

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: KEISUKE MASUDA, retired hotel maintenance man

Keisuke Masuda, Japanese, was born December 29, 1901, in Yamaguchi, Japan. His father, a fisherman, emmigrated to Hawaii in 1908. His mother soon followed, leaving Keisuke behind in the care of his grandmother. He attended school in Japan.

In 1915, Keisuke rejoined his parents. The family lived in Kakaako, where Keisuke entered first grade at Pohukaina Elementary School, at the age of 14. He found the experience embarassing but stayed on for four years of schooling. He worked in the pineapple cannery summers. He was a service station mechanic for 10 years until the depression forced the garage to close. He found work with Hawaiian Tuna Packers as a night watchman; he was later promoted to day foreman, a position he held until World War II broke out in 1941. After the war, he worked in hotel maintenance and plumbing until his retirement.

TIME LINE

1901	birth: Yamaguchi- <u>ken</u> , Japan
1915	came to Hawaii
1929	married
1931	began to work for Hawaiian Tuna Packers
1949	vice president, Kakaako Community Association
1952	left Kakaako, worked hotel maintenance and plumbing
1965	moved to Kaneohe

NOTES AND TRANSLATION FROM A HAWAII HOCHI NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

about

Keisuke Masuda

March 21, 1978

The makai area between Punchbowl and Ward is Kakaako. Today, an area of factories and warehouses, Kakaako was once filled with simple wooden houses. Until about 20 years ago, there were several hundred Japanese families living in Kakaako, mostly working as fishermen or as part of the fishing industry. In 1955, the area was condemned and the people of Kakaako were evicted, relocating themselves throughout the island. And still, former residents continue to associate with each other.

The Kakaako Community Association, comprised of about 230 members, was founded to modernize the area and to establish a Japanese language school. Mr. Keisuke Masuda, a 40-year resident of Kakaako and one of the KCA's founders has presided over the KCA for 30 years. This year, as the KCA celebrates its 30th anniversary, Masuda will turn over the presidency to Mr. Katsukichi Kita, also an active member of the Kakaako Japanese community. Masuda received the presidency from Mr. Seiichi Kawamoto, the organization's first president.

As part of its efforts, the KCA established the Kakaako Chiho Gakuen, a Japanese language school. Its first facility, a warehouse loaned to them by the Fuji Sake factory opened to 200 students. It was supported by movie showings twice a year, an idea of Mr. Masuda.

In 1951, the school established a judo club for its young people. Named Shisei kan (toward purity/enlightenment), the Club moved an old building up to the school. Here again, because of his knowledge of the martial art, Mr. Masuda was an active supporter of its activities.

When the Kakaako eviction began in 1955, the school, clubhouses and social gathering places were the first to be closed. The KCA borrowed a DOE school classroom to continue its Japanese language classes. As the enrollment dropped, the school reduced its staff until principal Hitoshi Uesugi remained alone.

Keisuke Masuda was born in 1901, in Oshima town, Oshima gun, Yamaguchi prefecture, Japan. He came to Kakaako in 1915 to meet his father, who was a fisherman. In 1929, Masuda married his wife Shizue and together they had eight children, seven boys and a girl. Prior to World War II, Masuda was a supervisor with the Hawaiian Tuna Packing Company. After the war he worked at a Waikiki hotel as a plumber, until 1970, when he retired.

Mr. Masuda is also president of the Iwakuni Dance Club, an organization established 25 years ago, to preserve the culture of the Iwakuni prefecture among its Hawaii residents. Masuda was a staff member when the Club elected its first president, Goichi Fukunaga. Masuda himself became president about two years ago.

During the Buddhist O-Bon season (June to August), the Club travels to various parts of the island to participate in the temples' bon dances. Another activity of the Club is their yearly visit to the Kuakini Old Folks Home, where they entertain the residents there. Mr. Masuda is one of the few people able to do the drumming for the dances. According to Mr. Kita, Masuda mastered the rhythm by ear after he arrived in Kakaako. As part of the KCA and together with the Fukushima Dance Club, Masuda also participated in the bon dances held for fishermen who have died at sea.

Today Keisuke Masuda resides in Kaneohe, where he is president of the Aloha Senior Club of Kaneohe.

Tape No. 3-7-1-77 And Tape No. 3-8-1-77

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Keisuke Masuda (KM)

September 8, 1977

Manoa Elementary School

BY: Vivien Lee (VL)

VL: This is an interview with Mr. Keisuke Masuda. Today is September 8, 1977, and we're at Manoa Elementary School. Okay, I know I asked you some of these questions before, but just for the record, can you tell me when and where you were born?

KM: I was born in Japan, Yamaguchi, a small little island on December 29, 1901.

VL: And when did you come to Hawaii?

KM: I came Hawaii April, 1915.

VL: In Japan, in Yamaguchi-ken, what did your parents do for work?

KM: Well, as far as I understand, my father used to be riding on a boat. Like today they call...those sailing boats those days. Never had steamboat. Hard to tell, though.

VL: He was a sailor?

KM: Sailor, yeah. He was sailor.

VL: Was that with Japan Navy or...

KM: No, no, no. It's commercial. (freighters)

VL: What about your mother? Did she farm or...

KM: Yes, she used to do a little farming.

VL: Was that just to raise family vegetables or did she sell them?

KM: Yeah, yeah. She worked, you know, some places where they need the help. Like during the farming autumn when have rice crops. Anytime when they need help on the farming, she used to go help.

VL: Did you ever help also?

KM: No, I didn't have to help any.

VL: And you were telling me before that you did go to school in Japan?

KM: Yes, I went to six years. Yeah, almost six and a half years before I came to Hawaii. 'Cause my folks came here early part as immigrant. My mama went when I was first grade, I think. My father left when I was a little baby.

VL: Oh, he came here first!

KM: Yeah. So I didn't know (what) my father looked like, you see.

VL: Why did he come to Hawaii?

KM: He have to work, eh. Immigrants, you know, those immigrants, they work for plantation.

VL: But do you know why he wanted to leave Japan?

KM: Well, because the living conditions in Japan not so good, see. Cannot make money, so the Hawaii government, they ask for some immigrants to work on the plantation. So many Japanese came. You know, certain time, certain time, like that.

VL: Do you know what plantation he came to work?

KM: He was in, I understand, he was in Kauai, Makaweli.

VL: And then he came back to Japan to get you folks?

KM: No, no, no. He came to Honolulu and start his fishing business, 'cause he was a sailor, so he know about handling the boats, eh. Was sailing boat those days. Never had the engine, you know. And later on they have a engine.

VL: Usually the contract was three years, plantation. Did he work those three years first?

KM: Yes. Oh, have to. And when the contract expired, everybody---some people stay, but some people, they go Mainland, they go other islands. After the contract is over, they'll flee anyway, see.

VL: He started in Kakaako then, the fishing.

KM: Yeah, 'cause Kakaako is in the waterfront, see, near the waterfront.

VL: Then can you describe how he went back to get you and bring you back here?

KM: No, no. He didn't come back Japan to get me, because---well, those days, they can call the family. Even now, the immigrants, they can call, eh, some of the relations. So they call the wife first. After so many years later, he call me.

VL: So did your mother come to Hawaii before you?

KM: Oh, yes. About seven years, I think.

VL: Seven years before you?

KM: Yeah, six, seven years.

VL: Who did you stay with in Japan?

KM: Oh, I used to stay with our grandmother. See, my grandmother take care me, see, while they're away, see. Yeah.

VL: And then did all your brothers and sisters come with you?

KM: No, no. They all born in there (Hawaii) later.

VL: So you were the only child there.

KM: Yeah. I was the only one born in Japan, and they left me with the grandmother, and they came Hawaii to work. Was many people do that, you know, a long time ago, you see.

VL: So then, I remember once you said you stayed at the Immigration Station.

KM: Right.

VL: Can you describe that whole experience?

KM: Well, those days everybody have to go Immigration Station, see, to check up everything. Passport and all that. Then the parents come to the Immigration Station and then, you know, get a release, like that. Go out.

VL: Oh. How long did you stay at the Immigration Station?

KM: Oh, I think I slept two nights.

VL: What was it like? You were only 14. Can you describe what it looked like?

KM: Well...I was small children, so I just don't know what's going to happen, see. Just wait for somebody come pick me up.

VL: Did they have Japanese speaking people?

KM: Oh, yeah. They have one interpreter. The man who's in charge, you know. The name is Dr. Katsunoma.

VL: Were you afraid or...

KM: Was. Yeah, little sort of frightened.

VL: Were all the children together?

KM: Yeah. Some of them, the parents go back in Japan, they bring the family with them, see. But myself, I cannot come with them. Myself. So I came with my friends, take care of me to come to the Hawaii, Honolulu.

VL: How were the sleeping conditions there?

KM: Oh, they have bunk, eh.

VL: Was it clean or...

KM: Well, normally supposed to be clean, but, well, I don't know what to say.

VL: Okay. Your parents already lived in Kakaako?

KM: Yes.

VL: Do you remember what the house was like? Your first house there?

KM: Yes, the first house I came in Hawaii was a little small cottage. It's about...let's see...it's about two bedroom, yeah. Small, two bedrooms with a kitchen and bathroom.

VL: Bathroom inside?

KM: Inside.

VL: Was there running water? Flush toilets like that?

KM: Yes, we had flush toilet.

VL: Oh. Where was this house? Do you remember what street?

KM: That house is located in Punchbowl Street, below the Queen Street. Now, the place is all Territorial office buildings. All built up there. You don't see any more those old building. 'Course they had little camp up there. And alongside the camp, they had few small cottages.

VL: What kind of camp?

KM: They call those days a camp because they had upstairs and downstairs. And downstairs have a store, you see. And upstairs where the people can live there.

VL: And a few cottages near this camp?

KM: Yeah, few cottages.

VL: Was this all Japanese people?

KM: Yeah, mostly Japanese.

VL: What kind of stores?

KM: Well, small little grocery stores.

VL: Do you remember what you were thinking, or your first impression of Hawaii? What did you think of this whole new place?

KM: Well, at the beginning, I wanted to go back Japan. Because I don't know my father, I don't know what he look like. Slightly, I remember the mother, you see. So there's no...love between the father, but they treat me all right. So they send me to school because that's only was 14 years old. Exactly was 13 and so many months, but anyway, 14 years old, you cannot go work, so he send me to the school. So I appreciate that, that much.

VL: You were 14 years old and going to the first grade then?

KM: Right.

VL: How did you feel about that?

KM: Well...I was kind of shame, eh, because I'm pretty big size for 14, and then stay with a six or seven years kids. I'm the biggest one in the whole bunch. You can imagine. With the first grade, they start around six or seven years, right? And I'm one of the big one in there, and everybody tease me. I cannot speak English, you know.

VL: So you didn't understand anything the teacher said?

KM: No, I learn nothing. Nothing I can understand.

VL: How long did it take you before you learned English?

KM: Well, it took me about two years, see. Then I start little understanding what the teacher said.

VL: Were there all ethnic groups at Pohukaina School?

KM: What you mean?

VL: Chinese and...

KM: Oh yeah. There's all the nationality get together. We have close to 35 students, you know, one class, eh. Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, Hawaiians, all kind.

VL: How did they all get along?

KM: Oh, was doing all right.

VL: How did you get along with all the little kids?

KM: Well, for long time I don't have any friends, so I stay all by myself.

I reading the Japanese book.

VL: Were you also going to Japanese school at that time?

KM: Yeah, at that time I had to go Japanese school same time, 'cause I haven't finished. Only six years in Japan.

VL: So in the Japanese school, did you have more friends 'cause they were...

KM: Yeah. The beginning part, you don't have any friends, but later on, you had friends. Start know each others.

VL: And at this time, what was your father doing? You were beginning one time to describe about the whole fishing...

KM: Yeah, he was one of the fishing, among the many other people.

VL: Do you remember how he went about his work and...

KM: Well, he used to go special on a deep-sea fishing, see. Stay out about a week in the ocean and then comes back, see. Stay about a week. Sometime nine days. All depend on the catch, eh.

VL: He was looking for aku then?

KM: No, no, no. You know, that kind of fish, the red snapper? The red kind fish, the big, kind of big size. All kinds, you know. You don't see 'em much now days, but still, they have it.

VL: Did he have his own boat?

KM: Yeah. He bought his own boat.

VL: And did he have a crew?

KM: Yeah, he was the captain, you know, skipper. And had about two crews. They go as far as Kauai.

VL: Do you remember like, where he got his fishing supplies from?

KM: Well, I guess through the stores, eh, fishing supply stores. Those days they had...I think was Soranaka, Kida, about two or three fishing supply store, where they sell all the fishing equipment, you know. Such as ropes, anchors, all kinds.

VL: Then how about for the food that they would take out on the boat to last them one week?

KM: Yeah, everytime they takes little vegetables. Of course, the rice, half bag of rice, you know. They used to burn the firewood on the boat, see. They bring some firewoods, all kind. The fish they catch, so they can

eat on the boat, eh. Don't have to bring any meat or like that. Now days, they bringing all kinds, meat and all kinds, eh. But before, just bring little vegetables. That's about all. 'Cause they catch the fish, they can eat 'em. You know. Yeah, so nothing to it. They cook the rice.

VL: Did you ever go with him?

KM: No, I never go. I didn't want to.

VL: Why not?

KM: I don't want to be a fisherman.

VL: What did you want to be?

KM: Well, I was hoping that I could be a machinist, but...couldn't come true. After the school, part-time I work for the bicycle shop.

VL: Where was that?

KM: That was on King Street. You know where the City Hall right now? Over there had this bicycle shop. I used to work part-time after the school. Sometime I work for the grocery store part-time to make little bit---help the family, see.

VL: Oh, you would give this money to your family.

KM: Yeah, yeah. 'Cause we were so poor. You know, those days, the fishermen, they sometimes make money, but sometime they don't make money, see. So it's kind of...hard time going on. But those days, food, everything was so cheap, you know. House rental is cheap so they can go by.

VL: Do you remember how much your rent was?

KM: Oh, sometime about \$10 a month, or something like that. \$10, \$12 a month. You can buy that 100-pound bag for about \$3.50 those days, you know. Was so cheap.

VL: Rice?

KM: Yeah, rice. So cheap. Everything is so cheap.

VL: Did your mother work also?

KM: Yeah. She used to work pineapple cannery sometimes. Not steady, you know. But most time she have baby, children, so cannot go work. After children come little bigger, then used to go Tuna Packers, and then little bit laundry, you know. Taking somebody's---there's a plenty single men those days, see. So they bring their laundry to her. She take care the laundry.

VL: Did she do that all by hand?

- KM: Yeah, by hand. Yeah. You know, those days had a charcoal iron. Put charcoal, no electric iron. Put charcoal in. Heavy-looking thing, she used to iron with that.
- VL: So the fishing, sometimes would bring money, sometimes not.
- KM: Yeah.
- VL: So you think you were generally poor?
- KM: Yeah, generally poor.
- VL: But did you have enough to eat and clothes to wear?
- KM: Oh, yeah.
- VL: Did you ever have any real hard times when there was no money?
- KM: No, I don't think so. But my parents, yeah, they feel, sometime. So have to borrow money sometime, no.
- VL: Where would they borrow from?
- KM: Oh, their friends. They borrow money from friends. Food like that, sometime you had to borrow for...about couple of months later, when they get big catch, they pay 'em, see. They used to do that.
- VL: So the stores would give credit?
- KM: Yeah, store credit, yeah. So I went through a little hard work. Not compared to now days children. Now days children, they all easy.
- VL: What was your first full-time job?
- KM: Full-time job? Yeah, after finish the school...and then I start work service station, mechanic. I was trying learn how to be a mechanic, see. When the automobile just begin to come up, so I hear they make good money, eh, mechanics like that, so I try to be mechanic. Work about couple of years, and then some service station, you know. They call garage those days, eh. And they take care everything.
- VL: Where was this garage?
- KM: This garage was located on the Punchbowl and Beretania.
- VL: And about how old were you when you started to work there?
- KM; Oh, about 20 I think.
- VL: So up to then, let's say you started school when you were about 14, and you said you went four years. So you were about 18.

- KM: Eighteen. That's where about high school graduate, about 18. So after that work in the pineapple cannery. Sometime.
- VL: What was your job in the cannery?
- KM: I used to take care those platform where they bring the pineapple in a box, eh. Those days, they have in a big box like that. And then they throw---of course, not myself, the other helper, see---carry the box, dump 'em in the machine when the machine take cares. They clean the skins and everything else. You no see now days any more. Everything now days is machine now, so you don't see any more those things. But, oh, before, long time ago, mostly hand work, see. That's where they need the plenty manpower.
- VL: Yeah. How did you get that job? That pineapple job?
- KM: You just go apply. First, I work for Libby. Then bumbai goes to the Hawaiian Pine. Only during the season time, you see, summer time.
- VL: So you just go apply and say you want the job, and they hired you?
- KM: Yeah, they hired me.
- VL: Were there a lot of jobs that you could have had? Like, was there a lot of choice of jobs?
- KM: Yes, but it's hard to get good jobs.
- VL: Why is that?
- KM: Because we don't have any high school education. You cannot work in a office like that. Yeah, those days high school graduate was just like university graduates today. They can go in a bank, stores, and all big firms---they can work in the office. But you don't have education, you got to take any kind of job. No choice.
- VL: Was it the case that anybody who wanted a job could probably find one even though maybe not such a good one?
- KM: Yeah, those days they had a job. But you looking for any kind of special job, then you cannot find. Like some people, they goes to the---they take carpenter, plumbing, you know. All kind of job. But it's very hard to get in those big firms, such as Hawaiian Electric, Hawaiian Telephone, Ironworks. All this big firm, is hard to get in.
- VL: Back then?
- KM: Yeah. You know, it's hard to get in a job. Unless you have experience or education.
- VL: But you could find a laborer, worker's job?

KM: Oh, labor job, yeah. Worker's job.

VL: Was going to ask you some more about the service station. How much business did they have 'cause the cars weren't too many, huh?

KM: Well, see, I works the Greystone Garage for almost 10 years. Yeah, they used to call Greystone Garage located on Punchbowl and Beretania. And sometime, I take the night shift job. Sell gasoline, sell tires and all kind, you know. Take care the service station. We had a pretty good business those days. Every year get more cars coming in, you know.

VL: Who would be the owners of these cars? Were they...

KM: Just like today. Everybody, they own the car. Some are company cars, you know.

VL: Was it mostly haoles or...

KM: Well, yeah, mostly haoles, and then, quite a few other nationalities.

VL: Do you remember how much gas cost per gallon?

KM: Well, those days it's about 25 cents, I think. 25, 26, somewhere around there. So cheap, eh, compared to today.

VL: So you worked there about 10 years, then?

KM: About 10 years.

VL: As your full time job?

KM: Yeah, full time job.

VL: What would a young man do for recreation, for fun in Kakaako at that time?

KM: Well, we don't have any. Even as far as...well, we used to play, like play baseball, all kinds. You know. But we have not too many recreation because we have to have---night time we go to the show, you know, movies. Silent movies in those days. No more talking kind.

VL: How many theatres did they have?

KM: I remember had two in Kakaako.

VL: And you would go every night?

KM: No, not every night. Sometimes. And later on, the Japanese movie start coming in, you know. Japanese movies coming in, and then, used to go about once a week, anyway. They put up nice theatre, Kewalo Theatre, eh, they call. That be a little later. Somewhere around 1935, 1936, 1940, that year.

Before that, only haole movies.

VL: And the baseball you played, was that with a league?

KM: Just among the friends.

VL: No set league, or teams?

KM: No, no.

VL: Where would you play?

KM: Used to play in they call that Atkinson Park---beyond the Pohukaina School, they have a big park. Used to go over there play.

VL: Did you folks swim or surf?

KM: Yeah, used to go swim sometime.

VL: So there wasn't too much recreation?

KM: No, no, not too much.

VL: So what would you spend your money on then?

KM: Well, not much money to spend anyway those days, you know. So cheap. Foods are cheap. Even go to the show is cheap, you know. So not much. 'Cause you only had small income, eh.

VL: What was your income at the service station?

KM; Well, at the beginning, we used to make about \$75 a month.

VL: That's good.

KM: Then comes up, up, up until they hit the big depression, you know, 1932. You remember those, where everybody no more job, and some place close up, bankrupt? No jobs, see. At those time, I was making about \$115, \$120 those days; I was making until depression hit, see. When the depression hit from about 1930, beginning about 1930 start, everything come slow down, so they cut your salary. Then comes to the end 1932; company have to go broke, have to close up, so no more job. And I wen go to work for the Tuna Packers, see. No more job.

VL: During the depression, did they ever fire anybody from the service station?

KM: : No, they just lay off. Just automatically, lay off. No more job.

VL: No, I mean before it closed, before the service station went out of business they cut your salary down?

KM: Yeah, they cut salary.

VL: Did they ever lay off people?

KM: Yeah, used to lay off.

VL: But they kept you on?

KM: Yeah. I work till the last---when they close up.

VL: Is that because you had been there a long time, so they wanted you to stay?

KM: Yes. Mostly though, I used to handle the tires, you know. Before we used to sell quite a bit tires everyday, but when the depression hits, we didn't sell any. Nobody come buy tires; they no more money to buy tires. No more jobs, see.

VL: How was your father's business at that time?

KM: Well, the fishing business not too bad, but the price is so cheap, cannot make money, 'cause lot of people no more work, see, and they won't buy fish. So actually, fish price drop, eh. So cannot make too much money.

VL: Did you have other friends that lost their jobs, too?

KM: Oh, yeah. Get plenty people that I know that lose the job. So you have to take any kind of job, regardless what kind of job. As long as get job, you have to take it. Otherwise you cannot live. And the more worse, I got married 1929, see. And I have two children that time when the depression hit, see, so I have to find a job to support the family. So I went to the Hawaiian Tuna Packers. I work three years, night job. 6:00 to 6:00, 12 hours a day; everyday.

VL: What job was that?

KM: Watchman and cannery, receiving all the fish from the boat. Have to scale the fish. Was just like take care everything. Steam boiler. You know, you got to make the boiler, steam 'em up, eh. To cook the fish. So I have to watch that. I have to go look for somebody to help clean the fish.

VL: You did all those jobs yourself?

KM: All those jobs, yeah. I work from 6 o'clock in the evening to 6 o'clock in the morning. No sleep.

VL: Why did they have---the cannery kept operating overnight?

KM: Well, but it doesn't operate every time. Most time is in the summertime, see.

VL: So you had some fishermen coming with their catch nighttime then?

KM: Yeah, the boat come in nighttime mostly, see, so somebody have to stay there to receive the fish, 'cause they have a contract, you know, among

the fishing boats and the cannery had a contract. So, whatever (fish) market cannot take, they bring all to the fishing cannery.

VL: If they brought it in at night, was there someone from the market that would receive the fish first?

KM: No, no, no. Direct from the cannery. The early part the boat coming in, they goes to the market first, see. And then when the market have enough-- they cannot take every one, 'cause they cannot sell it--so the balance cannot sell in the market, they bring it to the cannery. So cannery have to take 'em all.

VL: So they had to take all the rest?

KM: Yeah, take all the rest for the cannery, see. They can 'em up.

VL: I read somewhere, that the fishermen would get less money from the cannery than from the market.

KM: Oh yeah. Yeah, those days, in the cannery, they had a contract. Was about 2½ cents a pound.

VL: This was around when you started in 1932?

KM: Yeah. 2½ cents a pound was contract. But if you sell it to the market, they auction, so they beat the price, see. But anyway, even though in the market, maybe about 10 cents a pound, or something like that. So cheap those days, eh. So many fishes and not much people those days. Today we have so many people, and not enough fish; 'as why price is high.

VL: Going back a little bit, how did you find that job at the tuna cannery?

KM: Well, I had to go to my friends, you know. My friend was running the cannery. Yeah, he was foreman, see. So I applied the job because they was looking for one night man job. So I don't want to but I can't help it. I cannot stay home, 'cause cannot eat.

VL: You didn't want it because it was nighttime?

KM: Yeah, and long hours. Those days, no more time limit, you know. You work 12, 13 hours a day, you know, with the same pay.

VL: No overtime?

KM: No overtime.

VL: What was your pay for those jobs?

KM: Well, I used to get \$75 a month, just enough to keep going with a family.

VL: And you worked there at that night shift how long?

KM: Three years. Then I was promoted in a day job. And my boss was get sick,

so they had to go Japan. So I take his place to run the cannery.

VL: Can you tell me little more about the night job? Describe more exactly what you did? You were at the docks, then, part of the time, when the boats came in?

KM: Well, during the cannery season, actually they start around May, June, July, August, September. Was about five months is the most aku season, see, when they catch plenty. Aku coming in. So somebody have to stay nighttime. You don't know when the boats come in, see. Sometime the boats come in about 1, 2 o'clock in the morning, see. So when the boat come in late, I have to go call--mostly Filipinos, see--to clean the fish. Have to clean the fish, and wash it, and then put 'em in a tray, stack 'em up about, oh, about six or seven in a tray, they put 'em. Then put 'em in car, and put 'em in the boiler, where they cook the fish. Steam the fish in it. They have so many boilers, see. So I have to call some help, eh.

VL: What would they be doing? Just waiting?

KM: Just waiting. Sometime waiting, but sometime they go home. They think the boat no coming in, they go home, eh. So when the boat come in late, after 12 midnight, like that, then I have to take a bicycle, go up to Magoon Block where the Filipino sleeping, eh.

VL: Oh, they slept at Magoon Block?

KM: Yeah. So I had to wake 'em up. "Eh, manong, go work." They no like come, eh, sometime, so I have to beg them come sometime. "Please kokua. But you no come tonight, no more job for you next time." You know, most of the time make scared, eh. But they come. Oh, the three hours, four hours, they work, eh. And you know, those days they was paying only 25 cents an hour, you know.

VL: So you would pay them by the hour, then.

KM: Of course cannery pay, but 25 cents an hour. Oh, so you can imagine those days, everything is so...

VL: So they never had permanent job, then? They just got to wait around?

KM: No, no, no, no. Yeah, got to wait around. I don't know what they do during daytime, but, I don't know. Just hang around the pool, or something like that, I don't know. They don't have a steady job. If they have a steady job, they won't come to the cannery anyway, because they have to sleep nighttime. So it's only about, at the most, about five, six guys. Enough to take care the job in two hours, three hours. Cannot leave too long because fish come spoil, eh.

VL: So how many of these Filipino men were sleeping at Magoon Block?

KM: Well, sometime they have about three, sometime four. Some, they don't

want to come work.

VL: Then what would you do if they wouldn't come?

KM: Well, I have to go another place to find some more men.

VL: Oh, where would you go then?

KM: See, I had one place that they call Ah Leong Block. It's near by the, you know where the State Tax Office? Right across. Punchbowl. It's a big Chinese store in King Street, Ah Leong, before. That's a big Chinese store used to have before. They in a King Street. Wholesale.

VL: What did they sell?

KM: All kind groceries. Chinese food, any kinds.

VL: And so then if the Filipinos weren't at Magoon Block, you would go to Ah Leong?

KM: Yeah.

VL: And what? Chinese workers or...

KM: No, no. Mostly Filipino.

VL: Filipino. They would live there?

KM: Yes. Of course, I have couple of Japanese boy, the kind no more job kind. They come around. Young boys. They have no job, see. So I used to call 'em.

VL: Were there any other areas where the Filipinos lived?

KM: Well, I don't know the other area. They used to scatter around, you know.

VL: Like at Ah Leong, they lived upstairs or...

KM: Yeah, upstairs.

VL: Was it one big room, or each had their own room?

KM: No, they stay in one whole room.

VL: They rented then from...

KM: Yeah.

VL: Is that the same as at Magoon Block?

KM: Yes, same as Magoon Block.

VL: So then you would get five or six men to come. Then did they help you weigh it? You had to measure the fish?

KM: No, no, no. That one, I have to do myself. They had a big scale where the trucks coming in, you know. First they load the fish on the trucks, on the scale. It's about 50 feet, 60---probably about 75 feet away from the pier to the cannery entrance. They have a big scale, where the truck and all go inside. And I weigh the fish there, empty 'em up. Then weigh the empty (truck) to get the right amount of fish. So make the paper, you know. And then gives to the driver. The driver take 'em to the company.

VL: You had to fill out the paper?

KM: Oh yes.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

VL: This is the continuation of the interview with Mr. Keisuke Masuda. Okay, we were talking about the weighing the fish. After that?

KM: Well, those days, mostly manpower, you see. No machinery. Only machinery is the when slice the fish---of course, that's their job, see. You want to go to the cannery?

VL: Sure.

KM: Before that, they cook the fish nighttime. And then they leave one day for cool off. When the meat soft, cannot clean so good, they lose lot of meat, see. So when the fish come hard, easier to clean and then you don't waste too much, you see. They clean all the skin, take the bones out and all of that.

VL: So they cook it first, and then clean it?

KM: Then clean it. Cook first and then leave one day, oh, so many hours anyway. Busy time, you cannot leave too long 'cause the fish keep coming, eh. But most time, we leave one day, and next day it goes to the cannery, workers, see. We have quite many ladies. Mostly ladies' job for cleaning. It goes to the tables' we get about six tables, you know. When have too many fish, we fill up all the tables. Approximately about 200 women. Maybe more, I think, was. And at the cannery job, I wen take over my foreman's job, and I have to take care the machine, where they put 'em in the can. Put 'em in the double seamer machine where they cover the...you ever seen the cannery, where the---you didn't see?

VL: No.

KM: We have three machines. Double seamer, they call it. They cover the machine, and seal 'em up, eh. And then goes to the steam cooker. They

going boil again, see.

VL: Again? Well, why do they do it again?

KM: Well, have to sterilize that. Have to cook that. That takes about hour. Then goes to the---well, those are all machines, see. Then goes to the cooker, and come out about one hour later. Can roll down, and girls pick it up, put 'em in a box. That goes to the warehouse, see. And of course, somebody stay in the warehouse. They'd stack 'em up, put 'em in a truck.

VL: What about the label?

KM: The label is afterwards, when they have a order from the Mainland, then the label. And then put 'em in a box, and then ship 'em up.

VL: Now, I'm a little confused because when the Filipino men come to clean the fish, what are they cleaning? They're not scaling it?

KM: No, no, no, no.

VL: How do they clean it?

KM: They just, you know, get the knife. We have a big table like this, see. And then the fishes are all on the ground, now. Pull it up, hold the tail, just open the belly, and take the guts out, see. They leave the heads.

VL: Leave the heads? And leave the tail?

KM: Yeah. Only take the guts out. And then, throw 'em in a big box, where they had a full water and wash it in there. Some guys, they wash, they put 'em in a tray. Some guys do only cutting. So we had to have quite a many help, not only the cutters, see. So they put 'em in the tray, and then, push 'em into the boiler, and they steam 'em up, see. Then, when the fish tray all go in the boiler, they close the door and lock it up. Then open the valve for the steam. And when the steam up so much temperature, then you got to time 'em up, see. Put down the time, what time the temperature come up so much degree, then look at the time, just put down the times. And after three hours, the fish cook already. So you look at the time, then open it, let the guys pull it out fish. Ride 'em up on the other area.

VL: So then they have to wait for that three hours while it's cooking?

KM: Well, they still keep on cleaning.

VL: Oh, I see.

KM: I leave about couple of guys behind. And the rest, the one is finish cleaning, they go home, see. Leave about two guys, when busy time, two guys. Not too many fish, I used to handle myself.

VL: Now these guys that went home, would you pay them cash?

- KM: No, no, no, no. Just put down this guy work so many hours and give to the timekeeper, whatever they call, anyway. And then they fix the pay.
- VL: Then who taught you how to do that job? Who taught you how to run things?
- KM: Well, my boss, foreman taught me how to run the cannery, see. But most times, you have to work by yourself, so you got to learn, you got to catch up.
- VL: Did you ever make any big mistake?
- KM: Well, sometime, not very much.
- VL: And then, so you did that for three years. Then you got promotion?
- KM: Promotion. And take care the day job, the canning job. Take care the womens, everything.
- VL: So you were foreman, and you watched them?
- KM: I watched them, the fish is cleaned. Of course, I have the foreladies, you know. Foreladies take care the ladies. We had them.
- VL: About how many foreladies?
- KM: Had about six for the cleaning side, and packing side, about four. So about 10 foreladies, yeah.
- VL: And you supervised them?
- KM: Yeah, I supervised them. And I watched things in the machine all right, see. Wait till the can, when they come out to the warehouse, then I leave the rest of the job to the warehouse guys; 'cause we have a man in the warehouse take care the warehouse. My job was to put the fish in the can and be sure that it was packed good, and cook 'em up. So was quite a big job for one-man job, you know. But of course, I have a helper who watching the machine. Double seamer. The kind that cover. You know that canned goods, they stay all cover, seal up. That all goes by the machine and they seal 'em up.
- VL: Now the 10 foreladies; were they Hawaiian ladies?
- KM: Had one Hawaiian ladies.
- VL: One? What were the rest?
- KM: Japanese. Mostly Japanese workers, see.
- VL: The ladies were mostly Japanese?
- KM: Majority were Japanese workers. Of course, they live around the Kakaako

area, so the close by. Of course, some people come from town, too, you know. But mostly ladies living in the Kakaako area. So they can just walk down there. Walking district, see. You know, Kewalo Basin. And how close to the Kakaako, where the people living around there. So majority Kakaako people. But we have quite a bit from town, too, because when the season time, when get plenty, many works, eh. So cannot handle because we have to get plenty help.

VL: So the peak season, you would have about 200 ladies?

KM: Oh, more. Sometime.

VL: About how many?

KM: About 250 to 300.

VL: And then slow season, how many?

KM: Slow season...well, they looking for job, too. Cannot give everybody, when they have small catch, see. Maybe work about two, three hours a day, we no need so many guys. So we go by rotate 'em. And then these ladies, they keep calling, all the time to the cannery. "Oh, they have work tomorrow?" And then when have a big table, plenty catches, run the six tables, everybody get a job, see. They come in.

VL: These tables are long?

KM: Long. Yeah, yeah.

VL: So how many ladies at one table?

KM: Oh, about 50, close to 40 on a one table. The cleaning part. And then on the packing table, get about 42, 43. They all pack, see. They all pack with the hands, you know. Now they have a machine, now. They don't use any help on the packing side. But the cleaning, have to clean by hand.

VL: Still?

KM: Yeah, still.

VL: What? They cut the head?

KM: No.

VL: How do they clean?

KM: The heads and the bones, and all the skins, and you know, the dirty part of the fish are going to the fertilizer. It goes to the bone meal, they call, eh. They making the fertilizer out of that. Only the good part, clean part, they put 'em in the cannery, in the can, see. But those days, all by hands. Pack with the hands, see.

VL: Now the ladies that cleaned it, did they cut it, or was it the packers that cut the fish?

KM: When the cleaning done, they break the whole fish into four pieces, eh. Four pieces. That breaks easy. They call that fillet, they call that fillet. So they put 'em on the hand, and they clean 'em. Then after clean, put 'em on a tray on top, and the tray is full, the lady put 'em in the cutting machines. They go by the conveyor, then goes to the cutting machine. And ladies run the cutting machine. Then goes to the packing table. And the ladies, when the fish come, put 'em on the table, and then pick it up, put 'em in a can and throw 'em to the conveyor where the, you know, the can goes to the machine. Of course, they put the oil, salad oil. They put little salad oil and little salt to make the taste, see. That's all there is. Then after can steamed, it goes to wash the oil out, they goes to the washer, steam everything, washer. They clean the oil out, see. Then goes to the cooker. That, mostly the machine, see. But the cleaning and the packing, all by hands.

VL: Now, you said when it's slow season, you would rotate. How would you decide who should come in that day?

KM: Well, we give 'em the number of the table, see. Some ladies stay table one, table two. We had six tables, see. We start from one, two, three, four, five, six. When we need our two tables, we call number one table, see. They all come. But other table number, even though they come, they cannot get in 'cause they have to wait their chances. So that way, it's fair, eh, to everybody. Instead of you come, you know, picking somebody, it's no good, see. So they call, everytime they call. Those ladies, they call. "What table running today?" "Well, table two and three." And then when they have big catch, we tell, "All table." Then everybody come in.

VL: You mean, did you have to answer all the phones?

KM: No, no, no. I don't answer the phone. But sometime, that nighttime man's job, see. Maybe work Monday, and have plenty fish, I come down look, see. I come down look in the cannery see how much fishes are. So I figure we need about three table today. Maybe need a whole table, so I put on the blackboard. So somebody stay nighttime, they tell 'em. "Oh, today, all table." Next day maybe, "Table one, table two."

VL: Now how would you let the ladies know 'cause there were so many of them? Did you call them?

KM: No, no. I don't call.

VL: So you wait for them.

KM: They call. But to organize that, we had a hard time, you know. After the thing is all set, it's easy. The beginning part, I had a hard time because they all like work, see. And some ladies, they come to work,

but they cannot get in. We don't need so many, so they have to go home. Lot of time happen that, see. So I had to use my head, you know.

VL: So before you came, then it was less fair?

KM: Yeah. 'Cause the other guy was running--see, they use to give the knife to the people, who like come inside, eh. So for instance, you happen to know this lady, you give 'em the knife. The other guys come, they can't get the knife. But that kind of style not so good, see, so I change the idea. So we give 'em the number. All the table number.

VL: When did you come up with that idea?

KM: Well, when they have a big catch everyday, everybody come work, eh. When it come slow down, we don't need so many guys. So that's the time I had to figure it out.

VL: Maybe the first year that you were the foreman you figured that out?

KM: Yeah. Because all the working ladies, they have a badge. They get the number. So I let one girl put all the numbers down. And the one number, one table. So you work on number one. You, go work on number two table. So they remember that, see. So that's how to get everybody get chance to work.

VL: Now how would you keep the time?

KM: Well, everyday we start 7 o'clock, right. See. When we start 7 o'clock, I blow the whistle. Start go work. When the fish cannery is over, you know, maybe 3 o'clock finish, sometime 4 o'clock, sometime 1 o'clock. All depend on the fish, eh. So when the table is all clean up, fish is all clean up, I blow the whistle. I put the time down, what time finish work, maybe 3:30. Put 'em down 3:30. So the timekeeper come, put down the time. And they send in to the office. They figure out the payroll. See, they all the workers, they get the number.

VL: So, is that when they come in, then you...

KM: Yeah, they bring the badge. I give 'em the badge. They apply the job, I give 'em the badge. So they have to put the badge on the back (of their collars), so whether the timekeeper comes around check, who comes today work, you know, all that.

VL: Oh, I see. Did you do the hiring of the ladies?

KM: Yeah, I used to do the hiring.

VL: Did a lot of women come apply for jobs then?

KM: Yeah, sometime I have to refuse. But the biggest catch was in 1937. They bringing in the fish, average about 85 to 90 tons. Ninety tons now! 85 to 90 tons everyday.

VL: Oh, my goodness.

KM: That was the first and the last in the history of Hawaii. After that, slow down. And today is hardly any fish.

VL: I wonder why 1937...

KM: I don't know. That was the biggest catch ever in the whole Hawaii history. I mean tuna packers history. And that was the year I was in there. And I work six weeks without Sunday off. I works 7, to 10, 11, 12 o'clock in the night. And next day got to come start again. That much fish because we didn't have any machinery. No have no equipment. All by hand, see. So you cannot handle. So most of the fish, maybe about--we was throwing away lot of fishes those days. Cannot handle. So one time we had to stop the fishermen to go out catch.

VL: Did they like that?

KM: Oh, they was mad, but couldn't help it.

VL: So you told them don't catch fish?

KM: Oh, that up to the office.

VL: The office told them?

KM: The head guys, you know. Because cannot handle, what you going to do?

VL: Could you have worked, like, the ladies on two shifts maybe?

KM: No. Just one shift. Work till nighttime. Overtime, they works to about 10. At the most 10 o'clock. Don't want to keep 'em too long because they have to come back the next day. That's the time I had hard time because I had to keep on hiring, hiring. Boy. Five to 600 people that time, in and out, in and out. 'Cause some ladies cannot take the job. They get sick, you know. So I have to hire young girls, you know. Yeah, I had a hard time 1937. We can the fish so much, and then, we no more place to put the cans. Warehouse was pack in full. Up to the ceiling.

VL: That's why you had to stop then?

KM: No, the office have to stop 'em. Stop about a week, I think. And they making the box, see. The carpenters...over there had the dry dock, see. They have a fixing the boats, where they have a plenty carpenters. So they make a temporary icebox, and put the ice inside, and put

water in the box, and then dump the fish in there to keep 'em. Until when the fishes not coming too much, then clean those fishes. I had to do that.

VL: Now, what was your pay at the foreman job?

KM: Well, I was getting \$150.

VL: When you first started foreman?

KM: No. Well, when I start foreman...when I was promoted to the foreman, I used to have only \$100. Then a year pass by, they give me a raise, see. So until 1941, 1941, when the war start breaks out, about that time was making \$165, or something like that.

VL: Was that good salary that time?

KM: Yeah, pretty good salary. They only pay the womens: clean the fish about 20 cents, you know.

VL: Twenty cents an hour?

KM: Yeah, yeah.

KM: And that come up, little by little come up. We pay 'em 25 cents. Some.

VL: And they would usually work how many hours a day?

KM: Well, all depend on the fish, eh. When they have plenty fish, they work eight hours. But when you have not too many, well, work till about six hours. Something like that. When you have little less, we work only about half-a-day. Soon as the fish all clean up, pau hana, eh. They have to go home.

VL: Then when they work over time, you pay them how much?

KM: Well, same amount.

VL: Same? Oh, oh, I see. Did they have any benefits?

KM: No, no, no, no such things. Not like now days.

VL: Did you have any benefits?

KM: No, no. Nothing.

VL: What if someone got hurt? Accident? Did any accidents ever happen?

KM: Well, yeah, sometime they have little accident, but that the company take care, see. I have nothing to do with those things.

VL: Do you remember any accidents that they had?

KM: No. I don't remember because they're only some minor kind accidents. Sometime they cut fingers. Sometime they slip and fall down. Not too much.

VL: But do you think that the company paid them medical, if they had to go to the doctor?

KM: No, no, no. I don't think so.

VL: Oh, I see. Do you remember how much the foreladies were paid?

KM: I paying the foreladies...the last time, I was paying them about 27 cents, no.

VL: So not much more than the cleaners?

KM: No, no. About couple of cents more than.

VL: Were most of the women young women or....

KM: Well, mostly middle age women. Of course, we hired some young girls 'cause summertime no more school, eh. So they come to work. I have a young girls, I put 'em in a warehouse job, 'cause they no like smell the fish. So let them working in the warehouse.

VL: And what would they do in the warehouse?

KM: Well, label, and all kinds.

VL: Was the smell very bad?

KM: Oh, was terrible.

KM: If sometime you happen to pass by Ala Moana when the fish running, you can smell 'em. That was---most of the smell comes from when they making the fertilizer.

VL: Did they make it right there?

KM: Yeah. You know the waste food, all like that. Heads, and guts, all, see; they goes to the fertilizer and make fertilizer. That's where the most smell come. But in the cannery, of course, you do smell. Some ladies cannot take, see, so they don't want to work. Same as pineapple. You go in the pineapple, you smell lot of smell, pineapple smell. Did you ever see pineapple cannery?

VL: That I saw, yeah. Pineapple cannery.

KM: You smell.

VL: Okay. Can I go back---or is there anything more about the cannery?

KM: Well, I think that's about all. I'd like to mention that as the biggest catch in the Hawaii history. That's my knowledge. 'Cause that was the first, and the last. Was 1937, where they bring in the fish, average 85 to 90 tons every night for about two weeks, or three weeks. And then start slow down. About three weeks they was going. Was a big catch. That's where the fishermen make plenty money. Of course, the workers make plenty money. You know those days, 'cause they work everyday.

VL: Long hours, too.

KM: Long hours. Some ladies, they don't like come work. The hands all blistered up, eh.

VL: Did they wear gloves?

KM: No, no, no, no gloves. No gloves. Cannot wear gloves, and pack the fish. Pineapple, you have to wear gloves because the acid can eat up quick, eh. When they put 'em in the can, poke 'em by the hole, and put 'em in the can, eh. But fish, cannot do that. You have to pack 'em in the can nicely, you know. Looks good, eh. You no like any kind ways, you know. Of course, we have light tuna meat, they call number one. And then, now days call that chunk, eh. Now days all chunk, eh. But we don't call that those days chunk. We call it number two. They call flakes. You know all kind of small pieces. That one, just pack 'em. But number one, light meat tuna, they have to pack 'em nicely. And we got to weigh the can, too, sometimes. But approximately they can tell, almost can tell, you know. They're about, comeabout average. You cannot scale every one. That's take too much time.

VL: So you just scale once in a while to test it?

KM: Once in a while, take out and thing is too over, tell the lady, "You packing too much." If too little, no good, too. But that's forelady's job. Just keep looking around, looking around, you know, see how they packing. That was doing all right.

VL: Did you ever have any trouble with the foreladies, or with the other ladies?

KM: No, no. No trouble. Well, sometime I had to scold the ladies, but, you know, just to encourage them or something.

VL: Did any of them ever--were lazy or....

KM: No. Oh, they work hard.

VL: Yeah, yeah. When it's slack season, did you always get to work same?

KM: Well, in the slack season is we have to overhaul the machine, take care all the...everything, got to take care, eh. The machinery and repairing, all kind so.

VL: Did you do the repairs?

KM: Yeah. I used to take the machine all apart, overhaul 'em, put it back for get ready for the season. Mhm. Yeah, during the working time, we had lot of troubles, they had. Sometime we had to call a guy from American Can where they make cans, you know, American Can Company. Used to have before. We have to call the mechanic, put some new parts, like that.

VL: But for regular care, you were able to do that?

KM: Yeah, yeah. I had to do that myself. When a can get jammed, the machine stop, you know, so I had to repair that.

VL: And who taught you that?

KM: Well, mostly I learn myself. Of course, first one I watch, eh, how when the thing get jammed like that. My boss before.

VL: When you were a foreman then, did you have a boss?

KM: No. Of course, I have a superintendent above me. It's a haole guy, see. But he don't bother us.

VL: Uh huh. Let's you run the thing?

KM: Yeah.

VL: The time you had to work so many hours, did you get overtime?

KM: No, no, no.

VL: So always paid one month?

KM: Yeah, one month salary.

VL: Did they pay you cash or....

KM: No, they gave us check.

VL: Okay now, the conditions inside, it's one big warehouse, yeah. Like one big room?

KM: Yeah, one big room. About two-third of the building is used for the cannery and one-third of the building used for the warehouse. It's a long building. It's about little over 250 feet, I think. Approximately 200 feet.

VL: Was it hot inside or....

KM: Yeah, it's kind of hot so we had the fan running all the time. No more air conditions those days. You know the kind fan, big fan, you know, hanging down? And we have to keep the fan running all the time because the flies are coming in.

VL: Oh, you had problems with the flies, then?

KM: Yeah. So have to keep the fan running to keep the flies away. And once in a while we had to bring the...you know the kind shoot the medicine? Keep the flies away? What you call that? DDT or something like that. Anyway, keep the fly away. Shoot all on the floor, see, so the fly don't come around too often. Of course, they have mostly screen, but sometime door's wide open, eh, all the time. People in and out, in and out.

VL: Did you ever have any problems with rats or mice or cockroaches?

KM: No.

VL: So the whole time that you were there until 1941 when the war broke out, there was no fish for the packing?

KM: Packing. So after the war, the people from the Mainland took over the cannery, see. That's why they have to bring everything from the Mainland style, see. So they would go away with the old fashion. Everything is new style.

VL: Okay, I think I asked you everything that I wanted to about the job. Unless you have anything else.

KM: Well, I think that's about all on the fishing. But did I mention about how many aku boats those days?

VL: No.

KM: Had about 18 to 19 aku boats. Special is only aku. That means we have so much fishermen. Each aku boat have about nine or 10 crew, eh.

VL: Now were those aku boats belong to the tuna packers?

KM: No, no, no. Maybe some, but mostly individual owners.

VL: Do you remember anything else, like who the owners, or were they Japanese-owned mostly?

KM: Yeah, mostly Japanese, those days. Today, well, some other people.

VL: And what did the Kewalo Basin area look like? Same as today or...

KM: Well, it's about same as today.

VL: So these aku boats were berthed in Kewalo Basin?

KM: Yeah. See, aku boats, they all stay in the Kewalo Basin. They go out nighttime, they catch the bait, and daytime they go fishing. They go out. Some of them go out about 30 miles away, or some, you know. Around the neighbor islands. Some, they goes Molokai, some goes as far as Kauai.

VL: And do you remember anything else about the dry dock?

KM: Well, they have to dry dock. That's belong to the Hawaiian Tuna Packers. Mostly they repair the boats. So they have to repair the boat maybe--- they have to go on the dry dock at least twice a year, you know. So they clean it, they paint it, and repair the boat, and repair engine, like that. The Tuna Packers running the dry dock. All, most the boat, Japanese fishing boat, they goes to the dry docks. Small, big, all kinds. Have quite a many workers out there. Carpenters.

VL: Then would the owners of the fishing boats pay the Tuna Packers?

KM: Yeah, pay Tuna Packers, yeah. Whatever the cost, they got to pay.

VL: Did the Tuna Packers do any other kind of work? They had the fertilizer, and the dry dock, and the cannery.

KM: That's only about three main job.

VL: Okay, going back a little bit, you said in 1929 you got married?

KM: Yes.

VL: Can I ask how you met your wife?

KM: Oh. You know, Japanese style those days, they have a (go-) between man, eh. They go let you meet one girl. If I like her, I tell 'em, "Go ahead, Go hustle." You know, they go in-between; they talk the things over among the families. And that's a plenty cases those days, when the between men, they go to make the marriage. I was one of them. So I went through my friends, anyway, see. I had to go to Honouliuli. You know, you remember Honouliuli near Ewa Plantation? That's where she was. So one day I drive over to meet her. Well, just, you know. Tell 'em go ahead. She like me.

VL: You liked her?

KM: So they talk it over. Get married.

VL: Was that your parents that used the in-between?

KM: No, you have to go with a friends.

VL: Friends? Yeah. You were living with your parents at the time?

KM: Yeah, yeah. So after we got married, I wen go to the between men lot of times, you know, to get some other people get married. I do that quite a bit, go in-between.

VL: What do they call that? Miai or...

KM: Yeah, miai.

VL: But you knew the person that arranged it? Did you know this person before? The miai?

KM: No, no.

VL: Did you tell him, "I want this kind of lady?"

KM: No, no. Just look at 'em, that's all.

VL: Oh, just look at 'em.

VL: And then how long did you know her before you got married?

KM: She was so young, see, so I had to wait one year. I was engaged one year before I got married.

VL: You were about 28 then.

KM: Yeah, about that.

VL: And she was...

KM: She was about 19.

VL: And then she came to Kakaako?

KM: Right.

VL: Then did you folks still live with your parents?

KM: Yeah, the both parents was there in those days.

VL: Both of your parents?

KM: Yeah. My wife's side. But they all passed away now, but they came in Kakaako. They was living at Honouliuli, but since she got married, they all moved to Kakaako.

VL: Same house?

KM: No. Different house, but same area, you know. Near. Neighbor. About one block, was half-block away.

VL: Did you have your own house?

KM: Yeah. I build a house before I got married. Of course, was lease land, you know. So I build the house to get prepare for get married, see.

VL: Who did you lease that from?

KM: That was from the Ward Estate.

VL: How much did they charge?

KM: Oh, those days was very cheap, eh? I paid about a 100 dollars a year, something like that, leasehold. Very cheap.

VL: And you built your own house?

KM: Yeah, I built my own house. Of course, I had to hire a carpenter. I had the carpenter, too, and I do part of the work on the house. I had only one carpenter to build the house, see. So I help him to make the house.

VL: Oh. About how much did it cost to build the house?

KM: Well, those days was cheap. Everything, plumbing, about thousand five hundred (\$1,500).

VL: That's pretty good. What kind of house? How many bedrooms?

KM: Well, about three bedrooms.

VL: Then how long did you stay in that house?

KM: I stayed until...Kakaako, had to evacuate on account of the change in the zone. That was 1955, or somewhere around there.

VL: So you stayed that same house then, all those years?

KM: Same house. Until the lease expired anyway. That was 25 years lease, see. 1930 I built the house so...

END OF SIDE TWO.

SIDE ONE: TAPE #3-8-1-77

VL: This is a continuation of the first interview with Mr. Keisuke Masuda. This is the second tape. Okay, when you first got to Kakaako in 1915, how many Japanese language schools were there?

KM: Well, there's only one.

VL: What was the name of that?

KM: It's Kakaako Japanese Language School.

VL: Is that the one that you attended?

KM: Yes.

VL: Where was that?

KM: Was in Queen Street, below the Queen Street. Corner of Coral Street or something like that. Anyway, near the Pohukaina School.

VL: Who ran it?

KM: It's among the Japanese people, parents. All the Japanese school in Hawaii is not run by government or what, see. Their own individual. The parents, PTA, something like that. They donate the money and build the school, and pay the tuitions for the kids. And the teachers getting paid on the tuitions.

VL: How many teachers did this school have?

KM: Well, have one principal, about three other teachers that time when I was there. But not many people, see. Not many students. Of course later on, they have. Two Japanese school they make. Each school had about four fifty (450), somewhere around students. That much had a big population in Kakaako.

VL: When did the second one come?

KM: The second one comes, I don't know exactly what year but anyway, they had a little troubles among the parents, so they don't want to get along with the other guy, so they make their own school.

VL: What was the trouble?

KM: Well, the trouble, beginning, at one time the United States, the government, they no like the Japanese school in Hawaii, see. So they go to the court, see. Of course, they win the case, so they had to run the Japanese school again. But that time in Kakaako, the principal, they don't like the idea for go court, see. So some people, they want to go court, see. So that's why the opinions breaks up, and that's why they spread the school.

VL: So the principal of that school did not want to take it to the court?

KM: Yeah, that's right.

VL: Who were the ones that did want to take it to court? Some parents?

KM: Some other schools, see. Some other schools. Had plenty Japanese school. Makiki, Moiliili, Palama. All the district had a Japanese school. Among the Japanese schools, some of the schools, they don't want to go to the court, see. Some, they want to go out to the court. So finally, they went to the court, they win the case, anyway. That's how the things happen.

VL: So in Kakaako, what kind of feelings...did the community split in half?

KM: Yeah, community split in half.

VL: How did that happen or....

KM: Well, just on account of the school. School questions.

VL: What were the feelings, like, towards the other people?

KM: Well, it's hard to say, but..."You don't like the idea," "You like the idea." Something like that, see. So may as well make our own. "You make your own, we make our own." Something like that, you know.

VL: Was it so that the people would not speak to each other? They were not friends?

KM: No, no, they speaks. But inside the heart they don't feel so good, eh. They not so happy. You know what I mean.

VL: Was there any leaders of that school?

KM: Well, yeah, of course they have some leaders. Well, those days, all the Japanese, first Japanese, they all was young, see, in those days. They have lot of energy. Then you know, they have lot of fighting spirit, see. Those days, the Japanese issei, they all young, eh. They want to educate the niseis. They work hard on those things, see.

VL: I read that the leader of the group that wanted to take it to court, Makino?

KM: Yeah.

VL: For the Hochi?

KM: Makino was the leader. He want go to the court.

VL: Did you know him?

KM: No, actually I don't know him.

VL: Then the other side, I think, was the Reverend Okumura?

KM: Something like that, yeah.

VL: Do you remember about what year that was? I think they won the case in 1927. Around there?

KM: Something like that, yeah.

VL: Were you involved in that?

KM: No, no, no. I was in the neutral side, see, because I don't want go involve that, see.

VL: What about your parents? Did they have any feelings?

KM: No, they have no....my parents are no such things. They don't know what's going on anyway.

VL: Did you have friends that were involved with that?

KM: Yeah, I had some friends that was involved.

VL: Did they say anything, or do anything?

KM: No, I don't think so.

VL: Would you say that this caused hard feelings in the community there?

KM: Was, yeah, the beginning part. But after the years go by, well, you now, automatically comes down. So, was getting along all right.

VL: But they still kept the two schools?

KM: Oh yeah.

VL: You said that later on they had so many students 'cause the population was going up?

KM: Yes, population, yeah.

VL: Do you remember about when this population started to go up?

KM: Well, somewhere about around 1930, yeah.

VL: Were these people coming off the plantation?

KM: No. Some of the downtown area, they move to Kakaako or something like that. 'Cause lot of fishermen was in Kakaako, and some fishermen live in town, they comes to Kakaako.

VL: Were there certain areas in Kakaako that the Japanese people lived?

KM: Well, mostly they lived close by.

VL: Close by where?

KM: You know. Like...there's lots of houses came up, see. Mostly rent house, you see. That's why the people coming in Kakaako. Rent is cheap, and it's convenient place, you know. That's why many peoples come to Kakaako, and there's lot of population.

VL: But I mean, were there certain sections of Kakaako that were mostly Japanese or mostly Portuguese?

KM: Mostly Japanese below the Queen Street. You saw them speaking about Portuguese living around Queen Street. Yeah. Not too many. Hawaiians, not too many.

VL: So that area where the Japanese were mostly living, did most of the Japanese know each other? Did most of you know everybody, all the other Japanese?

KM: Yeah, some, quite a bit, quite many. 'Course they live so close, you see. You go step out of the door, next door you see friends. And next door you see another friends, and all that, see. They so close. Like today, you don't know who's living next door. Like our place, you know. And they don't talk too much, too, either. They no get acquainted. But the Kakaako people is so close, so they friendly, see. That's where the good part of the Kakaako. So they never forget Kakaako, even now we running the Kakaako Community Association, see. Even they're not staying in Kakaako. But they living all around the place, but they all come together.

VL: Why do you think they felt that way? So close?

KM: Well, it's kind of hard to explain, though. All good nature, eh? They all help each others, like that.

VL: Did you folks used to share foods or...

KM: Oh yeah, we share foods.

VL: What kinds of things would you do together with your friends?

KM: Well, everytime we get party, get together. That's the main thing. When the people get together, we have party, and everyone starts to know. That's one thing that's Kakaako used to have, lots of party.

VL: What was the occasion for the parties? The reason?

KM: Well, like for instance, fishermens, they always like to party, they like drinks, you know. Of course, they celebrate New Year's, and

some other occasion where they have the big catch. The fish, they have a big catch, they celebrate. And if they don't catch, they celebrate.

KM: To make a good luck. Something like that.

VL: Where would they have the party? At their house?

KM: At the homes. Invite most close friends, see. Not everybody, but cannot hold the people anyway.

VL: Were there any times when all the Japanese got together?

KM: Not everybody. As far as the community concerned, they have a New Year gathering, you know. That's when most of the people get together. They go to the teahouse. Teahouse, you know.

VL: Where was that teahouse?

KM: Where they'd serve the drinks and food like that.

VL: Yeah, where was that?

KM: Oh, it's around Vineyard Streets, and some, School Street. Like Natsunoya, (name of teahouse) used to go Kanraku Teahouse and all that kind. They borrow the place and they make a sort of meeting, anyway. General meeting. They celebrate the New Year.

VL: What about churches or temples they have in Kakaako?

KM: Yeah, Kakaako, they had Buddhist temple. I don't know about Christian side. I don't know much, because I'm not interested on Christian, see. South Street, they had the Jodo Mission. Of course they had Japanese School, too, over there. Of course that's only girls' school.

VL: Yeah, you were saying something about that once.

KM: Yeah. yeah. But now they move to Makiki area. They didn't stay Kakaako not too long. I don't know what year they move, but anyway, had one Jodo Mission, and Japanese Shinto temple, had two. 'Cause they fishermen, mostly fishermen, they pray for the good luck, eh. So every once in a while, they have a celebrate. That's where the people get together most time. Around the show, movies like that. Try to make some money for the shrines like that.

VL: Was your father Shinto?

KM: Yeah, yeah.

VL: So one Jodo and two Shinto? Any other?

KM: I think only had two, though. As far as I know.

VL: How about Christmas? Would you celebrate Christmas at all?

KM: Well, mostly it's celebrate at home, eh. Some people do, some people don't.

VL: How about bon dance?

KM: Bon dance, yeah. That was after the war. After the war, we put up the Kakaako Community Association after the war. And the same time we organize the Japanese school. Because during the war time, everything is closed; everything is shut down for so many years. We build again. We reorganize the Kakaako community. And that's the time we used to have bon dance. We run the bon dance until about five, six years.

VL: Five, six years ago?

KM: No, five, six years, every year. Before Kakaako move out.

VL: You were one of the organizers of the community?

KM: Yes. Yeah...I was one of the organizer.

VL: Why did you feel that Kakaako needed a community association?

KM: Well, because we had before, too, before the war we had, see. We have to have a community to help the people. Like some people passed away, you know, so we have to go there help make the funeral like that. That's part of the job, community. Work for the members, and they all appreciate, see.

VL: Money, you would help?

KM: Money, with the money. And with the help, you know. Anything they need for make the funeral. 'Cause the family, their family cannot do that. Somebody friends have to do that for, see. That's where all the community need the help, people need the help, see. That's one reason. And another thing is to get together, you know, to help each other. And we was running the Japanese school, so we have to have plenty help, eh. And send the kids to go schools, educate at the Japanese language school.

VL: But it already had two language schools, Kakaako.

KM: No, that was before the war. I'm talking about after the war, see. Before the war, had two Japanese school, but until the war...

VL: But then pau.

KM: Pau. Everything is gone, like community gone. Everything as far as community concern, everything is stop. After the war, well, we re-organize again, see.

VL: The community association that you had before the war, do you know when that started?

KM: Well, I think they was started on around, somewhere around after the depression, 1932, 1933.

VL: Were you in on that, too?

KM: Yeah, I was a members, anyway.

VL: Were there a lot of members?

KM: Well, had quite a bit. About hundreds (100), 150, something like that. But some people, they don't want to join in the club.

VL: Why is that?

KM: I don't know.

VL: Did most people join?

KM: Most people join, or they not take an interest in, you know.

VL: So the kind of things that that community association would do were help each other for funerals, and what else? In the early one?

KM: Well, besides the Japanese school, no more not much...mostly we get together, get pleasure, have picnic, like that, you know. Make the kids happy. Something like that. Somebody have to do the kind of--- start doing that, otherwise nobody going do, eh. See, once a year, we use to run and have a picnic. You know, let the kids and family go to the Ala Moana Park, and then you know.

VL: From way back in the 1930's like that?

KM: No, didn't have like that, those days. We didn't have any picnic. Mostly bon dance and picnic like that is after the war.

VL: So before the war, mostly what was the community association for?

KM: Well, not much.

VL: Did you folks ever do things with the Hawaiian people?

KM: No.

VL: Or go see their festivals or something?

KM: As far as I know of, 'cause we not taking too much interest to meeting the other people, you know. All my kids, they do. They go around with all the guys, but the parents doesn't do.

VL: In the 1930's, did you folks speak Japanese mostly to each other?

KM: Yeah. Mostly Japanese.

VL: What about the small children? Was there any place where you could put the small children for the mothers that worked?

KM: No. Didn't have before.

VL: How about the other celebrations like mochi pounding? Did you do that?

KM: Yeah, they use to do that at home, mostly.

VL: Oh, at home.

KM: All the neighbors get together, you know. But some, they order in stores, you know. Downtown they have mochi specialize there. Only that's mostly New Year time, eh.

VL: How about the Emperor's birthday? Was that ever celebrated?

KM: No, we don't celebrate at all. No.

VL: And how about Girls' Day and Boys' Day?

KM: Well, they do at the home.

VL: At home. Umhum. Was there any other organization for....help the people like did people have tanomoshi?

KM: Yeah, that's more on those....the people who wants to join in, you know. They get tanomoshi to help these guys out. Maybe this guy is in the hole, and about the friends, about 20 or more people get together, pay every month so much to help these guys. At the same time you make your little interest. Yeah, that was going on quite a bit from long time. Even myself, my parents used to----everytime, when they buy the boat, they need money, so cannot borrow money from the bank, so got to make tanomoshi to borrow from all the friends. That's how they was going.

VL: So your parents used that to buy the boat?

KM: Yeah.

VL: Did you ever use it, like for your house, to build your house?

KM: No, no. I didn't do that for my house, but my father used to make tanomoshi to make little money for investment, see. And I didn't do any. But I joined in to help the other guys.

VL: Was there a case where the person receiving the money just left?

KM: Oh yeah, some, they have. Many case happen, I heard. But I didn't have any trouble at all. My group.

VL: Was there much trouble in Kakaako, like stealing, crime?

KM: No, no. No crime, no stealing. Every open house with the doors open. Those days, nothing have happen.

VL: Well, you have anything else you want to say?

KM: I don't think so.

VL: Tired, eh?

KM: The most Japanese community activity is after the war, see. You don't want to go after the war, so.

VL: Why was there not much before the war?

KM: Not much what?

VL: Japanese activity? You said it's mostly after the war that the community gets together. How come not before?

KM: Well, they had before, too, but I wasn't involved. I was not officer, just a regular members. And I was little young, too, eh. Was so busy with house taking care the kids and all that. There's not time to go.

VL: You have how many children?

KM: I have eight all together.

VL: Eight children? No wonder. And did they all go to Pohukaina School?

KM: No. Until the last two....of course I have to move from Kakaako. I move 1952, eh, 1953, or something like that. So the last two, I had one boy and the last boy and girl, they went maybe one or two year. One year, they went to the Pohukaina. And the last girl, we moved, that's why they went to Lanakila. But the first five, they all go to the Pohukaina.

VL: Did you also send them to Japanese language school?

KM: Oh, yeah.

VL: Your wife, when she had the babies, would she go to the hospital or did she have them at home?

KM: Until the war, yeah, those are midwife, eh. Birth at home, eh.

VL: Was this a midwife that lived in Kakaako?

KM: No, they downtown.

- KM: They comes around. They come around every once a month to check on, you know. So when time for get birth, well, we got to call telephone, and she comes run down, right away.
- VL: And then what did you have to pay her?
- KM: We use to paid around \$30. Somewhere around there. Was cheap. Take care everything, you know.
- VL: So the first three children were born that way?
- KM: Yeah. I think was four, yeah, four.
- VL: And then after that?
- KM: After that is hospital. One boy was born during the wartime, so have to go in the hospital. Those days, even the hospital was cheap, eh. Now cost lot of money to raise baby now.
- VL: But you didn't have any insurance from your work? The medical? No medical?
- KM: No, no, no, no. No such things those days, see. Everything you have to pay your own.
- VL: Can you go into a little bit about the Kakaako Community Association after the war?
- KM: After the war? We reorganize the Kakaako community 1949, see. At the same time, we put up the Japanese school run by the Kakaako community. Take care everything. We borrow the school room. We fix 'em up, you know. Everything was gone, see. You know, on account of the war, eh. The building used to had, the army took it over, so some kind of warehouse, or something like that.
- VL: Which building?
- KM: We had the school building before, but during the wartime, some other guys take the school building to use their own warehouse, or something like that, see. So we didn't have anything. So we have to build our own. We have to get the, you know, the quonset hut building? You know, we bought that from the scrap junkyard and bring 'em in, and make a schoolroom out of that. Make the school house. And we do that all by volunteer work, you know. Every community work, see. 'Course we have to pay for the materials like that, but all the labors and all that, all help, community work, see. Volunteer work. Then we hired the teacher, open the school. And that's all run by the Kakaako community.
- VL: And you were in 1949, the vice-president?

- KM: Yeah, I was 1949. At the beginning I was secretary for about a year, and I come to vice-president. Then until about---more or less 15 years I was vice-president, and then I took over the presidency, until today anyway. It's quite long. We observing 30 birthday, 30 anniversary next year, you know, Kakaako Community. So it's quite long.
- VL: Back then did most of the Japanese people that moved into Kakaako, did they stay there long time? Or did lot of people come and go, come and go?
- KM: Well, some of them come and go because they---all depend on where they stay, eh. Depend on what area they stay. Some have to go out, you know.
- VL: Were most of the people, I think you said, fishermen?
- KM: Yeah. Mostly fishermen was there.
- VL: But would they stay if they could stay, or did some get better jobs and leave?
- KM: Well, some, they get better job, they leave. But they cannot stay because the Ward Estate and Bishop Estate, they like throw 'em out, because they like....on account they change to the industrial zone, see. They won't lease 'em any more.
- VL: What happened to your house when the lease ran out?
- KM: Well, just leave it there. Just leave it there. Can't take it away.
- VL: So what is it now? What is that...
- KM: Oh, that area? All the warehouses.
- VL: Warehouse? So they knocked your house down?
- KM: Oh yeah. Even the Japanese school was there, but knock 'em down. They build up new warehouses. Everything has changed over there now.
- VL: Just a couple more questions on what do you think should Kakaako be remembered for? Is there anything really special about Kakaako that stands out?
- KM: Well, hard to say, no. I cannot explain, because....I can explain in Japanese, but hard to explain in English. I don't know what words to use, see. But what I think is Kakaako, the people are so close, they friendly. That's one of the things that very proud of. That's why that's the only part I can say.
- VL: I guess I asked you before. I'm not sure why they were so friendly, what made them so close, you know. Is it just because they live

close together or....

KM: Well, maybe depends on the nature of the people who living there. That's what I can say. I don't know how to explain that now.

VL: Yeah. If you can say it in Japanese, go ahead, and then I get somebody else to translate it if you want to say...

KM: Even the Japanese, kind of hard.

VL: So you feel pretty proud about being from Kakaako?

KM: Yeah.

VL: And why is that? Why do you feel that way?

KM: Well, because we live there so long. You know what I mean. All the peoples are good, and no troubles, no crime, no more stealing. Everything is peaceful. You know what I mean "peaceful"? Of course, they have little fights among those people here and there, but that's everybody do that. They (outsiders) was talking about Kakaako gang the other day, but only very few people involved that. They go out to the other district, they makes the fight and all that. You know they (outsiders) was talking about the other day, Kakaako gang? So people that lives in the other area, they was kind of scared of Kakaako. You know.

And they thought was Kakaako is a rubbish pile place because they have an incinerator. So they give a bad names, yeah. And besides those days, some of the roughnecks, they gang up and makes fights and all that, so people living other district, they heard that, and they says, "Oh, Kakaako is a bum place." All that story. That's where the news spread. Besides they have a incinerator up there. They bring all kind rubbish up there, see. "Oh, you Kakaako? Oh, you rubbish pile." Some say like that. They think so cheap, you know. They was thinking was so cheap. But stay in Kakaako, it's not cheap. They all gentle. Was only one little mistake the people do that kind of things, the news spread, and spoil the whole area. Any place same, eh. One guy make trouble, they spoil the whole place up. Something like that.

VL: So you think Kakaako was not like that?

KM: No, no. As far as I know. Among the Japanese, especially. You don't see much young Japanese boys go in a bad way. Of course, might have some, but majority is all right.

VL: Okay, I guess, I'll wrap that up then. Thank you very much for all the time. You have anything else to add?

KM: No, I think that's about all. 'Course I don't know much about the

other people, you see, 'cause I don't go with a lot of people, see.
Mostly Japanese people, see.

VL: You have anything else you want to add about the Japanese people?

KM: No. That's about all, eh.

VL: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW.

Tape No. 3-46-2-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mr. Keisuke Masuda (KM)

April 12, 1978

Kaneohe, Oahu

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: This is the second interview with Keisuke Masuda in his home in Kaneohe and the date is April 12, 1978.

Okay, Mr. Masuda, I have some general questions I want to ask you today and then I'll talk to you about the community association too. Could you explain to us what makes up a camp in Kakaako. You know, the way the houses are. How did they decide what was a camp and what was not?

KM: In those days, the houses were built just like some buildings are, just like apartment-style, you know. And some is cottage but they're duplex. Two different person live in a one house but they have a partition in the middle. Just like a duplex. Most of the building was like that. And then they have maybe the house owner build maybe five or six building in one lot.. And that they call "camp."

GG: Did they have, like, Portuguese Camp and Japanese Camp, or did they just refer to the houses like that as Japanese camp mostly.

KM: Well, mostly Japanese camps. Of course, the Portuguese they live, they all get together.

GG: But they didn't call that a camp.

KM: No. No, no.

GG: I see. That was just like a little neighborhood.

KM: Yeah. Neighborhood.

GG: Okay. And you talked about the fishing supply stores. I think Soranaka was one and Kido was one. Where were they? Do you remember?

KM: Well, Soranaka was in the Punchbowl Street. Used to call that Kakaako Street, anyway. Right along side of that used to be the Iron Works, over there. You know the Punchbowl Street? It goes right through to Ala Moana. Well, that's near Ala Moana was. You know, they call that Kakaako Street that time. Actually the Kakaako, the name of the Kakaako

is from Punchbowl up to Cooke Street. From Cooke Street to Waikiki side, they call Kewalo. But they all combined and then they call the whole district "Kakaako."

GG: Do you know when they sort of combined? Because before, wasn't it Kewalo was a separate area? Kakaako, Kalia was separate. But when did they start sort of combining into the whole district?

KM: Well, as plenty people start moving into Kakaako, Kewalo district 'cause there was no room in the Kakaako so they borrowed the land. The places were all cleared places. The dredging. They put all the coral to make the land, make 'em bigger.

GG: The big land owners did that? Or the county or?

KM: Well, that land is supposed, used to belong to the Ward Estate. But dredging, you know Hawaiian Dredging, whatever that dredging companies, dredged the Kewalo Basin. All that coral they put 'em up there because there was a swamp before. Build up the place and make one nice big land up there.

GG: And then they started putting houses?

KM: Yeah, putting houses. All the people, they leased from Ward Estate. And some belongs to the Bishop Estate, I think. Those two big firm, they used to own the land already.

GG: Now, there were two fishing supply stores so must have been plenty fisherman in the area? Right?

KM: Oh yes. When I was a small children, there wasn't so many. But after that, until the war, oh we had lots fishermen. Lots of boats. Fishing, the most industrial fishing is taken care by the all Japanese. Very few other nationalities do the commercial fishing.

GG: And what kinds of things were available at the fishing stores? Did you ever go in the fishing store?

KM: Yeah. They have all the, what they need. Anchors, rope, such as bamboos, hooks, everything that, net, big net; everything that need for catching the fish.

GG: And do you know how your dad got his boat and how he financed it?

KM: They borrowed the money from the people.

GG: Oh, tanomoshi kind?

KM: Yeah, tanomoshi kind. So every month pay so much. They make boat.

GG: Do you have any idea what it costs to build a boat in those days?

- KM: Those days wasn't so high like today. Maybe about \$1,000, little less than \$1,000 sometime. Of course, you got to buy engine. Including the engine and a boat used to be around \$1,500. Small boat, not big boat. Small, about 30 to 35 feet boat.
- GG: And did he have it made in Kakaako by one of the boat builders here?
- KM: Yes. All the boat was built in a boat shop. They have many boat shops, those days. Like Mr. Funai still running his business. You know, his son running the business today. Mr. Funai (Senior is retired now).
- GG: You remember Katamoto?
- KM: Katamoto, yeah. And they had some more. Fujimura, Matsumoto and Tanimura. But anyway, about five boatbuilders in that Kakaako area.
- GG: Do you remember which one your father got his boat from?
- KM: Well, he make boat several times. Change, sell. He think the boat too small, well, you sell the boat and you buy little bigger one. All that kind, you know?
- GG: Do you remember, when they put the boat in the water, did they have special celebrations?
- KM: Oh, yeah, yeah.
- GG: Can you tell me about that or what they did?
- KM: When the boat built, they ready for launch. It goes, from the boat shop, they put 'em in the trailer and truck will take 'em down to the beach. Kewalo Basin or whatever.
- GG: This was they already had trucks and not horses so was it 1930's or....
- KM: Long time ago, I don't know. But when I saw many boats was built but all they have a truck with a trailer. And before they leave the boat shop, they decorate the boat. Put flags and all kinds. And they have a little drink, sake and then they have, you know mochi? Well, they throw the mochi. The whole people is looking at it, you know.
- GG: This is the people are on top the boat and they throw? I mean the owners or....
- KM: The owners and (boat carpenters the chief), some of the friends go on top the boat.
- GG: And then they throw the mochi to the people down below?
- KM: Yeah. To the people who watching.
- GG: What do they do that for?

- KM: Well, that's for good luck. Just like on other kind boat, they throw the champagne? Well, something like that. Same kind of reason.
- GG: And that's while it's still in the shop?
- KM: Yeah. Just ready to go out. Decorate the boat. Put flags.
- GG: What kind of flags do they put?
- KM: Well, they used to put Japanese flags, American flags and small, some others, the flag that name the boat. Every boat has a name like Ebisu-maru or whatever the people put the names. That kind flags. Of course, some (of the friends) donate the flags.
- GG: And almost all of the Japanese fishing boats had maru as part of the name.
- KM: Maru, yeah.
- GG: Do you know what that means or why?
- KM: Well, that's from the Japan from long time ago. I don't know what to tell....but...when they put the name, they always put the maru on the back. Well, that's from long time ago, those Japanese they do that. I don't know what meaning is that but.
- GG: And then now, did the owners and the good friends ride on top the boat on the trailer to the water?
- KM: Yeah. Right.
- GG: And then what happens?
- KM: And then goes to the wharf. And then they slide down the boat.
- GG: And then do they take off or they have more celebration?
- KM: No. No. That's the end. That day. But that evening, they invite the friends to the teahouse to make a little celebration (party).
- GG: And is there any special custom at the teahouse or special things that they're supposed to do?
- KM: No, no. Just people who gathered. Maybe one or two guys give a congratulatory speech. That's about all. At the end, three banzai and good luck. Everybody start drinking and singing. That's way the used to be.
- GG: And they sang Japanese songs?
- KM: Oh, of course. They call some geisha girls play samisen, you know? Those days was all mostly Japanese fishermen and so they like that kind. But later one, little by little, they cut down that.

- GG: Was this, say, right before the war or after the war?
- KM: Oh, that was before the war. Long time before the war.
- GG: But when did they sort of gradually stop doing it? Were they still doing it by wartime or had already....
- KM: Well, war--after the war is no such thing. Everything stop, eh, after the war. Especially Japanese fishermen couldn't go out.
- GG: Oh, I didn't realize that.
- KM: Anybody who pass around the beach side, the MP going catch you and throw 'em in the concentration camp. We was scared, you know.
- Oh, they call the enemies, "enemy aliens," those days. Mostly aliens, the fishermen. Maybe 90 percent was aliens.
- GG: Issei, right? First generation.
- KM: Issei, yeah. So, they don't know what to do. They don't know even when the war start. If some people got killed when they coming home from the boat right outside there, near Pearl Harbor. That's right after Pearl Harbor. The war began maybe couple days, few days later. Because U.S. Navy was watching, eh. Watching the enemy coming, something like that.
- GG: What did those men do during wartime, then, to make money if they couldn't go fishing.
- KM: Well, for long time you can't do anything but the United States Army, they called United States Engineers [Department], U.S.E.D. And they want some everybody work for the government. So even the old men, get up go work. Cut kiawe trees, all kind works.
- GG: But they did let the older Japanese men do that kind of work then?
- KM: Oh yeah. But those days, those mens wasn't too old. That's almost 35 years ago right? So maybe the age about 50, or about 60. So they (can work any kind job).
- GG: So at least, though, they were able to make money to survive and provide for their families.
- KM: Yeah.
- GG: Did they have, then, before the war, when they did these celebrations, did they have a fishing association?
- KM: Yeah, oh yeah. They used to have.

GG: Did they have just one or they had more?

KM: Well, depend on the size of the boat and depend on what kind of fish they catching. For instance, the smallest boat, they call kobune (one-man crew). Well, they have their own association. And other kind, middle size boats, as the kind go catch red snapper, all kind (three-man crew).

GG: What is the name of that size. That size boat.

KM: Oh it's around middle size (about 35 to 40 feet or over).

GG: Did it have a Japanese name for that particular size of boat?

KM: No, no. Then they have that group that catching the ahi. That's about a little bigger than the middle size boat. And then the tuna boat. Tuna specialists.

GG: The tuna boat is the aku boat?

KM: Aku boat. Aku boat is the one big kine for go way out, see. They have the aku boat association. About four different associations among the people, what kind fish they catch. And then each boat belongs to the fishing company. When they catch the fish, well, you belongs to Hawaiian Sui-san or Honolulu or Pacific. Had three different fishing companies who take care of those fishes and give a little support to the fishermen. Whatever their trouble the company will help.

GG: But the fishermen own the boat, not the company own the boat.

KM: No, no. Majority, fishermen own his boat. Well, maybe some people cannot, financially cannot. Then the company help 'em.

GG: Did your dad belong to any of these associations?

KM: Yeah he used to. He used to belong to Hawaii Sui-san. That was the biggest. They had so many boats compared to other companies.

GG: Okay, now you had, changing the subject, talked about Ah Leong Block.

KM: Yeah, Ah Leong Block.

GG: Was that like Magoon Block? Same style?

KM: Yeah, same style but was smaller. Magoon Block is the large one. Had so many houses, so many stores, you know, first floor. The second floor, the people live. That's a long one.

GG: The Ah Leong Block, do you know who owned that one?

KM: I think was Ah Leong.

GG: It was Chinese fellow that owned.

KM: Chinese guy. Ah Leong. They have a big store on King Street. One or two biggest Chinese like C.Q. Yee Hop. Those olden days, just like a wholesaler. He owns so many houses. And they built the Ah Leong Block on Queen Street, by the Punchbowl. Queen and Punchbowl, somewhere around there.

GG: So it was a little ways away from Magoon Block, then.

KM: Oh yeah, yeah. It's maybe about two blocks away.

GG: And you said, I think, that it was mostly Filipinos that lived in Ah Leong Block?

KM: Yeah.

GG: Because that's where you used to go to try get the men to come help in the tuna cannery.

KM: Right.

GG: You had talked a little bit about the temples in Kakaako. Did you, I think said your father went to the Shinto temple. Is that correct?

KM: Well, those Japanese, they have some belongs to Shinto, very few people belongs to. But the most fishermen pray for the Shinto. Buddhists handle those funerals, all kinds, fishermen don't like that.

GG: You know why they don't like that?

KM: Well, came bad luck, eh? But after people die, have to go Buddhist, have a service. Very few people that goes to the Shinto on a occasion like that. But for the good luck, they always go Shinto side.

GG: So now did you go to the Shinto temple, too more often?

KM: Well, I used to go once in a while. Maybe, those days, I stay in town, Kakaako, so we used to go Shinto when they have any New Year's like that, New Year's evening. Here and there. As where most people go. And once a year, they have a festival. That's begin from August, I think. August, September, October, that's three months (in each different Shinto). They have each temple having their festival.

GG: What is the name of the festival? Have a special name?

KM: Well, it's time for celebrate, the festival. Once a year.

GG: But what is it that you're celebrating? Something special?

KM: Well, pray for good luck for every peoples.

GG: And what happened at the festivals that they would have? How did they celebrate?

KM: Well, the people who goes there and then, of course, got to give little donation and they have little reception. They have entertainment.

GG: What kind of entertainment?

KM: Well, they have Japanese groups that dance. Some people sing, some people make a little show. That's the kind of entertainment they have. To draw the crowd. And have little reception.

GG: Was there a Shinto temple actually in Kakaako?

KM: Well, there was. Had two, small kinds, you know. That's where most of the fishermen goes there and they use the place for meeting and make a little party. They use the temple underneath. Under the house. Little rooms, see. So as where, everytime they have a meeting, they go borrow the place. Whoever make a small party, they use the place.

GG: Do you remember where the two Shinto temples were? In Kakaako?

KM: One was in Koula Street, that's where I was. Nearby. Was my neighbor was that side. One was by the Ilaniwai Street. Small kind.

GG: And then, when they had the celebrations, did all the people from Kakaako that belonged, say, go to the celebrations at both temples. Did they have celebrations at different times?

KM: Well, some, they go both. But some, they go only one side. Whatever they wanted to go.

GG: Do you know what the differences was between the two?

KM: Well, it's not much difference.

GG: But they had enough people to have two rather than just one.

KM: All the people, they make donations to support the temple.

GG: During that three-month celebration would you sometime go outside of Kakaako to another Shinto temple, to their celebration, too?

KM: Yeah.

GG: And it was mostly just Japanese who went to the festivals, or did other nationalities come?

KM: Well, very few other nationalities.

GG: You talked about that they had bon dances before the war. Who put those on, the bon dances.

- KM: Well, bon dance is sponsored by mostly Buddhists, Buddhist church. As when the Buddhists celebrate the bon dance. All of the season (July and August). I don't know how to say but they make 'em feel happy, anyway. According to the Buddhists, they say once a year all the dead men wants to come back to the home. Some kind of meaning that. So every church, most of church, they have a celebrate. Of course, some small temple don't have a dance but if big church like Pali (Honpa) Hongwanji (Mission), the one Shinshu Kyokai on Beretania Street. All those. Nuuanu Soto Mission (Zen). All those big kinds, they celebrate, they make the bon dance.
- GG: Did they have a Buddhist church in Kakaako?
- KM: There was, one yeah. But they moved. The one was in South Street. They moved to Makiki. That was before the war [World War II], long time before the war they moved out.
- GG: Did they have bon dance there, at the one in Kakaako?
- KM: No, they haven't ever had bon dance over there. The ground area so small. See, when you like make bon dance, you have to have quite a bit of area for people who can dance and people who can watch. So got to have a little space.
- GG: So did the Kakaako people who were interested go somewhere else to participate in the bon dance?
- KM: Yeah. But when we have....oh that's after the war. After the war, we have a Kakaako Community Association. And we sponsor. We used to borrow the Mother Waldron Park nearby on a Pohukaina Street. We made four or five times. That's after the war. Before the war, I don't think I see any. Oh, one time they had. They borrowed Atkinson Park. But most other district in Honolulu, they all having the bon dance. In Kakaako, I remember only once....
- GG: Before the war.
- KM: Before, Long time before the war.
- GG: When was the Kakaako Community Association formed? Do you remember the year?
- KM: After the war, 1949.
- GG: Okay. Now you had it before the war,
- KM: Yeah, before the war we had community organization.
- GG: And when did it start before the war. Do you remember?
- KM: Well, it's kind of long time. When I was a young age, they had a association already.

GG: Did you go at all when in your young time?

KM: No, no. I didn't go.

GG: And did it close down and it didn't operate during the war?

KM: Well, have to shut down everything. Same like the Japanese school. Cannot do anything. All military. Just broke up.

GG: Now why did it take so long after the war was over. The war was over in 1945. You didn't get it restarted until 1949.

KM: The people still was, you know, they all kind of afraid. Because all the people, the Japanese, all the big shots that used to take care the community like that, they all turn in, at wartime.

GG: Oh, they got interned?

KM: Yeah, interned. So the people little bit kind of afraid to restart the community. So that's why it take so long. But they find out they still need the community to help around the people. So started.

GG: In 1949 then.

KM: Right.

GG: And do you remember about how many people came out the first time when it first started again.

KM: Well, we have a pretty good population in the Kakaako area, so we had quite a bit.

GG: Do you remember approximately?

KM: About 100 or more members.

GG: That many?

KM: Well, we go around the people who like join in. Sign up.

GG: Now you were one of the leaders that actually got it started again?

KM: Oh yeah. Myself and about two more other men.

GG: Do you remember what their names were?

KM: They all passed away but Mr. Kawamoto, Mr. Iwasaki.

GG: What was your purpose? Why were you getting the community association together?

KM: Well, first of all to get the people get together. For help each other. Of course, we like to start the Japanese school for teach the children the Japanese language. Just like before the war. That's the main purpose. So as soon as we start the community, we formed the Japanese school. We hired teachers (made school classrooms and so on). Of course, that all taken care by the community.

GG: So the Kakaako Community Association, is that made up of only Japanese people?

KM: Right.

GG: I see. All the way along, even till today.

KM: All the way along. Yeah. Right.

GG: And so, the main thing was for the Japanese school and to help the people. Were there other ways to help the people besides the Japanese school? What other kinds of ways to help the people?

KM: Well, I don't think there's any other way.

GG: Mostly through the school then.

KM: When people die, you have a funeral; well, all the community go there help. Like that. And once a year we get together, have a little good time. Party. New Year's party. Just to people get more acquainted and more friendly. That's why they still going. Even the Kakaako people not there, they all move to other districts. But when that Kakaako New Year's we hold a New Year's party, there's plenty members come to the party. They still remember, memorize, the whole Kakaako. Some good things have come out of people. So generous.

GG: So when you first got started in 1949 can you tell me the different jobs you had in the Community Association.

KM: Well, first of all, when I start the community I was the secretary for about two, three years. Then I comes to --so, my president, he's not in good health, see? So after three years, I take his position to take care everything. Just like act as a president. But the name is not president.

GG: He still has the office but you're doing the job?

KM: Yeah.

GG: I see.

KM: That was done so many years.

GG: And how did you decide to get active, or why did you decide to get involved?

KM: Well, the people they want me to take care. They had so many officers, but we select by maybe vote or nomination. People say, "Oh, they want this man in the office." But before, used to vote. Just like we vote for the president, secretary, like that. Now days they just nomination.

GG: So that whoever will take the job?

KM: Yeah. Some places they give a vote but...

GG: You talked about the New Year's get togethers. Where did you have these?

KM: Over here now days they gotta use the teahouse. We use a big place. We have about up to couple 100 members coming.

GG: Still belonging then?

KM: Yeah.

GG: I see. But say, in the early 1950's where did you have the New Year's parties then?

KM: Most time we used to use the teahouse.

GG: Which teahouse?

KM: Well, we used to use Natsunoya, (old one).

GG: That one was still there?~

KM: Yeah. And Kanraku. Of course, different location but. They're the most popular teahouses when the people get together.

GG: So this was like for New Year's Eve?

KM: No. After the New Year's. Probably sometime in February. Whenever get teahouse opening. After the New Year, everybody have their own party so we wait till about February. Sometime February, some time in March. All depend.

GG: And then you just get together and talk story and do you have entertainment too?

KM: Yeah. Talk story. We let the people sing and we give them lucky numbers, all the people who comes. We spend quite a bit money.

GG: Did you just have one in March?

KM: Oh yea. We just had. March.

GG: Where did you have it this year?

KM: This time, we wen goes to the Kanraku.

GG: And how many people came this time?

KM: This year wasn't so much. We used to have about 170 people came (this year), including the guests. We invite some guests too.

GG: That's still quite a lot of people. This many years later.

KM: And nowday it's so expensive. Everybody have to pay about \$10 for the fee. So, some people cannot come. That's why. Before it's cheap, eh? Five dollar, six dollar. We used to have plenty people.

GG: But still a lot of people, then, from Kakaako get together and talk story about what it was like before.

KM: Oh yeah. Talk story. And people enjoy.

GG: Did the Community Association, too, hold picnics at Ala Moana sometimes?

KM: Well, we used to, we used to before.

GG: When was that?

KM: Oh, we hold the picnic, I think about three times we hold the picnic. After that, we don't make picnic because was too much work for the officers who do the job. You know, get, prepare everything. As lot of work so you have lot of young boys, young officers, they no like turn out. So we give up.

GG: When they did the picnics, was that like a pot-luck, everybody bring something, or?

KM: Yeah, they bring own lunch but Association furnish all kind of prizes, drinks. Children, maybe play games. You know, running, like that. We give them prizes. All that taken care of by the community. At the end, we give everybody lucky number. Some, we give them one bag rice. Some big kind. All kinds. We used to spend quite a bit money on that thing.

GG: And have the people always had to pay dues to belong to the association?

KM: Yeah, dues. Got to pay dues.

GG: What were the dues in the beginning?

KM: Well, we started \$3 a year. Very small. Now it's \$5 a year.

GG: That's still, though, from 1949 to 1978, that's not much of an increase.

KM: Yeah. We raise the dues only about four years, five years ago. I think

four years ago we make \$5. All this time, we was getting \$3 in dues. But people donate some money. So, that's why we can keep up the finances.

GG: And then for your prizes and things, did you get merchants, maybe Kakaako merchants to donate or other people outside?

KM: Yeah, stores donate little bit. Majority have to buy but they give little bit.

GG: And were there any other organizations, say, for Japanese people in Kakaako?

KM: As far as Japanese is concerned, no more. Oh, they have one, they call Kakaako Young Men's Association. That combined all kind nationalities. But mostly Japanese, about two-thirds are Japanese. Young Men's, they call that, Association. They still running.

GG: Did they have organizations for the different prefecture groups?

KM: No. No.

GG: I see. I think that's all unless there's anything else you want to tell me about, or any other memories you have of Kakaako?

KM:

KM: Well, the sad story is that we had to evacuate Kakaako. All the people have to move out. 'As why we close the Japanese school.

GG: What year was the Japanese school closed?

KM: Well, evacuation started from 1955.

GG: Is that when people started having to move out?

KM: Start to move out. Yeah. We the very first ones to move out.

GG: The Japanese school or the Association?

KM: The Japanese school too. But the people still there so we have to borrow Pohukaina School to teach the children left over. At the end, we only had about 30 students left. So the principal alone, have to stay and teach. But everybody have to go so automatically give up, had to shut down.

GG: So when did it finally shut its doors?

KM: That's 1959. Something like that. After 10 years we formed the Association and the school.

GG: So it was about 1955 when you had to start at Pohukaina and 1959 when finally no more.

KM: Yeah. When finally no more.

GG: And why, or how was it that the Japanese school was the first that had to move out?

KM: The land is Ward Estate. Those days, the people leasing the place.

GG: So the lease had run out?

KM: Lease fell off. We had one old home. Of course, lease land, see. We the first one had to move out.

GG: And this was because of the zoning change and the leases ran out and they wouldn't renew it.

KM: Yeah. Zoning changes. Yeah. And then everybody had to go out because they like changing the zone.

GG: And did they right away then, say in the 1950's, start tearing down the houses as soon as people moved out?

KM: Well, as soon as the people moved out and the other big firms. You know, all business men, they lease the place. And they make their warehouse, whatever. They had to lease quite a bit plot for making that.

GG: Did you get much warning that you were going to have to move or....

KM: Well, they give a warning. Maybe six months, nine months.

GG: And did the people have any recourse? Did you get together and say, "Well, we don't want to move out?"

KM: No, we didn't do that. No sense. Cannot buck against the people (like big guys).

GG: So, were people kind of huhu or....

KM: Well, I know but just can't help it. What you can do?

(Laughter)

KM: You don't own the land, see. If you own the land, all right.

GG: Right. So then, did a committee decide to go talk to Pohukaina School to see if you could use the facilities there?

KM: Yeah, yeah. Go to the public school administration or whatever they call that. Go ask for the borrowing rooms. Well, any other place too, they still using the public school for Japanese school. In other districts.

GG: Okay, well, I think that's just about it. Unless you have anything else?

KM: Well, I think that's about all.

GG: Okay, why don't we stop there then.

END OF INTERVIEW.

**REMEMBERING KAKA'AKO:
1910-1950**

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

December 1978