

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: BARBARA GIBSON, retired restaurant worker

Barbara (Sato) Gibson, Japanese, was born in Kawaihoa, June 19, 1917. Her father came to Hawaii from Japan with his parents at the age of 16. Her mother was a picture bride who passed away during the 1920 flu epidemic.

Her father built the Sea View Inn and a number of other buildings in Haleiwa. The Sea View Inn was confiscated during the War, and Mr. Sato interned.

In an unusual move for that time period, she married a haole military man, Mr. Gibson.

The Gibsons are parents of four children, three sons and a daughter. Two of the sons followed in the tradition of their grandfather Sato and operate restaurants on Kauai. The Gibsons live in Haleiwa.

Tape No. 1-19-1-76  
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Barbara Gibson (BG)

June 22, 1976

Haleiwa, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

(BG's husband makes a few remarks.)

GG: This is an interview with Barbara Gibson and her husband at their home in Haleiwa.

(Husband leaves room.)

GG: So, it (Sea View Inn) moved from where Haleiwa Sands is to where Gerry's is now.

BG: Uh huh.

GG: Now, your family still had connection with it, past the early '30s, or....

BG: Yes, until the War broke out, and then the Army took over the building.

GG: I see, because of martial law...

BG: Because my father was an alien.

GG: And did your father have any problems as far as being...

BG: He was put in the concentration camp for a few months.

GG: Oh really?

BG: Uh huh.

GG: I see. Here or in California?

BG: Here. Sand Island, I think. That's where they concentrated all the Japanese.

GG: Right.

BG: Let's see....I better start thinking back, so I can tell it to you a little bit more fluently. He was concentrated for, oh, several months, until they couldn't prove that he was in sympathy with the Japanese.

GG: Yeah. How did he first acquire it (Sea View Inn)? Now, when he first came to this country, did he work in the plantations, or did he start out as a store owner, or as restaurant owner?

BG: I think he worked in the plantation store up at Kawaihoa.

GG: I see.

BG: Uh huh. That's what I've heard, but he's never told me, because my mother died when we were so young that I never got that much information. My father was such a busy man, we never got any information from him.

GG: No.

BG: Actu...

GG: Were you raised by your father, or were you hanaied or....

BG: No, my aunt and my uncle and my grandma raised us.

GG: Hm. I see.

(Rooster crowing in background.)

BG: So I really didn't know too much of the history of our family.

GG: Mhm.

BG: Until after my father died. Then my aunt in Japan wrote a letter. She didn't know that he had died, because I didn't know her address either. So finally I started corresponding with her. Once in a while I write to her, and she writes to me. She writes it in Japanese, so I have a hard time understanding it.

(GG laughs)

BG: I have to go to another older Japanese person. (Laughs) They translate it for me.

GG: So you...

BG: Then I'd answer in easy character.

GG: Yeah.

BG: And then, it will get there somehow. And then later, a few of the younger generation who speak Jap---not speak, but, write English, I mean, they are learning English in the schools.

GG: Do you have children?

BG: We have four children.

GG: You have one that's here now?

BG: Four children. Four boys and a girl. Two of them operate restaurants in Kauai. The Menehune and The Fairway restaurants. Fairway Restaurant is where the Wailua Golf Course is now, and this boy (the one here) works for Northwest Airlines in ramp service, and his wife is an airline hostess.

GG: Oh. So, let's go back a little now. When you got out of high school, what did you do at that time?

BG: Well, I had to help my father in the restaurant.

GG: Did you help before you got out of high school, too? Summer time and things like that?

BG: Oh, yes. Uh huh. No! After school.

GG: After school?

BG: Oh, yes. As we grew old enough, maybe about 12 years old, we were helping already. You know, doing cashier work and behind the cigarette and candy counter, and waiting behind the counter a little bit.

GG: What kind of people did the restaurant cater to? More tourists always, or local, or both?

BG: Well, local people. Local, tourists, and service personnel, because the Army beach was right there. The first Army beach was right opposite Gerry's, now. And the Army bath house was right near the restaurant. The sergeant lived right next to the restaurant. They had quarters over there, and then, the bath house was right in the back. So, well, we had mainly service personnel. Mhm. And the local people. And tourists, because those days, they had only the Lewers tours. That's all I remember is Lewers tours. They didn't have tour buses.

GG: No.

BG: And these people---these tour drivers, they love to come to our place, because we gave them half price. And the ones who took the tourists over to the Haleiwa Hotel, you know Haleiwa Hotel is where...the new Sea View Inn is now.

GG: Yeah.

BG: They'd give them free meal, but they couldn't choose whatever they wanted.

GG: Yeah.

BG: The drivers who came to our place could choose whatever they wanted from half price.

GG: But in those days, could very many local people afford to eat out or....

BG: Well, most of them were plantation, you know....

GG: Supervisors.

BG: Supervisors and lunas, they call it.

GG: Managers.

BG: And managers, and bank manager and all those---Mr. Anderson---you know Mr. Anderson?

GG: Mhm.

BG: Uh huh. Well, he was a youngster when I was back home.

(GG laughs)

BG: So that's....what else?

GG: So you worked mainly in the restaurant?

BG: Mhm. I worked in the restaurant until I left home to get married.

GG: And when was that?

BG: In 1940.

GG: So, that was still before the War?

BG: Yes.

GG: Now how did you happen to meet your husband?

BG: Oh, my husband was operating the crashboat for the Army Air Corps, they called it those days, the U.S. Army Air Corps. Now it's the Air Force. And, uh...

GG: Well, is he from the Mainland originally, or....

BG: Yes. Uh huh.

GG: But he's been here since he came with the Army. Was that what he was with?

BG: Mhm. Air Force---well, he was here before then. I guess he worked with the Merchant Marine for a while, and then--- Merchant Seamen. He liked it over here, so he just joined the Air Force and came over here.

GG: Mhm.

BG: And we got married, and then he got his discharge in San Francisco. Oh, let's see now, and then two months before the blitz, our first son was born.

GG: Oh, for goodness' sakes.

BG: And we were living in Honolulu on Mokauea Street. Right close to that---St. Anthony Church.

GG: In Kalihi?

BG: You know, they bombed over there, too.

GG: Somebody else told me that.

BG: Yeah. They bombed over there, and then we could see those, what they call them, the zeros. Those Japanese...

GG: The Rising Sun?

BG: Yeah, the Rising Sun, overhead. Then we realized it was not just maneuvers, it was the real thing.

GG: The real thing. Yeah.

BG: Then, that was on Sunday. Monday, my husband had to go to work, and he didn't come back for a couple of days! You know, I got worried, 'cause he couldn't call or anything, and he was helping them take all the dead bodies from the ships that got bombed. Lots of those ships were sunk. So....

GG: Yeah. What were your feelings at that point, being Japanese and having a new baby, and in some ways, I guess, probably, not really understanding what was going on?

BG: Oh, I really felt bad about it.

GG: Mhm.

BG: And, some of the people, they....well, one Portuguese lady asked my husband, "How come you married a Japanese?" And, he just told her off. (Laughter)

BG: And then, we stayed in Honolulu for another couple of months, and then we moved over to Pearl City. That's where people evacuated. Right after the blitz and there were lots of vacant houses those days. So we moved to Pearl City, and we stayed there until Navy took over all the houses to make a Navy quarters out there. So we had to move. Went into Waianae. Makaha. For two years. All during the while my father was mad at me, because I married a Japanese---I mean, a Caucasian. Haole.

GG: I wanted to ask you what was your family's reaction.

BG: Oh, golly. Well, my brothers didn't care because my oldest brother married a part- Hawaiian girl anyway. That's...

GG: Before you married a Caucasian or after?

BG: No, no. I beat him to it.

GG: Oh. (Laughs)

BG: I got married first. In the same month, he got married, too.

GG: Oh.

BG: And my second brother got married during the War, I think. Yeah. And he volunteered for the AJA, but they wouldn't take him, because he already had a child, you know.

GG: Oh.

BG: But they gave him recognition for volunteering, and he worked at Schofield, I think, as carpenter helper.

GG: M.

BG: And while I was in Makaha, my second brother's wife asked me why don't I come back, 'cause your father's lonesome. I say, yeah, he is. He's just starting to get ignore from the rest of the family, I guess. I mean, the in-laws.

GG: He was out of the concentration camp by this time?

BG: Oh, yes. Uh huh.

GG: Yeah.

BG: And he had a fishpond.

GG: Uh huh.

BG: He got the lease of the fishpond from the plantation. Plantation had the fishpond then, but it is under the Bishop Estate. So....

GG: Did he take care and stock the ponds, or what was his...

BG: Oh, yes. So, I talked to my husband and we came back here. So, let's see now, how many years---was I away from here? My oldest boy was about 12 years old, I guess, so, I was away from here about 13 years, so, that part, I cannot tell you, you know.

GG: Yeah, right. So that was from....

BG: During the War.

GG: Right, and then just after the War.

BG: M.

GG: So from about '41 to approximately when?

BG: From '40 to....'53.

GG: So then your father was not with Sea View Inn anymore, after the War? Is that correct?

BG: No. Uh....

GG: They just took it over, took it away, or....

BG: Took it away, so my second brother finally was able to get Gerry's back. I mean the old Sea View Inn after the War.

GG: Mhm.

BG: He was able to get that lease back. But, had to, I guess, it had to be an American citizen. I don't know whether he got it after the War, or during the War. Well, the War was just a few years, anyway.

GG: Yeah.

BG: Anyway, he got the lease for that place, and then he operated Gerry's.

GG: And it was called Gerry's? I see.

BG: His son's name was Gerald, so Gerry's Sweet Shop. And then he sold that when his wife left him.

GG: M.



BG: So....then, during the War, my older brother opened up this place over here. Let's see now, after this Korean man took over the place, I think he went bankrupt, and nobody was operating that place, I think. And part of it burned, somehow. So, they started, from, just something like a garage. My father started, what you call, remodeling the place, and all that. He was very good at that. I mean, he had good ideas about the, old-fashion restaurant. So finally, they built it up, just one floor. Wooden building. And he operated that until, finally, my brother sold it. When was that, now? He sold it in....forty....no, he sold it in '50s 'cause we came back in '54, I said, didn't I?

GG: '53.

BG: About '55. No, wait a minute, no, he sold it before then. I think that he sold it before we came back over here, because by that time, he was living with my father. You know, he sold out the business, and then, came to live at the fishpond with my father.

GG: Tell me more about the fishpond. Is that the one that's sort of at the bottom where Kawaihoa is, or....

BG: No. Right here. It's right back of this place.

GG: Oh.

BG: It's on the side of the road right here, before Haleiwa Sands.

GG: Hm. I'll have to look when I go out....

BG: Yeah. He sold the restaurant to Tommy Tsujiguchi. So Tommy, he ran that place until his lease run out. And then, Mr. Alexander, who owned the property--Mr. and Mrs. Alexander they leased it to a man from Honolulu. Kobayakawa. And then, he opened up a restaurant called the Crustacean. And they went bankrupt, because Mr. Alexander wasn't much of a businessman, because he expected the business to be running in good shape in a few years. It takes quite a while for anything to...

GG: Yes, that's true.

BG: Well, so, the man had to quit, and then Marian Harada who has the Dot's, she took over. She bought the building from Alexander, and she operated that until, no, no, no, no. Wait a minute, no, Marian didn't buy that building. Dr. You did.

GG: M.

BG: You know, he used to be with the Olympics team.

GG: I don't recognize the name.

BG: Dr. You. Y-O-U. He was Korean. Marian leased the place from him, and she ran it until Dr. You sold it to Mr. Gross. I think he's an engineer for the plantation.

GG: Yeah, that name I recognize.

BG: So, I guess he thought Marian was making quite a bit of money, so the rental went up. Everytime the rental would go up, and, finally, Marian, being a good businesswoman, she decided she better get out.

GG: Yeah. While she could, yeah? (Laughs)

BG: Uh huh. So she got out, and then this haole man, I can't think of his name, and a Japanese woman, they ran the place for a while, and then they sold out the business.

GG: Well, during the time that your father had it, what kind of foods were served? Uh....

BG: Oh, American food. Seafood. Mostly American food. Mhm.

GG: And at home, what kind of food did you folks eat?

BG: The same.

(Laughter)

BG: Well, when we were growing up, my aunt used to cook us Japanese food. You know, they're very economical. They put a little bit of meat and what not and then lots of vegetables, and all that seasoning.

GG: That's the way I still eat today, to be economical.

BG: Oh, yeah. But too much seasoning was not good for my aunt. My aunt finally got the diabetes.

GG: Oh, boy.

BG: You know. But she was a good cook. Oh, we used to love to eat with her. So, here I am down at the SeaView, and growing up, and I'd get on for that Oriental food and first chance I get, I'd run down to---we used to live in this same house. It was facing the other way.

GG: Oh.

BG: So I'd run home. Well, we slept over there, see, so....

GG: At your aunty's, you mean.

BG: Aunty's, uh huh. Well, before then, we lived back there where the Tojo Farm is now.

GG: M.

BG: My father used to have honey bees. That was before he operated any business. Oh, but I'll tell you...

GG: M. Your Father sounds like a very versatile man!

BG: Before my father acquired the Sea View Inn, he and a friend, Mr. Norishigi--he had the capital--they built this Surf and Sea building. And it was one of the most modern building in this whole area, at that time. So, he opens up a little something like a sandwich shop. Odds and ends, candy and what not, but they went bankrupt, because it was too modern for this ....(Laughs)

GG: This area.

(Laughter)

BG: And, after that he...

GG: This was before the '30s, too, when he did that, or....

BG: Let's see now, yeah. Mhm. 'Cause I was born in 1917. That was 13 years....yes, I was only about six years old.

GG: Oh, my goodness.

BG: So '20s.

GG: Yeah.

BG: In the '20s. And that's when my brothers went over there, to live with my father, because, he had quarters upstairs. He had the rooms upstairs where he could rent some of the rooms, and then, he had the one room for the dentist. Dr. Chang, he used to come all the way from Honolulu to practice dentistry upstairs every weekend.

GG: Hm. And your father never married again?

BG: My father never got married again. I was two years old when my mother died. I hear that the Japanese---the Buddhist priest and his wife wanted to take me back to Japan as their daughter. But my grandma says, "Nope." She says, "I want my grandchildren to be together." So...

GG: How many of there were you in the family?

BG: Just the two---two brothers and myself.

GG: Oh.

BG: And, now, what else....

GG: Well, do you remember when you were going to elementary school or intermediate school? How did the kids all get along with each other? Was it mostly Japanese in those days, or....

BG: Mhm. Mostly Japanese, Hawaiian and Portuguese.

GG: Oh.

BG: Chinese. That's about all. Not too many haoles.

GG: Right, right, yeah.

BG: 'Cause when the haoles started coming, I tell you, they gave the haole kids a bad time.

(Laughter)

BG: Well, there were few haoles around. You know, the plantation's supervisors' children. But, I don't know how they got by. Well, they were alright, I guess. I guess they just grew up with them, so they were alright. Oh!

GG: Did you...

BG: Everybody got along fine! Those days.

GG: Yeah. Did you go to Japanese language school?

BG: Mhm. My father says, "Japanese school....if you don't go to Japanese school, you can't go to English school."

(GG laughs)

BG: I mean that was a threat.

GG: Right. Right.

BG: So, we got worried and we had to go to Japanese school. It was good because that way I can understand, most of the speeches that Japanese used nowadays.

GG: Yeah.

BG: But the real Japanese? Boy, that's real hard to understand.

GG: Yeah. My daughter is taking Japanese in, intermediate school, and she really likes it...

BG: Mhm.

GG: ...and she talks with the older lady across the street, and I think the older lady---well, she's so nice. I guess she's so pleased that this little haole girl is trying to talk to her...

BG: Mhm. Mhm.

GG: ...but she really takes her time, and talks to her so my daughter can understand, too.

BG: Oh, that's good.

GG: So I hope she'll go on with it, because I think it's...

BG: 'Cause all you have to do is ask, "What does that mean?"

GG: Right.

BG: I do that, too with these older ladies whenever they say a certain word and I can't understand it. I went to Japanese school for 11 years, but after I left the school, I never used Japanese. Everything was English. Even my father spoke English to us.

GG: Hm.

BG: Only one I spoke Japanese to was my grandma.

GG: Hm. So, even when you were little, then, English was used at home.

BG: Mhm. Yes.

GG: 'Course, I guess your father because of his business...

BG: Mhm. He just went to English school for three years. That's all. But, by golly, he was a politician. You know, he became an American citizen after the War. But, before then, he used to help all the politicians. He knew all the politicians even from Hiram Fong...

GG: Mhm.

BG: ...his brother Leonard, and, Governor Burns, and, Mr. Blaisdell, and....oh, all those old timers.

GG: Oh.

BG: Every one of them he knew, and he helped, you know, whoever he liked he helped.

GG: Right.

BG: Mhm. So we learn about politics quite a bit, through him. But, we never did go into it.

GG: Now, did you do any kind of work besides, working in your father's restaurant?

BG: My husband, he wouldn't let me work. He says, "You take care of the children." You know? And, so all these years I didn't work except for about nine months part time at the Waialua Post Office. I mean, Haleiwa Post Office. Mr. Nishiyama's missus was a classmate of mine.

GG: I see.

BG: And we were good friends. So one day he says, "There's an opening," for part time job. Why don't you take the exam." So, as a joke, I said, "Okay." So he says, "Well, come over on a certain day." So I went over. A boy that just graduate from high school, he and I, we took exam. He flunked. I passed.

(GG laughs)

BG: After so many years, away from school? My goodness! Ah, it was something.

GG: I bet he was a little....embarrassed that Mama passed, and he didn't, huh?

(Laughter)

BG: Well, I didn't know much about exams and what not, but at least, I had a hunch that if I didn't know something, if I didn't know an answer, I better skip that and take off.

GG: You did?

BG: So I just kept on going.

(Husband comes in, offers refreshment to interviewer.)

GG: Well, I wanted to ask, if you stayed in the Army the whole time, or Air Force, rather?

Husband: No, no, no...I retired from the Civil Service for the Navy.

GG: M.

Husband: I used to be the one that, handled all the big shot admirals and all. War, right on through.

GG: Oh.

BG: He was with Housing.

GG: I see.

BG: Navy Housing.

GG: And how did you two first start dating, or what was....

Husband: We didn't.

BG: We didn't really date. He always tells me he felt sorry for me because I worked so long in the restaurant, from daylight to when we closed. That was quite a few hours, and no pay.

GG: Oh, boy, so you were worse off than working in the plantation for ten cents an hour.

BG: Uh huh.

GG: Or ten cents a day.

BG: Well, the money I had was from tips, whatever tips, but they all knew that I was the boss' daughter, so you don't get as much tip as the other waitresses.

(BG laughs)

GG: But during the War, from what I have heard from some other sources, the servicemen didn't seem to care about their money. They spent it freely, and did they tip freely, too, or....

BG: No, not that much. They spent it more---well, they left a small tip if you give them good service.

GG: Oh.

BG: Oh, we used to treat them nicely, decently, and give them good service, so they really appreciated it. They said, "Oh we like to come over here, because we're treated nicely."

GG: How big a staff did you have, or how many people worked there?

BG: Oh, let's see now, we had one girl during the week besides myself, and on Sundays, we had about three or four girls extra.

GG: And then, did you do cooking and clean up and a little bit of everything, or did you primarily...

BG: We had a cook and a cook's helper. I mean, pantry side.

Husband: When I married her, she couldn't even cook rice.

BG: Yeah. I couldn't cook, because they wouldn't let me in the kitchen.

(GG laughs)

GG: How come?

BG: They just wanted me to stay outside. Take care of the business outside.

GG: Yeah. The cashier. Did you wait on the tables, too, or....

BG: Oh, we waited on the tables, too.

GG: Yeah.

BG: Behind the counter and all that, but mainly cashiering until my little cousin started helping us be cashier, He was a good cashier, too, and he was only about 10 years old.

GG: Hm. But, in those days, I guess you could work no matter what age, huh?

BG: Uh huh. So I guess they gave him a little bit of money. I didn't know much about the financial side. At least, my father got social security cards for us.

GG: Oh, well, that was good. So, and then, after you got married, you didn't work other than for a little short time at the post offices?

BG: Mhm.

GG: So---well, how did the two of you decide to get married, and if I'm getting too personal, tell me, alright?

BG: No, that's alright. You ask him.

(GG laughs)

Husband: Well, she followed me around with a mattress on her back.

(BG laughs )



BG: That's what he said he's going to tell you.

(GG laughs)

GG: Followed around with what?

BG: Yeah, he...

Husband: With a mattress on her back.

BG: Mattress on it....

GG: Oh.

(Laughter)

BG: That's an old saying, I guess.

GG: Yeah. Yeah. I heard about it in the plantations.

BG: No, he told me...

(Laughter)

BG: ...no, he told me---no, I never carried mattress on my back.

(GG laughs)

BG: We never got together for anything. Anyway, he said, "If you would decide to get married," he says, "let me know, huh?"

Husband: Yeah.

GG: And so you let him know, huh?

BG: Let him know, because....I found out that he was leaving. I talked to my brother about getting married, and he says, "No. I want you to marry a local boy. So you can come back and help me." You know, "Help us at the restaurant." And then, one of the boys who worked under him came and told me, he says, "You know, Gibson's leaving in October." That's when I went over to Mrs. Schmidt. Mr. Schmidt is---I mean, Sergeant Schmidt used to take care of the Army beach and then the bath house, and all that. And so, they started working....(Laughs) the secret service went to work.

(Laughter)

GG: So he couldn't leave, huh?

BG: So, the secret service went to work, and finally another sergeant and his wife were witnesses for us. And we got married in Waipahu.

GG: So, did you have a Service wedding then, or....

BG: No, just a....

GG: Small?

BG: We called it Justice of Peace.

GG: M. And did any of your family attend the wedding, or....

BG: No, no, no. They didn't know I got married...

GG: Oh.

BG: ...until they found my letter. I left a letter behind, in the post office.

(GG laughs)

BG: Um, you call it elopement.

(GG laughs)

Husband: It was something for a haole to marry Japanese, then in those days.

GG: Well, what was the reaction of the people you (To husband) were working with? Did it upset them at all, or....

(BG laughs. He shakes his head no.)

GG: So tell me, now you said you lived in Kawailoa, right, when you were small.

BG: Mhm.

GG: What was it like up there or the house you lived in or....

BG: I don't remember that part, because I was really young when we moved down here.

GG: I see.

BG: So after my mother died---oh! You've heard of the epidemic they had in 1919? My mother was expecting another child, and she caught that epidemic---you know, she caught that, what they call it---the...

Husband: Flu.

BG: They call it, uh....

Husband: Influenza.

BG: Eg-eg---A-G-U-E.

GG: Yeah, I've heard of it. I don't know how to pronounce it, either.

BG: Yeah, yeah. Eg-eg-eg, I guess. Anyway, that's what the doctor called it. I was looking in some papers in the file, and I found my mother's death certificate.

GG: M.

BG: And, this Dr. Yamamoto had that written down. I think it said A-G-U-E. Anyway, it was the flu.

GG: M.

BG: What they call it? They call it the Spain---Spanish flu.

GG: Was that the time of the strike?

BG: Yeah.

GG: Yeah.

BG: During the strike.

GG: Your father wasn't plantation, though.

BG: Yeah, he was working at the plantation store, I think, because during the strike, people were having a hard time getting food because of the strike.

GG: Right.

BG: And my father was helping out those people, and so they remembered him, because he was so helpful to them. I don't know whether he took the food from the store to give them, or whatever, just to help them.

GG: Oh.

BG: Mhm. So I don't know too much about that.

GG: Oh. We had heard that there was another, I believe, Japanese fellow who left the plantation at that time, and grew vegetables and what not to help the people. Evidently he saw that the strike was...

BG: What is his name?

GG: I don't remember the name...

BG: You don't remember the name?

GG: ...right now. I'd have to go back and check.

BG: M.

GG: But, that was his way of helping. That was the Filipino Strike, I think, wasn't it? Or was that the Japanese Strike?

BG: In 1919?

GG: Yeah.

BG: I don't know. I think it was the whole area, I think, plantation strike.

GG: Oh, was your family evicted from the plantation, and your mother...

BG: I think so. They were evicted so we came...

GG: ...was expecting, and ill at the same time?

BG: Yeah, she died. Uh huh. We were still up at Kawaihoa, I think then.

GG: M. And then, was that when you moved down into Haleiwa?

BG: Mhm. Mhm.

GG: And you lived in this same area, right here, or....

BG: Yeah. Uh huh, where Tojo Farm is now.

GG: Yeah.

BG: Have you ever been to Tojo Farm?

GG: I've been by it. I've never been through it, so, uh....

BG: Uh huh. Well, we lived in that area. We were quite small, and I can barely remember anything before then. Just what other older people used to tell me.

GG: Mhm.

BG: We lived in a certain area, and you know, how pleasant my mother was, and all that. 'Course, I never knew my mother, 'cause I was too small.

- GG: Do you remember any of the games that you used to play as children, or did you ever have time to play, or....
- BG: Oh, yeah. Oh, yes, when we were youngsters, we used to play hopscotch, and, I don't know what you call that. You know you cut a stick...
- GG: String? Oh.
- BG: ...about this much, and then, you have another stick about this long, and it's cut diagonally. And then you hit that thing, and then....
- GG: The stick flies?
- BG: Hit it up in th...yeah. And then you measure?
- GG: Oh, yeah.
- BG: With the stick? What do you call that?
- GG: Joshua Lee told us about that.
- BG: Yeah. Uh huh.
- GG: I think he finally talked to some other people and they told him it was called "Peewee," I think is what they called it.
- BG: "Peewee." Oh, yeah, yeah. That was it!
- GG: Yeah. (Laughs )
- BG: "Peewee", and "Bean-bag." We used to collect some of that koa. Koa seed, or Job's Tears seed, and then, make bags out of it, you know, and then we play "Bean-bags."
- GG: What kind of cloth or material did you use?
- BG: Cotton.
- GG: Oh.
- BG: M. Cotton material. Most of the material was from rice bag, I guess, huh.
- GG: Yeah. That's why I wondered.
- BG: Because our underwear was rice bag, anyway.
- GG: Yeah.

(Laughter)

Husband: Aunt Jemima.

BG: Aunt Jemima. Let's see now, what else game was there? Oh!  
You get some of those seeds and then you throw it? And then you  
put your finger and space. As long as you can...no, you didn't  
have to do that. You just hit it. Hit the other bean. I don't  
know what you call it.

GG: Sort of like marbles with beans, or...(Laughs)

BG: With your finger. Fingernail.

GG: Yeah.

BG: And then, if you hit that right, without hitting anything else,  
well, you picked that up and that's yours. And then we used to  
play jacks, huh.

GG: Mhm. What did you use for jacks?

BG: They had jacks.

GG: Oh, they did? Way back then?

BG: Mhm. Jacks and a ball, you know.

GG: Yeah. M.

BG: And, uh...

Husband: Uh, how long have you been in the islands?

GG: In the islands? Altogether, about 12 years. But I lived here  
10 years, was gone 11 years, and now I've been back 2 years.

BG: Oh.

(Laughter)

GG: But, I married local boy here, though, and my children--two of them--  
were born here.

BG: What is your name?

GG: Gouveia.

BG: Gouveia. Oh. Uh huh.

GG: My...

Husband: You don't make the Gouveia sausages?

(BG laughs)

GG: No. Unfortunately, not that branch.

BG: Gouveia.

(Laughter)

BG: Uh huh.

GG: Well, what about as far as Japanese customs? Now, when you were growing up, were there certain Japanese festivals or customs that you practiced at home, or....

BG: Mhm. Every New Year's, we had to eat certain food. They had that blackbean, and then they had that codfish roe roll I think. They call it kazunoko.

GG: Mhm.

BG: We had to eat that. It comes dry, and then you soak it, and then we have to eat that. Boy, crunchy and, ooh, ugly tasting thing, you know.

(GG laughs)

BG: And my uncle says, "You have to eat that." So we just put it in our mouth, and we chew it a little bit, and while he's not watching, we spit it out.

(Laughter)

BG: You learn that from all the Japanese, too, you know. In the morning, you have to take a bath, first. Then you had that ozoni, they call it. It's a broth, that they make out of a certain kind of ingredients. I never did have to make that, so....my aunt used to.

GG: Mhm.

BG: Because we were young then. And they put with mochi, you know.

GG: Did you have to help make it?

BG: No.

GG: Mhm.

BG: That's why I couldn't cook.

(Laughter)

BG: We didn't have to do anything.

GG: Oh. Lucky!

BG: All I had to do was help clean house. That's all, when I was a youngster. And when we were old enough to go to work at the restaurant, all we did was wake up in the morning, go over there, and come back home at night, sleep, and that's it!

GG: Yeah.

BG: In the house.

GG: M. Did you belong to a church as such when you were growing up, or....

BG: Well, we had to follow our parents, eh.

GG: M.

BG: Well....my mother died, and then her ashes was up at Kawaihoa, at the---they call it, um....

GG: We've been up there.

BG: Yusenji.

GG: Yeah.

BG: Yusenji, they call it. And they had services for the dead every so many years. First year, the third year, the seventh year, the thirteenth year. They go by odd numbers, and, we had to go to church.

Husband: I...

BG: Otherwise, we never went to church. (Laughs)

(Husband says something to someone outside)

GG: M. I was wondering---I just wondered if there were any special, oh, religious services, or Japanese customs, bon dances, or did they have those down here, too, at the....

BG: Oh yes. Uh huh. They had bon dance, uh huh. Mhm. They're not very large now. I mean, the members aren't so much now.



GG: Did you participate when you were younger, or....

BG: No. I could never dance that thing!

(GG laughs)

BG: I'm a clod.

(Laughter)

BG: When it comes to dances.

GG: Or through Japanese school, did---at school did they put on pageants, or....

BG: Oh, yeah. Spring Festival. Springtime, we all had to get in groups, and then every grade would have a certain dance they will participate in and, I tell you, I was so darn clumsy, it took me a long time to learn it.

(GG laughs)

BG: Hoo.

GG: And where did they have those programs? At the school itself?

BG: At the Japanese school.

GG: And then, the parents or whatever, came to watch?

BG: Mhm. Mhm. (Chuckles) Then Saturdays, we had the sewing lessons. Japanese kimono making, and Japanese sewing.

GG: Yeah, have you carried...

BG: I've forgotten all that.

GG: (Laughs) Have you carried on any of these traditions with your children, or....

BG: No.

Husband: They don't know. They...

BG: They are Americanized. (Laughs)

Husband: I got one daughter married to a Japanese boy, and she's sending the kids to Japanese school.

BG: Now.

Husband: She had to go to school to learn how to speak Japanese to keep up with them.

GG: (Laughs) So the culture is returning, huh?

Husband: Yeah, this youngest one here, when he was in the Service, he went to Okinawa, and he went to school to learn to speak language, Japanese language.

BG: And he was in the Air Force.

GG: And do you speak any?

Husband: What?

GG: Do you speak Japanese?

Husband: Me, I don't speak nothing, but dirty words.

(Laughter)

GG: Haole, through and through.

(Laughter)

Husband: Yeah, yeah. For three months I couldn't speak nothing, cause I had this stroke.

GG: Oh. Well, you sure seem to be doing fine. How long ago has it been?

Husband: At '71.

GG: No, how long ago did you have it?

Husband: At '71. 1971.

GG: Oh, I see.

BG: Seven months after retirement, he got the stroke...

Husband: That's about five years.

BG: ...retired.

(BG's son and daughter-in-law enter. Interview ends.)

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 1-51-2-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Barbara S. Gibson (BG)

July 13, 1976

Haleiwa, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: This is an interview today with Mrs. Barbara Gibson at her home in Haleiwa and the date is July 13th, 1976. Okay, we were talking last time, some about the restaurant and I wonder if you could describe to me what your work was like in the restaurant. What exactly did you do?

BG: Everything.

(Laughter)

BG: Except cooking.

GG: Well, can you elaborate or go into little more detail?

BG: Well, I usually open the restaurant, and did all the cleaning. You know, janitorial job and got the thing ready. You know, the place ready for business.

GG: Setting tables and....

BG: Well, getting the place cleaned up, you know. Get it all ready.

GG: And then you did the waitress work, too, is that right?

BG: Did cashier work behind the counter.

GG: And cashier?

BG: Waitress. That's about it.

GG: And you did this from---what age were you when you first started?

BG: Let's see. I started helping when I was about twelve years old, I think.

GG: And you worked there until right about the War time, or....

BG: Until I was 23. (Chuckles)

GG: 23. Oh, when you got married. (Laughs)

BG: That's when I went out and got married.

GG: And how did the customers treat you, especially as a very young girl working there? The clientele, of course, you mentioned that they knew you were the boss' daughter. Did you find a difference in the treatment, say, by the local people or the tourists or military people, or....

BG: No. Just about the same. Well, it's the way you treat them that they treat you.

GG: And was this about the only restaurant of any size on this side at that time?

BG: Mhm.

GG: Okay. And could you tell me a little bit more about your husband's job and what he did?

BG: Well, he was with the Crash Corp.....Army Air....(to husband) Army Air Corp? In the Army Air Corp.

GG: And then, did you mention that he went into housing or something after the War? Was he involved with....

BG: Yes. He was with the Navy Civil Service.

GG: Helping to find housing for Navy personnel, or....

(MG=Mr. Gibson)

MG: I was in charge of all of the maintenance.

GG: The maintenance of the housing. I see.

MG: Five thousand houses.

GG: Hoo boy! (Laughs)

MG: That's what I was doing when I retired.

GG: And when did you get into that?

MG: Oh....1950.

GG: So it was after the War, then?

MG: Yeah. Yeah. During the War, I was working at Landing C, running

a service station, the Landing 0 when the War broke out.

GG: Oh, for heaven's sakes. That was a service---or a military service station, or...

MG: No, no, no. I was civilian. I got out of the service nineteen and forty. Before the War.

GG: I see. But you stayed here?

MG: No. I went to the States and then I come back here, and the War broke out December 7, 1941. And I stayed with the Civil Service all the way through until I retired.

GG: What were you doing the morning of December 7th? What do you remember?

BG: Well, we were living in Honolulu. Mokauea Street. And we were awake.

MG: Well, tell her what you were doing.

BG: Well, let's see now. What was I doing?

MG: You don't remember?

BG: Well, he remembers better than I do. (Laughs)

MG: On that morning of the 7th, we were fixing to go around the island. And me and the other guy was arguing who was going to drive. And about that time we were standing out there waiting for the wahines to get ready, then, we saw the planes circling over. And smoke coming out from Pearl Harbor, though. Then we knew it was it, and we didn't go anyplace, therefore.

GG: (Laughs) But since you were a civilian, did you have to report?

MG: No, I reported the next morning. Then stayed in the Navy yard for two days and three nights, hauling dead bodies. All during the War. All during that time.

GG: How did you happen to get that particular duty?

MG: Well, it's military, and the moment a colonel in the Marine Corps walked over and give you a rifle.....and we had to take over all of the--- the guards, they called in with trucks and all for the Chinese cannot stand blood. And they run all Chinamens out of the yard, and then we taken over hauling dead bodies.

GG: That must have been an experience.

MG: Yeah.

GG: (Laughs) Okay. So you--were you Honolulu at the time that your father was interned then. Right? Do you remember much about that or what the family's reaction was, or.....

BG: I don't know. I guess, they must have resented it, too, because, you know, they took the business away from the family, because my father was an alien. And then they took him, you know, concentration camp. I think it was at Sand Island. And they held him there until they were sure that, you know, he had nothing to do with Japanese in Japan, or...

GG: Do you know if he had any support from the community, or did people write letters for him, or do you know anything, as far as how they went about the investigation?

BG: No. I don't really know. I should have asked my father more, you know, but, I wasn't that nosey type, so I rest. (Laughs)

GG: Yeah. Was any of the family able to go and see him at all while he was there?

BG: I don't know. Because I was in Honolulu, and I didn't have transportation to come out, that's why.

GG: And how long was it that he was actually in the concentration camp, or do you remember?

BG: I think it was just several months.

GG: Okay. And you said that you had worked at the post office for a while, too. What was your job at the post office?

BG: Oh, just....what do you call that, now....(Postal Clerk.) But, you know, when you sort out mail---I mean, you put the mail in the boxes and change address....

GG: Did you work behind, then, in the back part, rather than at the front counter, or something like that?

BG: Oh, yes. In the back. Well, we had to do a little bit of counter work, too.

GG: How big was the post office? Not too big, I guess.

BG: No, just in a little courthouse, you know. Waialua Courthouse. Now it's a bigger building.

GG: How many employees did they have at that time?

BG: Five. Including the Postmaster. But I was just a part time worker.

GG: And how long did you work there?

BG: Just nine months.

GG: Nine months. What year?

BG: Let's see. I really can't recall. (Chuckles) Because, it's over ten years, anyway.

GG: Okay. And were your children born in a hospital or at home?

BG: At home. I had a midwife. Spanish midwife. She was really a good midwife.

GG: That was in Honolulu or in Waialua?

BG: Let's see, now. One in Honolulu, and three in Pearl City.

GG: I see.

BG: In the peninsula, you know, where the Navy had already taken over.

GG: And did you have the same midwife for all four of your children?

BG: Oh, yes.

GG: I see. And how did you happen to hear about her, or know of her, or....

BG: We had a landlady in Honolulu who had this midwife, and she praised her highly, so I thought I'd try her out.

GG: Can you tell me a little bit about the procedure? The reason I'm asking, we've heard very little about midwives. And it's interesting that you should say the one you had was Spanish, because the only ones that we've heard about in Waialua so far are Japanese.

BG: Japanese.

GG: And then one person mentioned that there was a Portuguese lady who was a midwife out there, too. So....

BG: I don't know that one. Well, as soon as you're sure that you're going to have your baby, you call her and then she'll come. In about two hours, she's there. Or, you know, earlier than that. As soon as she can, anyway. And she stays with you until the baby's delivered.

GG: And then, what is the procedure at that time? Boiling water, or.... I don't know very much about having a baby at home. (Chuckles)

BG: She comes and she examines you. And then she knows just about how soon you're going to have the baby. And....she helps you. Whenever you have your pains, you know, she's rubbing your back, or doing whatever she can to help you, eh. You feel so relieved and very

confident of her.

GG: Did you have any trouble having any of the babies? Or they were all healthy and normal deliveries and things like that?

BG: Normal. All normal.

GG: Do you know what would happen if, say, it had been a breach birth? Are they trained to take care of that and turn the baby, or....

MG: She was under a doctor's care all the time.

BG: She was with a doctor. I mean in case of any complications, she'd rush you to the hospital.

GG: I see.

BG: Have the doctor take care of you. She even delivered triplets.

GG: Oh, for heaven's sakes!

BG: She rushed them all, you know, to the hospital to have better care. Being triplets, you know. I had every confidence in her.

GG: What year was your first baby born?

BG: '41. October.

GG: Was it still a common practice at that time to have a midwife, rather than go to the hospital, or....

BG: Oh, yes.

GG: 'Cause I know later on, most people had their babies in the hospital.

BG: Well, the last one was born in 1950.

GG: And there was no complication? Did you see a doctor at all during your pregnancy, too, or....

BG: Oh, yes. By the time you're seven months gone, you have to go to the doctor and have a checkup.

GG: And they had no objections about a midwife rather than hospital...

BG: No. Because I went to the doctor that was connected with the midwife.

GG: Anything else that you can remember?

BG: I think a midwife does the job, 'cause she tends to you all the while. And you don't have to be afraid.



GG: What would happen if, say, you and somebody else down the street were having a baby at the same time?

BG: You mean with the same midwife? No, that wouldn't happen.

GG: It doesn't work? (Laughs)

BG: Because she was all the way from Honolulu, and...

GG: You said your last three were born in Pearl City.

BG: Mhm.

GG: So when was it that you actually came back to Waialua?

BG: Well, from there we moved to Makaha. Waianae. For two years, and then we came back here in fifty....three.

GG: '53?

BG: Mhm. So there's a big...

GG: Gap there, yeah. From about '41 to '53 you were gone.

BG: From '40. Uh huh.

GG: Okay. Tell me about when you were younger, and you said you lived up in Kawaiiloa, right? Yeah. Do you remember anything about....did you have to help with household chores at all, or...

BG: Oh, I don't remember anything about Kawaiiloa. Just the older friends used to tell us, you know, that we lived in Kawaiiloa, and.....

GG: Oh, that's right! 'Cause you moved down right here after you'd lived in Kawaiiloa.

BG: I was about three years old when we moved out here. And we lived....

GG: By Tojo Farm? Right, well, when you were growing up there and before you started working in the store, did you have household chores at home that you did?

BG: My aunt took care of us. I did the sweeping, you know. Sweeping the house and tending to the younger children, you know.

GG: Well, could you tell us a little bit about....you know, we assume because we live today that you had vacuum cleaners and all that, but we know you didn't....what was cleaning the house like in those days?

BG: Just sweeping it out. I don't remember mopping the house. We just swept the house, because....only place that really got soiled was in the kitchen. Because the other rooms had the goza. And we couldn't go in there with our slippers or anything.

GG: No.

BG: You know, barefoot.

GG: Did you have furniture at all, or everything was pretty much on the floor, or....

BG: Well, we had to sleep on the floor, on those...

GG: Futons, yes?

BG: Futon, they call it. Tatami and futon. And well, let's see, in the kitchen we had a wood stove. And....my aunt did ironing with one of those charcoal iron.

GG: Did she have an ironing board or she do it on the floor, or....(Laughs then whispers) I can't remember.

BG: She must have had an ironing board of some sort, but I hardly ever watched her, you know, doing it, because we were so busy playing, too. (Laughs)

GG: Yeah. Did you ever iron with one of those charcoal irons?

BG: No. I never had to iron or do anything like that. All I had to do was, maybe, heat the water. And, oh, my uncle had some pigs, and we had to help feed the pigs and clean the pens and help....with the swill cooking. (Especially, we had to chop all of those weeds--those pig grass, we used to call it--to get it ready for the swill cooking.) But my uncle did the heavy work.

GG: Did that take quite a long time, though, to cut the grass and....

BG: No. An hour or so.

GG: And that was a daily chore, or....

BG: Just about. We had one of those grass grinder, you know, that cuts the grass.

GG: Is that like a mower or...

MG: No. A grass choppers.

BG: You know, you just grind, I mean, used to have...

GG: Feed the grass into it?

BG: Feed the grass and then you chop it.

GG: How did you get the grass, though, to put into it?

BG: Well, my uncle used to take us all the way to Mokuleia. You know where the Campbell Ranch used to be? They had those pig grass there, and we had to take a sickle and cut the grass and put it in the bags and bring it home. And then....

GG: Feed it into the grinder.

BG: Mhm.

GG: And then what about as far as eating was concerned? Did you eat in the kitchen, or....

BG: Oh, yes, we had a big table. We had to eat anything that was on the table. And we couldn't talk or swing our legs like the kids do now days? Everything had to be silence.

GG: But you did have play time and that was the time to let out your hostilities and have fun, or whatever.

BG: Oh, we hardly had any hostilities, although I used to be jealous of my cousin. She was a year younger than myself. I guess because I didn't have a mother.

GG: Yeah.

BG: So, I'd fight with her, you know. And I'd get punished.

(Laughter)

GG: What kind of punishment?

BG: Oh, Grandma used to punish us. (Laughs) Oh, she'd, you know.... spank us or something.

GG: Did she spank you with her hand or with a switch, or....

BG: Well, with a switch. (Laughs) And once we were playing. Well, my uncle had some chickens, too. So, we'd go down, you know, where the chickens are and we'd pick some of those eggs and then, my cousin and I, we'd go and get a little skillet and fry some eggs, you know. Play house. The real way.

(GG laughs)

BG: Yeah. We used to have fun that way. And then we'd get caught, you know. And then we'd hear our uncle calling us, come up the hill, you know, and there he is waiting with the broom.

GG: Oh boy.

(Laughter)

GG: Where did you cook the eggs, if you were doing that?

BG: Oh, we used to....

GG: Make a little fire?

BG: Yeah, fire, you know, with stones all around and make a little, something like a barbecue place.

GG: Just out whenever you were playing, or....ever have any fires that way?

BG: No, no. We were very careful. But we had to go and steal some kerosene from my uncle, you know. And my brother, my oldest brother happened to be sick that day, and he caught us.

GG: Oh boy.

BG: So he told our uncle, and...he was waiting with a broom. But, we were pretty fast. We got away.

(Laughter)

GG: And what about when you were going to a school, then, in terms of the discipline in the schools. What kind of punishment if kids misbehaved at school or talked back, or....of course, in those days, I don't think many people talked back period. (Laughs)

BG: The kids were all, you know, they respected their teachers those days. But, if we were to be punished, she'd have a ruler. Ruler? And she'd give you one on the hand. (Laughs) But I never did get any. Then, especially the boys, you know, they'd swear sometimes. They'd ask one of the student to bring soap. She's going to wash the child's mouth out with soap.

GG: Did she ever do it?

BG: Mhm.

GG: I think that's kind of what more kids need more of today.

BG: Oh, she'd make the child bite into the soap, you know. And the soap...

GG: Not let him get any water for a while?

BG: No. Just happened that I took the soap and then one of the boys got punished. So he says, "You wait until after school." Say, "I'm going to give you licking." Oh, well...

GG: What kind of soap did you have in those days? Did you make your own

or did it come from the store, or....

BG: Oh, they had store soap but I remember my uncle made some soap out of, you know, washing soap. Clothes washing, brown soap? I remember he melted some hog fat and used some lye in it. But I don't know what else he put in it. You know, we were so small we didn't pay too much attention. But he made some soap.

GG: Did he make it regularly?

BG: Mhm. Mhm.

GG: And what about shampoo? What did you use in the way of shampoo back then, or....

BG: Well, we used soap. No shampoo.

GG: Did you ever use the shampoo ginger for washing hair?

BG: No.

GG: I thought of a couple of other things along that line. Oh, you mentioned about the washing, now. How was the washing done?

BG: She had a tub and she scrubbed; you know, it's one of those washboards. But then I noticed a Hawaiian woman lived near the fishpond. She.... used to, you know, soak the clothes and then she'd have a stick. Flat stick, you know, and she'd beat on the clothes, and then get it cleaned that way. And wash right by the fishpond there.

GG: And did you hang them up then? Or how did you get them dry, or....

BG: It was hung up.

GG: 'Cause I kind of wondered did they have clothespins then, or....

BG: I think so. But my aunt, she did washing for people. And she went and cleaned house, too, you know. And she really worked hard to help support us.

GG: Did the people bring the laundry to her or did she go and pick it up?

BG: She went and cleaned houses so I think she brought them home, you know, and then washed it and took it back.

GG: Did she keep doing that for a long time, and....maybe get a washing machine to help her out somewhere along the line?

BG: Oh, finally she got a washing machine. And by that time, she was just doing our family wash.

GG: And did you folks have a car at that point?

BG: Oh, yes, my father was so modern, you know. He always made sure he had a car. He had a car for himself, and he had a car for my uncle. You know, transportation. Let's see now. It's a Model A, I think. We always had transportation.

GG: Do you remember how early it was when he had his first car?

BG: I think in the early....goodness, I was about six years old when I remembered he had a car.

GG: So in the early '20s?

BG: Early '30s. I was born in 1917. From the early '30s.

GG: Okay. What about communication with other people? You know, did your aunt or your father or anybody write to people in the old country in Japan?

BG: I know my aunt wrote....

GG: Did they send money back to relatives in Japan?

BG: I don't think so. Because I don't think they ever had enough money to send back over there. (Laughs) If they did, I don't know about it.

GG: What about communication with people around here? Did you mostly visit with family or did you have friends at...

BG: We had a telephone.

GG: Oh, you had a telephone, too.

BG: Oh, yes. My father was...

GG: Your father was very modern, huh?

BG: Oh, yes. He had a crank telephone, you know, in the house. And.... let's see, what else modern did he have? Oh! He had one of those Victrola. You know, the one that has the....

GG: The big horn....

BG: With the dog. RCA, wasn't it?

GG: Yeah, I think. Or Victor.

BG: Victor? Oh, Victor. That's right. And we had one of those music machine, you know, that has those needles....

GG: Oh, the roll panel, like?

BG: Mhm. So that really helped me in school, too. Because, once the teacher asked how music was....what you would say....how this music machine works. So...

GG: And you knew?

BG: I knew. So I tell them.

GG: (Chuckles) "A" for the day, huh?

(BG chuckles)

GG: How did your father---was it just naturally his personality, or he liked inventions and having lot of things, or....

BG: I guess he liked to be one of the first to own anything. And we even had one of those tanks, you know. With a pump. So we'd have water all the time. We had a little well back there. And then a pump that would make the water go up in the tank. So we had water. Into the house.

GG: Was it only cold water, or you had...

BG: Yes, just cold water.

GG: And then you had to heat it on the stove if you wanted hot water.

BG: Uh huh.

GG: What about your bathroom facilities? Were they inside or outside?

BG: No, we had a separate outside bath house with the furo.

GG: And did one of your brothers have to keep that stoked?

BG: Oh, yes, the kids all had to take turns.

GG: What about toilet facilities? Did you have indoor plumbing or was it outside...

BG: No, it was outdoor. It was about fifty....about fifty yards away from the house. That was separate from the bath house.

GG: What about during the Depression? You must have been, I guess, about 14, teenager when it was Depression time? Actually it hit here in '31, I think it was. Did your father feel any effects or did you feel any effects of the Depression?

BG: I never did.

GG: ...any harm to his business? People still were able to eat out? Did he did have the restaurant at that point? That was in '31.

BG: He did. Well, I guess it was little slow, but we depended mainly on the Army. The Army had those....they call that....(To husband) what do they call it? Canteen....you know they call it the show tickets? Those little tickets?

MG: Oh. Canteen tickets.

BG: Canteen tickets. And the soldiers, you know---we had the Army beach right out there. So, we really depended on the soldiers to give us business.

GG: Was this later, though, toward War time, or back in the '30s they had quite a military...

BG: Yes.

GG: Oh. I didn't realize that. All along.

BG: The Army beach was right here. And so....it didn't bother us too much.

GG: Okay. What about mechanization on the plantation? You know, more machinery was brought in and things like this. What about in the restaurant, too? Did your father improve or update, I don't know, equipment in the restaurant as he went along?

BG: Well....he always had a crude oil stove. You know, one of those big ones. I think he kept up with, you know, whatever needed to be kept up...

GG: What about refrigeration? Like, now, to preserve or, you know, keep the food that he had? Did he have icebox to begin with?

BG: Oh, yes. Quite big. And he kept all the food in there where it wouldn't spoil. The inspectors used to come those days, too. Board of Health inspectors. So he.....

GG: Had to keep things up?

BG: Oh, yes.

GG: Tip-top shape. Do you have any idea when he got his first refrigerator, rather than the icebox?

BG: I really don't know. (Laughs)

GG: And can you go into a little bit more about....they just took the business away from him, period. Because he was an alien. Then, did that mean... it just seems awfully terrible to me that they would do that. And then after the War, was he able to recoup anything, or....

BG: Well, my brother, after the War, my second brother was able to get that building back, you know, to start himself a little restaurant.



GG: Well, the military took it over, partly because he was an alien, but was it also because of martial law that they just....

BG: Yeah.

GG: ....you know, sort of came in and took over everything.

BG: Martial law and being alien. And they made a PX out of it. The Army had...

GG: But, now your father had owned---did he own the land and the building?

BG: The land was Bishop Estate.

GG: But he owned the building, right? And then, now after the War, your second brother, you said, got it back. Did they do anything to mess up the title of the building, or whatever? I mean, did he just get it back lock, stock, and barrel, at that point?

BG: Well....the Army had improved it, you know. Because they had this PX over there. So, after they left the place, well, my brother got hold of it, and then, he improved it himself. And my father helped.

GG: But in terms of, say, capital, or money to get restarted again, he just---your father had absolutely no income during this period?

BG: No, no.

GG: There weren't any government loans to reestablish or anything of that sort?

BG: No. No. He never got any payment for anything that they took over. And my brother had to make a loan from his brother-in-law, I think. Help him get started.

GG: And there was no recourse for any of the aliens, then, in terms of, you know....

BG: I don't think so. Not until Dan Inouye had some discussions about it.

GG: I can't recall if I asked you last time, were you involved or was your father ever involved in, I think it's called tanomoshi. That was, like, before they had banks, when...

BG: I don't know much about my father in tanomoshi, but I know my uncle. ...he join that tanomoshi. I mean, they still have it now days.

GG: Oh, they do?

BG: Oh, yes. You know the businesses? All the employees, they get

together and they put in so much, you know. Maybe ten dollars or something like that, and then, they amass a certain amount, and then each one can borrow from it.

MG: They bid on it.

BG: Or bid on it, or something, anyway.

GG: Yeah. Is that sort of equivalent, then, to what, I guess, it's the Chinese people call it...

BG: Credit union?

GG: Well, that, or, like, Chinese call it hui? I think they form a hui and then they can borrow or if they decide they want to buy property or something.

MG: Yeah, yeah.

BG: Something like that.

GG: Okay. What about, now, after the War? Of course unionization had already been established on the plantation by the time you moved back here. But, when you came back, what were some of the changes that you saw in the community that you had left 13 years before?

BG: Well, I noticed that the Army beach wasn't there anymore. They had shifted over to....Haleiwa Beach Road. Before they shifted over to Haleiwa Beach Road, they built another building right back of this Surf and Sea. And the Army had built this breakwater, and that just ruined the whole beach. You know, it got polluted. Because the water couldn't go out the way it's supposed to. Finally, the Army moved over to where the Waialua Beach houses are. Beach club, by....that condominium.

GG: What other changes? Did you notice any particular change in the population, as far as people that were still here or people that had left, or....

BG: Not too much changes then. (To husband) Did you notice any changes?

MG: Well, we come out here often enough. We didn't see anything.

(Laughter)

GG: You didn't see any, or there weren't too many?

BG: Not many.

GG: And all the little stores and things that are along the road on the way out here, they were there when you left, and they were still here when you came back, and they're still here today. So....

MG: Yeah.

BG: Yes. That's right.

GG: And have they changed hands an awful lot, or do you know?

BG: Well, this Lantaka Store was Abe.

MG: But that was....

BG: Then, Sekiguchi. Then, Yoshida. And then Lantaka. So, quite a few....changes.

MG: Well, tell about your old man when he's the first Japanese to get his citizenship.

BG: Oh, yes. I think that was right after the War. You know...

MG: That came out in Washington, came out over the radio.

BG: When Mr. Poston--P-O-S-T-O-N--was the main man, you know, give out the citizenship.

GG: And your father was the first one to be naturalized, then.

BG: Mhm. I mean, first Japanese.

GG: After the War? Did he have to study hard for that?

BG: I guess he did. (Chuckles) He wanted to make sure he passed.

MG: He was teaching all these other Japanese, American, so they could get citizenship, too.

BG: Oh, he helped a lot of them, you know.

GG: Well, he was involved---didn't they have what they call the Victory Unit or Victory Organization out here. I think....was he involved in that, or are you?

BG: I really don't know. I guess other people would know.

GG: Yeah. I think we got a list from the plantation. Because, of course, Mr. Midkiff really went to bat for the Japanese people that worked for the plantation.

BG: Oh, yes. Mr. Midkiff really did help.

GG: And they had lists of various people that had contributed or bought War bonds and were active in the Victory Unit, and I think your father's name was on all three lists, so he was evidently quite active in the community.

GG: You said you learned about politics from him, too. How did he get involved or interested in politics, or....

BG: Well, being a restaurant owner, you know, the politicians would come around and stop and, you know, ask him to help them. Whatever he could.

GG: Help to meet the people in the community, and things like that?

BG: Yes, and he really went to bat for the politicians that he liked.

GG: And this was---I guess, at that point, primarily Republican area, right? I think the whole island was.

MG: He was a Democrat.

BG: No, he went both. He was a Democrat, but he helped the Republicans, too, wherever he thought they were doing right. And now, this was way before the War.

(Laughter)

GG: It's too bad some of them didn't help him more when the War came.

BG: Well, I guess they couldn't do much, you know. All they could do was wait.

GG: What do you recall about the Red Scare? I guess it was during the very late '40s and the early '50s when Jack Hall, who was involved in the union, and some of the others were, I think, accused of being Communists--did that have any effect on this community, or do you recall anything about it?

BG: I don't know, because, at that time, we were in Pearl City. And....

GG: I guess it was pretty much over by the time you came back.

BG: Let's see, now. Jack Hall's wife was the sister of Curly Bletso. This man by the name of Mr. Bletso used to work with---(To husband) didn't he work with you?

MG: Yeah.

BG: His wife's sister was Jack Hall's wife. She's a Japanese woman, and I think she worked for the Public Health.

MG: She did, but she got fired.

BG: Oh, because that.....position.

GG: Did you notice that perhaps unionization---of course it was in '46 and again it was '53 when you came back. But did it seem to make

any noticeable change for the people in the community here in terms of better economic opportunity to be able to---purchasing power and things like that?

BG: I notice the plantation, the workers, they benefited by it. And then, they still lost out in a way, huh. 'Cause they had to start buying their own homes. They didn't build anymore free houses. And free water. Some of them still lived in those old houses, you know that the plantation...

GG: The camps?

BG: Well, later, they charged a little bit of rent.

GG: When you were either going to school, or through your work in the restaurant, did you know many of the plantation people, other than, perhaps the supervisory level, did you know many of the workers? Or go to school with the workers' children, or....

BG: Mhm. My uncle worked for the plantation. He was a truck driver. He got a little better pay, I guess. And my aunt--this is another aunt and uncle. Not the one who took care of us. The one who took care of us was a fisherman. And he got lost at sea. The year I left home to get married. Early part of the year. But my aunt and my uncle worked in the plantation.

GG: Did he fish from a boat or did he fish from the shore?

BG: Oh, he had a boat. He had a sampan. But one night, you know, when he was going out, his boat hit the....what do you call that?

MG: The trestle. Railroad tracks that used to go across the river.

BG: And he must have damaged his boat. Must have sprung a leak, because he never did come back. And they found the boat on the water about a month later. They never could find his body.

GG: What about around statehood time? What kind of effects did statehood bring to this area, or bring to you and your family?

BG: Oh, at that time, Marian Harada had the restaurant. You know, it's Haleiwa Sands, now. And I happened to be helping her bake pies, because her regular pie lady was gone to the Mainland. And I remember that day. And then the senior citizens from Honolulu came out. They used to come out quite often. And they'd have luncheon. Just happened that it was just about noon when they arrived and they got news that we were granted statehood. And you know, they didn't eat. They went right back to Honolulu. For the celebration.

GG: (Laughs) So all your pies didn't get eaten that day?

BG: Oh, well, I just made, a few for the desserts, that's all. I wasn't really a regular worker. I just...

END OF INTERVIEW

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA**

**May 1977**