

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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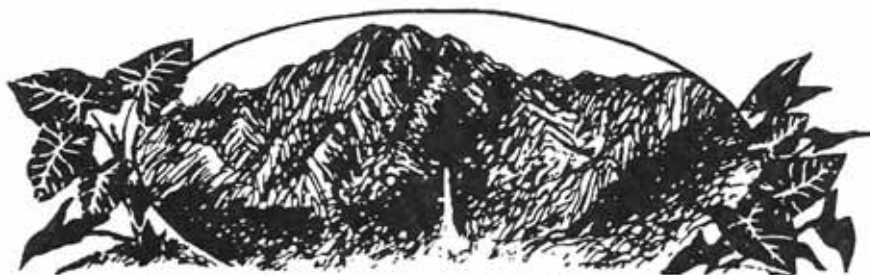
Noboru Oda

January 26, 1994

Manoa, Oahu

By: Lorrie Mortimer

Tape No. 1



Mālama o Mānoa

P.O. Box 61961 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96839

Oral History Project

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Summary

Noboru Oda was born in Iwilei February 17, 1917. He moved to the back of Manoa Valley with his family in 1921 or 1922 and has resided in the Valley ever since, raising his own family, three sons and one daughter, with his wife.

Mr. Oda's father came from Fukuoka, Japan, as a contract laborer to Hakalau Plantation on the Big Island. He moved from the Big Island to Honolulu and sent for a "picture bride". When he moved his family to Manoa he started to farm with other Japanese farmers. He raised dry land taro and other truck crops.

As the only son in a family of seven daughters, Mr. Oda remembers the days before autos, telephones, electricity and indoor plumbing. He discusses tanomoshi, the only form of financing available to the farmers, losses to crops, production of okolehao as a supplement to income and the cooperation among the farmers when someone was in need.

He also remembers his school days at Manoa Elementary and Washington Intermediate. He had to quit school because of family hardship just before completing ninth grade and help his father by delivering the farm produce to buyers downtown. Mr. Oda and his sisters all attended Japanese school. His parents spoke only Japanese, so Mr. Oda represented his family when English was necessary. By 1933 Mr. Oda was working downtown and the family had stopped farming, due to his father being paralyzed. This was the beginning of a career that started in produce and ended with Mr. Oda owning his own business as a produce wholesaler.

Other memories shared by Mr. Oda include meeting his wife, their wedding, the war years in Honolulu, buying his first house in 1950 for \$25,000, and the changes to the Valley.

Mr. Oda is now retired but continues to work, using his knowledge of the Japanese language, with tourists at the airport. He is also an active member of Malama O Manoa.

Interview

LM: This is a Memories of Manoa Oral History tape. The interviewee is Noboru Oda. The interviewer is Lorrie Mortimer. This interview is being conducted on January 26th, 1994 at Mr. Oda's home at 3310 Halelani Drive. Mr. Oda was born on February 19, 1917. His wife's name is Harue and he has four children. The eldest is Clifford, followed by Dale, then Earle, and Susan.

LM: Mr. Oda, could you give us an idea of some of your family background? I know you were born in Honolulu.

NO: Uh huh.

LM: Where in Honolulu were you born?

NO: Well I understand it was the old Dole Cannery, at the present Dole Cannery place in Iwilei they call it. And they used to have a big -- - I think it was a gas tank and my father used to brag about it that he and another colored man is the only one goes up to the top of the tank. (laughs)

LM: So you were born at the Dole Cannery.

NO: Yeah, at the present where the Dole Cannery is. They call it Iwilei.

LM: Was this in a hospital?

NO: No, no, no. They had an apartment like I think I recall now.

LM: And where did your family come from?

NO: My father and mother --- originally my father came from Fukuoka Prefecture. He came as a labor contract. I understand the first place he went was the Big Island, Hakalau Plantation. Then later on he came to Honolulu and those days they had this they call "picture

bride". That's when he got my mother as a bride and I think they were about ten or fifteen years apart because they send the younger picture to the bride (laughs). Those were the story I heard. Those days were all picture brides.

LM: Okay. Your family moved to Manoa to farm.

NO: Yes. I recall I was probably about four or five years old I recall we move up way up in the Manoa Valley and those days the road wasn't like the present day you know because dirt road, rocky road and narrow road and horse and buggy days and I recall both side of the road had lots of guava trees you can just hand-pick from the wagon. And they had lots of they call hau trees. Nothing but hau and guava trees I recall.

LM: Was your family farming before they came to Manoa?

NO: No, they wanted to start farming in Manoa, yes and those days I recall I think was we had more rain than what we have today. It's always raining every day so only certain crops can be grown in Manoa. For example they used to have they call this dry land taro or dasheen, Japanese call araimo.

LM: Oh that's araimo.

NO: Araimo yes, but they have two type of araimo, the white type and the red type. We used to grow the red type. Spoil faster than the white type but it had better production, more abundant production than the white one, easier to grow I understand, but it takes about , oh I think , seven to eight months to get the maturity and those days they were exporting to the California and there was only one broker who was able to speak you know Japanese/ English, bilingual, so they were all relying on him to ship out the exportation. And in order to export those things they have to get clean very thoroughly, take all the dirt off, the root off and they have to pack it in the crates and they have to ship out so they had quite a few expense because in order to get in time for the shipment they have to hire lots of labor to peel the root and clean off the dirt and pack it up. You have to pack it up within a day or

so. They have lots of extra, they have to hire extra help to make it in time . And to get it to maturity it takes eight months. In the meantime they have to fertilize, and weeding, lot of labor and expense involved so he was relying on the shipment. Then he got the bad news that everything was spoiled so he didn't get a penny and meantime he has a family increasing one after another so they had a hard time the way I look at it, no revenue but lots of debt. So in order to get finance those days the easiest and the simplest way was to organize they call tanomoshi which is financing methods through friends or the neighbors and gather, and every month they have a set amount, for example if twenty-five dollars a month for if they have fifteen members that means they have to meet fifteen months. And the organizer at the beginning, he gets the whole lump sum. And that's how he used to maneuver to buy fertilizer or buy food. The hard part was he has to pay back every month again without any interest. And those who did not get the money, every month thereafter they will put a bid in, whoever wants that cash, put in a certain amount of bid, say \$1.50 or \$2.00, whatever the bid is the interest for the remaining members that don't have the cash. Each one --- there's only one person can allow to get that month's cash you know. They all put in twenty-five dollars, accumulate twenty-five dollars, then whoever bid the highest bidder get the money. And everybody seems to need the money because they have fertilizers to buy, they have food and other necessities and that's the only way they were financing, you know, trying to maneuver the finance.

LM: Now if the person won the bid for say \$1.50, he has to pay \$1.50 to every member?

NO: No. They deduct the \$1.50 from the total amount to the remainder members. So the organizer don't get a cent until everything is over so naturally he needs the cash again so he reorganize again after the fifteen months. He solicits another member to get another tanomoshi and the organizer, we call them oya, or you know he is the head of the family and he has the other members with him so each time he has to reorganize in order to maneuver the cash. So I remember you know every organizer, that when he organize and the remaining, the interest, I have to deliver the interest to those who

don't attend to that tanomoshi. There's once a month they have a certain date set, certain amount until that group terminate. So in fifteen months, every month they keep on bringing the money on certain months and those unable to attend that meeting we have to return the interest, the \$1.50 to that particular person who did not attend the meeting. Those who attended the meeting take home the \$1.50 home. In those days \$1.50 was big money too, yeah. So they keep on going and that 's how he used to maneuver the cash the way I look at it.

LM: And you could only bid --- win the bid one time?

NO: One time only. Only one time yes.

LM: And then you were out of it?

NO: Yes, so the luckiest person is the last one you know because he don't has to pay any interest out because he gets all, the last one. The first one and the last of course. But the first will suffer because he has to pay back right along till the remainder of the fourteen months without any interest. But the last person receiving interest plus he doesn't have to pay the interest so he's the luckiest one.

LM: Yes that's right.

NO: So those who don't need the money doesn't bid at all, he doesn't come to the meeting but he just keep on receiving the interest. In those days they were pretty faithful, pretty honest . We don't have those delinquent ones or that couldn't pay and in order to get that bid he has to have two witness or co-signers in case he couldn't repay the principal, then these two witness has to finance, refinance for him. So they are very careful who they're gonna sign for it. And well, we had a couple of incidents that my father brought a friend because each time --- well cannot get the number of the investors for this tanomoshi, he get from downtown, you know, his friends ...

LM: Oh so these were not all people from Manoa?

NO: Originally all from Manoa but later on they have other merchants came around and they have other friends came in but now they have hard time to put in the bid because nobody wants to sign for him so my father--- in other words if my father 's friends came in he asked another friend to co-sign and he will co-sign for him in order to get the bid. But now one incident, that friend ran away you know after he took the bid so my father couldn't tell his friend to pay that amount so he has to foot all the bill himself. I mean he had to sacrifice for that because he just asked the friend for the name only and he couldn't burden the other friend you know because he doesn't know him and he didn't want to sign but my father beg him to sign because he say he wouldn't burden the other partner. So he had a couple incidents like that which he has to sacrifice.

LM: I see. Okay.

NO: That's how they refinance the cash because after when they said the exported taro was spoiled and he didn't get a penny but he as to pay back for the fertilizer company, he has to pay back the labor so he has to organize tanomoshi to get the cash to repay them back.

LM: Now where did these laborers come from?

NO: Oh, from the neighbors, our neighbors.

LM: Oh from the neighbors, so you hired neighbors.

NO: Yes, hired neighbors.

LM: When you moved here do you remember were there lots of farmers in this area?

NO: We were one of the earlier ones but they had some earlier than us where here and there they had the farmers here. Some of them way up in the Valley had the banana farmers, Chinese banana farmers. And they had truck crop farmers, my neighbor was truck crop farmer. They raised turnips and dasheen, that araimo, and I think it

was green onions and ginger.

LM: That was for the local market?

NO: Local market, local market, yes uh huh. All local market. Except for the dasheen but that was early stage. Later on because of they couldn't trust their brokerage and they tried to go on their own. Truck crop for local market only.

LM: Now were most of these farmers Japanese, of Japanese extraction?

NO: Yes. Practically all of them was Japanese.

LM: At this time they were Japanese farmers.

NO: Yes, Japanese farmers.

LM: What kind of things did you have to do. You had to help grow the crops? What did you do?

NO: No, I was weeding mostly. They have a hoe, an implement called hoe you know. Don't know if you remember that hoe, when they garden they hoe. Well we have to hoe to cut the grass, the weeds and we have to cultivate by hand you know. We didn't have any tractor or things like that. It's a small 2 1/2 acre lot so we have everything through labor, physical labor, and they had this fork-like thing to dig the soil, to cultivate, so all this thing was hand labor. (laughs)

LM: And your whole family did this, your mother and your father?

NO: Yes, the whole family, uh huh. But the rest of the sisters were really young, had just been born year after year so I was the second oldest and my oldest sister I think went to grammar school about 6th grade and she used to work as housemaid to earn money but that was later on. But the beginning, we only depend on the farm.

LM: Both your mother and your father worked on the farm?

NO: My mother and my father, yes, uh huh.

LM: What was the house like that you rented?

NO: Well, it was --- well those days they didn't have lease, we had month to month rent like and we had --- you know the funny thing no matter how poverty those days I didn't see any homeless people. Funny, somehow you get shack some place (laughs). We had a shack there --- well the first house I remember, we had a kitchen and the bathroom. Our bath was separate and the toilet was outdoor, cesspool type. No more flushing toilet. And we didn't have any water lines so we had this galvanized roof and we had the big water tank and they take the rain water. And we using that for household. And stove was the ground, you know on the ground-type stove.

LM: What did you burn, wood?

NO: Wood, wood yeah. We used to collect wood, guava trees, hau trees and we burn with the wood. And later on they start having this kerosene, but the stove was for a long time I remember we used to burn with the wood. And the upstairs was just one open bedroom. We all sleep on one floor (laughs). Yeah. And there were a lot of mosquitoes those days so they had the mosquito net. We used to have mosquito net I recall.

LM: My goodness.

NO: Yeah, because they have water all around, no screens . But those days they didn't have any crime like now you know, no burglary, robberies or --- the door was wide open all the time so naturally the mosquitoes, the flies would come in. Primitive days.

LM: Where was your closest neighbor?

NO: My closest neighbor? Well fortunately or unfortunately we had the --- they call Senator Shingle. He had the big mansion there. And I

think he was a Republican and he used to entertain people lot there but because of this Senator Shingle we had one of the best roadway and we had the electrical wiring come in, the water line came in and later on the sewage came in so the development was faster than other areas. But the beginning we had horses so we had to cut grasses and my job after school was to come home and cut grass for the horse because "horse and buggy days". And practically everybody had horses so we had very keen competition looking for grasses, especially after storm you know.

LM: How many horses did you have?

NO: Oh just one horse, one horse, and we had stable and we had also a pasture about oh a half a block away and you just open the door then the horses go right to the pasture there.

LM: They were kept together?

NO: No, no, no, just one horse, just my horse.

LM: Just your horse.

NO: Yeah, just my horse.

LM: And did the trolley --- there was a trolley wasn't there in Manoa Valley at that time?

NO: No --- oh yeah they have streetcars but that was way down by the Oahu Avenue.

LM: Oh I see. They didn't come as far as you?

NO: No, no, no, no, not this way. That was way later on. The beginning was very primitive living up here. After, they start coming up repairing the road, after they put in the water line, the electrical line, telephone line, but those days no. There's no electricity. We used to use this kerosene stove you know, lantern, kerosene lantern. Yeah. And there's no telephone for a long time. The only thing I recall, they had about two or three telephone which you have to run,

oh, two or three blocks away to borrow the phone.

LM: From individual people?

NO: Yeah, individuals. They hardly had any telephones. Yeah. So no recreational things those days, no TV, no radios.

LM: But you were working so hard you probably...

NO: Yeah, that's right. We slept early. Working hard every day.

LM: And when you had time to relax did you play with neighbors or ...

NO: No, I didn't have any time to play.

LM: You never played!

NO: Never played. Always working in the field.

LM: Oh, you never went swimming in the stream?

NO: Oh well we were swimming at the river, pond, a long time ago yeah I recall.

LM: So you used to play...

NO: We used to swim and also we used to go fishing in the river and we used to use those earth worm for bait. And there's a fish called opu, or Japanese call gori you know. We used to hook those fish and bring home and fry.

LM: Did you eat it?

NO: Yeah we used to eat it. Very tasty fish. Yeah we used to go fishing I recall during the small time you know.

LM: How old were you?

NO: Oh, about eight or ten or those ages I think.

LM: That you would go fishing.

NO: Yeah, fishing with the neighbors.

LM: With neighbor's children?

NO: Yeah, neighbors fishing.

LM: And swimming.

NO: Swimming too yeah.

LM: Was it that deep that you could go swimming?

NO: Oh there's only certain area that have the swimming pond like yeah.

LM: What kind of things did your mother cook? Was your mother cooking Japanese food?

NO: Uh, yes, majority was I recall Japanese food .

LM: And she did all the cooking for the family?

NO: Yes. And we used to take bento for school you know during school year, and I remember she used to put those rice and those plum, ume boshi plus sausage. I don't know how she got, probably was cheaper than anything else, Vienna sausage.

LM: Vienna sausage!

NO: Yeah (laughs).

LM: With shoyu?

NO: Yeah, we like that, and with the musubi, we used to take lunch cause we couldn't afford to buy lunch those days. Five cents was a big money.

LM: Where did she shop? Where did you buy the rice?

NO: Well there's only one store here in Manoa, called Fujise Store. There's one store just like a general store. They used to have everything. They were selling --- later on they were selling gasoline. They have from hardware to groceries to everything they used to carry. Small little store. But later on when my mother and I used to go down to the Moiliili area, they used to have a grocery store there and we purchased the groceries and bring home.

LM: Did they sell fertilizer?

NO: Yes they sell fertilizer too. But the only trouble fertilizer, one or two bag is not enough for the whole acreage so you have to order at least half a ton or one ton, one ton-two thousand pound, half ton-thousand pounds, and then you get a better price and they'll deliver the fertilizer to your home. But that's a big money so whenever they want the fertilizer, when they organize the tanomoshi then they order the fertilizer. Otherwise as you said that have to purchase one or two bag at a time, go down to the regular grocery store and this was kind of expensive.

LM: Well so you didn't order it. When you ordered one ton you ordered from somebody else outside Manoa?

NO: Yeah, outside. Pacific Guano they used to call. They used to deliver with a truck load and the majority of the farmers were ordering and so at the same time they put all the orders together and drop off here and there. Yeah, that's when only when you can afford to have the cash to buy by the ton or half a ton. Otherwise he used to buy one or two bags at a time. Yeah because cash involved. That's the main thing.

LM: How old were you when you went away to school, when you went to school?

NO: Oh I started from first grade, so six years old. And everyday we had up to eight grades but when I started to go there I think they

came down to sixth grade, then you have to go junior high school which is Washington Intermediate. I went there too.

LM: I see. Where was the school when you went there?

NO: Manoa School and Washington Intermediate. Yeah. And I have to --- you see Washington Intermediate from seven, eighth and ninth, you graduate in ninth but one month more I was supposed to graduate and I couldn't because my family had a hard time. At that time my mother had some illness, something like a breast cancer. And my father had, right along, he had this ulcer, stomach ulcer and he used to drink this certain kind of medicine. And I recall every time he had a stomach ache he couldn't work. So the weeds grown up and no revenue so we suffered, really had a hard time.

LM: So you had to work....

NO: Yeah, I had to work hard and I had to quit school and I went out to work so I used to help the truck crop and at that time we already-- - Senator Shingle, I think he wants to evict, I mean ban, the horses because of the multiplication of the flies. You know the fly increase so somehow the Board of Health gave the notice that we have to take out all the horses out and that's when we had to get a truck and Model T Ford. Those days you know just beginning and we bought --- a friend of mine got a second-hand truck for me and I took license.

LM: How old were you?

NO: At that time I was fourteen.

LM: Fourteen!

NO: Yeah, and I got a license somehow.

LM: When you were fourteen years old?

NO: Yeah, so we got the license but very easy to get license those days.

LM: They didn't have a minimum age ?

NO: Fifteen was supposed to be the minimum age.

LM: Oh, so how did you get it at fourteen?

NO: Somehow I think they bribe (laughs). We give some hard luck story and they.... So took the license as a fifteen years old and from then on I used to go out after school . I used to go and sell, we had the Chinese bananas and carrots and those truck crops, I used to sell local stores.

LM: But not from your farm?

NO: From our farm, our farm, yes, yes, yes.

LM: So you branched out and you now grew bananas and ...

NO: Yeah, well we had those crop already, bananas. And then instead of the araimo we converted to truck crop, carrots and daikon, things like that, green onions, and we used to take down to River Street . So mostly the bananas was already precut and pack it up so when I come home, my mother used to pack it up and when I come home I load it on the truck and bring it to the grocery stores.

LM: So you had enough growing on your, you said one and a half acres?

NO: Oh yes. We had about total of three acres .

LM: Okay. And this is all in the same spot, where you first came?

NO: Yes. No we didn't move. But the land was divided into the higher altitude and lower, here and there scattered. It's not just all one level land so it's kind of difficult. The high spot we grew truck crop like carrots, sweet potatoes, things like that . Now the lower side we grew bananas, papayas, things like that. So kind of diversified crop, yeah.

LM: And at this time you said you must have had -- you were fourteen -- all of your sisters were born at this time? How many sisters did you have?

NO: Yes, I had seven all together but one passed away, but six sisters and there's another, two, I lost two sisters so five still remain, yeah. They're all below --- one of them, the oldest one, and I was the second and about two years apart we had few other sisters but they all were going to school yet. The early days yeah.

LM: And then they'd come home and help?

NO: Oh yeah, they was helping too, uh huh, but they were more younger so they help the mother you know, laundry and things like that and the mother used to work out in the field.

LM: And what about your older sister?

NO: She used to go out and work already, housemaid.

LM Oh that's right.

NO: So she brought some revenue to help us. But it wasn't enough. So my father had a lot of debts. See in the olden days, funny, they all were giving us credit, you know charge by the month. And you have to pay end of the month but oh, he got debt all over, lot of bills pile up. We had the grocery store. And my mother had all girls, they need the dressmaker. The dressmaker had pile of bills and even the tuition, Japanese school we used to go, and that had some bills pile up.

LM: Now all the whole family, all the children went to Japanese school?

NO: Yes, everyone went to Japanese school after, you know one hour, after the English school. We all attended Japanese school.

LM: Did your parents speak English?

NO: No.

LM: So they only spoke Japanese.

NO: Yeah, only Japanese. That's the trouble (laughs). Yeah, everybody was like that, most of them, yeah.

LM: Now when you had some time when there was time to relax or something with your family did --- they must have had some time -- you talked about New Year's celebrations and, you know, birthdays....

NO: No, it's nothing like celebration. When New Year comes around we have to do extra, think about extra revenue and we used to sell those, what you call the moroba or the o-kazari for the mochi you know. It's the fern leaves with the plum leaves and we used to tie and we also get the bamboo and the pine tree they call kadomatsu. And we used to sell those to make the extra money for the New Year celebration.

LM: But didn't you say you had New Year's. Sometimes people would bring food and you'd have a New Year's party or something, when you were talking about that?

NO: Oh, that was a club. That was the farmers' club. We had a celebration. Yeah, as a group, yeah we had every year.

LM: Was that the group that you belonged to, there, that farmers' group?

NO: That time? That time, yes, uh huh.

LM: And your father joined this group, or you joined?

NO: Yes, my father. But I was representing my father because he was ill health and he couldn't, he didn't want to attend those meetings, so I used to represent my family. That was later on.

LM: When you were about fourteen?

NO: Yes, from then on.

LM: But just for the record what was that called? What was the name of that organization?

NO: They call North Manoa Farmers' Association. They call Kita Manoa No-Gyo Kumiai. That means the North Manoa Farmers' Association.

LM: It has a Japanese name so it was all Japanese farmers?

NO: Yes, yes. And that organization still exists today. Yeah, of course the original members all deceased but the children and their grandchildren, they all continue this organization. It's a wonderful thing. We still meet once a year. Yeah.

LM: Where did you have this New Year's party?

NO: Well originally we used to have it centralized and who have a big garage we put up the tent and we gather over there. Everyone comes there and they volunteer, they donate and they cook. And they have all the cooking utensils too. And they have the tables. Was well organized. All the farmers came in. And olden days they love to drink sake so they had a three day affair to celebrate the New Year party. The first day for the preparation only. And then next day is the New Year day and the third day is for general cleanup. And they also have the feast and drink so three day affairs. Yeah, and they were looking forward for the celebration, especially the drinkers.

LM: How many, how many members?

NO: Oh, we had a lot of members those days. Oh, let's see, had about oh fifty or sixty members I think, but they have families come in together see. There's the members and they have the children, the wives, they all, big affair.

LM: By the time you had all these, you had several hundred people?

NO: Yeah, well about hundred or so I think. Ninety or a hundred, I don't really know the count of it but I assume somewhere in that count. Yeah, but they were looking forward for this. But now we don't have those farmers and we don't have the facility. We go out to restaurants, like Wisteria and we have this New Year party. Our New Year party coming on March 6th I think, the first Sunday of March. Yeah, they still continue that tradition. So originally that's the only thing they were looking forward, for New Year's celebration.

LM: And you say they got together for funerals and weddings and everything else.

NO: Oh yeah. That's the main purpose. Whoever has any kind of death in the family, then they all help out to make the program and, you know, have the funeral arrangement. Yeah, and whenever they have any kind of unfortunate happening, maybe say he had fire or somebody ill, you know, they all try to help out. Like example, one of the member's garden was -- those days had lot of floods -- his garden was near the river and about, I don't know, quite a big portion wash away by the flood. So one Sunday everybody volunteered and build up a stone wall along his garden. So we all went out to help out and of course the --- who the victim is have to supply the lunch you know. She do the cooking and supply the lunch but the volunteers they all pitch in and try to work out for the day. I remember I went out couple of Sundays to build up the stone wall.

LM: And how did you find out? You said there were not many telephones.

NO: Yeah, through word of mouth they communicate. I mean either they run over and tell the neighbors. The neighbors tell the other party, like that. Yeah, no telephones those days. Later on they have telephone, but the early days no.

LM: One other thing I was gonna ask you. You said you had this Japanese farmers' association. Was there other, like a Chinese farmers' association?

NO: No.

LM: Just the Japanese farmers' association.

NO: No, just the farmers. Well they had Chinese families that was living and they were farming I think doing a different scale you know. I think it was watercress. I know they were residing up in the Valley but.... In the tanomoshi we had the Hawaiian men came in as a member. Was one down here.

LM: So you did have different races.

NO: Oh yeah, we have Chinese family, I think was one only, and Hawaiian family was down here but the regular, our farmers' association, was strictly all Japanese people. They were the only ones farming at that time.

LM: Now where exactly was your first house located? You said near Waioli Tea Room?

NO: No, no, no. Waioli Tea Room is here, but way up the valley about a mile up and presently it's on the Waaloa Road, 3751 I think was the numbers, something like that.

LM: Oh, so it had a number.

NO: Yeah, no, I mean it's now they have a number, those days no. And later on during the wartime, this Rev. Fujinaga, he had a Christian church here, and applied for post box, a mail box and that's when they started to get mail delivery. That's way later, 1941 I think. Yeah, originally no.

LM: And then did you move from that house?

NO: Yes, we moved from that original house to further up where they had another vacant house because the landlord there [original house] was Ena Estate and she says she needs that property because she gonna build houses, so we had to move out and we move up, further

up, and we live in that other house for about ten years. Then that landlord says oh she wants the house back. So we have to move out, came down lower place. We found a house open. That's why I said those days was unusual you know, you bound to see some kind of shack somewhere. So we weren't homeless at all (laughs). I mean it.

LM: But you had to find out who owned these places.

NO: Right, right, right. Well, we knew the owner so we asked them and was very cheap rental you know. We don't have any lease or anything so when they say, oh they want us to move out, we have to get out. And we came down, further down, by the name of Suehiro. He used to have anthurium farm. And he had a shack there so he rented to us. We stayed there for another ten years.

LM: Now where was this? you say further down.

NO: Yeah, let's see now. It's just by the corner of where the present road, one goes up to Paradise Park and one goes down to Waaloa Road. Right below that, about a few feet below that. Yeah so it's....

LM: Okay. Pretty far back, pretty far back in the Valley.

NO: Oh yes. Well no, it's still up in the Valley by the --- I don't know if you've been up to the Paradise Park. And there's the two roads divided, right about a few feet below that, so it's further up too. But that was the third place we moved from the original house.

LM: Each place that you went to you had a truck farm?

NO: No, the rest of the place we didn't have any farm, just as a home so we were all going --- at that time I had a job outside working, so the original place was the only place where we did truck farming.

LM: So how old were you when you moved from that place?

NO: Uh, let's see, 19-, my father was paralyzed at that time, and we went up, so 19- let's see. When we move on the third house was

during the wartime, so 1941, the third house, the last house. I was already employed at the market, and was ten years prior to that so about 1930s, during depression days, 1930, '33. 1933 was my last day, junior high school days I think. '32 or '33 anyway. And that was the depression days, hard to get jobs. And that 's when I had the job for a dollar a day and I was real happy I remember. Yeah, I had a job in 1933 I think.

LM: Nobody was farming anymore?

NO: No, nobody was farming anymore, yeah.

LM: So now you were working at the produce market?

NO: Yes, I was working at the General Grocery Store, Chinese store by the corner of Piikoi and Beretania. Then in 1941, January, I moved to the--- they used to get the May's Market which is the Liberty House Market, the big market. And that was the corner of Pensacola and Beretania where right now there's a bank I think, right across from Safeway. This was the big market. That's when I transferred, in 1941, January. Then the war outbreak in 1941, December, and I stayed there during the wartime. And as soon as the war was over, 1946, '45, yeah. And '46 I started my own business. At the same time I had to get married, so I got married and I opened the business so I was short of cash.

LM: (laughs) In 1946?

NO: Yes, 1946. But until that time during the wartime, oh the economy was so good. I work hard. I had about three jobs. I had a lot of money at that time, of personal savings. But when I got married, I opened the business I was broke (laughs) and my friend loaned me the money. I have a very faithful friend that trusted me and he loaned me the money to start off on my business.

LM: So you were living in this house right by the Suehiro anthurium farm, and you got married and lived there?

NO: Yes, yes.

LM: And what about the rest of your family? Did they stay?

NO: Oh, they were all together. We were all together

LM: Your mother and your father were too?

NO: No, my father passed away in 1940, early part, March I think. And my sisters got married. Two of them got married by that time so I had only, what, three I think left, yeah. They help me with the business.

LM: And what about your mother?

NO: Oh my mother was there yet. After we bought this house in 1950 my mother was still here and she passed away later in this house.

LM: So you stayed at that house until 1950 and then you bought this home.

NO: Yes, yes, so that 's about ten years. Yeah and then I bought this house. At that time because we were evicted there. That's why we made up our mind. My sisters said "oh, we'll help you, so buy one house". And we spotted this house and we had the second mortgage because you know those days, I think was \$25,000, was big money to us and we couldn't afford the down payment and the financial but somehow we got the loan through second mortgage and we got this place.

LM: How had Manoa changed during all this time?

NO: Oh, well after that you don't see any farmland, all housing. Down here was all Joe Pao and Amfac Development. Over here was all Island Home, Bishop Trust and Kondo understand is the developer up here. And majority of them had the lease, but we're the only one, we didn't have any kind of security so we've been evicted three time and we finally made up our mind we have to get a home. So when I bought this home and when I started the business the same time, the bank told me "first thing you do is to purchase a home".

Then easier to the loan, on collateral loan, see, no equity. And that's how I started off because I have to buy a truck, I have to buy this, buy that. Then I went into retail business and we operate that business for about five years I think, 1952 to '61, yeah ten years I operate a retail business.

LM: Were there still people farming? Some of the people at the time of the association, they were still farming?

NO: Oh yes, oh yes, those day, yes, they still farming. And gradually they were evicted. You know the farmland was so expensive that they couldn't afford to do farming and became house lot. So now you don't see any farm land here, except way in the Valley there, the Board of Water Supply owns the land there and there's one or two farmers raising, I don't think they're raising bananas now, oh some of them raising bananas, most of them raising flowers now. There's hardly any farmers.

LM: Now you talked about the war years. you said that you moved during the war years. Well, before we go to the war years if I asked you what was the strongest memory of your childhood what would you say?

NO: My strongest memory is that tanomoshi (laughs). Tanomoshi, yeah. Because I been running around to return the interest and each time we organize there's a lot of

End of side A of tape.

LM: That was the end of the tape, so you were talking, you had to do all of these things for the tanomoshi.

NO: Yes, that was my strongest memory.

LM: And in reading your notes you gave us, you also said you had memories of Prohibition and okolehao?

NO: Oh yes (laughs). That was I think still the younger days you know when my father was still healthy. Yeah, the Prohibition days, I

didn't know what it was but now I recall it was Prohibition days because he took me way up in the ti leaf mountain and it was the west side of the valley, there's lots of ti leaves. And as he dragged me into this, another man with him, I start to smell the okolehao. You know it's very strong smell. And they were burning something there. We could see the smoke coming up and I was afraid you know somehow. The way I know this, he was kind of sneaking, going in to it, so I thought it must be something secret and I was just worried myself, that with the smoke coming up anybody could detect what's burning in there and there and I was so afraid. But somehow, they were manufacturing this okolehao.

LM: Who was doing this?

NO: My father and some other men.

LM: The other farmers?

NO: The farmers yeah, and, well you know it's bootlegging. Next day they have to hide underneath the vegetables and take it down to the market, down River Street. And we used to get out about two o'clock in the morning with the horse and buggy days, and I remember he used to hide the gallon, they were selling by the gallons, and hid way underneath. We had a lot of daikon I remember that time and he hid way at the bottom of the daikon and when we came down early in the morning about two or two thirty in the morning, by the Board of Water Supply, present Board of Water Supply where, I think, was Van's Furniture Shop is it, by Alapai and Beretania Street, I saw these flashlight detective checking all the wagons and he came to our wagon and he start looking at bottom of the daikon and I was really worried that time. But evidently he didn't discover the okolehao so we just passed by. But it was hidden underneath the turnip but did not find (laughs). I was really worried and so today I recall that was the bootlegger, you know bootlegging.

LM: What did they do with it? Where did they sell it?

NO: Oh, I guess they took it down to River Street and somebody was

there waiting for it. This was big revenue for them (laughs).

LM: Did your father do this on his own, he sold his own okolehao, he made his own and sold it.?

NO: That's right

LM: For the Association?

NO: No,no, no,no. They made it on their own, all on their own. Yeah they taking their own risk (laughs). That's all individual. I think, the way I think now, everybody else was doing it too. Yeah, because you know they had hard time and only vegetable, I don't think they can support the family. So that was one thing I remember.

LM: Exciting!

NO: Exciting yeah.

LM: Did your family attend a church here in Manoa?

NO: No, no, no.

LM: What religion were they?

NO: They were Buddhists but their Buddhist temple was located down Moiliili, which is presently in Palolo now, the Higashi Hongwanji, but originally located down University. Well, we went down when my sister passed away, and certain days, they have to go to the church. They also relocated down to Old Waialae Avenue, the same church. I remember going there a couple of times. Yeah they were attending church only for special occasions. Not for religious, you know every set Sunday or something, no. Only special occasions, Buddhist Temple.

LM: Now going back to during the War years.

NO: Yes, well that was my draft age too but they were asking for volunteers, they were drafting people, but since I was the only son

and sole supporter of the family I was deferred. We had classification called 1A, 2A, 3A. 1A is the one they inducted but I was classified 3A which means dependents because I have a lot of dependents, I was deferred for 3A. So I was working at the market at that time, the May's Market and the second time I was deferred as, they called it job, because of the essential of the job, depend on what you doing, and I was in the produce. By those days produce was very, very valuable because all the military people, the personnel, the military mess sergeant came into the supermarket and bought out all the greens so naturally it wasn't enough for the civilian and the producers were less because they couldn't get fertilizer. They have to get certain priority and was very top priority in the farmers. And I used to be a delivery boy at that time because those days gasoline was rationed too so all the people used to call in and they had the charge account and we used to deliver and I was a grocery delivery boy there. And later on my manager, after the war, the manager call me see if I want to take over the produce department because he felt it was much easier if an Oriental guy purchaser. He could go to the farmers because mostly the farmers are Oriental too. So I took the job because they provide me with free transportation and those days the food were rationed too and I could take home whatever I need, so I took the job. But the only job , my job is to go to the farmers get the vegetables and we used to go and cut lettuce, Manoa lettuce. There was a Manoa lettuce king in Palolo Valley and they rotate the market and the personnel and they put the peg to each road that you supposed to get it, but you have to bring your own, you have to cut your own, labor, you have to provide the labor, you have to bring the cash and you have to bring your own container. All what they do is just collect money. So we used to take off our shoes and cut the lettuce and pack it our own and pay cash to him and we used to wash it and take it home.

LM: Oh my. Home or back to the market?

NO: To the market, supply the market. Yeah, but we have to provide them the labor, plus bring the cash and the container in order to get the merchandise. That much the merchant was so desperate to get, hard to get.

LM: Now you were getting from all over, not just from Manoa Valley.

NO: Yeah. No, no, no. I used to go down mostly at the market, River Street. That's where all the produce wholesalers were at that time. So first come, first served base and we used to stand by and watch for the trucks to bring in the produce. We used to fight over the produce. Then certain commodities we used to go down and cut, for example Manoa lettuce. I had a connection and we have to supply, bring the cash and do our own labor work and then bring back the merchandise. So I used to go all around here and there and pick up the produce to supply the market. And in the meantime, this reverend here, he had the Christian church up the valley and he wanted to volunteer to the military, to the army, that we'd provide manpower, so every Sunday we'd go down, the military trucks used to come and pick us up. And one Sunday I remember we down to Ewa Beach to cut kiawe trees. And one Sunday I remember we went to Red Hill and Fort Shafter to dig tunnels for the ammunition dump probably. And Fort Shafter, I don't know what it was, we used to dig the ground. I don't know it was underground, ammunition dump or something like that, or stadium or something. We used to dig anyway. Give lot of volunteer manpower job. And of course they supply the lunch and they used to bring us back on the truck. And we did all those things, because during that time all the young men, you hardly see young men, they all were out in the service. Everything was rationed. And at night is curfew. You cannot go out. And we used to volunteer for they call Civilian Defense. You know, they check the house lights, you know the lights not supposed to leak and they were just like a warden. Yeah, we used to go out. We used to do a lot of volunteer work and we were restricted from down the ocean or with restriction we shouldn't carry any cameras, no all-wave radios. Just stay home at night.

LM: This was everybody?

NO: Everybody, everybody, yeah.

LM: Everybody, not just Japanese-Americans, just everybody.

NO: Everybody was restricted to that yeah.

LM: When you went on your very first job, when you started work, what were you paid?

NO: Dollar a day.

LM: One dollar a day?

NO: Yeah, and I was happy. Dollar a day plus we work six and a half days a week. Sunday we work half a day. And I was still on good side because I started from six to six but some other...

LM: 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM?

NO: Yes 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and Sundays at least I had half a day time you know but understand, other Japanese wholesalers, they work longer hours and they don't have any Sundays I think. They get through something like 5:00 O'clock I think. They were just terrible. But I was working for this Chinese grocery store and I was real fortunate I think. I used to deliver the groceries and I learn lot about the grocery pricing and merchandising and the produce so I thought, oh I better get into a bigger market. In 1940 that's when I applied to that --- that was one of the leading markets. Those days there were about five leading markets. May's market they call it , the store I used to work for. And that owned by Liberty House. And Liberty House was owned by American Factors, our delivery truck was parked in the American Factors garage. Our paycheck used to come from Liberty House. And there was Metropolitan Market, this was the big market that was right -- - one of the markets was down on King Street, was the main branch, the main store and the branch market was on Beretania and Pensacola, Metropolitan Market. And they had Chun Hoon Market by School and they had a lot of military. The had C. Q. Yee Hop downtown and they had Aoki Store in Waikiki. These five major markets used to take charge accounts and delivery service. Then as generations changed after the War, this Foodland came up, the cash and carry supermarket. Then that's when all the old trend markets came down. They had to shut up because you cannot afford to

deliver with the cash and carry price and the charge and delivery bill cause the overhead. So all these big major markets close up after the supermarket came up. Today it's all cash and carry. When Foodland came up, Time's came up, Safeway came up, Star came up, Holiday Mart, all those supermarkets. That's the trend today. You don't see those old days, charge and delivery. Those system was gone.

LM: There were still no markets here in Manoa, was there?

NO: Oh I started in--- at that time there was no Foodland or other supermarket --- I started my concession I did. You know they have a market, they want somebody to run the produce department. That's when I went in --- when I started from King Street when my friend and I --- he had the property on King Street called Chow's Market. He asked me if I want to go in concession as the produce. I did right after the war. That was my first business and I ran there for about five years I think. Then there's another market came up in ---where the --- across from Manoa Service Station, is apartment or condominium now. They used to have Woodlawn Supermarket along the river. That was Magoon Estate and they wanted somebody take over the concession of produce. So I had --- for a while I had two or three concession. I had one Moiliili, one friend of mine wanted me to run the produce so that's where my three sisters helped me. They were in charge of the produce department and I used to supply the three markets, go down the wholesale market, buy the vegetable and distribute to these stores. For a time I had three branch stores. Then later on I had concentrated to only one, to this Manoa one. Then I was evicted after five years I think.

LM: From that Manoa market?

NO: Yeah, yeah, so that's when I went to the wholesale business then. Friend of mine used to deliver the --- from the wholesaler --- he said-- he was a veteran and he got wounded in the legs -- he say he wanted to sell his business so I say why don't I go into the wholesale business. That was in 1951, November I think. So I was evicted at this concession so I had no lease, nothing so I went into

the wholesale business which I ran for about twenty-eight years.

LM: So why did they evict you from the ---where Magoon is?

NO: Because that originally was --- they call Ackerman Brothers --- that developed that market and they had this man named Roy Emory, he passed away, he was my original boss down May's Market and he invited me to get the concession . Then they sold the business to this Kim Chow Shoe Store manager, Kim Chow Shoe Store anyway. They wanted that market. When they bought out they wanted to run the entire business. I had only concession. So I was evicted. So I had no lease, so I changed my business into wholesale. I went to wholesale business. Good thing I did (laughs). But it's hard work, wholesale business, hard work. You get up early in the morning. All labor work. And I started off with one man and two trucks. Later on I had about fifteen trucks, oh ten trucks, fifteen men. Big overhead I had. And later on I had labor problems, those days start to come labor problems. And I had a buyer so I sold the business. Yeah, it was a tough business.

LM: When was that that you sold the business?

NO: 1979 I sold the business. And I worked for the buyer for three years, then I got out and looked for tourist business. So I'm working down the airport now.

LM: What are you doing --- that's your other job now so you're doing what at the airport?

NO: Well fortunately, because my father was ill health and I mingled with the old folk, I start to learn a lot of Japanese language and probably because of the bilingual I be able to speak and read and write that. Probably I can be able to work to the airport now because we greet the Japanese tourists and the company I'm working is Japan Tour Agent Company. And we greet the Japanese tourists. I do mostly the departure now. When they arrive and they take them around to sight-seeing -- normally the Japanese tourists stays only four or five nights. That's the most and they go back because they have to work right away. So when they on the way

home, the tour driver brings the passengers to the airport to certain airlines. We have Japan Airline, we have United, we have Northwest and they have group departure is different area where we give them the boarding pass, explain them what to do, what gate to go, we issue the boarding pass, show them which gate is at what time and they get Duty-Free and the omiyage to pick up. We do all those things for the tourist, show them.

LM: You had how many years of Japanese school?

NO: I went to ninth grade. But after that I was interested in Japanese speaking so I learned, went to school and I read books, look at the TV and hear over the radio and be able to speak Japanese and learn how to read and write a little so that was advantageous to me I think. And because of that they hired me. You know they get lots of retiree working down the airport because they are the ones that are bilingual. The younger ones today, not many can speak, read and write Japanese. Unless they come Japan or the mother is from Japan or some, they speak language at home. But the majority no. And the majority of the young people doesn't like this kind of work hours because some mornings you have to go early in the morning and you don't know what time you get through. The young ones wanted a set time of work, you know from eight to five or something, set hours. So that where we lucky and we come in the picture. So I'm enjoying the job you know, lot of exercise, going back and forth. I don't drive now. I used be a tour driver you know and drive the tourists and narrate here and there and we have the route. But that company kind of decreased, declined on the tourists so changed to another company and now I work only in the airport.

LM: Now let's step in another direction and talk about your marriage.

NO: Oh (laughs). Well that was when we moved to the third house, 1940 or '41,'41. And let's see, after that a few years while we were living there --- I didn't have the feeling to get married during the wartime. And it was not nice to, so I was waiting you know until the War end. And during that war days we had friend make luaus, they were making parties already. You know for other occasions. And one day, one occasion, this friend of mine told me,

"oh you have to bring a girlfriend to come to the luau." There was nothing but luaus then. So when I used to deliver my groceries to -- I used to have the area, Diamond Head, Waikiki, Kahala, one of the biggest area. And all the maids, they used to have maids, you know, cooking and housework. And they used to tell me I'm the only one lasted so long so I presume there were a lot of changes. They didn't like the area because too big a area to cover and I was delivering that area, Kahala, Kaimuki and Diamond Head and she used to work near Diamond Head as a housemaid. So one day I asked her if she willing to come to a luau one Sunday. Sunday was off so I told 'em if you want to come to luau. And she agreed, so I pick her up and evidently from that we started to date, go out to movies, things like that . So as soon as the war ended I told her I better get settled down, you know to go into my business. So that's when this organization people help me with build up tent.

LM: The farmers' association?

NO: Yeah, they help me with build up tent. Of course we hired a tent and those days after the war all kind of businesses start coming out and people were entertaining, making parties. And so I told her oh we better get married, so that was 1946. We married at a Christian church, down University with a reverend officiating .

LM: What was the reverend's name?

NO: Fujinaga. And we had the ceremony at Church of Crossroads down University. Then we had the reception at my home, in the yard. You know there were nothing but weeds there and we build --- I think we put some kind of board and they put up the big tent and I had friends playing Hawaiian music and we had the guests. And that time I was working at the market already so I invited all the employees and all the neighbors so we had a pretty good reception. Yeah (laughs). 1946, so my son was born 1947, the oldest son. And he's in Denver today, but he doesn't have any children. If he had the children I had a big grandchild already. Yeah but too bad . He was going to --- in fact I had three boys and one daughter. All of them went to University.

LM: University of Hawaii?

NO: Yeah, University of Hawaii, and the oldest one took ROTC in the Air Force, so when he graduated, we attended two ceremony, one the ROTC, he get pin Second Lieutenant automatically, and then he took the academic graduation. Then he married to this classmate and she's from Hilo. And my son was specializing in Entomology, you know the insects, bugs yeah. And I used to run the wholesale produce at that time. I used to supply the string beans for the bugs I remember.

LM: Oh for the bugs.

NO: Yeah, for feed the bugs. He used to order beans and I used to deliver the string beans, I remember (laughs). Then later on after graduation he has to go into the Air Force. He say he want to go in the Air Force. So he went to Denver and I think he went also Florida, he stationed for oh about five years in Tallahassee. Then he was shifted to Okinawa. He stayed there for oh five or six years, in Kadena Air Force Base. And I visited him that year, '70 sometime from Fukuoka, when the first bullet train went from Tokyo to Hakata. And they had invited us and I went over. And when I heard that it takes about hour and half to fly to Okinawa, I visited him and that the year that they had the Expo. And there were shortage of water, drinking water so he told me that they don't do washing only once a week. So that night I slept his house but I didn't take a bath because I was worried about the water (laughs). I remember that yeah. So he's in Denver. He's still in Denver today but he got out and --- I think he served about fourteen or fifteen years in the Air Force. He a Lt. Colonel now in the reserve. He comes here. He calls me everyday, I mean every week, and he's been coming to Hickam every year for two weeks' duty, but last year he went to Japan, Yokota. And the other year he went to Philippines. And the other year he went to Texas I think. And this year he say he has to go to Colorado Springs or something. But anyway when he has time he wants to come to Honolulu and...

LM: And live here? He wants to live here eventually?

NO: No, no, no. I don't think so. He has a big home there. I went to see
- in Aurora, Colorado.

LM: What about your other two sons?

NO: The other son is, second boy, is also --- he graduated
Roosevelt, but he want to go to Purdue badly instead of UH. So he
went to Purdue. He wants to pick up, take up --- he was very good
in mechanical drawing but now later on he came --- he want to be
electrical engineer and he graduated with honor in Purdue. And
when he came back the construction was real bad so he got kind of
disgusted and he say he want to be a paramedic. And he was
working paramedic, as ambulance, with the ambulance. And later
on he say he see the doctors make lot of money. "I think I want to
be doctor," he said. So he got interested in medic and he graduated,
He was lucky he was accepted in John Burns' Medical School. He
graduated there and we went to that ceremony two times too.
Then, right now, he was interned at UCLA or USC Hospital in
California for one year. Then he changed to New Jersey. He went to
Morristown, New Jersey. I went to see the hospital, very nice
place. And then he got married to the nurse, she was registered
nurse at Queens and they got married and they got two children.
That's the first grandchildren I have over here. Yeah, yeah, that's
the only grandchildren I have. He's working Queen's right now,
Emergency, he specialize Emergency.

LM: Does he live in....?

NO: He live Hawaii Kai. Yeah.

LM: What about the last one?

NO: The last one stays home. He went to University. He was very
interested in Japanese and he wants to go to Waseda but got a
scholarship, applied for scholarship, the scholarship for Ke O
University, Japan and he went there and he stayed there three and a
half years. He graduated and one year he took the scholarship from
this Tokyu, in Japan, Tokyu Foundation. And the other day, I mean
last year, that had the reunion, tenth anniversary and he went. They

sent him the free ticket and free hotel. He went over. And he's doing real estate now. And partly he's with the hotel business, so part time he's doing real estate. He stays home with me.

LM: He lives here?

NO: Yeah he lives here.

LM: Your daughter lives....

NO: My daughter lives in Torrance. She married and she's working for the Hughes Aircraft yeah. And she's doing pretty good I think with the husband. They have a home and she has no children too.

LM: So you have only one living here in Manoa with you? Only one of your children stayed...

NO: Stayed in my house. But the other living in Hawaii Kai. Two children here and two up the Mainland.

LM: And your sisters?

NO: I have

LM: Three left ?

NO: Oldest sister, the second one right below me lives in Saint Louis Place, near, they call Eugene Place. That's the second one. And the next one is, live in Mainland. What you call that place, not Orange County. In L.A., it's in L.A., yeah. And then the other one lives in Manoa over here , Kumukoa. And then the last one live in Wahiawa. So I have other sister here, oh and one more lives in Gardena, two sisters live in Gardena and near Gardena, oh what you call that place now... but in L.A. Two L.A. and three here, one St. Louis, Wahiawa, and Manoa. Yeah. And the oldest one passed away last year, two years ago.

LM: Going back just quickly to your homes that your family rented.

Do you have any recollection of how much you paid when you--- how much they had to pay for rent in the different homes that they rented?

NO: Uh, yes, I think that was --- the last one was, I think was thirty-five dollars. Well just a moment please. The first place we went I don't remember how much money my father used to pay to the Ena Estate. The second was ten dollar a month, ten dollar a month, it's real cheap those days. And the third one

LM: And that got paid to whom, the ten dollars a month?

NO: To the private owner named Matsukawa. They still --- they used to ---no they not there anymore. They used to live there. They used to own the lease, the place, sub-rent like. And ten dollar a month used to pay. And the last one, I thought it was thirty-five dollars I think a month. But those days you know that's a big money to us, yeah, yeah.

LM: And by then, the last home, you had electricity and telephone?

NO: Oh yeah, we had electricity and that was wartime.

LM: That was '41 so of course you would have had.

NO: Yeah, we had telephone and we had water line, sewer line. And the second house we had, I think we had telephone too. Electricity was there and mail was running and yeah, we had water line and electrical line and telephone at that time too. Only the first house....

LM: Only the first house you had to cook on wood fires.

NO: Yeah, wood in ground stove plus cesspool type of toilet, no water line, no sewage, yeah.

LM: Well that's probably pretty good coverage of your life.

NO: Is this the family history?

LM: Well, mostly about, well mostly about how it was for you in Manoa.

NO: Olden days.

LM: What it was like.

NO: But I think they really suffered because they had so many children increasing and there's no revenue and raining everyday and they took lot of loss by doing --- like my father, I recall, because they had hard time with the vegetables, a friend recommended to go into poultry business and not realizing that they had strong wind, they had the Kona wind. He build the chicken coop by facing the roof back, you know, which way the wind's coming but he didn't realize they had the Kona winds when they had the Kona rain coming the opposite direction and that's when he took big loss on the chicks, all died. And that's another additional debt he suffered. And the reason why this friend of mine probably helped me is because I paid up during the wartime, I work as much as I can and do a lot of saving, try to pay up my father's debt. I think that's the reason why I think he loaned me the money.

LM: What kinds of things, as you look back on your Manoa, your life here in Manoa, what kind of significant changes do you see, significant events in your lifetime here in Manoa?

NO: Events?

LM: Uh huh, about Manoa...

NO: Well, most of the events was held at the Language School, Japanese Language School. We had lots of acts on the graduation and all kind of event during the school days when they have anniversary or holiday, they put a lot of act, what they call that, dramatizing, act, shibai. And they used to have benefit movies. Most of the event was held at the school grounds, not at individual homes or things like that .

LM: But in terms of Manoa, seeing how Manoa has changed over the time

you've been here....

NO: Well, the significant change in Manoa is the housing. The house lot increase in the valley. You know we had nothing but gardens, taro patch and now change all to housing. That's the amazing thing, all homes, all house lots, amazing. It's changed. You hardly notice where you were living. Yeah, the beautification of and the development of the valley, is a great change. So that means the residential population grew and the residential increase, so the the developments increase in the valley. Every spot is homes now, there's no vacant lot. Hard to find vacant lot in Manoa now.

LM: You were talking about how much you had to pay debts and everything else. Did you use banks here? Did your parents use bank?

NO: Originally I don't think they knew what a bank was . I don't think they had anything to put in the bank but at my days, yes I had a bank, yeah.

LM: But not your parents? They never....

NO: No, no,not during the parents' days. And one more thing I recall. I don't know if I told you the story but, this was long time ago. You know they had one burglary in one farmer's house and then they, all the farmers, got together and they guarded this valley. There's a one way street up and they made a shift, in eight hour shift or five hour shift. I think it was somewhere five or six hours and each --- about three or four person come on certain hours and they guarded every vehicle that came in the Valley. Checked them up and tried to protect the community. And that was amazing thing, I thought. Until someone sleeping, they take shift and they come out and guard the place so the vehicle, the strangers cannot come in the Valley. They just check up. One time they had the burglary and they were careful. I think they were down by the Waioli Tea Room. They guarded the place and one where the intersection of Paradise Park and Waaloa Road. They guarded over there.

LM: This was the first Neighborhood Watch.

NO: Yeah, Neighborhood Watch, right. Oh that was amazing. They all volunteer then you know. Those are the things that the organization people are willing to volunteer. In time of need when somebody's house is under destruction, they try to help out and build up. And when they had the flood they all volunteer. And especially when somebody had a death in the family, they arrange all the funerals. Things like that. Those are the things they were all....

LM: Kind of miss that now huh, with the So many people.

NO: Yeah, right, right.

LM: You can't have that kind of close sense of community.

NO: Yeah, that's right. Very close relationship yeah. That's right. Olden days was really very close. Well generations change, the trend has changed so cannot blame now. That was wonderful thing I think.

LM: Well thank you Mr. Oda.. It was so nice of you to take this time to do this.

NO: Oh don't mention it.

LM: Thank you.

Glossary

araimo	Japanese name for the corm or underground stem of dry land taro; also referred to as dasheen.
bento	Japanese term for a box lunch
kadomatsu	arrangement of pine and bamboo for the New Year's celebration. The arrangement is placed at the entrance of a home.
gori	small, freshwater fish, also called opu
mochi	Japanese cakes or patties made of pounded sticky rice.
moroba	Japanese term for fern leaves
musubi	Japanese term for cooked rice formed into a ball or other shape so that it can be conveniently eaten by hand
o-kazari	New Year's arrangement of two mochi on top of four fern and four eucalyptus or plum leaves for good luck.
okolehao	Hawaiian name for a liquor made from the root of the ti plant.
omiyage	Japanese word for gifts purchased by travelers to be taken home to friends and family.
opu	fresh water fish, also called gori
oya	Japanese word for the head of a family or group
shibai	play-acting

shoyu

soy sauce

tanomoshi

Japanese term for a group organized by an individual who is referred to as the "oya". The purpose of the organization is to provide a source of emergency funds for the members of the group. The group meets for as many months as there are members, and each member puts a predetermined amount every month into a collective fund. The "oya" receives the fund for the first month. Thereafter, members bid for the monthly fund, and the winning bidder receives the money and pays the amount of the bid to any of the members who have never won a bid. Once a member has won the bid, he/she is ineligible to bid again.

ume boshi

Japanese pickled plums