



OGSH
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e-Newsletter
 2023
 April

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OGSH April Meeting
 April 15, 2023, 9AM
 Serikaku Chaya or Zoom

Upcoming Events 2023

- AGENDA**
- I. Guest Speaker – Micah Mizukami
 - II. April Treasurer’s Report
 - a. Income – membership dues, donations, book sales,
 - b. Expense-, Bonenkai, HUOA Annual Dues
 - III. Committee Reports

- April
 15- Saturday OGS Meeting, 9AM
 Speaker: Micah Mizukami
 UHM Ethnic Studies Center
 for Oral History
- May
 20-Saturday OGS Meeting, 9AM
 Speaker: Brynes Yamashita
- June
 6-9- Warabi Ashibi – Children’s Day Camp
 Hawaii Okinawan Center
 16- Senior Health and Fitness Fair
 9AM – 1PM, Hawaii Okinawan Center
 17- Saturday OGS Meeting, 9AM
 Speaker: Colin Sewake,
 David and Amy Kaneshiro
- September
 2 and 3 Okinawan Festival
- November
 18 Bonekai
 Hawaii Okinawan Center
 Legacy Ballroom

photos by Clyde U. and members



Donna’s Word of the Month

Binchoo – *noun*; [benkyoo] study, learning

Haitai OGS!



I trust that most of you have completed your taxes for 2022. I am happy and relieved to report that mine are done too! As we continue our journey in learning new things and exploring possibilities, I continue to marvel at how well we have been able to execute our mission and strategic plan in the areas of governance, networking, research and education for preserving our unique history. As we travel down this path of research and learning, we are also exploring more about DNA and oral histories. We continue to

expand our footprint in the types of documentation available for our personal family histories. I take a personal interest in the types of tools available to us for documenting our research. Last month Stan Uehara shared his personal story about his research and with each shared story, we become better equipped with the methodology used to share and preserve this knowledge. We will learn more at our meeting from Micah Mizukami of University of Hawaii as he talks about oral histories. I look forward with anticipation towards all the activities we are planning for this remarkable year.

Chibariyo,
 Donna Nakamura

Speaker: Stan Uehara



Sokuzen's older son, my father Sunao arrived in 1923 aboard the Taiyo Maru. He was 17. He attended Trinity School to learn English. He became a Japanese language school teacher and principal on the Big Island. In 1933 Sunao married Toyoko Maedo, whose parents emigrated from Katsuren, Okinawa. They had 2 sons, Richard and myself.

World War II brought an end to the Japanese Schools in Hawaii. My father saved enough money to buy land to start a dairy. Other ventures included pig, chicken, and truck farming. My father retired at 62. He spent his retirement writing tanka. He came a tanka master and had his poetry published.

After my father passed away, our family lost contact with our relatives in Okinawa. I knew there was more to learn about my relatives. Distant relative Seishun Nakamoto, a Henza Island fire captain, volunteered to show me the Sashiki area. Seishun went to the Sashiki Fire Station. He got a map to zero in the koseki address. But, there is no 243 Aza Tshako in Sashiki today.

The last day of my Okinawa tour was a free day. This was my last chance to locate the Ueharas. I knew, historically, that families clustered together. The Ueharas had to be in the vicinity of the original koseki address. I walked four blocks from my hotel to the Naha Bus Station. I boarded bus #38 to the Sashiki-Baten bus stop. I was back in Sashiki. My plan was to talk to people and show them the 1990 photo. Some men at an auto repair shop recognized Hirokazu Uehara. They pointed in the general direction of his home. I headed in that direction. I did not know exactly where his house was located. I did not have an address. A neighbor finally helped me to find Hirokazu's home. I was excited, nervous, embarrassed about surprising him. An elderly woman came to the door. She was Hirokazu's mother. She graciously invited us in. We managed to carry on a conversation with my limited Japanese. Hirokazu generously shared his family documents with us. Takeo Uehara, another relative shared his family tree. I was very lucky to get these documents revealing generations of my ancestors in Okinawa, starting with the 1400's with Kananushi, the original ancestor of Kana-Oshiro families. Uehara relatives live near the original koseki address as I had suspected.

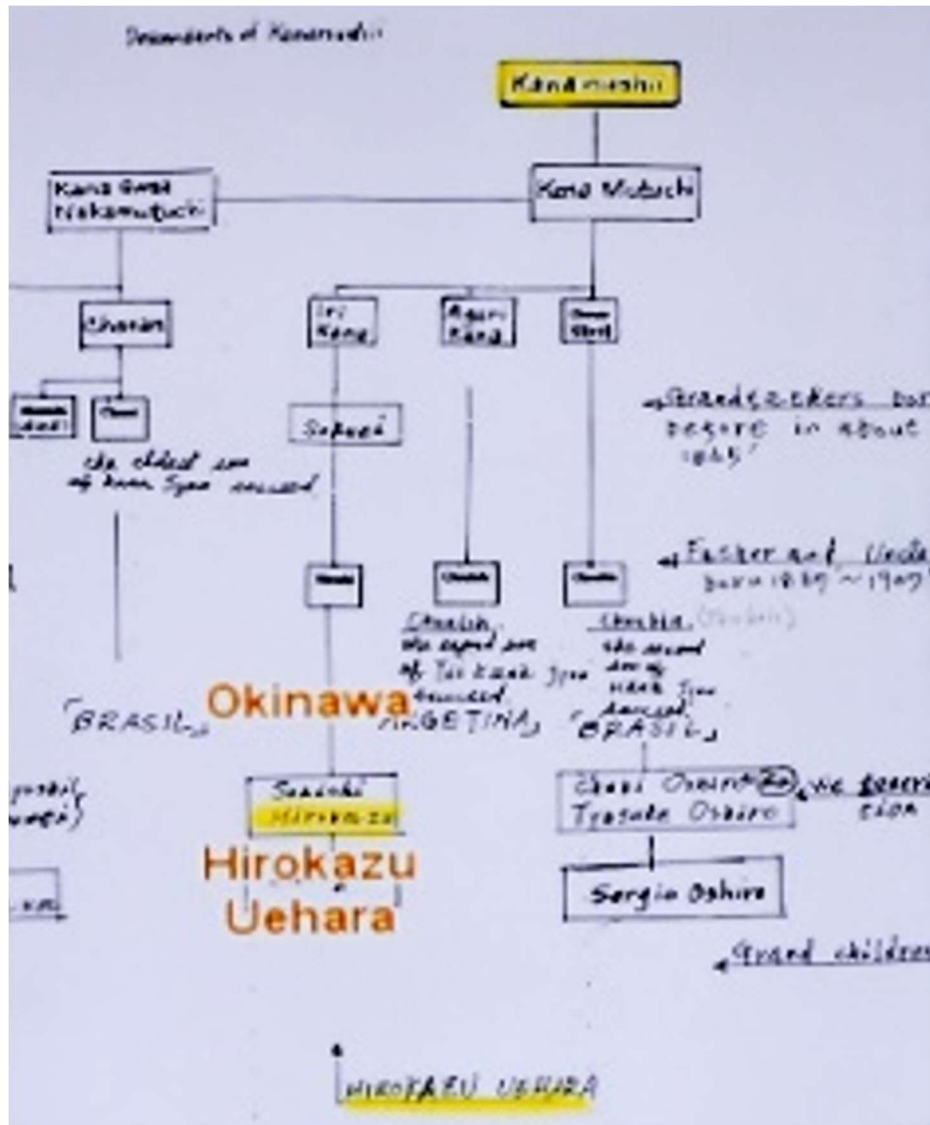
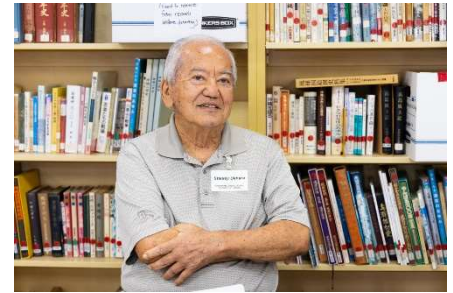
In 2008, I signed up for a tour of South America and an opportunity to attend the Centennial of Okinawan Immigration to Brazil and Argentina. I learned from the family tree that my relatives live in Brazil and Argentina. I was given addresses to my relatives in South America. I wrote to the relatives. To my amazement I got email replies from Tyusuke Oshiro of Campo Grande, Brazil and Tadashi Uehara of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

I attended the 2008 Centennial of Okinawan Immigration to Sao Paulo, Brazil in August 22, 2008. I met Tyusuke Oshiro there. Tyusuke is 81 and lives in Campo Grande, Brazil. He flew the 2 hours to Sao Paulo. He and Masae Oshiro had 8 children. Tyusuke Oshiro is a close relative. His mother and my grandmother are sisters. His father and my grandfather are first cousins. Tyusuke arrived in Brazil when he was 14. He sailed for 38 days from Okinawa around Africa to Brazil. He worked a variety of jobs, including being a tailor, before opening his business making steel products. I was impressed with their successes. Son Osvaldo has a PhD. He works for the government. Our tour took us to Iguacu Falls. We met Sergio Oshiro, son of Tyusuke in Foz do Iguacu. We had pizza dinner at Sergio's apartment. He spent some time in England learning English. Sergio and his wife Patricial work for Customs.

I attended the Centennial Celebration at the Okinwan Kenjinkai Hall on August 29, 2008. We participated in the Centennial Parade on Avenida de Mayo. The Hawaii group was welcomed by the residents of Buenos

Aires. Tadashi Uehara and son Gustavo planned a city tour for us. Tadashi Uehara is also known as Julio Ricardo Uehara lives in a working class neighborhood of Buenos Aires. He was very cordial and generous. He apologized for his poor English, as his first language is Spanish. He said most Okinawan immigrants to Argentina went into dry cleaning or flower farming. He and Delia, his wife run a dry cleaning business. Son Gustavo is an engineer and his wife, Marisa is a dentist. We had a wonderful family luncheon at Tadashi's home. It was great Argentine hospitality. Muchas Gracias!

My final thoughts: It all makes sense now. The strange sounding names. Irikana, Shichikana, and Mekanajo that my father talked about in 1990 can be found on the family tree from Okinawa. They are ancient Okinawan house names. While these house names are still used today, surnames are required by Japanese Koseiki law as of 1879. Some family members chose Oshiro and others chose Uehara. I am forever grateful to all my relatives for helping me achieve my goals. From Sashiki, Okinawa to Sao Paulo, Brazil to Bueno Aires, Argentina, they welcomed me and generously shared their family documents. They tried really hard to communicate with me in English, while the only words I knew in their language was, 'Thank you.' So I say to them: Arigato! Obrigado! Gracias!

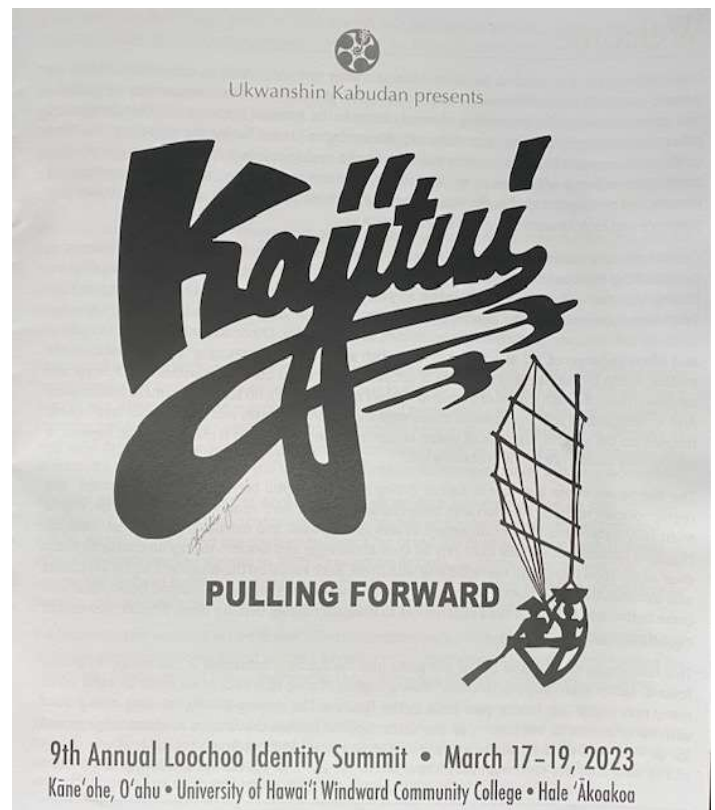


KAJITUI: 2023 Loochoo Identity Summit

By Doreen Yamashiro

Kajitui - Pulling Forward was the theme of this year's Loochoo Identity Summit held at Windward Community College on March 17-19. Resuming the in-person conference after an absence of 2 years allowed participants to re-connect with friends and create connections with new acquaintances.

Presented by Ukwanshin Kabudan, the non-profit organization which sponsors this annual event, the summit is an invitation to a global audience to continue the "journey towards strengthening our identity as indigenous people of the Ryukuan archipelago." The literal translation for kajitui is "helmsman" which refers to a person who takes the lead in organizing folks to accomplish a common task or unite to work for a shared cause. It may also be a "Big Aunty" or "Big Uncle;" someone who may be the family historian, 'story-teller' or consultant, who maintains the experience and knowledge to keep the group on track to attain their goal.

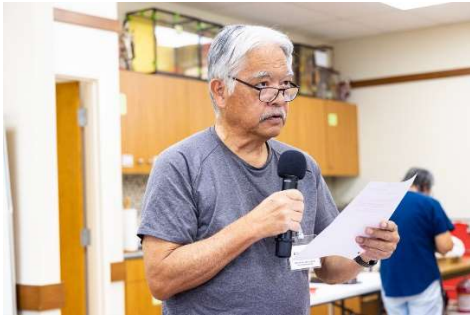


During a large group discussion, folks were asked to share an example of organizing an activity or event. OGS member Rodney Kohagura described how OGS members were divided into 3 groups/committees to be responsible for yearly events. The groups called Nanzan, Chūzan, and Hokuzan were named after the 3 separate Ryukyu kingdoms.

Several members of OGS were returning attendees who actively participated in the workshops on "Our Spirituality," "Our Genealogies" , and "Our Histories." OGS also hosted an information table to display the many publications, activities, and community events that they are involved in with the interested attendees.

First -time attendee, Blaise Higa, a young man with tremendous interest in his family genealogy, was delighted to find other folks who were possible additions to his extensive family tree. Meeting other people and learning more about Ryukyuan/ Okinawan culture, history and language, helped to expand his appreciation for his heritage and respect for his ancestors.

OGS Susan Ramelb, who has attended every year, commented that "it's always a treat to attend" the Loochoo Identity Summit. "What makes it special are the people, the learning experience and the delicious food!"



Hawaii Okinawan Center