

Ivy Carbonell

Tape No. 36-6-1-98

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Ivy Carbonell (IC)

Kahului, Maui

April 21, 1998

BY: Jeanne Johnston (JJ)

JJ: This is an interview with Ivy Carbonell at her home in Kahului, Maui. The date is Tuesday, April 21, 1998 and the interviewer is Jeanne Johnston.

Okay, Ivy, let's start with where you were born and when.

IC: Oh, Pu'unēnē, Maui, January 8, 1939.

JJ: Okay. And how many brothers and sisters do you . . . ?

IC: One brother.

JJ: One brother, okay. Can you tell me a little about your parents? Start with your mother.

IC: My mother---past, present, or now? (Chuckles)

JJ: Start with past.

IC: Past?

JJ: At the time you were born.

IC: At the time I was born? She was a housewife at the time I was born.

JJ: What was her maiden name?

IC: Her maiden name was Medeiros. Her name is Elsie and she didn't begin working until I was about ten. And then she worked until she retired in 1972.

JJ: Where was your mother born?

IC: My mother was born in Pā'ia, Maui. She's now in Hale Makua at age eighty-two, she's bedridden. Up until last month, I took care of her until I couldn't handle it anymore.

JJ: So you said she was born in Pā'ia. Were her parents from Pā'ia also?

- IC: I don't know, I really don't know because they died when she was young.
- JJ: Oh, I see. Who was she raised by?
- IC: She's raised by her older sister. She went to school in Honolulu for a while, the Sacred Hearts Academy. And then because my aunt lived in Honolulu, got married and lived in Honolulu, my mother was the second to the youngest of six girls and one boy.
- JJ: And did they all live in Pā'ia?
- IC: At that time of my grandparents' death, I presume that they did. She never really talked much about her early years because she was orphaned, sort of, not really orphaned but her parents died when she was young. So I never knew my grandparents on that side.
- JJ: What about your dad? What was your father's name?
- IC: My father's name is Henry Copp Daniels, Jr. He passed away on August 17, 1993.
- JJ: And where was he born?
- IC: He was born in, I think, Kula. I'm not really sure. But that's where the family came from. But he lived---he grew up in Pu'unēnē because his father worked for HC&S [Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar Company] with the railroad.
- JJ: Oh. What did he do with the railroad?
- IC: He was with the sugarcane train. The train that hauled the cane from the field to mill. I don't really know what his specific job was.
- JJ: What was your grandfather's name?
- IC: His name was Henry Copp Daniels, Sr. And he—I never knew him because he died in a train accident at work.
- JJ: Oh, here on—while he was working?
- IC: Industrial accident.
- JJ: Do you know anything about the accident?
- IC: None, nothing. My grandmother died. My grandmother is dead too, I don't know. Somehow, it seems to me, that they would reminisce with people their own age but they never really told us. I grew up being seen and not heard. So I don't really know that far back what went on in the family.
- JJ: When you were born, you lived in Pu'unēnē. Now, your mother was a housewife and what was your father doing then?
- IC: My father was working for HC&S. He was a mechanic in the machine shop at HC&S.
- JJ: What was it like in those days, in Pu'unēnē? Can you describe it?

- IC: It was fun. (Laughs) Fun, I mean, we lived in what they call a camp. Spanish B. So there was a lot of playing on the road. We didn't have parks, really, at the time. We had one park but it was kind of far from where we lived. So we just played ball and tag, you know. I guess the usual childhood games on the streets because at that time, not too many people could afford cars so the road was like our playground.
- JJ: How big was the camp?
- IC: There were a lot of camps because it was sugar workers. And I lived not that far from the mill. It was, let me see. We had, one, two, three—Spanish B had one, two, three, four rows of houses. I can't really tell you how many houses, maybe about twenty on each side of the street.
- JJ: Do you know why they called it Spanish B?
- IC: No, they had Spanish A, they had Spanish B. I don't know how they got those names. You would think there would be a lot of Spanish people but I don't think that was the reason. I have no idea.
- JJ: Could you describe the houses? What did the houses look like?
- IC: The houses. Not all that primitive. They were pretty good houses. We had a three-bedroom house. Well, of course, one bath. The living room, and a pretty good size kitchen. It was, you know, the kind that you have to go up the stairs and go on the veranda and go into the house. You know those plantation-type homes? Of course, I was what, about three or three and a half, when the war broke out. I remember painting the windows black for the blackout and at eight [PM] the sirens would sound and we'd all have to run home, off the streets, no lights. I have a very vivid memory of that part of my life.
- JJ: Could you describe a little bit of what went on during that time?
- IC: I was little, see, because I was born in '39 and the war was what, '41. All I knew was that I had to get into this bunny suit when they sounded the air raid sirens. And I didn't really understand what was going on and I hated it. I hated the suit, I wanted a gas mask like my brother had. My parents would always say shush, if I wanted to speak loudly. I didn't know why but I was kind of little so I just remember that bunny suit and the blackened windows.
- JJ: Do you know why they wanted you to get into a bunny suit?
- IC: They said in case of an attack, I don't know, I guess some sort of germ warfare or what, I don't know. But they needed me—we needed to get into those things because if you were five, you got a bunny suit. If you were four going on five, then you got a regular gas mask.
- JJ: Who gave these to you?
- IC: I don't know who gave it. I guess it was—we had an army base here on Maui.
- JJ: Where was it?
- IC: At NASKA, Kahului [Naval Air Station at Kahului]. On the way to the airport, they had a big base there. I guess maybe they issued it to the sugar workers, I guess. I don't know, I'm just presuming. I had a fun childhood, until my mom went to work.

- JJ: Tell me a little bit about before your mom went to work.
- IC: Before she went to work?
- JJ: What did you do?
- IC: Nothing. I was the only girl, I have a brother. I was the only girl so I was kind of, I guess, spoiled. So I played outside, did my homework, went to school. I did what was expected of me at that time.
- JJ: Where did you go to school?
- IC: I went to Pu'unēnē school until—well, I started at Holy Rosary in Pā'ia because they had a bus system. So kindergarten and first grade. Then they stopped the bus system. So Pu'unēnē was too far from Pā'ia so then I ended up at Pu'unēnē from second grade to eighth grade, I went to Pu'unēnē.
- JJ: What was it like, how big were the classes?
- IC: Oh, let's see now. Most of the classes had—there wasn't less than three and some of them had four, depending on the amount of kids to each grade. And so the classes were about twenty-five kids to a class. It was a pretty big school at the time because of the sugar workers. And we had a lot of Filipino people come from the Philippines to work in the sugar fields so they had children. So it was a mixed blend.
- JJ: How did you get to school?
- IC: I walked.
- JJ: Far?
- IC: Well, when I was living at Spanish B, it was close but when we moved to McGerrow Camp it was a little farther but I still had to walk because by then, my mom was working.
- JJ: Where did your mother work?
- IC: She started working at the Pu'unēnē Hospital, in the cafeteria. And then she went from there, when they closed the hospital, what they did was built the memorial hospital so most of the workers went there. She worked at all the institutions from Maui Memorial [Medical Center], she went to Hale Makua, and from Hale Makua, she went to Kula Sanitorium. And all the time she worked in the cafeteria until she retired.
- JJ: And what about your dad? What did he do?
- IC: My dad was a hunter and a fisherman. That was his sports. He loved hunting and fishing. And he did it well into his retirement age until he got cancer and then it was in his spine so he couldn't do it anymore.
- JJ: Where did he do his hunting and fishing?
- IC: He did his hunting all up in the Haleakalā area. He hunted goats, he hunted pheasants. And his

fishing he did at Mākena. Or he did it Kaupō side, in the back there, Kahikinui I think. And then that would be his *ulua* fishing. He'd do it deep ocean. Then when he did land fishing, he'd go like down to Spreckelsville and cast, or Kīhei, along the shoreline fishing. He was a real sportsman, my dad.

JJ: So, then let's move along a little bit to where you're in high school.

IC: I'm in high school, I'm at St. Anthony High School. I went there from my freshman year to my senior year. That's where I met my husband. Actually—yeah, that's where we went together through high school. We were high school sweethearts.

JJ: And what is your husband's name?

IC: His name is Ronald.

JJ: Well, tell us a little bit about the high school you went to.

IC: It was small. It was a—at the time—it was a [separate] girl school, boy school. It was not co-ed. The boys were up on the hill and the girls were down below. And I enjoyed going to that school. I enjoyed being with just the girls after being with boys at the elementary and intermediate grades. Let's see, what else. It was fun, high school was fun. I did the usual things, went to the prom, went to the banquets, whatever they had. I had a full schedule, six course schedules, most of my high school years. We had strict nuns, (chuckles) which they don't have now. I think that I got my sense of commitment and my sense of responsibility from going to that school and being disciplined by the nuns. Because God, I couldn't get that into my kids because they all went to St. Anthony but they didn't have—it was co-ed and it was totally different from our days.

JJ: So what else do you remember from high school days?

IC: Going to the movies on the weekend. I got my license before my husband got his. So I would come down—I would drive down and we'd go to the movies. Or we'd go to the football games. We never missed a game. Rooting for our school that didn't do very well because we were small. What else did we do? We had drive-ins at the time, you know, eating drive-ins?

JJ: Where were they?

IC: See-Kay's was the one that we hung out at. You know, the usual thing, what is there to do? We had the drive-in theater, that was fun. My kids don't know what a drive-in theater is so they missed out on that. What else did we do?

JJ: Tell me a little bit more about the drive-ins.

IC: At the drive-ins?

JJ: Mm hmm [yes]. Where were the drive-in restaurants located?

IC: Actually, for the drive-in that you could order from your car, we only had one. On the corner of Lower Main and Waiehu Beach Road. I think it was up until that corner then it's on Lower Main. Then you go off—what is that street? Waiehu Beach Road? It was on that corner. There's a service station there now. But it was fun because we'd make arrangements on Friday at school, you know, "Let's meet at See-Kay's tonight," or "Let's go to the movie and then meet at See-

Kay's on Saturday night." There wasn't much to do here, we didn't even have skating rings or anything. We had to find things to do and yet, we never got into trouble.

JJ: And you said there were drive-in movie theaters.

IC: There was one.

JJ: Where was that?

IC: In the back of what is now Maui Community College. That's where it was.

JJ: Oh. What did that look like?

IC: It looked like a regular drive-in. You drove up, you got your tickets, you drove in, you went over the lumps and bumps, whichever row you wanted to, you got your speaker, you hooked it onto your window and then you made out with your boyfriend. You never watched the movie.

(Laughter)

IC: That was my youth.

JJ: And then you graduated from high school.

IC: And my first job (chuckles)—my first job was with a lawyer. It lasted a month. I had nightmares. (Chuckles) It was not for me, that kind of job was not for me and he was a hard boss, too. Then I decided, maybe I should go to Honolulu to find work. So I went there with a girlfriend. She got a job, I didn't. So I told her, "Well, I'm going to go back home." My parents didn't have anybody because my brother was in the air force. So I came back home and I went to work at the pineapple cannery. Which—see, I never worked at the cannery during my high school years because my mom worked and I had to do the housework, the cooking and the cleaning. So she never forced me, or asked me even, to go. Because she worked there one day and she quit, she didn't like it so she didn't think that I would, but I needed a job so I went and I worked at Maui Pine[apple Company] for—up until after I was married.

JJ: Can you describe the job there at Maui Pine?

IC: It wasn't the most pleasant place to work but I was a packer. I was supposed to have a different job see, I was supposed to go into the trimming department. And I signed the papers and everything until they found out that I was left-handed. And then I couldn't get the job because of that.

JJ: Why was that?

IC: Because I was left-handed and they felt that you needed to be right-handed because of the way the machines were set up. I guess it was my own safety. But I had wanted to try but I wasn't that aggressive so I just said, "Okay, that's all right. I'll be a packer." They let you use two hands at the packing tables but I could put the pine in the can with my left hand but I picked it up with my right. But I—it was okay, it was okay. Packing was better than trimming because I was little and some of the pines were kind of heavy. Because I was really little. (Laughs) I wasn't even a hundred pounds at the time. So let's see, what year was this? I got married—I graduated in '57. I started working at Maui Pine, I think it was '58, no '59? I was nineteen, must've been '58 and I

got married at twenty-one. When he came home from the service is when I quit. Because we got married while he was still in the air force.

JJ: Where was the plant located?

IC: In Kahului.

JJ: And how many people worked there?

IC: Oh, there was a lot of people. During the summer, the school kids would come in so it would be—I mean, we had, fourteen, what they'd call lines, we had fourteen going during the summer. That's when the pines get ripe and you have a lot of pines so the school kids would come in we'd run—all the lines would run. When the kids went back to school, then they'd lessen the lines because had less pine. Then we'd be out of work when there was no pine. Maybe we'd be off for two weeks. And then we'd go back—they'd call us and then we'd go back. And then during the summer, we had double shifts. We had to work day shifts and night shifts. I liked the night shift better.

JJ: Did you? Why is that?

IC: Because it was less demanding. I felt that—we had foreladies and most of the strict ones worked in the day. We had regular workers that were like assistants—I don't know what word would I use, not assistants. They weren't foreladies where they got that regular forelady pay, they were just underneath. We considered them foreladies and we worked. It was those that had a lot of seniority and really knew the job, they pick them to run the lines in the evening, and they were more lenient because they knew how the workers felt during the day with these women harping on—women are hard to work for. Sorry, but that's the way it is. (Laughs) They are. I'd rather work for a man. I think they're more compassionate.

JJ: So how long did you work for the pineapple company?

IC: I worked from 1958 to 1961. I'm not sure, that's so—I don't remember. About three years I think I worked there.

JJ: And then, what did you do after that?

IC: Then I had my babies.

JJ: And how many children?

IC: I had two babies. Wesley and nineteen months later, I had Ronda. Then when she was three, I went back to work in the sales office of Maui Memorial Park [Inc.]. And then my boss left. I worked there not even a year, because my boss left and I didn't think I could work with the one that was going to take over. So I quit. My husband wanted another baby. So I had another baby and I decided, well, I'll just stay home and I stayed home with my children. I raised my kids.

JJ: Oh, good.

Let's see. What were you doing in 1960? Can you kind of paint a picture of what it looked like in Maui before the tsunami?

IC: Oh, 1960, that's the year I got married. I was living with my mother-in-law in Kahului.

JJ: What was her name?

IC: Her name is Rose Ching, her and her husband, my stepfather-in-law, his name is Henry. They lived in a house across the street of what used to be a department store run by A & B [Alexander & Baldwin] properties. There were three homes in the front row, right on Pu'unēnē Avenue. No, Ka'ahumanu Avenue, which is Ka'ahumanu Avenue, and it was just a two-lane avenue at the time. It was not the four lane. Across of their house, across was Bank of Hawai'i, which is still there. And where Burger King is now, used to be the Kahului Theatre, and it was a theater in 1960. And then our main shopping center was the Kahului Shopping Center. This was in the day before Longs, so A & B had their lumberyard next to the store and it ran all the way down where the parking lot of Maui Mall is now. In the back of where mother-in-law lived were all homes, all the way up to the beach. And there was Maui Meat Company. At the end of the three homes in the back was the Maui Meat Company. That's about it, I think. Yeah, that's what it looked like at the time.

JJ: So tell me what you remember of the tidal wave, the tsunami.

IC: We had had several false alarms prior to the one that hit. Well, this is the days before the sirens, okay? In 1960, we didn't have sirens yet so civil defense would come around on their jeeps and alert everybody. So every street had a captain. My father-in-law was the captain and you were supposed to see to it that everybody got the message to move out because there's a tidal wave warning, a tsunami's coming, move out, okay? So everybody moved out on our street except us.

JJ: What time was this? What time of day?

IC: I think the warning started in the afternoon some time, the late afternoon. And my parents lived in Pu'unēnē. And I had thought, maybe I should go to their house and bring my in-laws with me because it's well away from any tsunami [so it] couldn't get there. But my father-in-law said, "No, no. There's so many false alarms. We'll just stay till the last minute."

So I said, "Fine. I'll stay with you folks." So I went to sleep and I don't even really know the time, I'm sure somebody knows the time. I know that it was dark. It was night because I had my pajamas on. And all of a sudden, I heard my mother-in-law, comes running into the rooms because civil defense must have been going around.

She says, "Get up, Ivy. We gotta go because the tsunami is really coming you know. It's pulling out of the harbor already." You know the water was receding.

So I said, "Oh, okay."

And I got my jacket because she said, "You don't have time to change clothes."

I went, "Wow." So I grabbed my jacket, and we went out of the house and see, there was the lane, in back of their house, there was this lane that the front people could—because their garage was in the back and then had other homes on the opposite lane. So my father-in-law had his car parked out of his garage, it was parked like ready to go. If we had to go, it was ready to go. So he and I, we all went out of the house. The car was there waiting for us and my mother-in-law says, "Wait. I gotta get my cigarettes." She was a smoker at the time.

And my father-in-law says, “Oh, never mind the cigarettes. We gotta go.”

She said, “Oh, it’s right there on the table. I’ll just get it and we can go.”

And you know how people say smoking kills you? Well, smoking saved our lives because if we had gotten into that car we would’ve drowned in it. Because my mother-in-law went back into the house for her cigarettes, by the time she came out, the water was up to our knees. And so we’re yelling for her to get out, “Come on, let’s go. The water is coming, the water is coming.” And you know, it’s fast now. It rises real quick. So we said, “We can’t go to the car.” There’s no way we could open the door because the water was already up in windows.

And so we started—“Let’s go to the front of the house.” Because they had a porch in the front and there was this wide ledge and so we felt we could stand up on that. And so as—we were holding hands. Now water is up to here, up to your neck. We were holding hands and we’re going towards the front of the house. And we hear her dog, my mother-in-law’s dog, and here he comes with the wave, and my mother-in-law grabs him. Now the four of us, head for the front of the house, can’t see the stairs, right, so we have to feel with our feet carefully, and go up. So we waited until the first wave receded back. Then we went into the house, furniture had shifted already, carpeting had lifted because it had gone—the water line was like maybe about four feet on the wall. And the house wasn’t ground-level house, it was up, it was raised, it was elevated houses. I looked at that, I went, “Oh my goodness. Look at this.” I went into my room, but before I had left, I had picked up most of the stuff that I had on the floor and I had put it on my bed, and so I looked through my dresser. Now, when the wave hit, all electricity went off. I mean, total darkness. So my father-in-law looked around to see if he could get his flashlight. He found one flashlight while my mother-in-law and I changed clothes, because we were in our night clothes. We changed our clothes. I thought that was it. I didn’t know (anything about) tsunamis, so I thought that was it.

And my mother-in-law said, “Maybe we should go across the street before the other one comes.”

I told her, “What other one!”

And she said, “Oh, Ivy. It comes like, more than once.”

I said, “Oh my goodness.” And then we had this train that ran across.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

JJ: Okay.

IC: Okay, now we were heading across the street to the department store because the first thing we thought of was the department store, the office, is upstairs, and I mean high up. If we had—we didn’t think the water would get that high because we had already experienced the first wave. Although my mother-in-law says the next one could be even worse.

So now, there’s this train that runs in front of her house, belonging to Kahului Railroad [Company].

JJ: This is on the beach side?

IC: No, this is on the road side, this is on the highway side. The train ran on the highway side. The highway, right off Ka'ahumanu Avenue. So now, when the water recedes, it doesn't totally go away, there's still some water so now we have to walk very gingerly across because we have railroad tracks. We could've stumbled, right? So we're walking, feeling our way with our feet.

JJ: Could you see anything?

IC: No. It was total darkness. You know things like this happen at night, they get you even more scared. So anyway, I said, "Okay, I hit it. I hit the first track, okay." Now jump, let's cross over, we know we're going to have another track, so we go gingerly and then okay, now we're across the street. That first wave had opened up the double doors of the store. It went right through the store and the counter, it was just all over the place. I mean, they moved like you were cleaning house and you wanted to clean under the counters. It was just shifted all over.

In the meantime, we see my father-in-law's car going, when the water receded, because it had moved. And all we could see while the water was still coming, all we could see was the top of the car. Then when the water receded, we—what happened to the car? It was like in the middle of the street. When the next wave came, his car backed up between the side of the theater and the hedge that they had along the sidewalk. It just parked there. I mean, it just totaled the car. It had no dents, no—because it was clear of anything so it wasn't smashed or anything. But the smell. We had to get rid of the car.

So we went to the store, and in the meantime, of course, there's looters in between waves. And the manager of the store came down, gave my father-in-law a gun because we told him we were going to stay there.

So he and my father-in-law got it and he said, "There's going to be looters. Sure enough, you know." But they sat there.

And of course, he said, "You guys are all wet. Just take anything you need from the store. Change your clothes." He got us chairs and we would sit, wait for the next wave. (Chuckles) And when it came, we just picked the chairs up, moved on the side and let it come. It wasn't as bad, the second one.

JJ: How long was it between the two waves?

IC: See, I don't remember what time the first wave came, but I know we stayed across the street until the sun came up. And then, what we found when we went home was totally shocking. And we were so happy that all the people left because every house in the back, those three houses withstood the wave, but every house in the back was totally off their foundations. It was just awful. There was houses on the alley in the back, you know where we would drive our cars out. It was just—it was awful. In my mother-in-law's backyard had everybody's picket fence. There was a public telephone. I remember sending my husband a picture of that mess. And I'm holding up a fish that had come up.

JJ: Do you have any photographs of that?

IC: I don't know what happened to them. I looked for it because I figured you'd be interested in that. I had—the two that I sent to him that I remember was the one of me with all the rubble in the yard holding up the fish, and the other one was, there was a room next to the garage, it was a room

with a bathroom, a complete bathroom and everything, and I took a picture of the water line. How high the water had gone. I've been looking for it and I can't find it.

JJ: Where was your husband?

IC: My husband was in Guam. He was in the air force. Let's see, we got married in January. The tsunami came in May and he came (home) in September. And then we had another warning when he came home.

JJ: What did the shopping center look like when the sun came up?

IC: Well see, the wave went all the way up to—I don't know what effect this would have on people that do not live on Maui if they don't know. But if it went all the way up Pu'unēnē Avenue, it's way past Christ the King Church, which is quite a distance. But then, there's an uphill incline so it stopped, it didn't go any farther. So it went past the church and beyond a couple of homes, and that's quite a way.

JJ: Did the waves make any noise when they came in?

IC: Well, see the noises that I heard were buildings (moving), which I didn't know what was happening. (Makes noise.) Just getting the building off of the foundation, the breaking of wood and all these weird sounds but I didn't know what was happening because it was all behind me. Until we came back across the street at sunup did I know what those sounds were. It was all these homes being thrashed in the water. Because they're all gone. Or let's see. It must've been about six or seven homes that was totally destroyed. And just the three on the front on Ka'ahumanu Avenue that were spared because of the other ones, I guess. Or maybe they were made better, I don't know. Can't tell you.

JJ: Then what happened next that morning?

IC: Then there was cleanup. My husband wasn't here so we had to depend on his sister's husband. And then what we had to do was, we had to get a hose. We had to hose down the house. We had to take everything out to dry. It was a mess. It was smelly. It had this smell that you couldn't get rid of. I don't care what you scrubbed the house down with, you know this smell of *limu* and just the ocean. Sand, you wouldn't believe the sand that we had in the house. There was a lot of things we had to throw away because I don't think that we could ever have gotten rid of the stench. Now, the people who lived in the back, when they came to see what had happened to their homes, that was sad because there wasn't much that they could salvage. And so there we had all these homeless people. They had moved in with family until they could get their own places.

JJ: So your house was left on its foundation.

IC: Yeah. The only big damage was water damage. That was the only damage. And then my father-in-law's car of course. But other than that, we consider ourselves lucky. We got out in time, we were calm. Well, my father-in-law was a little excited and was fearful for him because he was kind of old already and I didn't want anything to happen to him. Other than that, we kept cool heads. And I told my mother-in-law, I said, "Thank God you were smoking because we would've drowned in the car." We would've been three dead ducks in it because we wouldn't have been able to open the doors.

- JJ: What happened to the dog?
- IC: Oh, he survived. He was with us all the time. Yeah, we kept him with us.
- JJ: Now, you said there was military in the area. Did they come and help?
- IC: In 1960, there was no military. They were gone already because the war was in '41 so the military base had closed down already. But the civil defense people, between waves, came and they asked us if we wanted to go to higher ground but we felt that we were safe and my father-in-law said no because the department store manager had asked us to watch it because he had to go down to the lumberyard side. He couldn't be alone because there were looters in between.
- JJ: Were the police around?
- IC: I don't—they must've been. They must've been but I remember the civil defense people. And it was after that tsunami that we got the sirens.
- JJ: Oh yeah. Now how long did it take to rebuild the area?
- IC: They didn't rebuild. See those homes belong to Kahului Railroad and they were employees of the railroad and what they did was, they brought in a cleanup crew and they just threw everything away, the houses everything, went. And those three homes just stayed there. The three that survived stayed. They're not there anymore but they stayed.
- JJ: What did your neighbors do, the other two houses?
- IC: Oh, they went through all the things, they left. We were the only ones that stayed.
- JJ: But did they come back and clean up?
- IC: Oh yeah, they came back. And they had to do the cleanup like we did because they were identical homes and so the water that went into our house, went into the other three, too. And so everybody, I mean the whole community helped. We pulled together kind of thing, helping out each other.
- JJ: Do you remember the names of the other families there?
- IC: One was the Ooka family, you know the supermarket up here? One was the Ooka family. Oh, no, pardon me. Not Ooka. Toda. They had a drugstore in the shopping center, the Toda family. I think it was Toda. That was at the end. Toda and Ooka. I know one was Toda. The other one must've been Ooka. Yeah.
- JJ: And those are the only three homes that remained standing.
- IC: Yeah, that remained and they stayed. They stayed in the house. Then the Ooka family moved away and another family moved in but it was after, way after.
- JJ: So how did you feel towards the ocean after that?
- IC: I hated it.

JJ: Did you?

IC: I was afraid because when my husband came home, I was still living there, and when my husband came back from the service, when I was three months pregnant for my first child, we had another warning. That weekend I moved out. So I'm not too fond of the ocean because I can see the destruction that it can do. When we were across the street at the store, somehow, because of the way the wave had moved the homes around in the back of the three that were left standing, we had a view of the harbor. Because the lights all went off but then after a while, the moon, maybe it was cloudy and it was covering the moon and then all of a sudden there's the moon. And we could see that there was no water in the harbor. And my mother-in-law said, "Another one's coming." She knew.

JJ: What did it look like when you can see?

IC: Empty. Because we only could see a small portion, just a small portion from when you were at the store because all the houses were moved away because they obstructed any view you would've had while they were standing on foundation. But once they were all off foundation, there was just this—it was like a little peephole that we could see, just a small part of the harbor. Where one of the piers, I don't know which one, the first one on the—if you facing on this side, on the left-hand side, we could see just a small portion. She saw that it was dry. Sun was coming up, I think, already. I think there were three good-size waves and one little one. About three or four I think.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

IC: I'm not sure, but I know three, at least three. It was scary, but I was young. You're gutsy when you're young. (Laughs) I just feared for my father-in-law because he really got excited.

JJ: How did they feel about moving back by the ocean to the same house after that?

IC: I guess they felt okay, I mean I moved back with them. This happened in May and I didn't move out until just before Christmas. Or was that, no, I think it's after Christmas that I moved out. Yeah, it was after Christmas that I moved out. They had another warning and I told my husband, "I refuse to live here anymore." I said, "You know, [when] I was here with your parents [while] you weren't here and I wasn't pregnant, it was fine. But [now] I have to think about my child." So then we moved to Pu'unēnē.

JJ: How long after the tsunami did you move back in there?

IC: Oh, that day, that very day.

JJ: Oh, you moved right back in.

IC: Yeah, mm hmm. We cleaned because by daylight, it was all over. So the cleaning began and yeah, we just stayed. But we would have ran if civil defense came around again that night, let me tell you. We wouldn't have stayed. We wouldn't have stayed. (Laughs) It was really funny

because we did leave you know. Now it's coming back to me. We did leave. We went up to my mom's, we did. And then we decided, while we were there, that we were going to go back home.

JJ: So you left earlier and . . .

IC: We did leave.

JJ: Wow.

IC: But we came back. That's it. I'm here, telling the story.

(Laughter)

IC: But I don't like the ocean because of that. I forced myself to go on camping trips because my kids loved it, but I could never sleep because I'd hear these waves crashing and I, you know. And like I said, if I close my eyes now, it's like I'm there. Everything is so vivid. It's an experience I think that you have till you die. Certain things, I think, in your life makes such an impact on you that you don't forget it. Mine is the tidal wave—was one. And a flight from New York to San Francisco. That, if I close my eyes I'm there. I'm in that plane because it was awful. But this one, (chuckles) wet, swimming, but it pushes you, see, so you gotta hang on to something. We didn't have anything to hang on to so we hung on to each other. Can you see us hanging on, dragging the dog on the way?

JJ: Yeah. And you couldn't see anything at that time.

IC: No, because all the electricity went. Everything was blacked out. And like I said, I think that it must've been a real cloudy night because I didn't even remember the moon until later. Maybe after you get acclimated to the dark—you know how it is if you're sitting in a well-lit room and you turn it off, all of a sudden you're blind until you get acclimated and then it's okay. I think that's what it was.

JJ: So how would you compare life before and after in the community?

IC: We didn't have a community after. (Laughs) They were all gone. There's a lot of cleaning up at the shopping center, too. They had tidal wave sales, a lot of—a lot of merchandise was damaged. Workers, store owners, and everybody, the next day, was just cleaning up. But there was a lot of—people helped, people came helped, they called. You didn't have phone service, the phones were down. But I think the community really pulled together at the time of crisis.

JJ: How long was it until you got your electricity back in the house? Do you remember?

IC: I don't remember. I know the electric trucks were working as soon as the all clear sounded. They were there because my brother-in-law worked for electric company. I don't think it took that long to get the electricity back. Not like when you have a hurricane or, you know. Because I don't even remember the water pulling out any of the poles. That would be scary if a live wire started to fall and I would remember that but I don't remember anything like that happening and it's not like we had underground service because we didn't. So I guess they withstood that, them poles. They were firmly planted in the ground. Okay.

JJ: Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

IC: No, I think I told you everything that I can remember. It's been thirty-eight years.

JJ: Well, thank you very much.

IC: Oh, your welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

TSUNAMIS IN MAUI COUNTY: Oral Histories

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