

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Masako Hanzawa Sugawa

"You know, when I first started working, I worked at part-time operator relieving these two on their days off. And my girl was small, you know, so I had to take her. And we built one crib and we left it right by the side with the switchboard. So I could feed her and all that. That's how I worked over there until she start to get bigger."

Masako Sugawa, eldest of three children, was born in 1911, in Halehaka, Kaua'i. Her father, Yoichiro Hanzawa, immigrant from Miyagi-ken, Japan, was a rice farmer in Halehaka; her mother, Kesa, also from Miyagi-ken, died at age thirty-three in 1919. Masako helped her father care for her sister and brother. At age fourteen, Masako and the family moved to Puhi where her father found employment as a carpenter for Grove Farm.

At age eighteen, Masako married Tokuichi Sugawa and moved to Lāwa'i. When her son began attending school, ca. 1934, the family moved to Kōloa. Both Masako and her husband were employed as operators by the local telephone company. He retired in 1960; she retired six years later.

Often called, "The Rose Lady of Kōloa," Masako can be found gardening or reading at home. She has a son on Kaua'i, a daughter on O'ahu.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Masako Hanzawa Sugawa (MS)

April 8, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Masako Sugawa at her home in Kōloa, Kaua'i on April 8, 1987. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, Mrs. Sugawa, for today I want you to start by telling me what your father's name was.

MS: Yoichiro Hanzawa. And my mother's name was Kesa Sato.

MK: And I don't know how much you know about your parents' background in Japan, but tell me what you know about your father and your mother and their early lives in Japan.

MS: Well, the only thing that I know about is that my daddy's family had seven in the family and they were rather a poor family. And my mother's side was a rich family with, I think, just about three children. And so, he did have a hard life, my daddy. So, as far as the background, that's about all I know. But I know that's the reason why when the thing came up that they were able to come to Hawai'i, he wanted to take the trip. And so, he was coming with one of his nephews together to Hawai'i. And when they did get to Honolulu [ca. 1905], [his] nephew had to go back because he had glaucoma. And from there, he came into Lihu'e and went to Halehaka and Niūmalu, all over the places, and then he start raising rice. But in the course of time, he went to school, English school. So, he went till, I think, about fifth grade, I think. So he was very good in English. So, when we were small and were stuck with our lessons, we would ask him and he would know, more or less, what it was, you know.

I don't know too much about my mother because as we grew up, she was sickly and I really don't recall my mother well, yeah? Because when I was eight years old, she died. And even at that time [in 1919], they had that influenza. She was in the hospital, and we were all home, three of us. I was eight years old, and my sister was five, and my brother was one. They've advised my father that there was no hope for her so to take her home. So when she came back, I got the influenza and I went into the hospital. And the hospital was at

Līhu'e where the intersection is going to airport, yeah? That was the hospital there. And I stayed in there for a month. But my mother came back [home] and she passed away. So when I was released from the hospital, it was after three days that she was already buried, you know.

So, came back. Then from there on, we had to help my daddy. Work in the rice paddies. And it was all right for a while because the rice prices was real good, yeah? But then, later on, the price start coming down and we had to struggle for it. And he had to go to outside work. Like now, that--it's a Līhu'e museum [Kaua'i Museum] now. The stone building, yeah? He was working with that. One of the contractors in Honolulu, he worked with him and he starts to work all contracting jobs.

MK: You know, you mentioned that he was doing a contracting job, yeah, where the Līhu'e museum [Kaua'i Museum, located in Līhu'e] is now . . .

MS: Yeah. He works for the contractor.

MK: Was he a carpenter from the time he was in Japan?

MS: Yeah, mm hmm. He was. He liked carpentry work. So, that's what he was doing in Japan as a small boy. I think he came down here when he was about, oh, eighteen or twenty? Something like that. But my mother came down, and not soon after she got sick, so he was left with three children. And to survive, he had to go and find outside job when the rice prices real dropped, you know. And then, finally, it gotten so bad that his friends asked him why doesn't he go into plantation work, you know, instead of staying down at Niūmalu where all those rice things were gone. So he decided to work into plantation and that's when [1925] we moved up to Puhi.

MK: Oh, okay. Now, moving back little bit, you mentioned that your mother's family was a rich family in Japan. Can you kind of tell me about her family in Japan?

MS: Chee, I don't know much about my mother's family, yeah? I met my mother's nephew when I went to Japan in 1960. But other than that, I don't know much of their family.

MK: You were telling me that your mother's father was like the headman?

MS: Yeah, over there. That's what my daddy told me, that they were rich. And what do they call--the sonchō-san? Something like that? And then, he [MS's mother's father] would distribute things to the people in the surrounding area, the area where they lived. I remember he telling us about that. But he always said that their [Hanzawa] family was poor, you know.

MK: How did it come to be that your father and mother got married?

MS: Well, my mother's mother liked my father, that's what he said--that he goes to help. Whenever there's a carpentry job, she would ask him to come and help. They were close by. And he goes and help. I guess she fell in love with him, the way he works, because he's so neat, you know, in the carpentry work. So as he grew older, she wanted him to marry one of the daughters. And that's how they got together. And after my mother died, some of the friends that. . . . Of course, the friends were [from] Fukushima-ken, yeah? Well, my mother folks were [from] Miyagi and Sendai. But they wanted my father to marry the other sister, you know, because he was left with three small children. So, they told him to why don't he get the sister to come down, you know, to be the mother. But, of course, this is later on that my daddy explained that at those days that stepmothers were mean and all that. And he just couldn't see the three children being taken care of with a stepmother. If it turns out the way they say, well, he couldn't stand it. So he said he never got married. So he refused the friends, said no, he doesn't want to get married again. He went right through taking care of us.

MK: I was wondering, where were you born and when?

MS: In Halehaka. January 24, 1911. You know where Halehaka is, yeah? You don't know?

MK: Not really. Where is it?

MS: Do you know where the Kukui [Grove] Shopping Center is? And you go further down going Kaua'i High School way. But way before that, Ulumahi, the new subdivision, subdivision with all the houses, well, before you reach there, there's a road going in towards the mountainside. And you go down that road, and way down in the valley [near Nawiliwili Harbor] there's a camp they used to call "Halehaka." But that's where we stayed for a while. Then he moved down to Niimalu where it's a valley opposite, right behind that Menehune Fishpond. You know where the Menehune [Alakoko] Fishpond? And the road, and there's lot of shrubs on this side with hilly mountainside. Down that, below there, they call "Niimalu," and that's where we raised the rice.

MK: So, in which place did you spend your childhood?

MS: Well, most of my childhood was in Niimalu after we moved down there, yeah? In Halehaka I was just born and I don't remember anything from there. So we must have moved to Niimalu soon after, I think. Because my sister was born there at Niimalu and my brother was there, too.

MK: You know, in Niimalu, what kind of house did you folks live in?

MS: Oh, it's one of those old homes, yeah, with low buildings and the floors are all dirt, except for the living room. But the kitchen was all dirt, I remember. And of course, where we have the dining room table, I mean the table, was with rough lumber, you know. And

our house was right close to a big waterfall and with this plantation river going down there. So we had a big pond. Was really a deep one. So we practically brought up in that pond, you know, swimming. (Chuckles) All day, swimming and doing all those things. But the house was really worse than this. Was really a shack, yeah?

MK: In those days, about how many people lived in Niualu?

MS: Well, when we were there, there were just three of us [i.e., three families]. One, I think, a little further down. And there was one that you have to climb up the hill and there was another home up there. Those were the three nearest. But the other homes were way up. It was between Halehaka and Niualu. So there were about three or four families, I think.

MK: What did all the other families do for a living?

MS: All rice paddies, yeah? And there was a store there, small little store they called the Asanuma Store, between Halehaka and Niualu where we were living. But they were the only ones, I think, had the store. The others were all rice in the valley. They were all planting rice.

MK: I don't know how they used to operate rice farms in those days, but did your father own the land or . . .

MS: No. It was leased. They leased from the people. I think my daddy's land was leased from Lovells, I think. Enoka Lovell's, huh? I don't know how the lease went, I mean for how long or what, but anyway, it was a lease and nobody owned it, the lands. I don't know who owned the others up our way, but I think I remembered my daddy saying it was Enoka Lovell's estate, all the Hawaiians that have lands up there. But at that time, rice planting was really a hard job.

MK: What kind of work did this rice planting involve, those days?

MS: Well, I was eight years old, and my mother died. From there on, the way I remember, they would have to prepare the patch, rice patch, paddies, with the horse and sort of a plow. They go through each paddy, I mean. And the paddies are kind of big, up this--it's not one whole solid area, you see. It's made into sort of terrace-like patches. And you have to make the dirt soft, so you have to go with the plow with the water in it. Then, one you would use for seedling. They'll throw the rice seeds in there.

And then, four months later, the rice would come about. . . . Is that about five, six inches high? Then you have to pluck all them into a bunch and tie it in a bundle, small little bundle, that you can hold in your hands. And then, you have to go to each paddy to plant it in rows. You know, you take about six rows at one time and start planting it. The next person will do the same way. Then you

have to keep the water in there until it starts growing big. And once the rice starts coming on that stalks, then the water is taken away, and it sort of come dry, yeah?

Then you have to go and cut with this sickle that is made for that purpose, you know. You have to cut the portion of the bottom part off, about four inches. And then, you lay it on the ground, and then you put the rice all in a row. Then after it's all finished, then you have to take it in a bundle, a big bundle that you can hold it in two arms, and then you tie it again. One paddy would be all dried up, and you have the tarpaulin all laid up on there, and then a post in the middle. And you stand that rice all up with the rice side up. And then, lay it all on there.

Then you take a horse. I know my daddy used to put that horse on that pole in the center and let the horse run on it, on the rice, so the husk will all come down, yeah, with the rice on it. Then once it's done, then you take that straws off from there. And you have to go through a screen to let the rice drop and all the leaves and all the things will be, you know, on the side. You cannot put it together with the rice, yeah? So, you screen it through. And then, when it's all finished, then the canvas is filled with those rice only, then you have to dry it in the sun. So, every now and then, you have to walk through there to turn the rices up so every one will be equally dried. Then you pack it in those brown gunnysack, yeah, they used to have. All in there.

Then, with the horse, you take it to Hulē'ia. That's where they had the rice mill. One Chinese man, Mr. Ahana, used to run that. And they take it there and have it, you know, husked into a rice. And pack it in the bag again, and that's how they sell that rice, you see.

So, in between that, while the rice is growing, you have to watch for the birds because they'll be coming. The rice birds will start coming, so you have to keep on watching and chase them. And you have such a big area. You have to chase all the rice birds. Hard work. It really was hard work.

MK: How did you folks keep the rice birds from getting into the seedlings and the rice?

MS: They eat rice. Well, what they do, my daddy had--Japanese call it "yagura," yeah, they make? Bon dance, they have that. Something like that built on the side. And then from there, they string strings right through to each one of those distance of the paddy. And then, they hang the cans all bunched up, you know. So, we sit in that building and pull the strings so the cans will jangle and make the noise, and the birds fly away if they're on the rice.

And the other one was, they used to make whip, you know. You know, just like horse whip, but they have the handle with the stick. And they make it with hao bush tree, yeah? And then, they braid it, and

then at the end, they use a sisal. Do you know what a sisal is? A rope, yeah. Well, we used to take that big leaf, and then we hit it with a stone. And then, all the silvery cord comes off from there. Then you wash it and then dry it. And then, you weave onto that hao braided ones, you know, about this length--about a foot length. And then, you know how you put the whip, yeah, to whip the horses? They had to make a big sound. It really makes a big sound when you do that, you know. And in the valley, it echoes, so the birds scatter.

(Laughter)

MS: Yeah. So that was another way of chasing the birds. Most of it was done by cans.

MK: Lot of work, then.

MS: Yes. So, I always tell the people that, you know, if you haven't worked in a rice paddy, you wouldn't know how hard it was before to raise rice, yeah? Now that you get from the Mainland and they do it with machine and all so easy, so you don't realize how much work is put in, yeah? But those days, was really hard job.

MK: Gee. And then, you know, I was wondering, who did your dad sell his rice to?

MS: Well, they used to sell to all different stores. So some, he used to sell to Tao [Store]. Used to have over here [in Kōloa]. The elder people used to have a store, so he used to sell there. And then, he get some into Lihu'e. So, to the stores, they used to sell them.

MK: You know, the other people that were doing rice, were they all Japanese people, too?

MS: Yeah, most of them was Japanese. Because the one above was the Okubos and the others were Takahashis. And the other was. . . . Oh, I can't remember now, but there was a Nakamura, too. But they were all Japanese, as far as I remember.

MK: You know, as children, what were you folks' duties for your rice farm?

MS: Well, my sister was small yet, so she couldn't do much. And my brother was small, one [year old]. I had to take care of him and plus take care. . . . But I was the only one that worked in the rice paddies with my daddy. So, the chores were already, you know what it is. Because as the rice grows, you know what to do, yeah? It just keep on doing what next steps. So when we go to school and come back and during Saturdays and Sundays, if we have to watch the rice birds, then that's what we do. Then time to come to harvest those rice, then I used to help my daddy. And he has some friends come and help him, too. But my sister, they couldn't do much.

MK: You mentioned that your mother died at age thirty-three from gall bladder trouble and you were only . . .

MS: My daddy was thirty-three, too.

MK: You were only about eight years old, yeah?

MS: Eight years old.

MK: How did you and your dad and the family manage without a mother?

MS: You know, when you think about it, yeah, I sometimes wonder how we survived. I just cannot recall how we went about it. I guess the things that's really sad and what we went through, you can remember well. But other times when you get together with the other children and play, you can't remember those things because, I guess, was so much fun in it, you know.

But the one thing that I remember is when my daddy---they have to work together with the other rice planters, so when his harvesting is over, he goes to the other families and they would help. He would go and help and they would in turn help him, too. So, we were left with whatever at home. And he goes out and help, and of course, it's not like plantation or business work that you start from seven [a.m.] and go home at, you know, certain hour. So, in rice planting, they work till late evening. And then, naturally, they have to have dinner together. So, by the time they come home, he's feeling good and comes home, it's kind of late already. And here we are, three of us, (chuckles) we don't know what to do. I remember--my sister always tells me, too--we used to sit by the door and cry, and cry, and cry because it was all dark, and my daddy's not there, and we don't know what to eat, you know. (Chuckles) So, until my daddy comes home, we three of us were lined up in the doorway. And we used to do that. Those things, I remember well. And then, my daddy would come home and put us to take a bath, and then feed us, and put us to bed.

And there was another thing that---oh, like clothing. My daddy used to sew for us all, you know. So, he used to tell us, if you want dresses like that, to cut--get the picture of the book. And those days, they used to have thick magazines, so, cut, and he used to sew it for us until I was able to. They have sewing school in school, sewing. Then I start to learn how to do it, so we were able to do it. But until then, he used to sew everything for us. So he had to sew my brother's shirts and trousers. Because with thin materials, you have to keep on with the rough playing and everything, he just can't afford. So I remember that he used to sew my brother's shirts with denim. You know, those days, the denim was thick. And he [brother] used to cry. He says, "Papa, I don't want this because it's so thick and sore." And he used to complain about it. But we just made him wear. So he never wore any shirt until he really grew up. He was always, from the waist up, bare.

(Laughter)

MS: Go in the rice paddies, swimming. He was practically in the water all day. But those about the only things I remember. But we used to go out in the hills to play together. One day we went up the hills together and somebody said, "Oh, your brother is crying up there." So, I went to check on him. And he had broken his leg. And we had to carry him back. And then, even at that, I don't think my daddy ever took him to the hospital. He set it himself and he fixed it.

MK: Those days when you folks were living at Niumalu, if you folks needed medical treatment, how did you folks get it?

MS: He [MS's father] has to take us on a horse till Līhu'e, as I said, where the dispensary was. Until there, to see the doctor. So, usually, small little things, he wouldn't bother to take us. But funny, those days, I guess there weren't much. . . . Like now, if you were to cut your foot like that, it get infected right away, yeah? But those days, things were so clean, you don't have that trouble, I noticed.

Because I know, one day, I was such a tomboy, I used to climb on a big tree and I fell down from the tree. And this family had the hedges trimmed slant way, you know. And I fell right on top of it and I cut my stomach here. Right [between] my thigh and my stomach. When I looked at it, something was peeping out, yeah? But I went home and my daddy saw it and said, "Oh, it's going to cure." So he put the thing back again. And somehow, you know, with the tape and all, it just healed. And I still have the scar like this, but it didn't get infected or anything like that.

And then, those days, lot of children used to have boil. I don't know whether you know or not. They used to have boil big like this and it's just a smooth, little, round ball, you know. You know, I mean, a boil, but it's just like a ball. And then, it get all infected inside. And my brother had about couple of them. And then, big, and it hurts, huh? My daddy would just grab him and take a razor blade, Japan razor blade, and just cut it. Cut the top and just press open the infection. And then, he put some kind of medicine and that's it. But it never got infected after that. It just heals like that. But I don't think we've ever gone to the doctor's.

MK: I know that in old times, some plantation towns would have kusuri-ya. You know, a medicine man would come . . .

MS: Yeah, yeah, they used to come.

MK: How about your place?

MS: We used to have, yeah. Even in Niumalu, they used to come. A big package, yeah, with all the Japanese different kind of medicine.

And that's the reason why, I think, we've never gone to a doctor. Because they have kōyaku and all different kinds, and he would just use that. But even when we were in Niūmalu, I remember that kusuri-ya-san used to come down. And of course, in Puhī, they used to come a lot.

MK: Would you remember the names of the kusuri-ya that used to come down to your place?

MS: Gee, I don't know. He was a Japanese man, though. He comes over, no? And leaves the package there. Then he comes next time. I don't know how often, but then he changes some of them, you know, with the new ones. And then, of course, some of them, you use, then he replace it. I remember we used to use lot of kōyaku, you know, that black in the shell, yeah? Put on there. But those are good, though. Even when you have stomach trouble, they used to give that medicine, and it did work, though. We miss those medicine now days. It used to help a lot.

MK: And then, like you mentioned that your dad used to do the sewing for family. Where did he get all the, you know, the thread and the cloth and . . .

MS: Well, my mother used to do lot of sewing. She used to like to make crochet things, too. And in Japan, they make the (bibs), huh? Cute, flowery (bibs for babies). She used to do a lot of that. And she used to sew Japanese clothes and obis like that, yeah? So she had all those thread like that. And we had an old sewing machine. We should have kept it. We sure had one old, old one. But that would have been antique. We took it from Niūmalu and we had it up Puhī yet. Those were--the bobbin pins--were those long type, yeah? And that's what he used to use. Regular sewing machine.

MK: And the material, he used to get it from the Japanese store that you mentioned in Niūmalu? Is that the store he used to get his material from?

MS: Down Asanuma Store? Yeah, they used to have over there, too. And then, later on, they had Yamaguchi Store down at Niūmalu by the pavilion. So, he used to get the material here and there.

MK: How about foods and things? How did your family get their foods and whatever they needed, you know, for a living in Niūmalu?

MS: Well, he used to go down to this store, Yamaguchi Store. That was way after Asanuma Store closed up. And then, he go down there. Whatever he needs, he purchased and came home. But there were lot of times that we used to eat fish because, those days, there were lot of hukilaus, you know. Now days, they don't have at all, but those days, every week, I think, they used to have. And all these families living with us, behind and the sides, every one of them would be watching for that mountain tip over there. You know where the first mountain coming in with the airport? The first mountain.

When the school of fish comes in, somebody's watching, see, with the glasses, I guess. And they would see the fish all in schools, yeah? Then they would put up a flag, up on the mountain. So we watch for that flag, although it's real small, but I guess you get used to it. And we watch for the flag, and as soon as the flag comes up, they all tell there going to be a hukilau. So we all go down there. And of course, we were kids, we cannot pull much, but we hang onto the net.

I don't know whether you've ever gone to Niimalu Pavilion, Niimalu. They have the boat harbor there, yeah, small little boats. That was all open space. It was ocean, sea. And towards this side where the pine trees are, all sandy beach. So they pulled the net in there. And they used to have lot of akules, yeah? And then, if you go over there, they used to give all to the children, too, (chuckles) those who hang onto the net. We get about six or seven and come home. So, we had lot of fish for food. That, I remember.

But we don't have any pipes for water. So, what we had to do is to carry the water from springwater. And that place was, chee, I think from here to. . . . I think when you turn around, it's to about Ike's house, to the main highway [i.e., about half a mile]. And they have a hill there and lot of trees. In from the hill, among the trees, there's a springwater coming down like a tiny fall. And so, we have to pick up all the water from there, even though we have a big pond right on the side. For bathing, we used to, washing and all, but for cooking, we had to carry the springwater back. And we have a big barrel in the kitchen and fill it up. And cans were those, you know, square cracker cans, the big ones? They have the wire rod and you can carry two cans with that, bring home, and put in the barrel, so.

Lights were, of course, all kerosene lamps. But even the water, we had to carry. Until we moved to Puhi, we were still doing that in Niimalu. But I guess that's nothing unusual because when my husband folks bought Lāwa'i Homesteads, we were using artesian wells. So when I got married to him, the washing and the furo, all, was with--we have to use the. . . .

MK: The well?

MS: Yeah. And the well was two buckets hanging on the tackle, huh? Carry one and the other will drop inside, yeah, big one. That's what we had. And then the lamps were all kerosene lamps. Then they changed to gas lamp. Then just before we were going to move to Kōloa, that's when they changed. We start getting the electricity and water. So, we really had jobs that we had to use.

MK: Especially compared to now, yeah?

MS: Yeah. Even the washing was done by water carrying to the artesian wells. I don't know why they didn't put pumps in there, but somehow they had, you know, just like the regular Japanese ido, yeah? They

have the small little roof on it and that's how they used to do it.

MK: That was at Lāwa'i Homesteads?

MS: Yeah, Lāwa'i. But in Niūmalu, was springwater, so we have to carry on our shoulder with a stick, yeah? One can on there, one can, and come back with it.

MK: Oh, so you folks had a lot of work to do when you were at Niūmalu.

MS: Yeah. We did. I guess that's the reason why we're healthy and big, eh?

(Laughter)

MK: How about for play? You said that you folks used to go to the mountains?

MS: Yeah. They had lot of hills, dirt hills, where it's erosion, you know. And so, what we used to do was take ti leaves. Broke a branch of ti leaves. Everybody would go up there. And then, we hold the side with this branch on the side, and with the leaf all on the side, and then we sit on it and we slide down the hill. We used to do that a lot up there. That's about the only games we could play while we're at home, or go on the trees and pick up fruits. There were lot of fruits at that time.

And hot summer days, well, we always in the stream. And because of the rice paddies, they have lot of springwaters that used to come on the side of the hills and that goes into a stream and it runs down to Niūmalu ocean. But the water was so clean. It's not like now days, you go in there, the water is all grayish color. But those days, was so clean that you can see everything in the water. So summertime when it gets so hot, what we did was, you go in there, you see shrimps and small little 'o'opus, yeah? Things like that. So what we used to do was to take two bamboo sticks, and then get cotton cheesecloth, and then we tie it down on the edge of the bamboo stick, and another one on top of it. And then we stick it on the two side of the stream. So the cheesecloth will be up, with the other end up, too. So we chase them all into the (chuckles) trap, and then we used to do that.

And then, if you have lot of shrimps like that, you could use it for okazu, yeah, for cook with satō, shoyu, and we used to do that. But we used to eat lot of shrimps, though. I remember when we get hungry, we cannot afford to buy candies, although those candies were, five cents, you buy jawbreakers? You call those marble candies. Oh, full of them. But then, the five cents was so [much] money, that we cannot buy them. So, what we did was practically eat fruits and shrimps in the streams. Those days, were big shrimps. And we peeled it off, the skin, and then you eat the meat, and it's really sugary, you know, sweet. I don't know whether you ever tried it or not.

MK: No. (Chuckles)

MS: I don't know whether the one in the ocean taste like that or not, but the ones that we used to catch in the streams, they were really sweet. We take the husk off, yeah, and the head, and then we just eat that.

So, I remember, one time, I got sick. After I got married to my husband. We went to Dr. [L. L.] Patterson in Wailua, Kapa'a. And he was taking my pulse and he said, "I never saw one Oriental lady with such big bones." Because my (chuckles) bones were so big. He said, "Your parents must have fed you with lot of fresh shrimps," he told me. He said, "That's why your bones are so big."

And I told him, "You know, Doctor, that's true. Because I've eaten nothing but shrimps when we were small little kids. Not candies, you know." And he was really surprised with the bones. And my brother is like that, too. Big bones.

MK: You think it's the calcium from the shrimp?

MS: Maybe. I don't know what's in there. That's what the doctor told me. He said, "That thing really builds your bones." And he said right away, shrimps. And I thought, "Oh, yeah. We used to eat lot of fresh shrimps." But my sister was kind of a weakling. She was sort of a picky type that doesn't eat much. But that's what we used to do. And o-tōfu those days was five cents one and was big ones. But we had to walk way up till Halehaka to purchase that. And sometimes he'll give us nickel and dime to go and buy it. My goodness, just like a child, you play on the roadside, then you lose the nickel. Then we have to look for it, you know. You cannot go home without the o-tōfu because Daddy had told you to buy and you lost the money. Oh, we had trouble. But somehow, we got through.

MK: So there was a o-tōfu-ya?

MS: Way up by Halehaka. You know where I was born? They had the o-tōfu-ya there. I remember this lady making lot of tofus over there. And that's the only one had, I think.

MK: Was Halehaka a bigger community than Niumalu?

MS: Oh, yeah. That was a plantation camp, you see. It wasn't a place where they raise rice like we did. It was a camp by itself. A plantation was running it. And so, they had the big o-furo, you know, big bath place where people will go over there and take a bath and pay for that. Something like Puhī Camp. They used to have that, too. And they had the o-tōfu-ya, and I think they had stores, too, over there. So the houses were just like these plantation homes, all with big porches, yeah? But eventually, those were all gone, too.

MK: I know that you also went to school while you were living in

Niumalu.

MS: Yeah, we walked for miles. I think we walked daily, one way would be about three, four miles, yeah, going to school. And then, we had to come back again home. But earlier part, after my mother died, I had to take my brother with me because my daddy's gone out to work. So I take him to school, and then go home with him. But he was too small to go in classes yet. After he grew up, then it was all right because he'll go to school, and we all go home together. And the Japanese[-language] school was close by, too. So, by the time we get home, the days are short, it was kind of dark, too. Because after the English school [public school] is finished, we go to Japanese school. And we have to o-sōji. And then, when we get home, it's about 4:30, 5:00. And sometimes--I don't know that Līhu'e Shopping Center where circular building is, yeah? They used to have a big---I don't know whether you remember the Tip-Top Cafe, the old . . .

MK: Yeah, I remember.

MS: Yeah, over there. Then the opposite side was the Kaua'i Stores, the big old ones, yeah? Those days, when you buy meat, let's say one pound, then they give you a small receipt that you paid for the meat. And you accumulate that in ten dollars. And if you accumulate ten dollars, then you can get the pound of meat free.

MK: Oh!

MS: Yeah, that's what they used to do. So, my daddy would do that. And then, he would ask us to go and pick up the meat free with that. So, we used to do that, too.

MK: And then, what school did you go to?

MS: Līhu'e Grammar School. You know where the water department and the agricultural new building is? Opposite the Kukui Grove [Center], over there. The schools were all over there. They tore down---they were using it. I mean, some folks in the agriculture department were using it, but then with the hurricane [Iwa] it went down. So now they built one new one. But the grammar school was over there. And then, the teachers' cottage was opposite side. But the Japanese[-language] school was way down by Līhu'e Mill. It's not there anymore, but right opposite of the Līhu'e Mill. We used to walk there. And they had only about two buildings, I think. Then eventually, they moved up to where the Līhu'e Grammar School is, way in the woods over there. Now, though, I think, Kawamuras have a store in that Japanese[-language] school. That was modern school.

MK: You know, the teachers at Līhu'e Grammar School, who were they? And what do you remember about those days?

MS: First principal that I remember was Mr. Simpson, I think. He was the principal. Then teachers, I had Mrs. Musick. Then we had

[Hannah K.] Sheldon. Mrs. [Eva] Fountain. And Mrs. [Cecil H.] Gates. The husband was a state highway department, road department, he used to be, the husband. And oh, there were several of them. There was a Chinese--Sui, I think. Was Mrs. Sui, too. And oh, there were lot of teachers because we go from one class to the other, yeah?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: And so, you know, at Līhu'e Grammar School, what do you remember most about your school days?

MS: Ah, not in lessons, but having. . . . We used to go lot of picnics, yeah? You know, I notice now days, the children don't go to [school excursions]--I guess because the parents take them. But in our days, the parents are too busy working. And that used to be really a treat. What we used to do, pay, let's say, ten cents per person. Then, they would hire a big truck. Regular truck that carries merchandise. All these children, well, let's say sixth grade or whatever it is, get together, we take lunches from home. And then, we would go to Hā'ena Caves. Next time, we would go to Kōke'e or someplace. And we always go on the truck. That's one of the things we really used to enjoy because other than that, we have no means of going. The children used to really enjoy that. I remember all the kids would sing in the truck. I remember going on the trucks. Everybody ask the parents for the money to pay for the trucks. And we get there, they all have lunch, and then we come back again. But I think those were really a lot of fun.

Of course, they had class, school, stage shows like that, too. But I think, as far as I remembering, those picnics were really the ones that I looked forward to. Because the rest of the time is studying. They used to have lot of sports. Of course, baseball, some things like that, volleyball. But I remember that well, the picnics.

MK: Were there special games or things at the picnics?

MS: Well, they used to play baseball. No, mostly was going around the area. Like Hā'ena, you go to places, Wet Cave and Dry Caves. And so many of the children, so the teachers will have to be watching them. But I think the games were mostly baseball that we used to play.

Of course, when we go to school, we play all different kind of games by ourselves. But those doesn't include the whole bunch of them. At the school they used to play hopscotch. Jump those. And then, jacks. The boys would play with knives. You know, they throw the knives like that. And then, where there is lawn, we used to play a lot of dolls and things like that. Another thing that we used to

learn was with the string. What do they call that?

MK: Cat's cradle?

MS: Yeah. That, we used to do a lot. Then they get the Job's Tears or those seeds that grow on the side of the rivers. They would make into bags and then throw that and play with that. Or else, they would play with that, shoot each other, and then, you know, take as much as you can.

MK: Oh, like marbles?

MS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's what we used to do. And then, with the marbles, too, they make the fish. And then, put the marbles and then try and shoot those out. I think those were games we used to play, which I don't see the children doing it now days, yeah? Sad, you had to go---the children now days, they go to the stores and buy things and play with it. But our days, the parents couldn't afford it, so all we do is to think of something that we can play ourselves, you know. So, those are things we used to do a lot.

MK: You know, I notice that most of the teachers' names that you mentioned were mostly Haole names.

MS: Yeah. There weren't much Japanese at that time, though. Our days.

MK: You know, being a Japanese with an issei father, how was it for you at school with the Haole teachers and English subjects?

MS: Well, I don't know, it was kind of interesting, yeah? (Chuckles) We were naughty, too. But we sure got punished, too, at the same time. But I don't know, somehow, I liked it. Yeah, learning different things. Of course, some of the teachers were real strict. But above average. They were all helpful, though. Of course, they were, like Mrs. Fountain and Miss Sheldon, all those were born here, I think, local people, you know. So, they were all right. Mrs. [Dora] Ahana was the principal, too. At the end, she was the principal.

But the most strict one was Miss Musick. She was a big woman. She didn't tolerate children talking among classes. I remember, if we are caught--you know, those days, they would give a sheet of paper. All the school papers were all the same white ones, just like store paper. She would give the whole batch of them, then tell us that we were punished for it because they caught us talking. You have to write 1,000 times: "I will not talk in the classroom." (Laughs) All of us. You had to take it home, and write, and bring it back. Yeah, she was the most strictest one, I think. "I will not do that." Oh, there were lot of them, you know, do that, and then they have to tell you, "You go home and write 1,000 times that you won't do it again." But other than that, I don't think we had any trouble (chuckles) with the other teachers.

MK: How about, you know, all your classmates? Where did they all come from?

MS: Well, they were all from all over the area: Līhu'e, Niumalu. Because they all went to Līhu'e School. From Hanamā'ulu--I think Kapa'a is Kapa'a side. So from Hanamā'ulu on to that area, Puhi. As far as Puhi. Hulē'ia School had their own school. So, from Puhi to Niumalu, all went to Līhu'e School. And all mixed students. Chinese, and Hawaiians, and Japanese, and Portuguese, all. So, they were all mixed groups.

MK: So, those days, people brought home lunch or they bought lunch?

MS: Well, we had lunch at school, too. But those who can afford will buy. But those who can't, you take home lunch. We used to take rice balls to school. Those days, we don't know what wax papers were. We didn't have it, anyway, so what the parents did was use ti leaf. Yeah, they wrap it in, and then we used to take it down. But as we grew older and when we start working in the cane fields for summer, then we have some spending money, so the parents used to give us. And then, we buy lunch. But the most thing that we enjoyed, a matter of fact, the students enjoyed, was ice cream.

(Laughter)

MS: Today, ice cream, you tell them to buy ice cream, you don't care for it much, huh? But those days, my, that was really something. And we have rotation of going to [help at] the cafeteria. Let's say, well, this week is sixth grade goes to the cafeteria. Next week, someone else goes to the cafeteria. Then, in that time, somebody would make the main dish, and some would cook rice, and some would make ice cream. Ice cream was made in big gallons, about this [i.e., about twenty inches] tall. I don't know how many gallons that is. Then you got to crack all the ice and pack it. Then, in there, you have the ice cream sauce inside there. Then, you have to put Hawaiian salt around the thing, and then you have to grind, and grind, until you cannot grind anymore. But the children used to buy a lot. It was five cents a cone, but they used to love that.

MK: Mmm, that was a treat.

MS: I guess it was treat. Yeah, it was, especially those days. In the stores they didn't have ice cream either, so that was a treat, though. (Chuckles)

MK: And then, you mentioned that summertime, the children used to go work plantation?

MS: Yeah, we used to go. Even from Niumalu, we went to work. We apply to Grove Farm Plantation. Of course, Līhu'e children were going to Līhu'e Plantation, but we went to Grove Farm Plantation and apply for it, and they'll tell you come to work at certain-certain time. They'll tell you, you either going on a truck or a train. So,

either truck or train. From where we were living in Niūmalu, we have to come up through Halehaka way and come till where the Ulumahi is, the station, until there. Because the train station was there, you see. From there, we rode the train, and then they'll take us to wherever we were supposed to work. So, if you get late, then you're going to miss the train. So, we have to get up early and go down till there. Walk there, so.

MK: So, what kind of work did the children do?

MS: In the cane fields? Oh, hoe the weeds. Most of the time, it's hoeing the weeds. But as you grow older, then they have a section where they plant cane. So, you have to go and plant the pulapula. You carry the cane seeds, and then you throw all into the area where the cane is supposed to be growing. Then as the cane grow little tall, then you have to water it. So they call that hanawai job. And they don't give that to small, young children. But when you get older, then they assign you to that. So you have to fill in that lane with the water, and then shut it up, and then you go to the next lane and fill it up. But all different kind of job as you grow older. But when we went to Hulē'ia section--I don't know whether you've seen it or not, but the cane grows way up to the mountain slopes. Have you ever noticed that?

MK: What section is it?

MS: Hulē'ia. You know where Hulē'ia is?

MK: No.

MS: Oh. After you pass Puhī, and then on the left there's a road. After you pass the chemical station [between Līhu'e and Kōloa], what chemical station is that?

MK: Okay, okay.

MS: Then on the left there is a road going in. That goes into Hulē'ia Camp, you see. The cane is right up to the slope of the mountain. When we get there, they send us to work over there, when you go up one row of cane, and then you come hoe down, it's already time to go home. The length is so long, so you start in the morning at eight o'clock, I think. Then you start hoeing right through the lane, row, up till the mountainside, you know. And then, when you come back the next one, it's pau hana, time to go home.

MK: What time was pau hana, those days?

MS: Ah, 4:00, I think, or 4:30. Then you go on the train and come back again. They drop you off by--at that time, we were living in Puhī--they drop you off by the side road in back of Puhī Camp. And then, you have to walk home.

MK: Those days, you would have a luna that would supervise the children?

MS: Yeah, yeah. He does. Boys would have another one. Sometimes, they mixed up. But then, sometimes, the boys are another luna. The girls on the other side with another luna. They always have somebody watching so that you don't play around and not work, you know. But they were all right, though.

MK: At that age, you know, what did you think of plantation work?

MS: We looked forward to it, though, because we know we going get extra money. (Laughs) And then, when you're home, you're only by yourself, you know. Of course, you have the neighbor's children, too, but the ages are different. And some of them would be going working, and you'll be home by yourself. So, when you go to work summertime, somehow, you like it because you get all these kids together, all from all different places. Then you become friends. When you go home, you know you're going to have. . . .

And the thing is, what we used to enjoy is lunchtime. We have a group of us that can get together, I mean, get along together. Then we take all the o-bento out with the (chuckles) raincoat. And then, put all down. We share the okazu, yeah? So, that's another thing we used to look forward to.

Of course, the days are long, so we always used to buy something and put it in our pockets. So while we're working, we share with each other. Lot of them used to roast endō mame. Daizu. Yeah? They roast it. And then, come crunchy, yeah? So, we used to put in the pocket and eat that. Those days, we hardly buy peanuts because peanuts were supposed to be expensive, whereas daizu, you buy, you can roast quite a bit. So we used to take that. And then, abalones, those days, were cheap. Abalone.

(Laughter)

MS: So, with one knife, and we share. So, we hardly had any candies to eat, though. Because candies, you have to pay. So, those were the things we used to enjoy, look forward to. And then, when we first started working in the field, we had ten cents an hour, you know. But because the World War I was going on that time, they had the bonus because sugar was [selling at a high price]. . . . So, at the end of the month, when we had pay day, we used to have about thirty, thirty-four dollars with the bonus.

MK: To get the bonus, though, would you have to work extra? Or how did you get the bonus?

MS: Well, because the sugar was so high, they needed. So they apply on the amount of days you work, I think, and then they give. So the bonus, yeah, depends on how many days you work. So, naturally, they get good bonus, so nobody wants to stay home, you know. But was ten cents an hour. Then it came to gradually start coming up. And I think the last one that I worked, we were in eighth grade already, we used to get seventy-five cents an hour. But still, without

bonus, so it wasn't much.

MK: You said that you went to school up to eighth grade. Does that mean that you finished your schooling by the time you left Niumalu? By the time you went to Puhī, you were all pau with school?

MS: No, no. When I moved to Puhī, was fourteen years old. I completed grammar school from Puhī. Because at that time, we were attending school from Niumalu, yeah? So, when graduation, we were up in Puhī already.

MK: I was wondering, why did you folks leave Niumalu when you were fourteen?

MS: Because the price of the rice dropped and everybody stopped raising it. Because the rice was so cheap, they felt that it wasn't worth it. Because I think, originally, when they were selling, the rice was about seventeen dollars a bag or fifteen, at those times. Then it start dropping and dropping. I guess it's because it start to come in from Mainland. With machinery, made it cheaper. So then, everybody stopped raising it because it came to about three or four dollars a bag and it was not worth it. So they couldn't keep it up. So then, the friends told my daddy, "I think you better live Puhī and start work in the camp. You know carpentry." So as soon as he moved to Puhī, he was able to get job right away because they needed carpenters those days to build those homes, plantation homes. That's how we moved.

MK: So when you folks moved up to Puhī, what part of Puhī did you folks live in?

MS: Well, you know where the Kaua'i Community College is? That was all camps. Oh, you haven't seen the camps before, before that was built up?

MK: No, no, no.

MS: Oh, that area was full of this kind of houses. All this type house, plantation house.

MK: So right across from the Sereno Sausage Company where the Kaua'i Community College is . . .

MS: Yeah, yeah. Over there.

MK: All there was all camps?

MS: Uh huh [yes]. You know where the service station is? Right start of coming into Puhī Camp.

MK: Yeah, I think so.

MS: There's a service station. Then opposite the service station, start

coming in, all the community college starts, yeah? All over there was camps. The old camps are on the other side, yet. You remember, by the hill? Well, this side was just like that, filled. Way up till the back of community college, there's a reservoir there. All up there was all camps. Of course, all with roads, you know. And the houses criss-cross and the houses all there, filled. That's where everybody was living.

MK: What was the name of your camp at Puhi?

MS: I don't know whether they had any camp names. I know they used to call that "Puhi Camp." Because that was the only place they had the camp right through. The other side had different homes, but those were for lunas and supervisors, the good homes on the other side. But this side was all workers. I don't know how many camps there were, though. I mean, houses. But it was all concentrated over there where the community college is.

So my son goes up there. He works agriculture office, then at night he goes to [be a] security guard, [at the] community college. So he walks over there, all. So he knows where it is, too. After we got married and when they were small, we used to go to visit my daddy over there. And they used to have a small little Japanese store they call Funada Store. Way in, last, in the back of the camp, way inside. That small little store had all kinds of candies. So the children all used to go there and buy. So, he remembers where the stores were, you know, even if the college is there.

MK: At this Puhi Camp, what did the houses look like?

MS: You mean, the . . .

MK: Where you folks lived?

MS: Oh, just like this one here across here. You know the plantation house look just like that. This is McBryde Plantation house. It was never broken or remodeled. It's just like that, with one small little porch. The neighbors were real close because they have to mix. And they used to have big community o-furo behind. One of the ladies, that Mrs. Tango living next door to us, they didn't have any children. So she and husband used to run that. And they have that big o-furo partition in the center. And the boys on this side, girls on this side. And you pay fifty cents a month or something like that.

They had the Puhi Store on the other side. Remember now, where the sausage [Sereno Sausage Company] is. They had the Puhi Store there on this side with the post office. And where they have vegetable stand over there, yeah, that used to be a meat market. Ah Fong Au used to run the meat market. And so, people that wants meat go over there and buy the meat. Right next to my house and the third house, they had a barbershop. They had everything that a camp needs, you know, within that area.

MK: How about entertainment? Was there some sort of theater or . . .

MS: Well, yeah. I think the sausage store used to have a hall, a big hall over there. I think there's one in the back, but that was used for mostly Girl Scouts and things that started to come up. But in the front, they had a hall there. They used to make movie, a small one, but they used to bring the movie. And Iwamuras from Kōloa used to run the Japanese movie. They have the man that they call benshi that talks. Because those days, was silent pictures. So, when they have the Japanese show, they have the big flag with the names on, with the red and yellow. They have that by the hall, and we know there's going to be a Japanese show. Then, English show, they had over there. They used to have, I think, once a week, the English show, and then Japanese show once a week, too. So, we used to pay ten cents, though, those days, yeah?

And then, plantation would give. If you worked from Monday to Friday without resting, they would give you one ticket, coupon, which is ten cents. You can either accumulate that and buy one knife or something that's worth it, but if you want to go to the movie, you use the ticket and go. That's what they used to do. So, the children, summertime, they would try not to rest because you want to go show (chuckles) without asking the parents.

(Laughter)

MS: The hall was so small, so they didn't have any shibai. But we remember, one time, we said, oh, we make our own shibai, and then we try. So we got together with the other elderly girls. And then, we mixed up all kind of Japanese shibai. Those days, the old folks, they really took part in it when their children does something although it wasn't anything good, you know. So, they all come and they pay and donate. So, I remember, we did the shibai and we made twenty-five dollars, I think. And we donated to Mahelona Hospital. It came out in the [news]papers. But I remember doing that. They said, "The girls over there made shibai and they donated twenty-five [dollars]." Of course, those days, twenty-five dollars was big money those days. I remember that.

MK: You folks did a lot, then.

MS: We did. We used to get along nicely. We did a lot.

MK: And then, in this Puhi Camp, what were the living conditions like? You told me that you had to have the mountain stream water at Niūmalu.

MS: Oh, yeah.

MK: How about at Puhi . . .

MS: But Puhi was all right because they already had pipes in and they had lights.

MK: Electricity?

MS: Yeah. So, it wasn't hard work at all when we moved to Puhi. They had everything that we needed over there. It wasn't like in Niualu, like that.

MK: You know, like when you describe Niualu to me, it seems so isolated with just . . .

MS: It was.

MK: . . . three families, four families. How different was it for you folks when you moved to Puhi where you had, you know, a big camp.

MS: To adjust ourselves? Well, for a while, it was kind of hard because we don't know who the neighbor is, although they are Japanese. But we're just stuck in there with one empty house and tell us, "You can have that house." And you go in there, adjust yourself. But the neighbors are all people that we don't know and we have to start to become friends. So it took us a while. And naturally, they say, "Oh, they [MS and siblings] don't have mother." And all the rest of them have mother and the fathers, yeah? But eventually, we became friends.

Of course, when we went to the same school from the camp people, so as far as the children, of course, we were friends already. But it's just a matter of getting acquainted with the adults. They were all nice people, though, the Puhi people. The Japanese were---they all had children, so they understand, yeah?

MK: You know, like earlier, we talked about shibai. I was wondering, a lot of Japanese camps on other plantations, they would have Bon-odori and other gatherings or Boy's Day celebration. How about Puhi? Did they do things like that?

MS: Gee, I can't remember. Bon dance, they had, though. But as far as Girl's Day, Boy's Day gathering like that, we didn't have that. I don't remember. But the thing that I remember well is when they have weddings like that. Those days, weddings, they didn't go to restaurant like now days. They did it at home, the party, like that. Yeah, at the home, they make tents. There's the tent out and then put tables, and they make a party.

So, everything that's made is made at home. They would have a big--what you call those--crock, yeah, with big chunk of ice. Those days, they didn't have icebox, so they buy from the ice mill and they bring big chunks over there. Drop in there, and then they have the strawberry syrup, whatever there's in there. Then some ladies will be making age-mono with potatoes, all that. And then, oh, nishime and all. So everything was done at home. All the children---get camp, so everybody's invited. They all go down. So, for a while, they cannot make that thing full because they start giving it to the kids. And then, when the children are all filled

with it, then they can start piling it.

Then, myself, and there was Mrs. Mori. I think was Mori, I think. They had family, Mrs. and Mr. Amimoto. And Mr. Amimoto used to be the type that used to love to sing and dance that way. So, we used to learn the Japanese songs. Every time when they have wedding or something, he would come and tell us, "Come. We're going to sing tonight." So, myself, and I think was Mrs. Mori, we used to go and sing a lot. And they used to give us money like that, yeah? Sing Japanese songs, like that. So, Mrs. Muranaka was living down there. She knows. The father was the one that used to do that. She always says, "Oh, Masako-san, you used to go and sing, yeah?" Because her (chuckles) father tells us to go and sing, so. That, we used to do a lot.

But Bon dance like that, we used to go outside districts, Bon dance. We used to go all over the area, dance. Pākālā and all that.

MK: Did Kōloa have Bon dances in the old days that you used to go to?

MS: Yeah. In the Shin-shū and then the Jōdo-shū. They used to have over there, two places. But I haven't danced after that, though. After I got married, I didn't. But when we were single, we used to go all over, Kōloa and Hanapepe, Kapa'a side. We used to go all over with kimonos.

MK: What used to happen at the Bon dances in those days?

MS: They were all same ones, you know. Not like now days, they have all different kind of dances, yeah? But those days, were only the same one, the original ones. So, it's not hard. Like now, you have to learn if you want to dance. But those days, you learn one basic one, then that's it. That's the same one. So, we go with kimonos. And the boys will pick us up, and we go down, and dance, and come home.

MK: How about O-shōgatsu?

MS: Ah, O-shōgatsu . . .

MK: At Puhī?

MS: We used to go, yeah, O-shōgatsu, from house to house. Yeah, wear kimonos, and then we go there, and they tell, "Come and eat." And we used to eat, yeah? That, we used to visit each house. The girls would wear kimonos and go together.

MK: Those days, what kind of okazu did they serve for O-shōgatsu?

MS: Well, when I got married to my husband [1929], my mother-in-law used to cook a lot. And the family will all come down there to eat, so we have to have that thing ready. So we work until late at night to make that. Even the yōkan, even that, we used to make that. Yeah,

she used to make in the big o-kama, yeah? You boil the azuki first. And then it goes through the--whatever you call with the bamboo [i.e., bamboo sieve], yeah? You go through that thing, and then the water and that thing sinks down. Then you take the water out and just take the ones that's down. And then, you have to cook. You put back into the o-kama, and then you cook with sugar. And we used to cook for long time so it doesn't spoil, yeah? And then [we also made] kanten. And then, o-nishime is cooked all separately. She used to do it all separately with bamboo and all those different ones. But it's cooked separately and then you mold them on the plate. And then, they get big fish. They never used to have too much meat, though, no? O-shogatsu, mostly fish. O-sashimi and then the nitsuke, like that, no? And the namasu. And I don't remember making any chickens, either. And then, of course, o-kazari with the age-mono and oranges and everything, yeah? Then they would eat. I remember, they come down and eat.

And then, we make the o-furo early, too, so that those who wants to bathe would bathe before the night and all, no? But they used to come down with kimonos and visit. And we have it in the living room, all the table set out, and the food all ready, so when they come, they. . . . It's a whole-day affair, used to be.

But not anymore, though. Now days, they don't do that anymore. Although I put my matsu-take here. My neighbor, every year, he goes and gets his one, so he gives to me and to my neighbor. The take and the matsu. Put it by the doorway until O-shogatsu is over. Although we don't make food, but. . . .

(Laughter)

MS: Just to signify that there's a new year, you know. So, we still keep on putting that. But it's kind of sad, though. You know, to get away from there. And it seems that now days, the food, the daily food, is O-shogatsu food from before. Now days, you eat so much rich food. So when you have party, it's the same thing.

MK: Not as special.

MS: Yeah, nothing special. So, even the o-sushi like that, too, you know. You go to the store, you can pick it up. Those days, no, you have to do it and make it yourself. You hardly ate those things other than parties. So, I don't know. People say, "Neuchi ga nai (It is valued less)," or something.

(Laughter)

MK: No value, huh?

MS: Yeah. That's what I think, too.

MK: So, life at Pui was kind of nigiyaka, then, yeah, in comparison.

MS: Yeah, it was, it was. Because when they have the Japanese movie, oh, they come hit, with the car, with the drum. The big drum, and dom-dom-dom-dom. That thing makes the noise. All the kids run out to watch, and they throw those pamphlets for that night's show. And they all go to see the movie. So it was really fun. Not like when we were in Niūmalu, though. Niūmalu was just by itself.

MK: And like, you were saying that your father, when you folks were living at Puhi, worked for the [Grove Farm] Plantation as a carpenter? What kind of things was he doing for the plantation?

MS: Well, they have to build the homes. Whatever they did, they would bring it to the carpenter shop and he has to do it. Or else, they get houses that need mending. He'll go out and mend. And like now, before you come to Puhi, you see the restaurant on the right side?

MK: Is that the Kilohana one?

MS: Yeah, yeah. That used to be Wilcox home. Albert Wilcox, I think, was the home over there. So, he [MS's father] worked over there, too. And he installed the elevator over there. Things like that, they send him to fix. Because Mr. [Joseph H.] Moragne was the manager at that time. And he knew that my father was a neat carpenter. So everywhere that needs a particular type of work, then he used to go there. Other times, then he's in the mill, and then they give him all kind of jobs.

MK: And how about the work that you did at Puhi? What kind of chores or work did you have to do?

MS: At home?

MK: Yeah.

MS: Oh, well, after I got there, I used to go out to work after I graduate. Before that, well, I had to cook and, you know, wash the clothes for the family like that. But this was regular chores, yeah? But after I graduated [1925], then I start working because my father needed the money. I used to work at the girls' dormitory in Līhu'e. The girls from Hanapepē, Hā'ena, all those areas, Kilauea, too much of a distance to come with a car. Those days, cars were scarce, too. So, they come to this dormitory. It's from Ulumahi going towards high school, there was a building on the other side, left side, where they had the girls' dormitory. And the boys' dormitory was on the other side where the Līhu'e Shopping Center is. But the girls were all there. I used to go down there, clean the place and cook for the girls. I worked for quite a while there. Then after that was finished, then I used to work for Ahanas down Niūmalu.

MK: Oh, who did you work for?

MS: Ahanas.

MK: Ahanas?

MS: Yeah. K. M. Ahana, he was a [Kaua'i County] supervisor. And the brother, K. C., was a supervisor, too. K. M. was an auditor, I think; and K. C. was a treasurer or something. And then, the wife [Dora Ahana] was--they were living in Hule'ia--was principal for Kōloa School.

MK: Oh, Dora? Dora Ahana.

MS: Yeah. The husband was a treasurer, I think, county treasurer. And the other brother was an auditor. So I used to work for the other brother until I got married. So, right after I graduated, I started working. Whereas my sister, she went to---opposite my home, there was a Korean lady that taught sewing trousers. So she went there to learn how to sew pants like that. But she didn't work in the Haole house too many. . . . I don't know whether she ever worked or not. Can't recall. But I worked right through.

MK: What did you think about working in, you know, Haole houses?

MS: Well, the only Haole house that I worked was. . . . Oh, yeah. I worked for a while at Charlie Fern. Do you know Charlie Fern [a newspaper editor and publisher on Kaua'i]?

MK: Yeah.

MS: Yeah, we worked over there, too. She's married to Shiraki now, but Shimizu [Shimizu was MS's co-worker's maiden name.]--anyway, one of the girls. She and I used to work over there. They lived right behind Bank of Hawai'i. So I worked for a while there. But they were nice people, you know, so was interesting. We used to like because had two girls together, so. She would cook and I would clean the home. And we go out together. And Mrs. Fern was very nice and Mr. Fern, too, so was very good. Of course, the dormitory, Miss Figley, she goes out to teach school. And then, the mother of this lady was at home with me. So, she tells me what to do. So, they were nice, too. I lived there in a small cottage. And then, I come home once a week to Puhi. Because I had to cook breakfast early in the morning, too, so.

MK: How was the pay, those days?

MS: Twenty-five dollars a month. But big money, those days, you know. So, I helped my daddy for a while with that. And olden days, they have tanomoshi, huh? And that's about the only thing they had, so I helped him with that, to pay for those tanomoshi.

MK: Like those days, you know, when you were still a young girl, what did you expect out of life? What were your hopes at that time?

MS: Oh, chee. I don't know. Of course, many times you wish that you can get to be like other people that went ahead. And yet, when you

consider, I think, well, I didn't have a mother and I have two below me which I have to take care. So, I have to give those thoughts up and do whatever I can, work, you know. But as a whole, no, I don't regret it. Whatever I did, I feel as if I accomplished something. And of course, after I got married to my husband, then I got this telephone company job, then I worked for thirty years. I felt that I did do something worthwhile.

But there was my neighbor, Mrs. Tango, used to tell me that my father had mentioned several times that I was the only one that was able to help him so he could get along. Because my sister, my brother were small. And after they start working, he wasn't too hard up already because we had already gone ahead to work. But I was a big help to him. She mentioned to me one day. But my sister wasn't that type, so. But as far as work, I wasn't afraid to tackle anything because I worked so much down at Niualu. So I wasn't afraid to tackle anything.

MK: Gee, you did work a lot, yeah?

MS: I think I enjoyed my life as a whole. I never regretted one day.

MK: I know that at age eighteen, you got married, yeah?

MS: Yeah.

MK: Who did you get married to?

MS: To my husband.

MK: What was his name?

MS: Oh, Tokuichi.

MK: Tokuichi. . . .

MS: Sugawa.

MK: . . . Sugawa. And how did you folks meet?

MS: Through telephone.

MK: Oh!

(Laughter)

MS: Where we were working as a maid at the Ferns' place like that, and then we get the time off. And then, one of my girlfriends that died right around three years ago, she was the operator in Lihue. And my husband was operator in Koloa. So she would introduce us. But we don't know who they are because it's on the telephone. So (chuckles) we became friends on the telephone. Then we start conversing. And then, next time, you know, we would talk for a

while. And of course, he cannot go out anytime because he's working nighttime. The only time he was able to go out is the day that he's off. So then we made arrangements to go out together with the girls. And then, that's how we met.

MK: Oh, over the telephone!

MS: Over the telephone, we became friends. So we don't know who we're talking to in the beginning because it's only by voice, conversation, yeah? Then we got married.

MK: You know, I was wondering, how about your husband's type of background? You know, you grew up in Niūmalu, and you really had kind of a hard life because you lost your mother. How about your husband's side?

MS: Well, my husband's side, they may have had rough time, too, but it wasn't as bad as us. Because I think he was born in Makaweli. When he grew up, he worked in the Kaua'i Telephone Company, I told you, in Līhu'e. Then after that, they bought this homestead in Lāwa'i. So the parents moved there. And then, they had to go there. At that time, when they bought the land, somebody had to stay there. So they asked him to come back to stay with them. So he liked the telephone job and he hated to leave. But since he had to come back there, he told his manager, Mr. Wood, that he has [to] quit the job, but if there's any opening, to let him know because he would like to work again. So, he quit and came back. And while they were staying in Lāwa'i, he worked in the bakery. They lived . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 15-16-2-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Masako Hanzawa Sugawa (MS)

April 14, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Masako Sugawa at her home in Kōloa, Kaua'i on April 14, 1987. The interviewer is Michi Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay. I was wondering, after you and your husband got married, where did you folks first live?

MS: With my mother-in-law and father-in-law in Lāwa'i. And two brother-in-laws. We were all together down there.

MK: And whereabouts in Lāwa'i was that?

MS: You know where the cannery [Kaua'i Pineapple Co.] is? You've passed that road, haven't you? Well, you pass that small cement bridge, and then coming slightly around the turn you see a building on your left, an old building. Somebody else is living now. It used to be Uchima Service Station. And then, a few feet away from there, there's a house. Right now, they have a building there, my sister-in-law is living. There's a road coming down the hill. We cannot see the home that we used to live from above the road. And that road continues on and turns to Akaji's, you see. I don't know whether you went to see the Akaji's manjū. Have you seen that place [Akaji Manjū Store]?

MK: No, I haven't gone.

MS: Oh, you haven't been there? Well, it's slightly above there, then it turns, and then the Akaji Manjū [Store] is over there. But our home was below that first turn. You can't see from the road.

MK: Those days, what did the house look like? That Lāwa'i house?

MS: Well, the kitchen and the house was built separately. And of course, it used to be like a plantation home. But the plantation homes have the kitchen and everything together on one building. But these ones, I think they made themselves because the kitchen was separate and the living room and the bedrooms were on another

building. But not like other plantation house because they made it themselves. So, they had floors, you know, all.

And then, my father-in-law, I think, and my mother-in-law, they are old people from Japan so they made the home with shoji, you know. Of course, the floor was goza. And then, the bed, they used to sleep regularly like Japanese with the futon laid out. But they had shoji. At night, they close it. And in the morning, they open it into a living room. We used to have small little rooms on the side. Of course, those were made into American sort of home with the bed and things like that.

MK: How about, you know, the water and electricity?

MS: Well, when I first got married, they had a big artesian well with a roof over it. And then, they have two buckets hanging on a chain, one on each end. We had to carry all that. Get the water from that artesian well for o-furo, and washing laundry, and cooking, and all. So, other times, when we start to have children, then we try to cover it because it's dangerous.

Then, we didn't have electricity either. It was all kerosene lamps until several years later, they changed to those gas lamps. So even the iron was the old-fashioned one with charcoal. I don't know whether you remember. (Chuckles) You have to make the charcoal in there. We used it for quite a while. After that, it turned to gas iron.

Then while we were there, I think after we got married for about five years, just before my son was going to start to go school, I told my husband, "I think we should try and move into Kōloa." Because from Lāwa'i going to Kalāheo School is way up the valley and quite a distance for small children to walk, you know. We told my mother-in-law that we'd like to move when the children start going to school. She said, "Well, good idea." So, until then, we stayed together.

But before we moved, for a couple of years before that, this Nāwiliwili Transportation [Company], they were in with this road buildings. And they started to go around to get rocks, blue rocks, for crushings to make the roads. And we had quite a bit on our land, you see. So my husband sold the rocks to them. And then, they made a road coming into our lot. And then, they start taking all the rocks out. Mr. Hashizume was one of them that got these men. Contracting with about twenty men there. And they made a barracks right little above so they could stay there and then work on it.

And he asked me if I could do the laundry for these people. So I said, well, my intentions were to move out. So, I tell, well, whatever I can earn, save the money, and then we could move out. So, I took the job and I washed all the shirts and the trousers for twenty men. Of course, it was some job because we didn't have washing machine at the time and I had to do with the hand. That's

how we saved the money. I think it was five years, when my son was five years old, we moved to Kōloa right next to the [Riuichi] Fujimoto photographer. You know where the photographer is?

MK: Yeah, just four . . .

MS: Yeah. Over there, on the turn.

MK: . . . four or five houses from here?

MS: Mm hmm [yes]. There was one house and we rented it and stayed there. Then they started to go school because it was close by. Then we felt that, "Chee, I think we better try and get one home instead of staying there for years and not owning one." And finally, we bought this from Mr. Kimata, this lot. Then we built it inside there.

MK: You know, moving back little bit, I was wondering, what kind of work were your parents-in-law doing in Lāwa'i?

MS: They weren't doing anything. They were already retired sort of. But I don't think they worked at all. They stayed, I think, because they had all these children, you know. They [i.e., the children of MS's parents-in-law] were older and working. Because oldest one just died recently last year. He was the oldest one. And then, they had the oldest sister. And then, my husband. And then, there was another one who was Lāwa'i cannery machinist. And then, youngest was a boy working with Mr. [Hector McD.] Moir in the [Kōloa] Plantation, bookkeeping. And then, the youngest girl. They were working in cannery when season.

But the old folks never worked. I doubt it because when I got married and went there, they weren't working at all. But they weren't in a working age, too, because they were aged already. What he did was, my father-in-law used to raise lot of vegetables and kept going on that. But my mother-in-law never did anything, though, as far as I know.

MK: How about the other people in that Lāwa'i area? What were they all doing for work?

MS: Oh, cannery. All, I think even the ladies and menfolks were all involved in the Lāwa'i cannery [Kaua'i Pineapple Co.] job. Because as far as I know, after I got married, they were all working. And if the wives weren't working, the husbands were working either in the pineapple field or in the cannery. They had so many job at that time.

MK: So, in those days, was there a camp for the Lāwa'i cannery workers?

MS: Yeah, there was. It's amazing all those houses are not there. But when I got married and went there, right after you pass the bridge, there's a turn there with a big monkeypod tree. Right there, on the

opposite side, they had, I think it was Kunioka's blacksmith shop, and Kimuras took over afterwards, I think. And right next door was Matsuura Store. Now they're moved up to the main highway. Right on the side from the bridge on the slope side, there were camps all over. There were houses all over there. And then, coming down from Kōloa into Lāwa'i Valley, on the side there were lot of homes, too.

But as the cannery closed and people start moving out, they bought their own lands, then some of them bought the house that they were in and they moved it, you see. So the house is not there now. But they were all filled with houses, those days, except for the ones that some of them owned. The Portuguese family like that, they owned their house down and the land, so they stayed there. But they were full of homes.

MK: Like your husband's family owned the land . . .

MS: Yeah, they bought that. It wasn't cannery. The ones that living on the cannery area, was all owned by cannery.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Okay, you were talking about . . .

MS: My father's land, my father-in-law's, yeah. They bought that as soon as they found out that they were selling lands, you know. So they bought it. And that's the reason why my husband had to quit the job and go down there. Because I think he mentioned that when they have a land, they have to stay there. You know, somebody has to stay there, I suppose. So, he left the telephone company and went down there for a while. So, they had already owned that land.

But from the road down to the portion that they owned, there were pineapple fields up and down. Then, when we were just going to move, and then Lāwa'i cannery was beginning to close up, then that's when they asked us if we would like to buy those land with the pineapple field up and down, which was above our lot. And if we didn't want it, then they were going to sell it to someone else. But we were going to move out, so my brother-in-law, the youngest one that was working Moir's plantation office, felt that, I think, he should buy it. Because if somebody else buy it, then he'll have to pass through [someone else's property] (chuckles) to go to his house. And at that time, agriculture land was cheaper than regular one, so he bought it. So the whole portion down there is his land which is now belongs to the wife. So, they living down there.

MK: You mentioned that were some Portuguese there who had bought lands, yeah?

MS: Yeah, Marques brothers. They're on the opposite side of the river in the valley. I think they still have houses over there, although he made some homes in Kalāheo. But I think the ones that he has down there is rented out or something like that.

- MK: Then most of the people who lived in Lāwa'i were Japanese, at the time you and your husband were living there?
- MS: Yeah. Most of them were Japanese. They had Filipinos, too, though. Because some of them used to come to my home because they were good friends with my brother-in-law. But I think they were mostly Japanese.
- MK: You know, since they were mostly Japanese people there, were there like community activities like Tenchō-setsu or Shōgatsu . . .
- MS: Yeah, I think they had. Because I was telling about the Daijingu they had up the valley. Of course, I don't think there's any building up there anymore, but, oh, they used to have a big affair, I was told. I've never been there, though. But my husband used to say, oh, they used to have sumo and all those things, no? And I think they used to have those things, although I've never been to one.
- MK: Then, o-shōgatsu, they used to celebrate, you were telling me, yeah?
- MS: Yeah. That family used to come, the friends used to come down. So I used to help my mother-in-law make all those food by midnight. And then, one of the things that my father-in-law did was ryorinin, ne. When they have weddings and big parties like that, they ask him to prepare the food. So, he used to have lot of dishes like that, that he has to take it with him to have the party for them. So, that's one of the things he did.
- MK: How come they asked him to do it?
- MS: Well, I think he used to be good in those things, to arrange parties and prepare the food. That's what he used to do, I remember.
- MK: You know, I was wondering, in the old days, how much contact was there between Lāwa'i people and Kōloa people?
- MS: The only thing I can remember is only when the store people come down, you know, from Kōloa. Because we just had Matsuura Store. And otherwise, we'll have to go to Kalāheo or to Kōloa to purchase goods. Oh, they did have a Ah Tai Dang Store, the Chinese store, that's just opposite the cannery. Now, I think a beautician is over there. But that used to be a Chinese store. But after the cannery closed, then they closed it, too. They moved away. But most of the Japanese goods, the Kōloa Store, then the Okumura Store, and Tao Store. Oh, yeah, Sueoka Store. So, they all went out to different places to take orders. They'll come with the truck, you know, and then come down. You buy from another store, and then next day, another store would come, and whatever you need, they order. And then, in the afternoon, they'd deliver.
- And then, o-tōfu people come down. And then, I know the Akajis used to go out to sell their o-senbei like that. They go out and sell.

So, I think that's the only way they had the contact, outside from when they have shows or o-shibai like that. Then they come out from Lāwa'i, you know, to see.

MK: Where would they come to see the shows and o-shibai in Kōloa?

MS: They used to have it in Kōloa Theater, too, when the theater came up, I remember. And the Japanese movie, they used to have it behind the cannery. They had the old hall there, I remember. I haven't been there, but my husband used to say that they used to go there to see the movies. Then the o-shibai after I married, I remember coming once to Shinagawa Camp up here behind the Jehovah's Witness [meeting hall]. They used to have tent around. They put the tent around, and then they put the goza on the ground. Then we used to watch. Then those were the small ones. But they used to have that come from Japan maybe, big troupes like that. We used to go to Līhu'e to watch. They had a big armory and that's where they used to have, too.

MK: You know, going back to your own family, I know you had a son and you have one more child, yeah?

MS: Yeah. A daughter.

MK: When were they born?

MS: My son was born November 2, 1929, I think was. And my daughter was born year and a half [later]. So, it's what? [Nineteen] thirty. . . .

MK: One?

MS: [Nineteen thirty-]one, yeah. In April.

MK: And those days, where were they born?

MS: They had the Kōloa Hospital here. You know where it is? Yeah, well, over there, Dr. [A. H.] Waterhouse was taking care of the hospital, so we came there to have our babies. Then after we get home, then we have this. . . . Of course, Japanese were very strict of after you give birth and watch the woman, you know. So, they used to have elderly people come and take care, and bathe the baby, and all that. Mrs. Kokami used to do that.

MK: Kokami?

MS: Yeah. From Lāwa'i. She lived in Lāwa'i, one of the camps. And my mother-in-law folks will hire her and she'll come down to wash the baby and everything until for a month or so. That's how they did it.

MK: Oh, that's a good service, yeah?

MS: Yeah.

(Laughter)

MS: I remember their hiring her. Two of my children, she took care.

MK: So, Mrs. Kokami would take care of you and the baby?

MS: No, I'll . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: So, you were talking about Mrs. Kokami . . .

MS: Kokami coming down to take care the baby. Well, what she does is, she bathes the baby and then washes the diapers. That way because my mother-in-law was old already and she couldn't do it. And they don't want us to touch those things. So, I think she used to come for about a month or so. And that's what she did.

MK: You know, a lot of people remember Dr. Waterhouse. What do you remember about Dr. Waterhouse?

MS: Oh, he was one of the most sincerest doctors. Of course, we were working in the [telephone] exchange already then, my husband, and then during the day, I used to go in as part-time. But at night, was my husband. Those days, the doctors used to go out on calls, you know. Now days, they don't. All the calls, he goes out. And he takes care of the whole Kōloa town, and then to Kalāheo, and sometimes way over to 'Ele'ele. He would go out on a call, and he comes back and stops at the exchange, and then ask if there was any call for him. Those days, they weren't so strict in the telephone company, so we used to take calls for them. Number and who had called. So, he goes right back again.

But there were many times we tried to catch him before he comes when these people calling from. . . . Let's say, he's out on call in 'Ele'ele, and we know just where he is. He'll tell us, so. Maybe we have a call from Kalāheo. We take the call, and then he'll call in. Then we tell him, "There's a call for you in Kalāheo," so he won't have to come back and go back again. That's how we used to help him. So, sometimes when the calls were slow, he would drop in and chat with us. You know, my husband, there at the exchange. He was a very sincere doctor. So, my two children were born under him. And he never charged us, though.

MK: Oh?

MS: Yeah, he was like that. And people have hard time, then he won't charge them. He was more missionary doctor than anything else, yeah?

MK: I know that when your son was almost five years old, you folks moved

to Kōloa, yeah?

MS: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: And first you lived by the Fujimoto photographer.

MS: Right.

MK: Then you bought this house, yeah?

MS: Yeah, we made it, this one.

MK: Last time or the other time I saw you, you were telling us a little bit of the history of this land that you have here. How Mr. [William K.] Waialeale had it and the background of this area. Can you tell us about . . .

MS: Yeah. I'm sure this was one of McBryde lands. Because this was McBryde, all, so this must have been the McBryde Plantation lands. And Mr. Waialeale bought it from McBryde or someone else that had already bought from McBryde, I'm not so sure. But I know it was McBryde land. Then he sold it to Kimata in Wahiawa. Then when we were looking for land to purchase, then somehow, my husband got in touch with him. Of course, this was all woods, shrubs and everything. Then we asked, "I wonder who owns this land?" And he found out it was Kimata, so we asked him if he could sell it to us. So we bought from him.

And then, the neighbor is [Henry] Aokis. They already owned it from Waialeale. So, later on, after we lived in it, they moved his house from Kukui'ula to bring it here. This was one of the McBryde Plantation--it's either luna or manager, I don't know, but it was Christian's home down at Kukui'ula Bay. And they brought it here. And that's the house, so it must be quite an old home.

MK: So how about the house on the right-hand side?

MS: These ones, all the land is owned by Waterhouse. So, they bought from them. Ike [Okamura] folks and all. Those lands were all open. So, they have their family plot over there, too. It's there.

MK: Then, you mentioned that this was all bushes and woods, yeah? So you and your husband started from scratch, then?

MS: Yeah. You know, we had big koa trees, haole koas, yeah? Oh, there was filled over here. So, my daddy came from Puhi on the weekends and helped us dig that all out. So, we had to dig it all out and level out all, and made the stone walls. Actually, it was all bushes with trees. And we had big monkeypod trees and plum trees, too. So we had to clear all that. Then we built a home.

MK: And the home itself, who built the house?

MS: You know, at that time, they had lot of contractors, so we asked my father--he was a good carpenter, as I was mentioning last time. So, we asked him if he could make the plans for us. And we told him what and what we wanted. So, he made the plan with two bedrooms and a bathroom and a kitchen. And he said to give this plan to the contractors. Don't give it to one but try a couple of them. So, we gave one to Kurasakis out here and one to Hiranaka. And what we wanted was just the framework, and partitions, doors and windows in. But the rest of the things, we were going to do it ourselves. So, when we took it there to Kurasaki, he said, I think it was \$190 or something. (Chuckles) To build a house. Then we took it to Hiranakas. But at that time, the job was slowing down. So they said, "Oh, we'll make it for--" I think was \$180 or little cheaper than that. So we gave to them and they built it. With \$180, yeah?

And then in the midst of it, we were just about completing, the strike came on [in 1937], on the stevedores or something, and they couldn't bring the lumber. So, we had to go and pick it up. And then, we completed it. But actually, what they did was just partition, and then the windows, the doors, and that's it. And then, the porch and electrical, all those, my husband did it by himself.

MK: You mentioned there was a strike going on with the stevedores when . . .

MS: I think it was stevedores. So they didn't deliver that. Either it's the stevedores or the truckers or somebody. So we had to pick up the lumber down at Port Allen, 'Ele'ele. And that's how we completed it. But luckily, most of the home was already finished, just a little bit. And that was the cost of it on the building. (Chuckles)

MK: That's real good, yeah?

(Laughter)

MS: Yeah. But those days, money was really big, huh? So not like now. And then, of course, it was remodeled several times. Because the bathroom was small and over here was just a small living room. But later on, we extended it.

MK: Then, in those days, you said Aokis moved in later?

MS: Yeah.

MK: Then, how about all around here? Who were your neighbors in the beginning?

MS: Well, this house was here already. Opposite the plantation house. And there was a Puerto Rican family living there when we built here. Then, later on, this Lopes family, Filipino family, bought, I think, from Waialeale, too. They bought and they came in here. Then on

the opposite side was already owned by Aokis. They got it from Waialeale. And there was a old building there, just like a plantation home. They rented out to other people. But I think one of Hamaku's uncle or somebody was living there, one Hawaiian man. When the war [World War II] broke out, he was still living there. Now, I can't recall whether it was after that, that the Aokis bought that land or not. But one Hawaiian man was living there because I remember when the war broke out and they shot the cannon from the boat [Japanese submarine], yeah, to the Shell tank above Nāwiliwili. I don't know whether you read it in the news.

MK: Oh, no.

MS: Well, they had, I think, several big oil tanks up by Nāwiliwili. And this, I think it was Japanese ships, submarine or what, came by the Nāwiliwili Harbor, and they shot at those tanks, see? And then, we could hear that cannon sound. At that time, we were all blacked out. Then we were preparing to evacuate. I remember that man came out there, the Hawaiian man, and said, "It sounds like it's very close." You know, the sound. We could hear the booming sound because it's right opposite the mountain. Then, I think, Cortezans--I don't know whether you know Cortezans.

MK: I know the name.

MS: Yeah. The father and the mother [Rev. and Mrs. Catalino Cortezan], they were living--not, this house is just recently built--on the other side, the old house, above the other side. They were living there. So, they came up, too, and we were all on the road, wondering whether we should evacuate or not. But anyway, they said, "I think it's best to get things ready." So we woke up the children, and then we packed bags, whatever we were going to take up. At that time, I think, was supposed to be at Kilohana Crater up there that we were supposed to evacuate to. But while we were doing that, then it settled down. The noise didn't come at all, so. Then we found out that they had shot that tank and nothing more, so we didn't have to leave.

MK: So, you were one of the real old-timers, though, in this area--yourself, the Aokis, and the Cortezans?

MS: Yeah. Aokis used to live down at Kukui'ula. But after they moved here, then they came our neighbors. Then the Cortezans were there. Of course, those houses along Ike's [i.e., Ike Okamura] area is sort of all new.

MK: I was wondering, this road is called "Waikomo Road." Was it ever called anything else earlier? Did it have a different name?

MS: No, they didn't have any names for that. After the county started to build these roads and the new subdivisions, then they named all the Hawaiian names in between, so it's still new, those names, all different names.

MK: So in the old days, if somebody asked you, "Mrs. Sugawa, where do you live?" what did you tell them?

MS: We just have to explain, "Come to the highway and then turn."

(Laughter)

MS: Give them directions. That's about all we did. Of course, now, the delivery men, gas, and all those, they say, "What is your address?" Then we give a house number and the street number and the roads. But these were put in just recently. It wasn't too long ago. So we didn't have any road name as far as I know when we moved here when we built the home. And of course, the roads up there weren't there either, the new ones, you know, behind the Big Save. They were all new ones, too.

MK: Oh, the subdivisions?

MS: Yeah. Because it was just. . . . These roads were here, though.

MK: Okay. You know, when you first moved into Kōloa, what do you remember about the town? That would be back around 1934, 1935. What did Kōloa town look like?

MS: Well, of course, the buildings were all sort of old. And Yamamoto Store was really old. The roof was just about gone. But the buildings with all those dress shops now on the highway, they were old buildings, too, until recently they were remodeled. But they were really. . . . You remember in Honolulu the 'A'ala Park area where the stores were old and discolored? Was like that, there. I think, matter of fact, every building was like that. Of course, the [telephone] exchange was right opposite there. And then, the Kaua'i Motors was there, and then the post office was right opposite our building. Of course, our building was a small building on the other side. The post office was there. And then, the Manila Trading Tailor Shop was there. Then the Salvation Army, Yamamoto Store, and all along that road area.

But then, after the post office went uptown, then Awa Store came in. And we had the beauty shop there, too. Of course, after this war [World War II] all these people start coming, so we had a. . . . What do they call that? One of the ladies, Mrs. Ingram, she took out one store. You know, those, they sell herbs and all those fruits and things like that over there at the store for a while. Oh, Garden of Eden, that's right. That was the name of the store. Then the Iwai watchmaker was over there, too, before that. Then, as I mentioned about Mitsunami Store, and Tanaka Store, the fisherman, was right by the bridge where the Sueoka Store is now. And then, they had a bank over there, too, First Hawaiian [Bank] which was Bishop [National] Bank [of Hawai'i] before.

And then, the Mitsunami Store, the husband, wife, all the Japanese goods. You know, kimonos and obis, and all those. So people in

those days, in our days, when they got married, was all kimonos. So they all used to purchase from there. Then the Yamada Liquor Store. Then next, where the steak house is, used to be ice cream parlor. My brother-in-law had the ice cream parlor, Okumura, over there for a while. Then they had a butcher shop, too, I remember, Hamamuras. Then the Chang Fook Store. Then the Tao Store. Then they had the Filipino barbershop after that. But now, it's all ice cream parlor over there, an ice cream parlor. But yeah, he had the ice cream parlor for a while.

MK: And those days, where were the popular hangouts for people to go and socialize?

MS: Well, chee, they didn't have any special place. I know the elderly people when they want to talk stories like that, they were always by Yamamoto Store. Because they had the porch there level with the road, if you remember, and they used to have benches over there. So, I used to always see three or four elderly people sitting down there and talking stories. But younger people, I wonder if there was a billiard pool [hall] someplace over there, I remember. But I can't recall anyone getting together and socializing in Kōloa. Maybe Ike [Okamura] folks know better or [Tadao "Barber"] Kawamoto. He would maybe know where they got together. But at that time when we were working in Kōloa exchange from Lawa'i, we were commuting. At that time, we didn't get around too much. But after we moved into Kōloa, then we start to know most of the people and places.

MK: Then, how about the plantation camp areas? Where were they, back in '35?

MS: Well, the ones that I know was up at, you know, where the First Hawaiian Bank is. All those areas were all plantation homes. Of course, now, it's all changed to all different homes that they bought and made it. But all those areas from the o-tera by the post office. All around there was camps, all homes like this. And then, as you go past the First Hawaiian Bank and go uptown--of course, now on the left side is all new homes, too--but all those areas were plantation homes. They still have some in the back, I think, where the railroad track goes.

MK: Then, since the main reason you folks moved to Kōloa was for schooling for the children, what school did they go to?

MS: Kōloa School, right here. Because it's so close. So my husband was trying to get a place where we don't have to take them in a car. Those days, you know, then they could walk down. Originally, we were going to buy down the beach. Who was that man? A Japanese man owned it and we were going to buy from him. We made arrangements to buy by the Kōloa Landing area. Then, whoever was going to sell that to us told us that we would have to buy the other house together with this one, which we cannot afford. So my husband said, "Now he says that we have to buy the other one, too." If we had the money at that time, maybe we could really make money with those two houses

now. But what we were just trying to do was to just get in there and have a house so we could go send the children to school nearer.

After they told us that, then my husband start to think about it. He said, "You know, even if we bought just one of those," he says--he goes to work at night--"then we have to take the children in the morning to school with the car." Because most of those children were going with a car. It's not on a walking distance. So, then we changed our minds. He said, "I think we better look for someplace nearer." And then, he was searching, and he found this place.

MK: This Kōloa School that you sent the children to, who were the teachers that you remember that your children had?

MS: Well, I wonder if this Mrs. [Juliette B.] Wong was the principal? And Mr. [David] Isoda. I think I have the book someplace. Anyway. . . .

MK: Mrs. [Eleanor] Anderson?

MS: Yeah, there were. Mrs. Anderson, the Blake family. And the Wongs. Japanese ones were Mr. Isoda. . . . Who else was teachers there? Oh, Mr. [Robert] Iwamura. Then later on, he became an insurance man in Honolulu. But he was one of them. They were lot of Japanese teachers, though. Oh, Mrs. [Tsui Tashima] Yamagata was one of them, too. She's passed away now. Oh, Mrs. [Ah Heong] Lo, a Chinese teacher. Oh, there were several others. And Mrs. [Dora] Ahana was one of the principals, too. I think she was before Mrs. Wong.

MK: What did you think of the education that Kōloa School gave your children?

MS: I think they did quite well. They were rather strict, too, at that time. So I think the children really studied. Now days, I don't know. But those days, they were strict, though, the teachers. And so, when they were just about graduating eighth grade, my husband said, "We better send them to Mid-Pacific [Institute]." So two of my children went to Mid-Pacific. But up till eighth grade, I think they studied well. Because they were able to pass the exam to get into Mid-Pacific. Otherwise, you have to take a test first, and if you can't pass it, then you won't be able to get in there, so. I think the teachers were very strict. The children obeyed.

MK: I remember looking at a book about Kōloa School, and they had pictures about May Day celebrations and Christmas and their operettas that they had.

MS: Yeah, and they had stage shows. So, there were couple of them, my daughter was in it, too. They had all that kind of entertainment before, in school, that they get together with the children and have all that program worked out. But now, it's getting less and less, I notice. I guess it's hard on the teachers, too. I think, now, they

have over here up till sixth grade is it? They all go to Kaua'i High, I think.

MK: You know, I was wondering, when your children were like growing up, what kind of special events did the kids go to? Like picnics or anything like that, you remember taking the kids to?

MS: Gee, I don't remember those picnics like that. I don't think they ever went like we did. They take 'em on excursion, walk excursions to the mill or to theaters. Several times I've seen students going up--the teachers taking the students up to excursions. But going on cars that way, I don't think I ever had my children go out that way at all.

MK: I know that about 1935 they had a centennial celebration of Kōloa. Did your children participate in any kind of celebration?

MS: You know, I just can't recall that. I'm just wondering if we were still down in Lāwa'i, you know. I think we were down there yet, I think.

MK: You know, since you had the children, I guess from '30s and '40s, you were busy working and taking care of the children. How did you manage?

MS: My husband goes at night, and I work during the day. Of course, in the beginning, it was part-time job. I mean, replacing. So, I'll be home during the day. And when I go up relieve him at night sometimes when he gets days off, then he's down taking care of the children. So there was never a time that we could go anywhere together. The days off is just a couple days and sometimes it's just one day off. Maybe Monday and then on Friday. So, we never went anywhere together, you know. So, after my husband retired and I started to get to the years of service where I could retire, then I felt that I think I should . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: . . . move you back a little bit, you know, from your retirement years. I was wondering, you mentioned a little bit about the outbreak of World War II and how it affected you in the early days. But I was wondering, how did World War II affect you and other people in Kōloa those four years?

MS: Not pertaining to work or anything like that?

MK: It can pertain to work or to your home life.

MS: Well, we all had a hard time at that time because you can't go

anywhere you want. And then, we were working, too. The work came so strict, you know. They start putting all barbed wires around the telephone buildings. We had to work overtime. Then that made hardships on the children, too. When that was going on, of course, all the areas were with soldiers here and there. So, we had to be very strict with the children, too. And all the homes were blacked out, too. And some of the food that you want to get, you couldn't get it. But as a whole, was all right.

But then, sometimes, you have these soldiers all over here, you just don't know whether you have to be friendly. And then, when we're working exchange, we're so afraid that we might say something that we not supposed to. So, it really, as far as work was concerned, was really hard on us. And anybody else is nervous, too.

But as the years went by, of course, we had lot of soldiers that we work together because they're on the Signal Corps and they work at night. And we were working at night, too, sometimes. So we became friends. Of course, my husband used to tell, "Well, we must invite them and have them drink couple of drinks or so with pupus." And so, we used to invite them in. Then we have troubles, too.
(Chuckles)

MK: What kind of trouble?

MS: Oh, one time, we invited one fellow, several of them. Of course, my brother-in-law used to work--you know, the youngest one, I told you--in the plantation office. So, he goes home to Lāwa'i every day. Couple days later, when we came back from a matinee, we noticed our screen door was cut in the back, screen window. And my husband said, "Chee, somebody went in." So we came in and we looked at it. But nothing was stolen except for a [bottle of] whiskey. You know, those days, everybody was trying to buy with cards, whatever you can buy. Even if you don't drink, they want to buy it. I guess, human nature. So, you ask somebody else to buy it for you if you have a card like that. And we had it in there. So, in case they do come, then we can share with them. But evidently, this fellow that came in, took the whiskey bottle. And that was it, because we called the police. And the MPs [military police] came, too. We had to tell them the story, actually who and who we invited, and all that.

So, then, that afternoon, my brother-in-law that works in the office was going home. He saw this soldier walking, so he thought, "Chee, I better--" you know, he offered a ride. Because I think he [soldier] was stationed somewhere up at Lāwa'i. Then this boy offers whiskey to him, if he want to drink. He said, "No." He didn't accept it because he said he's going home from work. And then, come to find out, he was the one that stole our whiskey, offering my brother-in-law.

(Laughter)

MS: Because MPs checked the boys that used to come down. Then they found out was this boy that had stolen the whiskey and offering to my brother-in-law. Oh, we had a good laugh over it. But then, after that, we told the MPs, too, we don't want any trouble. I mean, you know, since they needed the drink, perhaps they take it. That's the only thing they stole. Then just before they were leaving this island to go down under, he came to apologize, this boy. And my husband felt so sorry, he said, "Well, no hard feelings," and he offered couple drinks, and they went off. But that's the only trouble we had. Other than that, everybody was fine.

MK: Those days, what were all the soldiers doing in Lāwa'i and Kōloa area?

MS: Well, they all had their jobs. Some of them worked at the Signal Corps like that where they have to man the exchange just like we do. And then, some of them get passes. They go out. Then some of them were stationed guarding their area. So, they all had something to do. And I noticed they had a bakery. They took that--remember the post office area that I was mentioning about right opposite the telephone company, they had the army bakery there. So, they were all over the area. They had at Knudsen Gap, too. And behind our church.

MK: That bakery that you mentioned, could civilians go there and make purchases, too?

MS: I don't think so. I've never seen them . . .

MK: Just army?

MS: Yeah, just the army. They supply all the island bakeries, I think, to them. But I know my sister-in-law used to do laundry for them, though. Soldiers bring in if they could, you know, laundry for her. They were living behind our church. And so, she did lot of laundry for them. They pick it up.

MK: What is the name of the church that you're a member of?

MS: Oh, Kōloa Union Church.

MK: Kōloa Union Church? Okay. There are so many churches in Kōloa, I thought, I better get that clarified.

MS: Yeah, (chuckles) Kōloa Union Church.

MK: So, during the war, you had lot of soldiers here, and you and your husband were still . . .

MS: Working in the exchange.

MK: Working at the exchange. And then, how about like the '50s and the

'60s? Did you notice changes in the community after the war?

MS: Oh, yeah. Everybody became normal. I mean, normal living. I think they were at peace and there was no nervousness like when it started. I mean, especially the elderly people, they were so. . . . I feel sorry for them because they felt so nervous and all that. But '50s and '60s were, I think it just came down to peace. Just regular.

MK: I know like after the war, you know, the unions came up, and the plantations, you know, less and less people start working at the plantations. How did that affect the Kōloa area? Would you know?

MS: But in Kōloa where the plantation camps were there, they, people were still working in plantations. And so, there wasn't much change in those, I'm sure, because people that the father and mother started from plantation, they continued with it. And then, they'll have their sons, and most of them were working in the plantation, too. You know, in the mills and all that. And they still do. So, there was never a change in those, except for the ones that went to war. But, so far, as far as I know, the ones that the parents worked with the plantation, they still have sons working, although the parents are retired. Because some of them that I know are still with the plantation.

MK: Then, the plantation camp housing like, you know, where Mrs. [Hanako] Gushiken lives, it's all subdivision now.

MS: It's all, yeah, it's sold. They used to have Tanaka Store up in the camps, too. They were living here for a while, then they bought the store and they went into the camp. This was one of the sons of the one that I was telling you about the fisherman. He's one of the elder sons that opened the store. And his sons ran the store, too, together with them. They had a big camp store. So, all those area were houses, plantation houses. But then eventually, the plantation started to sell the area. So, they all bought and built their own home.

MK: About when did they start buying and building their own homes?

MS: I wonder what year is that? Chee, I can't recall, but it was quite new, yet, though. Just recently. Of course, now, you can't figure out the years because you think it's three years and it's six years gone by.

(Laughter)

MS: But I think it's. . . .

MK: Kind of recent?

MS: Yeah, recently. Because when the bank, First Hawaiian Bank, built a new one, the homes were there already, no?

MK: I know that, like Kōloa town is now very different from the one that you used to know. You know, they've . . .

MS: Up front. In the front area, yeah.

MK: . . . remodeled it. And they call it "Old Kōloa Town" now, yeah?

MS: Yeah. Because the buildings were never broken down. They had to just remodel. So the buildings are the same, all the front area. Because only Yamamoto Store, that was really torn down sort of already. The roof was coming down, too. But they couldn't tear it down, but they could fix it up and then rebuild it. So the store remains the same.

MK: What do you think about what they did to the town?

MS: You mean, now?

MK: Yeah.

MS: I think it's good. I like it. Makes not only the area but Kōloa itself, you know, the district of Kōloa, important in the maps. Because until then, it was sort of a shabby town. The tourists come down, but nobody noticed it because there was nothing to attract them. But now, with this remodeling and all fixed up, chee, I mean, when people come down and they see, they say, ho, even at night with all those lights on, that Kōloa is really built up. I think it makes you feel good. I do. I don't know what the (chuckles) others feel, but it's nice to come down and see the improvements in progress. And of course, in the back, sometimes, you like to see something old left there. But those are few things that you want that thing to be there and not be torn down. So, I think I like it.

MK: Then, now changing the subject a little bit, you're known mostly as the telephone exchange lady of Kōloa. So, I was wondering, what's your history with the telephone company?

MS: You mean, how my life went on with the telephone company?

MK: When you started working and. . . .

MS: You know, when I first started working, I worked at part-time operator relieving these two on their days off. And my girl was small, you know, so I had to take her. And we built one crib and we left it right by the side with the switchboard. So I could feed her and all that. That's how I worked over there until she start to get bigger. Then we could leave them with my mother-in-law. But when she was tiny, well, I took her there. And the exchange, the pay stations were inside in the beginning. So when people come to use the coin box, we had to open the door and let them come in and use the telephone there. And our switchboard is right close by, see. So, naturally, when the people come in, sometimes your friends come in. So after they finish talking on the phone, whatever call they

were making, they'll just chat and chat, spend several hours like that.

(Laughter)

MS: It was just like a family. Then later on, they built the exchange outside on the porch. We don't have to open the door, so they'll use the phone outside and call us, and we connect them to that. There were several times, though, when we checked the outside coin stations, they would forget their money in there. But those days, everybody is so honest. At one time, I remember, somebody left a big bundle of money in there. And we knew who it was, so we called them and told them to come and pick it up. But it was so family, so when we're going to have lunch in there, we sit and eat lunch at the switchboard. So when we want soda or something, we'll go out on the porch and call Yamamoto Store and tell (chuckles) them to deliver. They bring it up to us.

And of course, those days, the telephone, there were just about fifty or forty customers, the whole area. Because most of the important plantation people, those were the ones that had telephones.

MK: What area did you folks cover from that exchange?

MS: The whole area right down to Kōloa beach, all. But then, remember, those days, we didn't have those hotels and plenty condominiums, all that. But it's just residential phones. And then, of course, the plantation workers like the Japanese workmen, they wouldn't have telephone because they couldn't afford it, those days. So the main thing was the stores and plantation managers and supervisors. They were the only ones. Then, next to them, insurance salesmen, they have a phone at home. So, there were just about forty or fifty telephones. Then, gradually, increased it.

But later on, they have about thirteen or fourteen party lines, you know, on one line. And then, some people would ask us to wake them up certain time. Even that service, we used to do, which later on, it's just strict business and we couldn't do that anymore. But they'll tell us, well, they're going to airport, so if we could wake them up certain hours. Then, they'll go to a party and they'll say, "If there's any call, I'll be at certain-certain house for a party," so get them there. All those were extra service, those days. But now, you can't do that. Of course, now, it's all connections. Then they had toll charges. They had five cents to where, you know, you have to make all those calls.

Then, eventually, this telephone company start to expand and they felt they should centralize. So, they start cutting over to Līhu'e to make one exchange. So, we have to move all these workers here and there. At that time, was in 1948, they were going to eliminate all this thing [Kōloa exchange] gradually.

At that time, the traffic manager, the operators' manager, had retired. So, the telephone company manager was Mister. . . . Oh, what was his name [Hansel Taylor]? I forgot. Anyway, he came and asked me if I would like to have that promotion and take over the Līhu'e, which is the center. So, I debated for a while and I asked my husband, "You think I should?" Having only eighth-grade education, to take over such a responsibility, I said, "Chee, I don't know." And then, the manager said, "You worked all these years. I'm sure you can do it," you see. So, I told my husband, "Maybe I should try." So, I transferred to Līhu'e and take over the Līhu'e exchange, the operators. At that time, they had teletype, you know, wireless cablegram with all teletypes.

And then, they start shifting Kōloa exchange first to Hanapēpē. So, my husband was transferred to Hanapēpē. And the other ladies retired. And then, the part-times were shifted here and there. And then, from Hanapēpē, we start to take the seniority first, that those who want to transfer into Līhu'e, we going transfer. So, we start to transfer all the ones that wanted to transfer and continue working, by seniority. And then, gradually, we eliminated all. So just became only Līhu'e exchange.

MK: How did you like your new position compared to the old job you had in Kōloa?

MS: Well, in Līhu'e, I didn't have to work on the board at all because I just supervise the girls, and make the time sheets and reports, and yearly estimations, how much you're going to use, all that. But the responsibility was heavier than here because over here, you just work and connect the people to other people. Then, when you work with about--we had about twenty-three, I think, twenty-four girls. They were girls. Then it gets complicated because each individual person is different and you have to handle it that way.

But one thing I've always stressed on them when they get sort of out of hand, we stress on giving service to the customer and then try not to irk those people, even if you're right. The customer is always right. So, you have to take the blame for it. And then, I stress to them, I always did that because I felt it was necessary, that always remember that your wages comes out from the customer. Company is paying you, but where does the money come from? That's from the customer. If they don't subscribe for the telephone, you don't have money. So, I always told them that whenever you get, you know, worked up about it, think first that, "He is paying my wages," and then you won't have any trouble.

And so, it was all right. Except they have unions and all that, and you have to try work it together with them. But when my age came fifty-five and I worked for almost thirty years, I felt that I think I should retire. Because at that time, my husband was very sickly already. So, I thought we need to stay together for a while and take a trip. So, I told my husband, "I think I'm going to retire."

He said, "Well, if you think you can manage at home with the income that we have." He had already retirement and social security, so he said, "You better retire, then."

So, I retired. And as soon as I retired, the telephone company start changing. Because it was just at that point that everything was starting to convert and they were going to do it from Honolulu. And the people start coming. So, after I retired, the whole bunch of new ones came in, which I don't even know the workers. You know, they start working.

I never regretted one day. I feel as if I did something worthwhile with the least of education I had. So, some of my friends, we are still friends. I mean, we worked together for long time. And one of these girlfriends, that Higa, she's in Līhu'e. She's one of those that worked together for a long time with me, too. She always says that, "You should feel good that you did accomplish something with the least education you had." Of course, there were many times I felt that I wish I had gone to school or could have gone to school if my daddy could have sent us. But being the oldest, I just couldn't. We have two more down, my sister and my brother. So, I guess I have to be satisfied with that. But I never regretted that I did a good job of it. I felt that way.

MK: People still remember you.

MS: Oh, they do. Because this girl that retired--after I retired, there were lot of new girls start coming in. And then, of course, the traffic operator that took my part is different, too. Same job, but two different person. So, they handle differently. So, this girlfriend says that, "You know, the young ones that come in, they always says that, 'Chee, you know, I hear about Mrs. Sugawa, oh, how she used to help these people but--different.'"

(Laughter)

MS: She said, they always used to say that, somehow, they hear from their parents or something that, you know. When I was working, I felt that--the person that took over my part may think that way, but I felt that it was my job and being a supervisor, you're on call twenty-four hours a day. So when there's a storm or a hurricane or something like that and they have trouble, they'll call, you see. So, I always used to go down, no matter what time of the day or what time of the night, I went down to be sure that everything's working out okay.

So, there were many times there were big floods like that. Then the Hurricane Dot [1960] when they had, we couldn't come home. I stayed there. And then, all communications were broken up and I couldn't call my husband either. But the girls were stuck over there, too. And then, came busy. So, we'll go and help each other. I always felt that it was important that when things like that happen, that you stay with them, then they realize we are part of it and not just

supervising them. So, we were rather close. So, even after I retired, I see them, they all say, oh, they start calling when they see you on the roads like that. Then on the retirement parties of the others that I try to attend. And then, when we get together that way, they always talk to each other and have a nice talk.

MK: You mentioned "hurricane," and I was wondering, how did Hurricane Iwa [1982] affect you?

MS: Oh, I was all by myself here. I think it was about two o'clock in the afternoon. I had the radio on. Of course, we heard there was going to be a hurricane, so I had the radio on. And I was watching. And they start telling that, "You people better be prepared with candles or something because the lights going off." And I looked around all over the place, and I just couldn't find one candle. And I thought, "I better go up to the store and get one." When I opened the door, it was just cats and dogs. It was raining and blowing. I said, "Oh, no. I'm not going." So I shut the door, and then I looked in all the drawers, and finally I found one big one that in the restaurants, in the hotels, they use in the cup? Those, yeah. I had one of those, so I thought, "Oh, this should last." So I had it here. I sat here and I looked outside and it was blowing gales. And I thought, "Chee, I better sit here. And just in case the house should come down, then if I lay down between here, then it will protect me."

(Laughter)

MS: Then I waited and waited. I couldn't do anything, so I waited and I waited. And then, came about six o'clock [in the evening], I think, was the worst time. Ho, I just closed my ears and I thought, "My God, I wonder what's going happen now?" And I stayed here. And then, until about, I think it was about eight [o'clock], then everything came quiet. Funny. And I looked out, was beautiful skies with stars. I thought, "Oh, no. Don't tell me we're in the eye of the storm and it's going to come back again." But it didn't after that.

So, next morning, early, I looked at my kitchen. The floors are all flooded with water because I didn't have time to close the window. And I could hear the trees falling down, and the rain just came in, and was all flooded in there. And I had to clean it up.

Then, next morning, early, I went out, I see my neighbor's house, Aoki's house, the roof had all flown away, the living room. And then, the roof flied, was way over on the other side of the bridge and some was on the bushes. But mine, it didn't affect at all, the house. So, my neighbor says---theirs were new house, so it didn't take the beating at all. And they were looking through their bedroom window. Their bedroom is facing our side, and they were looking at my roof and Aoki's roof, and said, "Chee, I think Mrs. Sugawa's roof was going to take off first." They can see the thing flopping. Then all of the sudden, just heard the noise, and Aoki's

one. Mine didn't. So, after that, my son-in-law came and pound the nails in.

Then I was worried about my son folks because they were living in Weliweli, down at the beach. I wanted to go and see if anything should have happened to there because there's no telephone calls at all because it was all torn down. And then, Ann Isonaga came up here, early in the morning. And then, she had gone throughout the cane field road to come out here. So, I asked her right away, "Chee, I wonder if my son folks are all right."

Then, she said, "Yeah, down Weliweli, I think everything's fine." She said, "But you cannot use the main highway because by Kukui'ula Store, the electric pole and the telephone pole, and everything, the wire, is on the road."

And the people were passing through the--they were allowing to come through the cane field road. So I had to wait until later on in the day. I think was late in the afternoon, when my son folks came up from there, and I asked them if their house--their house, the roof went all off. They had those type with the paper and they put pebbles on the roof? That type. So, they said that thing just ripped right off. And the rain came down in torrents inside their house. And the only place they could find where to stay was, he had one den in his room. So the girls, all, and the mother, stayed in that den, and he slept in the bathroom, he said. That's the only place wasn't leaking. All the bedrooms and living room were just clogged with water. Because it just went down. So, after that, we tried to take some food and things down for him, but they had gas stove, so it wasn't too bad. But we couldn't pass that road. So they had the workmen from Arizona, state of Arizona, come down here, I think, to help them fix those.

But then, later on, my sister-in-law living in Kalāheo, my nephews came down with the pickup truck with the garbage cans, the clean ones. They came, said, "Auntie, we want some water." They didn't have water. So, they came.

I tell, "Yeah, help yourself." We had water. I said, "Come and help yourself."

They loaded with the water and they took home. They can't cook and they couldn't use bathrooms. Then, my son-in-law, he lives by Ike's place. He said, "I think I have to take some water from the river."

(Laughter)

MS: And then, when he took one and went home, the water main was working already. And they were lucky because their lights came on right away. We didn't have lights for one week. So, all what we had in the freezer, we had to throw it away, all spoiled. And so, I asked them, "How come you people had?" They said the lights from up here down to the mortuary, the lights were on. So we asked them, "How

come you people had lights there on the highway, and we didn't have?" And people down there didn't have there, either.

Then they told us that they had some body in the morgue. I don't know how true it was, but (laughs) they had to have the lights in there. You know, to preserve the body, I suppose. That's what my son-in-law. . . . So I said, "No kidding? No wonder you were lucky with all the lights on right away." So we went out without lights for one week. And we had to start all over again, buy things, you know, for the freezer. But we threw it all out, that thing. But was scary, though.

The first hurricane, Dot, at that time, too, was bad. But my husband was home alone. And I was working and we just couldn't come back already. I tried to get hold of him. The telephones were all out, so we couldn't. At that time, there were calls coming in from the Mainland because they were worried about their families, but we couldn't connect them because the lines were all out.

And then, my son folks were living in Lāwa'i, see, at that time. So he start to worry about it because they were renting a house that was very old like a plantation home. He start to worry about them, thinking that the house must have flown apart. So he start to go out from here. Then the policeman blocked him by the service station. Said, "No, you cannot go because it's all broken up. So, you better stay home." So, he comes back here, then he goes out this way (chuckles) to go out again. Then they stopped him somewhere else again, so he couldn't go. Finally, he stayed home. And then, later on, they found out their house was all right.

MK: And how was your place? It was okay, that time?

MS: Yeah. Over here was all right. Except we had the big mango tree right here, was broken down, but it didn't hit the house. But Lawa'i was bad at that time, though.

MK: Which hurricane was that?

MS: Dot. Yeah, that was the first one that came. Next was Iwa, so. But at that time, lot of the homes above Lāwa'i, new homes, the roofs just flew right into the Lāwa'i Valley. My sister-in-law folks live in the valley where we used to. They could see the roof flying all over the place. But theirs was all right, though. But I don't think we'd like to experience that again. All those homes by Kukui'ula were washed off towards the cane field way.

MK: I guess we've talked about a lot of things today. I just have couple more questions. I was wondering, why are you called the "Rose Lady of Kōloa"? That's another thing you're famous for.

MS: (Laughs) Well, my husband started rose plants. We had lychee trees and all that where the rose plants are now. It started from a Sunset magazine my son got once. In there had couple of nice roses.

My husband said, "We try and order it and see what happens." He ordered couple of them and he started planting there. Then, somehow, people saw us planting the roses. Some people have the catalogs. They write the names down, I think that's what happened. Then they start sending catalogs of different nurseries in the Mainland, which we didn't even subscribe for.

So, then my husband got interested. He look, "Chee, this flower is nice." The flower for the year. So he started adding it. Then we finally added. We cut the mango tree. We cut the lychee tree off and started to plant all roses. Then, pretty soon, the down portion was filled with rose plants. It's a new area, so, oh, the plants were real tall and all in bloom. So, then, people start passing here and start to ask if they could buy. I tell, "No, we're not selling it. To keep us busy, we're planting the plants." So, we start to cut and give it to them because we weren't in business.

And they say, "Chee, but you know, we cannot come and ask again if you don't sell. So, please try and sell even if it's cheap." So, then, if that's the case, then we start to adding and adding. And then, we start new plants and we start adding. And pretty soon, the whole area was rose plants. And then, people come down and they pass, and "Can you sell?"

So, I thought, we just as well sell. And at least I can pay for the water and the fertilizer and chemical. So, I said, "Okay." I was selling two dollars a dozen. So the people, this Haole people, start to come in and they start to buy. They don't know my name. Even if I told them, they're going to forget.

(Laughter)

MS: So, they said, "We remember you by 'Rose Lady.'" Then they tell their friends. "Where did you get the flowers?"

And they say, "Oh, you go up this road." And so and so. "And there's a Rose Lady there," they tell.

(Laughter)

MS: That's how it came to call "Rose Lady." The boys that come to buy started to name that. I suppose they can't remember the name, so all they remember. And at that time, I guess in Kōloa I was the only one that had rose plants. Plenty of it, I mean. Lot of people had few. So, that's how they remember and tell them where to go. So I had Rotarians or Rosearians or whatever you call them. They have a club at Mainland. They come down with tour and they stay down at Sheraton [hotel]. I guess when they look at all these Hawai'i flowers and they don't see any rose plants, they question them, "Chee, don't they ever plant rose plants," or something.

Then the hotel people tells them, "No, we have a lady that plants roses. So you go up this way."

(Laughter)

MS: Come up here. So I had several of the groups that come. Then they take pictures of it. Then they didn't realize, you know, you could plant roses here. I tell them, well, it's kind of hard, but then it grows. I mean, you know. Then they ask, "Do you have to prune it down?" and all those stories. So, I tell them what I do. Then they said, in Hawai'i, island of Hawai'i, they see a lot of it because it's cool up there. So, that's how started it. Then people come down and visit. Now, lot of people have roses, so they don't, but bus drivers used to bring them, too. Those big buses, yeah? They come down here and pass through here, stops. I wave at them. I'm working the (chuckles) garden.

MK: Oh, so that's how you . . .

MS: Yeah. So, that's why they put in the newspaper, "Rose Lady."

MK: So, I'm going to end the interview here, then, yeah? Okay. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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