"Going out taking orders and deliver. I was the youngest guy, anyway, about fifteen years old. So the boss used to ride me every time. I decided, gee, I better go learn something, some trade. Well, during that time I used to go in the camp and watch the Filipino guys, how they cut hair, see. I used to think, gee, hey, these guys they doing good job without using the clipper, only the shears and the razor and the comb. So I thought, gee, if I buy one clipper, maybe I can do it like them, too. So I ordered one set, clipper, comb, and a shear . . . from Montgomery Ward, I think. My brother Sadao was going to school yet. He was about ten, maybe eleven years old. So . . . he was the first one. Let's try give him a haircut, you know. And it came out pretty good, see."

The third of five boys, Tadao "Barber" Kawamoto was born April 2, 1911 and grew up in the fishing community of Kukui'ula, located not far from Kōloa town and the sugarcane fields of McBryde Sugar Company. Barber was raised by his mother Shigeno after his father Taichi died in 1916.

Barber attended Kōloa School and completed the eighth grade in 1925. He worked briefly in the sugarcane fields, then as a delivery boy for McBryde Sugar Company Store. He gradually learned the art of barbering while watching Filipino men cutting hair on the plantation and decided to try his hand at the trade. In 1926, Barber worked as an apprentice at the Tip Top Barbershop in Līhu'e, then, in 1927, went to O'ahu to train as a barber in a shop located in downtown Honolulu.

In 1932, Barber returned to Kaua'i and opened his own barbershop in Kōloa. He subleased space in a building on Waterhouse land. Barber eventually acquired adjacent space and with his wife, Yuri, whom he married in 1942, operated a liquor store.

Barber was a Kōloa fixture and continued to cut people's hair until 1982, when rising rents forced him to give up his lease. The building, still standing today, has been renovated as part of "Old Kōloa Town" and now houses specialty shops for tourists.

Barber lives in Po'ipū. In his converted garage, he still cuts residents' hair in a chair he saved from his Kōloa barbershop.
WN: This is an interview with Mr. Tadao Kawamoto, on March 4, 1987, at his home in Po'ipu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Kawamoto, why don't we start by having you tell me when you were born and where you were born.

TK: Well, don't you want to know when my father [Taichi Kawamoto] first came over here first?

WN: Let's start with your birth first, and place.

TK: Oh. Born in Kukui'ula, April the second, 1911.

WN: Okay, and what was your father doing in Kukui'ula?

TK: Well, my father passed away when I was five years old, anyway, so. All I know is what--I spent a few years with him, I think that I remember. I think he was a carpenter. But he must have come as a plantation laborer like all the Japanese people at that time, you know. He came over here about 1904, my eldest brother was born 1906, my second one was born 1909, and the third, born 1911, and the fourth one--we had all boys in our family--the fourth one was born 1913, and the youngest one 1916. Of course, one of my brothers just above me, he got drowned in Kukui'ula, right close to our home over there in the ocean. He was about ten years old, I was about seven at that time. That was two years after my father died 1916. My brother drowned in 1918. I was just seven years old at that time.

WN: You said he was a carpenter. Like what kinds of . . .

TK: I remembered we had one picture of him. He and one Hawaiian guy named Joe Aka. Joe Aka was good friend of my father. They both used to be carpenters, too. And they used to build homes, too, I think, and church, and my father later on started to build sampan. In fact he was the first sampan builder in Kukui'ula. They had quite a bit of sampan in that little bay there. Japanese fishermen.
WN: You mean Kukui'ula Harbor?

TK: Kukui'ula Harbor, yeah. I remember some of the boat that he built, because they told me, "Oh yeah, this is the boat that your father built." But there were plenty sampan that he had built that were still being used, way back in '25, '26, in fact, up to the '30s, yeah? Because he must have built sampan from about 1909, maybe.

WN: Was he a carpenter in Japan?

TK: Must have been. Which I don't know. We never had a chance to talk with him too much, anyway. And my mother never mentioned too much about him, too.

WN: What about your mother [Shigeno Akazaki Kawamoto]? What kind of background did she come from?

TK: Well, you know, ours is a very peculiar family, see. And I tried to make one family history for my children, too. You know, like Japanese before, a couple that have no children will adopt somebody, and that's what happened with my father. In Japan, this is Yamaguchi-ken, that's place he was born, he was adopted by this Kawamoto family. His real name, family name, is (Tanada). And then he got adopted by the Kawamoto family, there was only one old man and old lady. Well, they weren't too old at that time. When they arrived from Japan to Hawai'i, was 1904. So this Kawamoto family was not that old yet. And my mother came from Akazaki [family]. So they both from two different family, made up these Kawamotos. So the family roots of Kawamoto start from right there.

WN: I see. So this is different from yoshi then, this is not yoshi? Your mother's name wasn't Kawamoto?

TK: It's not a yoshi. That's what I say, it's very peculiar. The Kawamoto family adopted my father, who was (Tanada), and she was Akazaki, got married to this Kawamoto. His name was Kawamoto Taichi, T-A-I-C-H-I. Then they both came to Hawai'i.

WN: They were married already?

TK: Yeah. They got married in Japan, they came to Hawai'i. But he didn't---see, he died. When he died he was thirty-three years, anyway. Young man yet. Very young. And that's the beginning of, well, you might say the beginning and the end of Kawamoto. My father, anyway. From 1904, and died in 1916, see. He didn't live very long in Hawai'i. But he was, in fact he was one of the early Japanese Christians in Hawai'i. Those days they never think much of Christian, most of them were Buddhist, see. But my father was a Christian, because I remember me at five years old, they had a Christian church in Koloa, see. Ike's [Okamura] father was one of [the members]. His father knew my father very well. Because when I came back here from Honolulu, I used to cut Ike's father's hair and he used to tell me, "Oh yes, I know your father well," he said.
My father used to walk from Kukui'ula to Koloa to the [Koloa] Japanese Christian Church, you know. And I used to follow. He used to tell us, "We all going to church." Dress us up, and we walk (chuckles) from Kukui'ula to Koloa. Me and my brother Takeo, [who] got drowned later, and my oldest brother Shigeo. Three of us with my father, walking to church from Kukui'ula to Koloa.

(Laughter)

TK: I remember that very well.

WN: Where was the Koloa Japanese Christian Church?

TK: I would say somewhere near Big Save [Value Center], somewhere near where Big Save was, I think.

WN: Where the Big Save is now?

TK: Yeah, where Big Save is now. I think was somewhere about there. [The Koloa Japanese Christian Church was located in the Japanese Camp.]

WN: I see. So not far away from the [Koloa] Jōdōshu and the [Koloa] Hongwanji?

TK: Well, they never had no Jōdōshu at that time anyway. Yeah, Jōdōshu was built in [June of] 1910. And our church, the Hongwanji, was built in [October of 1910]. So I would say they had the church over there already, but it was somewhere in the vicinity, anyway, the [Koloa] Japanese Christian Church. Not where it is now [i.e., Koloa Union Church] where Waterhouses have built and all that.

WN: How long did it take you from your home to Koloa?

TK: Coming up to Koloa?

WN: Yeah.

TK: Well, when we started going to school, we used to walk from Kukui'ula to Koloa School. Not through the government road, used to come through the short cut, the plantation road, that's where they used to have the haul cane truck going down. But before that used to be the railroad, and we used to walk from there.

WN: Along the railroad tracks?

TK: Yeah. It's about two miles, you know. Would take us between thirty to forty minutes, I think, yeah? So when we start in the morning, going to school, we got to start about six o'clock sometimes. Come up to Koloa School and have about fifteen, twenty minutes to play,
you know. But kids' days, well, when we going to school we just play around. We don't just walk, walk to school. We jump around here and there.

WN: Did all the Kukui'ula kids go to Kōloa School?

TK: Oh yeah. Kukui'ula children all went to Kōloa School. In fact, those people living up Lawai'i went to Kōloa School, too, and they had just as long walk from Lawai'i. No such thing as buses before. Oh, today's kids, they are really lucky. The bus come up almost to their front yard, and then pick them up and bring 'em to school.

WN: Seems like your walk was uphill, eh?

TK: Well, slightly, but when you're young, you don't think that way, you know. Yeah, you can be running and you don't feel tired or anything like that. Now if you tell me to walk from Kukui'ula to Kōloa, I say, "Oh, no way!"

(Laughter)

WN: Tell me something about Kukui'ula town, itself. Was it mostly Japanese?

TK: Yeah. Majority of the [McBryde] Plantation workers was Japanese, see. On the lower side where we used to live, that's practically all Japanese because it was Japanese fishermen camp on that ocean side. And further up in the [cane] field side, going up the road was the plantation workers. I would say we had more Japanese way back up to 1924, '25, yeah? Had few Filipinos then, because Japanese immigrant, I think they start immigration law, when is that, in fact about 1927 [1924], I think [i.e., the 1924 Gentlemen's Agreement between the U.S. and Japan, restricting Japanese immigration]. So after that we didn't have very many Japanese come at all, but Filipinos used to come, quite a number of them, as contract laborers. So we had, oh, plenty Japanese over there, and plenty Japanese kids, too.

WN: What about Hawaiians?

TK: Not in that camp there, no we didn't have no Hawaiians. The Hawaiian mostly was living down Po'ipū side, here. But they have the Hawaiians coming to Kōloa School, you know, living down Po'ipū. But in Kukui'ula, hardly any. Gee, I cannot think of any Hawaiian living down Kukui'ula. Mostly Japanese, that's why.

WN: Besides plantation, what other jobs were there over there?

TK: In Kukui'ula?

WN: Yes.

TK: Nothing. Fishing and plantation.
WN: Fishing, they had fishermen, then?

TK: Fishermen, yeah, yeah.

WN: And they were mostly Japanese?

TK: All---in fact all Japanese. They used to go with those two-cylinder gasoline engine that go, "Pomp, pomp, pomp, pomp, pomp, pomp." They go out in the late afternoon, and they come back in the morning. Maybe that's the reason why I didn't care much for fishing, because when the men come back in the morning they pass right in front of my house over there, "Kore motte ne, okazu (Take this for a side dish)." They just give us the fish, like that. But that's after my father died. We were young kids yet, yeah. And they were very nice. Fishermen are very big-hearted people, you know. Yeah, very. Something like the Hawaiians, they say, "The more you give, the more you'll catch." (Laughs)

WN: Where do you think---where did they sell their catch, I wonder?

TK: The fishes you mean?

WN: Yeah.

TK: Oh, they go out. Sometime, couple miles out, yeah. And the fish was very cheap, those days, so. We used to have some peddlers come down with the car to pick up the fish from the fishermen. And also we used to have the fishermen wives go out in the camp to sell the fish, too. And in fact there was some that used to walk from Kukui'ula to Koloa carrying those basket, you know, with that rod over the shoulder and two bags on both end of that. And coming to Koloa and selling the fish for twenty-five cents a bundle. Get about five akule, this size akule.

WN: About what, eight inches, ten inches?

TK: Yeah, no, pretty good size, of course . . .

WN: A foot long?

TK: Yeah. For twenty-five cents a string, we call that. And then they come up here to sell the fish and . . .

WN: Where did they sell in Koloa?

TK: Maybe if they go in the camps, they just set the basket there and then people would come. Because there were no market where they sell fish. And even this fish peddler that used to come down there to pick up the fish to sell, they used to go with their car and stop certain area, you know. And the people just come out and buy the fish, whatever they have.

WN: No refrigeration in those days either, eh?
TK: Ah, that came much later on, yeah? Much later on. But they had, what they call those, block ice. They used to get one block ice and then chip the ice and put the fish on there, get 'em chilled so the fish won't spoil, because some of them had to come up and pick up their fish with the truck, and all that. They had to make a living, boxes where they can keep that thing cool. That is, people who are going to bring the fish home from Kukui'ula to Līhu'e, see. Because Kukui'ula, I think was the only place where they had so much more of the fisherman. They used to come from Līhu'e to pick up the fish over here in the morning, and go back and sell it in Līhu'e, see. Because if they sell it for twenty-five cents a bundle, they still making pretty good, because plantation workers only making about, those days dollar a day, no? I think was less than dollar a day, I think was seventy-five cents a day.

Because I remember when I was going to school we worked summertime, about ten years old. We worked in the plantation, you know, McBryde Plantation. And we get paid twenty-five cents a day. (Chuckles) Start six in the morning and get through about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, for twenty-five cents a day. (Chuckles)

WN: That's boy wages, yeah?

TK: Well, yeah. They used to hire the school kids, you know. Like I told you, they rather hire school kids because we plant the cane seed, the one they cut about eighteen inches long. When the elderly people spread 'em out, when the menfolks spread 'em out, we just go over there and we just line it up. The ladies come from the back, they cover it up [with soil], and then we have the people who will irrigate them, too. They start from one end of the field, they go to the other end there, and they plant and then they cover and irrigate 'em, all in that one day's time. Sometime we get through early because they'll give us something like a contract. "Okay, you folks make so many acres, then you can go home." You don't have to put in the full ten hours or so, you know. If you start six in the morning, until four o'clock, that's ten hours already. Ten hours for twenty-five cents.

(Laughter)

TK: Twenty-five cents a day, oh... When I tell that to my kids, boy, they couldn't believe it. And not only us, because most people [i.e., school kids] who had work those days all getting that, you know. The ladies working for seventy-five cents a day, see. They considered adult. We were kids, so they give us the minimum, (laughs) which was twenty-five cents.

WN: So right near the Kukui'ula Harbor, just mauka of that was the cane land already... 

TK: The camp. In fact it was all cane field over there. And then the plantation camp runs about quarter mile up in the field. Up toward that hill, a ways. Maybe I should mention about that Kukui'ula
Harbor there, you know. Kukui'ula Harbor is not a natural harbor, there. That pier there was built by a fellow named (Henry A. Jaeger), I think. And he was the fellow who contracted clearing that field down there, because that field there had nothing but rocks, you know. Oh, plenty rocks, and all that. So they had to remove the rocks and I think with that rock he built that pier, extending way out till the end. And that was very good for the Japanese people who liked to go fishing, too. And they can moor their sampan right over there, see. And when he got through with that project he must have moved away, because the big warehouse that he used to put his equipment in was vacant, and that's when my father took over that building as his boat shop. Until he died in 1916.

WN: Did this Mr. (Jaeger) own that strip of land?

TK: No, no. That's all plantation land. I think it was the government land, I think. Plantation got hold of it somehow, later on. I don't know how they got hold of it, but. Because some Hawaiian people owned some land around there, too, which I heard much later on that, "Oh, yeah, this Hawaiian owned quite a bit of property around there." But then it was all land given by the king, yeah? You know, if Hawaiian those days, they had kuleana. Get so many acres here, and they used to mark their land with the stone wall, and all that, see. And then I think there were some Hawaiians living--owned their property there, but they were not living there. Especially on the beach side, at one time some Hawaiians owned over there. I don't know much about that because I didn't follow up all on that.

WN: Were there sampans and fishermen on the Po'ipū side?

TK: Not this side here, but on that Kukui'ula Bay area there. Well, you might say that's the east side. On this [Kukui'ula] side here, plenty fishermen, houses, and this side here is the plantation homes, yeah? My house was right in the center over there. Right facing the bay like that, yeah?

WN: So the Honolulu side of the bay was more fisherman camp . . .

TK: More fisherman camp.

WN: And the Ni'ihau side was . . .

TK: The Ni'ihau side was plantation. But the plantation camp never used to be alongside that bay. It was going right up into the cane field there. Following that small creek, the river-like thing, the spillway from the reservoir, which is way up there. This water . . .

WN: Waitā Reservoir?

TK: Not Waitā, no there's another reservoir called "Number 20." McBryde [owned the] reservoir, pretty big reservoir there, too. That
spillway water come right down close to my house where I used to live, see. And that's where the people living on both side of that stream. I think in the olden days they liked to have the houses built alongside the stream so they can go out there and wash the clothes, and all that, see. At one time the water that used to run through there was clean water, but then they started raising pig. Somebody raising pigs, and goats, and horses, and cows up the stream, up the valley, and the thing all got polluted.

WN: Besides the plantation, what kind of businesses were down there in Kukui'ula?

TK: Only fishing.

WN: Only fishing. What about stores?

TK: No. There were store, but that store owned by the plantation, so.

WN: Oh, plantation store.

TK: Plantation store, yeah.

WN: Oh, McBryde Plantation Store.

TK: Yeah, McBryde Plantation Store [a.k.a. Kukui'ula Store]. We used to have people from Kōloa, the store owners up here, we had quite a bit of stores in Kōloa, they used to come down and take orders in the [Kukui'ula] Japanese Camp. They used to have Sueoka Store here, Tao Store, Okumura Store, and let's see, of course, you had that Kōloa Plantation Store there, too. They used to have salesman go down there with the wagon, you know. And they used to go down there take order one day, and deliver next [day], I think about once or twice a week. Then they deliver and take order, you know. My eldest brother worked Kukui'ula Store, and he used to go up to Lāwai'i side to deliver and take order same time, you know. Today people come to the store; those days you have to go to them because they had no transportation to come down to the store to buy.

WN: How many plantation stores were there for McBryde?

TK: Oh, McBryde had one in Kukui'ula, one I think at Lāwai'i Stable [Camp], one in 'Ele'ele. I think they had three stores. Three big stores, anyway. Because all the people who work in that McBryde Plantation can go to the store and they have credit. They can buy, charge it, and when come payday, they collect their pay right by the store, see. We used to have a store way up here where the railroad track come around, and that rail car brings the payroll from 'Ele'ele main office. So everybody goes up there to get their pay. The moment they get their pay, they just go right next door to the store, pay their bill.

(Laughter)
TK: And then many of them, what pay they get is not enough to cover their store bill. (Laughs) It's just like the song ["Sixteen Tons"], "You owe your soul to the company store." (Laughs)

WN: You were talking about the railroad. Was this the same railroad that started at Koloa Landing?

TK: Well, there was one that come up to Kōloa Landing, but that's from McBryde side. The one from Kōloa, that comes another way again. It ends up by the Kōloa Landing where they used to get their freight, and all that. But the McBryde one comes up from--now this is the Kōloa Landing, the river come out, let's say this is the river here, come out of the Kōloa Landing beach. Then Kōloa Plantation railroad come way this way, because it's a slight hill, see. They come way up from the Kōloa Sugar Mill, then come this way here. McBryde one this side, level, so they used to come up till here, only.

WN: Oh, McBryde one came straight . . .

TK: Never used to cross it.

WN: The river.

TK: Yeah. There was a bridge there, but . . .

WN: Waikomo Stream?

TK: Waikomo Stream, right down there, see.

WN: So both railroads would end at the stream, then?

TK: Well, as far as I remember, this one here, there was a bridge going over there, but I never take notice of any rail or train going over that to the Kōloa side, because there is no rail on that side. Maybe there was at one time, I don't know. But up to the time I reach go to school, 1920, or '23, '24, we never see, because that thing had come to there and stop. But McBryde had a rail going up to that point. But we never had---the road going down now to the Kōloa [Landing], you know where the new hotels coming up by the Kōloa Landing there, in those days they never had a road anyway. Had a dirt road, that sandy road. And used to be only good for horse and buggy. And cars used to go over that sometimes, too. But when cars go over, so much sand on the road over there, that sometime they get stuck in the sand. (Laughs) Because the road was not built for automobile yet. For horse, buggy, fine.

WN: So McBryde had their own railroad and Kōloa had their own railroad?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Kōloa had their own, yeah. That river seems to be like the dividing point, I mean this Waikomo Stream, you know.

WN: Oh, I see, the boundary?
TK: On that side was mostly McBryde [Plantation], see? This side here was Kōloa [Plantation]. Now that you mention it, I think that is about the boundary line. From the stream, that side is mostly McBryde, and this side here is Kōloa. Excepting when you come up to past Kōloa town, on the other side of that valley, there, up the road, it was Kōloa Plantation. Because I think that the one going up to 'Ōma'o Road, I think that's--looks like from the stream goes up to there, and goes to 'Ōma'o Road, then this side is McBryde and this side is Kōloa. But this stream here, this Waikomo Stream goes right up to Waita, and the left, the west side of Waita is still Kōloa Plantation, see. So that 'Ōma'o Valley must be the one that dividing that, from Kōloa and McBryde.

WN: Because there's a 'Ōma'o River that joins up with Waikomo River, right there where the old mill was.

TK: Right, right, right. That 'Ōma'o River, that's why I say maybe that valley there is the dividing from McBryde and Kōloa. I think so because I notice on the west side of the river is McBryde, see. On the east side of that one, 'Ōma'o Valley, is Kōloa Plantation.

WN: Were there any churches down in Kukui'ula?

TK: Ah, no. We only have, we used to have the Salvation Army come down there. Christmastime we used to get apples and orange and candies. That's the only time we get oranges, apples, (laughs) during Christmas.

WN: What did they have, a party or something?

TK: No, they used to have, I would say, something like Christmas party, yeah? Because most people down there was Buddhist, anyway, and Buddhist don't know much about Christmas. But the children, you know, we go to school and we learn about Christmas, and all that, so we know what Christmas was. The day that we going get our apple and oranges.

(Laughter)

WN: You said that Kukui'ula was mostly Buddhist, where did they go for their Buddhist services?

TK: I think, those days the minister used to come down.

WN: From Kōloa?

TK: From Kōloa. Instead of the people come up to the church, the ministers, and they used to have one residence, they take turns, one month here, one month at the other home and all that. Because we was Christian, I don't remember how they used to do it, see. My father was a Christian, see. And my mother stayed, after he passed away, she still remained a Christian because us kids was going Christian church, and Salvation Army come around, and all that, you
know. We were more Christian than Buddhism. In fact my father was the only Christian over there, so the rest was all Buddhist. So I think the minister used to come down there.

And we used to have a Japanese[-language] school over there, too, which the minister used to come down and teach. Only for a short while, though. They come down in the afternoon. . . . I don't remember exactly what, because Kōloa used to have a Japanese[-language] school, too, you know. And the ministers used to be the teacher. And they used to have some other Japanese elderly people used to teach Japanese, too.

WN: But Kukui'ula didn't have Japanese[-language] school?

TK: We had for a short while. And I think we had some people from Kōloa used to come and teach. But not too long though, because I remember going to school over there when I was about ten, eleven, twelve. I would say about three or four years we had it there, yeah? Then they stopped it because they cannot get a teacher, so we started coming to Kōloa. After our elementary school is over, which is about two o'clock or two thirty, we used to go to the Japanese[-language] school in Kōloa, see. That's right near our church, you know. That school, that building is still being used for something yet, see. Right next to our church, our [Kōloa] Hongwanji [TK later converted to Buddhism], that used to be the Japanese[-language] school. They had two different classes, one early and one late class. The late class sometime would get through about four thirty in the afternoon. And when the days were short, like December, January, in fact from late November, the days kind of getting short, you know. We used to come home, sometime the moon is up already. (Laughs) Walking home from Kōloa to Kukui'ula, you know. Yeah. We reach home about five thirty, sometimes. We had to walk all the way home after the Japanese[-language] school is over, oh boy. Pretty rough, those days.

WN: So actually, Kōloa was like the town that had all of the things that . . .

TK: Yeah. Kōloa was the main town. Kōloa Landing there was the main port for a long time, you know. The people that come from Honolulu by boat, oh they used to get small boats like Kīna'u, and Haleakalā, and all that. Used to stay outside the Kōloa Landing, there, and they'd come down, you know come in on the boat . . .

WN: Rowboat.

TK: Rowboat. Row it into the landing there, and they unload freight from that with the little donkey they used to have there, the gasoline-operated donkey, you know. That used to lift 'em up and all that.

WN: You called it "donkey?"

TK: Yeah, we used to call it "donkey." (Laughs)
WN: Was it more like a winch? Was it like a winch?

TK: Exactly, yeah, it's a winch. Operated with the gasoline engine. With the cable, you know. Lift the thing up from the boat, the boat land into the small little place over there, the rowboat. Then they get that thing going down, pick this up, bring 'em up, and put it on the flatbed rail car if it's coming to Kōloa, see.

Well, there were plenty salesmen come from Honolulu that used to come on these boats, and they used to stay in Kōloa, because Kōloa was in the center of Kaua'i. If this is Kaua'i down here, see, Kōloa is over here. Going to Waimea and going to Kapa'a is just about same [distance] both ways, see. Since the boat land over there, the Yamamoto Store there used to be a motel. But it was not Yamamoto [at the time], see, it was operated by fellow named Yamaka. But his real name is Yamashiroya. He's got his grave up in the Kōloa Cemetery, there.

WN: Yamashiroya?

TK: Uh huh. You know when this kanyaku imin? They have asked me, this fellow Inouye from Waimea have asked me, "Mr. Kawamoto, can you have the cemetery cleaned up for this occasion?" [The 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first boatload of Japanese contract immigrants, the kanyaku imin, was celebrated in 1985.]

I said, "What occasion?"

He said, "Oh, that kanyaku imin, hundred anniversary. We want to have all the cemetery cleaned up, and also can you buy three bouquets which we will reimburse you, and put one on the columbarium that we have up there, and one on Yamashiroya grave and one on that. . . ." We had a Christian grave[yard], back of that [Kōloa] Union Church over there. But I didn't know who Yamashiroya was, so I went ask (Masato) Nishita. "Nishita, who used to (know) Yamashiroya?"

He say, "Oh, you know, the Yamaka man. The one used to run the hotel there."

Say, "Oh yeah, Yamaka." I know, when I came back here in '32, he was still over here yet, too, so you know. I remembered him.

But his real name is Yamashiroya. And he is the one that operated that hotel there, the motel for that. . . .

WN: For the salesmen?

TK: For the salesmen come over there, and stays over there. And they used to rent cars, I don't know where they used to rent their cars from, but used to have several people that had cars that they lend to these, we used to call them "drummers." Drummers come in from Honolulu. And they go one day on the west side, you know, maybe two days west side and two days east side, and when the boat comes in,
well, the next day they catch the boat and go back to Honolulu. Kōloa is the very, what they call, bigger than Līhu'e, those days, I think, main port.

WN: At Kōloa Landing, how far out did the boats, the inter-island boats [i.e., steamers], stop? How far did the rowboats have to come in?

TK: Oh, I think about a hundred yards, no? Or about a hundred and fifty yards. I remember seeing the boat over there several times, too. And then they get one of these big wide boats, you know, that olden days the sailors used to use, yeah?

WN: How long were the boats, the rowboats? About?

TK: Pretty big, you know. They used to load lot of things in that. Oh, I would say about forty feet, I think. Very wide one with the wide bottom like that, you know. They get two guys. One guy handle one oar, another guy handle this side oar, and they used to row it in.

WN: I see. And then they used to unload the freight from those boats onto the railroad (car)?

TK: Onto that landing, and from the landing, on the car. But if the flatbed car was over there, they just load it [directly] on the car. On the Kōloa side they can just bring the freight cars, the flatbed cars, all loaded up they'd take it way down to the sugar mill, and come back to Kōloa Store, see. They had the rail come up to there.

WN: What about goods that went to McBryde? How did the goods get there?

TK: That's what I say, see. I don't remember, but I think the McBryde one they used to come there with that railroad, too. But there was a rail going to--I don't know whether that crossed the river or not, but there was a bridge going over there.

WN: But it started in Kōloa Landing, too.

TK: But it started from here. They pick it up there and they bring it way back through the haul cane roads. Because when we was kids there was a road over there, and there were no cane on this side here where that railroad was, so evidently it must have been used for hauling the freight from Kōloa Landing.

WN: I was wondering, in the camps in Kukui'ula, were they segregated by nationalities?

TK: No, no, no. Well, the Filipino workers, they liked to stay among themselves, anyway. But we have Japanese living way up end of the camp there, some down this side, and in between. We had no problem as far as racial. . . . No segregation, but. Like my mother them used to wash the clothes for the Filipino workers, see.

WN: Oh, the bachelors.
TK: Yeah, bachelors. But the Filipino was all bachelor anyway. They were like how when the Japanese came over here the first time, you know. They came here to make a few dollars and go back to Philippines, that was their idea, see. Japanese first idea was the same thing too. Come over here to make some money and go back to Japan. But the plantation was a little bit ahead of them. (Laughs) They found that the Japanese workers are very conscientious and honest workers. And in order to keep them they had to figure out some way so that they can keep them longer instead of only for three years contract. Because if they come here to work for three years and if they have to send 'em back to Japan, it's going to cost the plantation lot of money, you know, just for three years. So what they did was ask each worker there, if they are married, "Do you want your wife to come over here to work?"

Say, "Oh yeah, sure."

"You know if your wife come over and help you, you can make more money, and you can go back to Japan with more money, too." And those who had sweetheart, they asked them, "Do you have sweetheart in Japan?"

Say, "Yeah."

"You like your sweetheart come over here and get married and you (both) can work?"

Say, "Oh yeah, we like that, too."

Those who didn't have anybody, say, "How about a picture bride, you like a picture bride from Japan?"

Say, "Oh yeah, we like it."

WN: So you're saying that the reasons for some of this picture bride, and bringing wives over was because the plantation couldn't afford . . .

TK: That was my thinking, because I noticed that they wanted to keep the Japanese over here. And the only way they can do it is by having them come over here, and they knew that when they start having kids they are going to be stuck here, anyway. There was no more such thing as birth control. Every two years you get one child. They all had big families, see. Even my family, we had five boys. There were several that had three, five, seven, they had plenty kids. Even if you get five boys like us, in our family, how can we go back to Japan when after the months of work, the money you owe to the store there, is more than what you're bringing home from work? So you're owing the store money, you get stuck there. So naturally, I think only a very few that came as a contract laborer went back to Japan, yeah, with money. Very few of them. That's why we have one big population of Japanese people here. Till the United States government, I guess they thought, they getting too many Japanese
there, so they put a stop to it by having the immigration law passed. No Japanese can come since 1927, I think.

WN: Nineteen twenty-four, eh?

TK: Was it '24? Well it was somewhere about that anyways. But then they start importing Filipinos after that, but Filipinos was all bachelors coming in, too. Well, that's why when the bachelors come over here many of the Japanese ladies do their laundry and all that. Even though they go to work in the plantation . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Where did your mother do the laundry for the Filipinos?

TK: You mean . . .

WN: You know, did she do it at home?

TK: Oh yeah, home, yeah. My mother had a rough time because my father died 1916, and then two months later my youngest brother was born; and then two years later, my brother, the one above me, got drowned. And she have to go to work to support us kids, you know. And the young one, my brother, the one in Lihue now, she have to carry him on the back and go to work in the field. While she was working, well, they used to call her more like water boy, water girl, used to give water to the working people, yeah?

WN: That was your mother's job?

TK: Yeah. Well, she had other kind job, too. But that was one of her job. The youngest baby, only about, not quite a year old. Got to carry that one. Oh, I think, he was about a year old, anyway. One incident, well, she left him in the field one time, you know. Thought that he might go to sleep, see. And so she went out to give the water to the workingmen. When she came back, the baby was not there. (Laughs) So he must have been about a year old, he could walk already, you know. And she went around hunting in the field, and the cane was big, tall cane, too, see. She went around asking, "Did you see one baby around here?" to all the people. You know, get Filipino workers, you get Japanese workers, you know, ladies and mens, too. When you working the field, you have to irrigate the field, so they quite far apart.

So she asked, every time they said, "No, we never see no babies around." They knew she had a baby with her, see.

So she went look around, and there was a reservoir close by there, too, you know. So she thought, "I wonder if he had rolled inside
the reservoir." So she went looking around there. No can find that boy. Oh, she was so desperate.

Then toward pau hana, when they get through work about three, four o'clock, this man Okuda, he was in the field, he said, "Baby o hirotta do." He said he's found a baby, you know (chuckles). When my mother heard that, oh she went run up to him, oh she was so happy to see that. . . .

WN: This was your younger brother?

TK: My youngest one (Sadao), yeah, yeah. I mean, that's the kind of life they had before, see. Had to bring that baby out to the field to work. Even if got to carry on the shoulder, eh?

WN: What about you folks? You folks were a little bit older.

TK: Like I say, my father died when I was five years old, so not too bad yet, you know. But I don't remember him too well, no? I used to watch him once in a while, though. We stayed there in that house, oh for long time, yeah? From, I think it was from 1904, you know, so we were all born over there.

WN: Were you born in a hospital, or . . .

TK: No, at home. Those days, all midwives. In fact my mother was a midwife, too. Yeah, she used to perform that. . . . So I don't know, when we were born we had to report to the Japan government, see. That's why we were dual citizen. Then in order to get our Hawaiian certificate we get what you call, not from the Board of Health, we called it Hawaiian birth certificate. In order to get that birth certificate, we'll have to had witnesses testifying that, "Yes, this boy was born over here, and I can testify to it." That witness got to sign too, otherwise, we cannot get the birth certificate, see. We call it Hawaiian birth certificate. Now days, you go to the hospital, and you know, automatically they give you the birth certificate. Yeah, those days was pretty rough, though.

WN: What was your house like?

TK: Oh, like a plantation house. I think my father must have built that house, if I'm not mistaken. He was a carpenter, so. Hind roof, you know, like some of these plantation homes was. Sleep on the floor with the futon, you know.

WN: All five of you?

TK: Yeah. We had three rooms, see.

WN: The bathroom was inside?

TK: No, all outside. Way back in those days, nobody had bathroom inside. Not in the '20s, anyway. They don't know what is. . . .
Well, even the home that (Jaeger) had built, I don't know whether
that thing had a bathroom inside the house or not. That's the house
he built there. He must have built in the late 1800s, no?

WN: I was wondering, since your father built the house, was it better
than say, the plantation-built houses?

TK: I think a little bit better, yeah? Because plantation home, no
ceiling, you see. You get (to see the) corrugated iron, or shingle.
At least ours, my father put some cloth to cover so that the rubbish
from the ceiling will not fall down. Something like canvas, you
know, right over there.

WN: The plantation owned the land that your house sat on?

TK: Well, that's where I thought that some Hawaiian owned that place,
but evidently the plantation must have got hold of it somehow. I
was talking to one old Hawaiian guy, "Yeah," he said, "you know, all
the Kukui'ula Bay area there, at one time used to belong to
certain-certain Hawaiian." And this guy he knows who owns that
place there. But the plantation made plenty changes, you know, I
think, or they bought the land out from the people who owned the
property. And those days you can get 'em cheap. In fact the
Hawaiians, they didn't care to own any land, because they got to pay
tax on it.

I remember one old Japanese man, he was the police officer for long
time, here in Kōloa, by the name of [M.] Tashima. He used to tell
me that, oh, the Hawaiians wanted to give him....

"Oh, this my kuleana here, Tashima, I give you this one here."

He tell, "No, no, no, no, no. I no like." He say what he get is
enough. He say, "I don't want any more land."

Because he got to pay tax on it. But the Hawaiian doesn't want it.
He wanted to give it away because he doesn't want to pay the tax on
the land. But that's what he told me, see. I believe him, too,
because the land that he got, I don't know how much he got it for,
but his house is in Kōloa town there. He practically got it for
nothing, I guess, anyway. Those days the Hawaiians didn't want to
own the land because they got to pay tax on it.

WN: As kids, what did you folks do to have a good time?

TK Oh, we used to go fishing sometimes, swimming down there,
play--well, they used to have baseball mostly, no? We used to make
our own ball with the cloth, you know, and string, and make our own
bat with a hau bush, hau tree, it's a light kind of wood, see. Make
our own bat. When I was about thirteen, fourteen, we used to play
football right in front our home over there, used to get the sand
beach over there, you know. And we used to pitch up some tent over
there and camp, you know, make a bonfire till late, till about
eight, nine o'clock. No place to go because we don't have any car to go around. We used to come to Koloa Theater once in a while, though. Walk from Kukui'ula. Then got to walk home again after the show get through about nine or nine-thirty, yeah? Got to walk all the way home again.

And sometimes, when McBryde Plantation used to harvest the field up here, they used to have a boxcar, the cane cars on the rails. But the first car they used to put it off the track because they don't want nobody to fool around. Two, three guys cannot carry and put it on the rail again. But when you get about ten guys over there, oh we can. So what we used to do is when get through with the show, you know, all of us boys used to go over there and lift the boxcar, it's off the rails, put 'em back on the rail, and take off the pin over there. And the other car, we put 'em off [the track], see. To make it show that, just like nobody had touched that car. So when the next day the plantation field overseer should come over there and see that, well, nobody touch that car, because that car stay off the rail, yet. So we used to do that and we used to all jump in and then give one shove. From Koloa, you know where the Shell service station is?

WN: On the corner [of Koloa Road and Po'ipu Road]?

TK: Yeah, yeah, on the corner.

WN: Oh, Tao [Koloa Shell Service] then?

TK: Tao's, yeah. Was right over there, see. Back of that Tao's Garage over there. That's where that railroad used to pass through. There weren't plenty trees around there those days, anyway. But anyway, that's where the cars was, see. So we used to give one push and that car come from there right down to Kukui'ula, you know.

WN: Oh yeah, how long—how far is that?

TK: Two miles.

(Laughter)

TK: So instead of walking home from the show, we used to ride. That is when they used to harvest the field up there, see. That's all McBryde field now. When they harvest the field over there they leave some empty cars over there. That's for their workers next day. But we used to push that car, and give one shove, and everybody jump in the car and we come down to Kukui'ula.

WN: How fast did it go?

TK: Oh, I don't know. We make 'em in about ten minutes, no, I think. The thing go kata-kata kata-kata. . . .

WN: So how many miles an hour you think was going?
TK: Well, I don't know. Ten, fifteen miles, maybe.

WN: Oh yeah. No, I mean how many miles an hour? How fast was it going? About ten, fifteen miles an hour?

TK: About ten, fifteen miles an hour.

WN: That's not so bad.

TK: But you cannot run and catch it up, though, because you know . . .

WN: Once it goes . . .

TK: Once it start rolling, the thing pick up more speed, as it goes down. That was up to about 1925, I think, no?

WN: So you kids never got caught?

TK: That's amazing, you know. Gee, today when I see the kids doing that kind stuff, "Hey, you, get down from there." Give you that cold feeling, eh? But fortunately, nobody got hurt from riding, taking the car like that, and . . . Just something like a runaway car, you know. Because nobody watch the brake, eh? We all jump in the car, just give one push, everybody inside the box [car].

(Laughter)

WN: So how did McBryde get the car back?

TK: Well, the next day the train come up to the field to pick up the--because they start pretty early in the morning to--we call it hapai ko--to load the cane into the car. So when they come up in the morning, they see the car down there, so they just push the car right up back again. Take it up there again.

WN: Did they push it?

TK: Yeah, with the train, you know.

WN: Oh, oh, with the train.

TK: The train just, you know, they lock the thing and bring it up. And they know that the Kukui'ula boys went bring the car down to there, see. So once in a while when they see us on the road, alongside the rail there's a road, see. And when they see us boys over there, what they do is they give out the steam, you know. Shoot the steam at us.

(Laughter. Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: We were talking about things you used to do as a kid, anything else you remember?
TK: No, those days we have a... Just play among ourself, no?

WN: Was there any kind rivalry between your bunch and the Kōloa kids?

TK: No. Not that I remember. Only thing, when they play some sports sometimes, you know. I don't think I ever played football with them. Yeah, I did play football with them, that's right, with Kōloa.

WN: Organized football?

TK: Well, those days, no helmets, you know.

WN: Oh, barefoot football?

TK: Barefoot, no helmets, too, and we just wear some hat over our head, see. Any kind of a hat. No shoulder pad, no nothing. And we used to play, you know where our church is, you know where the Kōloa Post Office is [today]?

WN: Yeah.

TK: That used to be the football ground over there.

WN: Next to the post office?

TK: Before the post office was built, that thing was all clear there, see. And there's our church over there, [Kōloa] Hongwanji, and the old theater, and this, on this front, all on the Kōloa Road side was a big park there. And that used to be the football ground. One side here was full of rocks. One side here is low and when it rain, get full of water. And we used to play football there, you know, I remember that. And those days, oh, no such thing as shoulder pad or anything, eh? Amazing how people never get hurt there. I remember that Kukui'ula and Kōloa used to play.

WN: Against each other?

TK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because Kukui'ula, we had plenty Japanese boys those days. Plenty boys.

WN: Who organized the games?

TK: Well, when they go to school, they start talking about it. They say, "How about, you fellas like play against us?"

"Sure." And we always playing in Kukui'ula, too. Practice, you know on the sand right in front of my house, there.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, we were talking about football.
TK: Well, that's about only kind of a sport, no? Football and baseball. And you know when we kids, we like to play with the--when we see Tarzan picture, we like to climb tree, and play like that, you know. When we see the kind samurai kind. . . . Because we used to have a show at Kukui'ula, too, you see. Traveling movie.

WN: Shibai?

TK: Not shibai. Oh, shibai, we used to have shibai, too. We have traveling movie. We had two movie company, that [Sadakichi] Iwamura and Takase. And they used to come on the weekends, you know. Mostly on Saturday and Sunday, because school days, they cannot have the kids go to shows, but they used to come on Saturdays and Sundays. Maybe Iwamura come on Saturday and maybe Takase come on Sunday, but show was only ten cents, those days.

WN: Where did they show it?

TK: They used to make a tent around, right by our house. You see the store that got wrecked with the hurricane? Kukui'ula Store? You remember that?

WN: No.

TK: Well . . .

WN: The one that's there now?

TK: Not the present, new Kukui'ula Store, but that one in Kukui'ula Bay. Well, anyway, right over there, they had a big open space. What they would do is, they come with the tent, they cover the whole area there, and in back they have the projection stand. And that one side where that screen is, is the end of one building there, see. So just put a screen over there. They used to come and show about once a week. But that, only Japanese picture they used to show, mostly.

WN: Who were they? Who were the people that showed the shows?

TK: Well, one is Iwamura.

WN: What was he? What did he---was that his job?

TK: Yeah, yeah. That's his main--he used to show only movies, see. And the other fellow was Takase. But they don't live in Kukui'ula. Iwamura live in Kōloa and Takase live in, I think was Waimea or Hanapepe. And they used to come down and show, ten cents for children, and I think about fifteen cents for adults, see. But we used to like to go to free shows, so we used to hit the drum. When you hit the drum up the camp, and down the fisherman camp, they give you one free ticket, see. The narrator go up there . . .

WN: The benshi.
TK: Benshi, right, right. And then we pass around those leaflets, see. What's showing tonight, see. Usually get about two guys, the one that pass the paper and one hit the drum. We used to go over there, Mr. Iwamura, we used to rush and go over there so we like hit the drum, eh? Get free show eh?

(Laughter)

TK: Not the same guy go every time, see. The guy who comes there first get the first chance. So when we see the truck coming, oh, we all rushing over there.

WN: So one to hit the drum, one to pass out leaflet, and one benshi?

TK: Benshi, yeah, yeah, yeah. So we gotta hit the drum all the way up and then he stop way up the camp, see. And he start narrate what going get tonight, and come hit the drum come down to about half way eh? And that's when all the camp people all come out to listen, see. That's once a week we used to get that. Then they used to have this kind Tarzan picture, you know. That first Tarzan I think was Elmo Lincoln, that I remember. He used to be the actor, yeah? And then when they show the Tarzan picture, next day everybody like climb trees. Start to (laughs) jump from branch to branch. Young kids those days, those things are nothing, see. Because Kukui'ula had plenty trees growing, mango trees, and whatnot, you know. And monkeypod trees, like that. We used to tie some string and then swing from one branch to another on the string--on the rope, yeah.

(Laughter)

TK: Yeah, we used to like that, and when get Japanese samurai picture, oh, next day we cut this kind hau bush, you know. About that long, see.

WN: Three feet?

TK: Yeah, about that. And then, you know the hau bush, when you pound that thing off, pound that thing, you know. Let's say you cut the skin over here, see. Then you pound all this end here, you can pull the thing out, you know. Like a sheath, sword sheath.

WN: Oh, you mean from the bark, separate the bark from the wood?

TK: Yeah. Did you know that?

WN: No.

TK: You know this kind hau tree, eh?

WN: Yeah, yeah, I know that.

TK: If you get one straight branch like that, then you, for the handle part you leave 'em firm. Then you cut all the bark there with the
sharp knife. And the end here, you pound 'em up, you know. Then you can pull that thing out like a sheath.

WN: Oh, oh.

TK: So we used to do that, you know. (Laughs)

WN: So you used to put one sheath inside your belt?

TK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just like a sword, you can pull it out like that. Oh, we used to have lot of fun.

(Customer arrives.)

WN: Oh, you gotta cut hair?

TK: Okay.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so then around 1925 you started working for the [McBryde] Plantation Store [a.k.a. Kukui'ula Store]?

TK: Yeah, after I graduated Kōloa School in '25. Then I went to work---well, I worked in the [sugar] field for about five months, I think. Then I worked in Kukui'ula Store for about another six months.

WN: Doing what?

TK: Going out taking orders and deliver. I was the youngest guy, anyway, about fifteen years old. So the boss used to ride me every time. I decided, gee, I better go learn something, some trade. Well, during that time I used to go in the camp and watch the Filipino guys, how they cut hair, see. I used to think, gee, hey, these guys they doing good job without using the clipper, only the shears and the razor and a comb. So I thought, gee, if I buy one clipper, maybe I can do it like them, too. So I ordered one set, clipper, comb, and a shear.

WN: From where?

TK: I think I bought it from Montgomery Ward, I think. My brother Sadao was going to school yet. He was about ten, maybe eleven years old. So I started---he was the first one.

(Laughter)

TK: Let's try give him a haircut, you know. And it came out pretty good, see. Took me about forty-five minutes, that one, but looks all right. Then cut my other brother's hair. Not too bad, you know, for the first time. Well, I just picked up from how the Filipinos used to do it, see if I can do it like them. And turned out pretty good.
WN: Who used to cut your hair?

TK: I used to go to the camp (barber). I used to have it cut couple times by Sparky Matsunaga's father. Sparky, he was born in Kukui'Iula, see. Today he is a United States Senator. I remember his father, his mother, and he has two stepbrothers and one stepsister. I remember all that family even when Sparky was small and the brothers was young yet, too.

I used to cut my brothers' hair, my two brothers. My older brother said, "No, no, no. You better practice some more, I don't want to let you practice on my head."

So I used to have a neighbor, have three boys, you know, just about our age, see. I used to cut their hair, too. And I used to like it so damned much I used to cut their hair every week, every Sunday, you know. So I pick up pretty fast, yeah. Then my mother told me, why don't I go learn barbering? She say, "If you want to go, you go try talk to somebody in Lihu'e." And in 1926 I decided to go to Lihu'e, take up barbering.

So I started at Tip Top Barbershop. That building not there anymore. But the name of Tip Top Cafe is still there because this barbershop was right next to that cafe. They had the cafe, the Tip Top Theater, and the Tip Top Barbershop. And at that time the same people ran the Tip Top Cafe. That Ota. But the theater was run by, I don't know, Lihu'e Plantation, I think. And Lihu'e Plantation owned that whole building there, see. And across the Tip Top Building was the Lihu'e Plantation Store. And just about the place where the round Lihu'e Shopping Center is, where the round building is . . .

WN: Right at that junction?

TK: Just about that place, yeah. Where the Tip Top Building was. And I stayed there, oh, not quite a year. Maybe about seven or eight months, yeah? And from there I went to Honolulu, 1927. I stayed in Honolulu from '27, '28, '29, '30, '31. Just about four and a half years. Came back to Kauai, 1932, January.

WN: Getting back to the plantation store when you first started, what made you think of barbering?

TK: Well, you know when somebody ride you every time, you think, oh I don't like the idea being pushed around. So I thought, gee, I got to do something so I can be my own boss. I didn't have a chance to go to high school because my father died when I was so young, and you know my mother was struggling just to take care of us. I had to go to work. In fact my older brother had to quit school at twelve years old to work in order to support the family. So I didn't have a chance to go to high school. So I thought, well, better do something. That's why I took up barbering.
WN: So you said you learned from the Filipino men. What, they had shops?

TK: No, no, no, no. They just cut hair right in the camp. They sit on the box and then, you know. They'd hardly, they don't put any, nothing over their shoulder, too. Just with the clothes on, or somebody with bare back, yeah. They just cut. They help each other out, because they used to be good. These Filipino very talented, you know. They don't use no clipper, they just go with the scissors and they can cut it very nicely, neat job. So when I started, I thought, gee, if these guys can do it, gee I think I can do it, too. That's how I started, see.

WN: And they were charging, too? I mean . . .

TK: No, they cut it free for them. And I used to get my haircut from them, too see. Like my mother used to do their laundry, eh? Sometime we bring the laundry up there for them, and then I tell them, "Hey, how about cutting my hair?"

He say, "Yeah, come here. You sit down over here." They used to give me a haircut, too. I used to like that.

By watching them I thought, oh yeah, I think I can do it, too. So I got a clipper and I started on my kid brother.

WN: So about that time, you thought you could make a living off of barbering?

TK: Barbering. No, but at least I wouldn't be pushed around, eh?

(Laughter)

TK: Be my own boss. Well, at that time, when I went to Līhu'e, I know I wasn't my own boss, but I thought someday maybe I might, see. But I enjoyed that job. Because you meet more people, too, you know. They talking, and you talk to them. I didn't stay there for long, maybe about eight months, but . . .

WN: So you were like kōzō [apprentice] over there?

TK: Yeah, more like deshi, you know. You have to clean the--those days have spittoons, you know. You know like cowboy days, in the bar they get (TK makes spitting noise)? They had that kind spittoon there before, too. So I have to wash that, too, you know. Mop the floor, wash all that, too. When I went to Honolulu in '27, I don't think they had that spittoon in Honolulu, already. Country, maybe had, but Honolulu never had, because I remember going over there and then I worked in the shop there.

All girls, eh? Only the boss and myself [were male]. The boss was Japan-born. And I was about the first Japanese, local Japanese [male], Hawai'i born, taking up barbering in that territory (chuckles).
The girls used to ask me, "Hey, Tadao-san, you from Japan, you born in Japan?"

I tell them, "No, I come from Kaua'i. Why?"

Say, "No more Hawai'i-born boys taking up barbering, only girls."

(Chuckles)

WN: Why do you think that was?

TK: Huh?

WN: Why do you think that was? How come was mostly girls?

TK: Because Japanese boys, they don't want to take up barbering. Only the Japanese men, from Japan, they were the shop owners, see. But never had no young boys taking up barbering. When I went to Honolulu, I was only about seventeen years old, I think. Because I came back here [Koloa], [at age] twenty-one, see. When we have Honolulu Barbers' Association annual picnic, all the barbershop owners and the barbers all get together, see. And you'll find no local-born (chuckles). That's when I found out. Yeah, kind of make me feel out of place, so. I thought, hey, I want to quit this job.

So during the days of the depression, '29, '30, '31, one Chinese guy used to come for haircut, and he was the guy that give examination for this federal postal exam, see. One day I talked to him about this postal mail carrier [job], you know. He said, "Yeah, so you can come and take exam if you want to, you know."

So I did go over there and take the exam. I have to go to the second group because there were so many of them. And it just so happened that, you know that depression, stock market crashed in '29. The people no more job so they try to get any kind of job that they can get, eh? And they applied for this postal job, mail carrying job, see. When I went there, was so many of them, I didn't know who was who already (chuckles). So when this Chinese guy came for haircut next time, I talked to him. I said, "By the way, how many people came for the exam."

He said, "I think about 150 guys took exam, no?"

And I told him, "Gee, it looks like plenty college graduate. College graduate, mind you, and me only grammar school, yet, you know."

And then he said, "Yeah, there were about fifty college graduate. And over fifty high school graduate, and ex-servicemen." You see ex-service men, you start off with ten points, see. If you get ninety, you get hundred. You get chance to get a job, see. Then, like us guys, no more education kind, maybe there was about twenty or thirty.

So I thought, gee, compete against university graduate, no chance
(chuckles). And sure enough, when they send you the--they send you the final exam paper, see. And then I get plenty of that thing I couldn't understand, too.

So when they think that, oh, I get sixty-six.

Oh, I tell, "Well, not so bad, you know. We not the one who have the education."

(Laughter)

TK: So I told 'em, "Oh, well." But those who had passed the examination, all [score] ninety-eight, ninety-nine kind, you see. And just come out of college, so their mind sharp, yeah? About that time I was about nineteen years old, and they were about twenty or twenty-one, like that, you know.

WN: I was wondering, did you feel any pressure from your family to get a job quick so that you can help support the family?

TK: Well, I thought of that, too, you see. I thought, well, I like to see my brothers get more education, too. But when I went away to Honolulu to work, I was sending some money home, but really hard. Was very hard, rough on my mother. And then the one next to me, he started to work in the plantation. The youngest one was going vocational school. No chance to go to high school. So when I came back here, I took him out of the vocational school to take up barbering. That's the one in Lihu'e right now, see. He's about six years below me, five and a half to six years below me.

WN: So both of you ended up being barbers?

TK: Yeah, I break him in, but he didn't like to--well, not that he didn't like, but he didn't care much for it, you know. I kind of forced him to take up barbering, you know. Maybe he would have been a carpenter, or be a contractor. Because my father was a carpenter, none of us took his footprint, anyway.

WN: So when you went to Honolulu, you were doing the same kind of thing that you were doing in the Lihu'e barbershop?

TK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: Where was the barbershop in Honolulu?

TK: First when I went there, this Sekiya man, he was the owner of the shop. He had an eight-chair barbershop, corner of Nu'uanu and Hotel Street. Right on the corner there. On the 'Ewa side, mountain side, not the ocean side. So the street come this way, no? On this side corner, see. And those days, Hotel Street had, oh the barbershops, all line up, door to door, and all girls barber, too, you know. Right across from us had another barbershop, on that Hotel Street. We were on Nu'uanu and Hotel corner, and this shop
was on Hotel, second door from the corner on Hotel Street. And on this same Hotel Street, on the mountain side, had two more barbershop, two doors from the corner, line up, two line up together. And right over there is four shops already. And you go down Hotel Street, on river side, there, had about four more.

WN: Gosh! All Japanese?

TK: All Japanese, all Japanese. And on Bethel Street, there, had two Filipino shops, too. And that was back in 1930, see. Oh, had plenty barbershop, all girls, eh? Mostly girls. See, many of them come to town from the countryside, like maybe from 'Ewa, or from some other places, and then they learn the trade, and then they go back, they open their own shop, see. When I was there, we had--I was there for four years almost, we had about two girls. Came over there, they learn, they quit, and they went away. And another one, another couple come inside. Because they don't get paid, you know. Yeah, they don't get paid, they just come be apprentice.

WN: Did you get paid?

TK: Like in my case, I can do it already, you see. So I can do it, so he paid me, eh. In fact when I was in Lihu'e there, I was better than the boss, anyway.

(Laughter)

TK: I used to do it at home, so I can.

WN: So actually for those girls, it was like school, then.

TK: It was, yeah. They apprentice. But they stay with the boss's house, they get free meal, and that kind of thing. Until maybe for about a year. Then they started getting paid. Like today, they have barber's college, yeah? You have to take barber's training for oh, about thousand hours, you see, before you can apply for a license. When you apply for your license, they going have practical training, plus written examination. My brother Sadao in Lihu'e, he was one of the member of the board of barbers. They used to ask him to come to Honolulu to give practical training tests, you know. I mean you get to watch this new applicant doing the barber work, see. Then he say, "Okay, you can," you know, if he approve, well, they can get their license. He was one of that.

They went ask me if I wanted to be in the board of barbers, I tell them, "Oh, no. I don't care for that."

WN: So way back in the '30s you needed a license?

TK: Ah, no. The license thing came in 1947. In 1947 they created the board of barbers. Before, up to that time, you don't have to have no license to become a barber. If you can cut hair and shave a little bit, put up a shingle there, "Barbershop." You in business
already (chuckles). Because there were no such thing as taxes in those days, you don't pay hardly any taxes, you know. Up to 1933, I think, when [President Franklin Delano] Roosevelt came into office, then we began paying territorial taxes, eh? But up to that time all we pay was ten dollars for each chair, I had three chairs over there, that's thirty dollars. Plus my poll tax which was five dollars, and that's all I pay to the County of Kaua'i. Maybe that barber's chair, ten dollar each, probably go to the territory, but the County of Kaua'i, we only pay poll tax, though, five dollars.

WN: That's when you first started?

TK: That's when I first started, right.

WN: Thirty-(two)?

TK: Yeah. But when you hit twenty-one years old, you got to pay the poll tax anyway.

WN: I was wondering, how much did they pay you in Honolulu?

TK: I used to work on a percentage base. Sixty-forty.

WN: And how much was one---per haircut?

TK: Fifty cents per haircut. Up till 1930 it was fifty cents. When the stock market crashed, haircut price came down to thirty-five cents; shave was twenty-five cents; facial, fifty cents. That's facial massage, you know. We used to give all that kind there, too, see. So the ladies, the girls, used to make pretty good because we used to get servicemen from Pearl Harbor, Schofield Barracks, when they get paid, oh, they come by the busload, yeah? All the barbershop, they all fill up (chuckles). And then they get haircut, shave, massage. Early part was fifty cents for haircut, twenty-five cents, shave, and fifty cents for massage. That's dollar quarter [$1.25]. And then some of them used to shine their shoes, too. You know we used to get the bootblack outside the barbershop there, by the entrance, eh? They come inside and while you get your haircut, they shine your shoes, too, you know. Sometime they [customers] used to leave two dollars, you know, for, after all, you get haircut, shave, massage, sometimes shampoo. And two dollars was considered big money, eh, in those days.

Yeah, that's good, how many years ago now? Nineteen twenty-seven when I started there, that's. . . .

WN: Sixty years ago.

TK: Sixty years ago.

WN: Anyway, we got up to nineteen. . . . Just before you're going to come back to Koloa to start your business. And I was wondering if--five o'clock now--I was wondering if maybe sometime I can come
back one more time and finish up from '32 on.

TK: That's okay with me if you want to come.

(Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW
This is an interview with Mr. Tadao Kawamoto on April 1, 1987, at his home in Po'ipu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Kawamoto, we just finished talking about your experiences in Honolulu. And in 1932 you came back to Kaua'i?

Yeah, I came back, was in January of 1932. I came back because, right after the depression then, things were pretty bad in Honolulu. So like I said, our shop maintained the thirty-five cents a haircut, but the other shops, like the Filipino shops, were competing against the Japanese-owned barbershops, too. And they came down from thirty-five, to twenty-five, twenty, and fifteen cents a haircut. That much in 1931, see. So I decided that if I come back to Kaua'i, at least people here had a job. They had a job in the plantation, you know. They only making dollar a day, though. But they had work. In Honolulu, I know there's several guys willing to work for twenty-five dollars a month, but they were told, "Sorry, here we have no jobs."

So when I came back to Kaua'i, well, I had that place [in Kōloa] reserved for me by Mr. Yamada. That's the [same] building I bought later on in 1965, see. Yamada put that building up in 1931 and he had a room over there. When he came to Honolulu, he told me, "Tadao, I have one place just right for your barbershop if you want to come back to Kaua'i." Because I was thinking of going back.

When he told me that he had a place over there, I thought, "Oh, that's very good."

Who was this Mr. Yamada?

He's the man who put the building up, that building that I later bought. But I didn't buy it from him. He [first] sold it to his brother-in-law. The brother-in-law had it for about ten years. You see, he had a twenty-five-year lease, and he renewed it again, and then he sold it to his brother-in-law. And the brother-in-law had [the lease] till 1970, but they retired at 1965, so I took over the
last five years from them.

Well, anyway, I opened a shop. I was only twenty-one years old when I came back here, see. I was in Honolulu for about four-and-a-half years, from when I was about seventeen years old. I was young yet. So your eyes are sharp and your fingers are very fragile, they can move fast, eh. So we used to give a haircut to this servicemen, haircut and shave in fifteen minutes, you know.

(Laughter)

TK: The reason we can do that is because in Honolulu we have this apprentice. You see, the customer sit on the chair, the apprentice put the cloth, the apron, around the customer. So all we do is cut. After we get through, they brush it off, put the lather on, we shave it. They wipe it off, lay 'em down. They put the lather, we shave once over, then they wipe it off again. So you can in fifteen minutes, see.

So when I came back over here, I have the habit of cutting fast anyway, so there were a few customers saying, "Hey, this guy, he cut the hair in less than ten minutes, you know." Whereas we had two old Japanese barbers in Koloa, see, when I came back in '32. There was Yamasaki and [U.] Nakata. They were, oh, in their sixty-something already, they were pretty old. But when they give a haircut, well, they take their time, see. Once in a while they take a time-out to roll their cigarette. (Laughs) So they take about thirty-five to forty-five minutes for one haircut, see. So when I came back here, they kind of surprised, "How can he cut this hair in ten minutes, because the old guys, they taking at least forty-five minutes for one haircut," you know. But then, they think about it, "He's young, so maybe he can," you know. But they doubt whether I make a good job or not, you see. (Laughs)

One Portuguese guy, when I gave him his first haircut--he used to go to Yamasaki, see. And then, just happened that Saturday that [Yamasaki] had about two or three guys waiting, so he couldn't wait, so he came down my place. So I asked, "You want a haircut?"

He said, "Yeah."

"Come up on this chair here." So he sat down, and no more ten minutes, he was out of that chair. (Laughs) He couldn't believe it, you know. See, I had three chairs, from the door, first, second, and third. I was in the last one there, see. And my brother stay in the center one, and the first chair was for the Filipino guy, see. We had three barbers there. I was breaking in my brother at that time anyway, so.

WN: Oh, the Filipino, you hired him?

TK: Yeah, he was working on commission base, see. It was something like what they do in Honolulu. So when I got through with this
Portuguese guy, he slowly get out of the chair, he pay me the twenty-five cents. That's for a haircut, was twenty-five cents at that time. Then he look at the mirror, he shake his head. He came to the center mirror, he look again, he said he couldn't believe it. He went to the third chair, that's closest to the door, see. And he shake his head, he said couldn't believe it that I can do 'em in less than ten minutes, and where the elderly barbers, took them forty-five minutes. So after that he was satisfied. Later on, he told me about it. He say, "You know. Gee, I couldn't believe that you can cut the hair that fast." When they used to get haircut in forty-five minutes up the street, see. Yeah, that was one incident.

 WN: So where were the other barbershops? Barbers?

 TK: Up the street, on that--you know where our Japanese temple is? I belong to the Koloa Hongwanji, see.

 WN: Hongwanji, uh huh.

 TK: Right behind that Hongwanji temple, used to be a barbershop. That man used to do some laundry work---I mean the wife used to do some laundry, and the man used to be the barber. That's Yamasaki. And another one was up the street, right across from the present post office. Just about there, see. So we had the three barbershops at that time.

 WN: Where exactly was your shop? What is there now?

 TK: The entire building, that's the building that Yamada put up, which I later bought. It's the one next to Sueoka Store. Coming down from Lihu'e on Maluhia [Road], you hit smack right into Koloa town, see, as you're coming down by that intersection there, the road turn that way. The one right in front, the red building, that's the one. The barbershop was right in the center of that thing over there. I mean, one wing of that building, but right smack where the road come into Koloa town. And the other side is Sueoka's.

 WN: The present Sueoka.

 TK: Present Sueoka, yeah. Well, at that time, when I started, that was not Sueoka, see. That building was vacant, because Kaua'i Motors used to lease that from Dr. [Alfred H.] Waterhouse who owned all the property in front there. And that used to be General Motors cars showroom, built by the Waterhouses, see. It has all rock foundation on the side. And then later on, half of that was rented by the bank, Bishop Bank, they used to call. That's the present First Hawaiian Bank, but it used to be [known as] Bishop Bank before. They rented half of that, and the other half was rented by a merchant named [M.] Mitsunami. He had his store there. At that time Sueoka was way up in the camp, see. Where all this new [Grove Farm] subdivision is now, there used to be a Japanese camp up there. Sueoka was up there.
So Mitsunami had half of that building there, and the First—well, the Bishop Bank had the other half. And my barbershop was right next to that. There was a little alley between the bank and my shop. Then after Mitsunami quit the store there, Sueoka moved down and took that portion [in 1927]. Sueoka also rented the back portion which used to be the Kaua'i Motors warehouse. Kaua'i Motors gave it up because it was very inconvenient for them, so Sueoka took over all the back building. Then in 1935, the bank moved to a new place where the present bank is now.

WN: First Hawaiian?

TK: First Hawaiian. That was the Bishop Bank. When the bank moved out of there [i.e., the old location], then Sueoka expanded his store, took the whole building [in 1935]. So they had the whole building plus the warehouse in the back. That was, I think before the '50s. Gee, I don't remember exactly when it was.

WN: Well, we're going to talk to Edith [Sueoka] Hashiguchi so . . .

TK: Yeah, because I think they bought that place. They [moved to the present location in 1927].

WN: Were they the only ones [i.e., tenants] to buy from Waterhouse?

TK: They're the only ones to buy, because. . . . I don't know whether you asked Edith or not, but anyway, Jack Mizuha was the administrator for the Waterhouse [estate] at that time. So he had the knowledge of how Waterhouse financially was. During the wartime Mrs. [Mabel Palmer] Waterhouse went back to the Mainland, and Dr. Waterhouse had to support her. And he didn't have that much income because prior to that he was the plantation doctor, but he lost out way back in the early '30s due to political reasons. See, the plantation was all Republican, and then Dr. Waterhouse, he didn't want to be involved in politics, but his relatives must have been, you know, Democrats. Fellows like Charlie Rice, see. So, since he supported the Democrat, the Republican, that's the plantation, told him to find another job, find another hospital.

WN: Who succeeded Dr. Waterhouse?

TK: Oh, we had plenty people after that. I think right after Dr. Waterhouse, could have been Dr. [Marvin] Brennecke. And we had Dr. Kuhlman there for a while, too. I think one of my daughters was born down there. I used to know all those doctors there then, but Dr. Brennecke was a very good doctor. Dr. Brennecke and Dr. Kuhlman.

WN: So you were renting from Yamada?

TK: Yes, when I first came back here I was renting from Yamada.

WN: And Yamada was leasing from Waterhouse?
TK: Leasing the land from Waterhouse, and he put the building up.

WN: Oh, I see. And so what did Mr. Yamada have, a store?

TK: Yeah, he had a liquor store. Well, not right at that time, because the repeal of the liquor came in about 1933 when [President Franklin] Roosevelt came into office. So then they could sell beer and. . . . Beer and wine only, not hard liquor, see, at that time. So Yamada had a license to sell that. Well, Dr. Waterhouse told them that on his premises, the property that he owned, he does not want to have competition by his lessees. You know, that he wanted to have only one kind of a business for each tenant, there. So at that time, Yamada was the only one who was selling liquor. And we have a Chang [Fook Kee] there. Well, they had a cafe there, see. So I think he was selling liquor, but that came much later on. It was during the wartime, anyway. During the wartime I know [Dan Fook] Chang was selling liquor. Yamada was selling liquor there, too, and also Sueoka, see. But by that time, Sueoka had bought that place already. I think he bought there about in 1943, I think.

WN: How did you get started? How did you get the capital to begin a barbershop?

TK: Well, for me to get started in Kōloa there, wasn't too bad, because when I was in Honolulu, when I decided to come back to Kaua'i, the friend of mine who was a salesman for this Island Barber Supply, I was going to buy some equipment from him, see. But he said, "If you are planning to go to Kaua'i now, I get a good deal for you because there's a fellow by the name of August Aguiar. He had a three-chair shop in Kapa'a. He is willing to let it go for half the price what he paid for." And he paid $1,300 for that three chairs, like this one here. This is one of them, see. (TK points to one of his own barber chairs.) And he had one basin and the mirror casing. That mirror casing was made in Honolulu. August Aguiar went to Honolulu and told this Island Barber Supply guy--his name is Ray Kagihara--that he'd like to have a shop with all the equipment made just like this one here. They went look around for barbershops and he saw one he liked, so he said if you can make one like that and send 'em to Kaua'i. And so they did that. And that thing, oh, nice outfit, you know.

So he told me, "If you want to go back to Kaua'i, if you want to buy that thing, you can get it for $650." But those days, $650 was big money, too, you know, (chuckles) but I could scrape it up. I had a couple thousand dollars saved up, so that was nothing, the $650.

So I came back and without looking, I bought that. He told me how old it was. This August Aguiar bought it in 1929, see. That's only two years he had it, you know. And I can get it for half the price what he paid for, see. And that's the balance that he owes to this barber supply. So I got a good deal there. And till today that chair is better than the one that my brother have in Līhu'e. Oh yeah, these chairs are very sturdy.
WN: Oh, this is the same chair?

TK: This is the chair. This is one of them. Had three like that, you see.

WN: Are those easy to move? You had to take it out of his shop to move it to yours, huh?

TK: Oh, you mean, from Kapa'a?

WN: Yeah.

TK: I had my friends with the flatbed truck, we went to pick it up. Oh, we brought everything home in no time.

(Laughter)

TK: Then we set it up, and I think I started the business in about the first week of January, yeah.

WN: Nineteen thirty-two?

TK: Yeah, 1932. Got the paper there.

WN: How much rent did you pay in the beginning?

TK: Oh, at that time was, oh, I think was fifteen dollars a month, yeah?

WN: Oh, yeah? Not bad.

TK: Yeah, well, haircut was only twenty-five cents, anyway, so. People working in the plantation was making only a dollar a day, back in 1932. Till about, they had a big strike in 1946, so you can just imagine the pay was small way up to then, 1946. Those foremen, the lunas, they were making a little bit more than ordinary labor.

WN: How did you get customers in the beginning?

TK: Oh, my friends, they all came and said, "Tadao, you going to start a new barbershop, there, so." I was living Kukui'ula, those days. I get all the Kukui'ula people. The young boys especially. Kids going school. Adults was twenty-five cents and kids was fifteen cents.

(Laughter)

TK: And shave, I think, was about fifteen cents. Then later on after [President Franklin] Roosevelt came into office and things began picking up, then we had CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camp up Koke'e and WPA [Works Progress Administration] project, and all that, then our haircut came up to thirty-five cents, see. Thirty-five cents for haircut, twenty-five cents for shave, twenty-five cents for kids. That stayed at that price for quite a
while, yeah, till 1940, I think. When the war break out, then we start charging fifty cents a haircut. About 1945, it came up to seventy-five cents. And 1950, about a dollar. I think it was two dollars by 1960. Nineteen seventy was three dollars. By 1980 came up to five dollars. That's when I retired already anyway, so.

(Laughter)

WN: So there were two other Japanese barbers in Kōloa . . .

TK: Yeah, they retired . . . Mr. Nakata retired, oh, in the mid-'30s, I think, he quit already. He was quite old, too. And then Yamasaki, too, before the '40s, I think.

WN: So you were the only one after that?

TK: We had another barber up the road, another Filipino shop right where—that building's not there anymore because it burned. It was right alongside Big Save store, there. That building burned down. Then he moved down to the corner of this Kōloa Road and Weliweli Road. The new Kōloa town association building [Kōloa Civic Center] is there right now.

WN: Oh, oh, the senior [citizens'] center?

TK: It's on the corner of Kōloa Road and Weliweli Road. It's the new building there. That's the one that used to be—-that's still Waterhouse property there, yet. They used to have a barbershop there.

WN: Filipino?

TK: Filipino guy, yeah.

WN: Was that the only Filipino barber?

TK: Yeah, yeah. Just he and I. Then he retired, oh, I think in 1980, because that's when the rent came up, too, see. So he say he could not afford that rent.

WN: This is Mr. Daos?

TK: Daos, right, yeah. Jose Daos. I think he's retired, he stay in Kapa'a now, which is by his son.

WN: So for a while it was just you two, then?

TK: Yeah.

WN: Cutting everybody's hair?

TK: Yeah, yeah.

WN: And you said you were living in Kukui'ula at the time? Where, where
Where I grew up, yeah. I came back from Honolulu, I lived down there with my brothers, then I used to come up to Koloa to work. When we get through, we go home. We used to work in the night, when I first came back here, we used to work from about eight in the morning till nine-thirty in the night, you know. That's what we used to do in Honolulu, too. Honolulu, we used to work till about nine-thirty.

Because the people in the plantation, they only work during the day, they don't work at night. Today, well, they harvesting all at night, too. But those days, they only work during daylight hours, so we have to accommodate them when they come back. Some of them come back about five o'clock, six o'clock, you know. Then they take a bath, they come down for haircut. During the wartime, when the war break out, we had those blackouts, so we were forced to close about six o'clock, see. Since then on, since we had to close it at six o'clock, we decided to keep it that way, even after the war ended. We started to close a little early.

But by 1946, well, the plantation went into mechanization, and then they did away with all the trains and tracks and all that. They start hauling the cane by truck so then they work during the night, too. We didn't have to work at night because people had two shifts. Those who work night shift, they can come for haircut during the daytime. They only come once a month maybe, anyway. Or once in three weeks. Not like. . . . Today, well, today, the kids cut once a month or once in two months.

(Laughter)

They go to the hairstylist and all that, you see. They don't have to cut hair that often, anyway. Long hair, like you fellows, no need cut it off, leave it on. You can let your wife trim little bit. That's what many people do today. Let their girlfriend or the wife trim their hair. Short hair, you cannot do that because that would show. You got to have clipper or something like that. I mean fellows who cut it real short, yeah, like crewcut, and all that. You cannot use only shears with cutting crewcut. Got to use the machine, the clipper. But long hair, like that, oh, you can just grab the hair, snip it here and there.

You know, during the wartime, what, were there soldiers around Koloa?

Oh, yeah. Right across, below the [present] post office, on that same side, we used to have a bakery there that used to supply all the bread throughout this island. And they were stationed, we had a barracks right in front of my store by the corner, there. Maluhia Road and Koloa Road, you know, on this side under the monkeypod tree, now. They used to have their barracks right over there, and the bakery was alongside there. And that large concrete slab, about
forty by eighty feet, this concrete floor, is still over there yet.

WN: Oh, yeah? So as you're going up Maluhia Road and Kōloa Road, on the corner, it's on the left? That vacant area where people park their cars [i.e., the site of a proposed shopping center, Koloa Plantation Market Place, on land owned by the Knudsen family]? Is that where it is?

TK: They park their cars under the monkeypod tree?

WN: Yeah. Across the street from your shop?

TK: Yeah. Oh, okay.

WN: Yeah. And they had the barracks over there. And if you go further up towards the post office, on the same side, there's a big concrete slab that used to be the foundation of the bakery. It's still there, the concrete slab, see. Because when we had this Koloa Plantation sesquicentennial celebration [in 1985], they used that platform there for, you know, cover it with a tent and used that for a stage. So that was very nice. At one time we were going to try and use that for skating rink for the kids. Would have been nice, but Knudsen don't want to take a chance because that's their property there. If somebody got hurt, you know what they going do. They going to sue somebody, and then... .

WN: So right now there's nothing over there, huh?

TK: Nothing there right now, no. They have some future plans for that place, though, but. It's going to be a mini-shopping center, from what I heard.

WN: Oh, yeah? On Knudsen land?

TK: Knudsen land. That might be quite some time, yet, though. Because they have to consider the road coming and going out of Kōloa town. The road is not adequate to take care all the traffic. Even coming this way, here, the Po'ipū Road. Too many cars. Only one road coming into Kōloa and Po'ipū and going out of Kōloa. If they start developing this side [i.e., Po'ipū] here, too, and McBryde thinking of developing down that Kukui'ula area there, too. This road is not adequate to take care of the traffic.

WN: That's why they're building another one. They're going to build another one, huh? Down to Po'ipū.

TK: A road? But that's the one right over here.

WN: Right here?

TK: Right over here [next to TK's home]. That's going to come, I think, because they get the money appropriated already. I was objecting to
that, but, oh, well. I figured people living around here, back this side here, they all like to see the road over here. They don't want a road on that side because would create too much dust, eh. Because this one here [i.e., the proposed road], not too bad for us because the wind is blowing that way, away from our home, so. The dust will be carried on that side. Only thing going to be dusty is by the corner over here, you know. That's where they make the turn right over here. That's Kipuka going down and Pahoehoe, see. Cars from halfway down the street will be all coming through here. Cars from up there be all passing through here. It's going to be a little bit dusty, yeah?

WN: Yeah. Busy, too.

TK: Yeah, it's going to be a busy corner right over here.

WN: Yeah. So right now it's just a dead end, now.

TK: Right now it's a dead end, yeah. (Laughs)

WN: Quiet neighborhood street.

TK: We like to keep it that way, but we cannot. Cannot stop progress, anyway. And besides, [Kaua'i] County had the money appropriated for this project, too.

WN: So the county condemned the land?

TK: No. When we bought this land here, we were told--in fact I saw the plan, too--that there is forty feet of land set aside from our west boundary, all the way down from Po'ipu Road up to where this state land ends. In other words, they had planned for the future road from Po'ipu to Koloa on this west boundary of the subdivision. But forty feet is not enough, see, so they were going to take forty feet more from the Knudsen estate and make a highway going up. Well, eighty feet would be adequate for a two-lane highway. So they had that planned. We were told that.

But they didn't do nothing for the last twenty years, so we thought, oh well, now that they are going to develop Mahā'ulepu, I think they should think of an alternate road instead of over here, because the traffic from that side there is going be pretty heavy, too. Because now Mel Ventura is thinking of developing [Hyatt Regency Kaua'i] down by the ship[wreck] right there, and beyond that somebody else may develop in the next twenty years. And this road here and the Po'ipu Road wouldn't be adequate to take care [of the traffic]. But if they make a superhighway from that end of Po'ipū Kai, going up to Koloa town, and up to Maluhia [Road].

Well, I figure that, maybe in the future, I don't know whether the sugarcane--whether the plantation will give up or not. Whether they closing up. But if they do, they can use that [Wilcox] Tunnel there, going to Līhu'e, see. From here, all the traffic from Koloa,
Po'ipū, if they are going to Līhu'e, they don't have to go up Knudsen Gap. They can just go right through the tunnel here . . .

WN: That's the [Wilcox] Tunnel?

TK: Right now they're using for hauling cane, see. I think the county should look into that somehow. Maybe they can widen up the tunnel, then. Even if they have to charge a toll fee, you know. I don't mind paying fifty cents going through there, then you can save that much gasoline going up through . . .

WN: Faster.

TK: . . . up there. And mileage, I think you save about eight miles, you know.

WN: Yeah. You know, getting back to that war, that bakery. Could anybody go to that bakery? Or was that mostly just for soldiers?

TK: Well, you mean to visit in there?

WN: To buy.

TK: Oh, to buy? Yeah, it's only for the servicemen. Because Chang had his own bakery across the street, see. That Walter Chang's father [Dan Fook Chang] used to still run the bakery there. During the wartime, the old man, Walter's father, was still living yet, see.

WN: Were there any problems between the local people and the soldiers during the war?

TK: Oh, yeah. They always have that. (Laughs) They have that problem. I know there was one fight right in front my barbershop, there. (Laughs) Right on the street, there. Yeah, we have because, well, the Japanese, well, we were classified, like. You might say that we were not alien, but being the ancestors of the people of Japan. Although we had volunteered for all this civil defense during the wartime, going up to the outpost, lookout. Then we had several places down the waterfront. Out Po'ipu, Spouting Horn. And I used to go around. That's all volunteer work, see. So we used to go around, and we get extra gallon of gasoline. They used to allow us only three gallons a week. But they used to give us about six gallons. In the day you probably can go out, do your work, but in the night we have to go out to all the lookout posts, bring coffee for these guys, doughnuts for all these people who are on the posts. I was one of them. (Laughs)

WN: Did you get along with the soldiers?

TK: Oh, yeah. As far as my barbershop, no problem, because they come in for haircut, and da_kine, you know. I never have no problem with the soldiers. In fact, I think at that time we was charging fifty cents a haircut, see, during 1941 till about '45.
WN: How was business during the war?

TK: Yeah, was pretty good, no?

WN: Was it better than before the war?

TK: Oh, yeah, yeah. Even the [Kōloa] Theater, too. The theater used to make—they weren't doing so well until 1940. The theater was opened in 1936, you see. And then they weren't doing too good, but then when the war break out, they have to come to the show, six o'clock, and got to get through by eight o'clock, see. Because nine o'clock they got to be all home, and all got to be blackout. So, by six o'clock, oh, sometime the theater stay all pack up. The people waiting in line. The local girls with the soldiers all going to the show, eh. That's when you had a lot of this, you know, local girls will go with the soldiers.

Mostly was, I think we had a lot of Marines over here those days. You know where Ike [Okamura] live, we had a signal corps camp there. And across the street where the [Kōloa] Union Church is, used to be a community hall. And we had some signal corps boys stationed there, too. But I think Ike them were away already, they were in the service at that time.

WN: What about down Po'ipū? There must have been a lot of soldiers down there.

TK: No, they were all up in there [Kōloa], during the wartime. I don't think we had any stationed down here, though. But they had bunkers built here and there, you know.

WN: Was there barbed wire on the beaches?

TK: Oh, yes, they had that, yeah. That's during the wartime. And that's, what, forty-five years ago.

WN: After the war, they had a strike, huh? The sugar strike.

TK: Nineteen forty-six.

WN: Forty-six, yeah. What do you remember about that strike?

TK: Well, I know it was a long strike [seventy-nine days], though.

WN: Did it affect you at all?

TK: No. I think the other businesses, yeah. Businesses like grocery business. Mine was only barbershop, anyway, so. Well, they do come for haircut maybe once in two weeks, and once in three weeks. But grocery stores, they were kind of getting rough time because their regular customers, they want to charge, you see. And knowing that person, well, you know he's been coming to your store all the time to buy, no? You cannot say, "No, I don't want to charge you [i.e.,
give you credit]." Sometime they had to carry over for them. That happened, though. Then when they started to work [again], they gradually pay up their debts.

Right after the strike, then I think the prices of goods came up because they [i.e., plantation laborers] were getting better pay, eh. And the plantation began mechanizing, too, see. They did away with all their locomotives and the tracks, and going into trucking their cane to the mill. They used less men because they used those big cranes to lift the sugarcane from the field to load 'em on the truck. Today, when you go to harvest field, you just see only the guy who is the operator of the crane, and the truck over there, and the guy who get the bulldozer, shoving the cane. Before, way back in the '30s, oh, you get 150 men in the field sometimes. Laying the tracks, burning the cane, cutting the cane, and what we call hapai ko, you know, load 'em on the [railroad car]. Portable rail track men, the mule men, oh yeah. Today is all the mechanization.

WN: When Grove Farm took over, when there was a merger with Kōloa Plantation and Grove Farm [in 1948], were there any changes in the area that you remember?

TK: I don't know much about what happened, no, really. Got to be somebody in the plantation who will know about that. I think, good to ask the fellow, Shintani down here. Ike's brother-in-law.

WN: Kiyoshi Shintani?

TK: Kiyoshi. He was with Grove Farm when Grove Farm merged with Kōloa Plantation, see. In fact, he and I same age, see. He's a little bit younger than me, I think. Tomorrow I make seventy-six.

WN: Tomorrow?

TK: April the second.

WN: Oh, same as Ike, then.

TK: Ike tomorrow, too?

WN: Ike is April 2.

TK: April 2?

WN: Yeah.

TK: I'm April 2. I think Kiyo is about May or June, you know. I'm about couple months older than him, I think.

WN: Oh. Congratulations.

TK: Yeah. Thank you. So you try ask Kiyo about Kōloa Plantation, and the merger. He knows about it because he was there for a long time.
If he was not a Japanese, [but rather] the white-skin kind, well, he'd be way ahead. He knows about the plantation. Like him, well, you get new young Haole graduate comes to the Kōloa Sugar Company, he breaks them in, eh. Then a few years later, well, they on top of him already, you know, giving orders. But that's what I heard, see, and I think that's true, too.

WN: Oh, was rough.

TK: Yeah.

WN: For Japanese, huh.

TK: Was rough for them.

WN: I was wondering, from before the war and then after the war, were there any changes in your business? How you ran it?

TK: No. Barbershop business never change. Style never change, too. No changes as far as my business goes.

WN: Did you make good profits during the war?

TK: During the wartime, yeah. Things were expensive compared to prewar time, but the income was better than those prewar days. You can save more.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, so all this time after the war and everything, you were still living Kukui'ula?

TK: No, I moved to Kōloa about 1937.

WN: Oh, where?

TK: I built a house where my sister-in-law living now. And then we stayed there with my mother because Kukui'ula Store was moved down there in 1928, and then my brother was working for McBryde. That's McBryde Sugar Company. He worked for McBryde Sugar Company Store, so they were given new house right near the store, you know. So the place where we stayed was going to be torn down, so we moved to Kōloa. About 1937 we came up to Kōloa.

WN: This is where, on Waterhouse property?

TK: No, I built my house over there. It's below the mortuary, below this Kaua'i Mortuary. It's in the back, you cannot see it from the road. We stayed there till I got married. When I was there I got
married.

WN: When did you get married?
TK: Oh, 1942, yeah? May of '42.

WN: So, in 1965 you started the liquor store?
TK: Yeah.

WN: How did that come about?
TK: That was a good deal, because for the next five years, well, the rental was only $185 a year, you know. Lease rental. That's what Yamada used to pay to the Waterhouse, because he put the building up himself and he only lease the land for $180 a year. (Laughs) So they made money, those people.

WN: So most of the leases were that cheap?
TK: Yeah. That was because Dr. Waterhouse was that kind of a person that you can talk to him. You make a suggestion, he say, "Yeah. I think it's all right." He would say, "If you want 'em that way." He'll give 'em to you the way how you want 'em, see. That's the reason why Yamada renewed the lease before Dr. Waterhouse passed away, see. He had it from 1932 to '55, that would be twenty-five years, yeah. Before that twenty-five year ended, he renewed again, till 1970, see, for the same amount, $180 a year. The building cost him $3,000 to build, but I think when he sold the building to his brother-in-law, I think he got more than that.

WN: So you bought the building from . . .
TK: I did not buy 'em from Yamada. I bought it from the brother-in-law.

WN: What made you do that?
TK: Well, they were going to sell it to somebody else. If I didn't get it, well, they were going to sell it to somebody. So I said, "Oh, yeah, I'll take it." Since I'm right next door over there, anyway. They gave me the first preference, since I'm already paying the rent on that barbershop, which was for the five years, was very good. Hundred eighty dollars a year for the lease, well, (laughs) you can't go wrong, no? Then the next, from '70 to '75, came up to $300 a month.

WN: You mean, from 1970?
TK: Nineteen seventy to 1975, the lease rental came up to $300 a month.

WN: From $185 a year to $300 a month. Wow!

TK: So when it jumped like that, you would think, holy mackerel! Then
from 1975 to 1980, came to $475 a month, and from 1980 to 1985, $1,500 a month.

WN: Five-year leases?

TK: Five-year lease, yeah. So that's when I decided I better retire already.

(Laughter)

TK: Well, that's when I was negotiating with Charlee, she was renting a space from our building.

WN: Who?

TK: Charlee Real Estate [ERA Charlee & Associates]. She has a place in the building right now. She get a office. She's a realtor, she's renting there, now. But anyway, she was going to buy my lease out, see. The entire thing, because I have till 1985, eh. At that time, Bishop Trust was the administrator for this Waterhouse property. I told her that if she want to, she can buy me out, see. We make arrangement and everything, she satisfied. So she said, well, she will write to the Bishop Trust to see if they could transfer that entire lease to her, from me to her, see. So she negotiated with them, and took them one whole year. They tell, "Well, you'll have to wait, because we have to talk to all the Waterhouse people, and all that, you know." The Dr. Waterhouse family, and all that. Took them the whole year.

Then 1982 came, then they said, "Well, we not going to lease that place anymore, already. And if Kawamoto don't want that place, we have somebody that we want to give this entire property to. To lease the whole Waterhouse property." That's how Bob Gerell got the whole place, see. So when Bob Watts--he's the son-in-law from Waterhouse--when he came over here, came to that shop with Bob Gerell. He introduce us, he said, "Well, this is Bob Gerell, and he's got the lease for this entire Waterhouse property for sixty-seven years." That's why he, for sixty-seven years, he'll get his money back, you know. And he's willing to spend up to $3 million for this entire place. I don't know whether he already spent that much money or not, but well, we were getting only five year's lease at a time. Yamamoto Store, Chang, me, and all the people around there. Well, nobody is going to put any improvement for five-year lease, you know.

There was a fellow had. . . . Right next to the [Koloa] Chevron Service Station, this. . . . I forgot his name, anyway. He opened up a restaurant. And he had a lease till 1980, also. He was there from '75 to 1980. They told him that if he can put improvements in that place, they'll renew the lease. He had the option to renew the lease. So he did some improvement there, fix up the roof, and all that inside the room. And then they in turn jack up his rent. Now, you make the improvement, and then because it's nice, better than before, they raise your rent. So he was not satisfied, so he gave
it up, too.

WN: I was wondering, you said 1970, the thing really went up? The rent, the lease rent?

TK: Yeah.

WN: Well, what happened in 1970? How come it went up so drastically?

TK: Well, that's when all the leases expired, see. All the low leases they had, all expired. They were all about the same time.

WN: The ones that they did with Waterhouse, Dr. Waterhouse?

TK: With Waterhouse, yeah. See, when the lease expired, then Mrs. Waterhouse turned everything over to Bishop Trust, because she didn't want to collect all that kind rental, and all that, see. Although Bishop Trust was handling before that, because after Dr. Waterhouse passed away [in 1948], they did [name] the Bishop Trust as the administrator for the Waterhouse property. But the lease was until 1970, see. When the lease expired, they just brought it right up. So, that's the story of Koloa town from 1932 to 1980. (Laughs)

WN: You know that liquor store that you had, how did you run it?

TK: Oh, just me and my wife. She take care the liquor side and I take care the barbershop. I close my barbershop about five [o'clock] in the evening, have my dinner, and then we run the liquor store with a few other things, too. And then we work till about nine o'clock in the night, see. It was all right because we had Big Save up there, too, we had Sueoka right next door, too, but they closed about six o'clock, see. So we get the late customers come in. The people come from the airport [on their way to Po'ipu hotels], sometime they come down there and say, "Hey, there's a liquor store open over there, let's go by there." Coming down the street, they can see right in front of our store, there. Right on Maluhi cutoff, Maluhia and Koloa Road, see. So they stop by and they buy the liquor. And go down to the hotel, see. You know, after Bob Gerell renovated the whole area there, Bob German was running that where my liquor store used to be.

WN: Bob German?

TK: Bob German, yeah. He got a place down here, too, I think.


TK: Well, he was doing fine because Sueoka used to close at six o'clock. Big Save used to close at six o'clock, too, early. So he open till eleven o'clock. He was getting the late customers. Then when Big Save started to open till late, till about eleven o'clock, and Sueoka open until nine o'clock, well, this guy here, he could not sell his liquor because Sueoka right next door. And you'd buy one
liquor for eight dollars from Sueoka, you got to pay almost eleven dollars over here. So that guy cannot make a go. People . . .

WN: So this Bob German, you sold to him?

TK: No, no, no. He rented from Bob Gerell.

WN: Oh, I see.

TK: Yeah. When Bob Gerell renovated the whole area there, Bob German had one partner with him. They rented that place over there to open up a liquor store, see.

WN: I see. And what's there right now?

TK: Right now it's empty. Because Bob German gave it up. He couldn't make a go.

WN: Because of the lease rent . . .

TK: Oh, yeah. He cannot sell da kine liquor. He's selling all high-class liquor, too, you know. But it's too expensive. And now Big Save don't get too much of the tourists, but Sueoka do get 'em because coming down Maluhia Road, they going see this Sueoka here open, and Sueoka carry general merchandise, everything, you see, where Bob [German] mostly liquor and few snacks. They rather go to this store here and do the shopping. So Bob [German] was losing a lot of business.

Bob German gave it up because on top of that, Bob Gerell raised his maintenance fee. You see, all these shop owners here are prorated to pay maintenance fee for these caretakers, here. And they have quite a number of employees, see, and the salary for this manager, too. So they had to jack up that maintenance fee for each shop. He said, oh, they was making lot of noise about it. So he [i.e., Bob German] said he cannot afford to make a go with that kind of a price, that kind of rental.

WN: So the only business on that strip that's not under Gerell is Sueoka?

TK: Only Sueoka, because he owns his own property.

WN: So Old Kōloa Town that Gerell has, starts from the Po'ipū Road . . .

TK: Corner. Maluhia Road.

WN: Maluhia Road to Weliweli Road? Is that where it goes?

TK: Oh, yeah. I mean from Weliweli Road to Sueoka.

WN: Oh, to Sueoka. Yeah.
TK: Yeah. And from the [Waikomo] River, way down, going down by the corner of [Kōloa] Chevron Service Station, and down till...

WN: Down Po'ipū Road?

TK: Down Po'ipū Road, till where that dress shop get. Only the frontage. At one time Waterhouse owned all the property from the [Waikomo] River all the way [to] Weliweli Road where that [Kōloa] Civic Center is, all the way down here, across the stream [to] Waikomo Road. He owned all of that. All this piece of property. Of course, could be his ancestors, you know. Like the Smiths, the Farleys, they all are buried right near where Ike lives, see. They have a private cemetery there. Once he owned all of that. And he owned where Kiyo[shi] Shintani fella live too, down...

WN: Oh, Po'ipū?

TK: By Halelani, there, by Kōloa Landing. All that area there. From the old road that goes in front of Kiyo's house, you know, come out by Prince Kūhiō [Park], all that road there. He owned all of that. And he owned by the section from Kukui'ula Bay to Spouting Horn, on the ocean side of the road.

WN: So Bishop Trust administers all that land?

TK: Before. Before, the Bishop Trust administer what's Waterhouse's. But Waterhouses sold all of that [i.e., Po'ipū and Kukui'ula land] way back in the '30s. You know when the stock market crashed, I think he must have lost some money there. So he started to sell the land down here. He sold quite a bit of land during that time, you know.

Yeah, for a doctor, he was one of those real country doctors, you know. If a patient cannot pay him, he say, "That's all right." He used to raise some chickens, too. And get his own, not very many, but he had some Leghorns, and all of that. I remember that, you know. He used to tell the patient, "Yeah, you take it home, you need some nourishment. Here's a chicken, here's the egg." And when he get some old hens, you know, he'd tell 'em, "Here's the chicken, take home and make sure you eat that." (Laughs) Instead of them paying him, he used to give them. Yeah, that's the kind of man he was.

WN: Yeah, I know a lot of people speak really highly of him.

TK: Oh, yeah. Because during the wartime, when the wife went back to the Mainland, his father [William Waterhouse] stayed with him [in Kōloa], see. And he had the Parkinson's disease, too. So I used to go and give him a haircut at his house. He couldn't come to the barbershop, see. That is the father, you know. The doctor asked me if I could come down. So I said, "Oh, yeah, sure, Doc. I'll come down." Go down and give him a haircut.
WN: When the hurricane struck, 1983, Hurricane Iwa, 1982...

TK: Eighty-two, yeah, '82.

WN: How were you affected?

TK: Oh, I was living up there [Kōloa] by the store yet. I had this house here [in Po'ipū], already, see. But I had this place rented out, though. So I was [living] right behind the store, there. Well, when they said a hurricane is coming (laughs) we stayed with Ernest Sueoka. He lived right across the road. You know, back of our store is our home, and right next to that is a road that goes to Sueoka Store from Waikomo Road, see. Right opposite the road is Ernest Sueoka's house. So we went over there. We stayed there, because our house is old house already. So we could see our roof from Sueoka's house, they had a big plate window. You could see the wind blowing and the roof going (chuckles) like that, you know. But it didn't fly away, only we had roofing paper. That thing went, yeah.

But seems like lot of these old buildings, the nails are rusted into the wood, and that thing will not come out, you know. But they get a lot of these new houses, just built up in Lāwahī there, oh, the roof shakes a little bit, especially iron roof, yeah, shake little bit, and all of a sudden go (TK makes whooshing noise), gone. But because the wood is raw wood, the nails are fresh nails. Whereas the old buildings, the nails are rusted in the wood. Even if you want to yank 'em out with a hammer, you get hard time. So the old roofs looked like they fared pretty well in this hurricane.

WN: So how did this house do?

TK: Yeah, I never get no damage, too. I thought my upstairs was gone. We couldn't come down to Po'ipū Road, see. Was all blocked up, all the power line posts was down on the road. So we got to come down through the haul cane road by Po'ipū Kai, there. And all the cars, traffic, all came down this way, see. So we came down to see. When I get there, oh, I thought this one was sure gone. (Laughs) But no, I never have no damage over here.

WN: But what about the other houses around here?

TK: Oh, yeah. There were plenty houses, plenty houses that windows and things all busted up. But mine did fare well. The two-story building over there, not this one here, that one further up. His roof went, and his furniture all got wet, but he collected $80,000. (Laughs)

WN: Insurance?

TK: Yeah. So I told [him], "Gee, you can put up a new building with $80,000." He's an attorney, you know. He died windsurfing down Po'ipū. And they couldn't find his body for one whole day. He was
diabetic, too. Nice guy. He was the president of the Kōloa Community Association.

In fact they made a—-he told me, "Well, we going to have a recognition party for you, Tadao. After all, you was with the Kōloa Community Association for a very long time." So we had one party at Sheraton, retirement party.

WN: When were you active in the Kōloa Community Association?

TK: Oh, let me see, back in '53, I think... Yeah, somewhere about there.

WN: What were some of the major issues that you folks dealt with?

TK: Well, beautification was one of those things, no? You know that, all those trees planted around the baseball park, and the monkeypod tree in front of the post office over there?

WN: Mm hmm.

TK: We had that planted by some scout troops, you know. And the one that planted around the baseball park, that was planted by John Greg Allerton. That's the one that owns that Lāwai'i Kai Beach, over there. He died last year, or was it this year? No, last year. We used to get Christmas parties for the kids and all that. Way back in those days, not very many people. And we used to have Halloween parties, mostly for the kids, in the theater.

And when we had Christmas parties I used to ask John Allerton, "John, well, you going be the chairman for the Christmas party." (Laughs) And he liked that, too, you know. So he used to bring up his plants from Lāwai'i Kai. Get his boys to come over here and decorate that old hall. The old hall used to be right next to our Hongwanji church over there, you know. Used to be a nice place. He'd fix everything on the front porch, over there, you know. Trees and everything. And the people all sit out on the grass. There was a big monkeypod tree there, too. That monkeypod tree is still over there, yet. They sit over there and then we had the stage on the front porch. And he was very helpful.

Sometime he used to tell me, "Well, Tadao, I don't know why we doing this party." He say, "You are a Buddhist, and I am an Epis-ca-polian."

(Laughter)

TK: I said, "Well, it's for the kids, so it's all right, John." (Laughs)

WN: So what's the main differences, you think, between Kōloa today and the Kōloa that you remember as a young man?
TK: Well, I think that we have more people, no?. Maybe businesswise, I think, good for the stores, like that. But I think Koloa is getting to be pretty crowded. Well, no matter, I think everywhere right now, you get the population explosion, plus plenty migration, people coming from other places. Because of the hotels here, and all of that, they need more employees. People from outside coming to live in Koloa. And when that happens, well, you know, everybody looking for houses, so the house rent comes up. Real estate value goes up.

When I bought this place over here, that was state land. We had to bid for it, you see, went on auction. We got 'em for--10,068 square feet, was about $4,600, yeah. That's only forty-six cents a square foot. Today, that is a value, too. The assessed evaluation is $48,000, $46,000, eh. Shee, that's ten times more. The value going up. This party [i.e., neighbor] here, very similar, he bid on this property across here. He paid $55,000 only for the land (laughs). And his land just as large as mine. See, they have the money, so when it comes down to bidding for property, like that, no, our local people get no chance, no chance to own the property.

WN: So mostly Mainland people?

TK: Mostly, yeah. If they like it, well, they going to pay. They don't care how much because they have the money. That's something like the one up Köke'e, there. You know our local people had homes there for years and years, and they lost it because they were outbid by people from the Mainland.

WN: So what do you think is the future of Kōloa?

TK: Well, Kōloa district is a pretty large district, see. Goes up to Lāwa'i, there. But Kōloa-Po'ipu, I think, in the future, it's going to be a pretty crowded place, though. I can see they're starting to develop Māhā'ulepu, and McBryde has a big project by Spouting Horn. I think going to be all nothing but homes around here, yeah. Condos and homes. Even you see down Po'ipu Kai, there. You've been down that way already, end of Po'ipu Kai, you saw the homes down this side here. All---mostly Mainland people. They build up the home, but they not living here, they rent 'em out, see.

WN: They only live part-time, or rent it out?

TK: Yeah, yeah. They rent 'em out. So I think Kōloa is going to---Kōloa and Po'ipu area, and Kukui'ula, is going to be---next twenty years---oh, you going to find big changes. Big changes.

WN: What about the future of sugar?

TK: Well, that I don't know, yeah. I have no knowledge about sugar.

WN: Would you like to see the sugar industry continue?

TK: I think they should, because although they are employing not as many
people as they used to, still many people are depending on the sugar industry. Because sugar is a steady job, whereas hotel, if you get a recession, you know, guys going to be laid off. So I don't know. I think sugar should continue, yeah. But if the plantations are not making money, they're losing money, the investors will not want to continue, too.

WN: What would you want young people to remember about or to know about . . .

TK: Kōloa?

WN: . . . Kōloa? You know, how it was?

TK: Well, I don't know whether they want to remember Kōloa, but. Kōloa has been, I think, the oldest sugar plantation, no? That's one thing we can talk about Kōloa. See, they like to--like Bob Gerell, like to keep the Old Kōloa Town looking like how it was originally. But now you get all the new buildings there so it doesn't look like the old Kōloa town anymore, anyway.

But I think Kōloa should be a place where the kids could come and see and say, "Oh, yeah, this is the old Kōloa." Because you can see the old--there's some brochure that you find in this weekly magazine that comes out, yeah, called "Tourist." This is the Old Kōloa Town. But people who have been here thirty, forty years ago, when they see that, they say, this doesn't look like the Kōloa town that they knew. The way they built up, you know, renovated Kōloa, is good, because otherwise, all the old buildings would be torn down, anyway, when they build up new ones. What Bob Gerell did is, put up the building the way how it looked before, anyway, something similar to that, see. So it was all right, though.

But the people who have been here before, when they come over here, they say, "Oh, look at this Kōloa town, look at the big change." Then when they start walking around, they say, "Hey, nothing but Haoles, no?" (Laughs) See, like the old Kōloa used to be, you get all this plantation people coming around with their working clothes, yet, going around the stores, doing some shopping, and all that. But you don't see that anymore, already. All tourists around Kōloa town. That's the difference, yeah. Well, if they [i.e., merchants] are dependent on their income from the tourists, well, that's what they should expect.

WN: What about your life? Is there anything that you would have done any differently? How do you feel about your life?

TK: Well, gee, I would like to have gone to school maybe, you know. Because like us, we get hard time catch up. Father died when I was five years old. No chance for going school, no? Like, those days was pretty rough time. No such thing as welfare, no such thing as Salvation Army. We had Salvation Army, but that's mostly for religious kind. In Kukui'ula they used to come during Christmas
season, you know, and give us apples and candies. That's the only time we can get apples and candies. (Laughs) Today you can get apples and oranges all year around, and even candies, too. Yeah, I think, if I had a chance to go to school, I would have gone. But I don't know.

WN: What advice do you have to give to young aspiring barbers today?

TK: Barbers?

WN: Yeah.

TK: Well, if they don't care to go to school, I think the best thing to do, learn a trade, yeah. Whatever it is, learn a trade. You know, I used to get some young kids that come in for get haircut and they don't want to go to school. They like be a mechanic, or something. I said, "Oh, that's fine." I tell 'em, "Yeah, but why don't you join the service? You join the service, air force, or marines, or something like that, and then you can still get your education. After you come out of there, you can go to school if you want to." Because sometime when you just finish high school, you cannot make up your mind just what you want to do, yeah? But when you go in the service, you stay there for two, three years.

Is something like my son. He didn't know what he want, so he joined the service. That was in 1963. Then he was in basic training for about six months, then he was in Vietnam, then he went to Alaska. Then when he got discharged, he went back to school, see. He went to the University of Arizona. He took up electrical engineering. So I think he's doing all right. He said right now he's promoted to senior scientist, Hughes Aircraft, I think it is.

WN: Did you want any of your kids to be barbers?

TK: Well, I wanted my daughters, you know. But they said, "No, Daddy."

(Laughter)

TK: I think for a wahine it's good, you know, that. Even though they have children, after they retire, they can still do the work. Not much strain. Like my brother's wife, she's barber. Her father was a barber, too, see. One of the old plantation barbers. Then her elder sister, two of them was barber, and her, see. When my brother married her, she was working with one of her sisters. So barber, for ladies, I think it's good, you know. If they don't want too much headache. Maybe if you do some office work, get a lot of strain, eh. But barbers, no more such thing as strain.

(Laughter)

TK: Maybe that's why I can live long. Never get no pressure.

(Laughter)
TK: That's one thing, too, you know. Be your own boss, no pressure. Nobody to tell you what to do, and when to get up, and when to go home. I think that get a lot to do. Only pressure I get is from my wife, I think.

(Laughter)

WN: You want that in? Well, thank you very much, Mr. Kawamoto.

TK: Mm hmm.

END OF INTERVIEW
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