

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Lily Lilinoe Chong

Lily Lilinoe Kawashima Chong was born June 2, 1908 in Waipi‘o Valley, Hawai‘i. She was the only child of Sentaro Kawashima, a taro and rice farmer who immigrated from Wakayama, Japan, and Mary Kainoakupuna Keli‘iopu‘unui Kawashima, a Native Hawaiian from the Big Island.

The family lived in Waipi‘o and Waimanu Valleys until 1922, when Mary Kawashima passed away. Chong was then sent to Honolulu to live with relatives. She attended the Territorial Normal and Training School in Honolulu.

In 1926, she returned to the Big Island and lived in Waimea with relatives, where she met David Chong, a cowboy with Parker Ranch, whom she eventually married. The couple raised eight children.

Now widowed, Chong lives in Honoka‘a.

Tape No. 26-8-1-96

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lily L. K. Chong (LC)

September 23, 1996

Honoka'a, Hawai'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Lily Lilinoe Kawashima Chong on September 23, 1996, and we're at her home in Honoka'a, Hawai'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto. This is for the Big Island families oral history project.

Okay, Lily, well, we were just talking about your name before I turned the tape on. Your name is Lily Lilinoe Hisae Kawashima Chong.

LC: That's right.

WN: I was asking you what they called you when you were growing up.

LC: Yeah.

WN: So what did they---what were you known as?

LC: Well, the family and friends close by called me Noenoe, and some called me Lilinoe. But only in school they called me Lily. Some of my school friends.

WN: And Lilinoe, how did you get that name?

LC: I got it through my mother's adopted mother. That was her name. So we Hawaiians believe in carrying on the names of the families among the close relatives. And so right now I have about six or seven Lilinoes. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, in your family?

LC: Yeah. It carried on, I gave the name to my oldest daughter. And then she named her granddaughter Lilinoe, and then my second daughter had a daughter, and she called her Lilinoe, and then her daughter's daughter called her children Lilinoe, and keep on. . . . And then my grandson in the Mainland, he also called his daughter Rainy. Lilinoe, the meaning is rain, a misty rain. So instead of calling her Misty he called her Rainy Lilinoe Chong.

(Laughter)

LC: Then his younger brother in Waimea called my full name on the only daughter he has, Lily Lilinoe. It's a Chong anyway. So I have lots of Lilinoes to carry on when I pass away.

WN: Very nice name.

LC: Yeah.

WN: Very nice name. And how did you get Hisae?

LC: Well, Hisae, when I was growing up, my father used to call me Hisae. And I asked him, (chuckles) he said, oh, that was his sister's name. And I asked him what was the meaning, he say means burnish. I don't know.

WN: So your father was the only one who called you Hisae?

LC: Yeah, mm hmm. And his cousin—his name was Miki—he called me Hisae. But others don't know or they never (ask). Anyway, I grew up among more my mother's relatives.

WN: So tell me, first of all, when were you born and where were you born?

LC: Well, I remember my parents [saying they] went fishing down the beach, and my mother said—and my father also—that while they were camping down the beach catching *ulua*, throwing line, they built a tent. And so my mother [Mary Kainoakupuna Keli'iopu'unui Kawashima] started having (chuckles) childbirth pains and she gave birth [to] me in the tent down the beach.

WN: In Waipi'o?

LC: Yeah, down the beach Waipi'o Valley.

WN: And when was this?

LC: In the year 1908, June 2nd. What gets me is my mother said I was born June 2nd on Tuesday, and at two o'clock in the morning. Everything seemed to be two, two.

(Laughter)

LC: I don't know what's that about (whether good or not).

WN: Okay, so tell me something about your father first of all.

LC: Well, my father [Sentaro Kawashima] was a very humorous person. He's very kind, good-hearted and he jokes. To me, I was more close to my father than my mother. He often used to say he wished I was a boy instead of a girl. But anyway, he was a fisherman and farmer, and he liked to help people. And sometime when I was a little girl, these schoolteachers from Honoka'a used to come down the beach and go swimming, and he went out and rescued two teachers (at one time). And so they were happy, they wanted to pay him but he didn't want to take any reward. He said it was just lucky thing he was there. He was fishing with a bamboo [pole] and he saw them across a river and he was wondering what they were gonna do. And

first thing you know he saw them swimming out, and then they started yelling for help, one of them (was under the water). And so he left his bamboo and swam out (to help). He used to swim a lot in Japan, so he was a good swimmer. I know when I had my children he used to take my children down in the ocean. And he put [them around] his neck in front of him. Just throw them in the water to let them learn how to swim, swim back (to him).

WN: What, he would keep them up with the rope?

LC: No, nothing.

WN: Oh.

LC: He just put on his back, and they (go out and let them learn to swim back to him).

WN: Oh, I see.

LC: And then he take 'em out swimming and he just throw them in the water so that they go that way and swim back to him to learn how to swim.

WN: How about you, did he teach you like that?

LC: Oh yeah, I went swimming, too. But my mother never used to like me to go swim all the time. She was a good swimmer, too.

So anyway, my father used to be a person that—I know when I was grammar school, and he, during rainy time, I remember, he used to take raincoats, he used to have lot of short raincoats (for farm work in case of rain). That's what all the Waipi'o farmers used to have, you know, for bad weather. They don't use a long raincoat. Just a raincoat hat and short raincoat. And he used to pick up several from the kitchen, where he hang all his raincoats, and he would walk out with one raincoat and go out and then first thing you know he comes back with several Japanese people. (Chuckles) And I used to complain, "Papa, why you bring all these strangers here?" you know, in Hawaiian and pidgin English.

And he said, "Oh," you know, some of them he knew, some he doesn't know who they are, but he said, "It was raining so heavy and was flooding." But that's when the *gori* [goby], you know the *gori*, Hawaiians call it '*o'opu*'?

WN: Yeah, oh yeah.

LC: That's when they bite a lot. You know, when the water turn brown.

WN: You mean in the taro patch?

LC: No, no in the river.

WN: The river.

LC: Yeah, he goes down by the river side and he find these people and he bring 'em home and tell my mother to make pancake, coffee, like that, and feed them and let them sleep in the

parlor on the *lau hala* mat. They just sleep there and morning time they go back (and continue fishing).

WN: These were, what, plantation workers or something?

LC: Yeah, some of them plantation workers and some, I guess, they not working for the plantation but they just come down fishing. So he used to do all that, you know, go out of his way to see people that need help and help them. I know, like, some of the Hawaiians, when they building house, or have something and he hear that they need help he goes there and offer his services. And they liked him a lot. They all gave him a English name, Jim. (Chuckles) They called him Jim instead of Kawashima. And afterward, some of the Hawaiians got so used to with the name Jim, instead of calling Jim they call him "Jimo." (Chuckles)

WN: Well, your father's story is written up in that article [*The Hawaii Herald*, June 20, 1986,] but I would imagine he was one of the very few Japanese who lived down in the valley.

LC: Yeah, mm hmm. He lived right through [there] until he died [in 1956]. Of course, we built a house in Kapulena, between Honoka'a and Kukuihale. And then he lived there but he goes down the valley all the time. And he had a Model-T Ford, and he liked to drink sake and go mingle with Japanese. And (chuckles) I know one time that—I was about maybe around eight, nine years old—and he used to go on the horse up to Kukuihale, do shopping and come back [home]. Sometime my mother and I wait and wait. This was the house built down close to the river in Waipi'o, down the beach side. We lived there for several years. The thing you know we hear him singing, coming home. And one time while he was coming, I guess he was so (chuckles) drunk or what—he was going this way, that way—first thing you know he fell off from the saddle in the river. And I started yelling and my mother ran out and then dive into the water and grab him and shake him up (laughs) and scold him. He just laughing, laughing. And you know the song he was singing, "I love you, you love me under the bamboo tree." (Laughs) I don't know where he got that.

(Laughter)

LC: Then off he went from the saddle.

WN: Now, your father was issei from Wakayama [prefecture] in Japan.

LC: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: And then he came over here, he worked in the plantation . . .

LC: Yeah.

WN: . . . first, yeah, then eventually [tape inaudible].

LC: Yeah, he worked first in Kohala then he came to Kukuihale and met Mr. Toko [a.k.a., Tokujiro Sato,] and then from then on he start going down Waipi'o. And when he met my mother he built the house and lived down there. And during that time my mother was taking hula lessons, so he got interested. The lady said, sure she'll show him, teach him. And he became a very good dancer just like a woman, I mean a young girl. I know when I was about

nine or ten, they used to go and entertain, my mother and my father, when they have *lū'au* they call them because they like to see him dance. And so they go to parties and dance and sing. My mother used to play the guitar and he dances. And then sometime they both play the gourd, you know, slap kind. They learned all that. And at one time some of the *Haole*s were down there, and they thought he was a girl because he had those *lau hala* thing, they make it just like lei. And all that. And they don't use grass skirt those days. It's a cloth skirt with different colors. And when he dance and they threw money on the floor. (Chuckles) They think he's a girl or a lady, I think, I don't know. But he enjoyed that.

WN: Did a lot of people in Waipi'o think of him as being really different because he was Japanese or . . .

LC: Well, I think in the beginning they did. But after they got accustomed to him and being among Hawaiians and he start speaking Hawaiian and do like how the Hawaiians do in everything—like planting taro and farming and pounding the taro into poi and all that—well, they got (to enjoy him around). They always telling, "Oh Jim, we need you. Come and help." So he used to go. I don't think so they had, you know, inferior complex against him or something. I think they got along well. Everybody likes him.

WN: What languages did he speak?

LC: Most of the time—if he's with Hawaiians he speaks Hawaiian. And when he's with Japanese he speaks Japanese. And well, with other people he speak pidgin English.

WN: What about with you?

LC: Oh, he speak to me, sometime he speak Japanese. Most time Hawaiian and pidgin English. Yeah. But with my mother I always hear them two talking in Hawaiian. And they used to sit up in the night and mend [fishing] nets. Used to make nets: throwing nets and the other kind net, seine net or what we call *pāloa*. They used to—both of them—my mother used to do mending nets with him. They both do it together. Other than that, my mother used to be (doing her own thing). What she used to do was gather *lau hala* and weave mats, fans and hats like that, when I was a young girl, while my father is farming (or working somewhere).

WN: Was that for home use?

LC: Home use, yeah, but most of the time when she finish one, her relatives come, she give 'em away. And my father used to work with the buffalo, and I used to go along with him all the time, work in the taro patch or the rice field to level the ground before they do the planting.

WN: Before we talk about your helping your father, tell me some more about your mother. What kind of a woman was she?

LC: My mother was something like my father. She was a very kind person. I know when people used to pass by—you know (back of) our house, we have a big yard and (the back has) stone wall around. And she used to—when she hear voices she come out from the house and look and she call them, she say, "Come and eat."

And then they all say, "Oh, we going down the beach. Would you want to go, too?" And

then if she's not busy, she'll go along with them. And they go down catch those shellfish, '*opihī*, and squid, and all that. And when we were little, we used to—I used to go along with the other people's children. There's a cave down there before, but now since the [1946] tidal wave, the cave is all fill up with sand and stone. But used to be a pretty big cave. You could walk in and sit down. They used to take us—the mothers used to take us—me and the other children, all our mothers, they leave us there. They spread out *lau hala* mat on the sand and we sit there and they go out fishing, catching those '*opihī* shell and other things. And they pick up the other kind, the small shell they call *pipipi*. They build a fire and boil that and give us to keep us busy with the safety pin so we have to take 'em [i.e., the meat] out. I don't know if you see that.

WN: Yeah, I've seen *pipipi* before.

LC: Yeah, you seen, yeah. That keep the children busy. That's what we used to do in the cave. Keep ourselves busy eating, picking on that while they busy fishing. And then if they had somebody catch more or the others catch less they go ahead and divide among them so everybody have something to take home. They used to catch those eels, too. I don't know, small, small eels. They go with a piece of meat, and they put a [nylon] stocking on their hand, that lady stocking, and they hold the piece of meat, and there's the water coming up. There's a opening around the rocks. They put their hand there and the eel come and then they squeeze the neck, they catch 'em and put in their bag. That's how I . . .

WN: In salt water?

LC: Yeah, in the ocean.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah.

WN: And then . . .

LC: They pick 'em.

WN: . . . you just eat 'em?

LC: They take home, and they chop the head off, they clean and they—it's a small, about my finger size [circumference], but kind of long like that.

WN: What, about foot long?

LC: Yeah. They wrap 'em up in the ti leaf, they bake 'em and. . . .

WN: Did you eat that?

LC: Yeah.

WN: Oh yeah? Taste good?

LC: Good. Get meat, you know, there's that one small, long bone in the center. You just push all the meat out from the bone and you eat only the meat. I don't care to eat it now, but I . . .

(Laughter)

WN: What other kind foods did you eat in Waipi'o?

LC: Well, most of the time, *āholehole* and *moi*—my father used to go catch *moi* with my mother—mullet used to get, and *moi li'i*. That *moi li'i* they call that that small *moi*. And another kind of fish that come in from the ocean they call it *hinana*. Tiny little thing, just like *nehu*. Just like *iriko*. But this is . . .

WN: What did you call it, again?

LC: *Hinana*.

WN: *Hinana*?

LC: Mm hmm.

WN: Oh, I never heard of that.

LC: And they turn into the *gori* (when they grow big). You know what is *gori*, yeah?

WN: Yeah, '*o'opu*.

LC: Yeah, when they get bigger it's become a *gori* ('*o'opu* in Hawaiian).

WN: And this is fresh water, then?

LC: Yeah, it [originally] comes from the ocean, though, and come into the [fresh] water. They come in a school.

WN: Oh, you mean like brackish water, then?

LC: Yeah, yeah. And what the Hawaiians used to do, I know my mother folks and other ladies, they used to pile stone. And they have these—I forgot the name—the Hawaiians called it *pōhue[hue]*. And it's a long vine thing with the leaf, something like morning glory, but it grows down the ocean. So they go and pull that thing out. They pile the rock first and they put that thing over, so that when this *hinana* come up, they go in this place, (like a) fence. And they have a, what you call, a thin cloth or maybe, mesh kind of cloth. They go and scoop it up. They catch and put it in the bucket. Very delicious. Good. They take 'em home and some, if they catch plenty, they used to salt 'em and they dry 'em out. And then when get dry, something like *iriko*.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. And those that don't have too much they take home and they cook it. Either they bake like Hawaiian style, they put salt and bake 'em in the ti leaf, put in the ti leaf and bake it.

And others they scramble the eggs and you mix with that and you fry it, make patty. Good. Very delicious. So that's the kind thing they catch. And they used to have—not the *ogo* but other kinds of *limu* down there, they used to gather at the (end) of the (water), where the water go out (to the ocean). But nowadays, I don't see it. Everything seemed to disappear.

WN: So Waipi'o had lot of brackish water areas?

LC: Yeah. Coming in from the ocean (when the sea gets rough), yeah. But it doesn't go way up. Just go about quarter ways when high tide, yeah.

WN: So had mullet there, too, then?

LC: Oh yeah, lot of mullet. You set the net on the side, you catch mullet. We used to go and my father used to set the net on the side, and then we just go hit [the water] with the guava branches. And then afterward you go and you see all the net moving, all the mullet get caught in there, it catch 'em. So used to be so much fish down there, you know. And this small *moi li'i* they turn into *moi* afterward. They about that long. They call that *moi li'i*.

WN: The size of your finger?

LC: Yeah (and bigger). They very delicious, too. You fry it or any way. They used to have lot of fish. I know my father used to have several throwing net. He make his own. And when *moi li'i* time, he used to go down there. Several, not only him, several other people they go down there. They know the season, when it comes. And once they know there's *moi li'i*, oh, all those who have nets go down there. But my father, because he always go fishing, we have lot of different kind fish to eat and share. He used to throw the net and when he catch plenty fish he used to just shake the net and all the fish fall off. If somebody is around there, he tell them to come and help himself. He used to give and then take home just enough to eat. Most the time he, if people around, he always tell them to come and help themselves. So he was very good-hearted.

WN: He liked his fish Hawaiian style or Japanese style?

LC: Well, I see sometime he put *shōyu* vinegar, like that, he chop 'em [fish] up. And that's more Japanese style, eh. I think he eat more—he always have rice, but he eat little bit poi. He don't eat too much poi, but he likes his rice. He eats rice in the morning, rice for lunch, rice for dinner. (Chuckles)

WN: And what about your mother?

LC: My mother eats rice. Rice and poi. She used to eat poi in the evening. But there's some Hawaiians, they don't have rice at all so they come—because we raise rice. When we sell, you sell to the ditch company that time.

WN: The what company?

LC: Ditch company.

WN: Oh, ditch company.

LC: Uh huh. I think they were the people responsible opening a ditch line from Waipi'o to Kukuihaele.

WN: Oh, oh. This is Hāmākua Ditch Company?

LC: Yeah, yeah. But Mr. Payne—not Morris Payne is the son, now, this is Willie Payne, William Payne. He is the one, I remember, used to come down Waipi'o and check the rice and the rice mill. See how many farmers are selling rice. When they grind the rice, you know, they separate the (rice)—you could see the white rice go one side, the brown rice go one side. And some Hawaiians, when harvesting (time) because they want to eat rice, they used to—when you harvest—see, when they cut the rice [plant], they cut halfway. The bottom part they spread 'em down, and about that much where the grain is, they lay 'em down. And then afterward they come and they pick it up and bundle it up and hook with the stick, put on their back, take 'em home and put 'em on the cement floor they have. And the other Hawaiians, whatever is left, they used to come and pick, take home. They put 'em in a bag, they hit, hit with a stick and the rice all fall off. Then they dry 'em and then they hit, hit again so all the cover over the rice grain come out. And they use that. They cook for themselves because they don't have rice. But there's lot of people (chuckles) I know, we have neighbors—oh they live about, maybe, kind of far, maybe from here till the bank [approximately two hundred yards]. That far from our house. So every morning this man, he used to come to our house just to eat rice (in the morning).

(Laughter)

WN: Was this a Japanese man?

LC: Hawaiian. Hawaiian. And then sometimes his whole family comes. So when we have extra rice, my mother always give them quarter bag, like that, take home. And what they used to do, they cook the rice with the sweet potato to make it longer.

WN: Oh.

LC: Yeah. Last longer, (have more to eat).

WN: So when they eat it, it would be mixed together?

LC: Yeah, with sweet potato, yeah. They peel the potato, cut 'em up, and they wash the rice, and they put the potato into with the rice. I seen my father do that too, afterward. It taste good. Yeah.

WN: And you used to raise sweet potato, too?

LC: Yeah, raise sweet potato. Little bit, not too much. Little bit vegetable like tomato, beans and other things. The Hawaiian people they raise more onion and tomato.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. They don't raise other things. And they live on the taro shoot like that, and the *warabi* (and watercress). But my father used to raise eggplant, beans and other kinds of vegetable that

he likes. Cabbage, he used to make salt cabbage and eat. And sometime I see him raise *daikon* and make pickled *daikon*. I guess he wants to eat his Japanese food. So when he go up to Kukuihaele, he's always drinking sake with his friends, and sometime he bring their kinds of vegetable down. When he go up he take fish up there or something. They exchange, like. I don't know. Most time to his friends.

WN: And his Japanese friends were with Kukuihaele [i.e., Pacific] Sugar Mill [Company]?

LC: Yeah, they work Kukuihaele plantation [i.e., Pacific Sugar Mill Company]. But most of them, oh, he goes to Kukuihaele, as far as Kapulena sometime. And when he was raising taro—after he stop raising rice—that's when he used to deliver his (taro) way up to, what you call, 'O'ōkala.

WN: You mean, he'd head up. . . .

LC: Yeah, he had orders (from Portuguese and Hawaiians).

WN: Oh, I see.

LC: Used to take 'em. And you know how much the taro that time? Only dollar half [\$1.50].

WN: For how much?

LC: One bag.

WN: One bag? And how heavy was one bag?

LC: One hundred pounds.

WN: Hundred pounds.

LC: And now, eighty pounds of taro they selling fifty to sixty dollars. I know my [half-]brother Suei [Sueichi Kawashima], he sells his about fifty dollars or more, I think. I know Seiko Kaneshiro, the son sells his for sixty dollars.

WN: This is just raw taro?

LC: Yeah, raw taro and only eighty pounds. But at one time, the taro [price] came way down, was only fifty cents a bag. And the people just leave the taro in the patch. They say no sense go and sell because . . .

WN: Because get so much surplus.

LC: . . . because [by the] time you harvest and take up the *pali* and take to the people, don't pay much, so. But eventually it went up to dollar half [\$1.50]. You know, fifty cents then came to dollar and dollar half. That's when my father used take to 'O'ōkala.

WN: And these are poi companies buying the bags?

LC: No, no. Private people (that live in the camp).

WN: People who want raw taro and they make their own poi?

LC: Yeah, yeah. They make their own. (Some like to cook and eat.)

WN: Did he sell to poi mills or poi companies?

LC: Poi factory. Oh yeah, yeah, afterward. Afterward they had four poi shops down there. Some of them, they raise their own taro. Like Akioka [Poi Factory], and (Akiona, Ah Ho, and Olepau).

WN: Chang, Leslie Chang?

LC: Oh, Leslie Chang was after. They never raised taro. They only buy the taro and had a poi shop. And they didn't have it in Waipi'o. They had it in Hilo. All the time. When they move to Hilo, that's when they start having the poi shop. They used to operate a store before. They had a big store in Waipi'o. (Later the flood destroyed it.)

WN: Down in the valley?

LC: Yeah. And they used to go under Ahana [Poi Factory]. That's the name (in Hilo).

WN: But your father didn't do any of that?

LC: No, no.

WN: Factory or. . . .

LC: Well, he worked for Ah Ho Poi Shop. My mother used to go peel the taro for the Akioka Poi Factory, and he used to work for Ah Ho. But those days, they used to pound the poi [by hand]. They never had machinery. All pounding. (Only Akioka had machine to grind his taro into poi.) And the poi (bag) was so big. I think was, maybe, (eight or) ten pounds they were selling. Deliver to Waimea. (Parker Ranch.) And gradually afterward it came down, you know, the weight. Nowadays you cannot get poi for dollar. (Laughs)

WN: If you can get at all.

LC: Yeah, yeah. It's hard. I buy from Morgan Toledo. He sells two pounds [of poi] for five dollars. And when my brother, Suei, brings me taro, I used to cook 'em myself and I used to pound before. I had a small poi board. I used to pound and afterward, when I had carpal tunnel surgery my two hands, I got hard time so I bought this machine. They call it Champion. Have you heard about it?

WN: No.

LC: It's supposed to be more for juice, but they use it for grinding poi. And so I ordered and I bought one. So that's handy.

WN: How often do you eat poi?

LC: Me? When I have fish, I like eat poi. But other times we eat rice or bread or potato. But when I was growing up, we used to eat rice and poi most the time. And everybody, they love to eat poi and rice. And some families they just eat poi morning, poi lunch, poi evening because they have nothing else to eat. And, of course, they cook the taro. And you know before, they never had butter. They used to have this lard that come in a yellow can about maybe two-, three-pound size. Have a handle. And that's the kind lard they do all their frying. (Made from pork fat.) Never get this Wesson oil and all this other (cooking oils).

(Laughter)

LC: And you know what the Hawaiians used to do, they cook the taro, they slice 'em and they get that lard, they put it over the taro and they eat it.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. Taste good, I tried. (Chuckles)

WN: In those days, nobody heard of cholesterol, yeah?

LC: No, no. (Laughs) Nothing of that.

WN: Did you folks eat meat at all?

LC: Oh well, once in a while, people have cow or something. They kill the cow, and they let everybody know, oh, they going have a (meat) sale. And so you go there. They kill the cow, they slaughter, I mean, and they cut it all up in pieces. And they put all the banana leaf down on the (ground) and they have ti leaf over, and they have piles of meat. And plenty, you know. The bone, meat, everything together. And that's one dollar for one pile. So you just go there and you just choose how many pile you want. And you take a bag, you know, flour bag or whatever, and put it in. Once in a while they have. Then later on, the rice mill was sold out and everybody stop raising rice afterward. Anyway, before they sold the rice mill, they send word out that they were not going to have any more rice grind because they were gonna sell the machinery. And so everybody stop raising rice. And then so—what I was going to say, now. What I was saying before that? About . . .

WN: About the rice . . .

LC: Oh, the meat, the meat. They had buffalos in Waipi'o to do the harvesting of the taro land or rice field. So they had to get rid of these buffalos. So eventually they start killing the buffalos and they sell the meat. Good, (very) good taste.

WN: Oh, after the buffalo is getting old or something?

LC: (Not really.) They slaughter them (to get rid of them because they didn't have use for them), and sell the meat (to) everybody (that want to try taste the meat).

WN: And how did you folks eat the meat?

LC: Oh, we made jerk meat. Most the time my mother made jerk meat and dry 'em out. And some of them they just fry 'em like that or throw 'em over the charcoal. If they buy plenty they salt it. And then next time when they cook they put the taro leaf inside, mix it together, you know, for vegetable. That's how they use it. But the buffalo meat I tried was real good. And we used to eat donkey meat, too.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: (Chuckles) There was a Chinese man—married Hawaiian—and he used to come down and he makes all this smoke meat, donkey meat. We didn't know (then), see. (WN laughs.) He went to Kona, they were getting rid of all the jackasses [there], so he bought them and he slaughter and he made smoke meat, jerk meat and then he brings down the valley and tell everybody oh, he get some *pipi kaula*. They call that *pipi kaula*. And so everybody buy. (WN laughs.) Because get fat and all, eh. It looks good, so we used to buy. And afterward, we found out was donkey meat. And there was a man in the valley was so angry, he wanted to give the man good beating because he come down say it was regular meat. But it tasted good. (WN laughs.)

Some of the people in the valley they go hunting, get wild pig. When the ocean is bad, rough like that, they cannot go out on the canoe fishing. And lot of time people go out on the canoe and catch more fish. Those who have canoes they used to go out. And those that don't have, well, they have to depend on what they get from the river. Those days you don't starve because there's so much things that time. Now, all disappearing. Yeah.

Well, I believe like the Bible say, before the coming of Christ—I don't know if you believe, but I do—day of the coming of Christ, lot of things gonna change. That's true, his second coming. So right now the Bible say there's gonna be all kinds of sickness and disease. And it's happening right now.

WN: So what kind of work did you do helping your father out in the taro patch?

LC: Oh, most of the time I go help sickle the grass along the bank. You have to sickle the grass. And then when he's doing harrowing like that, making the ground level with the buffalo, he used to put me on the buffalo, I ride on the buffalo while he come from behind, hit the buffalo, to go. And sometime it's so hot, the buffalo just sit down in the patch. (Chuckles) It doesn't move because hot. Then you gotta wait until (he) feel (like) standing up and then you. . . . You cannot just force 'em like the horse or cow.

WN: So you're just sitting there on top?

LC: Yeah, yeah, yeah. (WN laughs.) Just sit on top. Those days you think lot of fun. (WN laughs.) And when my father used to go fishing nighttime—he used to go sometime, my mother don't go nighttime—he goes. And I used to follow him when I was nine, ten years old. I go down the beach and sit down, watch him fishing. He catch fish and then we come back. Sometime we go on horseback, sometime we walk, because not too far from where we live. Nowadays it's so different down there. Oh, you be surprised how much people at the lookout going down the valley. Of course, the road is much better now.

WN: Back then, growing up, how did you folks go up and down the valley?

LC: Oh, we used to go on horseback. And it wasn't as smooth as it is now. They fixed the road so good, the cars even go down.

WN: You mean not even four-wheel drive?

LC: Oh, the four-wheel drive used to go, but now [there's] lot of tourists. That's why I understand the Kukuihaele Association, the taro farmers, they complain so much. I have a grandson, he's a electrician in Hilo, T and T company [T & T Electric Inc.], and he was asked to go and put some signal light down there, by the county. Put [signal for] down and up, because these people, the tourist, they don't know where to stop when the people from below coming up. It's dangerous, you know. (People coming up with taro.) Several of them [tourists] went down with the good cars, go down. But you only (can) go so (far). You cannot go further in with the good car. But with the four-wheel, then you can cross a river and go all over.

WN: Let me turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so you said one of your jobs was to sickle the grass.

LC: Yeah.

WN: Did he use poison at all?

LC: No, those days they don't use. Just recently people start using poison. They all manual work. They never did. I guess they didn't even know about poison. (Laughs) They had just recently, I mean just lately (farmers use poison for killing the grass).

WN: I'm wondering, too, growing up, were the farmers full-time farmers back then?

LC: No, not full time. They don't work all day. They just (work so much) because it's their own. So they just work, when they get tired or the work is finished for that certain day, they stop and rest. And then next day they keep on, you know. Unless they have harvesting time, then they gotta fill up so many orders. Then they'll work. And then they have to pull the taro and they have to keep the *pulapula* (seed), to keep increase (for planting).

WN: Seed?

LC: Yeah, for replanting. So that's when they work, maybe all day or three-quarter day.

WN: You know that *pulapula*, that call that *huli*, too?

LC: Yeah.

WN: Did you father use his own *huli* or did he have to get it from somebody else?

LC: No, he use his own. You see, those days they had this kind of taro, *uaua*, they call it *uaua*, and that kind of taro when you plant get lot of *keikis* around. Plenty young ones around. Nowadays they only have ‘āpi‘i, *lehua*, and some other kind—I forgot the names, the other kind taro. The most popular now they planting is most is *lehua* and ‘āpi‘i. And they don’t have too many small taro around like the *uaua*. The *uaua*, when you plant you get—after that you get lot of *huli* from there, from the ones outside. They don’t keep the mother one, they don’t. They only take the ones from outside, the baby taro. Of course, this is not baby, they come big. So that’s the kind of *pulapula* they keep.

WN: Did you father used to give *pulapula* to others?

LC: Well, those who need, if he has enough then he always give. Even my brother does that. Anybody down there. But sometimes, right now, since they pull for orders, if they have to pull maybe sixteen, eighteen bags, and you want the *pulapula*, and you come and ask me, I have to tell you to come and help pull so that you can get some *pulapula*. Otherwise I’m gonna charge you (chuckles) for each *pulapula*. That’s how they do it now. But before, it’s just give and take. They were not selfish or charge or anything. Whatever the other one don’t have they give to the other person to help.

WN: You think that’s changed now?

LC: Oh yeah.

WN: Why is that, you think?

LC: Well, I guess everybody—they have a change of lifestyle. Maybe they---some (of them) they kind of pride or, I don’t know. People before, they like to (help and share), you know, if you doing something and you need help they come there and help even if you don’t ask. They know that you need help, they come around and, “Oh, you need help?”

And, “Oh, yeah, yeah.” But over here [today], you have to ask them [others, for help], or even if you ask them, they want to be paid. You know, they don’t want to just go and help for nothing. Or like sometime, you go even our church before, if they hear a member of the church have to remodel his house or do painting or anything, all the men folks come and help and the women do all the cooking to feed the working men. But nowadays (chuckles) they don’t do that. Yeah.

WN: Big change, yeah.

LC: Yeah, big change. Even the taro farmers. Members of the church have taro, they all go help. I come and help clean all your (taro patch); after you harvest come help clean all the waste taro, put ‘em away and help you and help to plant all. And yours is finished, I go and help the next person. But now they don’t do that. Everything change. I don’t know why, but.

WN: So in growing-up time you folks depended a lot on each other as a community, yeah?

LC: Mm hmm, that’s true. Depend on each other. And everybody happy. Like *lū‘au* time, and Christmastime, you don’t have to be invited, you just go there and eat, help yourself. If you see somebody (chuckles) has smoke coming out, you know they going have *kālua* pig. Then

you all go there. And then you see another person, you all go there again, you know, keep on going, make the round (and everybody happy, I believe because everybody know everybody in the valley).

WN: So you don't have to be invited . . .

LC: No, no.

WN: . . . you just have it and people drop in.

LC: Yeah, yeah, before.

WN: No such thing as, oh, I don't want this person to come . . .

LC: Yeah, no [such thing].

WN: . . . I don't like them, I not going invite them. (Chuckles)

LC: They used to come and help themself. Even then, when they see 'em they tell, "Oh, come, come." But today, I see some people, when you go, they just look at you and say, "Oh, why are you coming here? Who are you?"

(Laughter)

LC: Yeah. But before was different.

WN: You folks knew everybody living in the valley?

LC: Oh yeah. We knew everybody. Chinese and all. And even the other Japanese. Few Japanese. But there used to be a Japanese they call Nakanishi. He was a more horse peddler. He used to come to Honoka'a or Kapulena, he buy people's horse (as a good price) and he bring 'em down and sell for extra money. He's the only one that do. But the other Japanese were all either in farming or doing something. During the tidal wave time, I think he almost got killed, but they say he gallop on the horse and went up the *pali* way (laughs) and the waves came up. Because he live down the beach. I don't know what happened to him. I think he died afterward. I never heard about him afterward.

WN: This is what tidal wave, '46?

LC: Yeah, the last tidal wave that destroyed Laupāhoehoe and all [1946]. That's the time.

WN: Where were you at that time?

LC: Oh, I was up here, but my father was down there [Waipi'o Valley]. He was living part time down there but his [main] home was in Kapulena. And he was down there in this small shack near the *pali*, and he had his pack saddle and all in one small house and these other things. And he said he heard a noise. When he look (out), he saw this big wave coming up. And then he said it went down. It didn't come way up. And then he heard a noise again. He say he look, he saw the second one. Then he prepared himself to get out of the house and go climb

up the *pali*. And he say he was about quarter ways, just above the house anyway. He saw the third wave came and took his house and everything. And then that wave went way up and then came down. That's when it took his house. Yeah, everybody were worried that time, we all went to the [Waipi‘o Valley] lookout and look down (the valley). And (there) used to be seventeen coconut trees in Waipi‘o, close to the beach where supposed to be King Līloa’s palace used to be, where the *heiau* is. Yeah those trees, seventeen coconut trees were all washed down.

WN: That was April Fool’s day, yeah?

LC: Yeah. And there was a man and his grandson, they lived in the middle of the valley down the beach. When the first wave came, (it) took their houses and then took them up. And then at first he said (he) saw the (sea)—they know that when the ocean, you know the water, go out first [i.e., recede] before it comes up, and they call that the *kai mimiki* in Hawaiian (tidal wave). And then he said [when] he saw that happen [i.e., the ocean receding], he got on the horse with his grandson, they start galloping. He was looking which way (was shorter to escape), he have to cross the river if he go this way. If he go that way he don’t have to cross the river so he went (the) way to go to Waimanu side. But he say he never even reach halfway, the wave came up, caught him and took him way up. He say he and his grandson separated. Because they were both on the horse. And then he don’t know what happen. And he said he found himself all tangling in all that moss grass down there, weeds I mean. And so he say after the water subsided, went down, and he went around (looking) and he found his grandson. Good thing they didn’t die (or get hurt, just some bruises).

WN: Oh yeah.

LC: Yeah. But there’s this lady, they have a house down the beach, too. And it just happen—by just coincidence, I think, was lucky thing—they usually go back to Kukuihaele [from Waipi‘o Valley] for the children to go to school (in the early morning). She had big family. And they usually go in the morning. But just happen that evening, they went home. They went up Kukuihaele. And good thing, they saved their lives, I think. Some of them would have died. Because she had seven children at that time, and all little ones. So it was just lucky. Now she’s ninety years old, still living. And her children all grown up.

Get lot of changes now. The valley is so different. I composed a song for the valley, so. In Hawaiian, but. (I plan to have English words too.)

WN: Really?

LC: You know, some time ago there was an article from a national poetry [magazine], so (chuckles) I submitted something that I wrote about the valley. And they wrote back to me. They said they like the poem, so they was going give me a prize. So I’m waiting (laughs).

WN: Not yet?

LC: Not yet, I don’t know.

WN: The poem was in Hawaiian or English?

LC: English.

WN: What kind of prize would you get?

LC: Well, they said the biggest prize was \$1,000. And \$500 and \$300, and all depend. So I don't know. One of my daughter says, "Oh, seeing is believing."

(Laughter)

WN: This is Mainland?

LC: Yeah, Mainland. (Laughs)

WN: I wonder if they would understand what you were trying to say, because they don't know over here.

LC: Yeah, yeah.

WN: So what about school, what was school like down there, Waipi'o School?

LC: Well, school was good. We had two teachers, a principal, and the grades were first to sixth grade. And the children were all big kind, sixth graders so big, just like ladies and men, (WN laughs) yeah, when I first went to school. And, of course, the Hi'ilawe River was flowing alongside the school. The main lesson those days was arithmetic, geography, history, reading and spelling. Those were the things I remember down Waipi'o. Fourth-grade time, the principal used to go fishing, and then he give out the lesson to the children, and then he read his newspaper. First thing you know he's sleeping. And he had a son, his older son—he's the same grade with me—he's a rascal. He used to go and change the time of the watch.

(Laughter)

LC: And then they have a student that have to ring the bell when two o'clock. Those days [school] was only from nine [o'clock] to two [o'clock]. And so when the bell ring, he gets up and he tell, "Oh, who rang the bell?" He look at the watch, "Oh, two o'clock already." But it's not supposed to be two o'clock.

(Laughter)

LC: Every time those days, the children that can afford, they buy lunch from the store there. They had this Akiona Store, we called it. And he bakes bread, pies, cupcakes, like that. He used to make small loaves of bread and he used to cut 'em into half, he put butter one side and jelly one side, for five cents. So those who can afford, they go buy bread and those who cannot they bring lunch from home. Either they bring poi or rice or whatever. And I know I had a cousin from the Young family, Katherine Young, I used to go spend the night with them and we used to catch frogs in the night. We used to go catch frogs and there's a man used to buy the frogs for fifty cents a dozen. And she was very clever in catching frogs, that one. Oh, sometimes I catch only two, three dozen, she catch seven dozen. But she won't spend her money. She won't buy bread or anything.

WN: What did they do with the frogs?

LC: Sell to this Chinese man. We take 'em to this man, the one that run the store and there's a man come from—I think he's from Honoka'a, but he say from Kukuihaele, he comes down there. And he gives the money. Everybody give their frog with this store man, and he comes there and everybody put the tag on their bags of frog, so he know you have so many frogs in there. So he pays to that man for certain amount.

WN: Had to be alive?

LC: Yeah, yeah. Not dead, gotta be alive. The frog, they live long, you know. They don't die easily. Even no more air go in the bag they still alive. So the man comes and buy. And so those who get the money they go and buy lunch or buy candy, or *crack seed* those days was popular. All that come from China, so. That was the lifestyle those days. And those who cannot afford they bring lunch. And some of the Hawaiian kids they ask this Nelson Chun—sister Grace and the brother was same grade with me. Well the sister, Grace, she used to say, oh, the Hawaiian kids ask her to bring the *pāpa'a* rice, the burnt rice. Because the father has a big rice farm so he has a lot of workingmen. So when they cook the rice and they (have the) burn part of the rice, the Hawaiian children want that. So they ask Grace to bring 'em to school. So she brings to them and they eat that.

(Laughter)

LC: Because as long it's rice, I guess.

WN: After school was over, did you have to help your father in the fields?

LC: No, only when we had planting rice, we used to send [i.e., chase away] ricebirds. My father used to get these big kerosene (square) cans. He put stones inside, and he get the string, and then he has a stand in the middle of the patches, and he had all this cord go to different corners (and sections) of the rice patches. And big area. And then some of them go to the house on the veranda. We have the veranda pole and some over there so when you get up in the morning, just from the house we pull the strings and send all the ricebird [away]. But in the morning, I have to go (on the stand and pull the cords to scare the) birds away until the time to go to school. Come back, (do the) same thing (after school).

WN: Pull the cord?

LC: Yeah, go on top the stand. It's easy, just sit down. He has a stool for me to sit down. Just sit down and pull all the different cords and see all the birds flying away.

WN: You still see ricebirds today, nowadays?

LC: Very seldom.

WN: Yeah, I was wondering.

LC: Yeah, really seldom. I see those other kind of bird that look like ricebird, but that's not ricebird. What do you call that? (Sky rockets.) Small birds I see. But ricebirds, when they

come and when they harvest the rice, they come (in a group) and eat all the leftover. Afterward this man, Hawaiian man, Solomon Kala, his wife is close relative to my mother so when we harvest rice they always come stay with us. And he helps my father. And he used to lay that net and he—when we throw all the waste, trash, the ricebirds all come there and he go and throw the net over, catch all the ricebirds. And then he pull all the feather and he get a bamboo, stick 'em through and put 'em over charcoal (and broil it). He eat it. Ricebirds [were] fat.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. Good taste. I tried. I rather eat ricebird than dove. Some Hawaiians, they like eat the dove. Some . . .

WN: How they used to eat the ricebird? Just put 'em on the fire?

LC: Yeah, just stick 'em on the bamboo just like barbecue. They small, they take the head off and they split 'em open like that and just put salt or *shōyu*, whatever. And get the fire, you know, the charcoal and they put over. And then when it's cooked they eat that, they drink their '*ōkolehao*. (Chuckles) Or sake, whatever. I know my father always keep sake. He say that's to warm up the body, I don't know. (WN chuckles.) But the Hawaiians used to have '*ōkolehao*. Those days people used to make '*ōkolehao*, drink and sell. I know my brother-in-law used to do that, too, after I got married.

WN: You might have answered this already, but, what kind of things did you do to have fun as a little girl?

LC: Oh, you know, because I was an only child, my father used to get these *hau* tree [branches]—I don't know what the English—you know what is *hau* tree?

WN: Yeah, *hau* tree.

LC: Yeah. He used to cut 'em and bore hole and make wheels. And then he get a board—he used to do carpentry work—he used to fix 'em just like a car for me. (Chuckles) And this *hau* thing that he cut make just like a wheel. That took the place of a wheel and I can drive that and play by myself. And then he used to make bamboo and dig hole. We used to play this *pee wee* (game), they call it.

WN: Mm, yeah.

LC: Oh, you know that?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

LC: Oh really?

WN: Stick, the stick the one you play . . .

LC: Yeah, yeah.

WN: No, I know because I talking to senior citizens. I never played it.

LC: Oh yeah. My father used to play with me. Sometime we play marble. And then when I get tired, I go my cousin's place and stay overnight with them, spend the night and have more fun with them. Sometime they come over but usually they so busy because the brother has his contract of loading everybody's taro taking up the *pali*, yeah. So they have to cut grass in the morning before they go to school. They have to cut so many bundle of grass for the mules. And in the evening after school they have to go and cut some more grass again until almost dark. So when I go there I used to go and help them. And help the little ones, not the bigger ones. And we all go to school together so that help them out, so. But usually at home, that's the only kind game. I used to go play marble. My father used to take time to stay with me. My mother never bothered, she's all busy doing her *lau hala* work or some other thing. I spend more time with my father. He's always the (one) find time, you know, to spend with me.

WN: Boy, and how did he find the time, yeah?

LC: I don't know (just for a while).

WN: With all the things he had to do.

LC: Yeah. Every time I used to call him, he say oh, yeah, he comes and do this, do that (and leave).

WN: Because you were only child that's why?

LC: Yeah, I guess so. That's why he always say, oh, too bad I'm a girl. He wish I was a boy, and (be of help to him more).

(Laughter)

LC: But I used to dress like boy. I used to put overall all the time. Mm hmm. I used to love to put overall. I never cared to put dress. Only when going to school.

WN: Oh, you wore dress to school?

LC: Yeah, mm hmm. My mother used to sew the clothes, make skirt and top.

WN: Used to go barefoot?

LC: Oh yeah. Barefoot. (WN laughs.) Yeah, barefoot because you gotta cross two rivers before you get to school.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah, you gotta cross (river and walk across taro banks).

WN: How long did it take you to get to school?

LC: Oh, not too long. Well, I used to go and meet my cousins and then we go. So would take sometime half-an-hour or less. All depend if we don't stop pick guavas on the way or talk story like that. And after school sometime, if we have money, we used to go to this Chinese store and buy this kind cake they call *kong siu pang*.

WN: Oh, Chinese cake?

LC: Yeah. It's a hard cake. So we buy that. We buy five cents for three and then come by the river (on the way home) and we throw in the water (as far as we can). And then that thing (the Chinese cake) when that thing come down, just soft enough to eat. (Laughs)

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: (Laughs) Yeah.

WN: So you throw 'em upstream?

LC: Yeah, when you crossing the stream, we throw 'em up and wait for the thing to come down. (WN laughs.) All the kids used to do that.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. We used to get lot of fun doing that.

WN: Okay, so you went to Waipi'o School, and then you said for a little while you folks lived in Waimanu Valley?

LC: Yeah, that was before I started school, and then I left school, I went with this man Obayashi, his name, that works for my father in Waimanu. See, my father was [rice] farming before he started going into taro farming. The rice farming *wen* close up. And then he decided to go to Waimanu [in 1916] to raise pigs and cattle, because nobody was raising pigs and cattle there. Only these two Hawaiian families were living there, and they were related to my mother, so they went there. And he bought several cows from these Okinawa people that come around, sell. And he bought some Hampshire pigs. *Da kine* black with the white over their back. I think that's the name they call it. They say they grow fast. And he took this man and they went to Waimanu. And they stayed. They left me in Waipi'o with one of my mother's relative in our own house. And so I got lonely, miss them. And one time I saw this man shopping at the Ahana Store. I saw him at lunchtime so I thought, I decided I'm going skip school. So I told one of my friends there, I said, "Oh, I'm going to meet the Japanese man, my father's workingman." So I came to the store and watch him. I didn't say I was going with him. And so after he pack everything, what he came for to buy, and after he pack (all the things)—he had a mule and horse. And so he put that, pack 'em all on the pack saddle and I saw him going. Then I start following him. And he didn't see me until he was way down, almost going up the Waimanu *pali*.

And when he saw me (chuckles) he start yelling at me, scold me, he say, "Go home, go home."

I say, "No, I'm going. Going see my father and my mother."

He say, "No," *bumbai* my parents going scold him. And I keep going and he keep. . . . Then one time he threw stones at me. (Chuckles) He thought maybe I wouldn't follow, but I keep following, I stay way back. And until halfway up the *pali* going up, I guess he felt sorry. He stop and I stop. I didn't go. I thought what he going to do. Kind of cranky Japanese man, anyway. (WN chuckles.) Old man. And he came, he told me to ride on the pack saddle. So I went on the pack saddle and went to Waimanu. And I stayed over from school, almost two years away. Stayed there with my parents.

WN: How did you father react?

LC: Oh, my father, at first he smile, he was happy. But then he said, why did I leave school? I shouldn't come. Well, my mother, she gave me spanking.

WN: Oh.

LC: (Chuckles) Yeah, she spank me, afterward then she hug me. (Chuckles) And she said, well, that [spanking] was for I shouldn't leave school. And the family don't know that I have gone.

WN: How long were you separated from your parents?

LC: Oh, almost one year they were away.

WN: One year?

LC: Yeah.

WN: Oh, must have been hard for you . . .

LC: It is, yeah.

WN: Especially your father to leave you, too.

LC: Hard, yeah real hard. I miss them. I used to cry nearly every night. And my mother's relative, they don't have children, just husband and wife. The wife was young, maybe, she's about five, six years older than me. She married young. And I don't think so they were very happy. They always arguing, I know. And, of course, they took good care of me. But still I wasn't happy, and I have other relatives close by. So that's why my parents think, well, I wouldn't be lonely, but I was lonely. (I miss them very much.)

So stayed there [in Waimanu] and played with the kids over there. They don't go to school, no school there. Just stayed there. And enjoyed myself over there until afterward my mother and father decided they should come back so that I go back to school.

WN: I see.

LC: So that's when they sold whatever they had and gave up. And then we came back.

WN: And you were about how old?

LC: Oh, that time, that time I was about going about eight years old.

WN: Eight years old. So you stayed out of school for two years?

LC: Yeah.

WN: How was it going back to school?

LC: Hard.

(Laughter)

LC: Hard, my father used to get this Japanese thing for help me (chuckles) with the arithmetic and all.

WN: Oh, abacus?

LC: Yeah, something, some fancy kind of thing he had (to add and subtract).

WN: Yeah?

LC: Yeah. Adding, subtracting, all that. (WN laughs.) After I got used to, then all right.

WN: And you told me too, that you went to [Kukuihaele] Japanese[-language] school for little while.

LC: Yeah, when they came back from Waimanu, they decided to (move to Kukuihaele. The families in Waimanu moved to Waipi'o.)

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, we were talking about your father coming back to work for Kukuihaele plantation [i.e., Pacific Sugar Mill Co.].

LC: Uh huh. Well, he met a man—I've forgotten his name—and told him that they were looking for somebody go take a contract, a one-year contract. But he has to find his own men to take [care of] the certain cane field. And so my father recruited these people from Waimanu, the menfolks, and some other people. So we stayed in Kukuihaele where Kelly Loo lives now. Used to be a big plantation house there before, before Kelly worked for the plantation and took over the place. Anyway, we stayed there and there was another camp right close by. They call it Nomura Camp. That was the name of the place where Kelly's mother-in-law have her house now right there. And so that's when my father—I have to go Kukuihaele School, and he say better I go and take Japanese lesson. So I went, and was good. In the morning we go to Japanese[-language] school first. And when we come back, go to English school. And in the afternoon, the Japanese[-language] teacher come and meet the children. And he comes with the long bamboo. (Chuckles) And we go back again to Japanese[-language] school. And then everybody we meet on the road, he watch. We have to bow down, you know. (WN chuckles.) If it's morning we say, *ohayō gozaimasu*. In the evening, *konbanwa*, and all that. And if any child, student, don't bow down, he poke you with the bamboo. Yeah. And so

anyway, was good in the beginning. And then afterward the Waipi‘o School kids attend Kukuihaele School, after sixth grade they come to Kukuihaele [School] because, you know. . . .

WN: Oh, so you go Waipi‘o School from k[indergarten] to six[th grade]?

LC: Yeah, uh huh. And so they go up there [Kukuihaele School] for the seventh and eighth. So those children that I knew, they used to (come over). The plantation store is right below, and the hall is right there yet, still there where the classroom used to be. They used to call out my name and (chuckles) make all kind sign and teasing me, and making bowing down, all kinds. They keep doing that all the time. I got so irritated, I start skip [Japanese-language] school.

(Laughter)

LC: And my father thought I was still going but I wasn’t going. So he said, oh, if I feel that way, he say *pohō* (waste time and money). You know, he paying the school and I’m not attending school (WN laughs) so I stopped. But you know, later years I felt so bad. I thought that’s foolish of me. I should have continued because when he remarried after my mother died, and had Suei folks [LC’s half siblings], Suei folks all went Japanese[-language] school. Three of them, my two [half-]brothers and [half-]sister, they all went Japanese[-language] school. And they had their Japanese[-language] school up Ka‘āpahu side. And the school goes to eighth grade up there, Japanese[-language] school. So they all went, so I don’t know. But then, of course, they all married Japanese. (Chuckles) Afterward Suei had Japanese wife and David [had] Japanese wife. Only Dorothy married *Haole*, so.

WN: So at that time you were living Kukuihaele?

LC: Yeah, living at (that plantation house).

WN: So who lived at your house in Waipi‘o?

LC: Oh, nobody. Just my grandfather was taking care. He has his own house but he used to take care our place. Even the time my father folks went to Waimanu, well, my aunt and my uncle were living with me, taking care of me and staying at the house. And so when he [father] went to take this contract with the plantation, his family all went Kukuihaele, too.

WN: And so you lived in, like, a plantation house?

LC: Yeah, that’s owned by the plantation. Is where Kelly have his house now, he built a new house. But there was a big, big house there that belonged to the plantation before. After that, Mr. Germano used to live there with his family.

WN: Germano?

LC: Yeah, a Portuguese contractor. He used to live there with his family. I know he raised his children there. And I think he was the last one that stayed there, and afterward, nobody stayed there for a while, and then Kelly moved there.

WN: So was that a big change for you to live up Kukuihaele?

LC: Oh yeah. Was a big change. I didn't know lot of kids there. Then when we went back again Waipi'o, not too long afterward, my mother died.

WN: Oh yeah, 1922 yeah?

LC: Yeah, '22.

WN: But coming up to Kukuihaele, you weren't that used to living with, say, plantation people or Japanese people. How did you feel about that?

LC: Oh, didn't bother me because I got used to living among Japanese and Hawaiian, you know. I got used to it. Later on I went back again to Kukuihaele School afterward because that [Waipi'o School] still [had only] lower grade [levels] that time. I went back again Kukuihaele and my father went into taro farming at that time. And I stayed with my—at first my father used to saddle a horse for me to go up to Kukuihaele instead of climbing up the *pali*. Because we lived way on the other end of the *pali*, and I have to cross a river and come and meet the other children and climb up the *pali* to go Kukuihaele School for the seventh, eighth grade. But afterward my mother decided I stay with one of her aunt that live in Kukuihaele, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan. And so I stayed with them. It was during that time that my mother got sick. And I went back one weekend, I found out she was sick so I didn't go school. And then she died that night. She didn't get sick too long, just two days. They call the doctor, but the doctor say they couldn't do anything, so.

WN: What did she have?

LC: I don't know, really. I have the death certificate. Says something about blood something. Because she started hemorrhaging. And from that she died. Well, I had an uncle, not real close[ly related] uncle, but relative to my mother. When I found out my mother was feeling real bad and she was telling my father to take care of me, I went to get my horse—I had one horse for my own—I call it Girlie. I *wen* put the saddle on, I rode on the horse, I gallop all the way going down the beach to go see this uncle of mine that I was close to. I told him, oh, my mother was very sick. "She's dying. I want you to come." So he came with me and he took my horse. He went up to see one *kahuna* man, this old man. Mr. Kia. And the man [Mr. Kia] *wen* pray, he said. And he came back, he told me and my grandfather and my father, the man [Mr. Kia] said somebody made *kahuna* to my mother, so for us to wait that night. If the rooster crow three times that means my mother was going to die. But he said about one o'clock [A.M.], to listen. The rooster going crow three times. And if after that my mother don't die, then she live. But if after that then maybe she's going to die, he said. So we didn't sleep that night. Sit down by her bedside. And then she start telling us that her mother is already dead long time, and some of her relatives were all there waiting for her. And sure enough we heard the rooster crow, and then same time she was telling my father about, you know, taking care of me and all that. And she closed her eyes, she died.

You know, funny thing I wasn't too close to my mother but when she died, I really missed her a lot. I used to go to her grave and stay there until my father come for me. Because (she) was buried not too far from our home at that family burial cemetery in Waipi'o. And I used to stay there even almost dark. Sit there, I don't know for what, (chuckles) but, when I think about it. (Pause) I start thinking of all the things, I been disobedient to her and answer her back sometime and she give me spanking, and you feel all that come back, and thinking and

thinking. And so my father used to come and get me, go home.

And then my aunt came and took me to Honolulu [in 1922]. I didn't want to go over. He [father] say, "Oh, you have to go. You girl. You cannot stay with me." (Chuckles) That's how I went.

WN: We can start talking about that next time?

LC: Okay.

WN: Went to Honolulu.

LC: Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 26-9-2-96

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Lily L. K. Chong (LC)

September 30, 1996

Honoka'a, Hawai'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Lily Lilinoe Chong on September 30, 1996 for the Hāmākua and Ka'ū families oral history project. We're at her home in Honoka'a, Hawai'i and the interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, for our second interview I want to just start by having you tell me little about what your father did at Kukuihaele plantation [i.e., Pacific Sugar Mill Co.].

LC: Oh, he was just an overseer for the workingman. And they gave him fifteen or twenty acres to take care [i.e., cultivate] until harvesting time. So after the first crop, he stop, he change his mind. He went back down the valley [Waipi'o Valley].

WN: Oh, he only had one crop?

LC: Yeah, only one crop. He didn't stay long.

WN: Did he tell you why he didn't stay long?

LC: Well, because the workingman, most of them that he recruited were Hawaiians from Waimanu [Valley]. They were relatives of my mother, so they were not used to doing that kind *hō hana*, in the field. Cut cane and all that. They have to do all that themselves [as independent contractors] instead of the [full-time] plantation people. (The cane was grown up already. All they need was for someone to take care till harvest time.) And then they used to have the flume, eh. They *hāpai kō* and all that. Send 'em [sugarcane] down [to] the mill. So he only took the job for one crop only [approximately eighteen months]. And then he--since the men, some of them, were complaining.

(Laughter)

LC: They didn't like that kind of job, so. They rather go Waipi'o and work in the rice field or taro patches. So that's why he stopped. Then he went back and he started leasing a place way down close to the beach and he raise papayas, bananas and eggplant, all vegetables and he raise pigs, too. And then he went into rice farming, and after the mill was sold, then everybody stop raising rice and they went into taro. So he went into taro raising afterward. And then those days when they raise rice, they have to have cement block in front of the

house, about maybe fifty or sixty square feet. And they have a hole in the center where they have to tie the horse. They have two horse to run around (to thrash the grain from the stalk). Afterward they take all the trash out and then shake 'em out. Whatever left they, I don't know what they do, they hit 'em up, hit 'em with a stick, I think. And then they throw that away and then the grain is all on the cement. Then they gather that seed. Take all the (trash) out and whatever trash (left), take 'em out. They strain the rice. They have a basket where they throw up and down and all the trash fall off (when the wind blows). And then they separate all the rice from the trash, and they put 'em all in a sack. And then every day they bring 'em out from the (house or) where they have (it stored). Bring 'em out to dry on the cement (every day) until it's dry. Then they take 'em to the rice mill.

WN: And the rice mill was down in the valley?

LC: Yeah, in the valley. Close to Hi'ilawe Falls. That's where the rice mill was.

WN: Oh, way in then.

LC: Yeah, way in. And the poi shops were close by, too. Close to the rice mill. And I think they did away [with the rice mill] about, maybe, I think 1928 or '30. They stop (running the mill).

WN: Stopped doing rice.

LC: . . . rice altogether. And so. . . .

WN: So he had rice and poi at the same time?

LC: Yeah, yeah, he raise (taro and rice).

WN: Rice and taro?

LC: Mm hmm [yes]. Rice was more for business and the taro was more for family use.

WN: Oh, he didn't sell too much of taro?

LC: No, no. He didn't sell until just recent, until he was later years. That's when he was with his second wife [Annie Kaleopu'akalaihi]. That's when he went into real taro farming and selling.

WN: What about most of the farmers down there at that time?

LC: Them, they use [taro] for home use and sell. Yeah, both ways. But you see, those days, the taro was too cheap. So they hardly sell 'em. Only when people around Hāmākua way or Waimea, they need taro, they ask. That's when they send out the taro and somebody from the valley have pack mules. They pay the one that pack the taro up. So that's the only way. Other than that, they rather keep 'em home. And they share with the family. They don't just only for themselves. Those that don't have taro or enough taro to maintain themselves, they always share with each other. That's what they (do).

WN: You folks eat rice, too, I mean his rice?

LC: Yeah, we use rice. Every morning my father used to cook rice and in the evening and lunchtime we eat poi. Poi and fish most the time. Because we always have fish, *i'a*. Fish was plentiful in the valley before. All kinds, *aholehole*, and small *moi* and you go throw line you catch *ulua* and *gori* [goby] and shrimp and all other kind fish. Mullet. And my father used to have a fishpond right along the house, too. He used to keep that kind, what you call, what's the name now . . .

WN: '*O'opu*?

LC: No, no. That Chinese fish they call it.

WN: Catfish?

LC: No. (Around the hotels, they have all different colors, but in the valley only the dark tan color.)

WN: *Koi*?

LC: Yeah, *koi*. They call it *koi*, yeah.

WN: What, colorful kind?

LC: No, those days only the dark ones.

WN: Oh, what did he do with that?

LC: For home use. They make *harm yee* with that

WN: What is that?

LC: You know what is *harm yee*?

WN: No, I don't know what . . .

LC: Oh, *harm yee* is they take the fish and they don't scale it. They just leave everything in and they put salt around and they hang it up. Let 'em get just like rot. And then so many (days), I don't know, so many weeks and then they turn 'em upside down, and then they know when it's ready and the salt all went into the fish. So when they cook rice, like that, they scale that thing out and then they cut the pieces. Before the rice get dry, you know, while they cooking, they put it on the rice and the rice cook it. And they eat that with rice.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. Just like a salt fish. They call it Chinese salt fish. I think it's the Chinese method of doing it. And some of the Chinese showed the people around the valley how to make. I know Mr. Auna, Joseph Auna, he's a great one to do that. He used to do with *moi* and that *koi* and another kind of fish he catch from the ocean. He say only certain type of fish is good for that purpose. My father used to raise that, a little pond on the side of the house.

WN: Freshwater pond?

LC: Yeah, yeah. Springwater. Later on he move on the other side of the *pali*, and he took care that big fishpond there that belong to the [John T.] Baker Estate. He took care of that. People from Kukuihaele used to come there and buy *gori* or mullet, it's all in that pond. And he used to go and set net, catch and sell to them. But the property belong to the [John T.] Baker Estate. But now, the pond is there but it's all grass and weeds all growing in there. It's all changed now. And down the beach got all this iron pines growing. Never used to have before.

WN: Oh, ironwood?

LC: Yeah, ironwood pine. Yeah, all over. Since, something like the sugarcane, it's growing in the sugarcane now.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah, that type of pine. And that happen after the last tidal wave (in Waipi'o).

WN: So somebody planted it?

LC: No, I think the seeds.

WN: Oh.

LC: (Laughs) Nobody planted, they just grow. And that type of pine, when they grow, the roots (and seeds grow) out and they have some more growing. They grow by the root (also).

WN: Those things grow by the beach a lot, yeah?

LC: Yeah. They have plenty down the valley now, along the sea coast. Never used to have before.

WN: I forgot to ask you, what was your house like down there?

LC: My father built the house [with] thick lumber. You know before, never used to have this nice, smooth lumber. This—what they call that—twelve-by-something [one-by-twelve] or those big boards. And then he put the backing between for the cracks, and he had a big parlor and an addition of kitchen and two bedroom, one in the back side and one on the porch side. So on the porch side, that's where I used to sleep.

WN: You had your own room?

LC: Yeah. With a single spring bed. (Chuckles) Those days (we're happy with what we have).

WN: Did they have mosquitos down there?

LC: Yeah, we have to use mosquito net. Most of the homes they have mosquito net. Like some of the families, when I go spend the night with my cousins, they have this *lauhala* mats all on the floor, and they don't sleep on the bed. And they have a special mat they bring out to go

over the other mat for you to sleep. That's only for sleeping. And we had a big square mosquito net to sleep in, so you don't have to have mosquito bites. Because never had those kind punk until afterward. Later on they had that.

WN: And you folks had outhouse?

LC: Yeah, gotta have outhouse. Never had *da kine* with [running] water, you know. All outhouse. Everybody, I think, had outhouse.

WN: You mean, dig the hole.

LC: Yeah, dig the hole and build the [out]house over. And (chuckles) one time, one year, I don't know, somebody they so rascal, somebody they got up to use the outhouse, the outhouse was gone. (WN laughs.) Was April Fool's time.

(Laughter)

LC: They took the outhouse out (and moved it away).

(Laughter)

WN: But you folks had to move the outhouse, right? You folks have to dig a new hole sometimes and move the outhouse, yeah?

LC: Oh yeah, yeah. Cover it up and then have another one. Yeah, that's what they do.

WN: So how did you take a bath?

LC: Oh, in the river. And have a ditch, oh, about four, five feet wide come through the taro land. So we dig the (ditch wide). I know my father used to boil it. You know this square can, cracker can before? Yeah, we fill that up, boil hot water in there and put in the tub and then bathe, instead of bathing in cold water.

WN: Oh, so you folks had a tub?

LC: Yeah. (Galvanize tub.)

WN: To bathe.

LC: Yeah.

WN: But you bathe outside.

LC: Yeah, we have a bathhouse, and then he build his Japanese *furo*.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. He made that.

WN: Wooden *furo*?

LC: Uh huh, wooden *furo* with—I know it's redwood, I think, he used. And then if we want to bathe in there, or most of the time my mother don't want to go bathe in there. She said that spoil the water, so we want to bathe with soap ourself and dip the water and wash outside, instead of going in like how the Japanese do.

WN: Did your father go in?

LC: Yeah, he goes in. (WN laughs.) He likes that. But not my mother and I, no.

WN: I guess Japanese style is to go in, but Hawaiian style is stay out.

LC: Yeah, yeah.

(Laughter)

LC: Yeah.

WN: I guess that made your father happy, yeah, at least he has fresh clean hot water.

LC: Yeah, he likes that. Even sometime he go take in the morning. He likes that. Morning bath. He go in there before he go out and work.

WN: So the redwood *furo* was, underneath had fire?

LC: Yeah, had fire with some kind of piece of iron, just like shingle but flat, underneath and this square board on top. And I don't know, they put something around, just like so the water don't leak. Then he build fire underneath.

WN: And he did that every day?

LC: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: Build fire.

LC: Every day. Lot of guava trees, and you go down the beach during big water time, all the wood come from up, all go down and go in the ocean and then, I guess the waves bring 'em up on the side along the (sand or rocks). We used to go pick that, take home for firewood. Because I guess the fire last longer, you know, the heat from that kind of wood. Because come from the . . .

WN: Guava?

LC: Not guava it's more '*ōhi'a* (from up the valley).

WN: Oh, hard.

LC: Yeah, hardwood. The guava, they burn fast.

WN: What were your jobs down there? What kind of chores did you have to do?

LC: Oh, just help my father along. I go send [away] rice birds and go do this, do that. And when rice threshing time, I used to help carry the rice bags in the house. Climb up about five steps to go on the [ve]randa and put 'em all in one room of the house. Pile 'em there.

WN: How heavy was one bag?

LC: Oh, about maybe hundred pounds. My father lift it up put on my shoulder. (WN laughs.) I was about ten years old I used to carry. I was about ten, eleven years old. I used to be strong and help my parents. And my mother used to go cut rice, too, in the field, used to help him. Whatever kind of job my father does, my mother always there to help.

WN: The rice was—he took off the . . .

LC: The outside cover.

WN: The husk.

LC: Yeah.

WN: So the end product was white rice?

LC: Yeah, inside is white.

WN: You folks didn't eat brown rice, then.

LC: Oh, we eat brown rice when we want to eat our own rice instead of take to the rice mill, my mother used to put in one bag, it's just like burlap bag. She used have one heavy stick, she go hit, hit, hit, and all that outside cover of the rice come out. And then the grain, she put in the screen, and all that waste go down. And we keep that. And that rice is brown. And we cook 'em outside. Those days they have those thick iron pots, not like this kind we have now. The heavy kind. Yeah, we used to cook all outside with the firewood.

WN: You folks cooked all your meals outside?

LC: No, we have a kitchen that connected to the house, and we cook over there. Separate from the dining room. But my father made---afterward he made another house right in the front of the building, then we have a bigger place, more room. We have shelves and a long table with benches on the side. He made that. And then he made this place where you have one iron and all the ashes there, and then we cook right there. But later on he made a regular, just like a dining house outside. Yeah, more room.

WN: Did you folks ever have kerosene?

LC: Yeah.

WN: Oh, later on.

LC: Yeah, we gotta buy kerosene. We used kerosene (for our lamps and lanterns). We used kerosene to light everything. And they had—people go around with torches. They put kerosene in the bamboo torch and go around. That's how we go and catch frogs, with the torch.

WN: Oh yeah? You guys didn't have kerosene lantern?

LC: Oh, they had, but the torch is more bright. You can see. The lantern is kind of little bit dim. Later on had flashlight, well, the flashlight good. You can shine strong. When you see the frog, you shine 'em straight, they don't move. They get blinded, I think. You just go and catch 'em.

WN: You ever ate frog?

LC: Maybe I ate, I don't know.

(Laughter)

LC: Yeah, maybe. Sometime you go Chinese house, they invite you to come eat, you know, they cook all kind, so delicious. And the smell is so good, you don't know. Maybe. (WN laughs.) I know I ate rabbit before. We didn't know was rabbit, but, you know. But that was Japanese made that. Oh, I ate donkey meat, buffalo meat, cow meat. So far taste all kind. (Chuckles) As long you don't know, eh. (WN laughs.) But after you know, it's all right. Doesn't make any difference.

WN: Did your father ever tell you what he thought was easier or harder, taro farming or rice farming?

LC: Well, probably they about the same, I think. Because when you start planting the rice they clear up a patch, and then they get the seed, they go and throw 'em all in there. And then the rice started growing maybe about seven inches long, then they go and pull it out. All pile 'em up and they go and replant again to become rice, you know.

Well, taro I think is much easier than the rice, you know. Rice is more work because after you plant, you gotta watch the water and let 'em grow nice. And when they start bearing, you start watching for the rice birds to come and pick on the grain. So you have to send the rice bird away until the rice come ripe. Then you can cut it and harvest. And then after you harvest, you gotta bundle it up and then take 'em home and thresh with the horse. And then after that, you gotta dry 'em out couple times before it get real dry to put in the bag to take to the mill. But the taro you just clean the patches and make it level, you put the *pulapula* in, and then just watch the water until it's matured. So I think he did mention that the rice is much harder.

At one time he tried to plant *nōmai* rice, they call *nōmai* rice. I asked him what is *nōmai* rice. He said, oh, in Japan they call that *nōmai* rice. Doesn't grow high, only grow real short. And that grain is round, thick. And different taste from the other kind of rice. Yeah, it's good. I think only once or twice he planted that type. They was just for home use, he didn't sell that. He wanted to keep. I don't know where he got the seed from, but.

WN: Somebody probably gave him, huh?

LC: Yeah, I think somebody gave 'em. But was good rice. We used to call it dwarf rice because never grow high.

WN: I was wondering, besides poi, how else did you eat taro?

LC: Besides poi? Oh, we fry it. You know, you can fry or you mash 'em and make patty, taro patties. Yeah, come just like pancake. But my mother used to—those days they used to have this small kind shrimp. I don't know, maybe she get 'em from the store, but even down the beach, certain time in the night we go down the beach, you stand where the wave come, you stand like this, and feel something around your leg, that's that kind of small shrimp. So they get the scoop net, the thin scoop net like mosquito net kind. And they scoop it, and they bring that home and then they put little bit salt and then dry it. And when dry they use that to mix with the taro patty. And then if you use that with the taro patty and you eat that, you don't have to have meat or anything, because shrimp is in there. So they use that for snack or lunchtime, like that.

WN: Oh, is that '*ōpae*, the shrimp?

LC: Yeah, it's '*ōpae*. Was the baby '*ōpae*. It's not the shape of the '*ōpae* yet.

WN: Oh, oh I see. But still got the shrimp flavor?

LC: Yeah, get the shrimp flavor. Sometime I see in the store tiny kind of shrimp. Maybe that's the type, I don't know. Some Chinese stores used to have but lately I don't see it. Maybe . . .

WN: What about the leaves? You folks ate the leaves, too?

LC: What leaves?

WN: The taro.

LC: Oh, yeah, yeah. We baked that. Sometime they make for *laulau*, like that. Most of the time my mother used to bake the taro leaf. Get plenty, and then she build fire outside and have one piece of iron on the fire and put that taro leaves all wrap up already in the ti leaves and let 'em bake in there. And then you use coconut juice, you know, coconut milk, rather. Yeah, you mix 'em up and eat. Good.

WN: Ooh. Yeah.

LC: Yeah. And then sometime we cook with chicken. We raise our own chicken. And we had two cows, milking cows. So we have our own milk. And we raise couple of pigs for home use. Before that he used to raise plenty for commercial, sell out. But afterward we stopped doing that, we just raise for home use. Like when holidays we always have *kālua* pig, Christmastime or New Year. And everybody go from house to house, enjoy each other's company and food. You don't need to be invited, you just (chuckles) go there, before. Nowadays you go, they say, "Oh, what you doing here?"

(Laughter)

LC: Or, "Who are you?" (Laughs)

WN: Sounds like a nice life.

LC: Yeah, it was. It was a nice life. I think a real happy, happy life, I feel.

WN: You said that taro was maybe easier than rice, but what about sugar? Was there--do you know why the workers didn't like to do it or why your father didn't like doing it? Is it different kind of work?

LC: Yeah, I think because different type of work. Especially the Hawaiian people, they not used to that kind doing *hō hana* work. They used to more the other kind of manual work but not in the cane field with weeds. They work more in the rice field and taro patches, like that. But not in the cane field. And I guess because the heat, too, eh, the weather. Hot (and itchy).

WN: Yeah, I was thinking of that.

LC: Yeah, so they didn't like my father to have another contract, so. That's why my father stopped [sugarcane cultivation] and went back to the [Waipi'o] Valley.

WN: So actually, he was like the independent cane grower for the Kukuihaele [Pacific] Sugar [Mill] Company.

LC: Yeah, uh huh. Just independent kind. And the plantation pay you so much, you know you have your own men to work for and take care and so many acres and see how much you can do on that particular portion that they award you to do it. So.

WN: So one year, only, he lasted?

LC: Yeah, [after] only one year and over he went back to the valley to work for Nelson Chun and work on his own. Not Nelson Chun but Nelson Chun's father [Hin Chun]. He liked my father too, because they have certain men that when they plant rice, they fast in planting. They don't like the slow kind.

(Laughter)

LC: I know my father and one man Lui Cheong, his name, and another man, I forgot his name. They were fast in planting. So he like that kind people to come and work for him (planting time).

WN: Louie Cheung?

LC: L-U-I C-H-E-O-N-G. He was fast. And he was still living after Nelson's father died, his mother died, but he was still working for Nelson Chun afterward. I think he live about ninety-four, ninety-five years, that man, before he died. Strong, healthy Chinese man. My father died when he was seventy-five.

WN: In 1922 your mother passed away, and you were sent to . . .

LC: Honolulu.

WN: . . . live in Honolulu. Why was that?

LC: Because my dad felt that [because] I was a girl, he preferred that I go and live with my mother's sister in Honolulu. So she came over and took me to Honolulu. I stayed with her a year, or a year and one month, I think, and they belong to this church. Her husband was a minister, so they go out every night. Only Monday night they stay home. And they go meetings on Fort Street and Kapahulu and all over, I remember. And we used to go. You see, besides myself, she had two other girls that she *hānai*, you know, raise. But I was the one related to her.

One day, I didn't go to school because I hurt my thumb. Oh no, that was not school day, it was a Saturday. And my aunt had gone down—she had the patch of ginger and crown flower on the side of the house, so every evening she used to pick the flowers, string 'em [into leis] and take 'em down the boat [i.e., Honolulu Harbor], when the boat come in, sell 'em. And was only twenty-five cents one lei that time. (Chuckles) And so anyway, we stayed home. She took one girl and another girl stayed home with me, so we were doing our laundry. While we were doing our laundry, one of my mother's cousin that I knew—I knew her better than my mother's sister, my own aunty—came to visit and she saw me doing the laundry with my sore thumb. And she told me, "Well, you better leave that. You going with me."

I said, "I cannot go, because my aunty is not home."

She said, "No, no, I'm gonna take you."

So I went with her. I left a note and I went with that aunty, her name was Sara, and I went to live with her down Pauoa. And this place where I was living with my mother's sister was up Makiki. Now they call it Makiki Heights. It's a nice place now. Before the houses—it's more just like a Hawaiian homestead.

WN: Oh, Papakōlea?

LC: Yeah, but this is—you see, Papakōlea is one side, this is on the other side. So that's where my aunt lived. And we became friends with some other families behind. Anyway, so I went to stay Pauoa, and then later on, my mother's sister, my aunt, found out that I went, she was really upset after she found my note. And I didn't take no clothes (chuckles) so she brought my clothes down, my basket of clothes. And she didn't want to talk to me for a while.

Anyway, I stayed with her and we went to (school)—we have to go through Lusitana Street to go to school, [Territorial] Normal [and] Training School. And I stayed there about two years, and then this aunty of mine, Sara, she was living with another sister, her name was Lizzie, and her husband was a policeman. Sara got married to an old *Haole* man that came to propose. And she didn't want to get married but the family said, "Oh, you are going to be thirty-six years old and still not married. You better get married. There's a chance for you to get married, this old man wants to marry you." So she married him. He had a home at Kalihi Kai. So I went with her to Kalihi Kai. And from there, he bought a property on 4th Avenue

in Kaimukī. During that time they were building a new house. So from Kalihi Kai, he sold that place, and we moved to 4th Avenue in Kaimukī. So when we moved there, they built an up[stairs] and downstairs house. Was three bedroom upstairs and one bedroom downstairs with all the facilities downstairs. Anyway, because the house was big, and only three of us, she asked her older sister, the one that she was living with in Pauoa, to come and live together. So they were happy, because they were paying rent there [i.e., her previous home].

And while we were there [Pauoa] we used to go up in the valley and Chinese people used to harvest the taro. We used to go and gather all the small taro, what they leftover in the taro patch and we cook 'em and make poi with that while we were up Pauoa before. Anyway, when we moved 4th Avenue, well, the life there was little different.

That uncle of mine, he's a policeman, he—see, my father used to write to me all the time in Hawaiian and I write to him in Hawaiian. And he had already married Suei's mother [LC's stepmother]. Every time I receive letter from him, he always send ten dollars. And this uncle of mine, somehow, he works nighttime, daytime he's home. He gets the mail [before] I come back from school, he gets the mail, he open and he read it, and he keep the money. Yeah. And finally, I found out that my father was sending money every time when he send the mail. So I talk to him [LC's uncle] and he said "Oh, I putting away saving for you." Because, you see, he had a son from his first marriage that's working down the leper settlement.

WN: Oh, you mean Kalihi Kai [Hansen's disease patient holding station]?

LC: Yeah, Kalihi Kai. And he wanted me to (chuckles) get friendly with him [the son] because that son is not from my aunty. That's from his former wife. And he used to send me down there, take magazine for the boy, and go take something. He always find something (for me) to take down to Kalihi Kai to see the boy. But I wasn't interested. And so it kept on like that, so I told my aunty Sara, the one married the *Haole*, I said, "I don't like this thing what Aunty Lizzie's husband is doing."

So she said, "More better you go back Hawai'i."

So one day---Saturdays I usually go downtown, go see movies, see my grandfather, he works down Pier 12. This time I didn't take anything. I just took the clothes on my body and I went. I written to my father that I was coming home because something was not good over there, so I ran away. Actually S.S. *Haleakalā* was running that time. And so my grandfather knew the purser—the Portuguese boy, he's a purser there, Bill they call him—and told 'em that I was coming back, to take care of me. And he got me everything that I needed to eat on the boat. So I came back. He help me get out the boat, come to Hilo town, put me on the train then I went to Pa'auiilo. My father was there waiting for me. That's when I came back. And I was supposed to---when I came back, my father wanted me to go to Kamehameha School for Girls. So somehow, we applied through somebody in Kukuihaele.

WN: Fred (Olepau)?

LC: Yeah, his father. Fred Olepau, Sr. He was just like overseer or bookkeeper for the plantation before. Well, his niece goes to Kamehameha School [for Girls]. She and I about the same age. And the time I came home was almost Christmastime when I ran away. And so they were not taking students that time until September, to go to the ninth grade. And so while

staying around in the [Waipi'o] Valley with my stepmother and my father, I didn't get along very well with my stepmother, and so I used to go stay with some of the relatives down the valley. Then my other (chuckles) aunty and uncle in Waimea, Mr. and Mrs. Piko Bell came down the valley and they heard talks about me and my [step]mother not getting along. So they came to see my father to let me go stay with them in Waimea. And I thought, oh, that was a good idea, go to Waimea away from my stepmother. Because of me, sometime they don't get along, my father and my stepmother. Because we don't agree lot of things. Because I feel my mother used to work so hard, side by side with my father, and she didn't get the things that this stepmother was enjoying. And that's (why) I get upset. And my father had a car that time, see. And before that they didn't have a car. So every time my father take her up to Kalōpā, that's where her father lives with her sister and her brother. And so I guess, she didn't like me, too, and I didn't care for her, so I felt, "Oh better I go to Waimea," so I went to Waimea. And then my aunt up there said—my uncle—he worked (as) a blacksmith for the Parker Ranch at that time.

WN: This Piko Bell?

LC: Yeah.

WN: How do you spell that?

LC: P-I-K-O. (Actually his English name was Peter.)

WN: Oh, okay, Piko.

LC: Yeah, just like the *piko*. (Chuckles)

WN: Bellybutton?

LC: Yeah. Well, his English name was Peter but everybody call him Piko Bell. Anyway . . .

WN: Oh, his last name was . . .

LC: Bell, B-E-L-L.

WN: Oh, Piko was his first name?

LC: Yeah.

WN: Oh, oh, okay.

LC: And so anyway, he told me, "You come up there, if you like school you can go Kohala Seminary," with my two cousins, his two daughters.

So I said, "Oh, that'd be fine." But when I got up there, found out I cannot go there. They were not taking outside children, only the children for the workers from the Parker Ranch. So I couldn't go. So there I got stuck again. I didn't go to school. I stayed around, help my aunt up there. And finally I met my husband and got married.

WN: Did you want to go to school?

LC: I wanted to.

WN: What would have been your first choice, Kamehameha or the seminary?

LC: Well, either one, as long it's a school, I felt that way.

WN: And in Honolulu you went to the Territorial Normal [and Training] School?

LC: Yeah, yeah. Training.

WN: Did you think that you were going to be a teacher?

LC: Yeah, that's what I thought.

WN: Did you want to be a teacher?

LC: Yeah, I wanted to. But my father, when I went away he told me he wanted me to be a bookkeeper (or secretary).

(Laughter)

WN: For him?

LC: I don't know.

(Laughter)

LC: I don't know, maybe he feel office work, I think. But my aunt over there, my aunties they all thought, well, I should continue there. Because those days, if you go to Territorial Normal [and Training] School, like John Thomas and Joe Ahuna, they didn't graduate (from twelfth grade). They only went to the tenth or eleventh grade and they came back and they teach school. [Attendance at Territorial Normal and Training School did not require a high school diploma.]

WN: And you went for how many years, that normal school?

LC: (Actually, two-and-one-half years.)

WN: So you weren't qualified to teach when you got back?

LC: No, I was only ninth grade.

WN: Oh.

LC: I never even go to the tenth. And I ran away, came back.

WN: Let's back up little bit. Here you are, country girl growing up Waipi'o, doing all these things

and then all of a sudden you have to live in the city?

LC: Town, yeah.

WN: How did you feel about that?

LC: I didn't feel right. Not happy. In fact, where my aunt's house is up Makiki, you could see down Waikīkī where that, they call that Aloha Park [i.e., amusement park] used to be way before. And had lot of lights, you know. Every evening I sit on the porch and I look at that place, I start crying, crying, crying. Because I stayed with her a year, over, up there, Makiki. And I didn't like the (place and their church activity). I feel so homesick. I didn't like the town life.

WN: Wait just a second.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Must have been real different, yeah?

LC: Yeah, real different, yeah. And you know, when we go downtown, I not used to using shoes all the time.

(Laughter)

Used to be sore, the feet.

And I know this other girl, Rebecca, her brothers came from Waipi'o, came to Honolulu and stayed with my aunt. She didn't know they were her brothers because she was taken [to Honolulu] when she was five days old. She's a Haraguchi from Waipi'o. And somehow, my mother's mother came over to Waipi'o, visit and this lady, Mrs. Haraguchi is kind of calabash family to my grandmother, "Oh, I have this baby. If you like you can have it." So my grandmother took this baby only five days old. And she raised this little girl. When she was five years old my grandmother died, and so my aunt took over and raised her. And that time I went to live there [Honolulu], she was about—I was fourteen—she was thirteen. And then another girl was older, she was fifteen, somebody's daughter she was keeping. And so anyway, her two brothers came over, (Tommy) and Mitchell, and my uncle got a job for Tommy. Tommy is a—he trains horse. And so my uncle got him a job out Waikīkī training these polo horses. And then his brother, Mitchell, I don't know what kind of job my uncle got for him, but (chuckles) every time they go with us downtown, especially around Fort Street, Mitchell used to open [remove] his shoes, tie the strings [together] and hold in his hand and walk barefoot. (Laughs) Yeah. Not used to wearing shoes. In Waipi'o different. And took long time before he got used to. Finally, anyway, he stayed in Honolulu and he married somebody from Honolulu afterward.

WN: What was the feeling of going from a place where you know everybody and everybody knows

you to a place where you see so many strangers?

LC: Yeah, you feel lost. You don't know nobody, you afraid to talk and afraid even to look at them, because they going see you one country jack. They know the way you act and walk, so, you not from the town, you know. Because when we walk, we tired, we just sit down in town, any place, we used to sit down. We didn't care because tired or hot. But my aunt said, "Oh, don't sit down, shame. Everybody looking."

(Laughter)

WN: And being Japanese-Hawaiian, did you feel any different being Japanese-Hawaiian in Honolulu as opposed to being Japanese-Hawaiian in Waipi'o?

LC: Not really. No. I had lot of friends at [Territorial] Normal [and] Training [School]. Different mixture, pure Hawaiian, and part-Hawaiian. I know a girl, Catherine Kuroda, she's part-Hawaiian, part-Japanese, we used to get along really well. Afterward she married one of the Napoleon boys over there in Honolulu. She didn't finish school. I know she left school. And different girls that come from Moloka'i and from O'ahu I met there. I made friends with them. I got along. And especially I like to play ball, so we used to go down Dole Park and play ball. I used to be their catcher because I was chubby, you know. (Laughs) Sometime go first base. Good fun. You know, we had that play hour, we used to go there.

WN: Did you get to do any fishing in Honolulu?

LC: No, no. But [when] I stayed with my other relatives in Kaimuki, we went down Wai'anae side, camp down there we used to catch crab down there, only. Nighttime crab in the sand. That's the only kind. And the other kind, something like crab in the water but under the stone. I can't think that name.

WN: Saltwater?

LC: Yeah, (in) the saltwater. It's under the stone, I know down there in Wai'anae before. We used to go catch in the night.

WN: *Kūhonu*?

LC: I wonder, don't sound like that, the name. Anyway, that's the only kind fishing. We never did go really ocean fishing or anything. And I never seen any river around there, so. Only up Nu'uana side, and Kalihi side. Then later on I know my uncle and my aunt, the one that I used to stay at Makiki, they got a job in Kalihi. They became in charge of the Kalihi Waena [Elementary] School. Yeah, because after I got married she came over and she took one of my daughters to keep over there. So I used to go down every year and visit. And they were in charge of the Kalihi Waena School until she died, then I brought my daughter back here.

WN: Okay, so then from 1926 you lived in Waimea.

LC: Yeah.

WN: How different was that from Waipi'o?

LC: Oh, that's different, too. Everything dry, no water and [the climate was] cold, cold. And those days we never had this kind *zōris*, that slippers. Used to go barefoot. But after you got used to, the cold was not so bad. Yeah, but really cold. Me and my other cousins, we used to have go pick up chips and make ready every time for the wood stove. Every time we have to be sure to get chips and firewood and clean all the '*ākulikuli* flowers because they pick the flowers, make leis, my aunt up there. And they used to be in charge of the Parker Ranch parties, Piko Bell and his wife, Alana. And they were in charge Christmastime, New Year time, Parker Ranch used to make big *lū'aus* for all the workingmen. And they the one go down 'Anaeho'omalu, there's a bay there with a pond that used to be owned by the Parker Ranch. And they raise those big kind fishes in there. They go there and surround the fish and they have to know how much fish they need for the party, and what's leftover they give to the workingmen. They make *laulau*, *kālua* and all that. Was good. But I stayed there and then finally I—they got me engaged to my husband [David Chong].

(Laughter)

WN: Well, why don't you tell me about that. How did you meet him?

LC: Well, he used to come around, and they introduced me to him. And at one time my aunt sent us up to Waiki'i, me and my other cousin, Susie, because her two boys got married. One married Kawai girl, (Dora) Kawai, and the other one married to Hattie Purdy. And so the two brothers were living up Waiki'i and they work for the Parker Ranch. And those days, Waiki'i used to have corn field. And so Peter used to take the wagon, hauling the [corn] from the field to the station. My cousin Susie live with him, and I lived with the other brother, Sandy, the younger brother, his wife was Hattie Purdy. Her father [Ikua Purdy] was the famous cowboy, before.

WN: Oh, yeah.

LC; Yeah, that Purdy family. So anyway, I stayed with them to help because she had a new baby and the other one had a new baby, so we were sent up there to help my cousin and the in-laws. And every morning we used to go in the long grass look for turkey eggs. And then pick up the turkey eggs, put all in our clothes and bring 'em home and the in-laws used to make cupcake or cake with the turkey eggs. Was good.

WN: How big was turkey eggs?

LC: Like duck eggs, but have spots around.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah, just like freckles around. And it's not pure white, you know, kind of light beige color. Big, the eggs.

WN: Bigger than chicken?

LC: Oh yeah, bigger than chicken. But good eating. And then when we finish our chores, helping around, Peter used to take us on the wagon when he haul the corn, we used to go wagon riding with him. And then I met somebody up there. But I didn't care for him. He came

down see my aunt, my uncle. He wanted to marry me. But I was not ready for marriage that time. And anyway, he used to come all the time but my uncle and my aunt wanted me to marry my husband, another person, so.

WN: He was a cowboy, your husband?

LC: Yeah, he was a cowboy. And afterward we got married, (he) worked (as a) cowboy and he used to go haul cattle down Kawaihae two o'clock in the morning. And [after] my third child, we moved down Waipi'o.

WN: Nineteen thirty-(one)?

LC: Yeah.

WN: So why did you move?

LC: Because he quit the Parker Ranch. My father wanted him to come down there [Waipi'o] and raise taro. So he wanted to go raise taro. We went. And his stepfather had taro land, too. So we went down there and stayed down there. Then afterward he got a job offer from the [Territorial] Board of Health, so he came to work for the [Territorial] Board of Health. And then we bought a place in Kapulena from the Saffreys. Later on we bought a piece of land up here in Honoka'a, on Ka'ao Homestead. Then we moved to Honoka'a, we built a house there and we were there until he died.

WN: When did he die?

LC: [Nineteen] sixty-six.

WN: So you lived, since you got married in '26 you moved to Waipi'o [in 1931], you lived there for a little while, five years or so, then you moved to Kapulena for about, what, five years you lived there?

LC: No, not exactly five years, I think about three or four years. Then we got this place in Honoka'a [in 1940].

WN: Before Honoka'a you lived Ka'ao Homestead?

LC: No, that's Ka'ao. That's the name of the place. (We built our house and raised our family.)

WN: And you were there for quite some time, then.

LC: Where?

WN: Ka'ao.

LC: Yeah, we stayed there all our life until. . . . When my husband died then I get this job offered over here, I came over here to work for the Hawai'i Housing [Authority]. Take care the senior citizens.

WN: Resident manager, eh?

LC: Yeah.

WN: That's 1971?

LC: Yeah, yeah. But before that I was working for the Honoka'a Hospital.

WN: Oh, what did you do?

LC: I used to work part-time for Harry Tanaka's sanitary laundry down here. And so he told me, "Oh, Mrs. Chong, go take test. Go apply for the Honoka'a Hospital." And I didn't think anything else to apply because I was working (chuckles) laundry. I applied for the laundry department for the hospital. So that's what I was doing, taking care of the laundry in the Honoka'a Hospital. And I had another woman work under me. And so it was good for a while. I worked there about five years, and I developed bronchitis. So my husband said, oh, better quit. And he got the Hawaiian homeland at that time. He bid for the Hawaiian homeland and he got one. Well, you see, (chuckles) when this Hawaiian homeland was open, I told my husband, "You know, the lady that works with me, Hannah, said 'anybody that don't apply for Hawaiian homeland is stupid. And you have Hawaiian blood so why don't you go apply?'"

He said, "She said that?"

I said, "Yeah, that's what she said."

Because she applied and her family applied so, "Why don't you go and apply?"

So he went. He went up the [Department of] Hawaiian Home[lands] office and applied and his name came out.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: Yeah. And he was number twelve so he got a Hawaiian homeland. And this lady that told me [about] that, she didn't get anything. (Laughs) Yeah. And so, because we got a Hawaiian homeland and he was working assistant foreman for rodent control and thing for the Board of Health, he told me, "Why don't you quit if you get worse if you working there," this and that. So I quit the hospital. And so we work on the ranch. You know, get a post and (built) the fence and everything.

WN: This is where, where was this at?

LC: Up Waimea (Hawaiian homelands above Pu'ukapu). And then after we fence all the place, we got cattle from the Parker Ranch, just like borrow. And you have to raise the cattle and sell it back to the Parker Ranch until you clear your bill and then you get cattle for your own to raise from the Parker Ranch. And that's how the deal was. And so that's why I quit working at the hospital. And I stayed in Waimea but I didn't help too much because of the cold. But I think it's from the thing that I inhale, that ammonia. I think so it's from that. That's how I developed that [bronchitis]. But the doctor insist it's because I work in the laundry [in

Honoka'a], it's hot and go Waimea, cold, you know, hot and cold, he said. But I didn't think that was the cause. But anyway after that, I used to—my son was going Kamehameha School, he came back, he finish. And so that's why I was working the Harry's laundry (before) to help my husband along with his education. And then we used to stay Waimea [and] stay down here [Honoka'a], two side. And then finally my husband stayed up [Waimea], I stayed down [Honoka'a] because of the weather. And then later on, after my husband died, he got sick, that's when I got this job over here [Honoka'a].

First I worked for the Hawai'i Economic Opportunity, I work with them for three years (after my husband passed away). And then while I was working there this place opened, and Mrs. Lim who was in charge of the Hawai'i Housing [Authority] in Hilo called our office to ask my boss that she needed help, somebody to take care over here [i.e., senior citizen's housing complex]. So Phoebe Loo was in charge down here for the Hawai'i Economic Opportunity at that time. She told me, "Better you go apply." So I came, I went to apply. And I got a job. And then Mrs. Lim wanted me to go recruit the plantation people, those retirees to come [live] up here because the houses were all built but all empty. And so I went to see one of the plantation *lunas*. He and I went on the truck going to Pa'auilo, Kuka'iau, down Pā'auhau and down Haina, Honoka'a. Most of the people didn't care to come [live] up here because they want to know if they can make garden and raise chicken. And, of course, they didn't allow that. You can raise garden, but small garden, not a big area. And so only few came up. We got some from Haina and majority from Pā'auhau came up here. And some other locals and some people came from Hilo.

WN: Even when they had housing supplied by the plantation you could still convince people to come up live over here?

LC: Yeah, yeah. Oh, lately?

WN: Yeah.

LC: No, lately they didn't have opening.

WN: Yeah, but back then? Back then the plantation was still going, eh?

LC: Yeah, plantation was still active yet, yeah. Was still strong. Nobody would think it would close up. But they rather stay on the plantation land because they can raise chicken and all those animals. No trouble. And they have a little garden in the back of their homes so they were satisfied. So that's why most of them didn't care to come up this way so only few came up. I guess about, one, two, I think I got about five families only came out. Only one from Haina, the rest from Pā'auhau.

WN: And no rent? You don't have to pay rent?

LC: We have to.

WN: You had to pay.

LC: And those days (chuckles) only forty dollars a month in the beginning.

WN: But plantation was free, eh?

LC: Yeah, yeah.

WN: So hard to convince somebody to go from free to paying forty dollars.

LC: Yeah, yeah, that's true. And so---well anyway it was forty dollars for a [month], I think, and then it went up, up, up, up. So now it goes according to your income. And it's part federal, so we have to pay more.

WN: So mostly pension—retirees living here?

LC: Right now there's only two living. The rest are all new people. All (the others) they pass away and go away. Yeah. From the time I start working here. Afterward I stopped working because too much stress because the way the house is built, if I open my water or flush the toilet the other person [i.e., neighbor] could hear all the noise, yeah. I used to live down the other side, one bedroom. And they used to come and call me in the night telling me oh, they cannot sleep because so-and-so, this and that. And I tell 'em, go sleep (chuckles) till morning. Then I complain to my boss in Hilo, she come out and talk to them, explain to them why. Everybody have to flush their toilet, (WN laughs) everybody have to bathe. And then they complain, oh because they bathe early, somebody bathe about five o'clock in the morning, or having shower and interrupt their sleep and all that. Oh, finally I stopped. I told Mrs. Lim I gonna quit. And she said, oh, if I have somebody in mind. So I recommend my friend, a lady friend. And she was anxious to work but she only work two years she quit. (WN chuckles.) Yeah, same thing, you know.

WN: You know, around this area the plantation is closed, yeah. No more sugar anymore. How do you feel about that?

LC: Oh, I feel bad for the people, you know. They depend their livelihood is all on the plantation. And especially from one generation to the other generation they been living on the plantation and depending their livelihood from the plantation. And no other source. And they cannot go to the hotels and work, some of them. And they not able to buy a car to travel [i.e., commute to Kona] that far and all that. I feel sadness for them. And some of them, like the people that belong to our church, I go and visit. Once a month I go and visit with a companion. And they have plenty children, the husband out of work, they gotta depend on welfare, they don't want to go on welfare but they cannot help. And some of them they only get food stamp, they don't have cash money. And the welfare is funny, you know. I don't like the way the welfare do things. And now they complaining because they short of money and the funds to help. It's because the way they use the money. These single boys I see, some of them is my grandchildren, they not working. They can go work but they don't want to go work. They go ask welfare. Welfare give them \$130 food stamp. They get that much for single person. And the old people depending on welfare, they get less than that. They not even hundred dollars. And that's not fair because these old people, they pay tax before, you know. And they supposed to have more than these young people who's strong and healthy and they could find job. Why give the young people that much money? That's my question. I don't think so they fair in their dealing.

WN: So you're saying there's no incentive to go to work.

LC: Yeah, because they just fool around and they get that money. If they need food they get \$130 (and more) for food stamp. So why should they go work? More they get lazy.

WN: You think they can find work?

LC: They can if they want to. Yeah, they can. They always have advertisement in the paper for hotel work. They can if they want to. Or even go work for McDonald's or any place. If they have that desire to work they can go work. It's because they so dependent on the welfare, and because the welfare is so easy for them. But the older people are the one, I think, they need more help. But they not getting the kind of help that they should have. I think that's not right.

WN: They figure, what, because the older people getting pension and. . . .

LC: Well, you see, some of them, they only get ten dollars pension from the plantation, you know. Yeah. A Filipino up here, he say only ten dollars from the plantation. And somebody, of course, they get fifty [dollars]. Not more. Small pension the old time workers. And then they gotta depend on the help from the welfare, especially husband and wife, like that.

WN: So the closing of the plantation, what does it mean for you folks as a family, you know, your father worked sugar little while, and then your son-in-law worked in sugar and your grandson . . .

LC: Grandson worked plantation, too. (And grandson-in-law.)

WN: . . . for a while. What does that mean to you, your family now that there's no more sugar?

LC: Well, to me, it's just like (chuckles) something just stopped all together and changed the type of life they have to live. They gotta be more cautious in their spending, their buying and living their livelihood. And their children, too, have to be caution, they cannot get this, they cannot get that because no income coming in. Lucky thing my grandsons that used to work for the plantation, they working—some of them—working for the [Mauna Kea Beach] Hotel. And, of course, the wives getting part-time job someplace to help out. Otherwise it's real hard. While some other people that have so many children, they cannot go work and the husband was not working for couple years. So lately the husband had a job so I'm glad for them. Well, like my other daughter they have a business store, hardware store. They don't make as much now because the plantation close. They depend on the plantation employees to always come in there, that's all their customers.

WN: Oh, that's the one right at the corner?

LC: Yeah, yeah. [B.] Ikeuchi [& Sons].

WN: Yeah. Oh so business is down? Business is down since the plantation closed?

LC: Yeah, yeah, business is down, yeah.

WN: Tourists don't like hardware store.

LC: No, no.

(Laughter)

LC: No. (I don't know, only local people and their regular customers.)

WN: So what would you like to see in the future in this area? What do you see this place becoming?

LC: Well, I thought since the plantation close up, I read in the paper they were going to improve the land and plant. Some they say coco[nut] palm or something else. But they never do anything yet. But when I look at the land, especially from here going to Kapulena and Kukuihaele side, all this pine trees are all taking over in the cane fields now. And they not doing anything. Of course, there's some people that leasing, they leasing the cane land, about ten, or fifteen acres. People who want to lease, they lease 'em and they go do their own farming. I don't know what kind of agreement they have, but since the weather is bad, so dry, I don't know if they are successful. But I know part in Pa'auilo below, a company raising papayas there and the papayas are selling pretty good. But this other part of the land is all going to waste. They not doing anything with it. So I don't know what the future going to be right now.

WN: You like to see agriculture?

LC: Yeah, I like to see agriculture. Some kind of agriculture. Well, further over [toward Waipi'o Valley], of course, they raise taro. But this side nobody is doing anything. I don't know what kind of agreement they giving to the people by taking ten, fifteen acres like that. I didn't inquire to find out. Well, in my condition now I cannot do anything anyway.

WN: Do you think younger people like your grandchildren would want to farm?

LC: Yeah, they would be interested. I know one of my grandson, (of) this daughter of mine, the youngest boy, he worked for the plantation and he's opening land in Waipi'o. Used to be our lease land. My son cannot go down there. He's busy with his own work so gave 'em to him, the lease, and he's raising taro down there. The taro is good business now; the price is high. But the other grandsons they working construction or, I don't know. And the other grandson-in-law, he's working with the hotel, too. Actually it's hard to see what the future going to be. If it continue this way the land all going be wasted. I don't know what they planning to do.

WN: Would you like to see some industries coming in other than agriculture?

LC: Sure. Oh yeah, that'd be good because then people will have jobs too, you know.

WN: What about tourism? Hotels, resorts?

LC: Well, I think we have enough hotels already. (Chuckles) I think too much. You saw in the paper, what you call, what you call the name? Seven Season?

WN: Oh, yeah, yeah, Four Seasons [Resort Hawai'i].

LC: Oh, Four Seasons [not] Seven Season. (Chuckles) Yeah. My grandson was working there all the time doing the construction work there. Not one, two of them. And they charging [high

rates]. Can you afford that? (WN chuckles.) I don't know. I think the place going be empty most of the time. Only millionaires can come there and stay there.

WN: So you rather see the hotels stay down Kona side, not this side.

LC: Yeah, I rather be that side. They better leave Hāmākua the way it is.

WN: And what about taro, you said the price is good now.

LC: Yup.

WN: Do you see taro continuing?

LC: I think so because everybody depending on poi. (As long as no disease.) Lot of people they depending on poi. Other places like Kaua'i is not too much poi now, taro. And so they depending this side, too. And when this side don't have they depend on Kaua'i. And so the taro goes up to fifty, sixty dollars a bag now. And not even hundred pounds, only eighty pounds. During our time when we were raising taro, we have to sell about 105 pounds, the taro bag. And the most that we could get was about ten or eleven dollars before. And all of a sudden it went way up. And then the pound came down. So I don't know. I buy poi from this Morgan Toledo. He raise his taro and he harvest and cook and make into poi. He sells two pounds [of poi] for five dollars.

WN: That's good, eh?

LC: That's pretty good. What's good is his poi is firm, not soft.

WN: Oh yeah?

LC: When it's firm when you buy and you mix it, you get more, so.

WN: Plus they have lot of health—there's good health benefits to poi. More people are hearing about it so maybe the demand will go up.

LC: Yeah, the fresh, fresh, fresh poi is good for babies, too. With children, mix with milk. That's nourishing, nutrients. I know one of my—many years ago—one of my in-laws raised this girl only with poi and milk. From baby time they used to mix the poi real watery with milk and feed 'em through the nipple. They make a big hole in the nipple. That's how she grew up. (Chuckles)

WN: No kidding?

LC: Yeah. And those days they never had this milk sterilize. They just go and milk the cow and (laughs) and mix 'em with the fresh poi and feed 'em. Never get sick. Funny yeah, when you think back how life was. Even us in Waipi'o, we have rainwater but most the time we get the water from the river. We go in the middle of the river and dip the bucket and take home for drinking water or cooking. And further up the horses are passing, the mules, they doo-doo in the water and, you know, all come down but we never get sick those days. Now you get more particular and get lot of sickness. It's funny, yeah? How things turn out.

WN: So many changes, yeah?

LC: Yeah, plenty changes.

WN: So as you look back at your life—you're eighty-eight years old—how do you feel about these changes?

LC: Well . . .

WN: Changes for the better? Or not good?

LC: Maybe in one way it's good and one way, I don't know. But then there will be lot of changes anyway. Whether we like it or not there's going to be lot of changes. Even through the government or through people.

WN: Okay, well, just before I turn off the tape recorder did you have any things that you want to say? Any last things (LC chuckles) you want to say?

LC: Well, recently I composed a song for Waipi'o. It's in Hawaiian, but. And when I was in a *kupuna* class, our teacher, Kū Kahakalau, she asked the students to write out a poem, and I wrote a poem for Waipi'o and I won \$100. (Chuckles) Yeah.

WN: Could you say it? Could you say the poem? Do you know it?

LC: No, I have it over there, the copy. Yeah, it's more in (Hawaiian) and then I wrote one—I saw an article in the paper one time from this national library of poetry. And I wrote one and I sent it. And they send me back and they told me they think my poem was going to be selected. I hope so.

WN: Oh, you're still waiting?

LC: Still waiting.

WN: Do you think you could read the poem on tape?

LC: Oh, I cannot read it by heart, I gotta look in the paper, I forgot what I wrote. I have 'em in the paper. If you want I can go get 'em.

WN: Okay, why don't I . . .

LC: Right over there.

WN: . . . turn this off. I'll turn it off now.

LC: Okay.

WN: And I'll turn it back on.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

[The following is a transcription of a tape recording with LC's live translation of the recording.]

—: . . . you enjoy. And I'm also gonna be enclosing the three songs that I composed—should I say I wrote the poem for them, for my children and my mother back in around 1991 or so. And I really do thank you so much for your help in having it put into Hawaiian words. Mahalo so much. (Sound of 'ukulele strumming.)

He Mele No Waipi'o

A Song for Waipi'o.

[Song begins]

*Ha'aheo wale 'oe e Waipi'o
Kahi a ka lehulehu e ho'okipa ai
Aia i ka nani a'o Hi'ilawe
A me ka 'ala anuhea o ka 'awapuhi*

See how proud are you, Waipi'o
Visitor come here to admire you
And when they see the Hi'ilawe falls
And with the sweet fragrance of the
ginger

*Kaulana wale 'oe i nā malihini
I ka nani kamaha'o o ka 'āina*

You are most famous to strangers
Because of the beauty and the lush of
the land
You are remarkable—your remarkable
scenery to admire
It's a home that I cherish and love,
unforgettable

*He 'āina uluwehi 'oe i ka'u 'ike
Ku'u home aloha poina 'ole
Ku'u home aloha poina 'ole*

*Kilakila 'oe i nā malihini
A me ka niu holuholu o pakalana*

[No translation provided.]
With the swaying coconuts and
pakalana
I crave to have a glimpse of the
wonderous land
And the remarkable Nanaue Falls

*Lana ko'u mana'o e 'ike lihi
I ka wai kupanaha o Nanaue*

*Nānea au i ka nani o ku'u 'āina
A me ka makani kolonahe o ka pō
Pōhai 'ia me nā kūpuna o ka 'āina
A me nā kama ha'aheo ā nā kūpuna*

I am fascinated with the beauty
and the gentle breeze of the mountain
Encircled by the youth of yesteryear
And the proud youths of the land

*Ha'ina 'ia mai ana ka puana
Waipi'o ku'u home poina 'ole
Pōhai 'ia me ka kupa o ka 'āina
Home pumehana me ka maluhia
Ku'u home aloha poina 'ole
Ku'u home aloha poina 'ole*

I end my song of you, Waipi'o
Waipi'o, my unforgettable home
Encircled and cherished by natives of
the land
It's a home of warmth and serenity
A home of warmth and serenity

[LC's recording ends.]

WN: Very nice, thank you very much.

LC: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

THE CLOSING OF SUGAR PLANTATIONS:

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Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
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August 1997