Clarice B. Taylor’s “Tales about Hawaii” column in the territorial Honolulu Star-Bulletin commemorated people, events and institutions shaping the history of Hawaii nei. Although the column generally appeared on the last page of the newspaper, it was often the item many readers turned to first. Our new column, to be included in every other issue of the Hawaii Medical Journal (HMJ), will focus on commemorating physicians of Hawaii (Na Kauka o Hawaii) from the early 1800s to the present, by providing biographical sketches and, when available, photographs.

Principal source materials are twofold: the In Memoriam—Doctors of Hawaii seven volume collection at The Mamiya Medical Heritage Center at Hawaii Medical Library (HML) describing doctors practicing in Hawaii and now deceased, and the Hawaii Medical Association’s (HMA) Senior Physicians Committee listing of living, retired physicians.

In Memoriam—Doctors of Hawaii’s compilations come from source materials including HMA archival listings, newspaper clippings, Who’s Who and Men of Hawaii listings and when possible contact with the doctor’s family, close personal friends and professional associates. This seven volume series began in the early 1950s as a project of the HMA Auxiliary, with the first two volumes being completed in time for presentation to the HMA in 1956, on the occasion of its 100th anniversary. Mrs. Betty Katsuki, widow of Robert Y. Katsuki, M.D., worked with other HMA Auxiliary volunteers for more than 30 years to complete the collection of biographical sketches of 621 doctors and 407 photographs listed in the 1986 Index to: In Memoriam: Doctors of Hawaii. The project was resumed in the mid-90s by HML volunteers Ann Catts, M.D., and Florence Chinn, M.D., with 63 additional biographical sketches, and is again ongoing. Work is currently overseen by John A. Breinich, MS, Executive Director, HML, and Laura E. Gerwitz, MA, MLIS, Reference Librarian/Archives. Online access to this database is available through links at http://hml.org/mmhc/.

Members of the HMA Senior Physicians Committee will also be approached from time to time for interviews as a basis for biographical sketches in Na Kauka o Hawaii. Many of these doctors already have video and oral histories in the HML Medicine in Hawaii: Oral History Series.

Biosketches will be presented with certain themes: for example, doctors who took care of Hawaii’s kings, queens and ali`i; missionary doctors; doctors who played significant roles in combating epidemics (plague, cholera, typhus, typhoid fever) in the 1800s and other infectious diseases (tuberculosis, leprosy); plantation doctors; doctors of Kauai, of Oahu, of Maui, of Molokai, of Lanai, of the Big Island. There will be overlaps among these themes. Our inaugural biosketch in this issue is of Dwight Baldwin, M.D., because with a birthdate of 1798 he is one of the earliest of physicians practicing in Hawaii on whom data is available.

Enjoy!