

I W A S A K I

Interview with Shigeto & Yaeju Iwasaki & Gail Kajiyama

October 27, 1988 for Manoa history at Lyon Arboretum
Interviewers: Beatrice Krauss, Charles Bouslog

SI: We had seven children, only one daughter, Gail here.

We lived in Manoa from 1925-1956. We bought the place (on lease) and started farming, near the bridge [no longer there].

GK: We were very near to the Arboretum.

CB: Did you know Yoshikawa?

SI: He lived right up here. We lived farther down.

I grew radish, carrots, string beans, araimo(?), daikon, gobo. Only vegetables. We went to River Street to sell. At first by wagon and a horse. Later, we had a Star sedan. Shingle came to live nearby. He said, "Horse brings too many flies, so he stopped all the horses."

CB: Any bananas grown near you?

SI: Banana was way far out from us. A Filipino area. A Japanese was living there; a Filipino bought it. From Fukunaga. Those boys graduated from the university.

BK: Wasn't Kutsunai (the first Japanese to graduate from the university) living up there?

SI: Yes.

CB: Did you call the business area of East Manoa "The Village"?

SI: We used to call it 'East Manoa.'

[BK: We now believe that "The Village" was a haole term.]

SI: That area was called Lower Manoa Road.

CB: We note that in the 20's and 30's most of the stores were Japanese operated. Maybe only one Chinese store.

SI: Yes. Only one.

BK: Where did your children go to school?

SI: All seven children went to Manoa School, thru all 6 grades. They worked plenty hard on the farm, all the time. They come back from school. They eat two loaves bread. They start to work.

CB: What was your water source?

SI: We had a well, then government water. Well water by bucket.

BK: When were your vegetables made ready for market?

SI: We got ready at night. At about two o'clock morning we start to run down to River Street, to wherever the orders were. To wholesale markets. From King to Beretania, a big market.

BK: Where the Chinese Cultural center is now.

SI: We also sold along Beretania and Hotel Streets. We got back home about 6 to 7 o'clock. After that I went to yard work.

I had a very hard time too. [Laughter] Seven children!

SI: We had to leave in 1956 because the lease ran out. It had been annual, then for the last few years monthly. The Bishop estate was getting ready to build houses.

CB: How did you pay for the house and lease when you first moved in?

SI: The lease was very low, maybe \$250-300 a year for 3 acres.

BK: Where had you been earlier?

SI: At Moiliili. Stone mason, carpenter, painter, all kinds of work. I had a cousin in the Manoa vegetable business. We met him in 1920, soon after we had come back from Japan. He came to sell vegetables at our house. He told me about the good vegetable land up Manoa. I was working at a Hawaii sugar plantation, working hard there. It was much, far better than the plantation.

The house was already there. I bought from Mr. Ikegami.

CB: What about storms?

SI: Rain, rain, rain, wind so strong. Daikon laid flat on the ground. Summer time the wind blows the sand in the *daikon*, then you can't sell it.

BK: Who was your doctor?

SI: A midwife delivered all the children. She [wife] went to Dr. Itamura on Beretania, and to a dentist at Palama Settlement.

SI: I was up here for 30 years, 1925-1956. In this one place all that time.

CB: When did you get your first radio?

BK: Just before the war started we got a radio.

SI: My eldest son bought it.

BK: The bridge (no longer there) had a dry bed under it, at the Kimura boundary. (Looking at map.) Lots of water only when it rained hard.

SI: The stream was about 2 blocks down from us.

We had more than 65 families up here. Our association was *Kita Manoa Nogyo Kumiai* (North Manoa Farmers' Association). We had officers. The object was to help each other. As after a big storm. Once the bridge blew out. One house, nearly went down too. Everybody get together, clean up the yard. Collect rocks, help each other.

CB: Did your sons come straight home from school?

SI: We always think so! But that's after Japanese school. This was *Manoa Heiwa Gakuin*, the old Japanese school, where a bakery is today. Mr. Shimoda was the principal.

GK: We just went across the street from Manoa school to our Japanese class. The other Japanese school was all East Manoa children.

BK: Any records of that school?

SI: I doubt it.

CB: Was the Ariyoshi family up here?

SI: When the war started, they came up there, in the banana area. They had a cousin or relative there. Matsukawa.

GK: George Ariyoshi...we went to school together [McKinley H.S.J. He was very distant. Her never talked to me. We were just farmers. He was running for president of the student body He had no classes at Manoa.

CB: How about WWII and the Korean War?

SI: All 6 boys went to war, one hit by shrapnel, but all returned.

BK: How many grandchildren do you have?

SI: Nine or ten great grandchildren.

SI: The names on the map are for 1930's, they had been here as early, or sooner, as 1915. I was a newcomer. About 1910-15 when first Japanese came up here. The land had been densely covered by lantana; that was all cleared when we came.

GK: We had very good land, good soil, flat. Others had more mountainous areas.

SI: Fine sandy soil, very good. Our neighbors had lots of stones, rocks. My land was so nice.

CB: Did all 7 children finish high school? Any go to college?

SI: Yes, all high school. None to college. No money for that.

GK: But also we didn't have the urge to go further.

BK: Do you remember a truck and van advertising Japanese movies, and have movies with a talker for the action?

SI: I do remember.

BK: We kids crawled under the cloth. Other Japanese seem to remember that movies were shown in some building. Old-fashioned movie camera.

CB: Living up here could you hear the sounds of the Chinese funerals?

SI: Yes. Big music, drums.

BK: The Chinese would throw out the papers with holes in them. They were for the devil to fall out, so he can't catch up with the corpse. What were your pleasures, games?

SI: Every year we had a New Year party at our farmer center, in a tent. Afterward we met in a big room at the Muramoto place, the other side of my house. We borrowed their land and built the house. Our group meets at least once a year, only as a New Year party. The last was at Wisteria. Speeches. Younger generation now attend. Music, singing, good food. Plenty pleasure. We used to have picnic, but we cancelled it as too much work.

[NOW the discussion turned to the three photo albums and loose pictures that SI/GK brought.] (550 on reel)
(587 = end of side A) [Numbers in () refer to tape counter.]

Side B

BK: Do you remember a girl named Masai, the father a plumber?

SI: That was East Manoa. Yamamoto.

BK: When the sister got married they had a real Japanese wedding. They made a platform and the bride had to go and change her kimono.

SI: Well, before, it was like that. I went to some of those.

I was a middleman too!

BK: Did you have an office? [Laughter]

SI: My home was the office.

BK: We had a Japanese working on our farm on Maui. He sent for a picture bride. She was angry. She said *his* picture was taken from the *good* side. But they made a happy marriage.

SI: This picture shows our house. The jeep there dates it. After the war.

[Now examining many pictures.]

SI: When we moved to Manoa this road here was narrow, a donkey road, stony.

BK: We had a Brownie (box) camera. We had so many pictures because we didn't have to pay for the developing and printing. Our neighbor did this for us. Furuichi. That's the only reason we could take so many pictures.(44)

BK: Do you remember names of different pools, like Ginger? The *haoie* people had names for all the pools.

BK: Any Hawaiians around this area?

SI: Maikai, a Hawaiian family. Near the river. That was their land. Called Harry. Do you remember near today's Manoa school the taro patches?

BK: We lived on Parker Place, and when we came up the valley we had to walk on the dikes.

SI: In heavy rain that taro patch was a river.

BK: Do you remember a Hawaiian playing a bamboo flute?

Who was your teacher at Manoa school?

GK: Mrs. Mitchell.

BK: Everyone remembers her. How long was Japanese school?

GK: One hour, then walk home. About 30 minutes.

I was number three. I had to help raise the younger ones and to cook. (99)

SI: I used to buy 200 pounds of rice every month, sometimes six loaves of bread at a time.

CB: No poi in your diet?

SI: No. We ate whatever came out of the ground....soy beans, sweet potatoes. We had good food from our garden. We didn't have much meat. We had some chickens. Eggs. Radish.

BK: Was your horse outdoors or in?

SI: Our horse was stabled. I sold horse and wagon to my cousin.

GK: I don't remember the horse. (121)

SI: We had no bananas.

CB: You were born 1896, and your wife 1900?

SI: That's right. I came to Hawaii in 1902, at age six. We went to Honomu, Hawaii, where I was raised. I went through the fifth grade there. It took me nearly two years to learn English. At 14 I worked on the plantation. I left the plantation in 1919 (when I was 23). I got married in 1920. (In 1970 we went to Japan for our 50th wedding anniversary.) (144)

I have two sisters there. They went back from Hawaii. We are from Kumamoto. (153)

SI: I was quite healthy. But many colds up here because we were wet so much. It was very wonderful when the waterfalls were running behind us, four or five going, a rushing sound. (194)

BK: Do you remember the Carter summer house up here? He became

governor. It burned down about 1950. How about the Harrison house up here at the arboretum?

SI: Too far up for us.

GK: The HSPA people we didn't know. They were the elite.

BK: Remember someone growing maidenhair fern up here?

SI: [Area is marked on map] Two big hothouses there. (211)

We sold Japanese taro, dasheen, onion, radish, carrot.

Each plot about the size of this room. These lines were walkways.

We did not irrigate. We carried water when we had too. It was dry only for a short time. (240)

SI: No outdoor shower, but a furo.

BK: Were any of these farms larger than 3 acres?

SI: Upper people had more land, because of the steep fields.

I had a very good, square land. Others had all kinds of shapes. Some went up the hill.

CB: Could a family get along then not knowing English?

SI: English wasn't so necessary. All over Japanese.

I learned a little Hawaiian, but I've forgotten it.

BK: Where were your markets downtown?

SI: Mostly River, one Kukui. None King Street. (300)

Our address was 3576 Upper Manoa rd.

BK: To go to McKinley H.S, where did you catch the trolley?

GK: At the Cooke place on Oahu Avenue. Then went along Beretania, walked across to school.

(310-370: looking at pictures)

CB: What do your brothers do?

GK: They all live here. They are mostly glaziers, one an

accountant.

BK: Did your family give haole names to the children?

GK: At first only Japanese names. In 1928 the schools said English first name mandatory. You had to have an English name.

I think this was a territorial law, not a school ruling.*[*p.11]

SI: We got real American names. Daniel (for Boone), Andrew (for a president), Benjamin (Franklin), Richard (given by the hospital).

BK: Whom did you do yard work for?

SI: First place was John Gill, & Lt. Col. E. K. Masseur, Dr. Harry Arnold (of Straub CVlinic). Dr. Howell (he moved I followed him). Brawley. Dr. Walker at Oahu & Armstrong. Johnson next door on Armstrong. I worked for Dr. Howell more than 15 years. They moved to the mainland, sent me Xmas cards every year. (450)

[SI shows his notebook of names. It contains all those living here, in the association, with addresses, from 1910 on. It also has names and addresses for his present Liliha home. BK took Xerox copies of the association, to be translated. SI reads off the names] (517-576)

587 end of tape [Remainder is reconstruction from notes.]

CB: What did you buy at Fujise store down on Manoa Road?

SI: 100 lb bag of rice, usually two at a time, each month, then four loaves of bread on Sunday.

CB: How did you get started on bread, not usual for a Japanese family?

SI & GK: It was the snacks at Manoa school. They ate bread there, wanted it at home. One son might eat an entire loaf when he came home from school!

CB: About some "first times"? Telephone?

SI: Telephone not until mid-1940's. Electricity 1935 here.

We had a wood stove, plenty wood all around us.

GK: Our mail came at the Japanese school. the principal passed it out! No mail deliveries up here. We had both an indoor and an outdoor toilet.

[Now SI & YI go to look around the area, as they had never been up this high. They had known the Okura family here. GK drives them.]

[Note that GK brought a map of the locations of some 75 Issei families from Lowrey & Manoa Rd. north to HSPA area. More names added later! Map to be placed on grid & used in history.]

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[Revision as approved 10/30/88 by SI & GK.]
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Addendum by Gail Kajiyama 10/28/88

We made lei, from gardenia, daisies, ginger and whatever flowers we had, for graduation. We stood on the sidewalks with lei on our arms.

On Memorial Day we took flowers and sold them at the cemeteries, all the peddlers lined up on the sidewalk. On other weekends when flowers were abundant, we used to stand at the corner of Punahou & Beretania (by Central Union Church) and peddle flower bouquets to the passersby. Sometimes we walked door to door. During the mango season we used to "steal" the fallen mangoes. Sometimes we were chased!

On Thanksgiving Day my parents took the boys up in the mountains to pick red "Holly" berries, evergreen, and ti leaves in preparation for Xmas wreaths, waiwai^{ole} too. Sometimes they went ^{by car} as far as Wahiawa.

On Christmas Day they went back to the mountains, behind

where Mr. Shiraishi lived, for the fern (*hapu*) leaves. Then to wherever they could find bamboo and eucalyptus leaves to make *moroba*, which is used under the *mochi* for New year. They also looked for oleander, pine, and bamboo to make altar flowers and *kadomatsu*, what we use at the main entrance of the shrine.

Also we had to pound our *mochi* for the new year. This was done by several families getting together, taking turns to pound and turn the rice. Others helped to cut the *mochi* to size, and all the others to shape them. Finally we had a lot of fun.

Our first contact with Christianity occurred in the 1940's through Kazuo Yoshioka and the Rev. & Mrs. Fujinaga. Ms. Yoshioka also helped us get our first telephone service. During the war we did Red Cross work and from that we were assisted in getting our first mail service.

Manoa Elementary School Teachers

Manoa Heiwa Gakuin

Principal: Miss Mitchell

Mr. Shimoda

Teachers: Miss Bell

Mr. Iwanaga

Mrs. Maude Williams

Mrs. Shinkawa

Mrs. Brown

Mr. Kumata

Miss Buchanan

Mr. Furukawa

Mrs. Blossom Nary

New principal:

Mrs. Sherman

Mr. Murata

Mrs. (Johnny) Emily Noble

[Improvements by him:]

Mrs. Wong

gym, judo, kendo,

soroban-abacus

soroban-abacus

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

City Dir: 1926 T. Iwasaki farmer Manoa road

1927 Mrs. S. I. i tchr Moililili Japanese Lang Sch.

Shigeto I farmer Manoa rd

T

" "

1931-2 Shigeto I gardener Mr

Kiyoto

" "

(wife was J Lang Sch tchr

1953 Andw K. I 3576 Manoa rd

Dani S. glazier

Noriyuki glazier

Shigeto farmer 3576 mr

Yoshio Mrs. I. tchr Moililili J L S

presidents?).

We would appreciate your returning the permission letter.

Aloha,

Charles S. Eouslog

(date)

TO: Miss Beatrice Krauss
Lyon Arboretum Association
3860 Manoa Rd.
Honolulu, Hi. 96822

Subject: Permission

For purposes of the forthcoming history of Manoa Valley, the editors of the history may make use of the 10-page interview of my parents (Mr. and Mrs. Shigeto Iwasaki) of 27 October, 1988, both as to information therein and as to direct quotations from.

(signed)

(Gail Kajiyama)

3 Nov. 1988

Dear Mrs. Kajiyama,

Now your "addendum" appears on p. 10. (I got it just today.) The augmented family-map is indeed welcome. We'll try to put it on a grid of today's Manoa. And thanks even more for the list of teachers. Any additional memories generated by all this are wanted too.

The photo copies were mailed today. We need identifications of your brothers. If you did not get enough copies, note that the new negatives are there, and you may proceed to get more.

And thanks for the photos of the house and your mother. They too will be returned in time.

Aloha, CSB