

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: GARY KUNIHIRO, farmer

Gary Kunihiro, Japanese, was born in Haleiwa on July 3, 1917. His parents came from Hiroshima in 1910 and worked on Ewa Plantation. His father later worked at Waialua Plantation. He left the plantation, worked at fixing teeth for awhile, then wood-cutting, and eventually rice farming.

Gary finished nine years of school and at age 14 went to work for Hawaiian Pine as a field laborer. He also worked part-time as the bookkeeper of a boarding house and store. He left the pineapple company in 1941 and learned the carpentry trade. He worked in the construction industry with a partner until 1949 and then went into farming. Gary still operates a farm in Waialua.

He married a woman he met in Wahiawa. They currently live in Haleiwa.

Tape No. 1-32-1-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Gary Kunihiro (GK)

July 1, 1976

Haleiwa, Hawaii

BY: Perry Nakayama (PN)

PN: This is an interview with Mr. Gary Kunihiro on July 1st, 1976 at his farm in Haleiwa. Mr. Kunihiro, could you tell me about your parents, how they came here and what they did?

GK: My parents came from Japan. From Hiroshima-ken in 1910 I think. I am the third in the family. Have elder brother and elder sister above me. Consists of six girls and three boys.

PN: And where did they work at first?

GK: My father, when he first came from Japan, he had a labor contract with Ewa Plantation. Then, the work involve was so hard that he left there and came to Waialua Plantation. And there he worked couple of years and after that he went out. Work in the farm.

PN: He went into what? Farming?

GK: He went into....dentist. Not dentist, by trying to fix people's teeth, and he had some kind of problem with the patient gotten swollen after the teeth was pulled and this party say he going to sue, this and that. Finally, he figured he might as well get out. So he go out. And then he went into wood cutting and all kind. Then he went into farming. That was in nineteen....oh, about twenty-five. About there. Then he grew rice. That was regular rice, huh. Then mochi rice and all kind. Then he went to farm, yeah. Vegetable farm.

PN: How did he get the land? Did he buy it or lease it?

GK: No, all leased. From some estate, huh. Hawaiian Estate.

PN: Oh, how did he decide what kind of crops to grow?

GK: Well, just that the wholesaler would come to this area. Yamaki Produce. Then he would suggest what to plant and what not. And those days, was really cheap. Everything was so cheap.

PN: They would determine the price also?

GK: Yeah, they would determine the price.

PN: And how did he buy equipment and....

GK: Well, those days, they used to have buffalo. You know, water buffalo. They used to plow with water buffalo.

PN: And you used to help him do that?

GK: No, later on, when he had garden, I used to help him water the garden with the long, about four feet, carrier. With two side on it with the rope hanging with the two five-gallon pail with a lot of holes. Just hole type, you know. Manual type of irrigation.

PN: Did he have any previous experience in farming?

GK: I doubt it.

(Laughter)

PN: He just went in with your mother?

GK: Husband-wife, you know.

PN: What were some of the chores you had when you were young?

GK: Chores. I got to help my parents water the garden and then, when he had rice field, we used to chase the birds with that....a string. Long string attached to a certain pole. And from there you pull. Lot of cans hanging. You have to pull that to make that thing rattle and the birds would run away. And that was one of the chores we had to do so that the birds.....when the rice is just forming, then the rice bird would come and suck all that....

PN: The young shoots?

GK: The milk of the rice.

PN: What games or sports did you play while you're young?

GK: Mmmm. Well, see, way back, we used to....see sumo. Japanese sumo. Was at Haleiwa where right now the boat harbor is located. Right in there. They used to have sumo. And then they used to give prizes. And that was one of the sport that we used to watch, eh. Then, when we were small, we used to go fishing sometimes, you know.

PN: Where?

GK: Oh, by Fresh Air Camp, then by, you know, they call 'em ryoba. That's where the old boat harbor is located. By the big stone right on the river mouth. And there we used to (catch) holehole and papios and manini.

PN: With bamboo pole?

GK: Bamboo pole, yeah. And those days, we used to walk to school, you know. From here to Waialua Elementary School. And then later on when I was going junior high, we used to walk too. At times.

PN: And what was school like?

GK: School?

(Laughter)

PN: Yeah. Could you describe it?

GK: Oh, it was just, you know....go to learn.

PN: What? Do you remember anything about the teachers or courses there?

GK: One of 'em, let's see. Oh, way back....see, we used to have some rascal kids.

PN: Were they strict or anything like that? The teachers?

GK: Not that strict.

PN: Did you folks raise pigs? You know, animals. Besides, you know, vegetables?

GK: You mean during what period?

PN: When your father first got into farming?

GK: Yeah. Way back, my father had some pigs. And at that time, he had some big sows, mother pigs. And one year, they had one disease called cholera and the pigs all got sick. And it would lie down. Cannot get up, and finally they would die. That's the one of the hog cholera that comes in the paper, you know.

PN: Yeah, yeah. This is long time ago?

GK: Long time ago.

PN: Any other things such as that happen on the farm? Disease or floods, or....

GK: Well, we have big rain, but mostly had trouble with the melon fly. Melon fly is when you raise cucumbers like that.

PN: What about when it flooded. Did it ruin the crops?

GK: Well, those days the flooding wasn't that bad compared to, you know, ever since plantation used to have railroad tracks to haul in sugar cane. When they do away with that railroad track....they was, you know, rail track was mounded high, eh. And somehow, the water wasn't coming over the Kam Highway. But since they do away with that railroad

track and they make all this roads, like the paved road where the big trucks get on. The tournatwo trucks. So we have more problem through that conversion of the plantation hauling of the sugar cane because all the water would run down to the water and just come down. All getting flooded.

PN: This happened often?

GK: Well, sometimes twice a year.

PN: Ruin all the crops then?

GK: I think it did. Really.

PN: Shee. You guys ever tried talking to the plantation and....

GK: No sense, you know. Because I don't think they would solve anything.

PN: But this happened when they change from railroads to tournahaulers?

GK: Yeah, that's what I notice. And right here they claim as a flood plain, anyway, but still they go into housing over here, you know.

PN: Oh, they planning some housing over here?

GK: Yeah. Right inside of here.

PN: Who's planning to develop here?

GK: Castle and Cooke. Mililani Development.

PN: So you guys leasing from Castle and Cooke?

GK: Some of them leasing Castle and some is from the Morrow Estate.

PN: Where did you live when you were a small kid?

GK: Well, my father build this home. Way back.

PN: Their farm used to be all around here?

GK: Used to be in the back too and this one here was sugar cane, but eventually, they gave up because this particular land wasn't producing good sugar, so they gave up this place. Then Mr. Araki leased the land after cane was abandon.

PN: Nine children lived here?

GK: Yeah. Nine. They all moved out. Right now, my brother and mother

is living here. I moved out, but, you know, I just come over here and I go back to my home.

PN: What did the other children do? Did they help out on the farm, too?

GK: Yeah.

PN: Do you remember when they brought in electricity to this area?

GK: Shee, I wouldn't know. Let's see....

(Laughter)

GK: 'Cause I know way back we used to have lantern, you know. Kerosene lantern. Then gradually, even the water, too. We used to take the water from.....they used to have a pump and they used to have the water run all the time because, well those day, they had some kind of agreement with the farmers that they had to supply the water. So, they had the water running all the time. Eventually they closed that. Then, the water was connected to the water main for the main highway. And we had it connected.

PN: So, that's how you guys used to get your water from.....at first was the pump from the plantation?

GK: Yeah.

PN: Do you know when they cut that off?

GK: Mmmm. Well, after we had our water, we put a line in. Then later on, because this pump was supplying only small area, so they did away with the pump. The water was about 1926 or 1928, I think, you know, with the labor.

PN: '26 to '28?

GK: I think about there. They put their own line from the main....they bought our own line, because at that time, the water company didn't supply pipes. We have to pay our own pipe.

PN: And electricity came before that, or after that?

GK: Electricity? Chee, I can't remember.

PN: Oh, that's okay.

GK: It was way back anyway.

PN: How did you folks cook food? On what kind of stove? Kerosene stove, too?

GK: You mean way back?

PN: Yeah, way back. (Laughs)

GK: You know those days, eh. (Laughs) Used to cook with stick, small kind.

PN: Just cut wood and make fire?

GK: Yeah. Make fire.

PN: Your mother used to cook everything for all you folks? What kind food did you folks eat?

GK: Food? Well, those day had vegetable. Had meat and pork, too, but then, it wasn't that plentiful, but because of the hard time, you cannot buy often.

PN: Just what you folks raised as vegetables?

GK: Raise plus, then we used to buy sometime meat and all kind.

PN: Japanese style?

GK: Japanese style, yeah, mostly. Ume, chiyosake, you know, salt salmon.... then, they used those turtle fish. That was way back. That was fishermans. They used to sell fish.

PN: They used to come...

GK: And those days, everything was cheap in the way back, you know. Not like now. Now is so expensive, eh. And those days we used to have stores like Miyake Store and Sakai Store like that. You can charge and you can pay him so much money a month.

PN: Charge....

GK: Charge account, yeah.

PN: Oh, they just keep their own books like that?

GK: Yeah. Those days was really hard times. It wasn't an easy life. 'Cause even the parents, too, they struggle. Because whatever income they have is not enough to support the family. See, I used to work 1932. I left school. Graduate junior high school. At age 15, I went to work for Hawaiian Pineapple Company. Those days was really hard time. People that have from Haiku, Maui. Pineapple company. They moved to Waimea Camp. I used to take care the books, too. Those days all us get hard time. Every month, they would fall back. And during the summer, they would catch up whatever credit that they owe the store.

PN: What did you do with the pineapple....

GK: I used to work as a field laborer and I used to take care one of the boarding house books. I used to make the report, eh.

PN: How did you get the job like that? Just apply?

GK: The job? Oh, that was part time job. So I work at the pineapple field for only ten hours and, you know, those day, used to be ten hours a day. Ten hours a day and \$1.65 a day.

PN: Phew! (Chuckles)

GK: Then after that I help the boarding house. Wash the dishes, then they had a store, too. They used to run a boarding house plus store. They used to sell rice, food stuff, sake and all kind. And the sake, you see, became a sellout. (Chuckles) And I used to make a report. You know, later part, I make everything for the owner.

PN: So how long did you work for the pineapple company?

GK: I work there, what? Seven years, nine months. 1941, January, I left. I left Hawaiian Pine and I went in town to learn a trade.

PN: And then you went into what? Carpentry?

GK: Carpentry. Then 1941, I was in town for about six month, then, I came back, and then I work construction until 1949. I went in with one of my friend in partnership construction. Then, 1949, eh, say he's going on his own. So 1949, I went farming.

PN: You know the time you got that job with the pineapple company, that was during the Depression, eh?

GK: Yeah. Just 1932. So was 1930, 1931, yeah, the Depression's about, yeah.

PN: Do you remember anything about the Depression?

GK: The Depression? (Laughs) See, actually, when I came out from school, when I started to work Hawaiian Pineapple Company, at that time, Hawaiian Pine, you know, they were out of business. Just start off new again. So they started a Citizen Camp. You know, American citizen. Not, you know, all Filipinos. So, all those young graduates-- some is high school graduate. In fact, had three university graduates who working over there. Temporary until they find other opening. By that time, the three of them was working over there.

PN: What did they do there? Everybody else?

GK: Same kind job. Picking pineapple. Some guys, they go loading like that. Fertilizer. Planting all manual labor those days. No machines.

PN: What did you do with the money you earned? You turned it over to your parents?

GK: Yeah, most of the money went to my parents.

PN: Did the Depression affect their farming?

GK: See, the farming at that time, my mother, my father and my brother used to farm. I went out to work. When they told me to come back to the farm, I said, "No. I'm going to stay over there." Because I don't want to see everybody in one type of business. And if things get bad, source of income will not come in. Cannot get source of other income. So I stayed over there, tried to help my parents. At least I get some income coming in. Because farming ups and downs, too.

PN: You don't remember if the Depression hit them hard? During that time?

GK: Well, I know my parents were struggling.

PN: How come you didn't go to work on the sugar plantation?

GK: I didn't care.

PN: (Laughs) You didn't like that? Oh, you heard something....

GK: No, no, no, no.

PN: How did you get into, like, carpentry? With your friend you said.

GK: No. When I went in town, 1941.....I went in town then I told my friend I'm going to learn some kind of trade anyway, so, went around looking for a job there. Knock here and there, then, I work week and a half for Okada Trucking and then in the meantime I went to Island Home where they build homes and sell. I went to see this man, Mr. Kikukawa. He was the foreman that runs the job. So I told him where I'm from and where I'm living. And then he hired me. That was in January....it was February, about, that job. Then until June or July.. ..I think it was July, I think. My brother came in town. He say he wanted to learn trade, so at that time my father was sick. He had cancer so I told my brother, "If you're going to stay in town, I'm going back to the country." So I came back and stay with my parents.

PN: And all that time you working for that Island Homes, you used to commute from here to town?

GK: No, no, no.

PN: Oh, you lived in town?

GK: Lived in town.

PN: Oh.

GK: Was living Kakaako.

PN: Oh, I see. Do you remember how much you got paid at carpenter place?

GK: Was two dollars a day, yeah.

PN: Two dollars a day? And you went apprenticeship school?

GK: No. There's no apprentice school. They just learn by what they teach you.

PN: Oh, I see. You what? You build homes and stuff like that?

GK: Yeah.

PN: This was what? During the War? '40....'41 you started?

GK: '41, yeah. '41, December 7, war started. But before that, I was working at Pearl Harbor and then after that job, went to Aiea Hospital. And then from there, we were transferred to Schofield. Work in a hospital addition. At that time, the War broke out. December 7, 1941.

PN: What were you doing when the War broke out?

GK: That day was Sunday, eh? See, I was cutting koa for beam pole. And then they say, "Oh, the War broke out." I couldn't believe it and when I came home on the news said Japan attack Hawaii at Pearl Harbor and Schofield. Then Monday I went to work at Schofield. Was before that, you have to get a badge to go in Schofield. And our badge was dark color instead of white. To distinguish that we Japanese, you know.

PN: What? Everybody had what? White badge?

GK: Yeah. I mean, different nationality had white color, you know, our pictures.

PN: You remember anything else about the War time?

GK: Well, the War....let's see....then that afternoon, see, one of my friends, I took him by Wheeler Field. I drop him there, then after work, I told him I'm going to pick him up, so when I went after I got through work, Schofield, then I went to Wheeler Field, then where I dropped him off, I went there. The guard came and...(Laughs)..."What're you doing over here?" He take the gun out and then I say, "I'm waiting for my friend. Went to work this morning, but he's not through yet." So I wait about half an hour, about 5:30, he didn't come so I went home. And they work overtime that day, so they didn't come in on

their scheduled time. After that, I didn't pick up that man. They went on his own 'cause he had different schedule.

PN: The guard let you go on...

GK: Yeah. But during the War, we didn't have too much hassle with the military.

PN: Even though you're Japanese?

GK: No. Because we work as construction worker, you know.

PN: Oh, every morning you have to go and check in?

GK: No, no. We just show the badge and we can go in. Was August....was it August 5th? The War ended. 1945. So as soon as the siren blew, my friend and I, we started go into our own business. Construction business. Contract business. So as soon as the whistle blew, from the next day, we didn't go to work. We went on our own project. Then he and I stick till 1949. Then, 1949, went into farming.

PN: Why did you change from carpentry to farming?

GK: Because contracting's a rough game. It is, yeah, because to begin with, if you go on your own, you have to estimate and you have to stay up late and do all kind other small little detail things. So I figure, well, that's not in my line.

PN: Only two of you running the whole company?

GK: No, had the other workers, too. But then because he wanted to run, you know, operate his families, the brother, the other brother, the sister, take care the books and all that. So what he wanted was the close family in operation.

PN: Oh, I see. Do you remember the blackouts and rationing?

GK: Yeah. Those days was blackout. Curfew was after 8 o'clock, you cannot go out. Then even traveling, you have to make what was it one inch and about four inch? Something like that, yeah. For your headlight, eh. So you won't glare the whole road when you travel.

PN: What did you do during blackouts, like that?

GK: Blackout? Most of the time we stay home.

(Laughter)

PN: Stay home? Did the rationing affect you at all?

GK: No, it didn't affect.

PN: Wasn't that bad?

GK: No. The only thing, the ration of the liquor. People were lining up to buy liquor, 'cause liquor was hard to get, those good liquors. Yeah. They had some Hawaiian distillers, eh. They use to make Five Island Chain and some other stuff, you know.

PN: Boot-leg kind?

GK: No, no. Regular kind. Commercial.

PN: You were, I guess, draftable age, you know.

GK: No, I couldn't be drafted.

PN: You couldn't be drafted? Why not?

GK: Because of my health. (Laughs)

PN: Your health? I see. What was your reactions to the formation of unions during mid forty, '45, about there.

GK: The union. When I was working Hawaiian Construction, U.S. Engineers, they had carpenter's union. Then everybody join the union. Pay union dues, and those days was cheap. I forgot how much was it.

PN: What about the ILWU sugar plantation union?

GK: Shee. I don't know when they started, you know.

PN: You had no....

GK: No, I had no contact or....

PN: Do you remember the '46 strike, like that?

GK: Yeah. The '46 strike they went out for....what it was? Six months? Well, those days they used to ask us, "If you guys want help." So, they came to help. And whatever vegetable that I had that I couldn't put in the market, some of those edible vegetable, I gave them by boxes, eh.

PN: You had many friends on the plantation?

GK: My few good friends. And they were one of the union leaders anyway.

PN: Oh, I see. Who was that?

GK: Harold Shin. Koyamatsu, Yasao Koyamatsu.

PN: Yeah, I talked to Harold, too. He's participating in this project also. What about the '49 shipping strike? Did that affect your farming business?

GK: No.

PN: No effect at all?

GK: But after the strike, I know everytime after a strike (Chuckles) merchandise go up, eh. Cost of material.

PN: Oh. Most of your vegetables you sell to where?

GK: Honolulu Market. Through the wholesaler.

PN: So, how did you get your present farm? Just from your parents?

GK: Yeah, my parents had the lease. Then, later on, I negotiate myself and pick up the lease from the plantation.

PN: You know, I guess you grow different crops from your parents, like that.

GK: Yeah.

PN: Those days. How did you decide what kind of crops you wanted to grow?

GK: Well, usually you try all kind anyway. From lima beans to string beans, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, you name it.

PN: You go by season or prices?

GK: Yeah, most of the....some, I grow certain months. Certain ones get good price, then I would plant them. Maybe beans consistently or bitter melon, or segua. Then this year, bell pepper, I didn't plant for about five, six years. But I planted this year. And I have my steady crop. Bitter melon, segua, then I have lotus root, hasu. That's seasonal, too, you know, from about later part of July--no, not July, but August to December. Then when I'm out of the production I'll harvest it.

PN: So you take your own crops into town and stuff like that? On your truck with...

GK: Yeah, my truck goes into town every other day. I have a part time driver. Then, if he cannot make it, then I would drive. Like today I have to go in town. He work part time for big termite company. Watchman.

PN: Could you try and compare like your farming today to your parents' farming?

GK: My father's days used to be mostly manual labor. But now, we go with mostly mechanization. We have our own plow, rotorvater. Then I would spray with power spray. Then we have drip irrigation. Those days we used to have a pond, several ponds in the field. The pond is about four feet deep. From there, you have a board right across so that you can go in the water and dip the can inside, carry 'em, two cans. And all the beds you know, three feet by maybe 15 feet or twenty feet,

anyway, we used to carry 'em right through. Back and forth, yeah.  
Irrigate.

PN: To water the field?

GK: We either go furrow irrigation or drip system. Right now, my field drip irrigation.

PN: That's with the plastic pipe with the pukas inside.

GK: Mhm.

PN: And before, what? Your father used to plow with buffalo, you said?

GK: Buffalo, yeah.

PN: Water buffalo? Now days what you use? Tractor?

GK: Tractor. And then, today, to go into farming is not that easy, because of that, you know, capital that you need. The tractor alone cost about eight to about ten thousand. And plus...

(GK's brother drops by. Greeting are exchanged. PN explains Waialua project to GK's brother.)

PN: Do you remember, I guess, the good years and bad years of farming?

GK: Good and bad. (Laughs) Well, the good years, everything you plant, everything grow, grow on. Anything you grow, you get good production, good quality, and when bad years, you can really grow things, but it doesn't come out right and you don't have the production, so you get a set back. And today to farm, get lot of insect, too, you know. More insect to contend with. And Hawaii weather is ideal for insect, because the climate is about the same all year around.

PN: Yeah, so, what do you use? Insecticide?

GK: Insecticide, yeah.

PN: Another question I'd like to ask you is could you compare your life now with life like at thirty, forty years ago? In terms of material wealth, happiness, freedom, relationship with other people?

GK: Thirty, forty years ago....see, those days you don't have pressure like today.

PN: What do you mean by that?

GK: Well, today, you would acquire more things, but everything is so costly, today, eh. Those days, you would make about \$26 or thirty dollars, or you would make about thirty something dollars a month. But still, somehow, you can get by. And then, you know, you don't buy lot of things, but today you buy homes and you buy this, you buy that,

so you would make more money, but you spend more money.

PN: Could you say which is better?

(Laughter)

GK: Well, today is better, but from now it's going to be harder, I think, because of the economic situation, too. 'Cause job is not that plentiful. And everything's so high, today. What do you think in your case? You think you can....you still going school, eh?

PN: Yeah.

GK: Okay, now after you graduate, can you find a decent job where you can make enough so that you can get by with your family or make a living?

PN: No, not really. (Laughs)

GK: Anyway, I know it's hard because what I'm going through today, what amount I have to support my family, it's not an easy thing. Right now, getting thousand dollars a month. Not enough pay. See, because the note you have to pay, you know. Electricity, your water, gasoline, and the food is expensive, too, now. In fact, I get some guys that comes to the farm. Like Steven Doi and what the other one now? I say it's not easy. They still single, yet, eh. (Laughs)

PN: You said you know how to massage. Could you tell me something about massage?

GK: Massage? (Laughs) You see, my type massage is I would take care people like sore back or, you know, bursitis, you know, the arm cannot go up, stiff neck, and people, you know, tired. All those things can be massage so that people get relief.

PN: How you got into massage?

GK: Way back, Nikko Sanitorium operated by Okazaki. And he used to be a judo teacher and he used to train all those policemen.

PN: He has it around here?

GK: No, no. In town. You know where the Car Barn is located? It's right close by there. Someplace close to Straub Clinic. About half a block toward what's that street? Toward Palama side. Half a block away had the Nikko Sanitorium. He still operating the massage....the son operating the massage studio now. The man would teach, what do you call, Itetsuryohō. You take a deep breath and then he used to press like that, you know.

PN: What you call that?

GK: Itetsuryohō they call that. You take a deep breath and you build up your stamina through the lower part of your belly button. That's where

the strength come in. Well, I learned that, you know. And you paid what? A \$15 fee. Then after that, I used to give 'em massage, and say, "How you massage?" And I used to just massage people just for kicks. And in 1959, I took license. Took exam and got a massage license.

PN: You registered with the state or something to get license?

GK: Yeah. Yeah. To get license masseur, you have to take exam. You have to take written test and after that, practical exam. I was on the board for about almost three years. My wife got hurt, so I resigned.

PN: Does your mother still practice any Japanese old customs?

GK: Old custom. Such as what? Speaking Japanese?

PN: Speaking Japanese. I don't know....(Laughs) I don't know the examples of....

GK: Right now, I think, she keep up with the modern trend. I mean she cook dishes that a normal family would cook. With salt and ajinomoto and....

PN: I was just wondering if, you know, they practice any old customs? Whether they passed it on to you? And have you passed it on to your Children?

GK: No. The custom that the lot of time parents want to pass over is this. See, what I struggle, I want to see my boys at least get up early in the morning and do something. But, today children, I don't know. They have to get up and sometimes. I just leave it like that. And see what they react or not. I have to get everytime after them. Say, "We go help Daddy." They come 9 o'clock and 2:30, they going home. (Laughs) So I tell my wife, "Eh, this a good training for them. Gradually, they learn how to work." (Laughs) The second boy say he want to work pineapple. He apply there. Pretty young, so he didn't have a call, but I think it's a good experience for them, too. Let them go out and work set the hours and then, you know, start certain time and quit certain time. And that's a good experience for them.

PN: What about when you were small? How long did you work in the field, like that?

GK: Summer time I work plantation, too, you know.

PN: Oh yeah? Doing what?

GK: Cut grass. Weeding, like that.

PN: What time you used to get up?

GK: Used to get up early.

PN: And work what? Ten hours a day?

GK: Yeah, those days, I think, ten hours a day, yeah. The eight hours a day came in....when was it? 1932. I left '41, so...

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

GK: Haleiwa had lot of old buildings which are not standing today. Some areas, there is some old buildings standing someplace like Haleiwa Theatre, about there. But most of the old buildings, they was located by Three Corners Service Station. There's a store over there. Those Chinese people was living over there. There's none existing right now. And they used to have Haleiwa Hotel. It was a very popular hotel way, way back. And that is gone. And they used to have a railroad track coming all the way from Iwilei right around Waianae Coast. Right around Kaena Point, they used to have a Haleiwa....right outside, close to the ocean, there's a railroad track going there. There's a station over there. Haleiwa Train Station. And those days, the tourist used to stop over here and used to stay at Haleiwa Hotel. But that hotel is gone and used to have a wooden bridge over there. The wooden bridge is gone. And Army put in temporary bridge. That was also gone, too. Then, the Army came inside. They build a beach house during the War time and that's gone, too. Then, a few old buildings left is right across Haleiwa Service Station. There's a place where a haole couple is operating a hardware store. That old building. And right along where Miura Store---Miura Store is an old building. Still standing. And right across Miura Store, they used to have several building with upstairs. Two story. And across that two-story, there's an old cement building built in 1923. About there. There used to be a store over there. Yoshida Store. Was the Yoshida Building. And right now, that building was renovated and rented by Kulawai Irrigation. They make a Kulawai Irrigation Store there, and that is their central operation office. Then there's a police station and a courthouse over there. Today, they renovated and they're going to set up a district court again. They had it one time, do away, and they going start again. That's one of the old buildings still in existence. Then, the Araki Liquor Store is an old building still in existence. Then after you pass Araki Liquor Store, across there's a Chinese family. Chinese Hawaiian. Achiu. And that area had a two-story. They had a big building over there. That building is gone. And that several more buildings alongside that building, that's gone over there, too. They used to be there till they moved. They living at Sunset Beach. And right across Achiu Building, they used to have a store over there, the Sekiguchi Store. And that building is gone. And they used to have several long building alongside that store close to Achiu Lane where this can come inside. So over there had several buildings. Then, my uncle had a shoe repair shop. Then he moved out and he moved to Waialua. Then, from there, he passed away, and the family's at Wahiawa now. But those are the old building was erected over there. Then Haleiwa....still in existence only on this two side of old building

after you pass the bridge, the Twin Bridge. They have a old building which is located and the theatre is an old theatre. It's still in existence. Then right along with this whole block here is Haleiwa, there's lot of old homes build and new homes are build. And some of the homes was brought in, yeah. And place on certain property. See, then, the school over there, Taisho Gakkō, that school had an old building. And that school building till 1946 tidal wave wen got hit. And then couple years back, they build a new school building, a two-story building. And the church...in fact, that old building, they tore down the old building, then, the church was built where wooden structure now. I don't know whether they're going to do away with that and they're going to slap the new building that they build. Then right along that boat harbor is another homes over there. Right alongside the river. And they used to have a Miner family and Yoshikawa family. Then, see, right over there, they used to get big stone, like that. You can go fish over there for holehole like that, but today, all over there is dredge and you don't find those big rock any more. And they have a cave, like that, where the waves washed and you could see the holehole swimming around.

(PN chuckles)

GK: But you don't see that. But then you can see by the breakwater, but today you cannot see those. Those homes was really old, old, old. Then further back, there's an old homes, but the old homes have gone, too. Used to be a sight, you know, all those places. Then, there's the Anahulu stream, way inside. They call 'em "mankotani." It's a mango valley, you call that. And over there, everytime get flood, those big black opu, you call that gori, they used to come here from way in the mountain. Used to wash down. So I used to hook those. Used to sell 'em to the Filipinos.

PN: You used to eat that?

GK: No. I don't care for that, because the smell. Filipinos eat that. Then way back, on this side, by the Twin Bridge that river used to get big kind of what they call pakeopu, eh. Chinese call 'em pangee. Big like this, you now? About this big. Those big ones. Just see 'em swim like that.

PN: You guys used to hook that, too?

GK: No. Some of them hook and they will eat it. Chinese, they would like that. They used to get lot of frogs on that stream, too. See, I remember way back when I was working Hawaiian Pine, those Filipino guys, they know where to go. Way down by Dillingham's place, you know. There's a stream coming down. You go over there, and the river is not too big, you know. It's a shallow river over there. Some place only get about two feet water, kind of puddle like and then get rocks over there. And then the water would wash over. The water's flowing constantly, but not too much. Goes over the water and you find the frogs on the side, and just go there with your flashlight, pick it up and go back and the Filipinos would kill and eat it. But, then, I

don't care for frogs.

(PN laughs)

PN: What else you guys used to do when you guys were small?

GK: See, way back, when small time, we used to catch papaya birds. You know, papaya birds? Kind of whitish black. It's bigger than mejiro. Then, some you have yellow over here and orange over here. And they roll like....the children roller. What do you call that? We had yellow bird. What do you call that yellow bird? German Roller. Oh, let's see. Had another name for that. That was the kind. Even, today, still they around. Papaya bird. And everytime you see papaya ripe, you know, they go and pick the papaya.

PN: How you guys used to catch the bird?

GK: You used to make a net with the wire, like that. Use the fishnet, then you put on string, then we put the papaya inside. It'll come hopping up and up, and when he go inside, we let go the net.

PN: And what you guys used to do with the bird?

GK: We used to keep 'em. Then it would sing.

PN: What else you folks used to do?

GK: Then we used to go torching. Right alongside where had the Japanese school, there's a shallow reef. When the water is not rough, certain night, the water is about this deep, about four inches about six inches, then we go with the torch. And we look for squid and sometime we find fish, eh. Kumu, like that.

PN: What kind torch you guys....how you make the torch?

GK: We used to get a bag and kerosene, eh.

PN: Soak 'em inside?

GK: Yeah, soak 'em inside.

PN: And what about the spear like that?

GK: Well, the spear you would make with wire. Get wire like that. Make sharp the point.

PN: What other kind things you folks did?

GK: What other things? Oh, then, right over here with a electric pole go along right on this road over here, they used to have about one dozen mango trees and right along on this yard, too. Then my neighbor had one big house over there, too. Had the mango trees. We used to climb

the mango trees and they used to have one Chinese mango and it's one cross with Chinese mango. The trees was planted, maybe, every about twelve or fifteen feet. The branches comes down so we used to cross from one tree to another. And we used to pick mango when mango season. Then they used to have those rose apples, and eat it. And even that Mankotani, we used to go over there and pick mangos, too, see, and nice mangos, big kind mangos. Then during our early teenager days, we used to go down when I was working pineapple, we used to pick mountain apple. You like mountain apple?

PN: Yeah.

GK: Go in the valley. There's a lot of mountain apple there.

PN: What valley?

GK: Way down in one of that valley near Waimea Fall. Go way inside. That's one of the big gulches. They have several gulches up toward that Waimea pineapple camp. Today, I don't think you can go there. They have 'em all in sugar now. So you have to go in later part of June or July, that's when you have the seasons.

PN: Just go over there eat 'em all?

GK: Yeah, eat 'em all. I mean, pick whatever you can then we leave back some, you know.

PN: You guys used to go to the movies?

GK: Yeah, once in a while, we used to go. Then at the pineapple camp, they used to hold movie every once a month. Then I used to be the taxi driver. (Laughs)

PN: You had one car?

GK: No, it was just boarding house one. So I used to take the boys to movie like that. Sometime bring in town. You know, play.

PN: What that? They would pay you so much to...

GK: No.

PN: They just let you use the car? From the boarding house?

GK: Yeah.

PN: What you guys used to do in town?

GK: Sightseeing.

(Laughter)

PN: How often you go town?

GK: Once a month, like that. Twice a month. Yeah, those days, we used to travel, all our groups. Say, "Eh, let's go downtown." After payday, like that, eh, we go downtown.

PN: What else?

GK: What else? Yeah, way back, they used to have baseball game. The senior leagues. We used to watch that senior league. They used to have Waialua Garage way back, you know. Behind Waialua Garage, they used to get one ball field over there. Then, we used to watch the baseball game over there. Then at Waialua had another team. Haleiwa had one team and Waialua had another team, too. Watch the baseball games on Sunday.

PN: What was the teams made up of?

GK: Mostly Japanese.

PN: But there'll be sugar workers and then what about the Haleiwa team? Just made up of anybody come out?

GK: Oh, those days, get good players. Haleiwa team.

PN: You guys never used to play ball?

GK: No.

PN: What about dating, like that? You guys used to date?

GK: Naw. We just (Laughs)....we don't date no girls.

PN: (Laughter) Not like now days.

GK: Yeah, not like now days. Those young boys, they're too fast, eh.

(Laughter)

PN: How you met your wife?

GK: I met my wife at Wahiawa when I was massaging. I had a studio at Wahiawa.

PN: Oh, I see. Remember anything else about the farm like that? You were helping your parents....

GK: Helping my parents. See, those days, I had no gripe as to why I got to work. I used to help my parents.

PN: What time you folks used to get up?

GK: You mean, to help the parents?

PN: Yeah.

GK: I used to after school. Saturday and Sunday. But today kids, you tell 'em but they don't want to get up. These are two different trend. They can sleep till late. They think nothing of it. The only thing I have to wake them up otherwise. But when they say got to go certain place, they would get up early and go.

(PN laughs)

GK: But I hope they will change, though. I always tell 'em, "You guys got to get up early in the morning. If you miss your morning, 'as means you're out for the day already." So I always tell them, "The place to train any child or any boy or girl is at home. Not when you go out and look for jobs. It's too late already because you have to be trained, (so) that when you go out, you be able to work." So I tell my boys, "See, you out of luck if you don't have training." Because there's a lot of kids, they train at home. When they go out to work, they train. Nothing to them, you know. But lot of times if you not trained, you will get inferiority complex because you don't know how to start, where to start. And the guy tell you something you cannot cope with it, because your mind is not trained, your hands not trained. That's why in my case, when I went to work 15, I get no problem, because I was trained at home. I used to help my parents. I no grumble. I just do my work. So when I went out to work, those days, 15 years (old) or so, we used to get man pay, you know. \$1.65. And that's a man's pay. \$1.65 a day. That's the difference today and way back. 1930s...

PN: And you got \$1.65 because you were keeping the books?

GK: No, no, no. That's working for the plantation. I mean the pineapple plantation.

PN: That was just a part time job you said?

GK: No, that was full time job. Yeah, I used to work two jobs, eh. But, today, I don't know.

PN: The other job was....what you was doing?

GK: I used to help the boarding. Wash dishes...

PN: Where was this boarding house?

GK: That's the Waimea Pineapple Camp. And I used to get free board and used to be \$11 a month and board.

PN: Because you went to school, that's how you know keep books like that?

GK: No. There's nothing hard.

PN: How you got that job? Just apply?

GK: Well no. I used to go help. He say, "You want to go part time?" Because I used to eat over there at the boarding house. And they were looking for someone to help them, anyway. So I helped them sell goods and make out the bill and after that, the later part say, "You go make the bill. Make the report so we can take it easy."

PN: Who owned that boarding house?

GK: Mr. Itsuo Sakai. After he left, after the store was closed, he moved to Haleiwa where the Kulawai Irrigation have this store there. He operate that store, then later part of '50s, I think, they started corporation between Koichi Kato, Itsuo Sakai, and Ted Haga, three of them, they form KIT's supermarket. K stands for Koichi. I stand for Itsuo and T stand for Ted Haga. So they put KITs K-I-T. 'As three guys. So, the two of them is still living and this guy-- Koichi Kato --he's the youngest of the partners in the corporation. He passed away at age of what? Fifty-three or four. For the other two are still living.

PN: And this boarding house. What kind of people used to stay there?

GK: Boarding house, most of the guys boarding was single guys. Like single Filipino guys, single Japanee boys and had some Hawaiian boys. But gradually they moved out. Because they go look for outside job. So most of them, they moved out.

PN: They were working where?

GK: What they do is this. Then, when you apply the job with the Hawaiian Pineapple, because you single man, you young boy, you don't know how to cook. And they have a big boarding house. Just like cafeteria. They cook over there and you have a stove over there. You have a long table where you can eat. They would prepare all your breakfast and your choice of miso soup, coffee, rice with egg for breakfast. Then you either can have coffee, cocoa or bread with butter, something like that, yeah. Then lunch, they would prepare you....you get your lunch can. Two decker type. The bottom is rice. And on top they put either cook fish with tsukemono or long rice with meat and tsukemono or fried egg. Those scrambled eggs, with something else. Then, that is for lunch. Then after work you go and take a shower. So, about 5 o'clock, you go with your friends. Go over there, you know. All the dinner meals are prepared, only thing they serve one choice, maybe two choices. What you want, they serve you and then you sit down eat. Then they would just go home and go to their own house. So they had single room quarters. They had some homes for married couple, too. But most of the single guys used to board at the boarding house. Something like university, you know, how they get those dormitories.

PN: Oh, I see.

GK: Same thing, but different set-up.

PN: And the married people, how much would they have to pay for housing?

GK: Those days was free, I think. You don't pay.

PN: But if you live in the boarding house, you have to pay?

GK: No. The boarding house is something like this, you know. It's something like cafeteria, or cafetorium. Okay? There's this one section where you would prepare the food. Then they have a long table where you can serve. A table where they would serve you. Used to have a counter you pick up your food. Then all the tables are lined up like this in rows. So, you would pick your food and go to the table. And on the table you have shoyu, ketchup, salt, and pepper, and whatever. Eat, then after that, I think the plate was left on the table and some guys would pick it up. You know, I would pick it up because I used to help the boy pick it up and take 'em by the sink, wash 'em and put 'em away.

PN: And you worked there, what? Seven years?

GK: Seven year, nine months.

PN: Did you go to Japanese language school like that?

GK: Yeah. We used to go in elementary school, then I went to high school, we used to go to Japanese school. One hour a day.

PN: Where was this?

GK: This was Taisho Gakkō. By Haleiwa, over there by Haleiwa Surf. One hour a day, five days a week. I wonder if we used to have Saturday? Gee, I forgot. Then I went night school when I was working at Hawaiian Pine for only short while. Then quit. Whatever I learned, cannot keep it. I can speak a little, but I don't hardly use, so....

PN: Most of it you learned from your parents?

GK: At school. What I learned, I still remember some, because I don't speak at all. I mingle with Filipino, mingle with local boys. We hardly talk Japanese. So whatever you learn, you just....

PN: Your parents sent you to Japanese school?

GK: Yeah, they sent us.

PN: About how long did you go? How long you attended school?

GK: Until ninth grade. Then after that, I went night school and then I quit.

PN: How was the sensei? Strict?

GK: Strict.

(Laughter)

PN: Did you have any contact or relations with the plantation people when you were young like that?

GK: In what ways?

PN: Like you said you went to movies once a month there, and anything...

GK: See, most of our relation was through school. We used to go to same schools. Some of those classmate, still we know each other, we talk about old times.

PN: I guess, we'll end it here.

(Tape is shut off and then turned on again.)

PN: ...no, but if you can tell us....why don't you?

GK: Right off Kam Highway, you go up a dirt road, there's a small field and you go right down and there's a place called Pump 3 Camp. And there's a pump over there that feeds the water to the sugar plantation fields. And you have a big wheel that pumps. And they used to have men that work right through the clock. I think two persons had to maintain the engine. You had to oil certain parts of that pump because the big huge wheel that turns around with that thing, just pump like that. And it was a piston type pump. And eventually, plantation did away with that pump, feeding through oil, but now, it's all controlled electrically. All with the push-button from the Waialua Mill. Open all that pumps. All electronic, all push-button. And even the pump they set up at where the pineapple stand is located, there's a drip irrigation pump over there. And even over there is set up all by the Mill. Push-button and all that place irrigate. You know, all time clock. On those cement flumes and gates, there's a Japanese time clock. And the gate would close or open by itself when it was time. So the workers are covering bigger area than before. Before they used to work about ten or maybe twenty acres. But now, I think they going hundred acres, you know. Hundred fifty acres. They get bigger area they cover. And those people, they get, I think, contract for taking care so many area and then, whatever tonnage plus they would get base pay so much per day. But then, whatever they would make so much bonus after the crop is harvested. So far, nobody covered for you on the plantation da kine?

PN: No.

GK: How the plantation's operating? You know, plantation, too, the mills are set up, new, too. Everytime, they improve the mill. You know, for more production so you can grind more sugar. Because you're taking in more acreage on all that pineapple land. So that one time pineapple wasn't selling as good. The plantation, same

company, took away some of the pineapple land into sugar, but now the pineapple, because the demand is greater now, or because the canned goods are selling more, fresh pineapple is selling more, so they want to take some of the land back, but plantation they won't give 'em back, now.

PN: One other question just came to my mind. Like, you say, that they going to develop in this area right where you guys living? What's going to happen to your farm, like that?

GK: As of July, I have to do away with this field, so I picked up another field.

PN: Is that the one by the Mormon Church?

GK: Mormon Church, yeah.

PN: How many acres is this right here?

GK: Oh, right over here, I think almost four acres, I think.

PN: They going take this house, too, and everything?

GK: No, no, no. This is separate.

PN: Oh, I see. Just up till here.

GK: Go right over here and goes up to that other housing development over there.

PN: And how many acres you got on the other side?

GK: I get about 5.77....

PN: Get any more things you remember about?

GK: There's lot of things I recall, but I don't know.

PN: Well, thank you for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **WAIALUA & HALEIWA**

## **The People Tell Their Story**

### **Volume V JAPANESE**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA**

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