BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: CHARLES SAKAI, store owner

Charles Mutsuyuki Sakai was born on September 21, 1910 in Haleiwa. His parents, Japanese immigrants, were brought to Hawaii to work on the sugar plantations. In 1907 they opened a store where Charles worked while also attending school.

After high school, Charles worked full-time in the family store, taking over its management in 1939. In 1954, a new store replaced the original one. In 1975 that store was replaced by a large modern supermarket, but it remains very much a family operation.

Charles is married with four children. He is in semi-retirement, enjoying golf and bowling when not managing the store. The Sakais live in Honolulu.
DH: Could you tell me a little bit about when and where you were born?

CS: I was born in Haleiwa on September 21, 1910.

DH: Where were your parents born?

CS: My parents were born in Hiroshima, Japan.

DH: Before coming to Hawaii, did your parents have any expectations about over here? What was the reason why they came? Do you know?

CS: They came to Hawaii because the family was in debt and they needed to earn enough money to repay the debt. They were under a three year labor contract with the sugar plantation. And as time went on, children were born and so they decided to make their living here in Hawaii.

DH: As soon as they came here, they moved to Haleiwa or....

CS: No, they first came to the island of Hawaii, I think. Then later, they moved to Maui and then to Honolulu. While in Honolulu, they came to Waialua, worked for Waialua plantation for a while. And after that, he (father) had an opportunity buy one small grocery store, so, that's where he started. That was in 1907.

DH: The rest of your family, right now, where are they?

CS: I'm married to Myrtle Tateishi. She's from Honolulu. We have four children, two boys and two girls.

DH: How do you get together these days? Do you get together at all or....

CS: My children?

DH: Or your whole family.

CS: All our children live in Honolulu except my son Paul who lives in Haleiwa. We get together quite often on many occasions such as birthday and family picnics. They (children) have their own

*After the taped interviews, Mr. Sakai made written additions which have been incorporated into the transcript.
families, you see. My daughter Doris has three boys. My son Tommy has two children; one boy and one girl. And my Barbara has two girls. Paul is not married.

DH: How much schooling have you had?

CS: I graduated from Leilehua High School.

DH: Could you describe for me a typical school day when you were a child? You went to Haleiwa...

CS: I attended the Waialua Elementary School for eight years and we went to Leilehua High School for four years. In those days, there were no junior high schools. I graduated in the year 1930.

Teachers were allowed to discipline students by spanking when necessary. Lunches cost five cents a day.

DH: Could you describe a typical school day? What you used to do...

CS: During my high school years I drove a car for Mr. Takemoto who was running the school bus through Kawaiola district and other places to our high school. He allowed me to drive his Chevy to pick up four or five other students to pay for my part of the fare. I was fortunate enough to be able to get a ride to school free for four years.

DH: From ninth grade, then, you were driving?

CS: I got my license in 1925 when I was 15 years old. Since then I have been helping out the family store by making deliveries. I take pride in my perfect driving record to date.

My brother was a kind of sickly person, so I used to take his route, you know. I'd go out in the camp, take orders and at the same time make deliveries. Then after graduation, I was fully paid thereafter. My father was still running (the store) at that time. Later on he retired so my brother took over.

DH: As a child, how did you go to elementary school?

CS: School was just about a mile from home so we all walked to school.

DH: Had language school, like that?

CS: All Japanese children were expected to attend the Japanese language school. After the elementary school, we go to Japanese school.

DH: That was what, Taisho Gakkō?

CS: We went to Taishō school which was sponsored by the Haleiwa Jodo Mission, a Buddhist organization.

DH: And a school day was from what time to what time?
CS: Our elementary school started from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the Japanese language school followed with an hour class.

DH: High school was....

CS: High school is about the same, too. Same hours, I believe.

DH: How did you get along with the other children like that?

CS: I didn't have trouble at all. I got along alright with the other folks. No trouble at all.

DH: Through high school too?

CS: Through high school too. I've never had any fight with anybody that I know of.

DH: During school, what kind of discipline were administered? You know, disciplinary action.

CS: We didn't have as much trouble as we do today because our parents were very strict and stressed moral education. The teachers were very strict and were permitted by parents to discipline children when it was necessary. We were taught to respect elders and teachers.

DH: How would you compare your education with your children's education?

CS: There is no comparison in the educational opportunities of our children and us. Our parents were immigrants and working all day, all night just to support the family. They had no time for their children. I was more fortunate than my parents were, but I was also saddled with responsibility at an early age. I was forced to stop my education after high school to help support my brother's family, my family and my parents, but I have worked hard to provide my children with all the opportunity for good education. They were all educated in private high schools and all of them have graduated from universities.

DH: Looking back through your elementary school, high school, was there any person that taught you a lot about something? Any one person or persons?

CS: No.

DH: Not really. You were saying your first job was at the store, yeah, your father's store? About how old were you when you started working?

CS: I started very early helping with deliveries after school and worked during the summer at a boarding house in a pineapple camp serving meals. After high school I started working full time at our family store. I was twenty years old when I started working for my father (full time).

DH: Before that was just helping then?
CS: Yes, it was work without any pay. I was paid fifty dollars a month when I started working full time. In those days, full time meant about fourteen to sixteen hours.

DH: Have you had any other jobs besides....

CS: No.

DH: That was all? Just that family store. Can you describe for me a typical day at work? What you used to do like that.

CS: We would start cleaning the store at about five in the morning and it would take an hour or so. Then we would have our breakfast. After breakfast, we would start stacking merchandise on the shelves. In those days, we did not have many customers coming to the store to buy because the houses were scattered over the plantation and they did not own any cars. They depended on the store to bring their order to them. We close our store at 10 p.m. and we would go to bed at 11 p.m.

DH: Most of your sales was done how?

CS: We had mostly charge accounts. In those days, the workers were paid by the month and so they would put all their purchases on account and pay it all when their payday comes. So at the end of the month, you have to make a statement, you know.

DH: Did you make deliveries like that, too? To the different camps and stuff?

CS: We used to make deliveries once or twice a week.

DH: What camps you used to go to?

CS: Well, we had the district of Haleiwa, Waialua, and then Kawaiola, Opaeula, Takeyama Camp.

DH: Where is Takeyama Camp?

CS: Takeyama is way up going Opaeula way.

DH: Past Opaeula?

CS: Yes.

DH: Way in the mountains then?

CS: Yeah, about....four, five miles, I think.

DH: The camp Opaeula, it's at the same place where...

CS: That's a pineapple camp. That is also about that far---five and six miles.

DH: Is it on the same road or....
CS: Well, it branches out and to go to Opaeka'a, you would go straight up the road. But to Takehaya Camp, you would turn right at Pump 3 camp and go straight up.

DH: The Opaeka'a Camp is the same Opaeka'a Camp that stay up there right now?

CS: Yeah.

DH: They're the same place?

CS: Well, there's no camp right now, though. They're all taken down already.

DH: And when you went into like Waialua, there were different camps, right? Filipino camp...

CS: We went into the camps in Waialua to do business. There were camps like Mill Camp, Lua Camp, et cetera.

DH: Mill Camp? Around the mill?

CS: Yeah, around the mill.

DH: Right where...

CS: The camps were mostly around the Hongwanji Temple.

DH: And Haleiwa area was just all around...

CS: Just this block here. (Meaning the area around the store)

DH: Were there any machines like that at the store? Any kind of machines?

CS: We owned three trucks for delivery and we had four employees.

DH: So as soon as you started working, you had trucks?

CS: We had cars already at that time. Trucks.

DH: In the store, you had any kind of machines?

CS: No.

DH: Everything was done by hand?

CS: In fact, in those days, we didn't have any meat department. Later on, about 1939 or 1940, I started the meat department. I had the opportunity to go into town twice a week to learn how to cut meat. Aoki Store showed me how to cut meat.

DH: So then after that you opened the meat department?
CS: Yes, after that I opened up my meat department.

DH: Where'd you get the meat like that from?

CS: Kahua Ranch. I always started early in the morning to go over there. You wait for your turn to pick up your meat. Load it in the truck and come home. That's in Ewa (Kahua).

DH: You had regular refrigeration?

CS: We had refrigeration. Later on we got a cutting machine, but, gee, that was many years later. War started in 1941, so maybe four or five years later we got the cutting machine.

DH: When you first started you said you were getting about fifty dollars a month.

CS: Yes.

DH: At about twenty---at age twenty...

CS: Age twenty, yes.

DH: Then slowly your pay used to increase?

CS: Slowly they increased it. Later on, wage control came in.

DH: This is about when? Wage control?

CS: In the '40's, I think.

DH: Were there certain jobs in the store that men did and certain that women did....

CS: Well. Only my wife was helping me then. We got married in 1936. And she was helping me all the time thereafter.

DH: What were your expenses like? Your major expenses?

CS: Well, the wages were the biggest expense. Lease rental was cheaper then. I can't give you a figure because I don't have the figures with me.

DH: When you first started working, then, you were staying with your parents?

CS: Yes.

DH: I see. So like then you yourself didn't have to pay any rent or anything.

CS: No.

DH: Your food, did you have a garden or you guys used to just---from
the store or...

CS: We drew our food from the store and recorded it as personal drawing in the books.

DH: Was there any other things that you had to pay for yourself? Any kind of expenses?

CS: No. Since I was not married at the time, my parents supplied me with food and clothing.

DH: So then your income was adequate at the time?

CS: Well, yes. I would say adequate.

DH: What kind of banking services were there?

CS: We did business with Bishop Bank.

DH: That's First Hawaiian then?

CS: Now it's First Hawaiian. We've been banking with them from the very beginning. That's how many years. 1907 to now.

DH: Were the savings systems and borrowing systems like that, were they the same as it is now or a little different?

CS: We hardly borrowed from banks at that period. Everything was bought in cash. If we didn't have cash, we didn't buy. But we have found out since then that if we don't have a credit rating, it is hard to borrow when we need it. After all those years of doing business with First Hawaiian Bank, they refused our loan application. In fact, they turned me down twice. In 1954 when we built that first Haleiwa Supermarket, they turned me down. This (present) one here, they turned me down again. The first loan, I got it from Central Pacific Bank. This time, I got it from State Savings. Under that circumstance, our credit standing is listed in the Dun and Bradstreet Rating house in the top bracket division. This is a cockeyed world of business, I must say.

DH: As you went to the new store, did expenses increase? The one that was built in 1954?

CS: Oh yes.

DH: So you had more hired hands and everything?

CS: Certainly. We had almost 25, including part-timers. We have close to fifty employees now.

DH: Where did you meet your wife?

CS: Mr. Doi and Mr. Murakawa from Honolulu introduced us.
DH: Did you date at all or...

CS: Yes. We did date several times.

DH: Can you tell me...

CS: They bring a picture to show you. You look at it and approve or disapprove.

DH: When did you first meet her? Was it...

CS: We first met in December of 1935 and were married on February 29, 1936.

DH: Leap year. You can tell me little bit about the wedding---how was?

CS: We had our wedding ceremony at Jōdo Mission and the reception was at Yamada's. Reverend Miyamoto performed the ceremony.

DH: You had a honeymoon?

CS: No such luck. I worked the very next day.

DH: Could you describe for me your first home that....

CS: My first home was a two bedroom house next to Araki Store.

DH: The florist side of Araki Store?

CS: No, the opposite side.

DH: So you were renting it from someone then?

CS: During our lifetime, we have moved homes about ten different times. It's hard to believe that when we look back during our forty married years. We were in town for awhile, too. My wife is from Honolulu, so she didn't care much about country life. Even when we got married, every weekend I used to take her back in town, you know. The family (wife's) used to live in town, Nuuana Street. When we opened our previous supermarket in 1954, we returned back to Haleiwa and boarded our children at Mid-Pac Institute. When my wife retired from the business in 1965, we decided to return to our house in Honolulu to be near our children.

DH: When did you buy your first home?

CS: My first home? We built our home on Haleiwa Road where Mrs. Umane is living at present.

DH: By the boat harbor?

CS: Yes.

DH: It's right across where the Umeda store used to be.
CS: Right there. It must have been about five thousand square feet of land.

DH: Is the house still there?

CS: It's still there. It's a three bedroom home. We built it for about three thousand dollars. It was built during the Depression years so labor cost was at the lowest point.

DH: This was about what year?

CS: It must have been in 1939.

DH: This home, your parents built it or....this is before you were married?

CS: It was after I got married. I got married in 1936, so naturally, it must have been after that.

DH: You bought it yourself?

CS: I think I saved enough to buy my own.

DH: So you felt pretty good about buying...

CS: Yes.

DH: Who would clean the house like that?

CS: My wife used to clean.

DH: So she used to do most of the household chores?

CS: Household chores, and took care of my three children.

DH: Did you used to do anything, any kind of...

CS: I did the yard work on Sundays because during the War, the store closed on Sundays.

DH: What kind of food you used to eat?

CS: We ate most any kind of foods. Fish, meat, and all those things. In those days, we ate a lot of rice. We had rice for breakfast but today, our diet has changed somewhat.

DH: When you were a kid, about the same thing, too or....

CS: Oh, when we were kids we used to eat lot of fish because fish was bountiful. We had meat about twice a week. My parents enjoyed their fish and meat did not agree with them. Fish peddlers came everyday to sell fresh live fish. Fish, vegetables or....

DH: Any kind of fish dish that...
CS: Sashimi.

DH: That you ate before that you...

CS: Same thing.

DH: Mostly fresh fish, then?

CS: Fresh fish from the sampan was brought everyday by a fisherman's wife.

DH: Dried fish, what?

CS: We had dried akule at times.

DH: You got your food mostly from the store, you said?

CS: Yes, we used our food from the store.

DH: Can you remember how much certain foods cost before? Like say about when you graduated...

CS: I don't quite remember any of the prices now, but those days were cheap, anyway. Maybe tofu was about ten cents. Today it's....

DH: Seventy-five.

CS: Bread was about twenty cents. It's forty cents today. Forty or fifty cents?

DH: About fifty.

CS: A bag of rice was close to ten dollars. It's close to twenty dollars today.

DH: Vegetable like that were pretty cheap?

CS: I think vegetable was so cheap. Lettuce was five cents a pound.

DH: What kind of heating or cooling facilities you had, like maybe at home?

CS: At home we had electric.

DH: Had electricity?

CS: Electric range.

DH: Oh, at that time, they had electric range?

CS: Yes.

DH: When that? About...

CS: In 1936 we had electric stove, heater, washer. Electric refrigerator.
DH: Was that considered kind of high class?

CS: No, I don't think so. People were buying those appliances already. It was a necessity, already. Well, when we were attending elementary school, we still used to buy block ice. It must have been around the early 1920's.

DH: Did your whole family eat together?

CS: The men ate first and the ladies would follow.

DH: And what kind of utensils you used to use?

CS: Aluminum utensils.

DH: And you eat with the hashi?

CS: Chopstick was used most of the time. We hardly use fork and knife those days because we never had a whole steak to ourselves.

DH: Did you share your food with other people? Maybe you make something, you give somebody or something like that.

CS: Hardly.

DH: Mostly within the family?

CS: Within the family.

DH: What did you do in your free time like that? If you had free time.

CS: I played a lot of baseball and later we had a bowling league sponsored by the market when the IGA market opened.

DH: This is...

CS: This is around 1928 like that. Maybe around freshman, sophomore years. 1925, '26, '27, around there. I used to play baseball in my freshman, sophomore years, and after graduation played in the 1928 championship team.

DH: After you started working, you used to...

CS: After I started working, I played on Sundays.

DH: You used to play in any leagues or anything?

CS: Yes, I played in country leagues. (Laughs) Haleiwa baseball team won the championship in 1928 when Higashi and---Kanemori played. We had a good team those days.

DH: Then as you got older, you used to still play baseball?

CS: After I got married, I played very little.
DH: After you got married, you used to do any kind of stuff after you pau work?

CS: I didn't have much time to play after being married because we had our first child at the end of the year. I worked hard but enjoyed our new life with my wife and baby...

DH: Did you belong to any clubs or organizations?

CS: I was a Lions Club member, advisor of Haleiwa Jōdō Mission Japanese Boys Club.

DH: Lions?

CS: I had to quit because of business circumstances. I was a member for two years and I had to resign.

DH: Before that, what?


DH: Why did you join the Lions Club?

CS: That's a service club. I wanted to do something constructive by some means of service to our community.

DH: So why did you quit? Because of business?

CS: My business commitment.

DH: Not enough time or something?

CS: Couldn't make the meetings. I had to drop out.

DH: During the years, you had any kind of accidents, illness, serious accidents, illness?

CS: No, I'm pretty lucky at that, though. I have been quite healthy all these years.

DH: And then the children that you...

CS: My children?

DH: They were born where, in the home or hospital?

CS: We have four children. Doris was born in Honolulu at my in-laws' house. Two boys were born in Haleiwa at home, and the youngest was born at a hospital in Honolulu.

DH: How would you go about getting the midwife?

CS: We just ask her to help deliver the baby and she takes care of the
mother and baby after its born.

DH: So three of your children were born in Haleiwa then?

CS: No, two daughters were born in Honolulu. We got a midwife in town. Mrs. Kishinami took care of the two boys.

DH: That Kishinami Store?

CS: Yeah, that Kishinami Store.

DH: You know what was done to any retarded children like that?

CS: I didn't have any retarded children, so I don't know.

DH: You knew anybody that had or what they used to do?

CS: No. I don't know.

DH: You heard of anybody committing suicide?

CS: No, not that I know of.

DH: Could you describe sanitation conditions like, in the community---sewage, garbage, streetcleaning.

CS: I think we have a fairly nice and clean community and we would like to keep it as it is.

DH: And then garbage like that...

CS: Pig-raisers come and pick up the garbage. So that part, we don't have to worry. Every afternoon somebody comes and picks up the garbage.

DH: What about rubbish like that?

CS: We used to burn rubbish. We can't burn rubbish under the clean air ordinance, so we compress rubbish and have it picked up by a private company.

DH: Streetcleaning, what, were they...

CS: Streetcleaning is done by the City and County Maintenance Division.

DH: They used to cut the grass and stuff?

CS: City and County also takes care of the grass and trimming of trees along the highway.

DH: From long time back, then?

CS: Yes.
DH: How did you used to travel around to anyplace?

CS: Automobile.

DH: Automobile? Did you ever own a horse or bicycle or....

CS: Our family used horse and buggy to do business at the beginning. I remember feeding the horse. I owned a bicycle. I remember seeing three horses at one time. My kid sister and I used to cut up the cane tops, mix it up with barley, and feed the horse.

DH: When did you own your first car?

CS: That's after high school.

DH: Oh, then when you started working, then you had your own car?

CS: Much later. Before that, my parents had the car so we used it, too.

DH: When you got your first car, how did you pay for it?

CS: We borrowed from the bank.

DH: Notes?

CS: Monthly payment.

DH: You went about...

CS: It must have been around 1935. Just before I was married, anyway.

DH: When you got your own car? You remember who had the first car?

CS: In Haleiwa?

DH: Yeah. Or even Waialua.

CS: Gee, that, I don't know. As far as our store was concerned, we were the first one in Haleiwa to own one. We had a Model T truck. They used to have one, two, three shifts. Clutch, reverse. It had a hand-crank. We used to hand-crank to start the car. Later on we had self-starters, but before that, you got to choke the starter.

DH: You knew of anybody who used to share cars; like a group of people get together then they buy a car and then they share the car?

CS: It was being done among the Filipinos, but like the Japanese people didn't do that. They bought their own cars.

DH: At that time, had any type of public transportation?
CS: We had taxi commuting from Haleiwa to Honolulu.

DH: What about the train that used to go....

CS: We had trains running to Honolulu somewhere in 1925. Guests came by train to the Haleiwa Hotel. That's early in 1920.

DH: About the 1940's, the train was still running?

CS: No. I don't think it was running at that time.

DH: You ever rode on a train? To go....

CS: No, I don't think so.

DH: Was that only for plantation or anybody could ride?

CS: No, it was for the public.

DH: Then you just pay a fare?

CS: Yes.

DH: You can remember about how much it was?

CS: Gee, I don't know. It used to go as far as Kahuku and back to the Honolulu depot at Aala Park or Aala Street.

DH: Plenty people used to ride the train?

CS: Well, so-so, I guess. I don't know.

DH: How was the postal system over there?

CS: We had one in Haleiwa, one in Waialua.

DH: Did you ever send mail to relatives like that across the sea? To Japan or the Mainland?

CS: We used to mail to Japan.

DH: Japan?

CS: I used to have a sister in Japan, so we used to send her money.

DH: How far back did the first post office....

CS: In Haleiwa?

DH: Yeah.

CS: In 1925 we had post office so it's maybe earlier than that, I think.

DH: How did you find out about things happening in the community like that?
Any kind of things happening.

CS: Through the newspaper and radio.

DH: There was a paper in the community?

CS: Yes.

DH: You remember what it was called?


DH: What about for just the Waialua-Haleiwa area?

CS: Local paper?

DH: Yeah.

CS: None.

DH: Oh, how did you find out about things going on in the immediate Haleiwa-Waialua area like that?

CS: Through the regular newspaper and radio or mouth to mouth report.

DH: Mostly just the important things would go in the paper?

CS: I suppose so.

DH: What about finding out stuff from the outer islands or Mainland like that?

CS: Newspaper and radio.

DH: You can remember about how far back the paper started---the papers around here? Like when you were out of high school, there was a newspaper already?

CS: Yes. I used to deliver the Japanese paper. I delivered the Nippu Jiji. Later the Hawaii Hochi. They paid me ten dollars a month for delivery around the Haleiwa area.

DH: For how many paper?

CS: It came in a sack of thirty or forty papers.

DH: This was everyday?

CS: Everyday in the evening.

DH: Were there any magazines at that time?

CS: I guess so.
DH: Did you ever subscribe to any? Not until later?

CS: I subscribed to Look magazine and Life magazine much later in life.

DH: Can you remember when you got your first radio?

CS: Radio? I don't remember.

DH: Your first TV?

CS: About 1959 or 1960. We had poor reception out here.

DH: Did you listen to the radio a lot?

CS: Not much.

DH: What about watching TV?

CS: From a few years ago, I had more time to watch TV in the evening.

DH: When you first got your TV, then, you were living out here or you were living in town?

CS: We were living in town. We had good reception in Alewa Heights.

DH: You remember any shows that you used to watch long time ago?

CS: Ted Mack's Amateur Hour, Pro Bowl, baseball, news, I Love Lucy.

DH: When you were managing the store, you used to talk to your neighbors or your friends about community news, any kind of things happening like that?

CS: For conversation's sake, we talk. That's about it.

DH: And when did you used to talk with them?

CS: During working hours in the store. Wherever I meet them.

DH: You know when people gossip like that, can you remember what it was usually about?

CS: When we go out in the camps to take orders, we hear gossip but we keep it to ourselves. It's poor business to repeat gossip, so I keep it to myself and then just forget it.

DH: Can you remember any funny stories or....

CS: Funny stories. Gee, I can't remember. There may be many but offhand I can't recall. (Shakes head)

DH: Before, were there a lot of small crimes like that in the community, in the Waialua-Haleiwa area, like stealing, drunkenness, vandalism, and....
CS: We were burglarized twice in our market and we did have petty thefts in the store.  
(Note: CS lost six thousand dollars in one robbery and was never able to reclaim it.)

DH: Before that, you used to hear of any kind of stealing like that?

CS: The biggest case we ever had was the Fukunaga case. This Fukunaga boy at one time was living in the Takeyama Camp. He was charged for kidnapping the Jamieson boy and killing him. He was hunted down as the "Three Kings Murderer" and was hung.

DH: Did you know him?

CS: I forgot his face, but I remember his name.

DH: How you felt about that case?

CS: It was the most notorious case in Hawaii and for a Japanese to commit a crime like that was terrible. It was unthinkable at that time. The way he went about---to get the ransom and commit the crime was a classic crime.

DH: His family was from over here?

CS: They lived in Takeyama Camp. Later on they moved in town. When he committed this crime, he was living in town already.

DH: You know why he did that?

CS: I think it was for some revenge.

DH: Do you remember any other da kine crimes like that---that were kind of significant?

CS: That Kahawai case where this Hawaiian boys assaulted a Navy wife.

DH: Massie.

CS: Massie case. I forgot already.

DH: They killed that guy, Kahawai?

CS: Yes.

DH: Before you had your own house, who used to live there?

CS: It's been so many years ago that it's hard to remember things. It's too bad I did not keep a diary of the many memorable incidents, names and places.

DH: Right out of high school, what? You know when you first started working, who used to live in the house? Was....
CS: Mr. Matsumoto was working for us and he lived in with us.

DH: He used to live with you?

CS: Yeah, he used to live with us.

DH: So had what, your parents, your brother, you, and Matsumoto?

CS: My sisters were there, too, at that time.

DH: Then after you got your own house who used to live there?

CS: My brother and his wife, and his four children, and my parents--my father and mother.

DH: Oh, so your brother and his wife stayed with your parents then?

CS: Yes.

DH: And then you moved to...

CS: I moved out.

DH: Then only had you and your wife and your kids? At that time had any kind of chores that men supposed to do and chores that women supposed to do, or was it just anybody do anything?

CS: Men worked in the store. Women did the housework and cooking and raising the children.

DH: In your family, who would repair the house like that?

CS: My father used to do all the repairing. He was a pretty good carpenter.

DH: Gardening, what?

CS: Gardening, we didn't do much gardening.

DH: Cooking and cleaning?

CS: Cooking, my mother, my sisters all did their share.

DH: Washing clothes, what?


DH: Who would discipline the children like that?

CS: My father was strict, but he wasn't around with the children. In those days, disciplining was not too much to worry about. Although he never laid hands on us, he was strict. We respected him. You know those days, you don't talk back. Uh uh. (laughs) Not like you children nowadays. We just don't talk back, that's all.
DH: Who would take care the money situation?

CS: My father took charge of the family finance.

DH: You folks used to go out anyplace together---one whole family?

CS: We went on family picnics once in a while.

DH: Any other things besides....

CS: Every Sunday evening, we would have a family chicken dinner. My mother raised chickens and she would slaughter chickens for the Sunday dinner.

DH: When you were small, was there anything you wanted to be when you grew up?

CS: I used to like to go down the garages and tinker around. So I thought I'd be a mechanic, but that didn't turn out.

DH: What did your parents want you to be?

CS: I guess they wanted me to follow up and take after my father's footstep.

DH: You wanted to do that, too?

CS: Actually, I didn't care for store life. The situation came about that I had to take over.

DH: You had any conflicts or what with your parents like that about the store?

CS: We had no conflicts because when he retired, he left the business in my care because my brother had been sick and left for Japan for treatment, and I was left to take care of the family, too.

My father had never had any formal education on bookkeeping but he became a self-taught bookkeeper and a good one, too. He kept records in Japanese but later, when I took over, I changed it into English. He kept a price book which recorded in detail the price movements and items so that the salesmen all respected him and no one could put anything over him.

DH: You know, in other areas of your life, like school, marriage or recreational stuff, did your parents approve of what you did?

CS: Mm, I don't know. They didn't say---I guess it was alright. (Laughs)

DH: Did your parents practice any customs from Japan like that? Any kind of customs; I mean like New Year's or Obon time or....

CS: We observed most old Japanese customs from Japan. I was working full time and so my parents were the ones that really observed
the traditions. They were very religious and helped their church with the annual obon festival. We closed on Christmas and three days on New Year's which has been their major holiday.

As time went by, things were in a much faster pace, and we were forced to open right after the New Year's day. Today, we observe most of the retail holidays. Times have really changed. With more employees, we had to observe these changes.

DH: What about bon like that? You guys never used to....

CS: We had the bon dance, but we never closed our store. It really was done at night.

DH: But you folks used to go...

CS: We were young and had to work so we didn't attend church, but my parents were very religious. They were at church at least once a month and volunteered their time to the church.

DH: So actually then, most of what you folks did was with the store?

CS: Yes.

DH: You practice any of the customs from Japan---Japanese customs?

CS: I guess some.

DH: Like shogatsu like that.

CS: We pounded rice cakes and cooked all the good foods that we don't usually eat. We call on people with calling cards and extend our good wishes.

DH: Do your kids do any of that---your children?

CS: To a certain extent. We would all gather on New Year's and have a feast with the family. They received some little New Year's gift and they would play with fireworks.

DH: When your children were young, what did you want them to be?

CS: We left it all up to them to do as they wished. We stood behind them and encouraged them. Tom went into the insurance business. He sold a million dollars a year, but after several years, he was disenchanted and he became the youngest stockbroker in Hawaii when he was about 28 years old. He's with E.F. Hutton. He was promoted to the vice presidency of the company. Paul became interested in business and he came into the market.

DH: What about your social life that? You approved of the stuff they do?

CS: I don't meddle into them, you know. They are entirely free to act and choose as they want. I'm Buddhist but we do not expect them to be one. It's up to them.
DH: You know, like when you used to go into camps and stuff like that, you heard of any kind of incidents of the workers not getting along with their boss like that? Or....

CS: Never heard.

DH: Never heard of any kind of trouble between the workers and the lunas like that--the plantation?

CS: Never heard.

DH: What about your workers?

CS: I've never had any trouble with our employees. People who worked for my father worked long years. I've never heard any complaint.

DH: The plantation camps like that were separated; different ethnic groups like that?

CS: Yes, Filipino, Portuguese, Japanese are sort of congregated in camps because of their ethnic background and because of the language barrier and customs.

DH: How you felt about...

CS: In Waialua you hardly find many Chinese or Koreans. It seems that they moved out from rural area and they all went in town.

DH: How you felt about this segregation, like that?

CS: In what?

DH: The camps. You know, the racial segregation like....

CS: Well, it was the best way in those days. Today, we speak the same language, and our American way of living does not conflict with any ethnic groups. It was more harmonious way to live at that time.

DH: You used to live in one segregated camp?

CS: No.

DH: Haleiwa was what?

CS: It was more or less a Japanese community with some other nationality groups.

DH: Oh, the Haleiwa community was mostly Japanese? You used to make any kind of deliveries into like Spanish camp or Filipino camp or Portuguese camp?

CS: No, not exactly.

DH: Most of your dealings was with Japanese, then?
CS: Yes.

DH: When you were small, you played with children from other races?

CS: Yes, I used to play with Hawaiian boys, too. We didn't have any trouble with them. I got along alright.

DH: At work, how you got along with people of other races?

CS: Well, in the old days we met more Japanese people as we hired all Japanese clerks because they got to be able to talk Japanese. Today we hire all nationalities who are willing to work.

DH: You think relations between other races have changed after the War as compared to before? You know, race relations?

CS: I guess so, but in Hawaii, everybody seem to get along nicely when you compare with the Mainland.

DH: You said Haleiwa was more like a Japanese community? You folks used to get along with other camps like that? Filipino camps and Portuguese camps.

CS: I don't know.

DH: Or was there any trouble between...


DH: It was more like two types of people living separately. Is that what it was? Did you do anything with any of the other camps like that?

CS: I never thought of it that way, so I can't imagine it.

DH: Have you ever participated in community events, like maybe luaus, fairs, bazaars, like that? Any kind of....

CS: No, I had a business to run and my hands were all tied up. My parents were helping the Red Cross and other community events.

DH: Can you recall any outstanding community events that happened?

CS: I remember the great flood in Waialua area. My folks were out to help in cooperation with the Red Cross. They had a labor strike, too.

DH: You ever participated in political issues?

CS: I'm a independent although I'm classed as a Republican. I like to vote for the best man although I've seen so many deals made in order to get elected. Most politicians are out to get something, either power or chance to get something. Otherwise they won't go in politics. Most politicians get rich when they get finished. Why? And how? I don't think anyone goes in politics for love. They want to gain something for themselves or for their friends.
Otherwise, what're you going to get out of it if you're not--spending money, and spend your time, you know, you got to be looking for something.

DH: Okay. You can recall the happiest moment in your life?

CS: Every day is a happiest moment so....(laughs)

DH: The saddest moment?

CS: Ah, saddest moment. There were many sad moments. I lost my parents, two brothers and three sisters.

DH: How was the Depression like that? Was it...

CS: I don't remember but somehow we got by. I don't recall any hardship, you know, real hardship. Although people were out of jobs living out here in the plantation community, it did not affect our business. Plantation was working at that time. But maybe in Honolulu where people were out of jobs, there were breadlines.

DH: You can recall any times when you were really angry at anything? Any incident or....

CS: I can't remember because I don't keep it with me, that's why.

DH: What single event in your life brought about the most change in your life?

CS: It was when we built our previous market and it gave us a chance to build this beautiful market today.

DH: You recall any colorful individuals in the community like that? Any outstanding people in the community.

CS: In music, we have the renowned Charles Davis.

END OF INTERVIEW
DH: This is an interview with Charles M. Sakai on August 15, 1976 at 11 o'clock. How did you get started in your business?

CS: Well, after graduating, I worked for my father. That was in 1930. As a bookkeeper.

DH: How did your father get into the business?

CS: My father was working for the Waialua Plantation, and after he had an opportunity to buy a small store in Haleiwa, he started his business.

DH: The store was already running? Somebody owned it?

CS: Yes, I think somebody was running it. It was a very small store.

DH: It started out as a store? Not anything else?

CS: Yes. As a store.

DH: You know why your father started this type of business?

CS: You can't get ahead working as a laborer. But in business there is a chance to get ahead. And beside, to support and educate your children you have to be in some kind of business. I don't know how much he was getting; maybe a dollar a day or something like that, but he just can't get ahead. Of course in business, prices go up and down. That's where the business people make money.

DH: What did your mother do? She's...

CS: Oh, my mother used to help him in the store.

DH: Before that she was just a housewife?

CS: Of course, she had to take care the family.

DH: How did your father pay for the store?

CS: I don't know how much he paid for it. I don't know how much cash he started with, but, anyway, he really had hard time because he had to carry the account for one month before he got paid by the

*After the taped interview, Mr. Sakai made written additions which have been incorporated into the transcript.*
customers.

DH: You remember how much it cost him to buy the store?
CS: No. I don't.

DH: How did your business start to build up? You know, after a while?
CS: Well, I guess time went on, and the sales picked up as he began to know more people and getting to be friends with the neighbors. It was a mouth to mouth advertisement, and the good word spread and people came in to buy from him. People trusted him and he helped people in many ways.

DH: And until how long did your father manage the store?
CS: He retired at 65 when I got married and my wife could help me at the store.

DH: Until he was 65? You can remember about what year?
CS: I think it was around 1936, the year I got married.

DH: In those days, you mention before that there weren't too many customers coming in. Most.

CS: We had to go out to the various camps to take orders. They didn't have any automobile those days. When my father started the business, he had no car to go to the camps so he used a horse and buggy to travel. When I started in 1930, we had trucks so we delivered with the pick up trucks.

DH: You remember what kind trucks they were?
CS: It was a half a ton truck.

DH: Just a wooden body, or....
CS: Wooden body.

(DH chuckles)

CS: Local automobile dealer will make the size for you, you know.

DH: Do you remember where your father bought it from?
CS: We bought it from Waialua Garage which is now Servco or Service Motors.

DH: Your second store, the one in 1954? By then, you were the manager, right?
CS: Owner and manager.
DH: How did you finance that store?

CS: Oh, I got my finance from Central Pacific Bank. We knew several members of the Board of Directors of the bank.

(Laughter)

CS: We have been in business for over sixty years and yet First Hawaiian couldn't help us. Maybe I'm not good looking.

DH: It was a long term loan?

CS: Which one?

DH: The second store.

CS: It was a ten year loan. Well, that was paid up.

DH: That property that the store's on is your property?

CS: The present one? Annie Ayau's property.

DH: The one that...the old store...

CS: The old one, I bought that property from the Liliuokalani Trust Company.

DH: Back in the old days, you know, the very first store, what kind of people became your customers?

CS: Mostly Japanese laborers.

DH: You know why it was mostly Japanese?

CS: We knew those people enough to charge their purchases. Later on, we did business with Filipinos, too.

DH: Was that because partly because of language?

CS: It was due to language understanding. My parents did not speak English or Filipino.

DH: You think the segregated camps had something to do, too?

CS: I don't think so.

DH: Were there any prosperous times?

CS: Well, I don't know. When you say "prosperous time"...

DH: Well, you know...

CS: There must have been prosperous times because we built enough equity to get a loan for the new market.
DH: Did it fluctuate or....

CS: No. As long as you watch your operation and watch your expenses, you still can make it. There were fluctuations during the many years like the Depression years. Prices were dropping so the merchants hesitated buying and kept their inventory low. And when the economy got better they started to buy more. Prices dropped down, but people did not have the money to buy.

DH: The Depression time, that was kind of bad for the store?

CS: No. Somehow we survived in the country because sugar plantation had jobs.

DH: Did you make any loans through the store? Did you loan out money?

CS: No. Didn't have that kind of money to lend out.

(Laughter)

CS: If I had the money to lend out, I would invest in my store and build it up.

DH: Did you give credit?

CS: It was a business practice to give credit in those days because people got paid once a month. When we opened the new supermarket in 1954, I went into cash and carry. At the beginning, I had to struggle because plantation were paying once a month. After a month of business the plantation started the twice a month payday and that helped us with our cash flow.

DH: The first store, you used to give all credit mostly, right?

CS: Yeah, my father's time, yeah. Credit.

DH: Was that because the pay was, like you say, once a month?

CS: Yes.

DH: Why did you discontinue that credit?

CS: Well, in order to survive in this grocery business, you have to look forward for a new type of operation. There was competition with markets in Honolulu. With this new type of operation we could buy things cheaper and meet competition with other markets. So, in fact, I was the first one to open up a cash and carry type of business in Haleiwa.

DH: In the first store, how did you go about giving credit to the customers?

CS: Well, you have to limit your credit, because, you know how much
the individual earns. You can't go overboard. You have to set some kind of limit. But occasionally, their family member gets sick and payment is delayed, and the bills keep on piling up. First thing you know, they couldn't pay. Sometimes it is never paid and we write it off as a bad debt.

DH: How did you arrange it? This is mostly through deliveries, right? At first? You deliver and then....

CS: We delivered most of the merchandise.

DH: Then how long they had to pay?

CS: Well, as soon as the payday comes, they pay the account for the previous month.

DH: How did you take orders like that?

CS: We go from camp to camp to take orders. The next trip around, you deliver and you also take the order for the next delivery. We go to the same camp about twice a week. And you go to a next camp, same thing, the routine.

DH: All your business was done by order and deliver, not peddling?

CS: No peddling. It was either by telephone order or calling from house to house to take the order.

DH: The first store, do you remember how many people were working there?

CS: There were about three or four workers, during my father's time.

DH: Were they all Japanese?

CS: Yes. Japanese because of the language.

DH: Did you have any major changes or events in your business?

CS: Major changes? Cash and carry is a major change, you know. Today our major change is our computer systems, scanning device, cashing devices, intercom systems and self service systems.

DH: Did you ever donate food to striking workers?

CS: Maybe we did. What strike are you talking of? Are you talking about in the days of the first sugar strike? I remember when they had the strike these people used to stay in the camp. We had a small warehouse and some families used to come in there. We used to give them food.

DH: Any of the later strikes, you used to give any food?
CS: Maybe when the union came around for donation. Might have given them.

DH: How about later, like in the late '40's and early '50's?

CS: I think we did.

DH: Can you just look back at that three stores and then tell me (about) the change in goods that you carry? Was there any change?

CS: Well, my father's time, they didn't have meat. In the second market, we went into meat, produce, frozen foods, household goods, drug department, liquor, feed department and garden supplies. But this new modern one, we discontinued the feed department because that takes up too much space. But we added more refrigeration, more frozen foods, more of many things that we didn't carry in the second store. Our volume has tripled.

DH: Your first store, what kind of things you carry primarily?

CS: American can goods, Japanese can goods and dry goods.

DH: Mostly, was it canned goods?

CS: Canned goods, Japanese dried foods, dry goods.

DH: Can you remember what camps you went to for deliveries?

CS: We went to Kawaii Loa, Waimea Camp; then Opaeula Camp, Takeyanu Camp, Waialua, and Haleiwa.

DH: The farthest you went down was Waimea?

CS: Yes, Waimea.

DH: What part of Waialua...

CS: In fact, way up to Pamalu.

DH: Pamalu? Where's that?

CS: Pamalu is way down... near the Boys' Reformatory School.

DH: That's past Kahuku?

CS: Before you got to Kahuku.

DH: By Wailei place?

CS: Yes. Wailei.

DH: That's Pamalu?

CS: It was close by. They used to go up the camp, way up in the pineapple camp.
DH: What part of Waialua did you go?
CS: Mill camp which was around the mill.
DH: That's where the Hongwanji and stuff stay?
CS: A Japanese section around the church.
DH: Out of the camps that you named, had some pineapple camps, too?
CS: Yes, most of the Opaekula, Takeyama, Waimea camps were pineapple camps.
DH: And Pamalu was one?
CS: Pamalu is a pineapple camp.
DH: The rest were sugar plantation. And Haleiwa was just....
CS: Local town.
DH: Kawaiola was....
CS: Kawaiola is sugar.
DH: Sugar. Did you charge to the people for deliveries like that?
CS: Delivery service was free.
DH: So if they came into the store and they bought something, or if you delivered that same item, would be the same?
CS: Same price. No delivery charge. That's part of our service.
DH: You know, as far as credit, did you extend credit to anyone or did you usually get to know them first or something?
CS: You have to get to know them first before you open up account. Later on, we had all kind nationalities.
DH: You mentioned earlier about, like the bad debts. If you got the money back, how did you get it back?
CS: We didn't get it back. Some. (Laughs)
DH: You just crossed it off or something?
CS: Write it off as bad debt.
DH: If they were back in payments--maybe for two months or something--you would just extend...
CS: In those days, we hardly went through a collection agency. We
just didn't like to garnishee people or go to a collector. Maybe that's a foolish way of doing business, but that's the way we were. People trusted you, and you trust them, so, you figure, some day they'll come through with it. Some came through. Some didn't.

DH: All you did was give 'em more time, then? Can you remember when electric refrigeration came in?

CS: When I learned to cut the beef, we opened a small meat department in the old Sakai Store and bought two refrigeration cases and two vegetable cases and we started it there.

DH: What did your wife do in the first store?

CS: My wife helped me.

DH: The books, like that?

CS: She helped with the personnel and helped with the selling and ordering.

DH: The second store, what did she do?

CS: She was the personnel manager; liquor department and drug department was under her supervision.

DH: The other tape you said the first home you had was by Araki Store, right.

CS: Yes.

DH: You remember how much the rent was?

CS: The rent was about twenty dollars per month.

DH: Whenever you were ill, who did you go to see when you were sick?

CS: My family doctor was Dr. Miyasaki.

DH: Did you ever use any kind of folk medicines, like that?

CS: What's that?

DH: You know, like... let's see. Like if you get, maybe, diarrhea, something, they tell you, oh, eat guava leaf and stuff like that.

CS: No.

DH: You used to just go doctor?

CS: We went to see the doctor for medication.

DH: You also stated your first car that you bought. Where was that now? (Consulting notes) After you graduated, you bought your car? The first car?
CS: My first car was bought in 1935.

DH: You remember how much the car cost?

CS: It may have been less than two thousand dollars. In those days, two thousand dollars was like five thousand dollars today.

DH: Where did you buy the car from?

CS: Waialua Garage.

DH: Your wedding was by matchmaking, yeah.

CS: That's right.

DH: Can you tell me little bit about what you did?

CS: Well, matchmaking, I had Mr. Doi. Mr. Hayakawa or...I forgot the other man's name. The other man knew my wife's family, whereas Mr. Doi knew our family. So they got together. My wife's side will talk it over with Mr. Doi. That's how the matchmaking begins, you see. Then we got the photographs and pictures. He'll (Mr. Doi) send my picture and they'll send her picture to my place. We look it over. And then you say okay. Then the family starts to talk it over. They'll learn my and my family's history. I in turn know the history of her and her family. That's how that matchmaking begins.

DH: How do you meet like that? The two families? Do you meet, the two families all at once?

CS: No. Those matchmakers get my okay. And the girl gives her okay. Then we send in the formal notice, "We want your daughter for my son." This matchmaker does all that, see; the marriage ceremony and party and everything. They do all that. Afterward, Japanese style, we send the matchmakers a sort of thank you monetary gift, see.

DH: When's the first time you met your wife in person?

CS: We had a date. (Chuckles) Then we met.

DH: You also mentioned some of your children were....born through midwives. All of 'em were born?

CS: No. Doris had a midwife. Paul had a midwife. I don't know whether Tommy had a midwife. Then the last one, Barbara, was down Kapiolani Maternity Ward.

DH: How did you go about getting the midwives?

CS: Locally, there's a lady that does that kind of job. You hire her.
I don't know how much we paid, but anyway, they'll come.

DH: How do you get her to come at the right moment?

CS: More or less you can tell when the baby is about to be born. You call. She helps out the mother, you know.

DH: Do you know how many midwives there were in Waialua-Haleiwa?

CS: I remember two that I know of. Mrs. Kishinami used to be one. Mrs. Sasaki used to be one.

DH: What kind of things do you recall about pre-Depression years? You know, before 1930? About the business like that? Like well, let say, like living conditions. How was it back then? Like before the Depression....

CS: In Waialua, we didn't feel it so much, you know, because we were in a sugar plantation community. Somehow those people were working. We didn't have any breadline like right in town, you know. Out in the country, to me, it was going as usual.

DH: Did the Depression have any effect on your family?

CS: No. Not that I know of.

DH: You said before the only effect it had on your business was you wouldn't buy as much stuff as you....

CS: Yeah. That's it.

DH: That's it? You had to lay off anybody because of the Depression? Any workers?

CS: Not that I know of.

DH: You remember how many hours a day your employees used to work?

CS: Gee, I guess ten to twelve hours, I think. Most of them used to work those days. No wage control. Later on, they start to get wage control. That's when we follow the law, but before that, I don't think so. They were paid one lump sum.

DH: Then after that, they had the eight hour day, right?

CS: Yes. Eight hour day.

DH: Did that affect you in any way?

CS: Well, at the beginning it was hard, but somehow you get adjusted to it.

DH: Did you have to hire more people because of that?
CS: No. Just went by, that's all.

DH: Did you have to work harder because....

CS: I worked hard but I enjoyed the work.

DH: In that time, were there a lot of fires? Maybe, say about 1935, '36, around there.

CS: Not that I know of.

DH: You used to play baseball before?

CS: I used to.

DH: You remember where the games were played?

CS: Oh, we played at Waialua. Went to Aiea, Waipahu, Ewa.

DH: Who organized this....baseball?

CS: I don't know. We used to have, I think, a booster club consisting of the Haleiwa people who provided equipment for the team.

DH: And you used to play teams from other parts of Oahu then?

CS: Yes.

DH: Did you ever play among yourself, like inter-community kind of league?

CS: I suppose so.

DH: You remember if you used to play with other races, other ethnic groups like that?

CS: We played barefoot football with other boys of other nationalities.

DH: Your team, was it a all-Japanese team or had some....

CS: We had some Hawaiians.

DH: Was there a regular schedule for your team or was this kind of informal?

CS: Just an informal kind. We weren't good players. We played for fun.

(Laughter)

DH: When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, where were you?

CS: Oh, I was working in the store.

DH: Was there any kind of damage?
CS: No. We had curfew, though.

DH: You mean after....

CS: The business hours were controlled and restricted by the military. We were not to be opened after 5 o'clock. It was blackout at night. At night, traveling was restricted. Early part of '41, '42 was like that. We were under martial law.

DH: Did the martial law have any effect on your business?

CS: Well, everybody had to close early at the same time. O.P.A. controlled the pricing of merchandise and we couldn't get enough merchandise to sell.

DH: Like after the bombing, did it affect your store?

CS: There was no bombing which affected our store.

END OF SIDE ONE
SIDE TWO.

DH: Where were we? How did you feel about the martial law?

CS: Well, nothing we can do. We were restricted, but we had to follow the law and rules. We didn't like it. (Laughs)

DH: How long did the stuff like curfew, blackouts, like that, how long did they persist?

CS: Gee, 1941, '42, '43. I think in '43 or '44, it started to ease up. The hardest time was the beginning of '41. '42 was really the roughest. The war ended in 1945. So by that time it was much easier.

DH: What was the community's reaction to the bombing?

CS: (Chuckles) I guess, nothing they can do.

DH: How did you feel about that?

CS: Oh, I thought Japan made a foolish move. You know, attacking a big country like U.S.A., but I felt sorry for them. I wonder if these big leaders didn't know about United States, how big that country was. (Laughs) It's impossible to knock her out. Too big a country. Japan is such a small country. How can their supply last. They take Burma and all those places, but they did not realize by spreading out so far it was impossible supplying these posts. They did not have the capacity and raw material to continue indefinitely.

DH: Did you have any kind of trouble because of the bombing, being that you're Japanese? You have any kind of trouble?

CS: Well....I was called in once because of some curfew rules.
Somebody reported that I was selling from the back door. But actually, what happened was this party (Mrs. Haraguchi) bought the merchandise during the day time and left it there to be picked up after work. You know, they cannot take that merchandise to work. So on the way back, they'll pick that merchandise and go home. But I guess somebody saw that, you know, and they reported it to the Army. I was called in. I told my reason, you know. They let me go because of the circumstances. That was the only time that I was called in.

DH: Had some people that were interned, eh. Nishimura like that.

CS: Yes. Many Japanese were interned because of some reason or other.

DH: Did you ever get....

CS: No, my father wasn't called in. None of us were called in.

DH: That guy, you said what? Haraguchi or something?

CS: He used to be a fireman at Haleiwa Station. His wife made the purchase, see. And then they went to work in the Schofield laundry.

DH: Did they call you in because they thought the guy was Japanese? Is that....

CS: I guess so. They thought that I was selling to the Japanese only.

DH: Oh. They didn't know he was Hawaiian?

CS: No. They knew that the name was Japanese and they thought that I was giving the Japanese the breaks.

DH: The effects of the bombing and everything, did it affect your personal life?

CS: No. We were scared though, because we were afraid that Japan may invade Hawaii.

DH: At that time...

CS: In fact, we all had some military training for preparation in case of an attack. Civilian men all went to drill.

DH: Cause you guys had to do that?

CS: Later on, we all volunteered, you know. But luckily they didn't call us up because of the family situation and other considerations.

DH: To go fight in Europe?

CS: I don't know where they were going to send us, but anyway, we all volunteered.
DH: After the bombing and everything, were people of other races treating you folks worse, or....

CS: There was no change in their association with us. Here in Hawaii I don't think there could be any ill feeling between people.

DH: They didn't look down on you?

CS: We never were looked down on. In fact we were respected by most people.

DH: What happened during the blackouts, like that? How they did....

CS: Blackouts, you can't go out. You stayed home. (laughs)

DH: That's all?

CS: Since at that time my wife was an alien by birth, the F.B.I. requested that the short wave component of our radio be removed. We never did get back the parts.

DH: Did a large number of Army troops and defense workers affect you folks in any way?

CS: Yes. These soldiers were camped in the vicinity, so in fact, it boosted our business. Came to buy things. Three of my employees left me because they were afraid of being drafted. We operated with our family members through the War.

DH: Did any of your workers get drafted?

CS: One, I think. It was after he left my place.

DH: Can you recall how the community felt about all the soldiers like that?

CS: I don't know. Our community is small and with the presence of the soldiers, many businesses had some benefit.

DH: Did you participate in any volunteer work?

CS: My wife helped out with the Red Cross on occasions. I served as some kind of a block warden.

DH: How did the food and gas rationing affect you?

CS: Meat was rationed to us so we in turn rationed it to our customers.

DH: What about the gas rationing? Did it affect you?

CS: I had enough because we use to sell gas at our store. We didn't do much traveling, anyway, in the first place. Unnecessary driving, we didn't do.
DH: Can you recall what happened to those people that were interned?

CS: I don't know. I don't know where they was shipped, but anyway, later on, they were sent to the Mainland. That's all I know.

DH: As a whole, how did the War affect you and the business?

CS: Gee, I don't know.

DH: Did it slow down anywhere? Did it increase, the business?

CS: I had my share. That's all I can say. We didn't go broke. We just survived, that's all. We didn't get rich. But we created confidence in the people by doing honest business, and we are fortunate to have these customers doing business with us today.

DH: Do you remember anything about the six months 1946 strike? That's right after the War.

CS: Oh yeah! The six months strike, but the only thing we were short of was rice. I remember we had customers in Opuela, pineapple camp, and they didn't have rice, so I had to go in town and search for rice. I had a heck of a time getting rice for them but we managed to get some for them.

(Telephone rings. CS answers it and afterward, taping resumes.)

DH: The shipping strike, did it affect you in any other way, besides shortage? Did prices rise? (Shipping strike was in 1949.)

CS: I guess after the strike, the prices rose because the shipping cost increased.

DH: Any other things were short besides rice?

CS: Of course, all goods we got from the Mainland were short. We had a good supply of can goods since we stocked it before the strike. We flew in some rice by air, too, and it cost about fifty dollars a bag.

DH: Did the 1951 tidal wave cause any problems for the family?

CS: No, not in my family.

DH: Did it affect your business at all?

CS: No.

DH: Going back to the shipping strike, how did you feel about it?

CS: Well...maybe they are entitled to it. I don't know. Anytime labor demands wage hike, the commodity's going up. As the businessman, he has to make certain percent of profit or otherwise he
cannot stay in business. He has to raise the prices. Today, you find the same thing. Labor asking for more pay. If the management gives in, your commodity has to come up in order for the business to make money. You are in business to make a profit. Your stockholders won't stand for any losses every year. Otherwise they'll take the money and invest in something else. That's why, today many plantations are going out of business.

DH: Did the Korean War have any effect on you?

CS: No.

DH: You remember Jack Hall?

CS: No. Personally, I don't know him.

DH: You know who he is?

CS: He's a union leader. That's about all I know him.

DH: What were your reactions when you found that he and six other guys were arrested for conspiracy to overthrow the government?

CS: I don't know much about that kind of politics.

DH: What were your feeling about Hawaii becoming a state?

CS: Well, I thought it was a good thing. We are rated the same as the people up in the States. We are treated alike. We are second class citizens if under a territorial system. That's why it is an advantage to all of us in Hawaii.

DH: Did this have any effect on the family or the business? Hawaii becoming a state?

CS: I don't know about my family, but I think it does to the majority of people in Hawaii.

DH: You mean for business-wise, or....

CS: Business-wise, everything.

DH: The War, the bombing time, you had any relatives in Japan at that time?

CS: I had a sister who was stranded in Japan. Her husband was killed during his repatriation to Japan.

DH: Did you communicate with her?

CS: Yes. We went to the American Red Cross to get her back to Hawaii. She is an American citizen so we were able to get her back.

DH: Oh yeah. You said that you used to send money to her? Your older sister?
CS: Yes.

DH: How did you send the money?

CS: Money order.

DH: Did the War and the U.S. defeating Japan like that, did it have any effect on your relationship between your relatives in Japan?

CS: No.

DH: Can you recall, maybe, how they felt about it or did they talk about it?

CS: I don't know. They didn't talk about it, though. I guess most Japanese people in Japan, too, felt they didn't want a war with America. What can they do? The leaders were the ones who led them to war. People can't help but take orders.

DH: What were the major things that has happened to you within the last 15 years? Any major things?

CS: Well, I had my son to carry on the business. That's the most satisfying thing for me. Although I love to work, it is nice to know that somebody will continue with the business even after I'm gone. That's the satisfaction I get.

DH: Can you compare your life now with your life about thirty or forty years ago in terms of material wealth, happiness, freedom?

CS: Oh, I have been blessed with everything that I expected in life. We have four children who are all doing well and I have been blessed with good health. We have built two supermarkets in my lifetime. My aspiration as a businessman and a father has been realized and I feel I have been rewarded for all those years of hardships.

DH: You think you happier now than before?

CS: By all means.

DH: And of course, you more free, now, because you can go play, eh?

CS: Yeah.

DH: You think the Waialua-Haleiwa area would be a good place for your grandchildren to grow up?

CS: Well, I think our community here in Haleiwa is a very good place for future children to grow, but I suppose there are not much job opportunities here to keep them when they grow. So they may leave here until they are ready to retire. My grandchildren are all
living in Honolulu so I don't think they will be enjoying the beautiful
country like atmosphere of Haleiwa. We would certainly like to
preserve this area so that our young people can see how it was
in a rural area.

DH: Okay. That's it.

END OF INTERVIEW
WAIALUA & HALEIWA
The People Tell Their Story
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JAPANESE

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