

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #441

with

Henriette Arakaki (HA)

April 2, 1992

H`alawa Heights, O`ahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is an interview with Henriette Arakaki on April 2, 1992, in her H`alawa Heights home. The interviewer is Joe Rossi.

Mrs. Arakaki, to begin with, could you tell me about your family and what part of France they're from?

HA: I come from the south of France, Marseilles. And I was born September 3, 1926, in Marseilles. I'm the only child. Unfortunately, my father and Mum divorced when I was about nine years old. It was pretty sad, you know, to have to go through this kind of. . . . How would I say?

JR: It's stressful.

HA: Stressful, yes. But fortunately, I was raised by my grandparents, my father's parents. And they really took good care of me. Also my father's sister that didn't have any daughter. She has two sons, she treats me like her daughter. So I was well cared for, and I had a lot of love. But still, I think that after you get older and you become a mother yourself, you kind of wonder why this thing have to happen to you.

JR: Was that uncommon back then, for people to get divorced?

HA: Not that much. Not like now, so much different. It [*was*] a big thing. Like now, it's just. . . . But before, it's a big thing.

JR: None of your girlfriends' parents were separated, divorced?

HA: No, but one of my uncles got divorced too. But I was much older then.

JR: It sounds like you lived with your father's side of the family.

HA: That's right, I lived with my father's side. And of course, being that my father and my mother—they were brother and sister getting married to brother and sister. You know, like if you have a sister and I have a brother, so I married you and my [*brother married your sister*]. That's a double wedding, see. So I was constantly in contact with my mother's parents too, although I was never in much contact with my mother. But I saw my grandparents quite often, on my mother's side. My father was still in good terms with them, so it was pretty good.

JR: What did your father do?

HA: My father was an accountant at the bank. And also, we had a business, quite a big business, and he did all the accounting for the business too. And my mother was---at the time, they were working all together, the two couples. They had a pretty big business.

JR: What kind of a business?

HA: Well, they would wholesale the dairy products. It comes from the north of France, because Normandy is the area where they have lot of dairy product—cheese and butter. And they had a big area where they mixed the butter and had people working that packed the butter in the little boxes. And the basement of the working area was all cheese. They have those big swiss cheese. They have to test if it's ripe enough to cut 'em up and sell it, so I used to be going down there with my uncle and trying the cheese. I used to love it. We used to have about twelve vans. We used to deliver to the whole south of France. The whole department of the Bouche du Rhone, they called it. But then during the depression, they didn't do too well. So they sold the business, and they just got one wholesale store in the market area in Marseilles.

JR: For dairy products?

HA: Yes, dairy products, although salami and things like that too.

JR: What kind of a neighborhood is it that you grew up in?

HA: Well, I grew up in a very nice neighborhood somehow. Right now it's considered the best neighborhood in Marseilles. It's the eighth district.

JR: Eighth district.

HA: The eighth district, yes. It's the best in Marseilles. It's sky high [*i.e., expensive*]. But my family sold that area. We had a real big area there. It's actually a little out of town, and yet it's right in town.

JR: Yeah, it's right on the edge.

HA: Yeah, on the edge, but it's in town. It was really nice. We had a lot of greens, you know. We had a villa. That's not an apartment. We lived in a villa.

JR: Describe that for me. What is a villa like?

HA: A villa is like---this we'd call a villa, what we have here.

JR: Oh, like a single-family . . .

HA: Single-family home, with a yard. And of course, every home in France is all fenced up. We have wrought iron fence and gate and all that. It was really nice. I went to see. I always go back and look at it when I go back home.

JR: Is it still standing?

HA: Yes, the home is still there. Of course, people bought it. We had an empty lot next to it, so

they bought the whole thing and they built a swimming pool and a tennis court and everything. It's very nice. But what surprised me a lot is the street. I always thought that was a wide avenue. But to me now, it's so small, it's so tiny. And I said, "Wow, I can't believe it." We had a castle behind our house, beautiful property. Of course, they built a big condo now, unfortunately. So I was really fortunate I got brought up in a very nice neighborhood, nice area. And of course, I went to a private school. But we walked. You don't get a ride from nobody, you walk. (Chuckles) Not too many people have a car. We had a (few) cars [on the streets].

JR: You didn't give it a second thought.

HA: No, no second thought.

JR: How far was it?

HA: I don't know. (It was about three-quarters of a mile.)

JR: Did it take a while to get there?

HA: It would take about half an hour. It's not that bad. But then you had to go back and forth four times a day, you know. Because you don't eat in school, you go home for lunch and you go back to school at two o'clock. You get through maybe twelve or something, and you go home to have lunch, and then you go back again. Then sometimes you stay for study hour, so you get home sometimes maybe six o'clock. We have long study time in France, although you stop for about two hours at lunchtime. But they have different ways now. Of course, quite a few children [*still*] go home for lunch. But they don't stay as long as we used to stay. I think 2:30 or 3:00, they're out [of class] already.

JR: Like here.

HA: Yeah, something like here. But we stayed long. I remember, I used to go home at six o'clock many times. And wintertime, wasn't too funny. (Chuckles) It was cold, you know.

JR: Did you have time, though, to play with your friends?

HA: Yes, I did. Next to where we lived, they had a private football field that used to belong to a bank company, a very big bank. And they had their own football field, and they play against the banks and some kind of administrations.

JR: That's what they would call soccer here.

HA: Yes, exactly that. We call it football. And that football field, I used to love it, because I used to run all the time. And had a big swimming pool, I used to go swimming. I loved to play with dolls, but still yet, I loved to move around. I just had to run and run around the field. And I remember I used to beat all the boys, because I was very active. I had it very nice, I think, until the war started, of course. I was thirteen years old when the war started, so then things changed. And that's when you want to really become a teenager, and you want to do things, you know. And I couldn't do it. We were very restricted.

JR: Maybe you could explain more. How were you were restricted?

HA: What happened is that, just when I was planning to continue my education, my grandmother

became ill. And they advised all the people that lives in the city, if they have a home in the country, to please go as much as possible. Maybe the man of the house had to stay back, because he has to go to work. At the time, not too many woman was working, only the husband. The wife is housewife, you know. We had a home in the country. I call it a hunting home. They used to love to go hunting, my family. So we moved to the country for several months, but then we moved back in town. We left my grandmother with friends, because she was very nervous in town. She just couldn't take all these siren and alert all the time, bombardments and things. We were very much affected once. In twenty minutes time, I think we had about 7,000 people died. The American made a mistake. They bomb us, every district of Marseilles. It was really bad. And I was in town at that time.

JR: They thought the Germans were there or something?

HA: I don't know what happened. We never really know the reason why it happened. But I was very, very sad. Now, let me see. Oh yes, the German was in town. That's right, they were in town. Of course, yes. We couldn't walk around at night. We have to be home before dark. Of course, nobody want a young girl to walk around in town during this time. That's dangerous, you know. And we have to camouflage the window, put dark paper on the window, because it wasn't allowed to see any light from the outside.

JR: Blackout.

HA: Blackout, that's right. And food, we didn't have much. Even if you could afford to buy, you couldn't buy it. There was no food. It was very hard, very hard.

JR: So that started around thirteen years old for you?

HA: I was thirteen. It was in 1939. In fact, I just made thirteen when the war started, just around there I think. September 3, [1926], I was born, so I think was something around there. We had a really---well, we shouldn't complain, because people in the north had much more. It was really bad. But we still had a pretty bad time too. Not as bad as the people on the Atlantic Coast, like Normandy, but still. And business was open, but there was nothing to sell. But we have to leave it open. So maybe once a week or twice a week, there's something that people would come in. The retail could come and get it from our store. And then you have coupon. You know, you're limited. Was pretty bad. We didn't have no candy for a long time or sweets, so right after the war ended you want just sweets. (Laughs) So happy to eat a little better food. But it took a while. Then when the American came in, we had to stay in the (cellar) for about one week during the bombardment.

JR: So exactly what happened? The Germans were . . .

HA: Were there already. They were occupying that city. And the American were coming in. You see, what they did, the government inspect the home and they [*determine*] the best place to be safe. You know, like our house, we had a very strong basement. They thought that was the safest place, so we have to let the neighborhood people come to stay with us.

JR: Like a bomb shelter.

HA: Bomb shelter. It wasn't really a bomb shelter, but this was okay. We had a very strong—you know, that's where we used to store all the cheese. We even had an elevator, to bring up and down.

JR: This was in the home?

HA: Well, it was in the bottom. Because when they built the houses, they had the business already. They built it accordingly, so they could use the. . . . It was a real big basement. I think the top was a garage, and you could [fit] about six cars in there. So you can imagine, it was real big.

JR: Were the people in your area. . . . I think the term they used—were they all part of the resistance, so to speak, or were some people going one way, some going the other?

HA: Well, we had, but not in our neighborhood somehow. But what happened is that the castle in the back of our home was occupied by the German. Actually, the ocean was not too far from where I live. The American was shooting from the ocean, and they tried to hit this castle. We was on the bottom—it's kind of like a valley, you know. Off and on, we tried to come out to get some water, because it was summertime. You just couldn't go out of the shelter to get some water, because as soon as you come out you could hear the bullet, you know, over your head.

JR: This is that week that you were told to stay under?

HA: Yes, that's right. It was a good thing, in a way, that we had a supply of canned goods and a few things. I was really lucky. At least we could eat. But for us, we were young. We feel that's fun, you know, in a way. But for older people, it was very scary.

JR: Did you have any contact with the Germans at all—I mean, personally—or where they just some people that were in the castle and you saw them?

HA: No, they really didn't bother us that much, (except for one incident involving my father. In addition to the dairy business, my family owned a service station with a very large garage. During the war, the Germans took over a portion of the garage. One day my father was doing the accounting for this garage, and a customer walked in. The man's family was in Africa, and he wanted to contact them. "I'm concerned. If you know anyone with a shortwave, please let me know.")

(The Germans in the other part of the garage must have heard the conversation, because the next day the gestapo came and took away my father. They interrogated him about the shortwave, asking him who had it and where it was. He kept trying to tell them that he didn't know, but they persisted. They later searched him and took all of his belongings. When they opened his wallet, they found a picture of Beethoven. "Why do you have this photo of Beethoven?")

("Because I'm a music lover.")

(One of the Germans was a music lover also. He said, "Anyone who is so in love with our music can't be a traitor." Then they shook his hand and let him go. When my father came back, everyone was stunned. Once the gestapo comes for you, you never come back. They couldn't believe that my father came back.)

They [*i.e.*, *the Germans*] used to have a lot of traffic in the street where we lived. They have to go up the castle, so the traffic was pretty heavy. I was told by my parents, "I don't want you, as much as possible, on the street. Only when you have to." So I was pretty careful. And the bad thing is that when people leave their home, you have those people, they go and steal things.

JR: Oh, looters.

HA: Looters, yeah, that's what they call it. That was bad. A neighbor, I think, they came in during the night and they took things. It was pretty bad. Anyway, the town was very much affected by all that.

JR: How much were you able to keep abreast of what was happening in the war? You know, like the Americans are advancing, the Allied forces are advancing?

HA: Well, I don't think we were much aware of it. I guess my dad was trying to find out. We thought it would be just about finished after so many days, so I think he came out and through the radio [*heard*] something. But they wasn't saying too much at the beginning, because they couldn't, right? It lasted about a week, I think. Well, like I say, so many people in this world. I mean, [*other parts of*] Europe really had much, much more problems than what we had. But we felt the war, a little at least.

JR: Was there a day then when the forces arrived and they marched through the street?

HA: Oh yes, after that. It was big celebration, of course.

JR: Tell me about that.

HA: Well, I can't remember very much. I know there was American trucks and jeeps and all that parading in the main street of Marseilles, and everybody was shouting and dancing. Of course, everybody was pretty happy, you know. But I cannot remember that much about it. Of course, every city or town that they liberated from the German, they all were so happy.

JR: Do you remember your first contact with American soldiers?

HA: Well, I wasn't in very much contact with Americans. My father was, because he helped them. When they came in, they needed people that spoke English. He helped them—you know, interpreter.

JR: He knew how to speak English?

HA: Oh yes, he spoke English.

JR: Do you know how he learned?

HA: Oh yes, he went to college. He was a pretty well-educated man. And he liked language, and English especially. He was always reading English books. So when they came in, everyone who could speak English, they needed people like that. He helped, and that's where he met my husband. Actually, after he came over to visit, I think that's the first contact with American. Because my parents were very strict about German or American. They didn't want me to go out that much. I wasn't going out that much during the war, and right after the war, not that much.

JR: Tell me exactly how you met your husband [*Alfred Arakaki*].

HA: Oh, okay. My father came home one day, and he says, "Oh, I met a very nice gentleman. He's so quiet and very gentle. He's a gentleman. But he come from very far place."

“Oh yeah, where did he come from?”

He said, “Oh, he came from Hawai`i.” But I knew about Sandwich Island. I learned it in school. I knew where it was. Oh, but I didn't pay very much attention, you know. And after that, maybe a month later or so—I remember, because I was in the living room and I just happened to be looking through the window—I see him coming with (a soldier). And I thought, oh, he looks different, the gentleman. And he came in, and I couldn't say a word to him, right?

JR: Because you didn't speak English.

HA: I didn't speak English. And he stayed little while, and he left. Then about month later, I think, something like that—normally, especially during the war and after the war, and even now, people don't visit people at night too much. They do it mostly lunchtime. If you going to invite someone, it's mostly going to be lunch, not dinner. So right after the war, no one would visit at night. Then the bell rings, so my father went to open the door. And it was (the soldier), and he says that he wanted to ask my father if he could take me to the Sergeant's Club, because he just became sergeant. He has one more stripe. He said, “I wonder if I can take your daughter to the Sergeant's Club to celebrate.” And well, my father told my grandparents.

“No, no, no. You're not going to let your daughter go out with an American. She can't go out at night, especially.” They said, “No.”

But my father said, “He's a very nice boy, and he's so lonesome. If she wants to go, why don't you let her go?”

They asked me if I wanted to go. I said, “Yeah, okay.” That's how it started. Then after that, they got really attached to my (future) husband. They liked him very, very much.

JR: Did you know any English, or did he know any French?

HA: Well, we couldn't. . . . A few words, you know. We didn't really talk. It was really funny, because we didn't talk. (Chuckles) I didn't speak any English. Whatever he says, I would answer in French. And I don't know, somehow I can explain. But I guess we got to understand each other. But it's hard for me. I cannot say. I don't know how. It's just impossible for. . . . And the times go by, and little by little we got to be able to communicate. And I didn't really know English, but I guess a few words I picked up here and there.

JR: He was basically the first American you ever came in contact with.

HA: That's the first American I came in contact with. Then, of course, when he came over my father was always with us, so we could communicate a little.

JR: He could interpret for you.

HA: Yeah, interpret. They was really good buddy. They really was good friend.

JR: Had you met any people of Asian ancestry before?

HA: No, never. But I saw a lot of Indo-Chinese, you know, Vietnamese. And being that Marseilles is the biggest commercial port in France, we have a lot of traffic there. Like I said, a lot of

ships would come in from all over the Orient, because Marseilles was a very important port. And so you get to see a lot of—from Africa, from Madagascar, from all the Orient, people from the Orient. I had seen many Chinese, just I didn't know they were Chinese or Japanese. I didn't know the difference. And lots of Vietnamese. They called it Vietnamese, we used to call them Indo-Chinois at the time. Marseilles was known to be a kind of rough town, being that they had so much different people. Any city that has a big commercial port is considered pretty, you know—same thing like here [i.e., Honolulu]. Not now, but I guess in the old days it was.

JR: Were any of your girlfriends dating American soldiers?

HA: No, no, no one. I met some French girl, through my husband, his war buddy, friends. *Haole* boy married to a French girl. I met about two or three, I think.

JR: In France?

HA: Yes, mm hmm. But we didn't really associate. We just met. In fact, they came to our wedding, we invited them. But no one that I knew, nobody.

JR: Obviously, things progressed, right?

HA: My husband used to come over maybe once a week on his day off, and we used to go out. Not too often, of course. And we knew each other for, let's see, over a year, I think. And well, he asked me to marry him. But it was very difficult for me to tell my parents. It was really hard for me to tell them that. But when they find out, they wasn't happy. Not because of him, because of the fact that I would leave home. But my aunt, my father's sister that brought me up, she begged me to stay back home. She would let me have an apartment above the store that we had in town, and she would furnish and do everything for me. "But don't leave home." She didn't want me to go.

But my grandmother was more sensible in a sense, because she told me that she understand that my husband's mother, "She must be very anxious to see her son after he went through the war, and it's a natural feeling for a mother. When your son is at war, every minute you have a lot of worry. And well, the war is over, and I think that it's not fair for you to keep him back here."

He had an offer to work for the American embassy in Marseilles. I don't know how it happened, but he had an offer. And he said, "If your parents really don't want us to go home, if they don't want you to go to Hawai`i, well, I'll take the job and I'll stay in Marseilles." But in a way, he should have done that. Because afterwards, a year or two later, we could have come (to Hawai`i) together. But he wanted to go home. I feel that he really wanted to go home.

My [grand]mother said, "Well, why don't you just let him go home and follow him." Because I know we couldn't go together. I have to go separate.

JR: Why is that?

HA: Well, at the time, you don't go with your husband. There's no way you could do that. I don't know why. So she says, "You go and visit, meet the family. At least they get to know you and you get to know them, and the mother would see her son." Which I think is very important. I would want to see my son after he go through the war for two years away from home. And you waiting impatiently to see your son. So that's what we did. And she said, "You have to promise to come back home as soon as you can."

I said, "Okay." But unfortunately, I wasn't able to go back, and she passed away before I was able to go back and visit. I feel really, really sad about that. So I told my husband, "Well then, since we couldn't have my grandmother meet our little boy, let's have another one, so as soon as he's old enough I can take him home and then he can see my grandfather and see the family." That's exactly what I did. When my youngest son was fourteen months old, I left with—he wasn't quite four years old, the older one. And I went back to France. My husband couldn't go. And I stayed there the whole summer.

I was really sad, because my grandmother did so much for me. And she was nice enough to tell me, "Okay, go ahead and go." And she passed away in 1947, December, a year and a half after I left.

JR: You went back in '50?

HA: And I went back in '50.

JR: Tell me about the wedding.

HA: Oh, the wedding. That was something. You see, in France, weddings are—now maybe it's different, but at the time, there's going to be a very nice meal, with beautiful crystal and whatever. But just for the family. Then afternoon, you have the reception for the friends. You have little cakes and drinks, and then you have a little dancing. It's very different. It was funny, because I got married in the French city hall, and then I have to go and get married in the military base, where the chaplain wasn't a Catholic. I'm a Catholic. I didn't marry Catholic church. But even then, you must go to the city hall to get married, then you go to the church. Even now, they still do that. Because when I was in France last year, my brother's daughter got married. We went to the city hall where I got married, the same one. That really brings back so many. . . . And by the way, it's a beautiful building. All the time I go back, I take a picture of the city hall. I don't know why. Anyway, then we went to the city hall, got married, so I have my French marriage certificate. Then we got married through the American—you know, a little chapel in the base. And then after that, of course, we went home. And we had a very nice lunch. My auntie, she did set the table very nicely, very beautiful. Then after that, we went down to the business. We had a big space, a big courtyard like. Then we had cakes and things and drink, and we danced. Then after that—of course, that night we didn't leave to go to honeymoon. That American GI that got married to a French girl, we stayed at their home. Then the next day, we left. He had a car—a jeep rather. They let him have a jeep. Then there was something that I can never forget all my life. We went to the Riviera and [stayed] at that beautiful hotel, the Negresco, a landmark on the Riviera. The American [forces had occupied] that for a rest area for the GIs.

JR: During the---I mean, after the war.

HA: Right after the war. We were allowed to go there. They let us have a room, and it was just beautiful. Right now, you should see that hotel. I didn't go this time, but many times I have (gone) back. In fact, my girlfriend got a room one night for us. She didn't tell us, she made a surprise. And this is a very, very old hotel, but it's just very beautiful. It's very, very beautiful. It's a landmark on the Riviera. It's in Nice, the Negresco Hotel. We were there two weeks. But we never had one meal in the hotel. We always ate (French) food. We used to go all over the Riviera and up the Alp. I used to love to go this little town, this little seaport, Ville Franche. And they used to bring the fish every morning, and I used to love sardine, fresh sardine. I don't

know why, I just wanted to eat that. They bring it in, and they cook it right there for you. Oh, that was just delicious. We used to go out and eat all the French food. We had a real nice time.

Then one week later, we went up to the Alp Maritime they call it. My grandparents have a very big property there. My father came to their home, and we meet him there, pick him up, and took him with us (back to the Negresco Hotel). So we hide him. We used to go through side door. And you know, they had a lot of GI cots in the closet, because sometime they had more than several boys in the room. We opened the GI cot, and he stayed with us for one week. When I say that to people, they laugh. They say, "What?" That was a really unforgettable time.

JR: You being a French woman, and you're married to an American of Japanese ancestry, that must have not been a very common sight on the streets back then.

HA: Not that common. But I don't really recall having problem with the French citizen, the people. Nobody ever. . . . Some people say they feel that they didn't want to serve them, or they didn't want to do something, they wasn't very polite. But I didn't have that problem. I can say even all the time I went back, I don't ever have this kind of problem. I always was treated real nice. In fact, people were nicer than I expected them to be. I don't know why. Somehow, it didn't happen to me. I think maybe I was just lucky or fortunate. It just happened to be the right people or the right time.

But one thing I remember now. In our country home, we had a neighbor. And during the bombardment—you know, when the American bombed my own town, Marseilles—well, it happened that they happened to bomb our neighbor's home, and the father (got killed). And these people, they wouldn't even look at me. They was just very hurt, you know.

JR: Because your husband was American.

HA: Yes, because I was married to American. And the father died because of the American, right? They were very hurt inside. Well, I don't blame them. That's the only thing I can remember. Yeah, they wouldn't talk to my family. They just wouldn't talk to us. But everybody else was very nice. No problem, even till today.

JR: I'm wondering what your husband told you back then about Hawai`i.

HA: Oh yes, this is something too. He told me that he has a farm. His father raises pigs [*in Kalihi Valley*]. And well, he says, "We don't have chairs. We don't have a table like this at my house." But I didn't believe him. I couldn't believe that. Because I didn't know too much about these Japanese customs. I didn't know hardly anything, right? I know they eat with chopstick, that I know. But I didn't know very, very much. I didn't know nothing, in fact, I would say. So he keep saying that he don't have chairs and he don't have table, and I don't believe that. He just joking us. I mean, I can't believe it. But when I came here, I was shocked. But what shocked me the most, first of all, is they made a big party for me when I came here.

JR: Maybe we should back up a little just so we can get you here, and then we can start with the party.

HA: Okay, I see.

JR: He went ahead of you.

HA: Right, he went ahead of me. He left in January.

JR: That would be '46?

HA: Forty-six. Yeah, he left in January '46, and I became very ill. I was ill right after I came back from my honeymoon. I had pleurisy, and I was very sick. And when I came home (from my honeymoon), a month later I find out I was expecting. So I got worse, of course. I was very sick. I was supposed to be on the first ship that [*left*] France to go to United States with the first war brides. The first one left Le Havre, in the north of France. I don't know how many war brides they had. But I was on the second ship, and we were 500 war bride, 500.

JR: These were all French women?

HA: No. I think they---I'm not sure. But I know there was Belgian, because the girl above my bunk was a Belgian. But I don't know what else. There (were) Germans too, I think. Not only French.

JR: This was a boat full of war brides.

HA: Full of war brides. That's one thing too. When we left Le Havre, we was in Camp Phillip Morris. It was a very, very big [*military*] camp, American. And we were there for several days, waiting for the departure. And then when we left, we went on a bus. And the street was filled with French people that was yelling at us and swearing at us.

JR: What for?

HA: Because that area was very badly damaged during the war. That's where (the Allies) landed, Normandy. And they just don't like American at all at the time. If they could have grabbed us, I think they [*would*] just do something to us. We was well [*protected*], the MP [*military police*] and all that. It was dangerous, in fact, because they was really angry at us. But it was a very hard trip. I had a very. . . .

JR: The ship?

HA: Yeah. Eleven days, I think, ten or eleven days. It was terrible. Weather was so bad. I think I was one of the rare ones that was not sick.

JR: But you were pregnant at the time too.

HA: Yeah, but I did well. From January—in fact, December I started to get very sick—until February, I was very, very sick. Then I became a little stronger, so I start getting all the papers ready to come to Hawai`i. And March 28, I left Marseilles. I stayed about a week or something like that in north of France in Camp Phillip Morris, and then we had eleven days of crossing the Atlantic. I must have gotten to New York after the fifteenth of April. And I didn't get to Hawai`i until May 10. So it was a long trip.

JR: On the part with the other war brides, did you have a chance to talk to some of them and find out where they were going or make friendships?

HA: Yes, I did. I just happened to---I think it was three girls was going to Puerto Rico. And the rest, they all went home—I mean, to their husband's home, right? Because they just have to take the

train or their husbands pick them up. But the girls that were going to Puerto Rico, they had the same problem that I had. There was no transportation from New York to Puerto Rico for them, so they had to wait in a hotel in New York. I was with them for a while, which was good. But they left before I did. That's when I got—really, I just didn't want to stay by myself.

JR: In New York.

HA: I asked to pay for my own plane fare or whatever to go to Hawai`i, because I didn't want to stay by myself. Especially in my condition, you know.

JR: Had you learned any English?

HA: A few, yeah. They wrote down for me a few things. I mean, not enough, but at least a few important words. Make sure I don't go to the men's bathroom or something.

(Laughter)

HA: That was funny. But in New York, I always had somebody that spoke French from the Red Cross. There's always somebody that come in and talk to me in French and explain to me things, and I could communicate with the people.

JR: The military arranged this or something?

HA: Yes. In fact, the Red Cross lady that took care of me put me on the train in New York. But I had to change trains in Chicago, and I had another lady that was waiting for me there, another French lady that took me to change train. The gentleman that was on the bottom [*bunk in my compartment*], when I board the train [*he*] wasn't there. The Red Cross lady couldn't wait, so she told a lady [*i.e., a nearby passenger*] to have him change with me because she didn't want me to sleep on the top bunk, being that I'm expecting. Finally she left, you know, she couldn't wait any longer. When the gentleman came in the train, the lady asked him to change and he refused.

It was pretty hard. About five or six days, I think. But I managed to ask them to bring the food right here. I didn't want to go to the dining room. Everybody was looking at me like I was something that came out from I don't know where. Of course, you are different, right, because you don't dress the same and you don't speak any English hardly. I read the menu, but the only thing I could read was orange juice and poached egg. I could figure that out. I didn't know how to order food too.

JR: How did you like the food when you did get it?

HA: Well, I liked it. Because I tried to have the lady tell [*the waiter*] I want to eat, because I'm very hungry. I want to eat good, good. But she was worried, because it's expensive. I said, "Money, no problem." I would show her that I got money. "No problem, I got money." That boy, what do you call him on the train?

JR: Porter?

HA: Porter or whatever. He was kind of. . . . He looked at me. "What if I bring the food and she cannot pay?" I guess this was going through his mind. But when he brought me the first meal, I pay him. And she show me I have to give fifty cents tip, so I give him. After that, oh, I had my

meals. Three meals a day, nothing but the best. I enjoyed it. I was very hungry, because I lost so much weight.

JR: When you were sick.

HA: Yeah. And I have to eat, otherwise I would get sick again. And I was told I have to eat as much as I could. "Eat a lot. You have to be strong, have to get yourself back to energy." I need to have it.

Nobody knew I was expecting. I was so skinny, nobody knew. Even when I came here. One week before I gave birth, I was crossing the street and (my husband's) friends [*saw me*]. They couldn't believe it. "One week later, she had a baby. I didn't even know she was expecting." I was very, very thin, very sickly looking.

JR: Oh, I'm going to stop just for a sec. I have to turn the tape over.

HA: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HA: Then when I reached San Francisco, I had a beautiful welcome. A French lady, from the Red Cross also. She was the First World War war bride.

JR: From?

HA: France. I think she was from Bordeaux, not from Marseilles.

JR: This is World War I?

HA: World War I bride, so she was maybe fifty years old. A very, very nice lady, Mrs. Hall. I'd never forget her name. And she was so happy to---actually, I think they may have had other war bride that went to Frisco [*San Francisco*] before I did, but she said that I was the first war bride that she came across ever since the Second World War finished. She was very, very happy to meet me. And she was with an American officer, military, and they asked me if I had a good trip. And I said, "Yes, I did in a way. But it wasn't that good in another way, because I had a pretty bad time to go up and down, especially during the night. I must go and use the bathroom, and I was just having a hard time. I was very scared too." It was kind of scary, you know, during the night and no one around.

At the time, the train station was on the other side of the [*San Francisco*] Bay, I think, because we have to cross the bay on a ferryboat. They asked me, "Where is the gentleman who didn't want to change with you?"

I said, "He's right over there." Then when we got off the ferryboat, the American officer that came to meet me approached him. And I don't know what they did, but he took his name and all that. That was very bad, especially to do that to a foreigner. Doesn't show very much good for the American, especially military. It doesn't show courtesy or whatever you want to call it.

It's not so good. But then in San Francisco, I was treated like a queen. You know, everybody invited me. There's a lot of French over there, and they have a French club and French newspaper. They really associate with each other, the French people there. She contacted everybody, so I was invited every day. "Too bad I didn't stay here two weeks, instead of in New York." For about five days or one week—I can't remember—I was at Fort Mason in San Francisco. And they come to pick me up every day, and they used to take me out to eat and invite me their house and made a baby shower. I have to buy a suitcase to put all the baby things.

The name of the ship that I went on from San Francisco to Hawai`i was *Arcadia*. It was a liberty ship, military. It was all civil service workers on that ship.

JR: They were coming to Hawai`i . . .

HA: Coming to Hawai`i to work. So nobody had any family here to greet them or anything. I was the only one that was supposed to have the whole family there to greet me. But nobody was there.

JR: Nobody was there?

HA: Nobody was there, because that was a restricted pier, Pier 40. It's very restricted right after the war. The MP had strict orders not to let anybody in. My husband and his family was waiting outside from seven o'clock in the morning. And he showed them---because I was already in the newspaper. They knew I was coming, I guess. The [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*] and all the newspapers, even Japanese paper. I had the picture on the paper one week or more before I arrived here. And too bad I can't find it. Oh, that makes me so sad. I really have to find the scrapbook. Anyway, they knew that I was coming. And my husband showed the MP the paper, but he just [*said*] no. But I don't know how---somehow, I guess, when we arrived, the commander of the ship talked to the Frenchman. There was a Canadian on the ship, and he helped me a lot because he spoke French and he really treat me very nice. Everybody was really nice to me. And he said, "Well, don't worry, because I'm not going to leave you until your husband come and get you."

I said, "Well, I'm not getting off until he come and get me." Finally, I don't know what happened, but they knew he was waiting for me. So I went to the little shack that they had at the entrance of the Pier 40. Quonset hut it was, if I remember. I met my husband and the family there. I have pictures, you know. I think I still have the pictures somewhere.

JR: It must have been kind of startling to arrive and find that no one was there.

HA: That was really very shocking. I said, "No, I'm not getting off. If they don't come and get me, they don't want me. I'm going to go back." I was a young girl yet, you know. But I was really upset, really scared too. But everybody was there.

Then that day, we went to my husband's second brother's home. He was living on Pi`ikoi Street at the time. He had a cute little home. And they had planned to let me stay with them for a while, because they didn't want me to go to the farm [*in Kalihi Valley*]. It was very---I don't know how to say it, but not very nice. An old, old, old shack. They didn't want me to live there. But it happened that all the neighborhood—Kam[*ehameha*] IV Road—they all get together and they celebrate any kind of occasion. Like they don't go to a hotel or what to have a wedding ceremony, they would do it right there, right next to the pig farm. You know, they put

up tent. There's no paved road. They just put the tent and make a table with whatever wood they can find, and there you go. So they had a big party. My husband told me, "Oh, we having the family get-together, but if you don't want to go, you don't have to go. You might be very tired, so you don't have to go if you don't want."

And I said, "No, you have to go." With the little English I knew, "No, we have to go. If they're making the family get-together for me, I have to go and meet everybody." But he didn't want me to go, because he didn't want me to see the area. It was, you know. . . . But I insisted, "No, we have to go. It's not nice not to go." So I went. I was shocked when I arrived there. There must have been 300 people. I couldn't believe it. And I didn't want to get out of the car. And all the kids, they was all around the car. I don't know which car he had, I don't really know. I think maybe the father had a car, I don't know.

But the thing that I mean to tell you—my husband and my son told me, "Did you mention that [i.e., the following story] to Joe?"

When I arrived at the pier, of course the family was there. Then I went in the car, and I was sitting in the middle of my husband and somebody [who] was driving. I looked at my husband. I said, "Chauffeur?"

He said, "No chauffeur."

And you know what I thought, I thought it was a Colored boy driving the car. But that was his brother!

(Laughter)

HA: But he was dark, because he work outside, do lot of sports. He was real dark, and I don't know the difference. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Colored—to me they all look the same. Oh, it was so funny, because I said, "Chauffeur?"

"No chauffeur." And he couldn't tell me, "*Mon frère*."

"*Frère!* Oh."

(Laughter)

HA: Anyway, I went to this party. They had a big bouquet of flowers that they made their own, with the ginger and all that. And I sit there, and I look. The food, nothing I knew. Nothing that resembles something that I ate all my life. (JR laughs.) Nothing, you know. *Sushi*, I don't know anything about that. I keep looking. The only thing I recognize, they had boiled egg. They call it Japanese *morimono* plate, and they have cut orange and *kamaboko* and they have boiled egg cut with fancy cut. And that's the only thing I recognize, so then I eat that. That's the only thing I eat. Then I told my husband that I have to go to the bathroom. So we get out of this long, long, long, long table. And you have to watch where you walk, because there's nothing but pebble and rocks and all that. Then I went by the main door to go in the house, and I see all those shoes. I was confused. I said, "Well, I thought your father raise pig, but I guess he's a shoe repair man."

(Laughter)

HA: I tell you, you never believe it, but that's the truth. I worked for Kuakini [*Hospital*] for fifteen years, and I've met a lot doctors. And I happened to be real good friends with this anesthesiologist, Doctor Ichiriu. And one day we were talking, and I told him that. And do you know that man, every time when I see him, he say, "How's the shoe repair man?"

(Laughter)

HA: He keep telling me that. He could never forget that. And every time he see me, he mentions that and he laughs. Always, I mean, years and years. Since 1963 I know that doctor. And in fact, when I went to Queen's [Medical Center] in 1980 to have a hysterectomy, he happened to be the anesthesiologist for the lady that was next to me. When he saw me, he was so happy. And he came to talk to me. Again, talk about the shoe repair. He keep talking about that.

But I didn't want to take my shoes off. That's something I didn't want to do. I don't know why. That's not. . . . What kind of style is that? You walk in, take your shoes off, you walk barefooted! No, this is not my. . . . I can't, I don't, I won't. After a while, (my husband) says, "Oh, I want to take you to my friend's house. I want you to meet this friend of mine. He's a real good friend of mine."

First thing I say is, "Do I have to take my shoes off when I go there?"

He say, "Yes, but that's okay if you don't want, they understand." Because I'm not going to take my shoes off.

JR: So you didn't?

HA: I didn't. But after a while. . . . And I know my father, when he came to Hawai'i, he thought that was best thing you could do is take your shoes off. That's the most sanitary. It was really good, he said. From the very first day, he thought that was a very good custom. And *sashimi*, same thing. When I saw raw fish, I told my husband, "This is not civilized. (JR laughs.) If I have to eat that, let me know, because I'm going home right now." And that's true. That was something terrible for me, to look at the raw fish. I thought that was really uncivilized. I said, "Barbarian people do that. Civilized people don't eat like that." I just couldn't. I didn't want to even look at the raw fish. But after two, three months, I love it, and I eat more than anybody else. It took me a while. My father eat it on the first day. The first day he arrived, we went to a wedding three days later, and my father eat everything that was out. There was all Japanese food. Sit on the floor like nothing. I took a while to be able to do all that. (Chuckles) But that raw fish, I just couldn't stand the sight of it. It was so terrible. But after I start eating. . . .

And I had such nice in-laws, you know. They never, never, never force, or they never have any, "You have to try." They was really nice. They said, "You want to eat, you eat. You don't want it, don't eat." And because of that, I think, little by little I tried, I tried. And I like everything, except *takuan* took me a while, and tofu. I didn't like it for a long time. Now I eat tofu every day.

JR: It's good for you.

HA: It's very good. My granddaughter, all my kids, they love tofu. My children eat anything. French food--I love to make a nice meal once in a while. Then we make nice table, candle, and whatever I have. You know, it's not the best, but nice crystal glass and we have nice wine. We make nice. But has to be not more than maybe ten at the most, because you can't sit at the

table, and it's not going to be—it's very difficult.

JR: Your father[-*in-law*] and mother-in-law, did they speak English?

HA: Pidgin English. When I first started to really be able to put a few words together, it was very pidgin English. Of course, I still don't speak good English till now. At the time, I would go to the store, "Me don't like this." You know, I speak like my mother-in-law. I didn't know. Well, I was with her all day long. Because after two months, I moved to the farm. It was kind of hard.

JR: That was a home or . . .

HA: That was home, because my husband was helping the father with the farm. That was his work, so we moved with them.

JR: So you lived with your in-laws?

HA: Yes, I lived with my in-laws. From May till August, I think, I stayed Pi`ikoi Street with my husband's brother. Then after my oldest son was a little over a month, then I moved to the farm. So I stayed with them. I didn't have any problems, but the living condition was very difficult for me. But I think that when you're very young, you do it much easier. But when you get certain age, it's very hard. But I was very young. I mean, that's my life. Either I do it or I just go back home. There's no other way to look at it, right? Either I go back home or I learn how to live the way they live, so I did.

JR: Was the feeling to go home strong?

HA: No.

JR: No?

HA: Never. And I never. . . . That's one thing that—I mean, I don't want to really say things to brag about myself. But my grandfather was always amazed, because he said, "She never complained about anything. And I'm sure that being that it's a totally different race, first, and entirely different way of living. . . ." Totally different. I mean, it's worse than night and day. You know what I mean? It's totally different. "And I've never read one letter that she's mentioned one little thing that she didn't like."

I never did, because if I did—my grandmother was the very worried type and not healthy. She was sickly, and I don't want her to worry about me. There were a few things that many a time I would [*want to*] write and tell them, but I said, "It's not going to do any good. They're just going to worry, and I'm not going to go back. I'm going to stick around and try to get used to the life here and do the best I know how. It's no use of telling them." If I had explained the way I lived, they wouldn't have been happy at all. They would have sent me the money to come back home right away.

The living condition wasn't—but they were so nice to me. My mother[-*in-law*] and my father[-*in-law*] were so nice to me. But the house was really bad. To go out and take a bath was, oh, unreal. You don't believe it. The wood's all rotten and full of termite. And that corrugated. . . .

JR: Corrugated steel?

HA: Corrugated steel. All rust, you know, can see holes all over. You go in there, and it's just a latch. And you have this old washtub, and you put water in. And to get hot water, you have to burn the fire outside, so the water would come in the *furo*, they called it. *Furo*, right? But that's not a *furo* like the *furo* that you see all over. It's not that at all. And I'll never forget, because I didn't want to go and take a bath late. I was very scared. Because there was just those pieces of old wood, all rotten and everything, and you could see right through. Oh, was so spooky. And if you go late, you have to turn on the light. And when you try to find the light, you get spider web and you get electrocuted every time. (JR laughs.) Wow, that was terrible. And then you turn the light on, in the old tub you find a dead centipede. Oh no, it was in terrible condition, bad.

Five hundred pigs next to your house, so you can imagine the smell and everything. And they cook the pig slop every day. What do you call that? It's a big container, and they burn sawdust to boil the feed that they going to give the pig. That was very big, almost as big as this [*dining room*] table, and very deep. And off and on I have to help. When they doing something, I have to go and put wood inside to keep the fire burning so that the food would boil. And the smell, oh. And they had a big field in front of them, was this california grass—they call it *honohono* grass—and they have to cut it every day. Oh, I just couldn't stand the smell. The pig smell didn't bother me as much as this thing. Oh, that was bad, a terrible smell.

JR: How long did you have to stay on that farm?

HA: Okay, '46 until—about maybe two years or something. Then we moved to Kalihi War Home. That was where they have now Mayor Wright [*Homes*] on School Street. Is that Mayor Wright? They have those little cottages for veterans, so we moved there. Well, my husband thought it would be more comfortable for me. Because it was very, very uncomfortable. But I didn't complain, though. I just went along with it. But he knew that I was. . . . So we moved to Kalihi War Home, but moved back again afterwards. Then we stayed at the house until 1950. Then I went to France, so we moved out. And when I came back, we rented a house on Dillingham [*Boulevard*]. Then my father came. Then we couldn't get back the housing already. There was a long waiting list.

JR: The war housing?

HA: War housing. So what we did, we decided, let's buy a place. We bought a property here, the land. In 1950 we bought, right after I came back, and 1951 we moved in here, June. But what happened is that, he was working for Pearl Harbor at the time and still helping the father, but what he wanted to do was do some part-time job. Because we didn't have anything. We couldn't afford any furniture or anything. This house was empty. He wanted to work part-time, but the father keep calling every day. You know, it's right down the next hill, see, Kam[*ehameha*] IV Road. You know Likelike [*Highway*]?

JR: Yeah.

HA: It's right there. And he keep calling every day. He needs help, he needs help. So (my husband) keeps going back and help after he get through work. Or sometimes he work swing shift, and he have to go in the morning. All the time. We couldn't afford to buy anything. So instead of keep living that way, we thought that better that we move in with them (and rent out our new home to save money). We knew they couldn't stay too long, because they going to build the

Likelike Highway. We knew they all have to move. Every one of them have to move out, all the farmers. We knew [it would be] only a few years, so we moved back with them. And they had a little shack in the back. We fixed it up a little bit. And we stayed in the back, the bedroom, and we go in the front to cook. My father stayed there too.

JR: Oh, when he was over here.

HA: Yeah, he was kind of. . . . My father came here in '50. We stayed here only about one-and-a-half [*years*] or so, then we moved with them. Then after that, well, they all moved to the country. They went to Wai`anae.

JR: And then you came to . . .

HA: No, then we bought a home on Damon Tract. Damon Tract is where they have all this—in front of the airport, where they had the old airport before. And so we bought a home. We figure we going make a little money to be able to later on come back here and make it furnished and everything. We bought a little house for \$2,000. I never forget that.

JR: Oh, on Damon Tract?

HA: Damon Tract. And we fixed it up. We had a big yard. It was real good for the kids. Had a big monkey pod tree, and the kids had a real nice time. And I had a little vegetable garden, and I raised little chickens. I loved it. It was nice. I was housewife, you know. I never go to work. In fact, I didn't go to work for eighteen years. I was home, because had four boys. And then I had to take care of my nephew. And my mother-in-law and father-in-law, they come in town from Wai`anae, they stay with me. All the time, even in Damon Tract. We never had that much room, was small, but they sleep on the *futon* on the floor in the parlor. We got along real well. I think that's the most important. That's the reason why I didn't want to say anything, because they treat me so nice. Even when I went back [to France] in 1950, they asked me, and I explained, but I didn't want to say too much. They would feel very sad. But I wasn't feeling sad. I was happy.

JR: Did your father know how you were feeling?

HA: No. When he came here, he saw with his own two eyes. He was very easygoing, my father, very, very easygoing. And he was very much close to my father[*-in-law*] and mother-in-law too. He was a really, really good friend. They couldn't really talk a lot, but they could communicate enough. They used to think the world of my father. The whole Arakaki family, every one of them think the world of my father. When he got sick, they all were so. . . . They said, "You don't have anybody. You're alone, so we going to stand by you and do everything. Whatever help you need, we just going to do anything. Don't worry. We going to stand by you." They were there all the time, really nice. So my father loved everybody very much.

JR: What was your father's name?

HA: Dominique Casanovas.

(Taping interrupted.)

JR: I wanted to ask you another question about the Kalihi War Home.

HA: Mm hmm [yes].

JR: Maybe you could describe that a little bit better for me. I haven't heard of that before.

HA: Okay. It was just one-story building, just one. Four homes in one building, (about fifty buildings in all). And it's located on the same area as Mayor Wright [*Homes*]. It's right there. And they used to call it Kalihi War Home.

JR: And your neighbors were other families?

HA: I guess they were something. . . . Yeah, someone was in the military. Someone has to be related to the military to be able to have this home. And you have to wait in line to have a home. It took a while to be able to have one bedroom. Then after that, we moved to a two bedroom when we had my second son. And then we moved, and I went back to (France). It was pretty nice. It was a very nice area, nicer than now. Yeah, it was.

JR: Did you have any contact with other war brides?

HA: Yes, I did. I met in '48 or '47 a French girl from Paris that was married to a (local boy). And I met her, and we became good friends. In fact, when she came she was not married. She got married here, and I was the witness for her wedding. I still have a picture of her wedding in fact. And we was good friends for a quite a long time. And she was my son's godmother, my oldest son. And she was living in Manoa War Home. In Manoa, they have the same type of housing. We used to see each other all the time and get together all the time. She had a daughter that was about six months younger than my older son. But after that they moved to Philadelphia, and I never did see her ever again. For a while we corresponded. I think the last I heard—that was quite long ago—she was in California.

Well, the same time that I knew that French lady, I met two Italian girls. One was married to Arakawa and the other was married to Miyamoto. Miyamoto passed away, she died. And the other one, she divorced and she's married to someone on the Mainland. But after that I lost contact.

(My son) Mark was born in '58, so in '59 I met a French girl from Marseilles, and she's still my dearest friend till today. We're so close that when I went to Marseilles, she called me once a month. She was so lost, she said. And her mother came to Hawai`i in '62, I think, and she became the cook for these people, Island kamaaina people, Richard Cooke family. She worked for these people for twenty years or something.

JR: Her mother did.

HA: Her mother. And she lived there in Makiki Heights. And I worked for them for two years, too, and I very, very much enjoyed that kind of work. These people were really nice. Then I got an offer to work for the state. I didn't want to leave this lady, the work was so pleasant. But they said, "No, no, no, you have to take the state job. It's better for you."

So, "Okay." And I don't regret it. I think I did the right thing.

JR: That was the job at Washington Place?

HA: Yes. And I really have a lot of good memories of Washington Place.

JR: So your employment career started at Kuakini [*Hospital*]?

HA: That's right. What happened is that I didn't work until my Mark—I didn't want to leave the children at home. And at the time, you have to pay for somebody to take care. You making so little, it's no use. I didn't work until he went to kindergarten. When he enter kindergarten—my sister-in-law was a nurse at Kuakini. She said, “You should go and work a little. It's good for you to mingle with people, to meet people. You've been home so long, I think that's enough.”

I said, “Oh, I don't want to work. I love to stay home.”

“No, I think you should. Let's go.” And we go see this dietary department. Mrs. Toyama was going to the camera club, and she kind of know my father [*who was also a member*]. So we go meet Mrs. Toyama, because she knows—we call him Pepe, you know, my father.

We went down. And we went first to the personnel office, and the personnel director said, “No, we have no opening. There's no opening.”

So we said, “Let's anyway go see Mrs. Toyama,” the dietician, the head dietician. As soon as I walked in there, she was so happy to see me and everything. And (my sister-in-law) said, “Oh, can you get her a little job, something so she can meet people. That's good for her.”

“Oh sure, I can get you a job. What hours can you work?”

“No, no,” I said. “I can't. I want to be home when my children home. I can't work when they're home. I have to be home.”

She said, “What kind of hours can you spare during the day?”

I said, “My son goes to Ma`ema`e School, so I have to drop him off first. But I have to be at Ma`ema`e School when school is over. I must go home with him.”

“Okay, fine. Nine to two.”

I said, “Okay.” So she let me go about ten to two, quarter to two, so I can pick him up and come home. For one year I did that. And then after that, she wanted me to work for her. I said, “No, I'm not coming back. Summertime, I'm quitting. I'm going to be home. I've got to take care of the kids.”

“No, no, no. I want you to come back.”

I said, “No, I won't. I can't come back.”

“Okay. Then what I do, I'm going to put a part-timer during the summer. And then September, you call me. Please make an effort. I want you back.”

I said, “Well, okay.” I don't promise, but to myself I said, “No, I'm never going back work. I don't want.”

But in August, she called me. “Now he's going to be in first grade, and you have more time.”

I said, “Okay, okay.” So I went back, and then I stayed there fifteen years.

JR: What kind of work were you doing?

HA: I was dietician aide. I was doing all kinds of things, but my main job was I used to take care all the doctor's meeting. You know, like they have a lunch or something, they prepare the food and I serve. Then I used to be in charge of the coffee shop. I used to be in charge of the inventory, order the food, whatever we need, do the cash, all the paperwork. It was a pretty good job. But then after a while they were shorthanded all the time, and they ask me to go in the kitchen and work. And it's not my line of work, to carry heavy things, trays and stuff like that. I wasn't trained for that. And I was getting very tired, and I couldn't handle that. I go in the morning to work to do my own job, and they just tell me, “Paulette, we are shorthanded. Please come and do this.”

And it was going on and on and on, so I said, “No, I can't be doing that. I just don't want to do that kind of job. It's not in me. I don't like it, and I getting very frustrated and tired. I can't take it.” Then I got an offer from Mrs. Cooke. I said, “Well, I'm going.” So I went.

I used to know a lot of doctors and the administrator of Kuakini Hospital, Mr. Tasaka. And we used to be on very good terms. He used to like me very much. And I remember then afterwards when I was in Washington Place, he came for something to do with the Commission on Aging, you know, for these old people. And he was like a member of this group, I guess. I don't know. And they had a reception at Washington Place one day. And that day, I wasn't working. And he went to Mrs. [Jean] Ariyoshi and he told her, “You took my best girl.” (Chuckles)

“What? What did you say, Mr. Tasaka?”

“You took my best girl.”

They wanted me to go back, but I said, “No, I don't want anymore. If I do only what I supposed to do, I come back. But if you going to push me there and there, I don't want.” But anyway, I was already with Mrs. Cooke, and after that, Washington Place, and I think I did good there.

JR: Now, what was your job at Washington Place?

HA: Well, Washington Place was something like what I was doing at Kuakini, but of course, you don't have a coffee shop. You take care of the guests, and I was like in charge of the museum. There's a museum downstairs. Make sure it's all in good shape. But I did a lot of flower arrangement after a while. I arrange all the flowers the best I knew how. I like to play with flowers, but I never had any lesson how to—*ikebana* lesson. But I used to love to do that, arrange the flower. I greet the guest. And I love to set table, you know, with the lace tablecloth and the Waterford crystal and things like that. That was more of my. . . . Then I help in the kitchen. Like if it's a party, then we don't—we have a chef. But when they have a big party, then we help to set the fruits in the plate, make it fancy. I like to do that kind of thing. But on Sunday, I was cooking for the governor. I shouldn't have said that I love to cook. But that's okay, they appreciated what I did, they enjoyed. But my husband didn't like that I worked nighttime every Sunday night, dinner. But he was really upset about that.

I didn't do any unusual things, but I got to meet a lot of unusual people. Well, Mrs. Ariyoshi always wanted me to greet whoever came to Washington Place, like VIP. A lot of people from

around the world, I see. It was pretty interesting.

JR: Did you get along well with the first family?

HA: Yes, always. I really got along well with them. I never had no problem. They used to be happy with what I did for them. And then when the Waihee came in, it's different, different taste. But what they like about my cooking is the soup I used to make.

(Interview interrupted. Taping stops, then resumes.)

HA: Now, what else? You have to ask me question.

JR: You got your citizenship somewhere along the way.

HA: Yes, in 1962. My father was an American citizen before I did.

JR: Oh yeah?

HA: But I did it the wrong time, I think. I spoke with the French Consulate secretary, and she said that if I did it later I would have kept my French citizenship, but I lost it.

JR: Oh, so you're simply . . .

HA: American.

JR: You could have had dual citizenship.

HA: Yes, I could have. It's too bad. I wanted to keep, because I'm very French inside.

JR: After all these years here, you're still . . .

HA: Still French. I'm very proud to be American citizen. That's sure. But I really have a lot of. . . . France to me is the best. I mean, I'm not that prejudiced. Not the best, but I still really have. . . . You know, I met one lady at Safeway a few years back, a French lady. She's not there no more, because she retired. She was a cashier there for fifteen years at Safeway. And do you know that she could hardly speak French. She forgot all her French. And she said, "Oh, you still speak it?"

And I said, "Yeah, I will never forget it." She couldn't remember a lot of French words. I said, "What happened?"

"Oh, I don't speak, I forget."

I speak French all the time, because I speak with the boys and speak with my friends. I read. I'm always reading French. Even those magazines, like, you would say, *Good Housekeeping*, whatever, books or whatever, I read. My spelling is not that good, because I don't write as much and I kind of forget. I have to get the dictionary off and on. But as far as reading and speaking, I could never forget my native language. I don't think I could, never. They all tell me when I go back home, they say, "Wow, it's like you never left. It was like you were here all the time." I mean, I speak like they do.

JR: You go back pretty frequently, then?

HA: Well, no. I went back in 1950, then I didn't go back for twenty years. I couldn't afford it. The boys all in school. And in 1970, we went back for our twenty-fifth anniversary. Then '76, after my father passed away I needed to go see his sister and settle things with her. Then after that, 1981, then '85, '87, and then '91.

JR: And you stayed for a long time, yeah?

HA: This time, yeah.

JR: How long did you stay?

HA: Ten months.

JR: Ten months. When you were over there, how did you feel about Hawai`i?

HA: I don't want to say that, but somehow—it's a funny thing that I thought would never happen to me. I missed the family very much, but I don't really miss Hawai`i. Because for years and years, I wanted to do that, go to home, go to Marseilles, and stay as long as I want, and go back when I'm good and ready. But I never thought that I could do it. Till today, I couldn't believe that I stayed that long. Because I wanted to stay four or five months. That I had in my mind, if I could. But I never thought I would stay ten months away from home. But I didn't miss Hawai`i. You know, my husband thought that Marseilles had better weather than Hawai`i. Although we have cold, the weather is very nice over there. I'm telling you, it's true. We have this wind that come in from the north, they call it a mistral. And somehow, it chase all the cloud to the Riviera side, so Marseilles is always sunshine. And it's really nice. The sky is always blue, and it's not that cold. We have off and on that wind, the mistral, that's very strong, but not too often.

I think all together I stayed six months in France. But I stayed in Germany two months, and I went to France (five) months, and I went back to Germany (for two months), and back again to France. And for all the time we were there, I think we had rain at the most four or five times. And it's not that humid. Very nice weather. My husband was very impressed with the weather. Of course, summertime it's hot. But the heat is different than here, totally different. And the thing that was surprising—and everybody was really surprised—we didn't get sick for ten months. Of course, we really be careful. I won't say that I didn't try to eat all those gourmet food. But if I eat today, the next day I kind of try to. . . . The worse thing for me was the bread. I couldn't stop eating bread. But all in all, the weather was really beautiful. Beautiful weather, very nice.

JR: You didn't miss your *sashimi*?

HA: That's exactly what my husband said. We were eating *sashimi* at his brother's house Tuesday night, and he said, "This is the only thing I missed in France, *sashimi*. Nothing else." Because there were so many different kind of dish that we liked to try.

JR: Did you miss it too?

HA: I missed *sashimi*—*sashimi* and hot rice. I sent picture to the children. Almost every week I sent them picture and telephone and all that. I sent them a picture, I said, "Well, you can tell that

I'm kind of a little heavier, but don't worry, I'm planning to lose it with *sashimi* and hot rice.” (Laughs) But I lost it, because I got sick when I got home. But somehow, I'm ready to go back again.

JR: Oh yeah?

HA: Oh yes. But they're expecting me in May next year. I don't know.

JR: I just wanted to ask you one more question, then I think we're *pau* for the interview.

HA: Sure.

JR: You know, I read some newspaper articles about war brides—these were written many years after the war—and it seemed like a lot of them had a hard time.

HA: Yeah, lots of them divorced and went back home. Lots and lots them, many, many. I heard that too. In fact, here in Hawai`i, many were divorced, many. And I remember this girl that met this boy. He was part-Hawaiian, you know. And she came to Hawai`i. I met a few times, this French girl, but I cannot say that she was my friend, just acquaintance and that's it. But I remember that girl somehow. She wasn't married. She came in, this girl, she just was really criticizing everything and she was terrible. She went back, you know. But after a while, she wanted to come back (to Hawai`i), but that boy didn't want her back.

All these years I've been here, especially at the beginning, the few years of beginning I came here, many, many girls, they didn't just want to stay here.

JR: Why do you think you're the exception?

HA: I think, to me, because I was young. And another thing too, I always respected older people. My grandmother raised me—and my grandfather—and I always have respect for my grandparents. When I came here, I really had respect for his parents. And they treat me very nice, so I was humble to them. I didn't want to be arrogant or anything like that. There was no reason for me to be arrogant anyway, because they were so nice to me. Like I said, I think it's the environment. All the people that I associate with made me an exception, because they treated me nice. And you know, I can see the good part. I was told by my father, “Always see the good part of the people. Everybody has bad point and good point, but you have to see the good part. And if they have more good than bad, then they are nice.”

END OF INTERVIEW