

JAPANESE CULTURAL CENTER OF HAWAI'I
VOICES OF LIVING HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Laurie Hirohata (LH)

October 4, 2019

Interviewer: Mel 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.

MI: Today is October 4, 2019. We're in the conference room [of the Japanese Cultural Center] to interview Laurie Hirohata. Laurie has a story to share with us about the Haiku [Maui] internment camp site so this is what we're going to be interested in today and also we want to learn a little bit about her family history, whatever she can teach us, tell us. Okay, so my name is Mel Inamasu. I'm a volunteer at the Resource Center. I'm going to begin by asking Laurie to briefly introduce herself, full name, month and year of her birth, and where she was born and raised, and then I will ask her about her ancestors.

LH: I don't want to give my birthdate.

MI: No, just month and year. Oh.

LH: No, I'm just joking. I'm Laurie Hatsuko Hirohata and I was born in September 1958, so I just had my birthday. I was born in California in Merced because my father was in the military, but my family, the Hirohata side, is predominantly from Oahu. The Yamamoto side, my mother's side, at least that [mother's] generation, all grew up on Maui.

MI: So I'm going to go step-by-step. Give me the full name of your father, first.

LH: My father is Lawrence Tadaharu Hirohata.

MI: And do you know roughly, what year he was born?

LH: Gawd, I knew you were going to ask me that...umm.

MI: If you don't know, just say you don't know.

LH: I don't remember.

MI: Okay.

LH: He was either, maybe around 1935?

MI: That's fine.

LH: My mother was '37.

MI: '35?

LH: Around '35.

MI: And where was he born, where was he raised, your father?

LH: He was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, raised in Liliha, on Oahu.

MI: Mother's full name?

LH: Carolyn Tamae Yamamoto Hirohata. She was born in March. They were both born in March and I think she was born in '37.

MI: '37? Okay.

LH: Yeah, I think '37.

MI: And she was born and raised where?

LH: On Maui, Kahului.

MI: I'm going back one step further, your father first. His parents, if you know their names—your grandparents on your father's side.

LH: You should have told me that—I could have brought it. What was my grandfather's name? My grandfather died when my father was a child, so I don't remember that. He was the Hirohata. My grandmother is the one that is from a royal *samurai* clan, so we've traced that back to the 8th century. She was a Sugu Shigemura. [Note from LH: The Sugu clan were under Lord Mori, and later changed to Shigemura.]

MI: Wait. What? Give me her full name again.

LH: I can't remember her first name.

MI: Okay, if you cannot, just...

LH: I can give it to you later.... [her name] was something like Mikiko Shigemura. They grew up in Waipahu. My grandmother's family was predominantly from Waipahu. Her parents first settled actually on the Big Island, in the Keauau area and then moved to Waipahu.

MI: Your grandparents were *nisei*, is that correct, second generation?

LH: Yeah.

MI: Their parents came to Hawaii [from Japan].

LH: Yeah, my great grandparents, on both sides, immigrated. So I'm *yonsei* [fourth generation].

MI: Do you know anything about them? Where they might have come from, in Japan, what prefecture?

LH: The Yamamoto side, I can't remember if they were from Kumamoto-*ken* too.

MI: If you don't know, just say, you don't know.

LH: Okay. My grandmother's side, okay, I think they came from, I don't know. I gotta double check but they were here [in Hawaii with grandfather]. My grandfather, Tadashi was born, actually on the Big Island. Then they moved to Maui, so he was a United States citizen. He had never been to Japan. He was always a local, Japanese American. My, ah, his wife, my grandmother, was a picture bride from Kumamoto-*ken*. My father's side, the

Hirohata, they were from Iwakuni-ken, Hiroshima area. My father's mother was the royal *samurai* one so we can trace that back to the 8th century. My father's father, I'm not sure where he's from but I think he's from the same area. But he was brought here as a *kocho sensei* [principal] by the Hongwanji church so the Heeia Elementary, that's by the Windward Mall, used to be a Japanese plantation school and they brought him here. He immigrated here to basically be a principal for that school.

MI: Okay. How about the other side?

LH: My mother's side?

MI: Yeah.

LH: My mother's side, grandparents, Tadashi was born and educated in Hawaii. Interestingly enough, he went to St. Anthony's school, so somehow he got to go to a pretty good [private] school. He was, according to when he was interned, taken away, arrested, he was working for the county clerk's office. So I get from one aunty, he was a bookkeeper in the tax office. Another aunty said he worked in the Mayor's office. Something to do with the county level as some kind of clerk. But he was a businessperson 'cuz he had the business background [and had side projects] evidently. My grandmother, his wife, she was shipped here as a picture bride. He brought her here as a picture bride.

MI: Her name was? This is your mother's mother?

LH: My mother's mother, Masao. She had a male's name. Masao Yamamoto was Tadashi's wife. She came in from Kumamoto-ken and she eventually had a restaurant or they opened up a restaurant in Kahului.

MI: So you're *sansei* on your mother's side, *yonsei* on father's side? Is that what it is?

LH: Great grandparents, grandparents, my parents. No, I'm *yonsei* on both sides, yeah.

MI: Okay, guess I'm mixed up.

LH: Yeah, great grandparents from both sides immigrated. Grandparents from both sides—no—I take it—yeah—because my grandfather was born here on both sides. I mean my grandmother on my father's side was born here. Right? Wait, I take it back. Anyway, you might be right. Hirohata would be fourth [generation], my mother's side would be third or forth because my grandmother was not born here. Okay, never mind.

MI: That's okay. Okay, so the individual we're talking about is who? Who was [the Haiku camp internee]?

LH: Tadashi Yamamoto, my mother's father.

MI: Tell us who Tadashi Yamamoto was. Let's just stick to him.

LH: Okay.

MI: So Tadashi Yamamoto was your mother's father or [your] grandfather?

LH: Yes, my mother's father.

MI: Okay, he's the one who you say was a businessman or he worked for the government, local government.

LH: He worked for the county, the local government, right.

MI: Okay, do you know any more about him that you can tell us? I'm trying to get some background and try to figure out why he may have been selected to be interned.

LH: That's what we're really trying to do, I'm interested in finding out. Because he was an American citizen, he wasn't *Kibei*. He never went to Japan. Educated, like I said, at St. Anthony's School. His father got killed at a young age, like in 1932. The father was a night watchman for the railroad company. And I get different stories but the one that I think is most accurate is that it was a Caucasian teacher [who] ran him over.

MI: Car accident?

LH: Yeah, car, because he was drunk. He was a drunk driver and my great grandfather was blocking the driveway or [trying to stop the driver to check in on him or] whatever, while on duty, and he got run over and killed and so then the company, the railroad company, took care of the family by giving my great grandmother a long-term lease on the cottage there, in Kahului. And so it was that, basically, that saved the family when my grandfather got incarcerated. [Note from LH: my grandmother and her kids went to live in the house during the war.]

MI: And they had how many children, that family?

LH: Tadashi had three sisters and a brother. The brother died young.

MI: I mean, your mother's family.

LH: Oh, my mother's family. I believe there were eleven [children], total. Two died young and nine survived.

MI: So the widow had to take care of eleven children?

LH: No, the widow had two boys and three girls. Tadashi is one of the sons. I don't have it all because my aunty—the younger brother died when he was a teenager or something but the three women go on to marry and become pretty prominent actually on Maui. [Note from LH: the 11 whildren were Tadashi's.]

MI: I'm going to stick with Tadashi. Tell us a little more about Tadashi, whatever you can. You've told us what he did as far as occupation. Can you tell us any more about Tadashi?

LH: What I was trying to trace, actually, is that according to my aunty that knew my grandfather the best, because she took care of him until he died in later life. She said that beyond high school, he went to some kind of like business school.

MI: On Maui?

LH: Yeah, on Maui. Because he never really left Maui until she brought him [and grandmother] to Honolulu when she was an adult, to take care of them in their older age. He'd never gone anywhere else [but] he was fluent in Japanese and English. So she said that he was very well liked by both English speakers and Japanese speakers. Before the war and during the war, people would use him to translate. He was fluent.

MI: Let's stick to before the war. Tell me as much as you can about Tadashi.

LH: So he was quite educated, he went to school, he was fluent [in] Japanese. He was working for the county. So he was a white collar worker, he wasn't a plantation worker. He was very close to the Baldwin family and so even after he was let go from being

incarcerated, he still was very close to the Baldwin family.

MI: Do you know why he was very close to the Baldwin family?

LH: I don't have the details on that. I'm still trying to—both the aunties who are still alive are like nineties and I gotta do a series of interviews because it's hit or miss. I just know that they were there, even after he was let go.

MI: They were there to help him in some way?

LH: Not really. That's why I'm looking into this. Because once he got arrested and suspected, everybody's kinda hands-off. I don't know what the connection was but my aunty remembers, even when my grandfather got incarcerated...

MI: Did he work for them?

LH: No, he worked for the county. He just knew them but she says she remembers Mr. Baldwin coming to our family restaurant, hanging out, socializing.

MI: Which family restaurant is this?

LH: This was called the Yamamoto Family Restaurant, which was in Kahului. [Note from LH: Actually called Oriental Café, the name was changed to American Café during the war].

MI: And that was run by his parents?

LH: It was run by his wife and him [helping out]. His wife, they had a couple of workers, and the kids.

MI: Now, how did his wife get to own a restaurant?

LH: That's kinda sketchy. We're trying to figure that one out, if he bought the property [or rented]. It was called something like Oriental Café.

MI: Where was it located?

LH: It was in Kahului. The home was behind it. The restaurant was on Puunene Street, I believe. Because Tadashi's house, with his children, their house was right behind the restaurant. His mother had her own cottage right across Kahului Elementary. It was down the block. So they were established in the Kahului area. So anyway, Mr. Baldwin and my grandfather had a connection. I believe it was probably tied to the county because of his work there. So he was doing all of this. We do know that at one point, he was busted for listening to a family program on the short-wave radio. It was in Japanese. But he didn't get arrested right away. It was some period of time [after].

MI: Was this before the war, during the war, after the war? Where did you hear this story?

LH: The family keeps on saying [he was listening to the radio]. That's why they keep on attributing that because of the radio program, that's why he was arrested.

MI: That's why he was arrested?

LH: But the more I delve into it, there's a long break. It wasn't like they busted him and took him away, or the next day, they came. So what it is, they keep on giving me this story. But then they also tell me that, when it was under the curfew laws, they were busted at least once, at night, cause they could see the light coming out from underneath the door—

you know—the family. But they believed my grandfather was already gone because it was only the kids and my grandma.

MI: I'm still trying to get the story before the work.

LH: Okay, we don't know. There are a bunch of blanks [in the story]. He was a county worker, he was pretty well known. He also was a really good baseball player so he has all these articles, evidently back then, of him being a really good baseball player, being in the AJA League and all of that. So he was pretty well known, right. They tell me that the mayor and all those people knew him, liked him. Mr. Baldwin knew him, liked him. They socialized because they'd drink and play cards in the restaurant.

MI: When you say, "Baldwin," do you know the [first] name of Mr. Baldwin?

LH: I didn't ask. I'm thinking it's the one who was the same age as my grandpa, the senior. It was back in the thirties and forties. Okay, so this is going on but my aunties, they don't know what happened. It's just that they came one day...

MI: Wait, let's go to December 7th. Do you know anything about December 7th and Tadashi?

LH: Meaning what?

MI: Did someone come to check on him, the government, the police, military, on December 7th?

LH: Not that we know of.

MI: You've already mentioned the curfew. Do you know anything about your family and December 7th? Maui was distant, it wasn't near Pearl Harbor.

LH: Yeah. That's why this is what I do know, the Oriental Cafe, the restaurant called Oriental something, was actually popular. All the soldiers would come there to eat.

MI: This is after the war started. I'm talking about December 7, 1941, the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed.

LH: This was before December 7th, I believe but I'll check.

MI: The military people were already there?

LH: Yes, because Marines were doing something. There was some kind of staging thing and they had a camp, so my aunties remember, as kids, the military jeeps going back and forth, back and forth. And they'd stop to have a meal. So they remember these soldiers, because the soldiers would give them trinkets and stuff, and play with the kids. So they remember that. They weren't afraid of soldiers, is what they're telling me, because it was just a common experience of what was going on. And they keep on saying, "It was the Marines, Marines" or whatever. It's all mishmash in their heads because they were ten, twelve. So as far as December 7 goes, there was nothing that was significant on December 7th. Not from this side [of the family]. On my father's side, there are a lot more stories.

MI: What are the stories on your father's side?

LH: On my father's side, because my great grandfather *kocho sensei* was tied to Honpa Hongwanji, right, [so] he was interviewed. Anyway, it was the Chief of Police, this Hawaiian Chief of Police who was very close to the family because he'd stop by and

hang out at the store, because my grandmother ran a store, the Hirohata Store, right next to the Kuakini Hospital. So at the time that there was all this concern that my great grandfather and grandfather would be taken away, the Chief of Police took my grandfather, the Hirohata family, under his wing and said they're under house arrest with him. So we were allowed to run...

MI: Continue the business, live at home?

LH: Yeah, cause they needed the store and everything. So they were protected in that way. I believe my great grandfather was interviewed, for the snippets that we have, cause he's tied to the church.

MI: But he never was incarcerated?

LH: No, no, because he was protected by a local [police or government official]—that's the only [thing] that we know. There's stories from the family that we were under suspicion but again, prominent family in the community at that time and everybody needed the store. The Kuakini Hospital nurses and doctors also vouched for the family 'cuz they needed the store.

MI: Where was the store [located]?

LH: Right next door.

MI: Kuakini Street?

LH: Kuakini Street, Kuakini Hospital, it's now the parking lot.

MI: Parking structure?

LH: Yes, the new one. The POB building, closer to [the] Liliha Street side. Right there was the store, barber shop, florist. And behind it, we had our houses. We lived there.

MI: His family owned all three?

LH: No, [the barber] shop was [Mrs.] Tanijo. It was three different families. But we lost all the property. The Kuakini Hospital took the property during the war 'cuz you couldn't own property as Japanese.

MI: Actually, it probably was not the hospital but the government took over the hospital.

LH: Yeah, but it was deeded to the hospital cause when my grandfather folks were supposed to buy it back, my grandfather refused to buy it back, basically. And the story goes, we were buying it back from Kuakini Hospital. But that may not be correct. I don't know. So anyway, that side [of the family] has an interesting story but on my mom' side, they [are] puzzled. [Note from LH: grandfather refused to buy it back because he said the price was too high for something he already owned.]

MI: On Maui?

LH: Yeah, on Maui. Because he was a [worker for the] County government and he was a white-collar worker. There's talk about a small boat that my grandfather had to go fishing because he loved to fish. But there was no way the boat could make it to another island. It was one of those leaky old boats.

MI: Now, let's stick with Maui and Tadashi. What's the story as far as when, why and how he

was picked up? Whatever you know.

LH: It's sketchy on when he was picked up, but it was after the war had already broken out, that's obvious. There's gaps in when—and I'm believing it was curfew—that's why they came when they heard him listening to the radio, because if not, who would have known that he's listening to the radio.

MI: You're thinking it was a curfew violation?

LH: I'm thinking that because they're saying—one sister said there were people in the room. She doesn't know if it was his friends or his sons.

MI: Listening to the radio?

LH: Yes, they were listening to a family program and one sister said they were playing games, playing cards or something. The other one goes, "No." Cause he drank a lot and he got worse after being incarcerated. So the other one said, "No." She thinks he was drinking alone. But he got busted for that. He wasn't taken away right away. It's either weeks or months, nobody knows, and one day they went to, I believe, his workplace [and] picked him up there.

MI: Workplace was in Wailuku?

LH: Wailuku or Kahului, it was the county office. So he got picked up, he was brought home to pack a suitcase, and disappeared. They don't know. Then they came, confiscated the cleavers, anything that looked like a weapon, in the restaurant. Basically closed down the restaurant. We got stories that maybe, underground, they ran it or it was closed down. But it never opened up fully. But when the war broke out, they changed the name to American Café, [Note from LH: to hide that they were Japanese] like everybody else.

MI: They closed the store, at some point, during the war.

LH: The restaurant got boarded up, from what the aunties are saying, after my grandfather was arrested.

MI: Now, did it ever open up again, after the war?

LH: They're claiming it never opened up fully. What happened though is that one aunty says, "No." She remembers neighborhood customers coming in to do things but they had no money to buy food. They had chickens that they got eggs from and their vegetable garden that they lived off of and used in the restaurant. They were living off of that. It was the neighbors and the friends and things that [were given to them that] kept them going. We don't know how long he was missing. One says three or four months, the other saying nine, ten months. But I'm thinking it was between six and ten months because if you listen to them and how they got poorer and poorer. So the family really suffered during that time.

MI: Now, you said they changed the name.

LH: They think it was Oriental Café because Oriental Restaurant doesn't sound right but something "Oriental."

MI: Okay, when did this name change occur, after the war? Are you talking about during the war?

LH: Yes, because when my grandfather got incarcerated, the restaurant closed.

MI: Yeah, yeah. That's why I'm trying to figure out when did it reopen?

LH: You know it's hazy, but I think [the name changed] when all the hype was going on. Everyone was afraid yeah and maybe because the military guys were coming, yeah. We don't know. They can't figure [it] out themselves. They don't remember, yeah.

MI: Okay, that's fine but, but...

LH: Like everybody else, when you watch these videos, yeah, they put up a new sign saying American Cafe and they remember soldiers coming.

MI: So anyway, after the war, there was an American Café on Puunene Avenue, is what you're saying?

LH: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. [Note from LH: I'm not sure they family ever reopened the restaurant.]

MI: Oh.

LH: I think because according to my auntie folks, it never really opened up again.

MI: Never really opened up? Okay.

LH: Yeah, so it may have gotten sold as American Cafe to someone else or someone else just took it over because they lost it.

MI: They lost it?

LH: From what they're saying, it got boarded up, it got, you know, they lost it and what happened was, my grandfather after he was released, he couldn't go back to the County to work. He had no job for a period of time. Until finally, according to my aunty, the Kahului Development Corporation was rebuilding a building and they finally hired him for a period of time. Then he got sick with a hernia and stuff. So his life went downhill after that, significantly.

MI: Okay, okay. Tell me whatever you can about that period. Now he's picked up, the family doesn't know where he is, what happens? How and when, if you know, did they find out where he was? And where was he, when they found him?

LH: It's sketchy, but maybe he was picked up, he was incarcerated on Maui, and he might have been sent to Sand Island for a little while. And then sent to Haiku Camp. It is through word of mouth from the neighbors, the Japanese community, that the family finds out eventually that he's at the Haiku camp because they went to visit him...

MI: Now, okay now, wait, wait. Now, do you know what year, roughly, we're talking about, when they find out that he's at Haiku camp? The war is 1941.

LH: Right.

MI: December 7th.

LH: Right, '42, '43.

MI: The war goes until 1945.

LH: Right.

MI: Yeah, so you don't know when then?

LH: You know, yeah, I can't get, yeah. I gotta go back and pick my aunty's brain because [what] I'm getting, it's sketchy. [Note from LH: June was pretty certain her father would be picked up by the Marines to help with interpretation/translation after Tadashi returned from camp because the Marines were pretty friendly with him after he came back from the camp. She remembered the Marines coming by to hang out and drink with Tadashi too.]

MI: Now, which aunty are you talking about? Which aunts are giving you information?

LH: There's aunty June.

MI: And June is the sister of...

LH: Tadashi. Tadashi had eleven children, nine surviving.

MI: No. But you are talking about his brothers and sisters who are telling you these stories or his children?

LH: No, these are his children.

MI: Eleven children?

LH: Yeah, but two died, yeah so there were nine.

MI: Okay, and which of his children are telling you these stories?

LH: June.

MI: June? Okay.

LH: And she...

MI: And what is her full name?

LH: June Tomie T-o-m-i-e Yamamoto.

MI: And the last name.

LH: Well now it's Lum, Yamamoto Lum and you know and this thing is missing Edythe [the oldest daughter]. I don't know her Japanese name but it's Edythe...

MI: I don't need her Japanese [name]. What's her last name?

LH: Edythe Uyehara.

MI: Yamamoto Uyehara?

LH: Yamamoto Uyehara. I don't think it has...

MI: How do you spell that "Uyehara?"

LH: I think it has a,"Y"." I don't know. (Chuckles)

MI: Okay, so these are the two aunts who still are alive and who have been telling you the story?

LH: Yeah, there were more aunts [and uncles], because we've heard the stories over the years, but they've all died.

MI: Okay. Would they be available to talk to? To come here? Or are they too old?

LH: You'd have to interview them by phone and Auntie June may allow you to go to her condo. She lives in Makiki because she's really physically going downhill. Auntie Edith said, "No," because she's in a nursing home, on Hospice care, but she's been pretty strong for quite a while. But I think if we talk to her by phone, she'll talk to you.

[Section deleted by interviewee request]

MI: Okay so from what they can tell you, Tadashi was taken, they cannot tell you when or how long [it was] before they discovered that he was at Haiku? That's the story, and they're not sure if he was sent to Sand Island and back to Haiku.

LH: I don't know.

MI: Tell me what you know.

LH: The reason being is that when the other aunties were alive, when we talked, cause I talked to them individually, [some said] Tadashi was missing, not for days, but it was for weeks or a couple of months, is what they're claiming.

MI: Okay, that's fine.

LH: And [they found him by] word of mouth, because there was this gentleman, a Japanese guy, who owns a store or something, that he would take orders for groceries at the Haiku camp and then deliver it up to Haiku camp.

MI: You know who this person was?

LH: We'd have to pick their brain and ask them cause some of those things, I didn't bother [to ask] because I'm trying to get other details, yeah.

MI: Now when you say, "This person," he was someone in Kahului town?

LH: Yeah, because it was their neighbor, because eventually that's the way that they got to see, the family got to see their father at the Haiku camp, was catching a ride with that peddler or the grocer.

MI: The grocer himself was taking things up for whoever.

LH: Yeah, they would get an order and he would take up their groceries and personal hygiene things like that. He'd take it up there. So Auntie June remembers going at least two times, maybe three times, with this man—catch a ride, and grandma would make, their mother would make *obento*, take it up and whatever he needed. And they would have to stand face to face, between the fence.

MI: Who would go to Haiku to visit Tadashi, if you know? Definitely these two went?

LH: Yeah, one or both times. Auntie June definitely went two or three times. It's not clear, it's fuzzy.

MI: Okay, that's fine.

LH: I'm thinking, the younger kids tagged along. Not sure if their mother went. Not sure if their grandmother went. [Note from LH: June only remembers her mom and her going. June said the younger kids were too young so their mom didn't take them.]

MI: That's fine.

LH: But the sons, Tadashi's oldest son, was actually in the military. He was in the Pineapple Brigade. He had joined the war.

MI: What is this Pineapple Brigade you're talking about?

LH: You know, when they're taken in and they call it, that's what I've always been told, Pineapple Brigade when he enlisted, never left Hawaii.

MI: Before the war?

LH: Once the war broke out, I believe. Sketchy whether or not he was ROTC already, because one, they tell me he was ROTC but his name was Willard, Willard Chuichi Yamamoto. So he was with the 442, in the 100th Battalion Pineapple Brigade. Never left Hawaii.

MI: 100th or 442nd?

LH: I'm not sure cause they give me ...

MI: That's fine.

LH: But they keep on telling me [about the] Pineapple Brigade, because he was basically stationed on Oahu. I think he interpreted, translated or you know something. But he never went beyond Hawaii. He was there [on Oahu] already. The second son got rejected for health reasons. Was on Maui, working and that was Makoto Yamamoto.

MI: Okay, so anyway, I'm going to focus on the Haiku camp. So some of the children, you know, at least went to the Haiku camp.

LH: Yeah.

MI: Tell me what they told you about the Haiku camp? You had started to tell me. What do you know, from them, about the Haiku camp?

LH: That's why I got involved with this when I came to Hono'uli'uli discussions, cause I knew back then they couldn't find [the Maui site]. So I went back and asked my aunts.

MI: When you say they couldn't find it, when are you talking about, what year?

LH: I don't know, six, seven years ago. When they first started doing the presentations. So they said they had two potential sites, when I came to a presentation here [JCCH] on Hono'uli'uli. So I went back to ask the aunts. That's what got me started on this. All they can remember is going up, zig zag up a hill or something. But it wasn't a whole lot of, cause I said, one side looked like the Hono'uli'uli group had pictures of trees and everything. They said no, they don't remember it like a forest.

MI: You're talking about Haiku, now?

LH: Yeah, when they went up. All they remember was it was always muddy. The road going up was muddy and it was green. There was not a lot of houses nearby. It was, I guess, secluded. It was a very bumpy ride, a very long ride.

MI: Did they ever mention whether or not it was in the town of Haiku? You mentioned secluded. Was it in the town of Haiku? If you don't know, just say, "I don't know."

LH: No, they're telling me it was like going up, they told me it's like going up into the

country.

MI: Well, Haiku is in the country and then there's a little town of Haiku.

LH: I don't know. I gotta ask them again cause they were only ten, twelve years old and all they remember is, of course, an old truck, the grocer's truck and the old bumpy ride that they would kinda get sick from riding and very muddy. They remembered mud all the time. And it was just grass or pineapple, whatever, sugar cane. But it wasn't like going through a town. They don't talk about a town. But the more we talk to them, the more little tidbits come back. Because the two pictures that I saw, potential sites, when I first came to the presentations, one looks like closer to a town without trees, more developed. They said, they don't remember that. They remember just like fields. Whether it was pineapple or sugar cane, they cannot remember. But it was really a bumpy road and of course, they were probably riding in the back of a truck with the groceries. And they said it was pretty harsh conditions.

MI: Did they remember seeing barbed wire fences?

LH: Yeah.

MI: They both remembered?

LH: I cannot tell you it was barbed wire because I kept on saying, "Did you get to go inside, cause you were only kids?" They said, "No." They don't remember ever going in or how the groceries ... cause they must have had to open the gate to give the groceries. They don't remember that. They remember standing, talking to their father and giving him *bento*. And they remember like probably to a friend...

MI: Talking to their father and giving him *bento*?

LH: Yeah, because the mother made *bento* for them too, yeah. They remember passing things to him but I said, "Were you inside?" [Note from LH: June said she can't remember, but she doesn't remember going into the camp, only standing next to the fence.]

MI: Were they allowed to do that or were they doing it without the guards knowing, behind the guards' back?

LH: This is the story I get that's really interesting. I think they were really lax there because, remember now, my grandfather was fluent in English and Japanese. So they just were using my grandfather to be their official translator. They were really good friends because after they released him, the soldiers would come and hang out with him, at his house, drinking and carousing. Then when they needed help, they'd pick him up and take him back to the camp, or wherever, to have him translate. [Note from LH: June said sometimes Tadashi would be gone all day with the Marines]

MI: Are you telling me that he was released while the camp was still open?

LH: Yeah.

MI: Other people still in the camp?

LH: Yeah, because he was there only for about, I think the longest is nine or ten months. One tells me four, five, six months. You know, their memories are fuzzy. To one, it's been forever, right. And then my mother was the youngest one. My mother didn't understand

what was going on, and to her it was forever. She was like five. But she was his pet and so I'm thinking, I'm assuming, they took my mother because she was his pet because she's so young, with them, just to soothe him. You know what I mean? But my mother, she was young, she didn't...

MI: So he was there for a few months? Not for the whole war?

LH: Auntie June probably has the best memory because she took care of him as they aged and died. So she's saying it was closer to nine months. But the thing is, he's not on the internment list. I got that far, to look for him. His name's not there so he was just arrested and incarcerated.

MI: But you're saying that after he was released, from what you're told, the guards used to come and see him and they even asked him sometimes to help, to go back there, [to help] with translation?

LH: Yeah and it really sounds like, from Auntie June, it was more than the guards. Military officers would come get him, cause she remembers uniforms.

MI: Did they say anything about him being worried about [being] taken again and being put back in the camp permanently?

LH: (Sighs) Like many other bitter Japanese old men, he went downhill mentally significantly after, you know, because he was kinda prominent in the community. He was really alcoholic, I think, after he came out, and then he had a hernia, health issues. And he went downhill. So he had rampages and I remember the few years when I was really young, when he was already here, he'd go on binges and it was difficult. When he was nice, he probably was able to share some, but by and large... [Note from LH: He didn't talk much about it and when he had his binges and flew into a rage, he really didn't make much sense, at least to us.]

MI: So you got to know him when he moved over here?

LH: Yeah, but I was really young. He died [at] like sixty-two or sixty-one. I was like three years old or four.

MI: Oh yeah? So you really didn't get to know him.

LH: I remember what happened was that, as I said, my mother was his pet and she could calm him down. So when he would have his rampages, while they were growing up and when they moved here, my mom was Tama-chan, they would call her to come and talk to him because he would calm down with her. What he shared, I have no idea because I was really young. And you cannot blame him. He was a bitter man, yet he still continued to socialize with the Baldwins and some others, so the guards became, you know, I don't think he was bitter against them. [Note from LH: my aunties said they remember Tadashi drinking with them on a number of occasions.]

MI: He never went back to his previous job.

LH: He couldn't. He was fired, according to the family.

MI: He was fired?

LH: He was released. I don't know if the military told him he couldn't go back.

MI: He was released at the point that he was arrested?

LH: I believe so, because he could never go back. Because when he came back, the two aunts remember that he had nothing to do and he was in a rage. He was drinking more.

MI: So from the point when he was released, as far as you know, he never really worked.

LH: He worked for a while at the Kahului Development Company, for about six to nine months. He got a hernia and was ill. But he was there as a bookkeeper or something, because he was an educated man. Okay, it was local government and like the Baldwin family still trusted him, that they gave him that [job]. But after the hernia, he suffered for years, until aunty June was old enough to come to Honolulu to go to nursing school. When she graduated, she brought them over to help, to care for them and got him his surgery and all of that.

MI: So the development company was a Baldwin family company?

LH: I have no idea.

MI: Well, okay, I thought that's what you were saying.

LH: But she told...

MI: The Baldwins hired him as...

LH: I'm thinking the Baldwins have ties because they have ties in the...

MI: If you don't know, don't say, don't say.

LH: Okay, all I'm saying is, according to my aunty she remembers it being called the Baldwin, the Kahului Development Company, is what she remembers. Whether that's correct or not, I'm not sure.

MI: I think that's correct but yeah.

LH: Okay, whether or not the Baldwins were not, but my aunty folks were saying that Mr. Baldwin may have helped because he was always gracious to my grandfather.

MI: Yeah, I thought you said Mr. Baldwin hired him.

LH: No, no, no, the Kahului Development Company hired him.

MI: Okay, that's fine.

LH: Yeah, but as long as they can remember, for Christmas my grandfather would take up booze to the house and the kids would play in the yard while my grandfather and Mr. Baldwin would have some drinks. Before and after the war. So the assumption was there was that connection even after.

MI: But he never really recovered?

LH: No, no. I knew this growing up, but until the Hono'uli'uli project started, I got interested because I've been to Maui tons of times. I didn't know where the camp was, right?

MI: Now his wife, I'm sorry, what was her name, again?

LH: Masao, she's gone.

MI: Oh, she's gone. When did she die? You said he died in 1962.

LH: Yeah, she died in 1994.

MI: Oh, so she lived thirty years.

LH: Yeah, they both came to Honolulu and she was a cook at the Coral Seas Restaurant at Ala Moana. You know, she lived a really good life. We had done some research on her and she was a picture bride. She put herself on the picture bride list because she was a very talented *koto* player. Of course, she was groomed to be a *geisha* but she wasn't that pretty, I guess, to be front line.

MI: She ended up on Maui, a picture bride on Maui?

LH: Yeah, because she was anticipating that she was going to be able to open up her own *koto* school and came here and had a pretty rough life.

MI: And was never able to do that?

LH: Actually, when she was in her eighties, late, late in life, she got hooked up with one of the Japanese recital schools and she started taking dancing classes and started participating. She used to always go to bon dances later in life and then they realized that she was an excellent *koto* player, so she started playing *koto* for that recitals [at] school.

MI: She had a *koto* all those years and she would play it?

LH: She had but it was all busted up or termite eaten or something and then the school lent her one, I believe. Because the recitals we went to, it looked kinda brand new. But I don't know if they rehabilitated hers or not. I'd have to check because I wasn't really interested in knowing, yeah. But then we went to her performances and she was one of the oldest performers. She performed till about eighty-nine or ninety. And they just used to make her the star because they were so impressed, right? So she got her fame and recognition at the end which we were really proud of, yeah.

MI: That's nice.

LH: Yeah, and she was good. I gotta admit that. I'm not an expert but I'm very involved with music. She was good. Unfortunately she never taught any of us. She would mention it but she never told us that... You know, like my father's side [would say,] "Sit down, you going [to] Japanese school. Sit down, you're going to learn..." you know, flower arrangements. She never forced us to do it and I wish she did. Cause I would have loved to have learned, you know, to play it, yeah. But you know, so they had it really rough and this is why I'm trying to trace it, cause I didn't realize it. Because I thought my grandfather was a run of the mill local boy working as a low life clerk, office or mail clerk. Sounds like he's more a bookkeeper type. He was a white collar and he was used, more like a professional. And his sisters all married dentists, doctors and things. They were all prominent. You know at that time, because they were all older kids, were like teenagers and like you know, ten, twelve, until my mother who was five or six or something. So my, his aunties, I mean his sisters, were married and they were kind of prominent. And now that didn't matter, at the time that he was taken away. So the thing is, he's not on the internment, intern list. Mr. [Tatsumi Hayashi] had helped, did help. We couldn't find anything. And Carol, I...

MI: Do you have any proof that he was in there? I'm not questioning the story, but do [you] have a picture of him there, or something, a piece of paper or anything to document what

you're telling me [about his internment]. Again it's more for, you know, especially since you tell me he's not on the list. How do you prove it? Not that we have to prove it but...

LH: That's why Carole [Hayashino] really wanted me to file the paperwork with the National Archives.

MI: Did you do that?

LH: I started it. I was up there because I used to go back and forth to D.C. and I ran into a snafu and for the life of me, I cannot remember what it was. But I think it's because he's not on the internment list. I had to do more work or something.

MI: This is something you may choose to do—I believe you, but it would be good to have something, some documentation.

LH: That's why I'm asking you. I came to sit with you. Is there something that's available locally?

MI: Not that I know of. Mr. Hayashi, he's, is the local database so if grandpa is not on that database, to get him on the database, you need to have some kind of evidence.

LH: So it's only through the National Archives that we can do this?

MI: I'm not an expert. No, there is no registry. Whatever lists there are, Hayashi-san has already culled them. He's taken out the names. So for someone who's not on that list, you will have to do more work.

LH: I don't know if we have pictures. We have pictures of all kinds of stuff.

MI: That's the other thing, you see, because sometimes there are pictures or something.

LH: I don't think they were allowed to take pictures in the camp.

MI: I'm just asking if there's anything at home, artifacts or photos, that might help to establish some of this. I would suggest that you go back and look at the pictures, the backs of the pictures, look around within what the family has to see if you can gather some documentation. That would be very helpful for Hayashi-san, also.

LH: Okay.

MI: Now, I'm still trying to get whatever information I can from you about the Haiku camp site or location. Anything else you can remember your aunt June telling you about that?

LH: I need to go back and talk to them again cause I didn't focus in on that. I have talked to them in the past more than once and the other aunty who died. It's sketchy because they were kids. There's other memories of other things but it's not like you drove through a town and then at the edge of town, there's the camp. All they remember is driving through muddy roads that was really bumpy. So it's secluded. That's the best I can say.

MI: Well, Haiku is "country," so getting to Haiku, I'm not surprised...

LH: Yeah, but then, yeah, when they say, "Oh, we went through the town and then we hit, you know, somebody's ranch or whatever." Because when I saw the two pictures from the Hono'uli'uli presentation, one looked closer to town, just my impression. You know when they showed, with all the trees and things? It looked like it wasn't that far from some kind of, you know, when it was like a bunch of houses, plantation houses or

whatever because the oldest brother, after the war, he worked for Maui Pine so he lived in a camp.

MI: That's Lahaina side.

LH: Yeah. He was a luna. So when I was a kid growing up, my sister and I, we'd go there for summers. So okay, so I'm really familiar with the camp town because over here was the big auditorium where they showed movies every Saturday night. The main store and the gas pump was over here. Everything, you could walk to, to roads and the cottages, all of that. So I'm very familiar with a camp town, plantation town I should say.

MI: They didn't describe anything like that?

LH: They didn't describe anything like that. And they grew up in Kahului because they're across the school and you know so they are more in like, a town, town, from back then. They didn't give all of that. All they remembered is getting kinda car sick because they said it was a long, long, long ride. I said, "How come you couldn't take the train?" They said, "Never had" where they were going to. But it sounds [like] in the middle of nowhere.

MI: They didn't say anything about a pineapple cannery nearby or anything like that?

LH: Okay, let me try asking them if they can remember. If I talk to them in bits and pieces like that.

MI: I understand.

LH: Okay, was there a pineapple cannery nearby, is that what you're saying?

MI: Yes.

LH: And then there was a town?

MI: A town.

LH: That's Haiku town?

MI: When I say town, I mean scattered...

LH: Like plantation-town kind of thing?

MI: A store, you know.

LH: Yeah, that would be a camp, a camp town.

MI: But it wouldn't be like, a whole group of houses or anything like that. I think the camps out there may not have been the same at Honolulu. But I wouldn't ask her specifically. Just ask her to describe, best she can, what she remembers, any buildings? Buildings only inside the camp or were there buildings outside the camp? Those kinds of questions. Any fields? What about soldiers? Did she see soldiers there, soldiers with weapons?

LH: Yeah, she remembers the guards and things that were there. What aunty June told me, and let me go back cause you know they start to change it sometime, but they were really afraid of the soldiers, but when they realized that that was Tadashi's kids, the soldiers were really nice to them, is what she remembered. Of course, they [were] using my grandfather! (Laughs) You know what I mean? They had a nice relationship going.

- MI: Now, okay, does she remember seeing other internees in addition to grandpa?
- LH: They have told me yeah, because they knew that it was a Haiku camp, there were others there. What I thought was so interesting was the grocer could drive up his peddler truck and give them whatever they ordered. I thought that was interesting and she said she doesn't remember because they're busy with the father. [She doesn't remember if] he just unloaded by the gate, the soldiers took it in and the men are standing in the back or if he just handed it.
- MI: But she does recall seeing others?
- LH: She remembers that there were other people there, but once they got off, they went in and grandfather's in one area and they were left alone is what they are saying.
- MI: Oh, so are they meeting with grandpa across the fence?
- LH: That's what they're saying but the more I talk with them, the more it gets fuzzy. Oh, wait a minute, how did they give them bento? Probably through the fence. But they don't remember sitting down and having a picnic. Like, you're standing up and talking with him, that's what they're telling me. They stood forever long, while the grocer was there doing things, but they don't remember like he was handcuffed with soldiers guarding him. They were told to go there, he was standing there, talking to the kids and they hung out until the grocer said, "Okay, gotta go." So I don't think it was hours. Maybe twenty thirty minutes, or so, whatever.
- MI: But they let him talk freely with the children?
- LH: That's what they're claiming. Again aunty June saying, in hindsight, because the soldiers were really nice to them, probably because the soldiers were my grandfather's friends already, because he's helping them. Because I'm sure when, well, I'm not sure, but the story Aunty June tells, [I ask,} "What was he translating for?" Because I didn't get it. [She replied,] "Oh, you know when the intern guys are having disgruntlement or..."
- MI: Oh, some of the internees were probably Japanese-speaking, yeah?
- LH: And they were talking to my grandfather so that he could go tell the soldiers and the soldiers want to tell them [to] do something or whatever, my grandfather would translate. And according to my aunty, because my grandfather, of course, his English is maybe *pidgin* [Hawaiian creole language] but fluent because he is not from Japan, right. He learned English and Japanese at the same time. The soldiers really liked him cause they could understand him, you know, and it makes sense. Why else would—and she kept saying, "Marines, marines." The marines would come around and ask him for favors after they let him out. So obviously the guards and these soldiers did not suspect my grandfather, cause they came and asked him for help. That's what's really weird. I mean, who suspected him, that's what I want to know and why? And it makes sense why he couldn't go back to county government but it's kinda sad that he didn't go back because he was actually an asset if he was bilingual.
- MI: I'm not sure it makes sense that he couldn't go back to his job but, you know.
- LH: It does make sense because of all the suspicion and you know now that, because now that's you've once been...

MI: Especially once the war was over. I mean the war was over, but anyway...;

LH: Okay, when the war was over he was already sick. He had the hernia and his temper, his personality had changed a lot yeah, cause he was...

MI: Was he bitter about that?

LH: Oh, yeah, he was an alcoholic.

MI: I don't mean the alcohol. Was he bitter about having been put in the camp? Was he mad about that?

LH: He was bitter about everything. His rages were that everything was done wrong. I don't know of about the camp, but my personal opinion, some of the rages, because I don't remember what he was saying, first because they kept us out because my {mom}? had to go to calm him down, but I think he blamed the government because he was right. He was an American citizen and he was Japanese, but he'd never been to Japan. So his rage was, he blamed everybody [for] this, of his life. He had a pretty good life, from what I can tell [before the war] and they said he was a baseball star and he had friends and [was] respected in the community. Everything was taken away. People did keep in touch with him, but I'm sure, because I'm a social worker, I'm sure, that because of his temperament change, personality change, people started dropping him.

MI: When you say people, these are old friends that kept in touch with him. Any names you can give us?

LH: I have to go ask. I never thought to ask. Except the Baldwins because I know aunty Jean kept saying, "The Baldwins kept in touch, the Baldwins kept in touch." Oh, shoots! I wrote on this thing. I need this page. I will email you this.

MI: Oh, I can copy it, if you, you know, already wrote.

LH: (Laughs) Because I need this. Here, you can take all of this so...

MI: I'll just copy it and give it back to you.

LH: Yeah, okay. Here, I just need the back page. Oh, make a copy of the back page for me, easier.

MI: Oh, okay.

LH: Cause I gotta get going pretty soon. What I would do...

MI: Oh, how much time do we have?

LH: It's like eleven now. So any quick questions before I end?

MI: No, I would ask your aunt if I could spend some time talking to her. The one who I guess is June.

LH: June, yeah, okay. I'm gonna call her tonight.

MI: I would prefer to see her face-to-face but if she doesn't want that, I can talk to her on the phone.

LH: You would drive to their house? It's in Makiki.

MI: Oh, yeah, I can go there.

LH: Yeah, cause she has osteo....

MI: And if you can be there and we can be there together with her.

LH: Okay, the only problem is I cannot drive right now.

MI: Yeah, okay, but anyway, just find out if she's willing to.

LH: I think she's much more open, just she's not that, she's a Mormon so she'd done her genealogy thing [because] is important to them, yeah. So she's done a lot of research.

MI: Wow, so maybe she can tell us more then?

LH: She has it, you know, but you have to ask her specific questions like how you're asking me.

MI: Yeah, yeah, that's what I want to do.

LH: Because she said last year [she did a presentation to her church group on this topic.]

MI: We don't know everything you know.

LH: Yeah, there's a lot I don't know and every time I talk to them, it gets different. (Laughs)

MI: So ask her.

LH: Okay. But it is...

MI: But tell her I'm most interested in that period about the Haiku camp and things she might have remembered or the other thing is if she has any pictures or any kind of documentation that will help us to establish your father or I mean your grandfather being...

LH: Okay, I need a copy of this.

MI: Okay. We'll stop here.

[Note: JCCH never met with June to ask more questions. She has since moved to a care home and is not willing to discuss this topic further].