BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: PETRA IZON, housewife, retired cannery worker

Petra Izon, Visayan, was born in Iloilo, Philippine Islands on April 24, 1905. She came to Hawaii in 1922 with her sisters, mother, and two brothers-in-law. The men were coming to work on the plantation. They were assigned to Halemano, Waialua.

Petra had completed five years of school in the Philippines. For awhile, she helped make hot water for workers' baths. She met and married Mr. Izon who was from Panay, the same island she had come from in the Philippines. They are the parents of eight children.

Petra worked for the U.S. Engineering Department as a waitress in the mess hall during World War II. Later, she worked at the pineapple cannery as a trimmer.

Mr. and Mrs. Izon now live in Wahiawa.
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Petra D. Izon

June 17, 1976

Wahiawa, Hawaii

BY: Araceli Agoo

AA: This is an interview with Mrs. Petra D. Izon of 94 Dole Road, Wahiawa. June 17, 1976. Okay let's begin by telling me how you got to come to Hawaii.

PI: Oh, I got to come to Hawaii because all my sisters were coming here to Hawaii. Only my mother and me would be left at the Philippines if we didn't come.

AA: Why did your father come to Hawaii?

PI: My father? No, I told you my father passed away when I was only...

AA: Oh, I'm sorry.

PI: ...one year and up, or two years.

AA: Okay. How were you able to come to Hawaii?

PI: My oldest sister were here before us with her husband and then they went home to the Philippines to take vacation. The husband were immigrating workers to bring here to Hawaii. That's why my two brother-in-laws, and my sisters, they wanted to come also. So we follow them.

AA: Didn't you have to be a worker to come to Hawaii?

PI: Not myself.

AA: Not yourself?

PI: Not me. But my brother-in-laws, they came here to work.

AA: They sent you to Waialua or did you live anywhere else before you came to Waialua?

PI: Oh we came to Waialua.

AA: You came straight to Waialua?
PI: Just for only a night, and then when they found out that my sister and my brother-in-law here, that we suppose to come to Waialua. Then they transfer us to Waialua, I mean to Halemano.

AA: Did you ever work there?

PI: No except for making hot water for the workers, just for a little while I don't know how many months.

AA: To take a bath?

PI: For them to take a bath. There was that bath house and they had that big tub. Then I boil hot water before they come home.

AA: Was that for everybody to come to use?

PI: For everybody to take a bath in that place.

AA: How long did you live in Waialua and when did you meet your husband?

PI: Oh, I meet him the first year we came because they were very good friends with my brother-in-law that come in first.

AA: You're from the same town?

PI: No, the same island of Panay, but it's in a different province.

AA: Can you tell me about your marriage then, and your children?

PI: My marriage, oh? We were married by a Waialua priest but we were not married in Waialua Church; we were married in Waianae. You know, one priest before, he has the three districts. Kauku, Waianae and Waialua, only one priest. That Sunday, the priest was in Waianae so we went to Waianae by train. (Laughs)

AA: For how long was the trip?

PI: Oh, I forgot how many hours. I should say, maybe one or two hours.

AA: Did you have a wedding gown? Did you have bridesmaid, stuff like that?

PI: No. Just the maid of honor and the best man and I had only the white long dress and with a veil.

AA: And did you have a big party? Did you celebrate?

PI: Oh yes we had a party. They made a party. And I didn't know anything about what they were doing, and they made a party.

AA: It wasn't your family who took care of the party? It was Mr. Ison's family?
PI: Oh him and by the help of my family too.

AA: Did you move into your own house after you were married?

PI: Yeah, we live alone in one camp, because the rest they move to the other camp.

AA: What other camp was this?

PI: That's Halemano Camp, but in Halemano section there were how many camps. And then from the other camps when we arrived--that was Camp 2--we moved to Camp Six where he use to live. Because he was water tender. He open the water; he distribute down there for irrigation. That was his job.

AA: Can you tell me about the births of your children then?

PI: Oh, my oldest was a boy but he passed away when he was only three months, a baby. And then second, Dolores. I had four sons besides the one that died and three daughters...that's why I have seven.

AA: Can you tell me what kind of schooling they had?

PI: Oh they just graduated from Waialua High School. Except one girl, she graduated from Maryknoll.

AA: Is that the youngest?

PI: That's the youngest girl. The youngest is a boy.

AA: Oh that's the youngest girl. How did you get her to go to Maryknoll? It was such a long distance.

PI: My niece daughter, use to go there too, so there was somebody live Waialua to pick up them.

AA: Why did you choose to send her to Maryknoll?

PI: Well, she wants, because she finish the grammar school at St. Michael School and she wants to continue at Catholic School.

AA: You yourself thought that a private school was better than Waialua High School?

PI: Well, of course it's better but it's more expensive.

AA: What about the education of your other children?

PI: Oh well, Dolores just graduated from high school in Waialua and so is the other boy who just retired from the Air Force. And then my second boy, he use to go to the U. (University of Hawaii) but he never finish. I think he had only one more year, Poho but I think he has a very good
job now. He's in Maui. And then my other son, junior, is working at Hickam. Live in Waialua.

AA: Junior. The one with the Boy Scout?

PI: Yeah.

AA: I know him.

PI: The choir leader from the church. And then my other daughter who is a nurse. She went to St. Francis.

AA: She's living in town?

PI: Living at Kalihi, works at Kaiser. And then my other daughter, the one in Florida. The one that graduated from Maryknoll. My youngest son, living L.A.

AA: What about you...were you a housewife?

PI: Oh yes,

AA: All right. What about your own teaching, did you teach them at all yourself?

PI: Oh, I teach them what I know when they were yet in the lower grade because I cannot teach them too much because I don't have too much education myself. When I was in Philippines I just reach 5th grade. (Laughs)

AA: Okay, how was it like when you were a housewife then? When your kids were going to school...

PI: Oh we had a hard life before because we don't have no electricity where we used to live. We use to wash by hands, and I'm busy taking care of the children, keeping the house clean.

AA: Did you garden?

PI: We had a garden,

AA: Was it your own garden or...?

PI: My own garden, My husband was working on that.

AA: How were your relationships with the other mothers? Did you sit around to talk, did you go shopping together?

PI: Oh yeah! Right over here I don't have any other mothers except my niece here. I have my two niece here. Or in fact, my daughter, I go with my daughter, they call me, or my sister down there, Mrs. Bunda.
AA: When you were in Halemano, how was your typical day, did you get up at 4:30 or something like that?

PI: No. Because my husband does not need to, he come home to eat breakfast, he just go out and open the water and then fix everything up that he use to do. Then come home again and eat breakfast so I don't have to wake up and make for him lunch just like other workers. (Laughs)

AA: Your husband worked 24 hours? Or because he worked as ditchman, he had irregular hours?

PI: Well, he had his own hours. He did not have any foreman that watched over him when he was working. He just work by himself. And then he come home. After his breakfast, he go out again, check the water and then come home for lunch and then go out again after, maybe, 1 o'clock. Because he had to make some calls to the one that receive the water, the overseer he call down that take care of the water that they use for irrigation.

AA: You got married in 1923?

PI: 54 years already married. 53 last February.

AA: How many years after that did you have your son?

PI: After we are married, after one year. But my first baby the one that died.

AA: But when you were in Halemano, how did you go around shopping? Did store peddlers come up to your house?

PI: Had some store peddlers come around the camp. But not when we were only in one house. We use to live in only one house, you know.

AA: The whole family or you shared the house with someone else?

PI: No, my family only in one house. You see they built that one house for us because it's near to the place where my husband open and close the water.

AA: You weren't close to very many people then?

PI: The camp, the pineapple camp is not very close. It's like this and that main road. But we live alone in one house. So after that we move to a camp. The 6-B camp. That was when we just move for a few weeks or maybe a month and then they had the Japanese attack. (Laugh)

AA: Okay, can you tell me about that Japanese attack? How did your family react? What did you have to do?

PI: That was early in the morning. That was Sunday, eh? We were in the neighbor's house, my godmother's house. Because that was the day that her younger daughter was baptized. So we were there early in the morning and we heard in the radio that they were calling for all those doctors,
nurses, and the one that could help. So we listen and listen and then we know that they attack Pearl Harbor. And we were all excited.

AA: Scared?

PI: Scared. After that they order for everyone to make a air raid shelter.

AA: How did you go about making your shelter?

PI: I didn't make the shelter, my husband dig and by the help of my son. (Laugh) And then after they dig, we put something inside.

AA: You just dug into the ground?

PI: Yes, in the ground behind our house.

AA: How did you cover it up?

PI: Oh well, we use only when we hear that air raid siren. Then we run inside there. But if no more air raid siren, you stay in the house.

AA: Everybody had to do this?

PI: Oh, yes. Everybody suppose to make an air raid shelter before.

AA: For how long did you have to use them?

PI: Oh, I forget now how long they were using that. Because later on, too many soldiers live in our camp. Came from the Mainland.

AA: They live in your camp?

PI: Yes, they use some of the houses there.

PI: But after when they were there, we didn't hear so much the air raid siren alarm. They had only that uh...you blow and then uh, it's like the horn.

AA: That was to warn you?

PI: Yeah, everybody know that just to be ready in case. Maybe they suspect some kind of enemy airplane. That, that's why we have to be alerted too. You get ready.

AA: Were there a lot of families in Halemano about 1930 or was it mostly single men?

PI: 1930, we were in that single house. That is part of Halemano, In Halemano there were six camps in that section.

AA: What do you mean by single house? Only a family live inside?
PI: Only us. That house only for us. Built there for us, for my husband because he have his work.

AA: What I mean was were there any other mothers that you...?

PI: In the other camps.

AA: In the other camps? You didn't go to visit with them?

PI: Oh yeah, I went, that's where my other sister were. Near. And my comrades; I have many friends.

AA: What about the health of your children? What kind of medical treatments did they receive?

PI: There was medical treatment from the doctor because the doctor use to come up to Halemano before.

AA: Dr. Davis?

PI: Dr. Davis. He had small clinic there behind, near the store.

AA: The store in Halemano? Did he take care of only Halemano or the other...

PI: Dr. Davis? No, Waialua. The whole Waialua. But there was a certain day that he come to our section, Halemano, or sometimes he go to the other sections of Halemano or Waialua.

AA: Did you go to the hospital to give birth to your babies?

PI: Not all. The first four at home. Before we were kinda ignorant yet. You know we come from the Philippines, we scared of the doctor. But after that, Dr. Davis advised me to go to the hospital. So the rest all...

AA: Who helped you then during your...?

PI: Oh, the midwife. She was a very good midwife.

AA: She helped other ladies give birth too?

PI: Oh she was busy.

AA: You have to pay her?

PI: Oh, she did everything I think that was ten dollars;

AA: Did you go through the Filipino custom of staying in the house and having heat come to you? Having people heat you?

PI: No, not our side of the Philippines.
AA: You didn't have to boil guava leaves in hot water?

PI: No. I know about that. Some people did that but no, not me.

AA: Your mother, didn't she come to give you some of her own medical help, what she thought was...

PI: No.

AA: She didn't come to make you drink little things?

PI: I think I remember only what to give to the baby. That when the first born baby you give that juice of the bitter melon leaves in the baby's mouth.

AA: Bitter melon, we do that, too.

PI: Oh yeah? (Laughs)

AA: Did Dr. Davis examine you before you gave birth?

PI: One nurse, before she used to come around the camp.

AA: How regularly? Every once a week?

PI: I think that was once a week.

AA: So she got to see you once a week?

PI: Uh huh. If you need medicine then she can give you.

AA: What about your other children? They were born at Waialua Hospital?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Again Dr. Davis?

PI: No. Not only Dr. Davis. Dr. Davis and who was the doctor? I forget already.

AA: Dr. Hatelid?

PI: Yeah, I think Dr. Hatelid wen follow Dr. Davis?

AA: When they got sick did your children ever get mumps or chicken pox?

PI: Oh yes.

AA: They stayed at home through it or did they go to the hospital?

PI: Oh yeah, they stay at home but I talk with the doctor.

AA: What did you think of the medical care? Did you think it was...

PI: I think that was very good one, yeah.
AA: Okay, can you tell me about your job then?

PI: My jobs? (Laughs) My job's taking care of the children, the house. But during World War II I used to work at the U.S.E.D.

AA: What is U.S.E.D.?

PI: United States Engineer. (United States Engineering Department) I think they were making something at the (Kipapa) Gulch. Digging and...

AA: Oh, by Kipapa?

PI: Yeah. And then we use to work at the mess hall.

AA: Did you have this job because you needed the money or you were sort of placed into it?

PI: Well, we need money. Who don't need money? And besides, I had a friend that ask me to work because she wanted to work, too, before from Waialua so that she have company. Of course they (the Army) pick up us and they take us home after work. So I took the job. I was fortunate my mother was with me.

AA: Your mother worked there, too?

PI: No, my mother was with me.

AA: So she could take care of your children?

PI: Yeah, my children. So I work.

AA: This was around 1940, '45?

PI: I think I started 1942 or '43 and then I stop at 1945. Yeah, because of the transportation. (Army stopped providing transportation.)

AA: What kind of working conditions did you have? Was it a really hard job?

PI: Oh, waitress. Well, not all the hours were very hard because we had rest for quite awhile, oh. But during meal time, that was kinda busy. When the soldiers came and ate in the mess hall. So we had to work fast, fill up the wagon with the dishes, bring 'em to the kitchen to the one who take care there. There they wash the dishes and then bring back the wagon again and we set the table. We slice bread, we clean vegetables. That's what we did.

AA: This was at Kipapa Gulch or at...

PI: Inside, when you go down at Waikakalau, there was a road going to the right (across Waipio Acres).

AA: It isn't there any more?
PI: I don't know if it's still there. But the road is still there.

AA: I only see an airfield, leveled area.

PI: You know from Wheeler, you have to go down like that? Well, there was a road going to the right. On the left there was those building already. But that wasn't the right side. Inside. Had a mess hall there, big mess hall.

AA: Did you work eight hours a day or longer than that?

PI: Yeah, supposed to be eight hours a day but we had...not too bad. Had rest.

AA: You had rest. What about your pay? Were you paid for overtime?

PI: No, we don't work overtime.

AA: Do you think your pay was good enough for the job you were doing?

PI: Well, of course the pay was not so high as now. I started $120 a month. Yeah, that was a very good pay to us before.

AA: That was a good pay?

PI: Yeah, $120. (Laughs)

AA: About how many ladies were involved in this?

PI: Oh, it's kinda plenty...maybe, between twenty and thirty besides the cooks.

AA: Was it mostly Filipino?

PI: The cooks mostly Filipinos and Chinese. And the lady workers, they were Filipinos and Koreans because Japanese cannot work in there. (Laughs)

AA: What about your job in the (pineapple) cannery. When did you start on that?

PI: I even forget what year was that. I work with my sister. Mrs. Bunda and me. We stayed my niece house.

AA: Mrs. Bunda is your sister?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Oh. What about Mrs. Misajon, how is she related to you?

PI: That's my godmother. When we were married. And her husband and my husband the same place in the Philippines. And Mrs. Misajon and me the same place in Iloilo City but different province.

AA: Your job in the cannery, can you tell me about that?

PI: Oh, packing. When I was working there, that was the first time I really
worked hard. Working in the cannery is very hard job. You have to
work fast. Because the machine, the pineapple just coming out, eh.
And then one day my forelady told me because they exchange. If you
stay this table then maybe the next day, they will put you on the other
table. And then she put me in the different table and the pineapple
was all big size there. Came from Lanai I think. And then I tried, my
thumb was sore. Could hardly da kine. You put your thumb in the hole
and you peel it. I complain to my Forelady, "I cannot work this kind
pineapple. Too big. My thumb sore." And then she said, "Oh, but
it is not fair for the others." I said, "Well, I cannot work this size
of pineapple. I don't want to work." I told her that. And then
she said, "Well, okay, you wait." After that then she put me in the
table, all the small pineapple came out. That one make your head
dizzy, too, because, ooh! Just pouring, just pouring. Small size, too.

AA: You have to pack in the big gallons, the small ones, yeah?

PI: That small pineapple, I don't know how to pack because different. The
packers, that's their job. I was in trimming.

AA: You were the trimmer?

PI: The trimmer. I forgot all about that. Packing is the one you put
in the can. The trimmer is the one you take out the skin. Yeah.
And then after that I said, "Oh, I cannot stand." They put me in
the packing. I never last long working in the packing.

AA: About how long did you work there then?

Maybe about three or four months.

AA: Your children were all in school by that time?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Do you think you were getting the right amount of pay for what you
were doing?

PI: Well, I cannot complain because they were paying everybody the same
thing. If you work at that kind then, the same.

AA: Did you have overtime?

PI: Overtime? No.

AA: How did you get back and forth? Was it Dole or Del Monte?

PI: Hawaiian Pineapple. (i.e. Dole Pineapple Cannery)

AA: Where was this?

PI: At Iwilei, I think.

AA: Oh, it's not there any more.
PI: It is still there. Kalihi, I think. Hawaiian Pineapple is still there. Right by the highway, to the right, yeah. Dole, yeah. I know Dole and Del Monte and Libby's. Yeah, those are the three companies that operate pineapples.

AA: Would you say this was around 1950?

PI: I don't know. 1948...yeah, I think around 1950.

AA: You were living here then in Wahiawa?


AA: Did you ever come down to the Waialua area to live?

PI: Yeah, we live there two years after he retire.

AA: Where?

PI: Down Waialua where Dolores living. Up Kekauwa Street. That was our own house before.

AA: Around 1930, what kinda things did you have to buy? What kind of furniture, if any furniture, and what kind of food that you couldn't grow?

PI: Oh well, we didn't need any furniture around 1930 because that is the time we live in that house without electricity yet. So we didn't have this kind (Referring to her kitchen appliances) and we use that stove that we use woods, just like the Philippines. Some houses, that was what they use to do. And then we use kerosene for lighting.

AA: What about your beds?

PI: The wooden bed with the mattress only.

AA: Your toilets were outside?

PI: Oh yeah, they had a toilet outside. Wooden toilets.

AA: How was it? Did you have to take off and put them somewhere every once in a while, or did you run it through running water?

PI: The toilet?

AA: Yeah.

PI: No, it's not flush toilet.

AA: It's a hole dug underneath?

PI: Yeah, hole dug. And then they made walls, and had the seat to sit down and then once in a while they deliver this what we call Pine-O
They put that inside.

AA: When it got filled, then you just dug another hole?

PI: No, no, that was very deep. Takes years for it to fill.

AA: What things did you have to buy from the store?

PI: What we need to eat or....

AA: You grew some of them?

PI: Yeah, we grew sweet potato, balunggay and beans, and well, so many kinds of vegetables.

AA: Uh huh, so things you got from the store was...

PI: Papaya, bananas, yeah, had.

AA: So things you got from the store were things like salt and...

PI: Or fish or meat, once in a while. We didn't eat meat very often before or pork, no. We had at that time fish.

AA: Did you have three meals a day though?

PI: Oh yeah, we had breakfast and lunch, light lunch and then dinner.

AA: The fish vendors, do you remember any of them?

PI: Yes, when we use to live in Camp 2 but when we use to live alone there was not vendors around.

AA: So you didn't eat fish...

PI: We had a car.

AA: Okay, from the plantation with your husband's job, you had a free house.

PI: Yes.

PI: Free water.

AA: What about the car that he had to use?

PI: Well, at first, he was using our car.

AA: Your own car?

PI: They supply gasoline, but after that they give him a truck.

AA: What kind of car did you have?

PI: Oh, we have so many kind of second hand cars before. We had a Ford, we had a Oldsmobile, and we had a jeep. (Laughs) But they supply him with truck after that.
AA: When you lived above Waialua High School, the house that your daughter Dolores is living in right now, you bought that from the plantation? It is your own house?

PI: Yeah, that was our own house. But we broke it down because was old already. And then rebuilt a new one.

AA: They rebuilt a new one. Was that house a good house? Were there leaks on the roof or the mosquitoes could come through...

PI: No leaks. No, had a screen.

AA: And whenever you needed repairing, the plantation would come and do it for you?

PI: Oh, that house in Waialua? That was our house so we have to pay for the fixing up. Anything that needed fixing. We bought it from the plantation, so plantation didn't have nothing to do with the repairs. It was our expense. But we didn't do any big repairs. My husband did it.

AA: Did your husband help you at all with your housework?

PI: Oh yeah, he was busy. Sometimes he cook rice. Sometimes he mop floor, especially when the children were small yet. (Laughs)

AA: So you shared in this things. You shared work like this and, it didn't matter to you that you had to share this work? With the Japanese, I think, it was only the wife that did most of the housework, yeah?

PI: Oh yes, well I did most because he goes out to work.

AA: What kind of recreation did you have with your children? You didn't have movies at that time, did you?

PI: No, well, I remember, after that, they had a movie once in a while in that camp up there. Camp 2, Halemano Camp. Maybe once a week.

AA: You have to pay for it?

PI: No, was free. That was the plantation's da kine, eh, I think that was. To help the people that live in the village. (Laughs)

AA: And you visited relatives pretty often?

PI: Before? Oh well, only to my sisters, my comadre, my townmates, yeah.

AA: A lot of them were living in Halemano?

PI: Yeah, Halemano.

AA: Did you go to picnics together?

PI: Yeah, sometimes.
AA: Where did you go?

PI: At Haleiwa Park or Puuiki or at Mokuleia. We reach Mokuleia. We use to go Mokuleia side.

AA: So you drive all your cars down with all your kids. Okay, did you belong to the Waialua Community Association when you were in Waialua?

PI: Yeah.

AA: What kind of activities did you have with that organization?

PI: Well, we belong but I hardly participate when the time we have gatherings because, well, I could (not) leave the house.

AA: What kind of gatherings did they have?

PI: Just like meetings, or had refreshments after that, and talk about this and that, some improvement. And I belong to the University Extension Club.

AA: What is that?

PI: That what we get comes once a week and we had meetings, activities, any kind. How to sew, or how to make quilts or so many kinds she use to teach.

AA: Just one lady who came down once in a while?

PI: Yeah, once a week.

AA: And all you ladies went to the...

PI: The camp. There was a house that they made into a clubhouse. That's where we gathered.

AA: What about the Filipino Association down there? Did you participate in what they did?

PI: No.

AA: What about the Catholic Club?

PI: Oh, yeah. We belong to the Catholic Club when we were down there.

AA: What kind of festivities did you have? Did you have the Mayo, the Flores de Mayo at that time?

PI: Oh yes, Flores de Mayo.

AA: What did you do?

PI: Well, after the Mass, during the parade, after that you get some refreshments or food.
AA: Was it a big parade?

PI: Oh well, before, it was not only the parade but now the celebration. And you have the big celebration, too. (Laughs) This last Flores de Mayo, too, over there. Big crowd.

AA: Yeah, it was your May Day program, too, I think.

PI: May Day program they didn't have. Only the celebration of the Flores de Mayo. Did you know we attended the Adult School down Waialua?

AA: Oh, you did?

PI: My husband and I.

AA: For how long?

PI: Oh, that was for, how many months? And then my teacher put me to sixth grade. And my husband, third grade. (Laughs)

AA: What year?

PI: Oh, I think that was 1959, 1960...we live here (Wahiawa) already.

AA: But you went to Waialua.

PI: Yeah, but we go to Waialua because I can drive, see. And that was in the gym. The old gym, the old gym before. They wen broke down that gym.

AA: What caused you to take an interest?

PI: Oh, just to learn, just like to improve your education, something like that. But some, they don't even know how to say their name, or how to read ABC. Yeah, that's right. All that.

AA: Were there a lot of old people like you there?

PI: Oh yeah, some even older than myself. Ladies and men. We had good fun. My teacher was Mrs. Mitchell and that other one, I forgot that other one that wen move to Kailua. Haole. Mrs. Mitchell is a Japanese, but married haole. Use to live Sunset.

AA: Your children, when they began to date, when did they start, when they met their husbands, things like that? How did they do it? Did they go around in a group of girls, did you as a mother allow them to go by themselves?

PI: Well, some they go by groups. And then my two sons, their wives came from the other islands, but they use to come here to the business schools. So that's where they met.

AA: Your sons also went to business school?
PI: No, the wives. And the that's where they met so I don't know, because they live in Honolulu. They come home only on weekends. So I don't know. Maybe they go out by groups sometimes, or they (Laughs) go out by themselves; they date.

AA: The way that the dating practices are here, were they the same as in the Philippines?

PI: What kind practices?

AA: In the Philippines, I myself, I don't think that parents allowed their children to go out as much. In here, was it different? Did you see other people letting their kids go out more freely?

PI: Yeah, I saw some, yeah.

AA: So you had to feel that you had to be that way with your children, too?

PI: Well, as for myself, no, I don't want.

AA: You scolded them, huh?

PI: I scold them but when they are of age already, sometimes you have to give them freedom once in a while.

AA: Uh huh. How were their weddings? Were they big weddings?

PI: Well, it's a just right wedding, I think, not too big, and not too small. My two sons married on the other island. And then my daughter married in Waialua, the nurse. But my youngest daughter married in the Mainland so we didn't attend.

AA: Your other daughter married that haole then.

PI: Yeah, the youngest one, the one in Florida now.

AA: What was your reaction to the haole into the family?

PI: Well, when I didn't meet him yet we didn't like the idea. (Laughs) But then when he come, when they came in 1958, we like him. He's a very jolly man. Yeah, that's what I like.

AA: They only have one son?

PI: Two. Two girls.

AA: So he's really nice man then.

PI: He's nice, very nice. Sometime he hug me. But he's my son-in-law already.

AA: Is he big?
PI: He's kind big built, yeah.
AA: Uh huh. When your children got married, did you have all that Ninang and Ninong?
PI: Oh, you mean baptized Ninang?
AA: No, for marriage.
PI: Oh yeah, yeah we have. You call that Ninang is only one. That's the matron of honor, but that you call Ninang, eh?
AA: No.
PI: The bridesmaid is the friend, eh.
AA: We call the Ninang or Ninong the almost the parent type, the age of the parents.
PI: Oh, the age of the parents? No, they are younger. (Had matron of honor or maid of honor, and one or two bridesmaid. That's all.)
AA: Younger ones.
PI: Oh, they choose their own Ninang and Ninong.
AA: When it came to this baptismal of their children or your children, did you have a lot of them, too? Godparents?
PI: Oh yeah, the one that is a nurse had six godparent. The rest, only two.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AA: Do you know why parents want to have so much Ninongs and Ninangs? (Laughs)
PI: I don't know about their opinions. But to me, it's not too da kine. For me, two is just right. But I did meet one of my goddaughter and I was one of the many...many of us; I don't know who.

AA: What about the communions that your children had at the hospital? (AA meant church.) How were they celebrated?
PI: Communion? The first communion? Oh, it's nice, they had their first communion. (No celebration; it was just an ordinary day.)

AA: All of them?
PI: All of them.
AA: And did you celebrate at home later on?
PI: Oh no, just usual family. Just had a little special one or two kinds. Only us.

AA: Yeah, when you have celebrations, do you always put something aside for the altar? No? As Catholics, you don't believe in that?

PI: No, I don't know about others, but no, we don't do that. You mean just like Japanese or Chinese?

AA: No, the dead people, before everybody starts to eat, we set aside a little bit of the food and...

PI: Oh, in you folks' home town?

AA: (Laughs) No. I think all Filipinos do that.

PI: No, I don't.

AA: Visayans don't.

PI: Some, but not us.

AA: Okay, did you have any serious accidents?

PI: I had serious sickness but...

AA: Yes, serious sicknesses.

PI: Oh, sicknesses, yeah. I was in the hospital. When I came out, almost three months. Ruptured appendicitis. Was Dr. Davis, I remember. The old hospital yet. That was the serious illness.

AA: Where was this old hospital located?

PI: Near the cemetery down Waialua.

AA: The Puuiki Cemetery?

PI: Yes.

AA: You had to pay for your own medical aids or your hospital? And you had to pay through your paycheck?

PI: No.

AA: They didn't take any money from your paycheck?

PI: Plantation paid for all those expenses.

AA: How much did they take?

PI: No. They paid. We don't pay. We don't pay the plantation for that. That was free. Even until now we are free as a benefit for working for the plantation.
AA: What about children that were born retarded? How did the community regard them? How did they take care of them?

PI: Well, I don't see any retarded children yet in our section before. I don't know how to answer that.

AA: Did you meet (i.e. know) anybody who committed suicide?

PI: Not in Waialua. But I know somebody who was murdered.

AA: Can you tell me about it?

PI: That was in the Halemano. Well, this one man, I think he like that girl, eh. But maybe I don't...

AA: Don't tell me any names. Just tell me the story.

PI: Because he has a brother down there. And then this girl came from the Philippines, too, see? The parents were over there...the father went over there and the brother. And then he was alone, I think, in the house but that was in Camp 2, that (Tape garbled). And then she came out. We were living in the other camp (Halemano). Not too far from that Camp Two but not on the same camp. Only we heard that was happening already. You see, the girl came out screaming. You see, that we call the man, the man is a little bit older, too. She said, "No, Tata! No, Tata!" But he was chasing her and already she was stabbed and she came out from the house screaming.

AA: Did the lady die then?

PI: Oh yes, the girl died.

AA: How did you react to the man?

PI: The man, they keep him in prison.

AA: Did he have to pay fines?

PI: Oh, I don't know if he paid fines, but he stayed there in prison for how many years.

AA: This prison was in Honolulu?

PI: Yeah.

AA: The one by Kalihi?

PI: Yeah, I think so. The one in Kalihi.

AA: Okay, who collected your garbage?

PI: Plantation take care before.

AA: They come everyday?
PI: No, not everyday.
AA: They sweep the roads, too?
PI: Oh, maybe once in a while.
AA: You said your family had lots of old second hand cars.
PI: Our cars before were all second hand; we can't afford to buy new one.
AA: This car was for your own purposes? You didn't share with other people?
PI: No, we need it for our family.
AA: What kind of public transportation were there?
PI: Oh, that's a plantation transportation, trucks. That bring them to the school.
AA: What about if you needed a ride to get to the store? Would they take you?
PI: Oh well, no. You have to use your own car or your relatives' or friends'.
AA: How much did it cost your children? Was it free?
PI: Yes.
AA: To ride the plantation truck to go to school?
PI: That was the plantation's truck.
AA: Where was this school? The Haleiwa Elementary School?
PI: Yeah, Haleiwa Elementary.
AA: How did you find out about the things that were happening in Honolulu? Did you read the newspapers? Did you have radios or did you have to wait for the next guy...
PI: Up there, up there, then we moved to the camp...electricity there, then we had radios.
AA: What about letters? Did you exchange a lot of letters between you and the people back in Iloilo City?
PI: Oh yeah, I always write. I have niece over there and nephew and lots of cousins.
AA: You always write your own letters? Did any of the older men come and ask you to write letters for them? Those that couldn't write?
PI: No.
AA: But that happened though, in some cases.

PI: Oh, yeah.

AA: Where people had to write for them.

PI: No, I write my own letters. I can write in our language and little bit in English, too.

AA: I think you know a lot of English.

PI: No, not really, not too much.

AA: Oh, you know, things like stealing? Did a lot of that occur? Did you experience any of your things being stolen?

PI: Oh, when I had my operation, I stay in the hospital long time and we live in one house. My husband use to visit me and then come home at night. And then that night, what happened, my mother wen stay with my sister and my children. Somebody stole some of our things.

AA: You never got them back?

PI: No.

AA: Did you tell the police what happened?

PI: Yeah, only the camp police.

AA: What did he do about it?

PI: Well, hard for him to look. Just one, some spoons and forks, an alarm clock, and some little things. We didn't have too many good things at that time, anyway. Not like now. We have television, radio, television. Just like they bring one truck and then they take things in the house and the neighbors think they were moving and yet the people were stealing. (Laughs) But before, we don't have those.

AA: In the Philippines, I understand it's the lady that takes care of the finance, the money, the buying. Is it like that where you come from?

PI: Oh yeah. Mostly.

AA: Did you take that custom to Hawaii?

PI: But that's what we are doing. I'm the one who keeps the money. I'm the one who hold the money. I'm the one who pay the bills. (Laughs)

AA: Did you have reason to use the bank? Like say in 1930?

PI: Oh, the bank. Oh yeah.
AA: Did you practice something called cumpang-cumpang?
PI: Oh, before they use to do that, yeah.
AA: Did you participate?
PI: Yes, one time. One time, with our families, with our good friends and with our townmates. It came out okay.
AA: How many people participated?
PI: Oh, I think was...sometimes four or six. Only that.
AA: You didn't do it all the time though?
PI: No.
AA: It was just once in a while?
PI: No, maybe that was about two times, I think, we did that.
AA: What were your reasons for doing that though?
PI: Well, it was cumpang-cumpang. Oh, maybe you mean different way and I mean different way. We call it for example, one need money, then the rest will give who will receive first, and who will be the next, and then the next, and then the last. Yeah. So, if you're the one who wants to be first, you have to need money.
AA: He takes it first?
PI: Yeah, and then the other one follow.
AA: You did this, too, in the Philippines?
PI: No. We didn't have much money then. (Laughs)
AA: How did you learn to do it, then?
PI: Well, I don't know. They were doing it here, so we copied.
AA: Who were doing it? Other Filipinos? Or the Japanese?
PI: We heard it. But only is from the family and very close friends.
AA: Some people are afraid of trusting the other people.
PI: That's right.
AA: Okay, what about your relationship with the Japanese. How was it? Did you get to talk with them, get in contact with them? I'm talking about 1930 to 1940.
PI: Oh, well, my relation? Okay.
AA: Did you make a lot of Japanese friends?

PI: You mean before or after the War?

AA: Before the War.

PI: Yeah, we had some Japanese friends in Halemano. Some Japanese use to live there before.

AA: In Halemano, it was Filipinos and Japanese only?

PI: Yes, and I don't know if had Chinese or....only I know is Japanese.

AA: Okay. After the War, did your relationship with the Japanese change? They became quiet after a while. They didn't participate in too many stuff?

PI: Well, sometimes, to me I say some words, not in front of them, but when we were talking. But after (Tape garbled)

AA: When you heard of what the Japanese had done in the Philippines, when they invaded, did that change your---I mean were your relatives in the Philippines being harmed by them?

PI: No. We were still friends with our Japanese friends. We didn't change.

AA: When you got to Hawaii did you have to change some of your styles, some of your habits? You had to change the kinds of food you eat from the Philippines, right?

PI: Oh yeah, because you cannot get what we had in the Philippines. Some other vegetables but no more over here.

AA: Like in the Philippines you take a bath in the morning, right?

PI: In the morning or during the day.

AA: Okay, and when you came to Hawaii you have to take a bath in the afternoon.

PI: Or evening.

AA: How did you react to that?

PI: Well, at first I use to take a bath during the day and after that in the afternoon. But later I was thinking that in the afternoon or evening is good because you have to sleep clean. (Laughs) So I got use to it. Now I take a bath late in the afternoon or early in the evening.

AA: In the Philippines I'm sure we all eat with our hands.

PI: Oh yeah, once in a while we use spoon.
AA: You eat with a spoon and not a fork, right?
PI: Yeah. In the Philippines we use spoon and then if you have a fork, too, you use spoon and fork.
AA: Did you know how to speak English when you got to Hawaii?
PI: Oh yeah, I was fifth grade.
AA: And you had how many years of English then?
PI: Five.
AA: Five years. They begin teaching English from first grade.
PI: Oh yeah, in the Philippines, yeah.
AA: But it still was hard for you to communicate though because...
PI: The pronunciation. And you know what you call that pidgin English. kinda hard in the beginning.
AA: Also then, the Japanese that were here did not know how to speak English. How did you communicate with them?
PI: Through pidgin. You had to learn pidgin yourself.
AA: So how long did that take you? How long was it before you could carry on a conversation with them?
PI: Oh, maybe almost a year or one year.
AA: So you know pidgin pretty well. You are an American citizen. Why did you choose to be one?
PI: Well, I'm not thinking of living in the Philippines. I just go there for vacation and then come back again because all my children are born here and they live here.
AA: Did you visit the Philippines?
PI: Yeah.
AA: Were you afraid that if you were not an American citizen you couldn't come back to Hawaii?
PI: No. I was not. I was with a tour.
AA: What were your reasons for becoming a citizen?
PI: All my children are American born, and then they live here. I think American citizen is little bit easier da kine...sometimes, for example, when you go vacation, you have to mark if you are alien. Yet if American, easy, much easier. (All the children were born Americans so I just followed.)
AA: Also with jobs.

PI: Jobs, too. But my age, I'm not thinking about jobs.

AA: When did you become an American citizen?

PI: Oh, too many years ago. My husband's was first then myself.

AA: The first American citizen?

PI: No. He's a veteran. World War II. So it was easier for him to take American citizen.

AA: Okay, in your camp in Halemano, who was your leader? Who made sure that you were living the right way, that you weren't going hungry... or when you had to say something to the plantation, wasn't there someone who would be your spokesman?

PI: Oh, if I want something from the plantation I do myself and talk to them. I don't like somebody to represent me.

AA: Who was it that you spoke to in the plantation? The manager?

PI: Oh, I went to the manager one time. That was a very long time ago. Then my niece stay with us, my two niece. And then they were living with us and the boss in the camp were complaining that they are not supposed to be with us, only plantation people. So I said, "Where they are going?" Because the father is in the Philippines. Mother and da kine were divorced. And then my sister was sick in the hospital for how many years. So they were living with us. So the boss complain to my husband that they are not supposed to live with us. So I went to manager's house, to the house!

AA: Who was the manager at that time? Thompson?

PI: Thompson, yeah. And I told him that we have our two niece living with us because they don't have anybody to take care of them. They were very young yet. And then he ask me where the father, the mother. I told him and he said, "Oh well, it's okay. They can stay with you."

AA: Why do you think the plantation wouldn't allow you to have them at your house?

PI: Because where they are going if they cannot live with us? Unless the government will take care of them?

AA: No, what I meant was what was the reasons that the plantation gave you? What did they say? How come they wouldn't allow the children to live with you? They had to be part of a working family?

PI: Oh, that was the camp boss that complained that they are not supposed to be with us because they are not plantation. That's why we went to see the manager.
AA: The manager restricted a lot of things. Like you couldn't leave the town sometimes.

PI: There was no restriction on traveling anywhere outside of the camp.

AA: Or friends couldn't come in because they would think they came in to take money from the workers. Do you remember anything like that?

PI: What do you mean?

AA: You know, like businessman. Sometimes when they would want to come to Walalu, the camp boss wouldn't allow them in.

PI: Because maybe they think that they are just trying to da kine the people there, the workers...take their money.

AA: Yeah, okay. If you have to cut down a tree, did you have to tell the plantation?

PI: If they planted the tree, sure.

AA: You have to tell them?

PI: Yeah, if that tree is kinda big and was outside our yard.

AA: What would they do to you if you cut down a tree and not tell them?

PI: Well, I don't know. That never happened yet.

AA: Okay.

END OF SIDE TWO.

NOTES FROM THE SAME INTERVIEW BY ARACELI AGOO

I spoke with Mrs. Izon a little further. However, because of a mistake I made with the machine, I did not get this portion on tape. We discussed jewelry with the assumption that ladies in the Philippines put a lot of value in jewelry. I asked her how it was with her here and she said that at that time she could not afford them and that it didn't really concern her.

I asked about her ironing and she described an iron from the Philippines made of a round box-like metal container which can be opened and where charcoals can be put in. These charcoals provide heat for the bottom of the metal container.

I asked her about washing. She replied that all she had was a scrubbing board and a club (called malo in Ilocano) which is used to wring and separate the dirt from the clothes. I asked her if other ethnic groups adopted this malo and she said yes, that others used it, too.

END OF INTERVIEW
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Petra Izon (PI)

July 2, 1976

Wahiawa, Hawaii

BY: Araceli Agoo (AA)

AA: This is an interview with Mrs. Petra D. Izon of 94 Dole Road, Wahiawa. Today is July 2nd, 1976. Mrs. Izon, do you remember anything about the Depression that happened around 1931?

PI: 1931?

AA: Everything would cost so much because of the Mainland. Over here, a lot of people were being laid out of their jobs. And the sugar would cost so little. Do you remember any of that?

PI: Oh, if I'm not mistaken, I think that's the time that they said the plantation lost so much. We were trying our best to raise our own garden.

AA: That's all you can remember about that?

PI: See, that's all I could remember.

AA: You had to do more gardening because you didn't have that much money.

PI: That's right. Well, we had all kinds of vegetables, papayas, bananas, etc. yeah.

AA: So you had to eat less meat and fish, then?

PI: Oh, we hardly eat meat. Of course, we had to eat fish, too, and chickens, sometime. We raise chicken that time. That's why not too bad.

AA: Your husband, what was his job around 1930? Was he an irrigator then?

PI: Oh, he had same job already. (i.e. Water Tender) When he came 1921--because went vacation Philippines, came back--he had that. Oh, he was helping as a carpenter, first. Then, after that, they give him that job about the water tender.

AA: Were there any machines that he had to use?

PI: You see, he was assign to one big reservoir. Way up Halemano.
Every morning, early, he open that....

AA: Let the water out?

PI: Water out to go into Opaeula and Halemano. Millions of gallons, they need. And then, after that, he walk by the ditch to check, because sometimes, the water go to the different parts of the ditch. Well, that's all he check. And at lunch time, he call some other ditch men.

AA: He never had to use any machines in his job? Was any part of his job taken over by a machine?

PI: Well, I don't call that a machine.

AA: What is it?

PI: It's just a gate.

(INTERVIEWER'S NOTE:
It was just a matter of diverting the flow of water to different areas of cane fields that needed irrigating. No machines involved. Also used wooden platforms as gates to control the flow of water.)

PI: A gate that has the number of how many gallons of water. If you open that, how many gallons of water go out. I don't know how he can tell that, but he knew how many millions of water he give to Opaeula and how many millions to Halemano.

AA: About 1938, they had what they call overhead irrigation where they have pipes and the water sprinkled.

PI: Oh, yeah.

AA: Was your husband still an irrigator at that time?

PI: Oh, yeah. Until he retired.

AA: Did he take care of only Opaeula?

PI: Opaeula and Halemano.

AA: Did that area have any of this overhead irrigating sprinklers to water the sugar cane?

PI: Oh.....not his job. Maybe down. Yeah. I don't know very much about his job. All I know is that he....open the water in the morning and then in the afternoon, he close, too. The water goes to the reservoir after he close.

AA: "Closing", you mean, he just put something to stop the water? No machine that he had to fool with?
PI: Yes. I remember he has a gate. But he pull up, and then, he has the kind stick, I think. And had the numbers. That's all I could remember.

AA: Okay. You know, when your husband was in the plantation, if he did something like work 26 days in a month, he would get a bonus? Do you remember any of that?

PI: Oh, that was before. That was before the War, I think. He cannot remember himself. Yeah. That overtime. Then he get the bonus. That's what you mean?

AA: Which. Well, you had free house, free water? The only thing you had to pay was electricity?

PI: We didn't have electricity, yet, that time when we used to live in that Camp 9. But when we moved down to (Camp) 6B and Halemano, too, then we had electricity.

AA: 6B is the name of a camp?

PI: That's another camp in Halemano Section. And in Camp 2. But when we were in Camp 9, only one house. (i.e. We were the only house there) No electricity. We use lantern and some kind of lamp. Run by kerosene. (i.e. hurricane lamp)

AA: You had to buy these lamps or the plantation provided them?

PI: No, we bought lamps.

AA: You bought them. How did you feel about taking orders from your haole bosses? Your husband. The management was haole, right?

PI: Yeah, that's right.

AA: How did you feel as a worker under them? Did you respect your bosses?

PI: Oh, yeah. We had to follow what they order.

AA: So, you think the plantation was really good at that time? 1931 and before?

PI: Before 1931?

AA: Are there any criticisms that you have towards the plantation?

PI: Well, for my part, I'm just a housewife staying at home. At the beginning, they didn't supply him a truck, see. He use our own car. But they supply the gasoline.

AA: But you felt that they should have at least bought the car, because...

PI: Yeah. I mentioned that, "Oh, why didn't they supply you with a truck just like other overseer or foreman?"
AA: You mean other people were being supplied and you guys weren't?

PI: Oh, yeah. They had before my husband.

AA: But these people were haole overseers or Hawaiians?

PI: Oh, not only haoles. Them Japanese.

AA: But your husband was an irrigator. That wasn't the same level as a overseer?

PI: No, no. Those people that had a truck was not the same as his job. They were foreman in the camp.

AA: Was he the only irrigator that you know of at that time?

PI: No. Had two Japanese above Halemano. And had one in 6B.

AA: Did they have cars supplied to them?

PI: No, no. They didn't have.

AA: So they were all treated the same?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Only gas.

PI: Only later, then, they supply him with a truck.

AA: Did you have milk delivered to your house?

PI: Oh, yeah, before when we were in Camp 9. But, you know what we did with the milk because we didn't have any electricity? We just put it in the water with ice.

AA: And that made it cold and it didn't spoil?

PI: If you will not drink it right away by the next day, well, was not too good, already.

AA: You said you put it in water and ice?

PI: Yeah.

AA: How did you get the ice?

PI: Oh, we used to buy it. But only sometimes. We don't do that very often.

AA: Ice cost a lot that time?

PI: Yeah.
AA: Did you make use of any of the clubhouses? There's the Filipino clubhouses by Farrington Highway.

PI: Yeah. We used to before.

AA: What kind of stuff did you use them for?

PI: Oh, when they had a meeting or some kind of celebration. Just like Rizal Day. And then, when they come up to show the movies once a week, it was in the club, too.

AA: You're talking about the clubhouse in Halemano?

PI: Clubhouse in Halemano.

AA: Every camp had a clubhouse?

PI: No, not all the camp. Only in Camp 2.

AA: That's Halemano?

PI: Yeah. In Halemano, there's only one club in Halemano area.

AA: In the gym around 1930, they used to have Christmas Tree Programs. They used to take the kids from school and ask the family to bring them there.

PI: Yeah.

AA: Did you attend every year?

PI: Oh, well, not every year. It's very hard to attend when you have little children. Baby.

AA: (Laughs) Okay. Do you remember what you did at those celebrations? At the Christmas Tree Programs?

PI: Oh, just watch. I didn't do anything. Just sing Xmas Carols and watch the nativity scene.

AA: Didn't they also distribute oranges and apples and balloons?

PI: Candies. Oranges, apples. And if they had too much extra--sometimes had extras--even the adults could ask, too. They give.

AA: Also, there was a child development center that was built around 1939. It was like a kindergarten or a pre-school area where you could bring your kids sometimes. I think it was located at Waialua Gym or Haleiwa. Do you remember that?

PI: I don't know Waialua. Maybe Haleiwa Gym. I think it was Haleiwa.

AA: You remember a child development center?
PI: Yes but my children were not brought there.

AA: As an irrigator, did he (husband) ever work just eight hours a day, or did he still work 24 hours, whenever the water was needed?

PI: Oh, he work eight hours a day, but when there was a heavy rain, he had to go out, and check. Or else the water will overflow. He has to fix his gate.

AA: Was there a time where he had to work ten hours? With emergencies?

PI: Yes, especially during the heavy rains.

AA: Can you tell me about the stores that you shopped at?

PI: Oh, we had a store in Halemano and before. Right next to the clubhouse. That's where we bought what we need. It (store) belonged to the Plantation.

AA: Can you tell me about the credit system that they had at that store?

PI: You could charge. And then, after the month, they deduct that from salary.

AA: What about if you use too much and you couldn't pay for it?

PI: Yeah, overcharge.

AA: Overcharge. How was that? How did you eat then?

PI: They took most of what you owed but put just a little in your pay envelope then you would charge again. But we never overcharge yet.

AA: Did you ever have people that did that?

PI: Yes, I heard that somebody just receive the envelope and they just put—I forgot how much they put in the envelope if your envelope supposed to be empty, but they put a little. I don't know if one dollar or what.

AA: This envelope?

PI: Fifty cents? Yeah. In the envelopes so that you could just---receive something.

AA: For your paycheck?


AA: So, that way, the managers were good then, cause they did something like that?

PI: Yeah. They put little bit. Maybe just to make them happy.
Can you tell me about the hospital? Waialua Hospital?

Oh, the old hospital before? Well, yeah, we used to go there. I took my children there when they were sick. At first, was Dr. Wood. But, I think, the people was kind of scared of him. Especially the one that came from the Philippines. Never got used to doctors. They hardly go to see the doctor. But after that, Dr. Davis, then too many people went to see him. Even my children, too, yeah.

What about the fire station? Do you remember seeing a fire station?

Fire station? I know plantation, I think, had fire station. But I don't know about that Haleiwa one, if...

Did any of your neighbors or your husband have to volunteer as a fireman? When there was a fire...

Oh, oh, yeah! Especially when the sugar cane got burned, yeah. All the workers, all the kind. They had to come out and help.

Did your husband ever have to go to school to learn something with his work at the plantation?

Oh, what they learn only is about safety. They went to learn about safety, I guess. Was every year.

It was first-aid kind stuff?

I don't remember about first-aid, but I know that they had to learn about safety. How to use the tools and how to avoid accident.

What about games? You know, like basketball and baseball? Did your husband participate in that?

Oh, before, they used to have a playground in Halemano 2.

The men used to go play, too?

Sometimes.

Did your kids belong to any basketball team?

Oh yeah. Junior, he used to play...baseball and basketball. And Jimmy used to play football in high school. And baseball.

Were you given any kind of rules about what time you should go play baseball? Did the plantation give you any kind of rules like that? Like they say you have to stop playing at 8 o'clock, or something like that?

No, they didn't give just like curfew. No. Only during the War.

Were there complaints that the ordinary working people had against the
lunas or the bosses, you know?

PI: That's what I heard before, sometime.

AA: They did have complaints about the camp conditions, the house?

PI: Yeah.

AA: So, you can say that not everybody was happy? Would you say that they were content with everything?

PI: Well mostly were content. But, some were complaining. (Laughs)

AA: If anybody had any complaints before union came in, how did they go about voicing this complaint? How did they let the manager know?

PI: Oh, they told the boss.

AA: They tell the camp boss or went straight to the manager?

PI: No, he tell the camp boss, first.

AA: When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, about where were you? Were you at home?

PI: Yeah. Early in the morning. We were at the neighbor's house, because that day, was going to baptize her baby.

AA: And for the next few weeks, were you living in fear? Were you scared?

PI: Sometimes. Especially when we had air raid alarm. But not really scared.

AA: Did you often hear that air raid?

PI: Yeah, at the first week.

AA: What kind of effects did it (air raid warning) have for the plantation? Did the people have to stop working or what?

PI: No, no. They continue working. But all the workers-- they call it National Guard (a job that workers were put into)--they had to practice.

AA: The plantation people? All of them?

PI: Yeah.

AA: They had to practice?

PI: To practice. But, just like how to shoot gun or find the enemy, kind. Just like National Guard.

AA: Why did they do this: Were they going go join the Army?
PI: No. To protect this place here in case they (Japanese) were going to
land, or something like that. They have to learn how to operate the
guns and how to -- just military exercise, eh. They went drill, too, you
know. Even my husband.

AA: Who would put this thing together? Did the manager tell you to form a
group and practice?

PI: Yeah, the plantation?

AA: And they supplied the guns and all their things? All the weapons that
you use?

PI: They didn't supply them. They just use that for when they were on
exercise, eh. Drill. No bullets. They don't bring that at home.

AA: (laughs) That would be scary.

PI: Yeah.

AA: What do you remember about the blackouts? Can you tell me stories
about that?

PI: Oh, when it was blackout, boy, that was kind of hard. Especially if you
are not prepared. You have to make ready your flashlight. Because in
case you had to run into the shelter, you need that.

AA: Did you have to block up all your windows?

PI: Yeah. Everything, blackout.

AA: Even your cars, too. (laughs)

PI: Had to blackout.

AA: What about the time you could go out, then? You had to have some curfew
then?

PI: Yeah. At night we had. We had curfew.

AA: During the daytime, were you told to stay in your house as much as
possible or you could still go about your business?

PI: Oh, they work. They go out.

AA: Only at night, everything had to be...

PI: At night, had to be curfew, yeah.

AA: Dark and everything, huh?

PI: Yeah.
AA: You said at the first time I came to talk to you that some military men came by your section.

PI: Yeah. They stayed there for how many weeks. Too many of them, yeah. And then, from there, they went to the Philippines.

(Interviewer's note:

There was a battalion stationed in the camps (6B and camp 2) about 3-4 month. before shipping out to PI)

AA: How long did they stay?

PI: Oh, maybe they were there for about I don't know maybe, one or three months.

AA: Did they scare you?

PI: No. They were very nice. Friendly. Even gave the kids in the camp a Christmas party with presents for all the kids.

AA: Your husband participated in the drills?

PI: Yes. But not with the soldiers.

AA: What about you wives? Did you do anything?

PI: No. Just my job at Waikakalau, then.

AA: Were some of them sent to outside places to volunteer their work? To volunteer themselves?

PI: No. I don't know.

AA: They didn't take some of them out to go....work at the pineapple fields? You don't remember any of that?

PI: No, I don't think so. Because they were working in the cane field.

AA: What about martial law? Do you remember anything about the martial law?

PI: The martial law?

AA: Yeah, that occurred during the War.

PI: Yeah. See, my memory is very dull now.

AA: (Chuckles) Did you have to work on holidays even?

PI: I think during the War, I think, sometime they work. Yeah.

AA: Your husband? They (the men) work for the plantation on holidays, too?
PI: On holidays, he work. Especially if raining.

AA: Okay. What about the union? What can you tell me about the union?

PI: I don't know very much about the union. Only I heard that there was a union. And then sometimes they had a meeting. They call the.... workers to attend the meeting. Then, after that, the ones that wanted the union, they have to sign up.

AA: How did you hear about it? Through your husband? Through your friends?

PI: My husband and friends, too. Relatives.

AA: When you first hear about it, did you like it? Did you like the things that they were going to do? And so you wanted to join?

PI: You ask me that. I didn't know anything about that. Only what I heard is that there was a union. And that they wanted to help the workers. That's what I learn.

AA: So, you really didn't have anything to do with it cause you weren't working for the plantation?

PI: Yeah. My husband did not join the union.

AA: In 1946, there was a real long strike. Do you remember that strike?

PI: Oh, that was after the War?

AA: 1946, yeah. And it involved everybody, I think.

PI: That's plantation strike, eh? Yeah, sugar cane. Yeah.

AA: Do you remember that one? 1946?

PI: Yeah, I remember some.

AA: You know the soup kitchens that they....

PI: They had soup kitchen, yeah.

AA: Every camp had a soup kitchen?

PI: Not all the camp. Only in Camp 2, because that's the biggest camp. In Halemano.

AA: And all these smaller camps came over there?

PI: Yeah. And then down Waialua. They had, too.

AA: Do you know the reasons that the people made these strikes: Do you know why the workers struck?
PI: Well to ask for some more wages, I guess. That was the main one, and better working conditions and hours.

AA: Did you think this was a good way to ask for a wage?

PI: Well, to me, I think, that was a good way.

AA: It was the only one? (Laughs)

PI: Because if you will ask by yourself only... (Chuckles) I don't think so you could get what you want. (Laughs)

AA: Do you feel that this helped? Because sometimes they didn't increase the wages. Do you think... it helped?

PI: Yeah, I think it helped. If not wages at least the working conditions improved.

AA: Sometimes, too, didn't you get more than wages? You got other stuff? They improved your house or....

PI: Yeah.

AA: They built you this other thing? Was it like that?

PI: Yeah.

AA: The Philippine independence, did you hear about it? You were already here.

PI: Yeah, I was here already.

AA: Did it mean anything to you?

PI: Well, I feel glad that the Philippines get independence. Yeah. Even if I was here already. To me, that is good for the Philippines.

AA: In 1949, do you remember a strike when there was very little food?

PI: Yeah, and too many people who were stock rice before that.

AA: So nobody had rice then?

PI: Yeah. And then, later on they found out they never use all the rice and never spoil. (Laughs)

AA: This was very long, too, right?

PI: Yeah, that was, oh... how many weeks that?

AA: I think it was about six months.
PI: How many months. That was a long strike, huh?

AA: It was the shipping strike, right?

PI: That's why too many were hoarding rice.

AA: Can you tell me about the retirement fund that the plantation provided?

PI: Oh, retirement plan? Well, Retirement plan, my husband has a retirement plan. They call it a John Hancock Insurance. Life Insurance. The plantation and John Hancock, they were combine that. He still receiving on that one and it helps.

AA: Yeah. Do you recall the fifty years anniversary of the plantation? It was about 1948. I think it was held at Fresh Air Camp?

PI: I heard that, yeah. But I didn't go.

AA: Then they had another one, right? This is the 75th? This time was Puuiki.

PI: Puuiki and then they had the what do you call this? If you want to sightsee all inside the mill and outside. How they work, everything, yeah. (Open house at the mill.)

AA: Did you go to the 75th anniversary celebration?

PI: Yes no. I went to the picnic, but not to the sightseeing of the mill.

AA: (Laughs) Too noisy.

PI: Not only that. My leg hurt to go around. Cannot stand that.

AA: The Korean War in 1950, do you remember anything about it?

PI: Well, I heard about it. (Chuckles) But I don't know very much about it. My nephew was there.

AA: Your nephew went to the war?

PI: Yeah. He was in Korea.

AA: Which nephew? Is that Mrs. Bunda's?


AA: The tidal waves around Waialua, it didn't affect you because you live so far away from it?

PI: Yeah.
AA: Did any of your family get affected by this?

PI: No.

AA: You don't know anybody named Harry Bridges?

PI: Oh, him! He is the president of the International labor.

AA: The ILWU. What do you know about him?

PI: I just heard about him, but I never meet him. Well, maybe he was a good guy. Go around helping the workers.

AA: What about Jack Hall? Do you remember a name like that?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Him and six other people were...people were saying that they were trying to overthrow the U.S. Government. Did you hear of anything like that?

PI: No.

AA: In 1952, there was a walk out in Waialua protesting Pagdilao, I think. Do you remember this?

PI: That he was...transfer.

AA: Do you remember something like this?

PI: Yeah, I think so. I remember little bit.

AA: Did your husband participate in the walk out? He didn't go to work?

PI: No. He went to work because he was not a member of the union.

AA: He didn't participate?

PI: No, because well, all he did was to operate the water.

AA: Do you vote?

PI: Yeah.

AA: Did you vote in 1954? The first time?

PI: Yeah, I guess so. I always vote.

AA: Okay. In 1958, there was another strike. Do you remember this one? You were in Waialua at that time, weren't you?

PI: '58. We are here already.

AA: You are here? So was your husband retired or still...
PI: Retired.

AA: Oh! When did your husband retire?

PI: '54.

AA: Oh, I didn't know he was that old.

(Laughter)

AA: How did you feel about their closing of Ewa mill? Did you have relatives in Ewa that had to loose....

PI: No.

AA: What about Kahuku?

PI: No.

AA: What about us becoming a state? Were you happy about it?

PI: Oh, yeah. I'm happy.

AA: Most of your children and grandchildren are in Waialua, right? Well, Dolores is in Waialua. Your son, Junior's in Waialua.

PI: Two of them in Waialua. The rest, all over.

AA: Do you think that's a good place to grow up? For kids?

PI: Oh, yeah. I stay there for how many years.

AA: You like it?

PI: I like Waialua. The best place in Oahu.

END OF SIDE ONE. END OF INTERVIEW.
WAIALUA & HALEIWA

The People
Tell Their Story

Volume IV

FILIPINOS

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