

2019 Upcoming activities:

- July 20, OGSB Meeting 9am-12pm  
Sally Tsuda and Shigeru Yoshimoto
- July 19 and 20, Friday, 6pm and Saturday, 5:30pm  
Jikoan Hongwanji Bon Dance
- July 21, Sunday, 11:30am,  
Hui Makaala Fashion Show, Hilton Hawaiian Village
- July 25, Thursday, 6pm-9:30pm  
Yuntaku: Artistry in Kakaako
- August 17, OGSB Meeting  
HUOA Book Signing with Lee Tonouchi and Laura Kina  
"Okinawan Princess: Da Legend of Hajichi Tattoos"
- August 31-September 1, 2019  
Okinawan Festival, Hawaii Convention Center  
Please remember to sign-up to help at the OGSB room. ←
- November 16, 2019, Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
OGSB Bonenkai, Okinawan Center  
"Kashiragawai"-Transition



e-Newsletter  
2019  
JULY



Donna's Word of the Month

"arawasun"  
To show, reveal

Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii  
c/o HUOC  
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Waipahu, Hawaii 96797

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Meeting Report  
Saturday, June 15, 2019

Attendance: 53  
Visitors: 4  
August Treasurer's Report:  
Income-Membership dues, donations, sales of Guide Book  
Expense – Office supplies, sponsoring 2 students to the LooChoo Conference  
Speaker: Penny Sakamoto  
Secretary's Report: Newsletter  
Transcribed by: David R.  
Photos by Curtis S.

Membership Meeting Notice  
Saturday, July 20, 2019 9 am—12 pm Serikaku Chaya

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Treasurer's Report-
- III. Committee Reports
  - a. Bonenkai
  - b. Okinawan Festival
  - c. Nomination Committee
  - d. Bylaws/BOD
  - e. Library
- IV. Announcements
- V. Speakers: Sally Tsuda and Shigeru Yoshimoto
- VI. Discussion
- VII. Committee Work

"Members and friends, WE DID IT!!!"

Thank you very much for your generous support in purchasing Festival scrip from our Club. Many also purchased scrip from your "sonjin" club, but made a token purchase so we could reach our goal of \$7,000.00

Special recognition to Rodney K., Donna Jean N., and Cheryl Sasaki for purchasing scrip for family and friends. Your "KAASHII" (assistance) added to the success of this project.

OGSH will receive \$2,100.00 from HUOA for our effort.

Ippee Nifee Deebiru,  
Sally M."

This month we have the pleasure of hearing from two of our researchers who have helped dozens of people in finding their ancestral roots. The paths have been diverse in finding the details, but they continue to persevere driven by their deep commitment to helping others on their treasure hunting journey. Please come and listen to one of the stories they have to share as we continue to highlight the types of documents that become the genesis for uncovering and revealing the profound stories that are uncovered.



Good morning everyone, I'm Penny Sakamoto. I would like to preface this whole thing that my parents and



my relatives here in Hawaii never really spoke to me about being Okinawan, so I had no concept of the culture or the different things that Okinawans did or ate. We didn't talk about it at all. So I didn't know I was Okinawan. I'm only half Okinawan. Even my brothers were never spoken to about being Okinawan. Before the 2011 Taikai, my friend Theresa said her cousins are going to Taikai and if I wanted to go since she needed a roommate. I said I would like to go because I like to travel. I enjoy seeing different places, meeting different people, trying different foods and things. We went to the Taikai. We experienced the tour of all the different places. They also had community gatherings. Because I'm from Onna and I didn't know anyone from the Onna area within our tour group going, I thought I'm probably not going to get out there, since it is an hour away. I wasn't sure about transportation, so I went instead to Shuri Village, so, I missed that opportunity. I'm not sure if they had a village gathering in Onna or not.

So when we came back, we decide to join OGSB, which was my start on my journey into finding relatives. That's what I wanted to do, to see if I had relatives or not. By that time, my mom and my older uncles and aunties were kind of on the decline so, when you start your process, go out to your family and everybody you know and talk to them about their ties to Okinawa, whether they have relatives. I asked my cousins and they don't know anything about it. My oldest uncle had ties. He used to go every couple of years and he would meet relatives, so I figured there must be relatives somewhere. So, coming to OGSB meetings, we had lots of help from the members. I think we started with Stan, Dorothy, and Nancy. They were so helpful on getting me started on OGSB's database. They encouraged me to gather more information, which I did, so I got information from the Japanese Consulate. I completed a form to request my koseki from the Onna area. Bob Kishaba, who is no longer with us, was instrumental in translating all that, putting that information together and sending it to them. I received it back and he translated for me. From that, I found out who my great grandparents were. There were addresses in the koseki and in the OGSB database that maybe these were my relative's addresses. So, I decided to write to them. The first letter I sent came back "unknown". So I thought if I write it in Japanese, it might get to somebody, Carol Chun my letter, but she went beyond that. She called the Onna Prefectural Office to find out if there was anybody listed at this address. She was told that nobody lived at that address for 20 years, so it made no sense to send the letter out. That was kind of defeating in a sense so I decided to stop there. I don't have any ties to Okinawa. I can't speak the language so I couldn't call anyone.

Fast forward to 2017, when the Okinawa Prefectural Library people came and helped at the festival. Prior to that, there were a lot of emailing back and forth with the OGSB people and them. So, we had a good relationship. Through that, I filled in another form and sent it with them. Hara-san was very passionate in helping us find our relatives since he was with the library and had the resources. He contacted the personnel at the Onna Museum and asked them if I had relatives or not. They did the research. In 2018, Theresa and I took the OGSB tour wondering if we wanted to go there because our friends had planned a tour to Japan at the same time. We were kind of conflicted, plus there weren't as many people signed up as we thought from OGSB, but we went. Good thing we went. We skipped the tour of Shuri Castle but we did our own thing. We went to Naha City Museum and other places. We were able to get information on phone numbers and stuff for relatives, so it



worked out really well for us. The OPL personnel, Ayako and her husband Ichiro, a graduate of University of Portland, translated and drove us to Onna. We went to the Onna Museum first and looked around and saw what they had there. Then we sat in the office and were presented with so much information that it was really overwhelming. They traced my relatives back to 1577. I was kind of flabbergasted. I became flustered and didn't know what to ask. I didn't ask their resources...where did they get all the information from? They gave me charts of our relatives. When I went, I took this book which has my koseki and I wanted to share it with my relatives in Okinawa because I was told I was going to meet my relatives. I had put in my family group, a time line, a family tree. I had pictures of my grandparents and other family members and who they were married to and other information I could get. So, I took this with me and thinking they might help me identify people in the photos. They were more interested in showing me their family in a booklet they had made. Actually, a lot of the documents that they had were destroyed in the war. Since my uncle was visiting every few years, he helped them develop the booklet that showed our relatives up to 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> generations. The Onna Museum people printed for me this chart which shows our relatives going back to 1577. They were able to trace it back because all the first sons had 'AN' in their name. So my uncle was Ansho Ueshiro. My grandfather was Anta Ueshiro. I didn't know beyond that. That was a real revelation for me. They went way beyond what I expected, helping me trace back to 1577!

After I got all this information, I was able to meet with relatives, which is what I really wanted to do. I wanted to see them face to face and shake their hands. They were very welcoming. They had the book that showed their recollections of relatives going way back to the 16<sup>th</sup> generation. That was as far back they could go. According to the Onna Museum, our family is related to King Sho Gen. That was a huge thing for me. We went to the Kisenbaru Community Center and I met relatives and they really looked my relatives. They looked exactly like my uncle. They've got to be Ueshiro. I sort of talked to them, though I think I missed out on a lot of the conversation because I don't really understand or speak Japanese. I know just a little, the translation helped. But I missed out on a lot of it. We were able to record some of it, but there were a lot of ambient noise, as there were at least 15 people there. I didn't get to meet everyone. This one relative was able to explain what was going on and a more distant relative was very knowledgeable about the family. It was really good to see them. I want to reconnect with them. Being in a big group was kind of overwhelming to me. I couldn't talk to them individually. I'll try and go back someday and maybe focus on a couple of people and talk to them. Theresa was able to get good information too.



I brought back all these information from the booklet that they made. It showed our "mon" which our mom had made into a necklace for me and my oldest brother. In the booklet it lists the names and dates of the generations. Shigeru helped me by taking that huge stack of papers and translating for me, to show the names in English and the generations they're from. He did everything and he did it fast. He found it interesting going all these generations back. Because of the help of OGS members, I was able to get this far. In April of this year, Theresa and I went back again on our own. We were able to stay in a hotel right across the street from OPL so we had easy access. We had a meeting with them and we had two people for each of us and they spoke very good English. They brought out reference material and shared all the information. I haven't been able to figure out what it all is. I need it translated. Although they told me what it is, I didn't take good notes.

I was able to see my relatives. Ayako and Ichiro took time off from their jobs. With their son, we went to Kisenbaru and met two of the relatives that I wanted to talk to more. They clarified a lot of information. Mr. Hokama is really good at researching and he made all these posters with his information about the family. The Onna Museum people went beyond and actually met with my relatives prior to this and talked to them about each person on this chart. They made this chart for me of relatives up to the point where they could figure out who they were and could verify. It's more of the recent relatives. They went way beyond and made this chart for me and now I know I have tons of relatives.



My suggestions for everyone is start out with OGSB members and the information we have here. Members have a wealth of information for you and they know how to do the research. They can direct you to the right way, where to go, and what to look for first. I was really fortunate. All of this was done for me. I didn't have to lift a finger. The people in Okinawa helped me, the OPL, Onna Museum. The people at OGSB were really great. Keep good records, something I didn't do. One of the things in the guide book says write down who you met, what book it was (if you know it), the date, all that stuff so you can remember. Use the resources at OPL because they have been so great at helping us with the research they can do. Visit the museums. We went to Naha Museum and we were able to get old maps and made copies at OPL. Visit the libraries in your province. The librarians will help you even though most of them don't speak English. We visited the local city government offices. We just went in, looked around to see what they had and they had an English speaking person. So they were able to help Theresa with some things. I didn't go to Onna's, it being too far away. But in Naha, there are a lot of resources. It was a great journey and I know I am not at the end. I have a lot of things that need translated. OGSB, OPL were a great help. To all the members, thank you.



#### OGSB Library Committee



**YOUR  
OGSB  
LIBRARY**



June 15, 2019 Meeting

