

**JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAII**

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**with**

**Kathy Dinman (KD) and Heather Dinman (HD)**

**July 13, 2017**

**Interviewers: Jane Kurahara (JK) and Melvin Inamasu (MI)**

Note: Comments in brackets [ ] are by the transcriber. Inaudible words or sections are identified by ((?)) in the transcript. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability.

JK: First of all, I want to congratulate you, Heather, and also your mom because I know she's been your guide and your supporter. You've done a lot of work and thank you for bringing your medal and sharing with us. We're just so tickled that the great granddaughter of Joichi Tahara has done this. It's just like, we just got Ellison Onizuka [exhibit] in the Gallery. From very humble immigrant beginnings to become an astronaut, it's almost like that. You've gone to the Nationals and you have placed third there. You were first here and you're just fourteen.

KD: At Nationals, she placed around fiftieth. She didn't get a medal. [It was] At History Day [in Hawaii] [that she was first].

HD: Well, we don't know.

KD: Around there, but not third. The first three people, first, second and third, did get medals.

JK: Oh, I see. But then you went to the other [competition] and came in first. [Army Educational Outreach Program, eCyber Mission 2017, 7th Grade First Place National Winner - Lanikai Science Squad, Kailua Intermediate School]. That was awesome. And, if you can come up with a pesticide that just uses natural ingredients, like ginger and chili pepper, wow, what a boon that would be to the farmers here. It's got real implications. So, congratulations, to start with.

HD: Thank you.

KD: Thank you. That's called eCyber Mission.

JK: Well, our purpose today, the short range, is that we were so impressed with your story and your family's story that we're trying to come up with an article for *Legacies* [newsletter]. I don't know if you receive this or not...

KD: My cousin told me...your quarterly newsletter?

JK: Yes. Long range is that I've been here over twenty years and I have really seen that one of the things that, and it's not only true of the Japanese but it's also true of families in general, that as the generations go, for some families, they build bridges. Other families become gaps. And one generation doesn't know about the other. And so, in your Tahara family, there are very, very strong bridges. And so, some of what you people do in your family, going all the way back to great grandpa [Joichi Tahara], if you can share it and we can share it with other families, I think it's going to help far more than just the immediate JCCH. It's something very helpful to all, it's universal. So, we're going to start now and I'd like to start with some introductory background. We'll start with you, Heather, and if you could give us your name, birthdate, the month and the year, and where you were born.

HD: Okay, so, my name is Heather Dinman. I was born in April 2004 in Hawaii.

JK: Then Kathy?

KD: I'm Kathleen Tahara Dinman, born April 1961 in Junction City, Kansas. My father was in the Army, by Fort Riley.

JK: We'll keep with you, Kathy. Will you tell us where you are in the Tahara family, generation wise.

KD: Joichi and Tomeyo had nine children. My father is the fifth. Nobuyuki, went as Glen Tahara. And, I am the middle daughter of three daughters.

JK: And, Heather, where do you fall in the Tahara family?

HD: I'm her daughter.

KD: I have two, one's twenty years old.

JK: So, you're a great-granddaughter, you're *Yonsei*, fourth generation [immigrant]?

KD: On the father's side, Joichi's side. Joichi *Issei* [first generation], my father *Nisei* [second generation immigrant], I'm *Sansei* [third generation immigrant].

JK: And, you've already told us about your parents. Heather, thank you so much for providing your process paper because that helped us a lot and also the link to the website. So, today, we want to start out by finding out more about how the Tahara family activities and history influenced you. You mentioned in your process paper that your visit in 2015 out Kunia way was very important to your decision to focus on this year's History Day Contest project, on Nisei Soldiers and Discrimination. Could you tell us more about that?

HD: Okay, that family reunion introduced me to the topic and it let me know about Joichi Tahara being interned and my two great uncles who fought in the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team] and 100th [Infantry Battalion]. So later, when I was thinking about my History Day topic, and, the theme of that year's History Day topic was Taking a Stand on History. So later, I was thinking about my two great uncles who fought for the 442nd and 100th and I thought this would be a great opportunity to learn about them.

JK: This is a side question. Do you like to do research?

HD: Yes.

JK: You get curious about things and you want to know more?

HD: Yes.

KD: Quick correction, my father was the sixth child, out of nine.

JK: Okay. But I recognize the name from when we interviewed Lynette [Tahara Kim, cousin]. Now, you also mentioned your great uncles. Could you amplify a little more on that? That they inspired you also?

HD: Okay. Both of them fought...one of them fought in the 100th, Uncle Nash fought in the 100th Infantry Battalion and Uncle Fat fought in the 442nd Regimental team.

JK: What did you find out about them?

HD: Well, I kinda researched the 100th and 442nd more as a whole but they were very brave to fight in World War II and to stand up for themselves and for the Japanese Americans.

JK: Yes. Would you like to say something about Fat and Skinny because...

KD: I agree with Heather, they were just so brave. When I was a little child, I didn't even realize this because it wasn't spoken at the family parties. Only later, helping Heather research, I found out more about them. Very impressed and very proud of them. I'm happy that they both came back because we found out, too, how many soldiers didn't make it back. So, we're happy that they did and they went on to marry and have children and have full lives and lived until they were in their eighties when they passed away.

MI: Did you ever get to meet them or had they passed on?

HD: No, I didn't get to meet them.

KD: She was a baby.

JK: Did you meet them?

KD: Oh, yes. I remember the family parties and everything. Especially at Uncle Nash's house, being the eldest. And Louella, his daughter, continues on with hosting the family party, in the same location. She rebuilt the house in Hawaii Kai.

JK: That's great. Heather, was that your first family reunion for the Tahara family or had you gone to previous ones?

HD: That was my first one.

JK: Kathy, I'm assuming you went to some of the previous ones.

KD: Yes.

MI: May I ask where you lived on the mainland?

KD: So, I was born in Kansas, we lived in New Jersey though I don't remember. I do remember four years, living in Fort Rucker, Alabama, for four years. Before Alabama, I went to Germany because my younger sister Deborah was born in Germany. And, before Kansas, my older sister was born in Japan. So, the Army transferred him around. But from Alabama, he went to fight in the Vietnam war and the Army relocated our family to Hawaii, Mililani. So, since ten years old, I just remember growing up in Hawaii.

JK: Thank you for sharing that. You also mentioned in your process paper that the opening ceremony at the Honouliuli Education Center inspired you and actually helped you with your thesis. Could you amplify on that a little?

HD: Yes, it was a very good experience and I got to talk to Brian Schatz [U.S. Senator, Hawaii] who helped to inspire me to later continue my research on some of the laws such as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952.

JK: How did all of that help you to solidify your thesis?

HD: Well, it was all very inspiring and made me want to continue my research where it either solidified my thesis and determined what I wanted to say in my overall project.

KD: May I explain. The History Day competition, it's not reporting on an event in history. You need to have an argument. You have to come up with an original or not quite thoroughly researched angle or something, so that's why she knew she wanted to do it on either Honouliuli or the 442nd, 100th and Senator Daniel Inouye. But she needed something more and Senator Brian Schatz helped inspire her...something about lawmakers and Japanese and immigration.

JK: Yes, because there's a general theme and you have to somehow link to that theme. What was the theme?

HD: It was Taking a Stand in History.

JK: And, before I forget, what is the theme for this coming year that you're going to also participate in?

HD: This year's theme is Conflict and Compromise.

JK: Oh, okay. That will be good. Reflecting on this past year, Heather, and on your World War II projects, what stands out for you that you learned, that you didn't know before?

HD: I got to learn a lot about how some of my relatives stood up against racial discrimination which they were very brave for doing and I'm very thankful that they did that so today, I can be treated equally as any other U.S. citizen.

JK: So, there's some gratitude there to your...the people who came before you.

HD: Yes.

JK: Do you feel very connected to the Tahara family?

HD: Yes. We go and see them a lot at the family parties.

JK: And, you're continuing to have family reunions and parties?

KD: About every three years.

JK: Are you on the Reunion Committee?

KD: I helped out with the last one in 2015. I think I'm being recruited again for the next one, maybe 2018 or 2019. It's mainly the people you spoke with, Lynette [Kim], April [Carvalho]. Also, two other cousins, Doreen and you've met Shelly Yasuhara on the Big Island. She was a big part, too, at the previous reunions. My cousin Doreen is a teacher, right now teaching at St.Louis [High School]. She was a big part in helping to plan the Pearl Harbor visit and everything. She's quite a good organizer.

JK: That was a big reunion for you folks. I know Lynette called over a year before the actual event. I know that the Reunion Committee is very central, like the core, to helping your family continue sharing your legacy with the younger people. You want to say some more about that work?

KD: Well, I really appreciate it, but it's my cousins and this group that grew up together in Hawaii Kai and they know each other really well and so, it's Lynette and April as sisters and then also, to me, Shelly is a big part of it, on the Big Island. She really has a strong interest in the internment and she has a friend named Jadelyn Moniz-Nakamura who did a whole video. You should definitely talk to her. I don't have her phone number but Shelly would have it.

JK: We have it.

KD: She's an archaeologist, right, with KMC [Kilauea Military Camp] on the Big Island. She did a video about Joichi Tahara and so, at the 2015 [reunion] she flew up and presented it and showed the video about a lot of research. Since then, Shelly has told me on the Big Island, she gives presentations at KMC or Lyman Museum. And, three internees, one of which is Joichi Tahara. And, she keeps adding to it and making it better. Shelly just saw the one in June at the Lyman Museum and she says it's just getting better and better. So, I hope to see it someday. I don't know if we fly down there or will you fly her up here or something? We'll definitely want to see it someday.

MI: Let me ask you about the Tahara family. When was the first reunion?

KD: The first one I remember was on the Big Island. My older daughter was only about three. She's now twenty so about seventeen years ago. But there were some others previously that might have included the Okino side of the family, which was really large. I was so young and I don't remember but that's where William Thompson is, the Okino [side of the family]. Maybe [I] met him when I'm only ten years old so that's why I didn't remember him. And, he's of a different last name, Thompson, but he's probably of the Okino family, on her website. So, they were larger [earlier] but then just the Taharas, the Okinos did their own [reunion].

MI: What I wanted to ask you was about the Tahara family before and after the reunions. What was the family like before you started having reunions and what's happened with the reunions?

KD: I would have to say, ever since I moved to Hawaii at age ten, so 1971, when my father ((?)) went to Vietnam, even though they weren't called reunions, the Taharas always had family parties with lots of food. And, that Nash Tahara, Auntie Shizu, is related to the King's Bakery. So, there were always a lot of pastries from King's Bakery. She's a Robert Taira family [member]. Uncle Nash's wife. [He] married a Robert Taira sister. So, there's always a lot of delicious pastries and it was often at Uncle Nash's house in Hawaii Kai. He lived right next door to Robert Taira, that family. So, they weren't even called reunions but the family got together frequently. That's when grandma was still alive.

JK: Did you notice any...what kind of effect did the family reunions have on the younger people. Oftentimes, younger people are not interested and they'd rather text each other and do other things.

KD: I think that the format she chose [was] the website, because that's a young people's thing, the Internet. That some of my cousins' children and then coming up, there's another little baby in the family, Nicole, maybe the daughter's about five now...On the mainland, [I] actually read her website to get to know what their great uncles have done. And that's why they feel comfortable to apply at any school, going to any restaurant. That's the part I was hoping was laid, to the younger generation. Don't just take it for

granted that you can get on the bus or go to any hospital and be treated, for a broken arm or something. Don't take it for granted.

JK: They got it from Heather.

KD: She got it. So, that would be great if through her website...She kept having to improve it as she advanced to every level but now that it's finalized, and now on Weebly [website builder] on a permanent way, maybe you can even put it on that, what's it called, flash drive? For the younger...

JK: Yes. We need to have that.

MI: If I can ask a little more, from our previous interview with your family members, I got the sense that something changed with the reunion that was held at the Kilauea Military Center. What year was that and for you, did that somehow change the tenor of your family reunions?

KD: Sorry, I think we were in Canada at that time. We did not attend that one. My younger sister Deborah went to that one. I think my older sister went, although not my mother, who wasn't well. But I didn't attend that one but I remember...Shelly Yasuhara was the one that coordinated that one because a letter was discovered among Tomeyo Tahara's, grandma's, belongings.

MI: Tell us about the letter. We heard about it but I didn't get a lot of details.

KD: Okay. So, this is what I'm hearing from Shelly and my other cousins. Grandma, Tomeyo Tahara, in her later [years] flew to Honolulu and she lived with Shelly's family, which would be Auntie Atsuko in the middle and Uncle Jimmy, her father. They helped care for her in her elderly years until she passed. And then, when they were cleaning out her things, after she passed, they found a letter that was written in Japanese. So, I think Shelly's friend was asked to translate it. I think they also gave a copy to my mother, who's from Japan. And [they] found out it was a very touching letter he wrote to his wife, how he appreciates her being a wonderful wife, and maybe he never said it before but wanted her to know now. It was pretty much his will. Now, I believe that was in the archives here.

JK: Yes.

KD: The translation maybe.

MI: That was written while he was in Honouliuli?

KD: Yes. Someone said that you can tell that he realized that he wasn't going to be released soon because I think, at Kilauea [Military Camp] it's like "Well, maybe they'll see that I'm a good person and loyal to America and I'm not going to be imprisoned, I'm going to be released." I think there was always hope. So, I think that it's [written] afterwards,

when he realizes, “No, I think they’re going to keep me for the duration of the war, or keep me somewhere, separate from my family.” He wrote that.

JK: I think we have it in our files here.

KD: We all took it more seriously, our generation. We all do agree, our parents never talked to us [about this] too much. It was quietly endured, pain and hardship in that generation. The Japanese culture was their way. But you don’t complain, you just go on. You just quietly endure. But our generation, we’re more talkative, I suppose. My cousins, they’re a little older, they said, “We need to know about this. We want other people to know.” So, I guess that is what changed. That is what I noticed.

JK: That’s kinda what’s changing now. It can change from having a nice party and getting together to we were hearing from Lynette [Kim] and April [Carvalho] that they felt that there had to be some kind of information given at each reunion. After a while they were talking about the legacy, passing on to the younger generation, like Heather and younger. Because they recognize that the appeal of texting and all that, the technology, is kinda influencing the younger people. How about the 2015 family reunion because I know you folks put a lot of effort into that one. Did you notice a change after that?

KD: Well, Heather took a stronger interest. She was how old in 2015, two years ago? Eleven. Before that, didn’t quite know about the war that had happened and her great uncle. So, anything before that, she was too young to understand what was being said when she heard it at the family party. At age eleven, she didn’t comprehend what was going on. There were several things. What we were influenced by. The Pearl Harbor, the Arizona Memorial or going to Honouliuli. The Japanese Cultural Center helped bring us out there, to the valley, to see the valley or was it Jadelyn’s [Moniz-Nakamura, NPS, Kilauea Military Center] video which she did on Joichi Tahara. We all went to Uncle Richard’s house. That would be the man in the photo. We’re all gathered at his house after the Honouliuli [tour].

JK: Is that where you saw the video?

KD: That’s where we first saw the video.

JK: Somehow, when you see a visual image of your great grandfather...Up till then, you hear about him but when you see him, did that make an impression on you?

HD: Yes, I think so.

JK: I remember Lynette saying that you really wanted to do this in 2015 so that the elders would be sure to be included.

KD: We felt very emotional, very intense, that exact picture right there. We were all choked up.

JK: From what you now know about your great grandfather and that generation, and then from the next generation, your Uncles Fat and, I want to say Skinny...Uncle Nash and so on, what kind of legacy have you gained from them? What things that they value do you value?

HD: Well, they are all very loyal to their country and they worked hard and persevered.

JK: So, you like those values, too.

HD: Yes.

JK: That's what the Japanese would say is *okage sama de*, I am what I am, because of you. It's being given to you. And then, the Japanese would go on to say, *kodomo no tame ni*, for the sake of the children. And so, this isn't a very fair question but just bear with me. You're kind of in the middle, you've received from the older generation. Do you have some thought about what you're going to pass on to your children?

HD: Well, hopefully they can look at the web site and then learn more about the great uncles and relatives who fought.

JK: It does help to have an actual person and an actual story that you can refer to. It makes it real.

MI: Do you think that learning about your family, your ancestors, is helping you, in your life?

HD: Yes. It influenced me to work hard, like they did in fighting, and always work hard doing what I'm supposed to do in school.

JK: Kathy, while we tried to concentrate on Heather's story, we constantly have been talking about the connections to the Tahara family legacy and I can see, we know that you've been a guiding supporter all the way, so...at this time, we'd like to hear more about your perspective on this journey. The seeds where it started and I'm just curious as to how Heather picked up on...I mean, she didn't pick up on this all by herself. I'm sure that you guided her and supported her.

KD: I suppose, over the years, every time that I noticed something, to both of my daughters, I would just tell them about it. Even though my father wasn't as talkative, maybe about what had happened during World War II. But I found it interesting and I just shared the information and I didn't think like, "I hope she makes this into a History Day project someday." But, I guess, it just fell into place that she knew about the family history and then this project comes and that's the theme. And then, you're supposed to interview people. We still have cousins and aunties that could still...and it just fell into place and she went with it. I was the one that contacted and said, "Would you mind speaking to Heather about Uncle Nash and what had happened, whatever you remember?" She would go, "Oh, definitely, yes, let me know." So, maybe I was her driver. It could be that I'm the instigator. "Well, let me drive you here." Or, when we read in the newspaper that

there's going to be the Honouliuli exhibit opening, it was like "Heather, we are there. Let me drive you." And I didn't know that you would acknowledge and put leis. [chuckle] We felt so special and honored like VIPs. We sat right behind Mazie Hirono's [U.S. Senator] seat and that made her think, things like this helped her feel the fire in her, to research more. Because, we thought we were only there to watch, maybe, and take some pictures. She left there feeling special. And then we saw, "There's news cameras. Let's see if we're on the news." Which we saw, the back of our heads. That made a young person feel like, "Oh, that was important." And, that just helped build it to the next level. And then, she started winning her projects.

JK: Yes, one thing led to another. It was meant to be. [chuckle] I have to share this with you. This came in the last *Hawaii Herald*, the very thing you're saying. He [Tom Ikeda, Densho web site] was responding to the theme of the legacy of the *Sansei* [third generation immigrant] and he said that in a *New York Times* article it reaffirmed his belief that knowing your family's story, especially if the story includes overcoming hardship, is the best predictor of resilience and happiness. The article noted that right after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, researchers found that the more children knew about their family's history the stronger their sense of control [was] over their lives, the higher their self-esteem and the more successfully they believed their family's function. And then, he brings that down to himself and he said, "In a similar way, the more *Yonsei* [fourth generation immigrant] and *Gosei* [fifth generation immigrant] know about the difficulty and successes of the *Issei*, *Nisei* and *Sansei*, the more they will evolve [into] an inter-generational self and know they belong to something bigger than themselves." So, he went about it in the very way that you have. He said, his *Yonsei* children, because of his work with Densho, he's the head of Densho, he would come home and he would talk about the interview he did that day with a grandma and so the children grew up hearing all this around the dinner table. And so, he mentions that now, they were the building blocks that connected my children to the core of the Japanese American community. The [his] son became interested in American history, he did oral histories, does that sound familiar, with San Francisco *Nisei* and he now wants to become a high school Social Studies teacher. His daughter studied filmmaking, wrote and directed documentary films promoting social justice and is currently working on projects about injustices against the African Americans and the American Muslim communities. And so, what you folks have been doing is chicken skin [goose bumps].

KD: We've heard of Densho.

HD: Yes.

KD: That's a very good resource. Is it out of Seattle?

JK: Yes.

KD: We're going to visit my sister Deborah and she's going to do some more research. There was an internment camp up there, Yulapp or something.

JK: Oh, yes.

MI: Puyallup.

KD: Yes, it's thirty-five miles south and there's a statue and a plaque. So, we already said, we [are] going to drive her there to see that.

JK: Great.

KD: And, my sister mentioned Densho. She thinks it's their base there.

JK: Yes. And, they're kinda like a little room because they're purely a digital company. From the beginning they decided they're going digital. And so, Tom Ikeda, you can talk to him. I find him very inspiring.

KD: You want to go look that up when we go visit Deborah? She was just here.

HD: Yes.

MI: Let me ask mom. How much did you know, as you grew up, about internment?

KD: Not that much.

MI: When and at what age and how did you learn about internment.

KD: We were in Alabama, so I'm under age ten, so between ages six to ten, we were living in Alabama and he told us a story about how his father was taken away and died. I didn't understand it. I couldn't grasp it. But that's the only time I remember really talking about it until we came to Hawaii.

MI: You were how old then?

KD: Between six to ten, I'd say eight years old.

MI: Then what happened, when you came to Hawaii?

KD: I'm now older, ten years or older, so I understand what he meant about there was a war. And, because he was Japanese, he was taken away. Then those things made more sense to me. The details. But at eight, I didn't quite understand.

MI: How about your family specifically? When did you learn about your grandfather?

KD: It might have been in high school.

MI: You learned from a school in Hawaii? They taught that in school?

KD: I do not remember, in Social Studies. So, I think it was just through the family. But I was around high school age [before] maybe fully understanding. Maybe when I was nineteen, when Tomeyo Tahara passed away. And then, there was more talk about Joichi, Tomeyo surfaced. But I think I was only around eight...because my father was eight years old when his father was taken away. I think that's why maybe it occurred to him to tell the children about it, about what had happened with his father.

MI: Did your father have any thoughts or expressions about how he felt about what his father had gone through.

KD: He didn't express a lot of emotion. He just said they had to work on the farm. They had to work in the store, extra hard. He didn't graduate from high school normally. He later got a GED [certificate]. He just went off and joined the Army, too. And, he did tell the story of Uncle Fat and Uncle Nash, went off and joined the Army, even though this was happening to their dad. And he told the story of, you might have heard this from my other cousins. This is after the [442nd rescue of the] Lost Battalion and a lot of soldiers died. But, they're in different Battalions I guess, or different, 100th and the 442nd. And then, they were in this town in Italy or France and then he stood out there and every soldier that came in, I think Uncle Fat goes, "Anyone know Nash Tahara? Nash Tahara?" Not that group. He waited there. Next group. "Anyone know Nash Tahara? Nash Tahara?" Next group. Finally, "I'm Nash!" That was the only time during the war that they hugged each other and they know each other is alive. That's what I heard. That's one of the stories. Yes, my father did tell me that story, when we were in Alabama. Again, I didn't quite understand the significance, like, "Oh, okay, they found each other." But later, it's like "Wow." It's so important.

JK: Yes.

KD: It's the only time they knew...They didn't have cell phones at that time and you can't really write a letter to that next Battalion that's on the move. They maybe wrote home but then home had to write to them and say, "Yes, your brother's still alive."

JK: Yes.

KD: A hardship Heather had to go through in 2010, my husband passed away and at that time, Heather was only...

HD: Six.

KD: Six. And I had to tell them, my father's father passed away when he was really young and he just... ]yes, you feel the emotion but you just have to toughen it up and go on with life. I remember explaining that to her. I didn't go into all the details about internment, back then, she's only six. But that my father and his brothers and sisters, that they had to just...you know aunty, uncle, everyone just had to just...so, she never met my father. He passed away young, at age fifty-six. I remember having to point that out to her. It's the way. It's the Tahara way. You gotta just toughen up. Go on with life,

JK: *Ganbare* [do your best].

KD: And, she has. Quietly, just endure it. You pick up the pieces and keep going on even if you're suffering inside, get over it. Make your life better. Improve yourself.

JK: That's part of your legacy. I see the strong values coming down.

KD: All the Taharas.

JK: Did you ever get to see the family home on the Big Island, Paauilo?

KD: Yes. So, she's [Heather] not born yet and my twenty-year old daughter was about three or four. I went to that family reunion on the Big Island and we saw the Paauilo home, even if someone else owned it. And the farm. This is where the Tahara Store was and this is the thing that pumps gas, back in the old days. There're some pictures of my Micha ((?)), is only super small.

JK: Lynette and April shared a story and we wonder if this is part of your legacy. They said they used to live with grandma on that farm. So, during the summer, when it was hot, they'd like little candies and things and so grandma would tell them, "You can have it but you have to keep track of what you eat." Like the old-fashioned plantations, they'd write it in the book, how much you owe and when you get paid, you pay. And so, they did that all summer long, they logged how much candy they ate and then she paid them two cents an hour so then they figured out how much they would have gotten paid and they said, it always ended up that the candy side was more. [laughter]

KD: That's where you get your sweet tooth, too.

JK: But I thought, even then, she was trying to teach them some responsibility so they tried to make it come out even.

KD: I can remember her teaching me how to crochet, because when our family moved to Hawaii, I'm already ten and I'd never met her. I came from Alabama so I think I even have a Southern accent and everything. And to bond, she taught me how to crochet. And, I kinda taught you (HD). We bought the needles, and we tried to crochet. But I can remember that. She was always a very good teacher and she had that giving personality, very caring.

JK: Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

MI: How does it feel to have accomplished all of this?

HD: Well, I'm very happy and proud that all my hard work paid off.

MI: So, is this giving you some direction as to where you might head as you grow older?

HD: Well, maybe, more the science part.

MI: You like science.

JK: By the way, what school do you go to?

HD: Kailua Intermediate.

KD: Do you have an idea for your project next year? Eighth grade History Day?

HD: Yes.

JK: Tell us about that.

HD: So, I'm going to do it on...still about World War II. We know somebody who was, how do you say it?

KD: He was a prisoner of war.

HD: Yes.

KD: During World War II. American soldier, pilot. And then, later...we haven't met him yet, but we know somebody, a family friend, that knows this person at a retirement home. And, the second part of his story, that they thought you would be interested in, the Japanese part, that he later became a lawyer and then he had some famous case where he helped the Japanese get back a temple, or something, here in Hawaii.

HD: Also, for Joichi Tahara, he was a...

KD: Oh, the same last name. Only recently, I researched who is this they're talking about? It's retired Supreme Court Justice Frank Padgett. I only barely remember the name from a while ago. So, my husband was a lawyer and I was a paralegal back then, in the day and he was a Supreme Court Justice. The name didn't click right away for me, till I Googled. So, who is this that Joyce MacArthur is wanting to introduce Heather to. I found out, "Oh, my gosh, It's the Supreme Court, Hawaii Supreme Court Justice Padgett." We don't know yet if he's willing to talk. I calculated his age. He's ninety-four. But our friend is at Kahala Nui [retirement residence] and that's where he's at. And then, she's asking if...because she knows the wife, Sybil...asking if he would talk with her. So, we don't know yet if he's willing to. Maybe, he doesn't want to.

JK: Whereabouts was he a POW, in Europe?

KD: No, in Japan. They call it Indochina, where his plane went down. Vietnam is where he was held captive, for nine months. So, this was the beginning...what year was World War II?

HD: Nineteen thirty- nine to nineteen forty-five.

KD: Okay, so that would mean that in January, 1945, the beginning of that last year. For nine months, he was a captive because then, the war ended. That's how he became free. But he later went to Harvard and something brought him to Hawaii. He married Sybil and they came to Hawaii, maybe it was the Bishop Trust [Company], I heard something about Trust. He was asked to represent that Japanese temple. And, he managed to get back the proof that the government had no right to take it away because it was something to do with the wartime. They seized it and they were about to sell it. But some Japanese community members went to that law firm and said, "Please represent us. We don't think they should sell it. We want it back. The war is over now, anyway." And Mr. Frank Padgett represented them and they got the temple back.

JK: Great.

KD: Even though he was tortured, he forgave, because he was tortured by the Japanese, back during the war. What I pointed out to her, something I noticed when reading, [is that] the Judge in that case ruled against the government and for the Japanese people, his name is Federal Judge Frank McLaughlin. And, I'm just saying, "Heather, where's your paper?" and I looked it up on her thing and that's the same judge that ruled Joichi Tahara to be interned for the duration of the war, at his hearing. Part of her...that's where I'd heard the name.

JK: Connections, yes. Oh, wow.

KD: Nineteen forty-two, right. The bombing was in 1941. Joichi Tahara, 1942. And then, that case about the Japanese temple was in 1950. So, that's about right. That man went on to become a federal judge. It's the same Frank McLaughlin, I'm pretty sure. But, that's for you to do some research. I only just recognize the name. Interesting. We'll see where she goes with this eighth-grade project.

JK: That sounds fascinating.

KD: Maybe he felt bad, maybe he turned over a new leaf.

JK: Who was that Supreme Court Judge on the West Coast, Warren, Earl Warren. He was very definitely in favor of the evacuation of the Japanese during World War II. But, later on, he also had this change of heart, becoming quite a liberal.

MI: He later became the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court. That would be an interesting story for you to learn, how people can evolve in life, how they grow and, if I can take a few minutes to tell...

JK: Yes. By all means.

KD: Yes, please.

MI: The state of California would do histories when people completed...he was the Attorney General of California [at the onset of World War II]. They would do interviews, the University of California at Berkeley. He was the Attorney General of California and they interviewed him later on in his life about his career. It was an interview that went on for six days and on the sixth day...he became a very liberal Supreme Court Justice...Brown and the Board of Education...there were big changes in the country. But during the interview on his life, they asked him, "We'd like to ask you about your experience as Attorney General in California." He was a strong advocate for the evacuation of the Japanese Americans. According to what I've heard from a historian [Richard Reeve], he started crying. He walked out of the room and he never came back to complete his historical lifetime interview. So, he had grown, he had learned in his lifetime and come to realize that he had made a wrong decision as Attorney General of California, advocating for the evacuation of American citizens. It would be a good story for you to learn. People learn as they grow and sometimes, they change their political positions as they learn more.

JK: There's a parallel to McLaughlin, too, there. He seems to have undergone change, as well. And, just to add a little bit to that, someone on Facebook has been sending me photos from Japan and apparently, he visited three POW memorials in Japan. One was for the American POWs, one was for the German POWs and I forget the other. But they were memorializing the POWs there. There must have been some kind of change of heart too, because we know that they were fairly brutal and tortured their POWs during the war. So, it's three parallels about similar journeys.

KD: There's so much to learn from history. Isn't that one of the things that you at age twelve, thirteen, you're doing this report. What did you learn about...what is the purpose of history?

HD: That we don't repeat our mistakes and also so we can appreciate what other people did in the past.

KD: And, you had something about tolerance?

HD: We should take time to understand other people's cultures and beliefs so we can be more tolerant and understanding.

KD: When we visited U.S. Senator Brian Schatz, this was then on the science [project], the second time we go to D.C. this summer. He said, "We're in the room of U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye." We're like "Wow." He got to keep the same office, apparently. Nice big corner office. I got a little chill, "Wow."

MI: From your experience, and this may not be a fair question for you. So, you don't need to answer. But from your experience, what you've been able to accomplish, would you have any advice for your classmates?

HD: Well, really, just manage your time. Don't wait till the last minute cause it's a lot of work. You should take the time so you can make sure it's quality. Do some every day.

KD: What did the judges tell you? Why did yours rise high? You didn't know it at the time.

HD: Oh, yes. Because of my interview with Mr. William Thompson [great grandma Okino's family]. Because he actually fought in the 442nd.

KD: Didn't they call it like new history? What did the librarian...

HD: Documenting history, that's what one of the judges said.

JK: Yes.

KD: No one else had that interview on record somewhere. Mr. William Thompson.

JK And, if you hadn't done it, there would have been this hole in history, because that story might have gone unnoticed or unpublicized.

MI: How would you separate that experience, interviewing a real person versus learning from Wikipedia.

HD: Well, the interview is a primary source so it's much more interesting and kind of reliable. Not everybody has it and they're harder to find. And, it really does help your research. It helps because that primary source actually experienced the event that you're talking about or it was made at the time of the event.

KD: Were you allowed to use Wikipedia as a source?

HD: Well, it's not very good. Everyone can change the [content]....

JK: Yes, that's right.

MI: So, it was a different kind of learning experience for you.

JK: This somewhat aside, but you're going down to Honouliuli with us on July 21. What are some of your expectations?

HD: I...

KD: Are you going to try to use this as part of your eighth grade...

HD: Yes.

KD: Is she allowed to take photos?

- JK: You can take all the photos you want, down in the gulch.
- KD: I read that you were part of the exploratory group that went on a three-hour...and discovered it back in 2002. Wow. That must have been something.
- JK: Talk about evolving. Heather, because when that happened, in 1998, KHNL called our Resource Center and I happened to pick up the phone. They said, "Where exactly is Honouliuli Internment Camp. They were going to show the movie "Schindler's List" which is all about the German Holocaust and before they did, they wanted to shoot a live situation here, locally, to help people connect to internment. To our embarrassment, we had no documentation in the Resource Center. And, the people we asked, only a few of them said, "I think I know where it is. I think it's over there." And, the other one says, "I think I know where it is, it's over there [different location]." And so, we couldn't use that information. But more people told us, "I didn't know there was an internment camp here in Hawaii." And then, like you, filling a hole in history, we realized that if we didn't do anything further, there would be this hole in history. And our mission, here at JCCH, is to collect and preserve the history of the Japanese in Hawaii. And so, there's this big *puka* [gap] there. But then, to tell you the truth, I evolved too. Because, my first goal was, I just gotta find out where it is because if anybody else asks us, we'll be doubly embarrassed. And that was the only goal I had. No knowledge about internment because nobody in my family had that experience. But one thing led to another. It's kinda like the connections you're making. You begin to wonder if somebody is helping you out.
- KD: July 21, we get to go beyond what the Tahara family reunion did? We get to go down into the foliage and everything?
- JK: Yes.
- KD: Wow. And are there still buildings? They said that you found buildings, aqueducts, sewer system...
- JK: You're going to see about five sites, three of them we'll spend time at and two we'll go in passing. One of the sites is the two remaining buildings. Only, they're almost flat now. Then we'll talk about those and then there's a mess hall slab and so we'll talk about that. Then on your walk down to the aqueduct, which is a landmark there, you will pass the rock wall there and Dr. Mel will tell you about that. You'll be walking and he'll be talking.
- KD: And, you'll be there, too. How long did you do these tours? We feel honored to go with you, this time.
- JK: Our president is thinking of starting a regular once a month thing, but she said start with this one, and so, um it's a very eclectic group going down there. I think you'll find it very interesting. There's a retired judge going down, Steven Levinson. You might ask him if he knows Frank Padgett. That might be a connection. He's very passionate about

the lessons you can learn from history. If you are emphatic about it, and you are definitely emphatic, you get engaged with it. You realized the value of it, then young people will want to know more and you're in the group so we'll introduce Justice Steven Levinson. I thought he hit the nail on the head, and this professor Karen Kosasa, from UH (University of Hawaii) she's in Museum Studies. She's going down. There's some graduate students going down to study Japanese or Filipino. I said, you know it doesn't matter what ethnic group because this is an immigrant's journey. So many immigrants encounter hardship and discrimination and what happens with them. There are some people from the *Obon* [Buddhist event for commemorating ancestors, whose spirits are believed to temporarily return to this world] and the Asian Center who left little notes saying, I want to go. And Mel will be taking video clips.

MI: I hope so because it will be very powerful. I look forward to it because there will be so many interesting people in the group.

JK: Oh, and there is a daughter of an internee going down. Jean Kawazoe, her father Zenichi Kawazoe, was a Honouliuli internee. And she is really excited about going down. Everyone has rich backgrounds.

KD: Will she be the only child?

JK: Yes, but you're the only one with a medal.

KD: This sounds great. May I also get a photo of Heather with the both of you?

JK: Oh yes. Thank you.