

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Josephine Nelson Todd

"I was looking off, thinking of papers that I had in the house, that things were worth something. And I began to grab stuff and run to my sister-in-law's place. . . . Papers and clothes off the hooks, off the hangers. And then I'd wait, because I knew that the water would go out. It would come and it would go out. So I'd wait. When I'd see the water go out, I'd run down to the house again. Grab some more stuff, whatever. Whatever I could grab. . . . Then I would go back, run again. I'd drop the stuff on the porch."

Josephine Nelson Todd was born November 9, 1906 in Pepe'ekeo, Hawai'i. She was the seventh of eleven children born to Hans Peter Nelson, an immigrant from Denmark, and Mary Morgado Nelson, an immigrant from Portugal. Hans Peter Nelson was an employee for Pepe'ekeo Sugar Company.

When Todd was a young girl, the family moved to Hilo. She grew up in the Villa Franca section of Hilo, an area populated predominantly by Portuguese. Portuguese was Todd's first language. Todd remembers her many household chores, such as scrubbing floors with brushes made of coconut husks, and ironing clothes with a charcoal iron. She also remembers playing childhood games, such as *kamapio* and marbles, with the neighborhood children, and celebrating holidays with Portuguese and American foods.

Todd attended St. Joseph's School from kindergarten through the eighth grade, then attended Hilo High School. Following graduation in 1924, she traveled to Honolulu to attend the Territorial Normal and Training School, receiving her teacher's certificate in 1927.

Returning to the Big Island, Todd taught at 'Ōla'a School, Kapi'olani School, and Waiākea Kai School before beginning a 34-year teaching career at newly-built Keaukaha School in 1930. In 1929, she married Oliver Todd, a Hilo native. The couple lived in a bungalow on the oceanfront, near the present-day Hilo Hawaiian Hotel.

On April 1, 1946, the Todds' bungalow was destroyed by the tsunami, but they were able to save many of their belongings by removing these items from the home between waves. The Todds stayed at Josephine's mother's home in Villa Franca.

Eventually, the Todds returned to the oceanfront lot to live. On May 22, 1960, after hearing the warning siren during the day, Josephine Todd went up to stay with her mother in Villa Franca, while Oliver Todd and their son, who was temporarily home from the U.S. Navy at the time, decided to stay in their oceanfront home. The next morning, the tsunami destroyed their home. The Todds managed to escape.

Josephine Todd, left homeless by both the 1946 and 1960 tsunamis, was interviewed in her home on 'Iwalani Street. The area was set aside by the Hawai'i Redevelopment Agency for 1960 tsunami victims to purchase lots at low interest rates.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Josephine Nelson Todd (JT)

Hilo, Hawai'i

April 27, 1999

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, let's begin. This is an interview with Josephine Nelson Todd, on April 27, 1999, and we're at her home in Hilo, Hawai'i, and the interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Mrs. Todd, Josephine . . .

JT: Yes sir.

WN: Can you tell me when and where you were born?

JT: Oh, let me think. . . . Oh, nineteen hundred and six [1906], wasn't it? November 9.

WN: And where were you born?

JT: In Pepe'ekeo, Hawai'i.

WN: What were your parents doing in Pepe'ekeo?

JT: What were they doing? My father [Hans Peter Nelson] was the. . . . What you call it now? What they call the *luna*, the boss, on the fields. And my mother [Mary Morgado Nelson] just raised family. Have one child every year.

WN: How many of there were you, how many children?

JT: There were thirteen.

WN: Thirteen.

JT: Uh huh. But two passed away. Eleven survived. Five brothers and six girls.

WN: And what number were you?

JT: Number seven.

WN: Number seven. What was your father's name?

JT: His name was Hans Peter Nelson.

WN: And where was he from?

JT: He was from Denmark. He went on the ships when he was about fifteen years old. Worked on ships. And I don't remember how old he was, but he was grown-up already when he arrived in Hawai'i and met his first wife, from Honolulu. And he had five children with that wife. And she passed away, and here he was with the five children to look after. He moved to this island and landed on the plantation. And then he met my mother. My mother [Mary Morgado Nelson] was on the plantation, too, with her family. She came from Portugal. And she was pretty young when they were married. She had one child every year and raised eleven of us. Five boys and six girls. And . . .

WN: So this is in addition to the five that your father . . .

JT: Yes, uh huh. She was married and she had these children to look after besides. But one of the boys passed away, and the other four survived. Then as they grew up, they took jobs. In those days, women didn't have to go to school at a certain age, until they were, you know, grown-up. So they worked at the plantation for the bosses, the bosses of the plantation. And so my mother was left with her own after that, to look after, to take care.

But they [JT's half-siblings] always thought of my mother, you know, being that they came without a mother. And in the meantime, she was taking care of having one every year, and as we grew up, we took care of the younger children. So we all stuck together and we were very close. My step-sisters and my step-brother. The other brother had passed away. My step-sisters, two of them lived in Honolulu, and one lived here. She was very close to us. She was the youngest. And so we grew up a good strong family.

WN: What was your mother's name?

JT: Her name was Mary Souza Morgado [Nelson]. And one of her nephews is still living. His name is Ernest Morgado, and he has the—what you call that, now. . . .

WN: The Huli-Huli Chicken [company].

JT: The Huli-Huli Chicken. We talk to each other once in a while, and we're very close. And there's another older brother out on the Mainland, but I don't get to hear from him.

WN: So your mother was Portuguese . . .

JT: Pure Portuguese.

WN: Pure Portuguese. And was she born in Hawai'i, or was she born in Portugal?

JT: She came to Hawai'i when she was twelve years old. She was not able to go to school, because in those days they had a lot of work to do when they lived on the plantation. And she learned what she could from friends and from other people. She was a strong mother, you know.

WN: By "strong," do you mean, what?

JT: We walk a, what you call the. . . Safety path, and the behavior. We were well trained.

WN: Now your mother was Portuguese, your father was Danish. How did that work out in your family in terms of growing up, culturally?

JT: Very well, because we just took everything for granted. Speaking Portuguese, learn Portuguese from our mother. But my father never spoke to us in Danish, although he did a lot of reading in Danish. Books, you know.

WN: Was your first language Portuguese, or English?

JT: Portuguese, and broken English. We had to walk the—what you call that?—rope. Whatever. We were well trained, really. Our punishment was not anytime, it was when we really deserved it. And we accepted it.

WN: What kind of punishment did you have?

JT: Well, if there was a piece of stick nearby, we'd get that. Or the hand. My mother was a strong woman. She had a heavy hand. But we turned out all right.

WN: Was your father strict, too?

JT: Yes, but he left the training for my mother. But his voice was enough.

(Laughter)

WN: Now, you told me that as a child, you folks moved to Hilo.

JT: Yes, we moved to Hilo when I was a baby.

WN: So you don't even remember Pepe'ekeo, yeah?

JT: No, I don't. No.

WN: So you grew up. . . . What part of Hilo did you folks move to?

JT: Villa Franca. Villa Franca, because there were a lot of Portuguese in that spot there, and the Portuguese people used to call it Villa De Criação. The Village of the Roosters. Whether they did a lot of fighting or not, I don't know, but we were all brought up well.

WN: So, what was it like growing up in Villa Franca?

JT: It was very nice. We worked hard, we did our work first, and then we could play. But we had to get all of our work done first.

WN: What kind of work did you have to do?

- JT: Well, we had to get on our knees and scrub the floors. They were not painted, they were hardwood, and our scrubbing brushes were made of coconut. We used that to scrub the floors. Get on our knees, and that's the exercise we had. We had good exercise. We had to iron all of our clothes. And it was charcoal iron. We had to heat the charcoal first, put it in the iron, and use that. That was our ironing.
- WN: Now, you said that Villa Franca had lot of Portuguese living there.
- JT: Yeah, a lot of Portuguese.
- WN: Were there like community kinds of things that everybody would do?
- JT: Well, they didn't have too much of that at that time. They had so much work to do that they had to do that first and keep working, scrubbing the floors, and cleaning their yards, and all that. All by hand. And no time for, what you call this, meetings and things that they have nowadays, you know.
- WN: What did you do as a child to have good fun?
- JT: Well, there was a game that we had that we called *kamapio*, with two sticks. I explained what that was.
- WN: Right, right, right.
- JT: And then. . . . *Kamapio*. And playing with stones. And what was the name now of that game?
- WN: You had stones?
- JT: Yeah. We had two sticks, and then we'd hit one and see how far we can hit that one.
- WN: Oh, this is *kamapio*?
- JT: Yeah.
- WN: Yeah, okay.
- JT: And then marbles, shooting marbles. I used to play marbles with the boys. (Laughs) I guess I was more like a boy than a girl, because you had to hold your own with the boys, you know. Mostly outside playing. And then if we had a ball, we could play ball, but we didn't have very many of those toys at that time. So we played with what we could get.
- WN: What about stores in the area?
- JT: Well, the stores were. . . . We couldn't just go in and buy what we wanted. They had workers to take down the orders. They'd come around to the house, and take the orders of what we wanted, and then they would deliver. They didn't have a lot of stuff where we could go in and buy, you know, and we didn't have the money to buy those things. So they took orders. Sometimes we gave orders by the phone, and they knew our names, and they'd come regular for the orders. But they were not big stores, and things were not. . . . We had flour, but it was

not, what you call, refined? We had our breakfast mush. That was not refined. A lot of that stuff was not refined. But it was good stuff. We had to eat it, you know.

WN: Now, your father came, you know, from the plantation to live in Hilo. Did he change jobs?

JT: Yes, he worked for the county. And in those days, they didn't have paved roads. When it would rain, you'd find puddles, and those puddles had to be filled, and my father had that job. There was a pile of dirt on the side where he would shovel it and go fill the puddles, and then when it would rain, a lot of that would run out, you know. So he had to keep. . . . That was his job. And I remember he had to take down the flag after work, and I went and helped him climb the ladder to pull the flag down. (Laughs) But I liked that job because I liked climbing that ladder. It was all hard work, but we never felt that it was hard. It was work we had to do. So we didn't feel that we were punished for doing all that work. And because my father was getting old at that time, so, you know, it was hard for him to climb the ladder to get the flag down. I was a tomboy, so I climbed the ladder. (Laughs)

WN: What other jobs did people have who lived in Villa Franca?

JT: Well, a lot of those jobs were menial jobs, you know. Maybe they had some bookkeepers and all that, but they were special. It was digging and cutting trees and beginning to make the roads, pave the roads, you know. But it was not anything fancy. Really hard work.

WN: What was your house like, over there?

JT: Well, we had a big house. It was not our house, it was rented. And it had a porch that ran right around the house. So when it rained we could play by running around the house, but we used to get scolding for that too, you know. But it was very comfortable. Rough floors. We had to get on our knees and scrub those floors until they shone, scrubbing the floors and mopping. Not all painted like nowadays. But it was kept clean. And we all had our regular jobs to do. But we didn't complain.

WN: What about things like special occasions, like holidays, celebrations? Did you folks observe that kind of things?

JT: Well, I don't remember any birthday parties. My folks couldn't afford it. And Christmastime, my mother would have all kinds of fruits. She'd buy them ahead of time and store them away. And then before the day came, we all had to have a paper sack. We made sure we saved one, and whoever saved the bigger one got most of the fruit. (Laughs) And then we were lined up all around the table. There was about eleven of us. And my mother would have the prunes first. She passed so many prunes to each one. And then walnuts, almonds, and apples. Each one had an apple, each one had an orange, and we'd hold on to those packages. And we tried to see who could keep her package the longest. Well, one of my sisters below me, she was really tight, you know. She kept her bag and made sure that she was the last to hold that bag with the fruit in it. My bag was empty a long time before. But we enjoyed all of that, and we waited for that fruit because that was the only time of the year we could have it. You know? And they didn't have fruits and apples all year 'round in the stores either. Only holidays. And that's the time we enjoyed it.

WN: What about foods, mealtimes? What kinds of foods did you have?

- JT: We never ran short of food. My mother always made sure that we had, first for dinner, we'd have soup. We had to eat our soup, and then we had our rice on the side, or our potatoes, and our stew. And not too many sweets. Bread and jelly, or bread and butter. But we never left the table [hungry], you know. My mother was a good cook, and then she got us started cooking, and we all took care of each other.
- WN: For example, what kind of soup and what kind of stew?
- JT: Well, we used to have bean soup, pea soup. . . . I can't think of any others. A lot of beans and a lot of peas.
- WN: Was there meat inside?
- JT: Meat, yeah. Soup bone. Sometimes chicken. We raised our own chickens in our backyard. And I want to tell something but I don't know if I should say what my job was. I don't know, did I tell you?
- WN: No. But you can tell me, and if you don't want it in later you can take it out.
- JT: Well. . . .
- WN: But I'd like to hear it.
- JT: We raised the chickens in the backyard, but my mother had a coop she kept them in at night. During the day they would run out in the yard and scratch around. But she wanted to know how many eggs she was going to have for the day. So my job was to go into the coop before we let them out and feel every chicken that was going to have—hopefully—eggs, and counted it. You know how I used to feel for the eggs?
- WN: No. . . . Just. . . .
- JT: Insert the finger.
- WN: Yeah, okay.
- JT: And you could tell what chicken was going to have an egg.
- WN: I see.
- JT: And so I would count them, and then let my mother would know, well, we're going to have eight [eggs]. And she'd let the others who were not going to have eggs out until the chickens laid their eggs. I guess that's the way they did it in Portugal, I don't know. (Chuckles)
- WN: I never heard of that.
- JT: That was my job. That's how she knew how many eggs she was going to have that day. But she wouldn't let them all out—they'd go make their nests in the bushes and all that, and never can tell.

- WN: Gee, I always thought it was all by chance.
- JT: No. Well, the coop was not very big, and so she had boxes made out for nests, and the chickens knew that those nests were for the eggs and that what they'd use. They were well trained, too.
- WN: So the chickens were only for eggs. Did you raise them for food, too?
- JT: Oh, food, too, uh huh. Those were the old chickens that was used for food.
- WN: Being a Portuguese community—Villa Franca—were there Portuguese-type traditions that were followed?
- JT: Oh, yes, during Christmastime, and they kept what the Catholics call the Holy Days. And during the Lent you couldn't eat meat and Christmastime we'd make sweet bread and only the special foods for Christmas. Like chicken, and walnuts, and fruit. That's the only time we had our apples and oranges.
- WN: Did you have the Holy Ghost?
- JT: Yes. The Holy Ghost---but that was done mostly in the country. Celebrate the Holy Ghost there. Not so much the city people, because they didn't have the things that they used at Holy Ghost time. But if you were in the country, the churches had all of those things, and people would celebrate the Holy Ghost, feast, in the country.
- WN: And did you folks have a church nearby?
- JT: Yeah. We had to go to church. We went to church every Sunday, and my mother took us to church. We all sat alongside of her, and we couldn't talk or whisper or anything. We just had to listen to the elderly and pray what we knew. But we had to be well behaved in church, otherwise we'd get punished after that.
- WN: And were you always well behaved? Were you always well behaved in church?
- JT: Oh, I had to be! My mother kept me right alongside her. Because if she saw that I was fooling around, she'd turn around and give me a pinch. So I had to stay straight. But I enjoyed going to church. I didn't mind it. And in those days, the mass was said in. . . . What's that. . . . Was not in English, it was in Latin. And we learned all the songs. They don't sing those songs nowadays. It's new songs that they have. But they were really good songs.
- WN: Now, what was the name of the church?
- JT: Mmm . . .
- WN: Not St. Joseph's?
- JT: St. Joseph's. Yep. And I remember the church where. . . . It was right in town, where that road near. . . . Where the police station is, the road down below?

WN: Kino'ole?

JT: No, no, it's not Kino'ole. Kīlauea, I think, it is. And it was a big church, with big steps, long curved steps. I remember it so well because there were so many steps we had to climb to get into church. It took the whole block from that corner going up to the police station, around to the other corner, going up to. . . . What's that main street?

WN: Oh. Waiānuenuē?

JT: I think it's Waiānuenuē.

WN: Okay.

JT: That was the first church I can remember. In fact, the other day, they happened to be saying something about that church?

WN: Oh, yeah, I don't know.

JT: Yeah, but a lot of people don't remember. 'Cause I was a shrimp, I was a young girl, little girl.

WN: What was school like for you?

JT: Very good. It was only girls, girls' school.

WN: Oh, what school was this?

JT: That was in the St. Joseph's. And did I tell you I saw Queen. . . . Who's our last queen?

WN: Lili'uokalani?

JT: Lili'uokalani. She just happened to be staying with some people up on that hill, where that church is, where that school is now. . . . By the cemetery. Kapi'olani? And our school was, where that hotel is, like, like a hotel? No, it's. . .

WN: Hilo Lagoon?

JT: No, on Kapi'olani. (Pause) It's made of rooms.

WN: I don't know.

JT: It's common, it's right there on Kapi'olani. But these people lived—friends of the queen—lived. . . . They had a whole piece of property there. And they were supposed to be very well reserved Hawaiians. Because they didn't mingle with too many people. Very reserved. And the queen stayed there. And our school [St. Joseph's School] was right down below, see? So, this one day, we were told that the queen was coming to visit us. So we put on our best, and we came in lines, and she sat on the porch, on the chair. And we went and we stood before her, we nodded, we smiled. I don't know what she asked, but she asked us different questions. And she was so beautiful and very well reserved. And we didn't realize

how important it was to us at that time, but then when I look back I think I was pretty lucky, because I was able to stand right in front of her. Forget what she asked me, but it was something I could answer.

WN: Do you remember what her voice sounded like?

JT: Soft, very soft. And she looked right at you and smiled and we were proud of that.

WN: Can you picture her face in your mind?

JT: Oh yeah, I still can see her. And we just took it for granted that she was the queen. We didn't realize how important it was.

WN: Do you remember what she was wearing?

JT: She was wearing a *mu'umu'u*. And she was heavysset, and very soft voice and sweet face. But I still remember her well. And I think I was about eight years old at that time.

WN: Well, if you're eight, then, this is about 1914 . . .

JT: About that, yeah.

WN: And I think she passed away not too long after that [1917].

JT: Yes, yes. Yes. She was elderly already. But very sweet, very soft-spoken. And spoke slowly. Soft.

WN: What an experience! I'm glad you told me that story.

JT: Never realized how lucky we were at that time. We just took it for granted, like, she was like anybody else. And she was staying with these people. . . . Now what was their name? It'll come to me, I forgot. They were very well—real reserved people, too. It's a Hawaiian family, and they didn't mingle too much with the others at that time. But she wanted to see the children. She loved children. She would like to see what we looked like. And we were well behaved at that time. (Chuckles)

WN: Now, the children attending St. Joseph's School, were they mostly Portuguese?

JT: Yes, and Hawaiians.

WN: Hawaiians too?

JT: Yes. Later on, there were more, other nationalities, and I remember I had—and in those days, they had double desks, where two people could sit at one desk. And my mate was Chinese, pure Chinese. And she was related to the Ah Pings from Pu'u'eo. Her maiden---family name was Ing. I'll tell you the story. Well, the father had a big grocery, and he had a store where the Palace Theater is. And he moved to where [S.H.] Kress [Co.] is. He had a cracker factory. Anyway, he decided to take all of his children to China. And she went along with him, with the father, all of them had. And they established themselves in China. During the war with

Japan, she came—she was a grown-up woman already, because when she went to China, she went on to school and she became a principal of three girls' academy. School academy.

WN: Is that the name of the school?

JT: Eh?

WN: The name of the school was "three girls academy?"

JT: No, that was not the name. But she was the principal of those three academies.

WN: Oh, three girls' academies. I'm sorry.

JT: And those girls were---that school was like. . . . I don't know what you would call it now. But they had to learn to cook, to sew, that type of school. And when the war started, she came on a trip. She was pregnant. She had been married, and she wanted her child to be born here in America, and to be an American. So she came to Hawai'i here. And she looked me up, because we were very good friends. She knew she was going to have a child in about two weeks, and she wanted to leave that child with an elderly woman. So she looked me up, and she wanted to know if I would help her to find the woman. And I said yes, I think I know who to call to find out. And because I know this woman's niece, and this woman raised this niece, and she was a friend of mine, too. Before I got to see them, I had gone home after that, and at dinnertime, we all sat around the table, big wide table, and I told my story: that I met this friend of mine who went to school with me and she was going to have a baby. Dr. Roll was the doctor, and she was going to have the baby in less than two weeks. Then right after that she had to go right back to China. And she was looking for someone to look after the child. And my mother said, "Oh, we take care of him." So it was settled. And so, after she had the child—she was in the hospital for two weeks. In those days, a woman who was pregnant, going to have a child, would stay in the hospital for two weeks. Anyway, she was there for two weeks, and we took him when he was two weeks old. And my oldest sister had become a nun. And this was World War I. . . . What was that, that First World War?

WN: Yeah, World War I.

JT: I think so. [JT and WN later realize it was World War II.] My oldest brother was. . . . What they call that when they. . . .

WN: Drafted?

JT: Yeah. He joined the [U.S.] Army, became a soldier there, and my sister left home the same time to be a nun. So when we took this child, she [sister] was a nun already, and she visited us and she looked at him and all that. And we had just fed him. Someone had mentioned this food that we could give him, see, a certain kind of milk. Well, he couldn't take it, it was too strong. So my sister was there and she watched, and she said, "This milk is too strong for this child." So she mentioned the milk that he should take, and it settled him. And we raised him.

When he was about eight years old, after the war of China and Japan was over, she wrote to me, and she said that now she's going to work and make money to come back and get her child. So when I told my mother that, my mother said, "Nothing doing, now, we're going to

adopt him." Because we raised him to be a boy, already. And I went to court with my mother and father and the judge just asked questions and all that and signed him over to us. We adopted him there.

He turned out to be a very good brother, and he was the head of the. . . . Forget now what the name is. . . . Company from the island here. The health department. And he was the head here. He just retired. His name is Clement Nelson. He's a very good friend of mine and he's close to us.

WN: But pure Chinese?

JT: Pure Chinese.

WN: With the name Clement Nelson?

JT: Yes, yes.

(Laughter)

JT: He took our name, you see? And he's married, his wife is Japanese. They have two wonderful children. And we are very close.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JT: They had lived in one of the islands close to China. Ma. . . .

WN: Oh, Macau?

JT: Macau, yes. And they [Clement's uncle's family] moved to New York. They had a big grocery. . . . not a grocery, chop suey house where they'd make chop suey—and people would buy. And so he learned about his sister's son. She must have told him. Because the sister visited them. She had to get back to China, she visited them just for a short time. And to get to China, she either had to go by boat or by plane. So she had to go by plane. Well, that plane was knocked down, and so she died at that time.

Well, anyway, her brother and his son-in-law decided to come and look up his sister's son. So he looked us up, and got to know all of us, and visited with him. And then later on, some years later, they came again. He came with the younger people in the family, and they all got to know each other. In fact, Clement and his wife had visited them in New York several times. They were well treated. And the older ones—already, the uncle has passed away—but they still keep in touch. And that was the family that the mother had left.

WN: Just to get the dates. . . . It's probably World War II, right, when Japan was at war with China. Because you were pretty much an adult by then, by the time you folks took in Clement.

JT: Yes. I was going to school, I was getting ready to graduate. In fact, it was, I think I'd started

teaching.

WN: Okay, well, you went to St. Joseph's. You also went to Kapi'olani School for a little while?

JT: No. I went to St. Joseph's. It was St. Joseph's. They had eight grades. And the thing is, the graduates of the Catholic school were not recognized as students from the public schools. So when we were to graduate from the eighth grade, we had to walk to Hilo Union [School] and take the exams there so that we could graduate. You see, they didn't recognize the Catholic schools at that time. So from there, we went to high school, was started from the ninth grade until the twelfth grade.

WN: So you went from St. Joseph's to Hilo?

JT: Yeah, Hilo High [School]. And I graduated in 1924.

WN: What were your favorite subjects at Hilo High?

JT: Oh, I don't remember. I had some very good instructors. Oh, I had Spanish, and that I know. The instructor was a man, and he happened later on in years to be, he had a book that we used in Spanish, that he was the writer for that. Forget now what his name was, though. But he was a good instructor, that I remember. And then we had our math, and we had our. . . . (of) course, we had our Spanish, math, I can't think. . . .

WN: English?

JT: English, yes. And then the year before I graduated, the principal had called us and asked who wanted to go to [Territorial] Normal [and Training] School for the graduation of a four-year college. And it was my last year in high school [1924], but I had one credit left to take to graduate. So, we could leave school--I mean, if we wanted to go and continue with our normal school, we could take that other high school credit there, because this normal school was connected with a high school, and so we would take our credit there. And so I did that. My brother helped me. And that year I took courses for normal school, and that course, that last subject that I [needed] to graduate high school. So I stayed an extra year at normal school and made three years normal school. I completed my teachers' college subjects, and then I took subjects for cooking. And so I graduated there [1927]. My last year graduation, I came up to graduate, because I had taken that last year. So I made graduation from my high school, and I completed one year of normal, and then I stayed two more years and completed normal school.

WN: So you stayed at normal school for three years?

JT: It was not easy, but it was worth it. When I think of the teachers now, I don't think they had the teaching [training] that we had. We had old instructors, and they were good. But you had to be on the ball.

WN: So this was elementary education?

JT: Elementary. And the last six months I had. . . . What you call that, for cooking?

WN: Home economics?

JT: Yeah. And then we had practice-teaching in Honolulu. Six weeks here, six weeks there. I had six weeks at the normal school there, then I had six weeks in Waimānalo. And then I had six weeks in . . . Kalihi. I forget now what the name of the school. Fern School. How I can remember, I don't know.

WN: Very good.

JT: Fern School. And then my first year of teaching, after I got home, was at 'Ōla'a. It was 'Ōla'a at that time, not, what is it now?

WN: Kea'au?

JT: Kea'au, yeah.

WN: 'Ōla'a School.

JT: Uh huh [yes]. And Mrs. Duncan was the principal. Very good. Of course, she knew my oldest brother very well, and she liked him, and so she took a liking to me. And so she would walk into my room, and she said, "Would you like me to take your class, in reading?"

I said, "Oh, please do."

So I'd sit back, and I'd listen to her, and I'd learn more out of her. I only had one year there, because at that time, when you started teaching, you had to spend one year in the country. And it was not easy to get to the country. But luckily, we had a man teacher, and he was from Hakalau. And he had bought a Ford. You know that kind of Ford that . . .

WN: Model T?

JT: Yeah, where you start with your feet down, not with your hands. And so when he picked me up, he taught me to drive. My brother had bought a new car too, and so I could learn to drive both cars. That's how I learned to drive. And he'd pick me up, take me to school . . .

WN: Where were you living? Still Villa Franca?

JT: Villa Franca. Yeah, we lived there---that's where I ended up, in Villa Franca. Lived there for years.

WN: So you still lived in your parents' house? When you started teaching? Villa Franca?

JT: Yeah, I still lived with my family. And I passed my paycheck, all to them, and she'd give me a couple dollars. But that was the way it was done. We accepted it. And then. . . . Where did I leave off now?

WN: Oh, I'm sorry, you were commuting. . . . Picking you up at Villa Franca, and then you guys went to 'Ōla'a.

JT: Yes, one year. Yes.

WN: That's a long way.

JT: Yeah. Was it eight miles or was it longer? It's shorter now. Because the streets were not like they are now. And then I moved into Kapi'olani [School], Mrs. Beers. I was there one or two years, I think. And then from there I moved to Waiākea Kai [School]. I was there one year. I got to Waiākea Kai because we were going to be married, and we wanted to live near the hotel.

WN: Hilo Hawaiian Hotel?

JT: Yeah. It wasn't Hilo Hawaiian at that time, it was homes under lease, twenty-one years' lease, from the state [i.e., territory of Hawai'i]. I spent one year there, and then when I was going into the next year, Keaukaha [School] was built, and they needed teachers, and being that I was the last teacher at Waiākea Kai, they moved me to Keaukaha, in 1930. The first principal was a teacher, who was teaching at Pu'umaile Home. Pu'umaile Home was [for] consumption [i.e. tuberculosis] patients. And then after the two years, we had a new principal. I was just a teacher there. Mrs. Kong was my principal. And we had to go from house to house, and check if there were any children of age. Because those Hawaiians were new [to the area], and they were there just one year, and they didn't know that children were to enter school when they were six years old. So Mrs. Kong and I went from house to house, and found out about the children's ages and all that, and so that's how we built up the classes.

And so we had four grades at the beginning, and I had first, second, and third, and Mrs. Kong had fourth, being that she was the principal. Waiākea Kai [School] had a lot of children from Keaukaha, so when it came the new year in September, they moved to Keaukaha [School], the grades were built up. Then we got the six grades built, and we kept the six grades. The next thing was that the children had to bring lunches to school, but they didn't have much food to make their lunches with. Just maybe *poi*, and they used to make their own thing that looked like *poi*. Flour, and sugar, and water, and they would call that *palaoa moku*. Something about flour, but I don't know what the *moku* meant. But anyway, they'd bring their lunches to school. By lunchtime, those lunches fermented, but still they had to eat something. And Mrs. Kong felt sorry for them. So she said, "We've got to do something for these children." We didn't have a cafeteria. So she said, "I'll talk to Mrs. Giacometti," who was the supervising principal—supervisor, teachers' supervisor. And Mrs. Giacometti got us a pot, army pot, and a one-burner oil stove. Nobody knew what a one-burner oil stove was. I mean, people now don't know what it was, but it was used with kerosene. And so she asked if I would help. And I said, "Sure, I'll cook something." And then my husband [Oliver Todd] used to go hunting, so we used to have sheep. And I used to clean up the meat and have that as soon as I get to school, I just start the soup. I had all the work for the children on the board the day before I'd go home. And so I'd explain to them. So they would be busy doing their work, and quiet, and learning something. And so I'd go out—the stove was right out the door, off the room that I had. It was a big room because I had three grades. And then I'd go and put in the food that was going to be used, and stir it up and check. Every now and then I'd check so that it would be done. And so the children had stew.

WN: This was what, like lamb stew?

JT: Well, the young sheep you would call it lamb, eh. And when we didn't have mutton, I would go to the meat market, and get meat, enough. I mean, not old stuff, but was good food, you know. And they would give it to me cheaper, because I was using it for the children. They ate that stew and licked every drop that fell in their plate and all that, they were so hungry. And they enjoyed it. And I remember this boy, one day, he was eating something—a bean, or something in the food, and he said, "Mrs. Todd, what's this? Grass?" I said no, it's not grass. I gave him the name of the vegetable. We had learned [about] food, too. And so I think we had that going for a year, I'm not too sure. Then Mrs. Giacometti found out that they needed a cafeteria, and so they started a cafeteria. And one of my sisters was a cafeteria manager, so she took that, then she was moved to intermediate after.

WN: Did you have rice, too? You had rice and stew?

JT: Well, rice or potato. Something. Yeah.

WN: What did they drink when you folks were cooking?

JT: Well, I'm not too sure if they had milk delivered. But right in the beginning, they had water to drink. They used to have a delivery car to deliver the milk, not an automobile, that horse wagon. And so then Mrs. Kong saw how they were enjoying it, and they were all eating. She thought, well, let's charge them a penny, so that they'll feel that they're giving, they're paying for it. So we told the children they could bring one cent, and every child would bring his penny. But you see, Mrs. Kong thought of something that was going to build up. Then they started paying for their lunches and they didn't feel that they were pushed around. So then when the school had the cafeteria, the cafeteria would pay for the food. And the parents liked that. They were so happy that the children were eating something they never had before. Most of their food was raw, like fish and all that. They didn't do much cooking in the beginning, because the place was built where each home had—if they want to cook something, they had to cook outside. So that's how it started out.

WN: So, a lot of it came out of your own pocket.

JT: Oh, yes, yes. We had to put in. I didn't mind. And it was just Mrs. Kong and I at the time. And then when that cafeteria began to get started then they would add another teacher and we ended up with each teacher had a grade. But that took years. But I didn't mind it. The children were really loving and the parents were so happy and felt, you know, that we were doing good for them too. Because they were poor. One-room shack. Outside lavatory. Outside drinking water. Outside cooking, if they had to, but they didn't spend much time cooking outside. And they were happy-go-lucky people. In fact, one of my students, her mother---they started in a one-room house, you know. She still keeping close to me. In fact, she's writing another story about school, she's . . .

WN: Oh, this is Eleanor Ahuna.

JT: Yeah. Have you seen her lately?

WN: I haven't seen her, no.

JT: Well. Yes, she has something wrong with her leg. She has to use a walker too. But she's still

- writing up. And smart girl. I had her in the second grade. Yeah. I've forgotten.
- WN: That's a great story. Shows a lot of compassion.
- JT: Yeah, but the thing is, my voice is not so sweet.
- WN: Don't worry about that. Okay, so, you got married in 1929 and you were living near your niece's home, on the oceanfront, near where Hilo Hawaiian Hotel is today. What was that area like? Like who else was living there?
- JT: Oh, there were homes all along the shore. But [only] people that could afford it.
- WN: Oh, was it a higher-income . . .
- JT: Yeah. And I know most of them. Twenty-one dollars at that time was a lot of money, (which was the) lease, yearly lease. And then the little house that we lived in was a little bungalow. My brother-in-law, Tom Cunningham, he took the big house, and he was married to my husband's sister. So he built that house for us, under the lease.
- WN: So your husband was pretty . . .
- JT: Handy. He worked for the county.
- WN: Your husband?
- JT: Yeah. And---what was that, during the war they had the . . .
- WN: The USED? Engineers? U.S. Engineer Department?
- JT: Yes, he was with them there. And then when the war was over, they were settled along the beach where the hotels. . . . Before you get to that other road, where the. . . . Oh, I cannot think.
- WN: Banyan Drive?
- JT: Yeah. Banyan Drive. That USED was settled there. And then after the war---they were there for a few years, then they closed it up---and so he started with the county as a plumber.
- WN: How did you meet your husband?
- JT: Well, his family lived in Hilo, but he was away from home for years, because his folks sent him to Honolulu to stay with an older sister, because he was a rascal. He was a good swimmer. And he stayed with his sister, and continued with school, and he loved to swim. So he used to hang around in Waikīkī, where he met. . . . What's that big Hawaiian guy?
- WN: Duke Kahanamoku?
- JT: Duke was a good friend of his. And then when he grew enough to work on the ship---he worked on one of those. . . . What you call those ships, carried food and all that?

WN: Freighter. Barge and . . .

JT: Yeah. Freighter. And he worked on that and he travelled. He went to China, he went all over. Then his father passed away. And his mother was left alone, because he was the youngest son. So he came on home. And the rowing club was next to where we lived. They had the rowing boats in there, and they formed rowing clubs. They didn't call them boats, the rowing. . . .

WN: Canoe?

JT: Yeah. Well, it wasn't really a canoe. [JT is referring to a sampan.] But anyway, used for them to row with. And so my two older brothers had joined the crew, had joined the oarsmen, and my husband had joined them too, and he got to know them. And that's how I got to know him. But when I saw this good-looking Hawaiian boy, I said, "That's for me!" (Laughs) And so, later on, we were married.

And we were married, lived there until the tidal wave found it. But I was going to school all the time, raising chickens in my backyard, and ducks, and all that.

(Visitor arrives. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so now, you got married in '29, and you folks were living where [the] Hilo Hawaiian Hotel area [is today]. Your brother-in-law, Tom Cunningham, what was he doing, what kind of work was he doing?

JT: He had a transportation business, and his wife was a senator.

WN: Oh, yeah. What was her name?

JT: Sara Cunningham. Smart woman.

WN: So they were pretty well-off, then?

JT: Oh, they were, oh yes. And he has a transportation business. It was a big business, and he had a hotel too. He has a son here, who's a golfer, William. And another son on the Mainland. He had a couple daughters but they passed away. But he was very good to us. Built this bungalow for us. And so, the day of the---do you want to go to the day of the tidal wave?

WN: But before we go to the tidal wave, can you just tell me where the bungalow was, in comparison to the Cunningham house?

JT: The Cunningham house was close to the road.

WN: To the

JT: The front road of that . . .

WN: Banyan Drive?

JT: Yeah. But those little stores along that hotel [today]. And we were supposed to have been in

the back, because it was the back of that house, going close to the water.

WN: Closer to the ocean.

JT: Yeah. And the rowing club was on the left side of us, on the lower ground, and our house was up above. So we had to have few steps to come from the garage. We had our garage at down at the bottom, and then to come up on the walk.

WN: And how far was the cottage to the ocean? About?

JT: Not too far. Let's see, like from here to this side. Like from here to that house that's right straight. . . .

WN: So, about what? Thirty yards?

JT: I don't know. How many yards would that be?

WN: I'll go try look. This house down here, across the street?

JT: Yeah, straighter. Straight across.

WN: That's a good fifty yards, maybe. That's where your house was to the ocean.

JT: And then we had a little pool. When the tide would come up, that pool would fill with water. But it didn't bother us at all. And so my husband had built a little bridge from where the house was and then to go to the water. It was deep right where it was in front of our place. And so he built a place to put his boat. He had a boat, and he would grind the boat to keep it out of the water. And he built it. And so, that all went, anyway.

WN: And so the day of the tidal wave. . . .

JT: You want the day of the tidal wave?

WN: What were you doing?

JT: I was getting ready for school. It was on a. . . .

WN: A Monday, I think.

JT: Yeah, I think it was a Monday.

WN: You were getting ready---you were still teaching Keaukaha School?

JT: Yes, yes. My husband had heard about it when he was down USED. They noticed the water rising. So he came home to check his boat. He had just built it over. Sampan. And he had it moored right in front of the. . . . What you call that building? The rowing club. Because they had anchors, and so he would anchor his boat in front of that. My two children were playing, and I saw my husband looking out. He had come home. He had gone down to work, see, and then I noticed he had come back. And he was looking out the ocean. I wondered what he was

looking for, so I went out to look. I looked over the railing. And I saw the water kind of moving outward, not fast. And so I told the kids, "Hey kids, come and see the tidal wave!" Well, when we were children, and we heard that there was going to be a tidal wave, we would run down to the water, you know where the Keaukaha Canoe Clubs are, there? We'd run down there, and the water would go out and come [in]. And when I saw that, I told the kids, "Hey kids, come and look at the tidal wave!"

WN: This is what, kids. . . . You were at home, right. So this was. . . .

JT: Yeah, my two children.

WN Your two children?

JT: They were going to get ready to go to school. It was about seven o'clock. So, my husband said, "You'd better get the kids out of here. There's going to be a tidal wave." So I rushed then said, "Myron, Sonny, come, get ready for school." And my sister-in-law's daughter lived in their house. It was a two-story house. She and her husband were getting ready to get her kids—she had two, I think, one or two. And I knew she was getting ready to go up to where the mother and father were living. They had moved up there. And she was going to take her things. I asked her if she would take my two children up. So they got together and they moved up. So I was free to do what I wanted. Well, I had a backyard full of ducks and chickens and pigeons and everything, but I didn't bother about them. Then we had one pig in a little coop, a little pigpen. So my son, that was his pet, but before he moved up there, he went and he let the pig loose. So the pig was used to running around. And I was looking off, thinking of papers that I had in the house, that things were worth something. And I began to grab stuff and run to my sister-in-law's place.

WN: How far away was that?

JT: About. . . . From here to that front yard.

WN: So maybe about thirty yards?

JT: I think so. The front yard where the mailbox is. And I'd run and drop stuff there on the porch, and I would. . . .

(Visitor arrives. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Anyway. So you grabbed some papers and you ran to your sister-in-law's house.

JT: Papers and clothes off the hooks, off the hangers. And then I'd wait, because I knew that the water would go out. It would come and it would go out. So I'd wait. When I'd see the water go out, I'd run down to the house again. Grab some more stuff, whatever. Whatever I could grab. And my husband was looking for his boat. His boat had been---not right in the beginning, but about a couple more waves, pulled out to the breakwater. And he was looking for that. In fact, he had told me, "Get me my shorts." He was going to change and go get his boat, you know.

I told him, "You're crazy! You can't get. . . ."

"Get me my shorts." So he put on his shorts anyway. Then I would go back, run again. I'd drop the stuff on the porch.

WN: So, you said you would wait for the wave to recede?

JT: Yes.

WN: But when the wave came, was it already flooding your house?

JT: No, no, no, not yet. It was coming slowly.

WN: You knew there were going to be more than one wave?

JT: Yeah, because those waves, when they came, on Coconut Island, I could swear they were as high as those trees, coconut trees. Covered. There was a man working Coconut Island, a lifeguard. Not a lifeguard, night watchman. And he got scared, so he couldn't come across, because the water had carried the boat that they used to use to go across [i.e., back and forth between the beach front and Coconut Island]. So he'd climb in the coconut trees. Never climbed the coconut trees in his life. But he climbed this coconut tree. And when the water went out, he came down those trees so fast, and he ran across [from Coconut Island], along the bottom of the ocean. Ran across, because one of his sisters lived on the opposite street. So he got saved.

I couldn't count, I didn't think of counting how many waves, but I think there were about six. And on the side of where my sister-in-law lived, was a big park, and there was a road between that park and the other side of the road, where people lived. There was a Hawaiian family, with some kids. They went in the park, and picked the fish that had been thrown in the park. But eventually they had to move, because the water got on that side. And then I'd come back and get some more stuff. But I'd wait. I'd see that water recede, and I could tell that the next wave was going to be higher, because it would go up more. And now all that strength in those waves. You could [JT makes sound] hear that sound, you know. And so . . .

WN: Now, just a minute now, let me. . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 29-43-1-99; SIDE ONE

WN: Okay.

JT: And so it hadn't reached the house yet, because my house was up high, on like a hill, see, from the other side of the. . . . Where that little pond, I told you it was a pond? But as the water came, the pond began to fill with water. I could tell it was going to be stronger. Anyway, I kept on. My [car] was in the garage. The garage was in a lower part where I said there was a few steps to get up. Anyway, it got so that my husband said, "You'd better get out of here. Take the car and get out of here. It's going to be more." So, I don't know how many times I went and got stuff. I got quite a bit of stuff. And then I stood in the back of the

house—before I got into my car—and I could see the roof of my house turn. And I knew that the water had got to my house.

WN: Sort of rotate. Just the roof?

JT: Well, the whole house was going.

WN: But you told me that the roof turned.

JT: But you see with the roof turning, it was taking the house [i.e., the entire house was moving by the force of the wave, but JT could only see the roof].

WN: Now, when you were in your car, was the place flooded?

JT: Oh, yeah. It was up to the bumper. So I got out of there fast. And the people on that side had moved already, a lot of them had moved. And my husband had his car, too. He took the car and he went out too. So naturally we were going up the street because my mother lived up at Villa Franca. I don't know if you know where that is. And it's quite a distance. So I drove that way and my husband took his car and went that way. Then we met up there. And some of the people were caught in the waves. You see, when the wave came, and the one that. . . . Where the other road, there was that river, where they put the boats.

WN: Wailoa River.

JT: Well, near that dining. . . . It was a cafeteria. Not a cafeteria. It's a restaurant. The one.

WN: The one---near. . . . Past Reeds Bay?

JT: Yeah.

WN: Is that Harrington's? You mean the. . . .

JT: Yeah, yeah.

WN: By Ice Pond?

JT: Yeah. Well, the water was going down that way too, and it was taking those homes, because there were homes there, settled. And then our place was all flooded. You couldn't go down at all. Everything was taken. Even the boathouse and the canoe clubs, everything went. My chickens and my ducks were floating all over the place. It was a mess.

WN: So by the time you were able to drive away, when you were driving away, your house was still there, or was it gone?

JT: No, it was gone.

WN: You actually saw your house go. . . .

JT: Yeah. Yeah. When I saw the house going, I knew I had to get out. First you could see the roof

turning. And that pond that was there was filled up. I used to salt duck eggs in big gallon cans. And there was one can, one jar, intact, with the eggs in it, all salted, but we had to throw it away. Strange how those things happen.

WN: Now, the Cunningham's house. . . . Did that go too?

JT: No, it didn't.

WN: So all your belongings that you were able to save from the house was okay. . . .

JT: Yeah. Because it was a big house, and high, see, so the water got under the house but there was not enough strength to pull. The strength was down below. And oh, this---I watched when I was standing in the back. The coconut trees, I could swear that the waves were as high as those coconut trees. That high. And strong. And it would carry [JT makes noise] way out.

WN: How far out would you say the water receded? I mean, could you see the whole bottom?

JT: Yes, almost to the breakwater. It took the breakwater and all, you know. And on to the other side. Hit all the houses on the side.

WN: Now, when were you able to go back to see all the damage?

JT: Days. I didn't go---we couldn't go. We were afraid to go.

WN: So you stayed with your mother.

JT: Yep. But you see, my husband's mother had a home on Ululani Street. Their family home. But it had been rented to a friend of ours. But they had planned to move. They had another place that they were going to move to before the tidal wave. So that house was empty. So my husband went up, and after that thing was over, and fixed it over, painted it, and all that, and so we had a place to live. And then finally we sold it.

I couldn't sleep for days. So we stayed with my mother. My mother had a big house. And Roberta's mother was staying there at that time.

WN: Your sister.

JT: Yep.

WN: Now, what about Keaukaha School, how was that?

JT: Wasn't touched. But the homes on the Kanako---?

WN: Kalaniana'ole?

JT: Kalaniana'ole. They were taken. That's where those two sisters that had the hula business. Kanaka(ole). . . .

WN: Oh, Edith?

- JT: Edith. Those two girls [Pua and Nalani, Edith's daughters] were my students. But their place was all washed. Those people had to run to the back roads, into the forest. And then my brother lived way down on Keaukaha. But luckily his house was up on the place there, hill, like. So the water just came to the steps. But that was a mess. Yeah. My friends had children who lived way down there, where the Keaukaha people had places out on those big trees, where they were raising fish there. The open roads, you know. Where there's river on the right side and the ocean on the left. And they're raising mullets.
- WN: Oh, now?
- JT: Yeah. You know where that is?
- WN: No, I don't. But past the Suisan, towards the ocean?
- JT: Oh, yeah, way down. Way down, where the other homes were, on the other side, on both sides of the road. The homes were there. Those fish ponds were wiped. But they started again. Friend of mine, family, owned that one. Nakagawa.
- WN: Oh, yeah, yeah. Seaside.
- JT: Yeah, Seaside. And there were homes on that side, on the lava. They were all wiped out.
- WN: So, would you say most of the homes near your bungalow was wiped out?
- JT: Oh yes. Yes. There were homes from where we lived to the hotel. And some of them, maybe a couple of them stayed, but they were affected by the tidal wave.
- WN: Okay, so after the tsunami, the tidal wave of '46, eventually, where did you live after that? Did you go back to the same place to live?
- JT: No, the state allotted these lots . . .
- WN: Oh, no, that's after '60, right? 1960?
- JT: Oh yeah.
- WN: What about after '46?
- JT: We stayed at the family one. And . . .
- WN: In Cunningham's house?
- JT: We stayed in Cunningham's house, yes. And then, after that, then the county had another home. You see, we lived like over here, and to the left, there was a home there that county had for the workingman. Not men, but family live there. But they moved out. And when. . . What was the second tidal wave, now?
- WN: Nineteen sixty.

JT: The water kept going that way down. And this was at night. But there was a warning during the day, three o'clock in the afternoon, on Sunday afternoon. And happened that I was ironing clothes and I was looking out the window, and the warning kept going, and it didn't look like it was affecting the water. And so, Clement came and said, "You folks want to move out?"

I said, "No, that's hardly anything."

Well, getting towards the night, my husband had said, "You better get out of here." And my son had just gotten home from the navy. He took some of his things and he put it in my husband's car. He had a Dodge. But anyway, it was enough (space) for them to put stuff in. And so, my husband decided to stay and watch. And he got me out. I think it [was] just my son [there], my daughter was in college. I put stuff in my car, and I started off. And they stayed back. And I went up to my mother's. And nothing happened, until about after midnight, then. My husband and my son were down watching the water, and he had his radio. Under the house was empty drums. And so they were listening down to one of the islands down south. But there was no warning. Because usually the warning for a tidal wave comes from down south. But there was no warning. And then they heard this bumping of those . . .

WN: Drums?

JT: . . . drums under the house. And my husband said, "Hey, let's get the hell out of here!" They ran just in time, got in the car, started off on the street where the school was. Waiākea Kai.

And people who had left their homes, when they thought, "Ah, no tidal wave." They went back home. And so my son and my husband yelled at them to run, to go. But some of them got drowned and got carried to the back where that place you were talking, mention where the boats. . . .

WN: Wailoa.

JT: No, not Wailoa. Where the. . . Oh shucks.

WN: You mean more towards Reeds Bay side?

JT: Reeds Bay. Where Reeds Bay. And some of them, their bodies were carried, they were found the next day, drowned. And my husband and my son drove---they didn't go down to Reeds Bay, they went up towards the town. There was a Waiākea town. When they got up to the top, where Waiākea Settlement was, the clock was, they looked down towards the town, and they saw the water coming in a flood, like. And two automobiles, one automobile on the top of the other one. They can't forget that, they saw that. Then they drove straight across the road, from where the clock still is, in the bushes, and came out in [Waiākea] Houselots. That's how they got clear of from that place and then came up to where my mother lived. And then the next day, everything was gone.

WN: Because this one, the 1960 one, affected Waiākea town.

JT: Yeah. I remember I went up to. . . Across the street from that place there, that eating place, it was like a hill. Because the girl that I used to work with lived up on that side. It was kind of like a hill, and I stood up there and watched the water come and go, but it was not anything

like the other one. The second one.

WN: Well, good thing your husband heard the drums.

JT: Yeah.

WN: Because you couldn't see anything, right, it was pitch dark.

JT: Because those drums, most of them were empty. And they were bumping against each other. And so they found the shortest cut and ran out.

WN: They ran a long way too.

JT: Yeah. And so they kept telling the people, "Run! Run!"

"No, nothing, no tidal wave," or something like that. But some of them got caught in it. Two of my friends got caught in it. One was a teacher, one was a cook in the school.

So that's why after that, the state [i.e., Hawai'i Redevelopment Agency was established to help those losing homes and businesses in the 1960 tsunami]. Got all these lots fixed up.

WN: So now, after '60, you folks moved over here.

JT: Yeah, right, right.

WN: So, this street here, 'Iwalani Street, has a lot of tidal wave victims?

JT: Oh yes, quite a number of them have passed away already, but all these people were affected.

WN: You were able to buy the property?

JT: Oh yeah. All the tidal wave victims were asked to go to the [Hilo] Armory, to pull. So we had a chance to pull.

WN: Lottery.

JT: Yeah. Lucky we got this one.

WN: Could you choose where you wanted?

JT: No, they gave you a paper with the number of the lot. This was all [sugar]cane land, you know. My husband used to come up after work and look at the place and figure out, because this, with the sun shining in the morning, he knew it was a good place. And fixed, settled it, decided it. He planned on the building, and he had a friend who worked in a lumber company. He'd go down and talk to him and the guy would pick the lumber. He only wanted so many at one time. That's how he started.

So, when I retired from school—I was still teaching here, and we had to come here. And I retired. I was able to get my money from my retirement and finish paying the house.

WN: Oh, I see. Yeah, you retired not long after you moved in over here, a few years.

JT: Yeah. So.

WN: Well, it's a very nice place to live.

JT: Oh, very nice. We get the morning sun. And the wind wasn't too strong. And we'd get the night wind. He had it all figured out. So he started making the garage here. So a couple of his friends said, "Hey, Oliver Todd going have a small house!" They thought this was going to be the house.

WN: Well, I'm going to turn off the tape recorder. Thank you very much.

JT: That's all, eh? That's enough. That's plenty!

END OF INTERVIEW

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