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INTERVIEWEE

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INTERVIEW WITH YUKIO YOSHIKAWA

3345 PAWAINA ST., HONOLULU, HAWAII 96822

ON JANUARY 31, 1986 AT 9:20 A.M.

ATTENDING: BEATRICE KRAUSS, PEGGY ROBB, CHARLOTTA HOSKINS,
MARGARET YOUNG, SARA YANG, CHARLES BOUSLOC,
REFERRED TO BY THEIR INITIALS.

YY: I was born in waianae.

BK: And when did you and your family come to Manoa?

YY: We moved here in 1926, when I was about a year old. I was
born on April 25, 1925.

BK: Where did you live in Manoa Valley?

YY: I don't remember the address, but I lived almost at the
end of the road, Manoa Road. Our boundary was where HSPA

YY: was at that time, and is where Paradise Park is today. We
were raising vegetables. It used to be a small farm, and our
farm ran from Manoa Road out . . . below Manoa Road all the
way up to the mountains. It was part of the John Ena estate
at that time.

BK: I asked him whether it was just off of where the upper
parking lot is, and he said, "Yes, the driveway went up
there." Until a few years ago the cottage was still there. I
remember that. Then it sort of collapsed three or four years
ago.

YY: We used to grow all kinds of vegetables--beans, cabbages,
turnips, Japanese turnips--the long ones, sometimes flowers.
When we were small children, my parents used to raise flowers

for memorials, and on Memorial Day we used to go to the Hawaiian cemetery on Punchbowl Street, I think.

BK: Did your father have a truck and take vegetables down to the market?

YY: He had a large, about 1920, about one ton, and he used to load it up with vegetables, take it to River Street. That used to be where most of the produce companies were. He used to go about twice a week.

BK: Do you have any idea how large your farm was?

YY: Probably . . . about 8 acres, even 10 acres at one time. There was a stream where houses are now.

PR: On that side of the stream on the left as you are coming up?

YY: Yes. As I recall, there were two streams: one where new houses are today and the other one where there's a small parking lot for Paradise Park for employees. There's a stream right there on the mauka side of the parking lot. The farm also included vegetables and . . . the land rises to a small hill and on top of the hill was a small mountain. So Manoa Road went all the way up to the mountain.

BK: Did you raise Manoa lettuce?

YY: No.

BK: When you're telling about the pool where Paradise Park buildings are now, was that part of the pool?

YY: No, there was another family. At one time they used to raise watercress. They also used to raise frogs. They built concrete ponds, and they built a high fence around it.

BK: Were the Shingles there when you were? They lived over on

John Ena right across.

YY: Right.

BK: It looks like somebody built right over the pool. So that's the stream between the farm, and Shingles are on the other side.

YY: On the other side of the Shingles. That's where they have a bridge. But when I was young, nobody swam in that area; there were better ponds to swim in . . . further down, further up. The boys that lived at the HSPA built the ponds beyond the Akutongs. That pond was surrounded by California grass, so on a hot day we used to swim there, we used to lie down on a big rock and warm up because the water was cold. It was a good pond. They had gotten large rocks and built sort of a dam, so the water level would be higher, and I guess the deepest area was probably about 5-6 feet deep, rectangular, about 20 feet wide and maybe 40-50 feet long.

PR: Get all the boys in?

YY: Oh yes . . .

BK: Charlotta?

CH: Whom did you have as neighbors?

YY: In the early 1930s my father's friend wanted to farm, so he sold part of the farm to a man--his name was Fujii . . . The man has passed away a long time ago. The wife is still living. They had . . . 6 children--3 girls and 3 boys. They came later so they never played in HSPA pool, like we used to.

PR: Did your father rent the land?

YY: He leased it from John Ena.

MY: What about Losey place?

YY: Well probably, I think, quarter of a mile further down. Ewa side of the road, they had a long narrow driveway. I think they raised quail.

BK: How long did you live in your house?

YY: About 1926 to 1950s.

PR: What about the Filipino camp? Do you know where that was?

YY: It was across the valley from us.

YY: You know that pond they talked about?

PR: How do you spell that?

BK: It's a Filipino name, "Akutong." That was the name of the family that was there then?

YY: He married a Japanese girl. I forgot what her maiden name was. They were neighbors. Her family used to have a banana patch. I can't remember everybody's names. Only one house, the man that owned it married a Japanese girl, and he had several Filipino men working for him. That's why maybe people called it a camp. Actually was not several families but one family with several male Filipino employees.

BK: Were they in a dormitory of a kind?

YY: Yes, probably that's what it was because I remember one house and he used to raise a lot of fighting chickens.

BK: Mrs. Calme used to sit here Sundays and look across there, and when she saw them bring out the fighting cocks and start the fight, she'd call the police.

BK: Where did you do to school?

YY: Manoa School. We walked.

BK: Who was your principal at the time? was it Mrs. Brown?

YY: No.

BK: Florence Deverill?

YY: I think she was our fifth or sixth grade teacher.

BK: Do you remember any of your other teachers?

YY: There was Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Nary . . . that's about all I can think remember.

BK: Did you go there as long as the sixth grade?

YY: Six grades.

BK: Six grades, and then where did you go?

YY: Washington Intermediate. Our games were baseball, football and something we used to call "steal eggs." We used to divide the boys into two teams.

BK: Only boys played this game?

YY: Girls play, and boys and girls didn't play together-- in our days anyway, I don't know about now.

YY: We divided ourselves into two teams and each had sort of a home base. One person from each team goes out and whoever gets tagged is out of the game, and they go to the other team's base, and as more boys got tagged, they hold hands trying to reach their base, their home base.

BK: Did they make a chain?

YY: Yes, and if somebody on their team could touch their hand, they all can go back to their home.

BK: where does the expression "steal egg" come from?

YY: I think when we first started this we made a circle in the dirt and put there a rock, and then we carried another rock.

BK: Now did you take your lunch with you?

YY: I used to take home lunch, but they also served at the cafeteria.

BK: Did you take sandwiches?

YY: Usually rice, some vegetables and some fish or whatever.

BK: All right, how many siblings did you have?

YY: I had one sister and three brothers.

YY: I was second. I had an older brother and two more below me, and my sister was the youngest.

BK: Did they all go to Manoa School too?

YY: They all went to Manoa School . . .

BK: And later Washington?

YY: . . . and later Washington and then to McKinley, the two older boys. My father used to drop us off, and then we walked home.

BK: Did you use the trolley car?

YY: Not coming home from school.

BK: No, but did you use it to go to town . . . ?

YY: To go to town or Waikiki.

BK: You caught it at Cooper Road there? Then it stopped at Punahou and you had to catch another bus, another trolley?

YY: I think it went down all the way down to King.

BK: So at your time it did go all the way downtown. Were you ever naughty and pull off the trolley, or were you too well behaved?

YY: No, I never heard of anybody doing that.

BK: When you came home from school you would help your father on the farm?

YY: Weeding, digging, planting.

BK: Watering?

YY: Well, no, we don't water at all. Today, I guess, if I were farming here I would buy a water pump, hot water pump, and if the stream wasn't dried up I'd probably dig a shallow well.

BK: Was water that near the surface?

YY: Very close. We never had running water but we had all spring water. We didn't irrigate at all. _____.

BK: Well, did you ever have water from the stream piped into the house?

YY: Yes and no. At the beginning we didn't have any water piped into the house.

BK: So you got it from the spring? You threw away the water from the stream?

YY: There was a pond where stream water came up. The original owner made a rock wall, and he built three small ponds. The first was not made of concrete, it was a rock wall, sort of with gravel on the bottom, I would say about a foot deep. From there he went into a concrete pond, a small concrete pond.

YY: And then into another concrete pond. The little pond we used as drinking water, and the larger pond we used for washing our vegetables. In those days everything was washed before we took it to the market.

BK: How did you prepare your vegetables to take them to the

market?

YY: They were are tied in bundles and were taken to the produce market, where they would be sold at retail.

BK: You say where River Street is. All along there were these wholesale vegetable markets. In the early days the wagons, the horse-drawn wagons would back up there and load up . . . I remember that.

PR: Were taro patches still there?

YY: Where Safeway is and Long's Drugs are. That used to be taro patches. Where Manoa School is, they used to be taro patches. The Chinese that had the taro patches built a concrete wall with water from the stream to go through the taro patches. where they built the wall the water was deep, so we used to go swimming there. It was a very narrow, long "pond." Right at Manoa School just before East Manoa Road. That's where the bridge is now. There really wasn't a pond below the dam. It was shallow place, so I guess sliding down was kind of dangerous. I remember my father telling me ___ that he had a lot of respect for a man that owns a store.

BK: Where was this store?

YY: Right off River Street at Beretania and Hotel Street. When the man died my father said, "He is a very good man," because when my father didn't have any money to buy food, he asked the man for credit to buy rice. The man told him, "By all means I have to give you rice because farmers cannot work without food, without rice." I guess my father paid him back after he sold his crop. He had a lot of respect for that man because

of what he did and what he said, that farmers cannot work without a full stomach.

BK: Do you have any idea what your father paid for leasehold?

YY: No.

BK: Did your father farm out at Waianae?

YY: He used to work at different plantations. He didn't work in the fields. He used to work in irrigation ditches, irrigation tunnels. He worked on the Big Island, on Maui, and here digging ditches, digging tunnels. He used to use dynamite. He has scars on his face, on his arms. When I looked at him I could see black spots on his arms, he had a big scar on his arms, that he raised to cover his face.

BK: Was your father Japan-born?

YY: Yes.

BK: Your mother too?

YY: No, my mother was born on Kauai.

BK: Did he come as an immigrant contract worker to Kauai . . . ?

YY: Yes. I think he met his wife in Waianae.

BK: Oh. What led him to come to Manoa as a farmer?

YY: Well, lots of immigrants wanted to better themselves, earn more money. The previous owner of the farm I guess earned enough, so after selling the farm he went back to Japan. So my father's intention was to do exactly that, but he was not that successful. So we finally gave up farming about 1939. That was when we were still going to Washington Intermediate and I was about in the 7th grade, when I was 12 or 13.

PR: Can I ask one thing, did he buy the store of the man he

praised so?

YY: No, ours was a different grocery store in Kakaako.

Side 2

YY: There used to be sweet white guavas. They used to be dark red sweet guavas, and ordinary-colored sweet guavas. We picked guavas all the time. Orientals like the young fern leaves, so I used to go up in the mountains to cut those.

BK: what kind of fronds . . . the fronds of what fern? Not the Hapuu?

YY: Yes, the Hapuu fern. That's the only fern big enough. Now if you look at the mountain and you see trees, green grassy-looking area, that area is overgrown with ferns.

BK: Well, that's not Hapuu, they're _____.

YY: The only thing we used it for when we went into the mountain is when it started to rain, we went under the ferns.

CB: How far up the mountain did you go?

YY: You cannot go very high in this area of the mountains. There used to be a trail near the end of the road, and once in a while we used to hike there. We ended up above Nuuanu reservoir. It's very dangerous to go down to the reservoir.

BK: And you didn't have an accident?

YY: No, my brother had a very close call. He grabbed a branch and the roots came out. He began to slide backwards, and the older boy grabbed him by the neck and they hung there. If he fell, he would have probably fallen maybe 100-200 feet straight down. Seven, eight boys would go on such a hike. Usually on a Sunday, or even weekdays during the summer.

For recreation we went swimming in the pond or played baseball, football. There were several boys about my age, maybe one or two years older. They used to be a large bird cage back of the Agee house. The HSPA probably used to bring in birds from other places, and the boys that lived here made slingshots and used to kill the birds in the cage. Oh, the cage was probably about . . . about a fourth of this room. There was a door you could walk in. It was a rather large bird cage. So Mr. Calme that used to live here, didn't like the boys roaming around. I know he used to chase the boys on horseback. You know how kids are, they exaggerate and say, "If you go in the mountains behind HSPA, he's always watching with binoculars." So we used to be afraid of the man; we were small kids, maybe 8, 9, 10 years old, and a man on horseback, it could scare you.

BK: what do you mean by reputation?

YY: That Mr. Calme is a scary man.

CB: Did you ever go down to the ocean?

YY: My father used to take us there in his old Model T Ford.

Another place we used to go was Kahala Park and also Sandy Beach, Kahala Park and waikiki. There wasn't much else.

BK: When did he take your family out?

YY: On Sundays.

BK: Did you take a picnic lunch?

YY: Yes.

BK: Would you tell us something about the family that lived here in that row of houses, and it is their children that we talk about . . .? Do you remember any of the names of the family?

YY: I remember one family name. That's Matsuura.

BK: Now, are there any of that family left?

YY: There's a boy, today he's a man . . . probably two years older than I am. His first name is Hidemi.

BK: Do you know where he lives?

YY: He . . . that last I heard he lived in Palolo Valley, Carlos Long tract.

BK: Did he live here for quite a number of years?

YY: He lived here for a long time, I would say at least 20 years.

BK: Now, were these boys on this place your main playmates?

YY: That's right.

BK: Would you go down to school together, walk down together. . . did your father take you to Manoa School, or did you walk?

YY: I usually walked.

BK: Did a group of you go together?

YY: No, we used to go individually, my brothers.

BK: Do you remember Japanese movies down at the "village"?

YY: Yes, I think they had it about once a month at the Japanese school.

BK: Did they put up a sheet against the building?

YY: Outside. And the parents, rather than pay a fixed amount, would make sort of a donation. Instead of charging admission, they leave it up to the individual family how much each person . . . I don't remember, maybe a dollar.

- YY: Per show. They'd have an intermission, okay, and they'd read out the names and the amounts that that family had given.
- BK: Now, where did your mother or father do their shopping, at this store you talked about . . . ?
- YY: Basically, at River Street.
- CB: Did you shop in the grocery stores down there in the "village"?
- YY: Yes, there used to be a Manoa Market, and across the street was a small Chinese store.
- BK: Do you remember Okamura store?
- YY: Yes, and there also was another store across from Okamura, Yano.
- YY: No gas station, but the Okamura store used to sell gas, and Manoa Market also sold gas.
- BK: That's where the Chinese restaurant is today.
- YY: When my father was farming he had an underground gas tank. So I can remember when I was very young, I wasn't even going to school at that time, we had some Filipino man working for us at that time, and one of the men sprayed my face with gasoline accidentally. It was bad but, you know in those days, unless you were really ill, you'd never go to a doctor. Nothing happened to me, actually.
- BK: Did your mother put some kind of salve on it? ○
- YY: Nothing.
- PR: Did you have a gasoline truck come up and put gasoline into it?
- YY: There was a man that sold kerosene, gasoline; he used to

deliver in a small truck. He had a tank on the back.

BK: You had kerosene lamps?

YY: Before we had electricity. I do remember when we first got electricity. We thought: It's different. It gets brighter at night. You know, all we had was a bulb hanging from the ceiling.

BK: Did you go to Japanese school?

YY: Oh, I went 8 or 9 years, but actually it didn't do me much good because what I remember today is hardly anything. I can read very little, I can write my name in Japanese, I still remember that. There also used to be a store where Manoa School is now, Fujisu store.

BK: How many stores?

YY: Actually 1, 2 . . . 3, 4 and later they built Manoa Market.

BK: Do you remember when they had a taxi there?

YY: No.

BK: Where did you live between the time you left this place here? Did you live somewhere else in Manoa before you lived where you are now?

YY: Yes. When we left here, we moved to Woodlawn. I can't remember the name of the street now . . . Puhala Rise.

BK: Your whole family moved?

YY: Well, this was after we all had started to work, started a car repair shop and service station, and everybody wanted to move away from here.

BK: Your father had bought a store in the meantime?

YY: Yes. But also, this house here was very small, very old, run

down, and with everybody working we were able to pool our money and buy this place.

BK: Was there anything between Puhala and where you are now, where you live?

YY: No.

BK: Are you married?

YY: Yes. I'm married. I first rented an apartment. Then I rented a house and then another house, and then I bought where I am now. So after I got married I moved, actually to where I am staying now. I have two boys and two girls.

BK: Are any of them living at home now?

YY: I have a daughter and a son. My oldest son is working with me now after he finished university. My second son went to school in Riverside, California. My family are Seventh Day Adventists, so he went to Pacific Union College. He's working as an accountant in Wilshire. I have another daughter that's in nursing; she'll graduate in June with a bachelor's. She's also in California.

YY: No. My oldest started at, first went, to Manoa School. He didn't like Manoa School because the teacher went after him all the time. So my wife decided to send him to the church school, that's Hawaiian Mission Elementary. He graduated from Hawaiian Mission Academy, then he went to the church school in Riverside, but he didn't like Riverside and so he came back to UH and graduated.

BK: How about the other children? Did they go to Manoa School?

YY: No.

BK: You sent them through Hawaiian Mission?

YY: Hawaiian Mission. My wife didn't like the experience that my oldest son had at Manoa School.

BK: What . . . do you think there was just a personality conflict, or why was the teacher picking on him?

YY: Well, you see, I guess my son was a slow starter. Probably at first grade he "wasn't bright enough" so the teacher would scold him. Then he would become tense, nervous, so he couldn't learn. He really hated to go to school.

BK: But he did learn well at the Mission?

YY: Cause the teachers are all church members, all the teachers knew my family and the children, we all go to the same church, so . . . they were very helpful.

BK: Did other members of your family have siblings along this time?

YY: All of us.

YY: My wife was born here. Her grandfather went back to live in Japan after he retired from the plantation. He was at the Aiea sugar plantation at one time. He became a blacksmith and he retired and went back to live in Japan.

BK: Now that's was your wife's grandfather?

YY: Yes, and he wanted my father-in-law to live with him in Japan. My father-in-law took his family to Japan too but he didn't like Japan so he came back.

CB: When was this?

YY: He went in '41 and came back in '41.

CB: Lucky he did.

YY: And he was supposed to come back, find a place for his family to stay, but before he could do that the war started. His family was caught in Japan during the war . . .

BK: Including your wife?

YY: Right. So she spent the entire war in Japan and a few years after the war ended she came back. Well, when she came back she couldn't speak English so she went to Hawaiian Mission Academy. That was the only school that taught English to students that couldn't speak English. So she went there two years, then transferred to McKinley School. That's how she graduated.

YY: If you go to a church school, Bible is a required course and they encourage all the students to go to church. That's how she was converted.

BK: You remember some of your classmates when you went to Manoa? Have you kept in contact with them?

YY: No. I don't have any friends that I went to school with.

YY: well, I graduated in '43. That was during the war. Governor Ariyoshi used to live close to the Filipino camp.

YY: Do you remember the bridge when we were talking about the pond? One road turns left, one road turns right. You turn left. He used to live in the first house on the right.

BK: He always talks about being so poor in Kalihi.

YY: That's not true. At that time farmers living in Manoa were just as poor as anybody else, but he lived there during the war. After the war started he moved in.

BK: He hadn't been there earlier?

YY: He was not . . . he didn't grow up there.

BK: He only moved after . . .

YY: . . . after the war started, so he was going to high school

BK: So he was at McKinley with you.

YY: He was one year below me.

BK: Do you remember him in school?

YY: No because we were in different classes.

BK: Classes were big so in those days.

YY: We had 4,000 students.

BK: How long did he live there, do you know?

YY: Probably a few years.

BK: This is the first time we've heard that that George Ariyoshi
lived in Manoa.

YY: So that's a secret?

All: Laughter, talking.

BK: All right, let's go back to school. Did you have a short
recess in the middle of the morning and a long recess at noon?
what did you do in your short recess?

YY: We were supposed to drink milk.

BK: You didn't like it?

YY: No, but we had no choice.

All: Laughter

YY: It used to come in small bottles, and as kids we used to save
the bottle caps.

CB: Were they from Manoa Dairy?

YY: I . . . I think in those days it was Dairymen's. Meadow Gold
used to be Dairymen's.

BK: So you had to drink this milk at short recess. In the cafeteria did they pass it out?

YY: I think they had it . . . I forgot now . . . either in the cafeteria and we used to go out in the yard to drink it.

BK: Even if it tasted awful?

YY: Even if it tasted awful.

BK: Your short recess was 15 minutes, wasn't it?

YY: I think so.

BK: Did it take you all the 15 minutes to drink it, or did you play?

YY: Yeah, we would drink and then fool around and then go back to class.

BK: The long recess, was it half an hour, or an hour?

YY: I think one hour.

BK: Did you eat your lunch out in the yard?

YY: The lower grades would have lunch and then you would have to take a nap.

BK: In those sleeping bags?

YY: No, we never had bags or anything. We had long, you know, straw mats, roll it out, and everybody would just lie down on the mats.

BK: Up to what grade was this? To what grades?

YY: Third or fourth.

BK: What did the rest of you do?

YY: Well, the higher grades went out and played.

BK: What did you play?

YY: You know, baseball, I think usually baseball because football

you get dirty, you roll around in dirt. Yet I remember playing football, but mostly baseball. I think it ended about 2 o'clock, 2:00 or 2:30.

BK: And then you'd go to Japanese school?

YY: Yes. I think Japanese school started about either 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock. Japanese school had two classes. The lower grades started earlier and the higher grades started later cause they only had a few classes, not enough room to accommodate all the different students.

PR: Was your Japanese school where the fire station is?

YY: There used to be two.

PR: Oh, two Japanese schools?

YY: Yes. Do you know where the Chinese restaurant is, there's a church behind it. That used to be the Japanese school I went to. The other Japanese school is still there, you know, across from Toyo.

PR: Is there still a Japanese school?

YY: Yes. And there's a theater across from the school. That used to be a church.

BK: You remember it was a church?

YY: We used to go to Sunday School.

PR: Oh, is that where you went to Sunday School?

YY: I went to that Sunday School. There was another Sunday School close to here on Manoa Road. Do you know where Pawaina Street comes down? In that area, I cannot pinpoint the exact spot. I went to both.

BK: Did you go to one and then another one?

YY: No, one on Manoa Road, across from Pawaina Street, you know where Pawaina ends on Manoa Road? Right in that area.

EK: But this is real old, Okamoto talked about it, he said they used to show movies there.

YY: Yes, right. You see, most of the farming people living in the valley, the Chinese had the taro patches and the Japanese community was invited. At the beginning it was one group. Then I don't know what happened, I don't know what caused the separation but the people living in the lower community (that's the Japanese group), the people living in the . . . this area, the higher . . . deeper in the valley formed another community, and they built the second Japanese school. My mother is still living. I'll find out what caused the division.

On the other side of the road there used to be a ti leaf hedge. When we used to tie the vegetables in bundles, we used to go there to pick up the dead ti leaves.

EK: Yes, because they're much more pliable.

YY: Yes to tie the vegetables. I remember one day while I was picking up ti leaves with one of my brothers, the . . . one of the Agee daughters thought we were vandalizing the ti plants.