



OGSH  
 PO Box 894779  
 Mililani, Hawaii 96789  
 OGSNews@gmail.com  
 Research Team:  
 ogsh.rteam@gmail.com



e-Newsletter  
**2023**  
 September



<p>Donna Nakamura <i>President</i></p> <p>Ken Kamiya <i>First Vice-President</i></p> <p>Jackie Toma <i>Second Vice-President</i></p> <p>Heidi Shimabuku <i>Corresponding Secretary</i></p> <p>Susan Ramelb <i>Recording Secretary</i></p> <p>Clyde Higa <i>Treasurer</i></p> <p>Virginia Tully <i>Assistant Treasurer</i></p> <p>Rodney Kohagura <i>Advisor</i></p>	<p>OGSH Meeting Agenda          September 16, 2023, 9AM          Serikaku Chaya or Zoom</p> <p><b>AGENDA</b></p> <p>I. Hiroaki Hara (on Zoom from Okinawa)          announcement for a Webinar to Promote          Fundraising for Lahaina          “Lahaina-A Town in Maui Where Many          Uchinanchu Settled”</p> <p>II. Treasurer’s Report          Income-Donations, Membership Dues,          Festival, DNA Workshop (fees and bento)          Expense-Mensore Committee supplies</p> <p>III. Festival Report</p> <p>IV. DNA Report</p> <p>V. Bonekai Report</p> <p>Photos by Curtis and members, Transcript by          David R.</p>	<p>Upcoming Events 2023</p> <p>September</p> <p>16 OGS Meeting, 9AM</p> <p>16 Autumn Matsuri, HOC, 5pm</p> <p>24 Legacy Award, Sheraton Waikiki</p> <p>26 “Tracing Okinawan Ancestry          Through DNA” 7PM, HOC</p> <p>October</p> <p>21 OGS Meeting, 9AM</p> <p>November</p> <p>18 OGS Bonekai          Hawaii Okinawan Center          Legacy Ballroom, 10AM</p> <p>25 HUOA Winter Craft Fair</p> <p>December</p> <p>No OGS Meeting          li Sogwachi Debiru 2024</p>
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Emi Karimata from  
 Himeyuri Peace Museum  
 OGS Guest Speaker in 2022



Honolulu Mayor Blangiardi. Colin Sewake,  
 and Okinawa Prefectural Assembly Chairman Noburu Akamine



## 2023 Okinawan Festival Summary

By Jackie Toma



After all the room and setup changes, the move to the first floor turned out to be fortuitous. The feedback from planning committee was being downstairs gave our booth visibility and accessibility to the general public. We had approximately 1,800 visitors to our booth this year. This is probably an under count because it was difficult at times to count everyone coming in. The peak times were Saturday at 10 am and 3 pm and Sunday at 11 am and 2 pm. There were OGSB brochures and membership forms at the Intake Table.

Raplee Nobori and the Serikaku family were there each day to talk to visitors and answer questions. There was a lot of interest in Raplee's DNA research, there were many people taking photographs of his display, talking to him, and picking up registration forms. The Serikaku stated that many people who had seen their display in previous years commented on how this setup was more accessible. Also, they were able to meet extended family and old friends.

Stanley Uehara's family tree had anecdotal information about his ancestors which brought the tree to life. The large maps and the ones we gave away were a big hit. We sold 715 bookmarks that were put into envelopes along with the Ryukuan names brochure. Twenty-eight Guidebooks were sold and twelve Short Stories books. For the first time there was a Table of Contents by author and volume for the Short Story books.

The Research Team assisted 153 families. Many were fourth and fifth generation and came prepared, with photos of headstones, documents, and had done preliminary searches. They were pleased to know that communication with the Research Team could be done by email.

Al provided assistance to those interested in accessing the database on their mobile devices and answered questions. He also created business cards with QR codes to the database and tutorials. Clyde showed the "Ancestor Video" he created for the Bonenkai as well "OGSB Retrospective of Meetings and Events" from 2019-2022. It was shown on a 40" monitor.

There were a number of volunteers, both members and non-members, who helped with before Festival preparation: planning for the event, creating new displays, copying the handouts, printing maps of Okinawa, and setup on Friday afternoon. There were eager volunteers who played sanshin outside the booth, assisted at intake, conducted genealogical research, sold bookmarks, Guidebooks and Short Stories books, and helped with breakdown and packing up. The OGSB booth could not have operated or been as successful without all these helping hands.

A detailed report including recommendations will be provided to the Board by the end of the year.

By Virginia "Ginny" Tully



Haisai!

A great Big Mahalo to all of you for your part at the OGSB booth at the Okinawan Festival. I hope all of you had a great time and met individuals with fascinating stories and inquiries. I was impressed by the younger generation seeking information about his/her great grandparent. There were a few who sought further information after reading the displays. Having all participants on the same floor, may have increased the "foot traffic" in the OGSB booth.

We would appreciate hearing your thoughts, comments and suggestions for improvement re: OGSB's booth. 2024 Okinawan Festival will be here sooner than we expect.

Appreciate you sharing your time, knowledge and interest in genealogy, especially on this long weekend.

By Connie Nakasone – **OGSH Research Team**

### **Floor Plan and Set-Up**

Overall, the final furniture set up worked well for the Research Section. The location was great. Near the parking elevator and restrooms. Hopefully, we are given the same location in 2024.



### **Manpower**

Even though we had fewer database workers per shift than at previous festivals, it seemed just the right number. Two researchers at the intake table made the process smoother and visitors seemed more pleased than in the past.

### **Safety and Security**

It was noticed on Friday, the day of set-up, that the large room did not seem too secure. Many workers and vendors were still arriving in the afternoon. Therefore, the equipment was set up and tested, the printer was hidden, and the laptops and mice were taken home for safekeeping. Only the cords were left in place on the table.

### **Request for New Laptops**

Allen tested laptops on August 25 and stated that one was not working. Another laptop did not function at times during the festival.

We are requesting the replacement of 2 laptop computers and their configurations be done way in advance of the 2024 festival.

### **OGSH Leaflets**

- More leaflets need to be printed for 2024. Our section ran out twice.
- It was suggested that the names brochure be simplified to resemble Mac Yonamine's small handout.

### ***By Cheryl Sasaki -Serikaku Display***

First of all, thank you very much for having the Serikaku family share our grandfather's flight story. It is very important to us because we don't want his achievement to be forgotten. Though it is a repeat display, there were people that stopped by and said they just walked through the booth upstairs, but that day they actually got to spend time reading the displays. Last night I was at dad's house cleaning up, and I found a book about my grandfather's flight, it was all in Japanese. lol!! There were 2 different groups of families that manned the display each day. My cousin Kathy and I were there both days, and we saw many new faces from the Serikaku clans!! one Serikaku was even my daughter's friend. With the different families that manned the booth, come to find out Donna's son does business with my cousins at George's Auto Parts. My cousin said he looked familiar, so I dragged her to him and they both pointed fingers, and recognized each other.



One thing OGSB can improve is the flow, maybe have arrows to start from, folks that turned left as they entered actually came to our display and asked what are the airplanes for? So I directed them to the beginning of the display.

It has been a pleasure having a booth for the festival.

Oh, and a big time mahalo to Theresa for the tribute she made for dad!!



Donna's Word of the Month

Nakajin

noun: center, heart, focus, core



Haitai OGSB Members!

I am still riding on an emotional high from our Okinawan Festival! You are all to be congratulated for pulling off a miracle of epic proportions! With all the planning, worrying and nail biting, the old Okinawan adage of "Nankuru naisa" played out for us . . . that is that everything will be all right (as one translation goes)! All the talents represented by many of our members was in full display and added to a heightened excitement and a new source of energy that spilled out into the aisles. This year, for the first time, it was decided to count the people who came through our booth and that number was close to 2,000 total. At the height of our counting, we were counting close to 200 people per hour on Saturday. I don't recall having that much traffic last year on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor so I would be bold enough to say that all of us being on one floor was a very positive decision for all of us. We all benefited! Someone reported that even the food lines seemed less congested because people had more room to spread out.

With the festival under our belt, the next big events are our DNA Workshop and Bonenkai! We currently have around 40 attendees registered and it is anticipated that more registrants will be added within the next few days! There is much buzz surrounding this workshop from individuals who are interested in this subject. And, our Bonenkai continues to evolve as we speak! We are heading to having a memorable and meaningful event. Registration will open in early October as your committee meets to agree on the details. Stay tuned as we continue to provide updates and status!

With gratitude for each of you,

Donna

















Haitai!

Congratulations on another successful Okinawan Festival! I really had a great time volunteering on Sunday morning. You are all such special people to be around and have such a wealth of knowledge and expertise. 😊



I just wanted to also send a message to give a big MAHALO to agreeing for OGSB to have a Summer UX Design Intern. Kayla had a wonderful experience and learned a lot. We shall see if her suggestions and recommendations will come to fruition in the future, but again, just wanted to thank you for creating a space for exploration in an area I see great opportunity in.

We recognized that during her live presentation, Kayla threw a lot of technical terminology that probably blew over a lot of people's heads. We didn't want to lose the value of her ideas through confusion, so we recording a new presentation for your viewing. This time more aimed at the features and opportunities versus her technical process. I hope this helps to paint the picture more of the value of the work she has done over the summer! Any next steps for Kayla's work will be determined by AI and the team of reviewers.

[Link to the Presentation Recording:](#)

( <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-8093EQBTCHXXVhJT4F9v0w-fh7aIGC/view> )

Thank you so much again, and please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions comments, or concerns.

Grateful for you all! Ippe niffe debiru!

Much Care,  
Jennifer

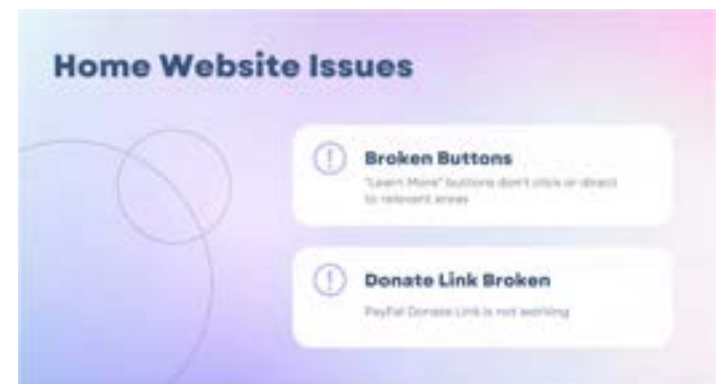
OGSB August Speaker: Kayla Mukai, Summer Intern



Speaker: Kayla Mukai, Summer Intern, working on database



Thank you for being so welcoming to me this summer. I really enjoyed my time working at OGS on the web database. It has been just so fun. I just want to share about what I learned and what I was able to do.



The first thing that I worked on was doing the OGS Websites Analysis. First, I looked at the "Home Website." A few of the minor issues I found on the Home Website were fixed really quickly. Fixing 'Broken Buttons' and also 'Broken Links.' For the 'Broken Buttons', the "Learn More" buttons don't click or direct to relevant areas and the 'Donate Link Broken', the PayPal Donation link was not working. The fixes were to link to proper pages or just removing them and replace the PayPal link with the link from the database site. These were done very quickly.

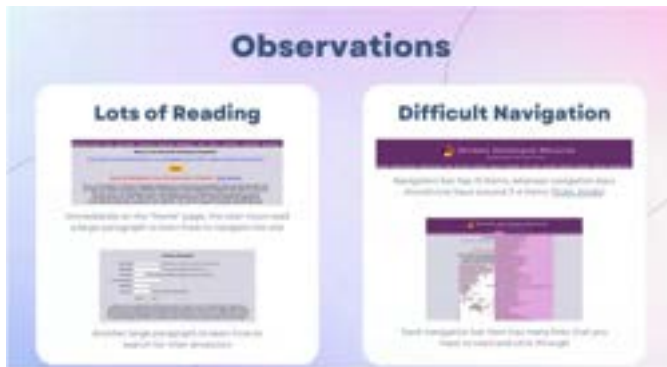


Some things that I found that I could be possibly improved on the "Database Website" issues were: 1) Lots of Reading, meaning many large paragraphs to read for instructions so, the paragraphs were condensed 2)

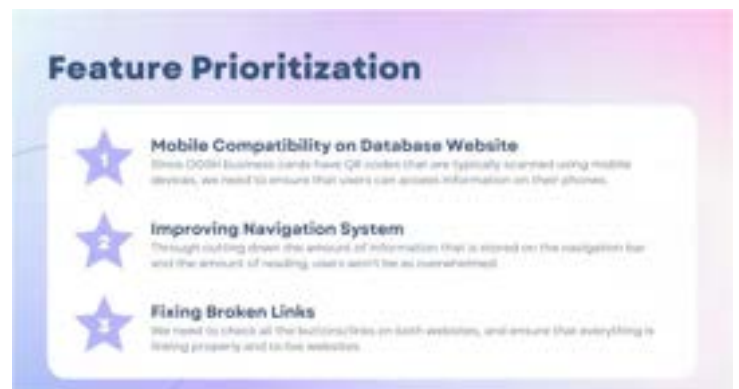
“Difficult Navigation” due to very busy navigation bar due to lots of information on the site 3) also “Mobile Device Compatibility”, it was not easy to use on mobile devices because this was originally meant to be used on a laptop and this was the main thing I worked on 4) Just fixing “Broken Links”.



On the “Observations that I Made”, there were lots of reading of these large paragraphs and difficulty in navigation where a navigation bar has 15 items, because which had lots of information available and condensing it even more.

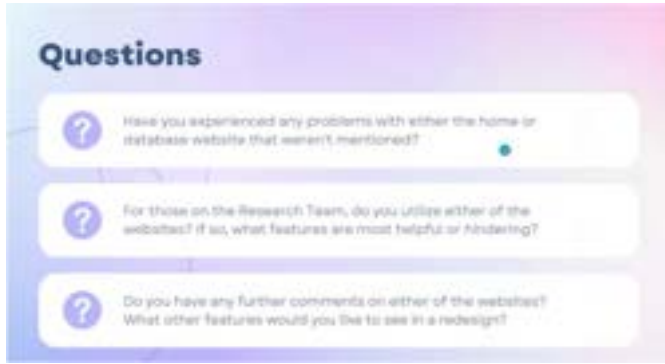


Next was “Mobile Device Compatibility” where the website was not compatible on mobile devices. I made the site compatible. Also fixing “Broken Links”.



“Ways to Improve” just created a more intuitive user flow that does not rely on lots of reading, condensing the navigation bar and have pages that detail what each link is for, fixing the design for mobile devices, and fixing the broken links.

These are the features I prioritized: 1) “Mobile Compatibility on Database Website”, 2) “Improving Navigation System”, 3) “Fixing Broken Links” by checking all the buttons/links.



This is what I mainly worked on this summer, the “Design and Development” for the OGSB database website. First, I started off with the redesign of the OGSB Database by creating user flows, sitemaps, low-fidelity wire frames, and high-fidelity mockups, and then validated them through usability testing. I also was able to learn about “PHP and MySQL” through creating a development plan for my proposed design and working on an assignment. Finally, also I was able to start beginning “Front-End Development” and building my designs in HTML and CSS.



For the “Redesign Process”, I first started by creating ‘User Flows’ to see how people currently interact with the website. Next, is “Site Mapping” where I was able to condense the navigation bar to four sections. Also working on “Low-Fidelity and Hi-Fidelity Prototypes” by creating low-fidelity and high-fidelity designs. Finally, “Usability Testing” by conducting usability test to see user navigation and sentiment.



For “User Flows” I basically walked through the user’s journey that different type of users has through the homesite and also the database. Next is “Site Mapping” by condensing the Navigation Bar into 4 main

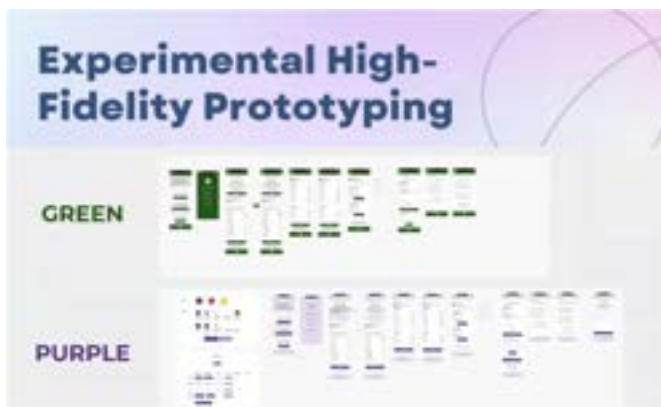
categories. They are 'Immigrant Search', 'Resources', 'Getting Involved', and 'Contact OGSB'. The part I focused on during my internship was the 'Immigrant Search' portion.



For "Low-Fidelity Wireframing" which are gray-scale prototypes that I was able to dump out all my ideas and create a workflow for the proposed Immigrant Search process.



Initial "High-Fidelity Prototyping" that I created. This color palette was in like what was going to be used by adding color to make it more visually appealing. Also, an "Experimental High-Fidelity Prototyping" by using different colors, such as green theme for the original home site or purple from the database site. I experimented with that and finally decided on purple.



"Usability Testing" was getting feedback on the design, ease of navigating. I got a lot of valuable feedback and made changes on those.

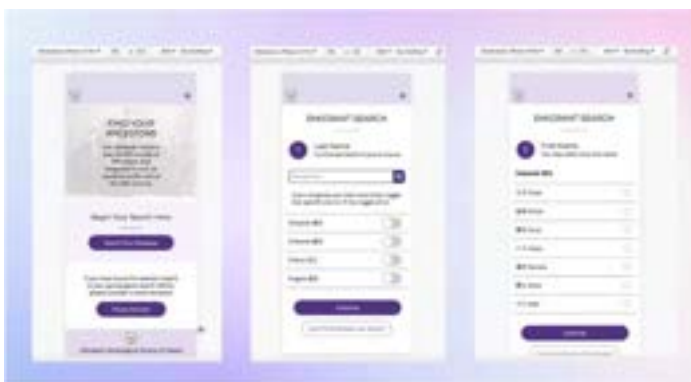


I “Learned PHP and MySQL” and it was my first time using either of these languages. Thank you to AI for teaching me them.

“What I Learned” were ‘AI’s Assignment’ by creating a searching tool that goes through a database of 500 items and a ‘Development Plan’ for how my proposed sited design could function with PHP and MySQL. I started on my “Front End Development” by coding the website using HTML and CSS. HTML and CSS are website languages.



Finally, “My Internship Experience”, I would like to thank Jenn, Donna, and AI for being so kind and knowledgeable. I learned so much from you all and feel much more connected to my Okinawan heritage through this experience. It was such a fun experience overall.



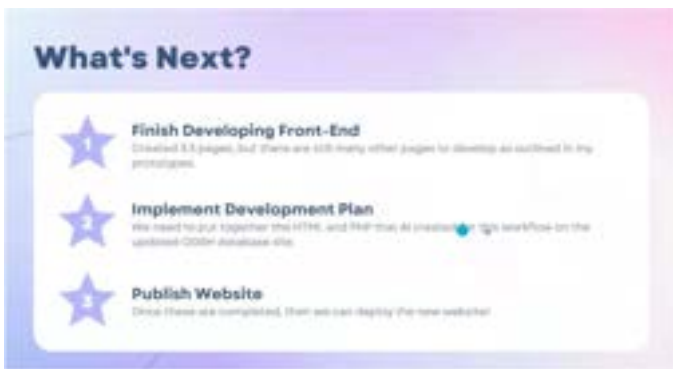
“Takeaways from this Internship”, I learned is designing a website is fun, especially when designing things that could potentially benefit others. Thank you to Jenn. I learned new coding languages that will benefit me in my future courses in college. Lastly, I hope to stay connected with the Okinawan community in Hawaii. I just really enjoy meeting you all.





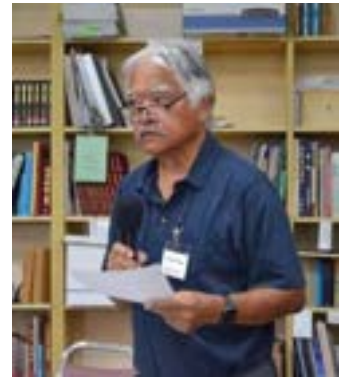
“Next Steps”, for further developments are 1) ‘Finishing developing Front-End’. I created 3.5 pages, but there are still many other pages to develop as outlined in my prototypes, 2) ‘Implement Development Plan’ where we need to put together the HTML that I created and PHP that AI created for this workflow on the updated OGSH database site, 3) ‘Publish Website’ once these are completed, then we can deploy the new website!

Thank you so much. I had a great experience. Learned so much. Thank you



### OGSH Meeting – August 19, 2023







People of Okinawa descent from Lahaina collecting clothes for post-war Okinawa relief (Provided by Taro Higa Collection, Okinawa Prefectural Archives)

# Lahaina

*A Town in Maui where Many Uchinanchu Settled*

**A Webinar to Promote Fundraising for Lahaina** ❤️

**Date :** September 26th(Tue), 15:00-16:30(Hawaii ST) / 21:00-22:30(Eastern DT)

**Speaker :** Hiroaki Hara, Okinawa Prefectural Library (Researcher of Okinawan Migration)

**Language :** Japanese, English, Portuguese, and Spanish (simultaneous interpretation)

Apply Now!



In Lahaina, Maui, wildfires that broke out on August 8, 2023 left more than 100 dead and caused extensive damage including historic buildings. Lahaina had a large population of people from Okinawa even within Maui, and once had a large Okinawan community. During post-war Okinawa relief activities, many relief supplies were delivered from Lahaina in hopes of the reconstruction of the mother island, Okinawa.

Today, we will trace the history of Okinawans in Lahaina, Maui, and share with you the damage caused by Lahaina and the fundraising activities of the Okinawa Hawaii Association (Okinawa) and the Hawaii Okinawa Association (Hawaii). In addition, the Hawaii State Library, which has a sister library agreement with Okinawa Prefectural Library, will look back on the history of the damaged Lahaina Public Library.



Hosted by Okinawa Prefectural Library Supported by Hawaii State Public Library System, Hawaii United Okinawa Association, Maui Okinawa Karaji Kai, Okinawa Hawaii Association

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your continued understanding and cooperation in our World Uchinchu Project.

In order to support the recovery of Lahaina, Maui Island, which suffered severe damage from the wildfires that occurred on August 8th, we are holding the following multilingual online lectures on the history of Okinawans in Lahaina and Maui for people of overseas Okinawan descent and Okinawan residents.

1. Lecture title: Lahaina recovery support online lecture  
"Lahaina: A Town in Maui Where Many Uchinanchu Settled"

2. Date and time:

**September 26th (Tue), 15:00-16:30 (Hawaii ST)**

September 26th (Tue), 21:00-22:30 (Eastern DT)

September 27th (Wed) 10:00~11:30 30 (Japan time)

3. Language: Japanese, English, Spanish, Portuguese (simultaneous interpretation)

4. ZOOM Application

<https://lahaina.opl.okinawan-migration.com/en/>

4. Agenda

(1) Opening Remarks by Okinawa Prefecture Governor Denny Tamaki

(2) "Lahaina: A Town in Maui where Many Uchinanchu Settled" by Okinawa Prefectural Library Mr. Hiroaki Hara

(3) Sister library lecture "History and disaster situation of Lahaina Public Library" by Hawaii State Library Ms. Stacey Aldrich, State Librarian and Ms. Stacie Kaneshige, Director

(4) "Lahaina wildfire and its impact on the Okinawan people." and "Fund-raising activities in Hawaii" by Hawaii United Okinawa Association and/or Maui Okinawa KenjinKai

(5) "Fund-raising activities in Okinawa" by Okinawa Hawaii Association

(6) Closing Remarks by Hawaii United Okinawa Association and/or Maui Okinawa KenjinKai

*From the e-bulletin of the Hawaii United Okinawan Association – The Purple Blast  
Sign-up for Purple Blast: <https://huoa.org/#newsletters>*





**Schedule:**

- 4:00 PM – Food Sales Start
- 4:30 PM – Doors Open
- 5:00 PM – Program Starts
- 9:30 PM – Program Ends

**Parking at Hawaii Okinawa Center and vacant lot across Zippy's, entrance from Puahi Street. DO NOT PARK at the Hawaii Okinawa Plaza.**

Crowds dressed in kimono, hapi coats and eisa outfits gather at the Hawaii Okinawa Center. Young and old, newbies and pros, dance to the beat of taiko, sway to the sounds of sanshin and cheer, "iya sassa-ha iyaal" into the night. Traditional Okinawan numbers are combined with time honored and contemporary Japanese

favorites for an evening of culture, food and fellowship.

With great music and dancing, matsuri goers can enjoy onolicious andagi and other local favorites. Each year, the Matsuri is coordinated by the efforts of many volunteers. **Ippee nifee deebiru, mahalo, thank you to their hard work and support!**

Performances by

- Hawaii Eisa Shinyuu Kai
- Hawaii Eisa Shinyu Kai
- Nidame Teishinkai Hawaii Shibu
- Hawaii Shin Kobukai
- Iwakuni Odori Aiko Kai
- Aiea Taiheiji Yagura Gumi
- Oahu District Hongwanji
- Oahu Soto Mission Bon Dance Assn.
- Young Okinawans of Hawaii

Club Food Booths

**Chinagu Eisa**

- Spam Musubi
- Taco Rice
- Melon Pan
- Jimami Dofu
- Pineapple
- Bottled Water

**Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko**

- Bentos & Sodas
- Tofu Salad
- Shave Ice
- Bubble Tea (2 flavors)

**Hawaii Okinawa Creative Arts**

- Andagi
- Andadog
- Cold Brew Ice Coffee

**Chatan-Kadena Chojin Kai**

- Bento
- Sodas, Juice, Tea

**Team Eguchi**

Okinawa Soba

**Country Store**

Jane's Plantation Ice Tea

**Monday crafters** will sell their crafts which includes bon dance hapi, flags, bags, etc.

**HUOA Store** will have 2023 Okinawan Festival T-shirts (only some stock remaining), eco bags, cooler bags, past Okinawan Festival T-shirts.

There will also be a donations table if you want to support HUOA.



*Saturday, September 30, 2023*

*Ikoen Honganji Hall 6pm. \$25*

*RSVP required. Contact; 808-781-9658*

*events@ukwanshinkabudan.org*

Come join us for an evening of great food, Okinawa entertainment, and celebrating the traditional August Moon Festival or Jūguya which follows the lunar calendar. As we begin to transition the season to the cooler Autumn breezes, this is a traditional time that we also give thanks for good harvests and what we have had so far throughout the year as we look to the end of the year and beginning of a new one. It's a time when communities come together to give thanks and celebrate with the ancestors and the guardian Miruku, who comes from the sea at this time to visit the people and join in on the celebrations.

Be sure to make your RSVP early as there are only limited spaces available for this event.

# JUUGUYA

with  
Ukwanshin Kabudan

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2023 . 6:00PM . JIKOEN HONGWANJI SOCIAL HALL

Registration is now open. Reservation accepted by mail. Just complete this form and mail it to **Ukwanshin Kabudan, PO Box 892725, Mililani, HI 96789**

RSVP deadline: Monday, Sept. 25

<p>Buffet Menu</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. sushi</li><li>2. potato mac salad</li><li>3. chow mein</li><li>4. namasu</li><li>5. fried chicken</li><li>6. shoyu pork</li><li>7. andagi</li><li>8. Nishime</li></ol> <p>Cold and hot drinks included</p>	<p>We are also arranging to have the traditional mooncakes available for purchase. It will be announced in a forthcoming email.</p>
	<p>Adults - \$25</p> <p>Children - 5-10 years - \$10 below 5 years - free</p>
<p>I would like to place an order for the following:</p>	
<p>_____ Adult (s) x \$25</p>	<p>= _____</p>
<p>_____ Child(ren) x \$10</p>	<p>= _____</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>= _____</p>
<p><b>3 Payment Options: Circle the numbered option you have chosen</b></p>	
<p>1. Mail personal check payable to Ukwanshin Kabudan to PO Box 892725, Mililani, HI 96789.</p>	
<p>2. Pay online with a credit card at the Ukwanshin Kabudan website (<a href="https://ukwanshin.org/">https://ukwanshin.org/</a>).</p>	
<p>- Select "Donate" from the main menu.</p>	
<p>- Enter amount of payment</p>	
<p>- We would appreciate if you include the added service fee to help cover operational expenses.</p>	
<p>3. Request that an invoice be emailed to you. Payment can be issued by credit card.</p>	
<p>Full name _____</p>	
<p>Email _____ phone number _____</p>	
<p>Mailing address _____</p>	
<p>Complete and mail this registration form with your check (option 1) to <b>Ukwanshin Kabudan, PO Box 892725, Mililani, HI 96789</b></p>	

## HISTORY

## HIMEYURI AND HAWAII

Colin Sewake

*Special to The Hawaii Herald*

Almost eight decades have passed since the Battle of Okinawa and the end of World War II, but the memories of 136 teachers and students from a women's school who lost their lives still remain.

Two women's schools, Okinawa Daiichi Women's High School and Okinawa Shihan Women's School, were located in what is currently the Asato district of Naha City. Okinawa Daiichi Women's High School was founded with the motto, "Ryōsai Kenbo" (developing well-cultivated wives and intellectual mothers). Students entered the four-year school after successfully completing elementary school and passing an entrance exam.

Consisting of a three-year preparatory course and a two-year regular course, the focus of the five-year Okinawa Shihan Women's School was to train future teachers. There were two paths for admittance to this school. Students could have completed both their study and the advanced course in elementary studies then enroll in the preparatory course at the school after passing an exam. The other way was to complete an exam and be enrolled in the regular course if they were a graduate of a women's high school.

Due to financial reasons, both schools were located as annexes to each other in 1916 and shared the same facilities. The students studied under the same teachers, and both institutions looked as though they had a sister-school relationship. The 28,500-square-foot property consisted of an auditorium, gym, library, farm, alumni hall, dormitory, and a swimming pool, which was the only one that existed in Okinawa at the time. Students came from all over Okinawa after passing the intense enrollment competition.

On April 1, 1945, the Battle of Okinawa began when the largest amphibious assault in the Pacific Theater by U.S. forces took place against the Imperial Japanese Army. Both male and female students at 21 secondary schools on island were mobilized for the war effort and sent to the battlefield. Most female students, ranging from ages 15 to 19, served as nurses. A group of 222 students and 18 teachers from the two aforementioned schools formed the "Himeyuri Gakutotai" or "Lily Princesses Student Corps," named after their schools' magazines. The one at Daiichi Women's School was named "Oto-hime" (princess's name from Urashima Tarō story), and the other at Okinawa Shihan Women's School was called "Shirayuri" (White Lilies).

Contrary to what actually happened, the students were told that the Imperial Japanese Army would easily defeat the American invasion and that they would be safe from danger. Many of them brought their school supplies and uniforms with them in hopes of returning to school and continuing their studies. Despite being told they would be working in Red Cross hospitals away from the fighting, the students were instead sent to caves used as hospitals on the frontlines where they performed crude surgeries and amputations, buried casualties, and transported ammunition and supplies to troops while being under the danger of constant gunfire and bombings. Those that still remained towards the end of the battle had to endure malnutrition and disease while hiding in dark caves with injured and dead soldiers, civilians, and fellow students.

On June 18, a rough order to dissolve and go home was issued to the unit that had experienced 19 student losses up until then. The next morning, American soldiers called hiding Imperial Japanese Army soldiers to come out of the Ihara Third Surgical Cave located in Itoman. When they received no response, they attacked with flamethrowers, unaware that teachers and students were also among them. As a result, four teachers and 38 students lost their lives. Another heartbreaking story involves one teacher and eight students who committed sui-



Entrance of Himeyuri Peace Museum, April 2021. (Photo courtesy of Himeyuri Peace Research Center)

cide by using hand grenades given to them by Imperial Japanese Army soldiers. Of the 240 Himeyuri Gakutotai students and teachers, 123 students and 13 teachers perished by the war's end.

In January 1946, Mayor Washin Kinjō of Mawashi Village (present Mawashi district in Naha), who was a relative of a Himeyuri Gakutotai student who died in the battle, led an effort for villagers to collect the remains of the deceased. They erected the "Konpaku No Tō" (monument to the deceased spirits) the following month, which was the first memorial to be built after the war.

The "Himeyuri No Tō" (Himeyuri Cenotaph) was built on April 5 of the same year at the site of the Ihara Third Surgical Cave, where many students and others lost their lives, followed by an *ireisai* (memorial service) on April 7. On April 9, a third monument known as "Kenji No Tō" was built honoring male students who perished. These three monuments serve as memorials that express the strong desire for lasting peace.

Although the story of Himeyuri is about a group and location on Okinawa main island, there are strong ties to individuals from Hawaii. The first is Chiyoko Oyadomari who was born on a Hawaii plantation in 1922 where her Issei (first generation) father operated a sugar business. In 1930, he relocated the family to Okinawa and opened the Oyadomari Gensei Store, a wholesale fish business, in Naha. Oyadomari was in the third grade in elementary school in Hawaii but was enrolled in the second grade at "Naha Shiritsu Kōshin Jinjō Shogakko" (Naha Koshin Elementary School) because she was thought to have issues with the Japanese language. She later entered the Okinawa Daiichi Women's High School; however, because of her gift of intelligence, she then continued on to what is now Ochanomizu University, one of the top schools for women in Japan.

Oyadomari graduated in 1943 and returned to Okinawa as a teacher at her alma mater. Because of

her history with the school and her bright and lively teaching style, she became very popular with the students. She taught her subjects with an open rapport, bringing much joy to the classroom. Students would request her to sing songs, such as "Okashi To Musume" (Sweets and the Girls) in her beautiful alto voice. Oyadomari also became an elder sister to the student residents as the dormitory's director.

As the Battle of Okinawa began and intensified, many teachers evacuated but Oyadomari chose to stay with her students. She lifted their spirits by singing songs to them and as they fled southward, she tended to those who experienced health issues and couldn't take care of themselves. Oyadomari, at 23 years old, was among those that were killed in the Ihara Third Surgical Cave, where the Himeyuri Cenotaph is currently located.

Kikuko Miyagi, a 16-year-old student at the time, commented, "While the sound of battle roared, we had to continuously dig trenches even though our one daily meal was a single rice ball. Students who were enthusiastic at the start quickly became tired. During one break as we knelt close together, we heard the sound of Miss Oyadomari's beautiful voice. When the last lines of the song, '...two Parisian girls enjoy sweets at the corner candy shop, bonjour!' were sung, all of us listening burst into applause. Miss Oyadomari's efforts to raise students' spirits went straight to our hearts."

Another Hawaii individual with ties to Himeyuri is Harry Shinichi Gima, a Nisei (second generation) with Yomitan roots who worked as an engineer on a U.S. military base after the war. The Himeyuri Cenotaph that was built shortly after the war had no plan for its management and upkeep.

Gima, one day, saw an elderly woman praying at the monument and was saddened when he noticed its neglected condition. He approached Seizen Nakasone, a former Himeyuri teacher who later became the first director of the Himeyuri Peace Museum, and asked, "Are we just going to



Chiyoko Oyadomari in her preparatory school days in Tōkyō, 1939. (Photo courtesy of Himeyuri Peace Research Center)



Portrait of Harry Shinichi Gima painted by Seikichi Tamanaha, 1952. (Photo courtesy of Himeyuri Peace Research Center)



## HISTORICAL FICTION

## “CHILD OF A HAWAIIAN IMMIGRANT”

By Genpachi “Jūkichi” Tsushima  
Translation by Kan Edmund Akatani  
Special to The Hawai‘i Herald

“Child of a Hawaiian Immigrant” is a historical novel that conveys the events, social conditions and life of the author’s own immigration and personal experiences while being faithful to historical facts. The editing team understood that it was the author’s desire to include actual events and people with accurate details. The main character Yoichi is based on the events of the author’s life in Okayama, Japan, his life as an immigrant sugarcane worker in Waipahu, his educational and professional life experiences, and his World War II internment.

This story comes to us courtesy of Bob Tsushima, son of the late Genpachi Tsushima. It was the first place winner of the United Japanese Society of Hawaii’s novel contest in celebration of the 1968 centennial of Japanese immigration to Hawai‘i. The journey from translating to self-publishing was a family effort. Bob was able to bring us this English version with the help of his brothers Mark and Willie, his wife Jeanne, daughter Kathryn, son-in-law Dan Keller. To purchase a copy of the translated book, go to [blurb.com/b/10379589-child-of-a-hawaiian-immigrant](http://blurb.com/b/10379589-child-of-a-hawaiian-immigrant).



## Chapter 4: Working in a Store

On a Sunday when the shop was closed, Yoichi went to visit Waipahu Plantation where his father worked. Although three months had passed since his arrival in Hawai‘i, Yoichi had never been out of Honolulu, so it was a chance for him to go to the countryside. He thought it would be a change of atmosphere for him. There were no buses running on schedule and there were no taxis in

those days. The usual mode of transportation to go to the country (the Japanese used to call all areas “country” outside of Honolulu) was the train. It was the first time for Yoichi to ride on a train in Hawai‘i.

The train in Hawai‘i was a crude version compared to trains in Japan. The gauge was narrower, the engine and passenger cars were smaller and made in an inelegant fashion. It was even poorer looking than the light rail trains that ran in the countryside of Yoichi’s hometown. Other differences were the locomotives burned diesel oil, not coal, as in Japan, and instead of using a whistle when it came to a stop or a crossing, a bell rang with a deep-sounding clang.

The train was slow moving and it was like riding on a horse-drawn carriage. After leaving the depot in downtown Honolulu and passing a large pineapple factory, the train ran through the countryside. On the left side was the beautiful blue-green ocean and on the right were the seemingly endless sugarcane fields. From time to time, Yoichi saw laborers who looked Japanese, using longhandled scythes. They were cutting grass on the paths through the sugarcane that were taller than human beings. There were a few houses scattered on both sides of the tracks. A horse carrying a heavy load on its back was moving along a road.

After passing two small stations, the train stopped at what appeared to be a terminal. This was Waipahu. It was a rustic looking station with a ticket booth and nearby was a concrete building that appeared to be a warehouse. Yoichi bought a bottle of soda water at a small shop by the station run by a Japanese woman. He asked the woman for directions to Camp No. 5 at Waipahu Plantation and showed her his father’s address.

From the station, there was a bumpy road. Beyond that he saw the big, tall smokestack of the sugar mill, spewing out gray smoke. Yoichi walked about 200 yards from the station, the road rising as he approached the sugar mill. Houses covered with red dust appeared on both sides of the road. Since most of the residents at the plantation were probably Japanese, many of the shops were

managed by Japanese and had signs such as “Ota Shoten” (Ota Store) or “Takahashi Store” hung outside. There were some grimy-looking restaurants, some beer halls, and a pool room. He turned at a movie house with gaudy posters pasted all over it, and as he climbed a short hill, Yoichi saw on the left side, the sugar mill, an immense, concrete structure almost oppressively large. Extremely loud noises of moving machinery were coming from it.

After passing the sugar mill, Yoichi continued to the right along the dusty road, as he was instructed by the lady at the store. On both sides of the road, broad sugarcane fields stretched endlessly. Yoichi was disturbed because his new shoes were getting dirty from the red dust. He noticed the dust of Hawai‘i came from volcanic rock and unlike beautiful brown Japanese dust; it was a distasteful red color. This red dust gave Yoichi a negative impression when he came to Hawai‘i.

To be continued ...

Edgar Gepachi “Jūkichi” Tsushima was born on April 20, 1897 in Okayama, Japan. He graduated from Okayama Normal School, a school for teachers, at age 19. In June 1916, Tsushima came to Hawai‘i as a contract sugarcane worker. To improve his English, he attended Ka‘ahumanu Elementary School in Honolulu for a year and then graduated from President William McKinley High School in 1925. He majored in English at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and graduated in 1930. Tsushima worked as a Japanese-language teacher and news reporter for Japanese-language newspapers. Because of his occupation, he was interned during World War II mostly in Santa Fe, N.M.

Tsushima became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1956, at which time he took on the name Edgar. He taught adult education classes for citizenship at W.R. Farrington High School and was also a radio announcer on KOHO. He was named Hawai‘i’s Outstanding Naturalized Citizen of the Year in 1967 and was honored with the Order of the Rising Sun Medal of the 6<sup>th</sup> Class by Emperor Hirohito. In 1975, he was named Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the governor of Hawai‘i. Tsushima died on July 9, 1985, at the age of 88.

## HISTORY/Continued from Page 7

leave the memorial in this state? Shouldn’t we keep up this area forever as a place of mourning for all of those young girls who died in the war? In Hawai‘i,



Ihara Third Surgical cave where Himeyuri Gakutotai teachers and students hid and perished with Japanese soldiers. (Photo by Colin Sewake)

we have Punchbowl (National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific), and we honor those who fell in the Pacific war.\* Please, let me do whatever I can to help!”

Gima began soliciting donations from friends and others and was eventually able to raise enough money for Nakasone to purchase a 6,600-square-meter area around the cave. He also raised funds for a wall around the memorial and constructed it himself by illuminating the area with his car’s headlights so he could work at night after he finished his daytime job.


The Himeyuri Alumnae Association later built a memorial in honor of Gima for his generosity, although he never boasted about his efforts and asked Nakasone not to mention his work to the public.

“His personality impressed me,” Nakasone said. “Although humble, he was really an extraordinary man ... an excellent, cheerful, and respectable person with a good heart.

Members from the Himeyuri Peace Research Center had the

opportunity to meet with Gima’s Hawai‘i relatives in 2019. Most had no idea about his work regarding the Himeyuri Cenotaph because he never talked much about it. Gima was remembered as a quiet and unselfish person. When asked what stood out about him, his family said that, as an engineer, he loved all things mechanical. He enjoyed tinkering on cars and racing. The team discovered another side of Gima that was never revealed in stories about his work on the Himeyuri Cenotaph.

As Uchinānchu in Okinawa and around the world observe “Irei No Hi” (Okinawa Memorial Day) on June 23rd marking the end of the Battle of Okinawa, let us remember the lives lost and pray for lasting peace.

\*The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific is a beautiful final resting place for those men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces and their dependents. 

Colin Sewake is a keiki o kama‘āina from Wahiawā, who was assigned to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa in December 1994 to fulfill his U.S. Air Force ROTC commitment. There, he met his future wife, Keiko, and decided to make Okinawa his permanent home. Colin is now retired from the Air Force and the Air Force Reserves. He and Keiko have two children and live in Yomitan.