

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Jennie Lee In

Jennie Lee In, seventh of seven children, was born in Hālawā, Kohala, Hawai'i in 1921. Her father, Kui Sung Lee, was an immigrant from China who came to Hawai'i to work in the sugarcane fields. Her mother, Tung Moi Lim, was born in the islands.

At the age of six or seven, In lost her mother. A year or two later, In's family moved to the Kauluwela/Liliha area of Honolulu.

In attended Kauluwela School, Central Intermediate School, and McKinley High School. Following her graduation from McKinley in 1938, she attended the University of Hawai'i. She graduated in 1942 with a major in vocational home economics.

After a year of employment in Hilo she returned to the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu to earn a certificate from the School of Social Work. In 1944, In was hired as a caseworker at Pālāma Settlement. Two years later, she was sent to New York to work towards a master's degree in social work. After obtaining her degree, she returned to Pālāma Settlement for a year.

She married, divorced on the Mainland, and returned to the islands in the mid-1950s. She was hired as the executive secretary for the Commission on Children and Youth. She subsequently remarried and raised a family.

While raising a family she taught part-time. From 1970, she developed and taught a program for pregnant teenagers.

Widowed in 1973, she later married Andrew In.

Retired since 1983, she and her husband are active in UH alumni activities.

Tape Nos. 27-10-1-97 and 27-11-1-97

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jennie Lee In (JI)

Mānoa, O'ahu

March 5, 1997

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This an interview with Mrs. Jennie In at her home in Mānoa, Honolulu, O'ahu on March 5, 1997. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto, and this interview is for the Pālama Settlement oral history project.

Okay. I think we can start today's interview by having you tell me when and where you were born.

Ji: I was born in a little town called Hālawā on the Big Island, North Kohala, April 29, 1921. Lived there until I was eight, then moved on to Honolulu to live with Grandfather and his family, after my mother died when I was still six.

MK: You know, I was wondering, how many did you have in your family?

Ji: I was the youngest of seven. So there were three sisters and three brothers and myself.

MK: And, you know, when you think about your family, what do you know about your mother's background?

Ji: Mother was third-generation U.S. citizen, and I remembered how hard she worked. She was the second of fifteen children born to my grandparents who lived within walking distance from where we lived. And she was truly sort of like a pioneer woman, went down when the stream was running to wash clothes, used flour and rice sacks to make underwear, raised everything from turkeys to pigs for the table, and had a going garden. And at the same time as a child, I remember how at nights, under the kerosene lamp, she would read to me while the other kids were doing homework, and kind of delighted in nurturing me, although she herself was sick most of her life. I'm sure much of it was from just pure hard work and poor nutrition, probably. But also, there was in the family a history of cardiovascular diseases, and she had high blood pressure through most of the time I could remember her.

MK: And what was your mother's name?

Ji: Her name was Tung Moi Lim. And she took on an English name, and I'm not sure whether it was Mary—yes, it was Mary—that she never really used.

MK: And you know, you mentioned that she liked to read to you at night and nurture you. How much education do you think she had?

Ji: I believe she went as far as the sixth grade, which was fairly good for those days. Somewhere, I have a vague memory that the goal was to go to eighth grade, and at that time, after you had finished the eighth grade, you could start in somewhere entry level to help teach. But of course she never achieved that. But she valued education very much. So as I said, I can remember the nights when she would take me aside and would delight in reading and telling me stories, some in Chinese, which I can still tell my children, and much of it was the books that my brothers and sisters had outgrown.

MK: And your mother's parents, what do you remember about them?

Ji: Well, Grandpa I remember very well, because he lived until I was—well, I was away in graduate school when he died, but those last few years, I wasn't close to him. Up till the time when I was maybe twelve, thirteen, he was in and out of the picture a lot. We lived with him in his basement for about four years after we came down from the Big Island. He was probably born in China and came over with his parents during the Gold Rush to go to California. And he was a tailor by trade. The family story is, his father was also very good as a tailor, and they went to California during the gold rush to make jeans for the miners, (and sewed) whatever kind of denim that they wore in the mines. He learned that from his father.

And my grandmother was always referred to as "the Golden Mountain girl," meaning born in California—(the) Chinese call California "gold land." So she was, well, then second generation [i.e., first generation born in the U.S.]. And after the gold mines were closed, they were on their way back to China when aboard ship, they were match-made, and they came as far as Hawai'i and never went on. Their parents went on back to China, but they stayed here.

(I knew Grandma) until the time maybe I was four or five, 'cause she preceded my mother in death about two, three years. She was a heavy woman, kind of smiley most of the time, sat on her chair in the living room. My recollection of her is not that clear. Grandpa used to play cards with us on the floor, all the time. And I have this passion for playing cards, even (now) by myself, play solitaire. And Grandpa affected my life that way. He was also a very jolly person, and loved to tease. He was lean and kind of tall, kind of a twinkly man in his mannerisms.

MK: Now, what did they do for a living, your grandparents?

Ji: Well, he was a tailor, and Grandma bore and cared for these fifteen kids that she had, with my aunt saying that there were a number of miscarriages in between. So she must have been the baby machine in that family.

MK: And then on your father's side, tell me what you know.

Ji: My father's side, we know very little, and he never really wanted to talk about it. We know he had an elder brother who lived in the mountains in North Kohala with his family, and we were rather close to those cousins. My father [Kui Sung Lee] was a [sugar] plantation worker. We later learned that he came over as an orphan with his older brother, and he must have been only about fifteen and the brother was maybe seventeen, eighteen. We have a picture of him, which I can't locate right now, getting off the boat, and I guess it's the immigration picture

with him in a long queue, wearing shoes that have a crook at the end, which was considered stylish in those days.

He was a stern taskmaster, and didn't put up with idleness; he didn't put up with foolishness. Now, as I look back on it, he was—after my mother died—trying to be mother and father, and didn't know how to be mother. So his way of handling it was to prohibit us from doing anything that he thought might contaminate the family name or put us in bad straits. He was much older than my mother, I think seventeen years difference. He drove himself; he worked six days a week in the plantation, and the seventh day, he worked as a gardener for one of the Haole plantation doctors who lived in the end of the valley where we lived. He really elected not to live in (a) plantation home, because there (were restrictions). They were small; they were confined. So he chose this job for the Sundays (of) his days off. And I guess it was a trade off—we could have the house and live in the valley, which gave us a lot of freedom, but it also made life very difficult, because he'd have to either walk or saddle an old nag to go to work. But that way, having this whole valley with a simple home (for) us, we could have gardens and we could have animals. And, of course, for us kids it was great, because there was a stream that we used as our playground a lot, especially when the rainy seasons came and we could float banana logs and go down the stream a distance, like a raft.

He did not value education like my mother did. He was more interested in getting the kids out and making money, because that was a big problem with seven kids, and he was older. After we came to Honolulu, he didn't have the kinds of skills, because he was a plantation worker, so he worked in restaurants as a dishwasher, vegetable cutter, labor grade-one jobs. And then—I don't remember how many years [later], (maybe four)—he cashed out on a life insurance policy that he had saved long time ago, and bought us a home and moved away from Grandpa. He quit working (then), and my older sisters and brothers had to go to work to help support us. When we moved into a bigger home with a larger yard, he planted a full vegetable garden. (Using a) balancing bamboo pole, with (one) basket on each end, he went to the neighborhood and peddled his vegetables to make cash. And he raised rabbits and chickens and ducks. One of his specialties was raising capons. And that was the way we survived.

MK: He was very hard working.

Jl: Oh, yes. And he expected the same of us, and most of us followed the lead, but some went the other way and decided that life was too hard that way. So he won some and he lost some.

MK: You know, you'd mentioned that he worked on the plantation. What kind of work was he doing on the plantation?

Jl: Well apparently, when he first came, he was very young and probably underaged. He used to carry buckets of water for the workers to drink. What do they call them?

MK: Water boys?

Jl: Yeah. And he worked in the fields. And according to my brother who heard this story much later, that he very early was one of the rebels, because they used to have German overseers who used horsewhip on them if they didn't (work). So in the cover of dark of night, he ran away with a group of men from Kohala and ended up in Ka'ū and lived in a village in Ka'ū, which is quite a distance (away). (He) lived with Hawaiians. And the Hawaiians had these

huge *hukilau*, and they would bring in the fish. (My father) peddled the fish. So he knew Hawaiian pretty well. He would speak with the neighbors in Hawaiian. And we would listen and catch phrases, and therefore, we can still speak some Hawaiian phrases that we heard Father [speak]. And I don't know how many years he did that, but it seemed to me (it was) a number of years.

Later on, (it was) arranged (for him) to marry my mother, he went back to North Kohala (to work) for the sugar plantation. I guess by then, the statute of limitations or whatever was over. The last job I can remember him working at was in the mill. His job was to test the acidity or the pH factor in the molasses in order to make sure that they crystallized. He sat up there next to two big boilers and every now and then, he would open the spigot and get a specimen of the molasses. He would use litmus paper, which I didn't know about (then) except it was magic. It would turn pink, or it would turn blue. And then if it was blue, he would do something, and if it was pink, he would let it alone. So apparently, his job was to check the quality of the molasses in order to make sure that they crystallized. He worked at that, and it used to be a twelve-hour job a day. I would tail along when my sister would deliver his noon or supper lunch pail, and we would walk that distance to deliver it. It was always fun to watch him play with that litmus paper.

MK: You know, when you think about plantation society, traditionally those who worked in the fields had like a lower status than those who worked in the mills. Were you folks conscious of that?

Jl: Not really, because we didn't live on the plantation itself much. We did for a short while after my mother died. We moved out of the valley, and I guess he quit his job on Sunday as a yard (man) and lived in the plantation home. And it was very confining in some way, because it had a huge bath house that everybody had to use. We weren't used to that. And you didn't have to go out and gather wood, but you had to use what they call the *kūkae kō*, which is the bricks that are left from the refuse of the sugar cane. We would have to go down to the mill and pack it back to our house. We didn't have the freedom to run around in this huge forest with the stream that went by the house, and mountain apple trees in season, you know, was a delight for us. We could go out and gather wild flowers, whereas in the sugar plantation community, (we) were just stuck.

There was one thing that the sugar plantation offered that we never had any access to, that was the outdoor movies. But my father was very strict about that. He thought anything like that would just introduce bad influence. So the only time we could go to the movies is when the church had movies about Easter or Christmas; then we could go to those. (However), it was more convenient in the plantation community, because there was a store (within) 200 feet from our house. And the doctor was available; you could go to the clinic. But we missed all of the freedom of climbing guava trees and playing in the stream and catching fish.

MK: So, you know, as a child, because your original house was sort of separated from the rest of the plantation, for your family, who were the people you folks interacted with?

Jl: Well, there was still Grandpa and Grandma and their kids who were still left in the house. There was the church that my mother insisted we be part of. And (there) was a very, very wise Chinese Christian minister, in the sense that he never put pressure on my mother or us to commit ourselves to the church to be baptized and so forth. Yet he was a pastor in the truest

sense. (When) my mother was sick, we would send somebody to go tell the minister. He would come, and he would just sit with her. And sometimes it was just to take her pulse. Chinese have a tiny little cure-all (pill)—I guess like aspirin—(prescribed) for anything. He would give these to her (and pray). And it was more, to me, a spiritual and psychological comfort. She would make us go to church every Sunday, and the people at the church were very kind.

Then there was a Chinese society, which still exists in North Kohala, called the Tong Wo Society. And that was more---it was somewhat religious. The practices were, I guess, more Taoist than anything. I mean, a lot of superstition and lot of ancestral worship and offerings of various kinds for the deceased. And that was part of our social life, 'cause they would be gatherings for Chinese New Year, for full moon, for the Autumn Festival and so forth.

And then the neighbors. We had wonderful Okinawan neighbors, Japanese neighbors, some Puerto Ricans and some Filipinos (who) lived scattered in the valley. I vaguely recall that at one time, my mother didn't have enough breast milk to take care of me, and I was sent to one of the *oba-chans* nearby for supplementary feeding. But that is only things somebody told me. In other words, I'm not sure that it happened. But there was the strong neighborhood kind of exchange and support.

And the school was a very important part of us. I remember when my mother died, the principal and many of the teachers sent food and comforted us. So there was that kind of help.

(Telephone rings. Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

MK: And you know you mentioned the school. What school did you attend? Or your siblings attended?

JJ: Well, I went through the second grade at Hālawā School. It's no longer there. School was a wonderful experience for me. I know I loved going to school. And I apparently, even at that age, was kind of an outgoing kid and very verbal. (Some) things stuck in my mind. My sister was in the sixth grade, and Mr. Carey, who was the principal and teacher for (that) sixth grade, several times took me out of first grade and (made) me go into his room and stand up and tell a story or recite something. The whole purpose was to show the sixth grader that you can express yourself. I guess I was kind of a teacher's pet, because the weekend that my mother had her stroke, I was in Hilo with my second sister as guest of my first grade teacher in her home (for) the Easter vacation. They had to call us home, and then we had to take the train back from Hilo to Kohala because my mother was no longer able to speak. So school's influence in terms of positive affirmation was there, and school was never a problem for me.

MK: So as a child, you had the support of neighbors, family, church, school, the Chinese community association.

JJ: Mm hmm [yes]. Of course, my biggest support was from my older siblings, 'cause I was (the) "baby." And also, I was a kind of a *'opihi*. I had twin brothers who were just above me, and I would follow them and try to ape whatever they were doing. So I was kind of a tomboy, you know, climb trees, ride horse with my older brother, jump in the stream and catch catfish.

So I used to do all those things and was kinda, as I said, tomboy. Yet I was very verbal and

very unafraid to speak up. Therefore, I got lot of recognition that way. The church choir people used to make me sit in the choir with them. I remember, as a child, you don't very early go away and stay away from home overnight. And I remember going away and staying with several families for overnight because they wanted me to go, and so I went. So some of (this) very early gave me a big boost in self-esteem. When Mother died, it was tough, but already I had had all the support and was still getting it through my siblings, who were very generous with helping me out.

MK: You know, your mother died when you were just six or seven years old.

JI: Yeah, I was going on seven.

MK: And you have older siblings.

JI: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: How old was the oldest one at that time?

JI: My oldest sister, let's see, would be about eighty-nine now. And I will be seventy-six. So the oldest sister (was about nineteen).

MK: And, you know, when your mom had her stroke and later passed away, how did the family manage?

JI: Well, immediately after she died, which was a matter of three days—no medical rescue at that time—the two oldest sisters were farmed out to work in families. In other words, they (were) live-in maids. The oldest one was called home to take care of all of us in the interim before we moved to Honolulu. The older brother, who was then about thirteen, really took my mother's death very badly, because he was the one she relied on a lot. He felt that he was kind of abandoned, because my father sent him to Hilo to stay with, not really a relative, but the man had the last name as we did, Lee. He owned a store in Hilo. So my brother was sent to live with them, and at the same time, my father thought it would be good for him, because the possibility for high school in Hilo and further education was much better than in Kohala. So immediately, three of them were sent on their own. And the twin (brothers) and my sister who's immediately above me—is five years older than I am—became mother substitute, plus my father taking a big hand in it. He was very, very resourceful in many ways. And, you know, he was a hard taskmaster. He was trying to do jobs and trying to keep us out of trouble and so forth, so that happened until we moved to Honolulu. We were still intact, the four kids and Pop. And the two sisters came to Honolulu and, again, found homes that they lived in and worked as maids. The older brother continued to live on the Big Island and was never really part of the household until years later. I mean, we kept the relationship, but we never really saw him until he came to Future Farmers [of America] conference in Honolulu from the Big Island.

MK: And, you know, back in Kohala, beyond elementary school, were there opportunities for schooling? You mentioned it was better for your brother to go to Hilo.

JI: Well, there was Honomaka'u School, which is now Kohala High [School]. And I think they had it up to, I know at least eighth grade, because my older sister did go to eighth grade, and

there was county busses that would bus them from Hālawā to Honomaka'u. But the opportunities for other kinds of educations was very limited.

MK: And, you know, when you mentioned that your older sisters became live-in maids, would you know how they felt about becoming live-in maids?

JJ: The second sister was sickly all the time. And both of them had severe hearing problems. The second sister, who is now eighty-seven years old, went only as far as fourth grade. And she has excellent social skills, and every family she worked for really loved her almost like (their) own. She plays that role even now. She always wants to be our maid, so to speak. Not so much lately since she's become handicapped more than just the hearing, but uses a cane. When she comes to our house for celebrations, she feels she should be waiting on me instead of me waiting on her. So there's a carry-over of that nurturing kind of role. Extremely generous. She lives in a senior home, and she's a friend to everybody there. She's not well, but she goes and takes (a) bucket and scrub the hall, which is community property, which isn't her job, but that's the role she's assumed.

The oldest sister, who did get married—but (had) a very hard marriage—I think was resentful of life in many ways. She didn't care much about home duties, so to speak. She would love movies and she would love entertainment and felt that she didn't get enough of this. Whereas the second sister, it didn't bother her. She just makes friends and she knows everybody loves her. The older sister was highly competitive with the second sister. And I think part of that was kind of a resentment that she did so well in friendships.

The older brother went on and became kind of a forester for the state. He was the one who really did the whole nene [repopulation] project, not in the administrative position, but as he used to say, "I'm the propagation mate." That was what he did, he saw that project through. He did get some national recognition for that. (He was) in the *National Geographic*, and he went to Washington, D.C. to get (a) conservationist award. He is a very able person, socially. Not scraping and bowing. He had good feelings about himself. He could have really benefitted from higher education if the circumstances had provided that. He's a good student, reads. A lot of the things he learned about in the project was just purely his own digging into resources. Finished high school, and you know, life is kind of really mellow for him, although he was stuck up in the mountains of Mauna Kea for years. He got married late in life at sixty-four for the first time, because he never met people.

The other four of us at home finished high school except for the younger twin. He was the rebel of the family. He had it rough in many ways. In those days, (in the 1930s), if you didn't pass a certain level, you couldn't go beyond the eighth grade. He was a (rascal and) I loved to play (with him because) he was exciting. My father and (he) were constantly "banging heads." And he was kicked out of Central Intermediate [School] after eighth grade. His life is a series failures, 'cause he never stayed at a job long, never lived long anyplace.

The other twin was the favorite of the two, and it shows. And the sister who was a kind of caretaker—the oldest of the four of us—really did sacrificial work for us, because she was also quite bright and could have definitely benefitted from higher education. But economically, she was in that kind of position, out of her own inner responsibility, and my father's pushing, had to go work at dime stores and other places to help the family income. She was able (later to return to an adult program at) McKinley (High). She (then) finished and certified herself for

working as a cafeteria school manager for the DOE [state Department of Education]. And she has had fairly good success in life with children who are all college educated and doing all right for themselves.

MK: You know, I thought I'd ask how your family had fared, because I know that sometimes when a parent passes away or if a family is having a hard time financially, social workers will intervene nowadays. But in those days, didn't have access to . . .

Ji: If you did---my father's one fear was to ever go on welfare. I can remember as a kid, he'd say, "We will never go on welfare." And proud, and do without instead of trying to depend on anybody. And all his life, he tried to do that by scraping up whatever he could. He was overconservative (and) stingy. You didn't throw away pieces of things that could be used again. And you didn't ever waste food. And you would never hoard the better one for you. He was very generous in a way. He raised his capons in our backyard mainly as holiday gifts to Grandpa, aunties and (others). And his one saying was, "You give away the good, and you eat what's left." The family kept the ugly lima beans and the skinny rabbits, and you gave the best ones away. And so he taught us generosity in the sense of sharing. And so we survived that kind of deprivation, if you want to put it.

MK: And, you know, you mentioned that when you came to Honolulu, you lived in your grandfather's basement. In what area of Honolulu was that located?

Ji: It's in the School Street area, on the edge of Nu'uuanu and Pālama. 'A'ala Park was a stone's throw away. It is where the Lili'uokalani Gardens are (now). But those homes there were in a flood area. And in big storms I remember we always having to scrub the mud out from the flood that came in. And our basement quarters were built over, say, a foot and a half above the basement level with a platform that we slept in. But the kitchen and the bathroom and everything else was flat on the cement on the bottom. And every time there was a flood, you had to put things on the platform and try to keep them from getting wet, and then scrub out all the mud after the storm receded.

MK: And, you know, coming from the Big Island plantation area, when you first came to Honolulu, what was your reaction?

Ji: Well, we never had milk nickels in Kohala. We had gum once a year when the church gave us a pack. And so your eyes got big, and if your brother gave you ten cents, you save that and you hoard it and you went in, got stick of gum or milk nickel when you could afford it. You knew you were kind of a "country jack" in the way you wore clothes because you didn't have it as nice as the kids in your class. (But) we had an aunt by marriage who was very kind to me. I was about the age of her oldest daughter. And she would sew me a dress now and then. And of course the big thing was on your birthday, somebody would hang a new dress up in the place where you hung your clothes, and that was it for the year. And that was through the generosity of these two sisters who worked in homes and saved.

But I never really felt inferior, 'cause I always succeeded in school. When I came down from the Big Island, I had just finished second grade, and I was to go to third grade. My aunt took me to an interview with the principal of Kauluwela School. And she said, "But I have no room in the third grade. It's all full."

So my aunt said to her, "Well, you talk to her and let her read to you." And she did, and so she put me in the fourth grade. I probably didn't have as nice a haircut. I didn't have earrings like some other Chinese gals had. But I was enough of a tomboy that I could do jump rope and play hopscotch as good or better than they. And in class, I was fine. So I didn't ever feel like I couldn't make it.

MK: I'm going to turn the tape over, okay?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Okay, so, we were just talking about your coming to Honolulu, your going to school at Kauluwela. After Kauluwela---well, before we move on to the next school, how did you fare at Kauluwela in your fourth, fifth, sixth grade?

JJ: I think I did, you know, quite well. And, once again, I credit my siblings for being supportive. And, you know, the teachers took me for what I was, and there was never lack of friends. I was forced to go to Chinese[-language] school by this lovely aunt who made dresses for me now and then because she thought I needed to have some refinement (MK chuckles) and some ways of dealing with the differences. We were Hakka farmers in Kohala. And you came to Honolulu, you were in (Punti) society, and you had to be able to not stick out like a sore thumb. I hated Chinese[-language] school, but I went for two years, and I can handle some (Punti) now, although I prefer not to because I'm proud of being Hakka. There was never in my life any kind of instilling that we were lesser than others. In fact, my father used to say the two things in life. (One), you want to be honest. And two is never let anybody put you down. So in various ways, he was telling us, "You're just as good as anybody else."

So Kauluwela School was fine. There were many people that I never really got close to. Because when you enter a school that's in a close(-knit) neighborhood, families are related and, you know, have had continuous relationships. It didn't bother me that the "better kids" were together. Because I had made some achievement in my own class. I was in the sixth grade play and played one of the lead characters. Some of those things made you feel okay.

MK: You know, you mentioned that your family is Hakka. Did you, at any point, feel discriminated against or treated differently because you were Hakka?

JJ: I think that came later in junior high, and still later in high school.

MK: What happened?

JJ: Well, when you started to date or when you became interested in each other, there's a feeling like, "Oh, she's a Hakka girl." But, you know, we used to make fun of them, too. In other words, you found your comfort in your own, and you can look at models in the community who are Hakka who have done real well. And father used to say, "Well, Mr. Mau, Mr. Lau," who have stores and everything, "they're Hakka farmers like the rest of us." So there was not a ghetto that we were confined to. And in the community in Waikahalulu where we lived,

there were both Hakka and Punti, and for some reason (the differences) never really sunk in. So we went on to high school, junior high.

Then we'd hear from the old folks, "So-and-so is married to a Hakka girl." You know, "Shame". Or "So-and-so married a Punti person. They're dirtier than we are. They're such-and-such. They're more interested in jewelry and in appearance, and we're more interested in hard work," and that kind of thing. So there was counterdiscrimination.

And I think it finally found its own solution with the fact that, in high school, I found the Church of the Crossroads, and that meant a lot to me, because that was where more than ever you were told you accept people for what they are and not (where) they came from. So I laugh because my current mother-in-law is (Punti). So is my husband. And very early when I became a member of this family, I was told, "Oh, you don't speak Chinese correctly."

And I always said, "Ah, that's okay. I don't speak correct in your dialect, but in my dialect, I'm fine." And they would correct me, and I would say, "No, it's said this way in my dialect." So very early, we almost came to an understanding that if you want to talk to me, you speak English or you speak your dialect, which I can understand, (and) I answer in Hakka.

MK: And, you know, in that area that you lived that's near Kauluwela, Liliha area, it's traditionally, then, thought of as being an economically depressed area, right? When you were going to Kauluwela, were you conscious of that?

Jl: (Pause) I guess not really, except my father was dying for the chance to get out of there. Part of it was that he didn't want to live with his in-laws. He wanted a place for himself. And part of it, he didn't want us to be (in the "poor section"). We never journeyed down to River Street unless I went with him (on) Sunday to market. And we almost never crossed Liliha [Street] into Pālama section, because that's where the immigrants lived, and the "bad families." The aim was to live east of Nu'uanu [Street], to move beyond up to Punchbowl, eventually up beyond. So when we first moved before we even bought the house, it was (across the street) to where the Pacific Club now is. So that's why I went to Central Intermediate [School] instead of Kawānanakoa [Intermediate School], (which) was considered the lesser of the two schools. And then later on, when he bought the home, it was in the Queen's Hospital area, which would then qualify us to go to McKinley High School, where there was property along with the house. Pālama was a place you didn't really go to in my childhood. We had distant relatives who lived on the corner of School and Liliha, and that's about as far as we journeyed.

MK: You know, looking back at your childhood and early teenage years, what was your conception of Pālama?

Jl: One is, it's far away. Two, it's for the "poor-class" people. And it smacked a little bit of "welfare."

MK: And, at that point in time, had you ever heard of Pālama Settlement?

Jl: Only in name, but not much reputation. 'Cause anyway, 'Ewa of Liliha Street was kind of area you don't venture into.

- MK:** And then later on, you went from Kauluwela to Central and then to McKinley. At McKinley, what sort of studies did you concentrate on?
- Ji:** Well, I did best in science. Geology, astronomy, chemistry. Also, I had a leaning toward home economics, partly because of the teachers. But we had also some beautiful social studies teachers. And they were very influential in my life. There was a smacking of keeping close to the ag[riculture] department. And so I became very good friends with the ag teacher, go to visit the garden. I have a urge to go pull the weed out there and talk to him. But the science teachers were the ones that were very, very influential.
- MK:** And what were some of the other extracurricular activities you were involved in at that time?
- Ji:** Well, it was varied. There was the science club. Then there were the honor societies. The National Honor Society, and the citizenship club. I took interest in the chorus, which most of the college-bound kids weren't (into). I took chorus, 'cause I enjoyed singing, and (Paul and Alice Saunders), the band teacher and the music teacher—were wonderful people. And my music didn't make that much of a dent, but I guess my being able to verbalize and stand out in front of a group, I got selected to be the emcee at the big (Christmas) concert that we did (at the) Honolulu Academy of Arts. I was exposed to a lot of good music as a result of that. And it was fun, because many of the kids who were in chorus and music were not in my other classes. So my base of friendship was quite broad with the ag fellows and the music people, and then with the science club and the Key clubs.
- MK:** And, you know, when you were going through high school, what aspirations did you have?
- Ji:** Well, I wanted to be a teacher like my aunt and my cousins. And of course in those days, (all) females in our family, were moving toward being home ec[onomics] teachers. And with my grandfather's skill in tailoring, we had several in the family who were extremely good seamstresses and very good cooks. So I knew I was going to college, but you didn't focus on a vocation very early then. But as you went along and you had to choose, that seemed to be the most viable. And I had had all my sciences, which fit into the home ec thing. So that's where I went.
- MK:** Did you always know that you were going to go to college?
- Ji:** I always said that I was going to go, regardless. So the opportunities came because by then, my father didn't need me for the money I would bring in to help raise the family.
- MK:** And then, you know, when you were going to high school, did you have any part-time jobs?
- Ji:** Oh, every summer since you were fifteen, you worked at Dole cannery, Hawaiian Pine[apple Company], in those days we called it. And then I remember working one Easter at [SH] Kress, selling little Easter chicks and little baskets for Easter eggs. In those days, they had NYA [National Youth Administration] jobs, which is student help positions. And in my junior and senior year, I worked for the department head in core studies, and did the typing, correcting of tests and things like that. And partly is because I was an outgoing kid, and I could speak up. And I guess I had a sense of humor that the teachers always seemed to enjoy having me. So I wasn't lacking for any jobs in high school and in college. And, again, my father used to say, "Any honest work is good work."

So I remember, I guess I was a senior in high school, they were putting on a radio program about the benefits and the ways that NYA was helping students. And I got picked along with a college guy, and we were part of a radio program. (MK chuckles.) Eloise Ewing was head of that at that time. So I guess very early the things that really helped me was ability to verbalize and being able to get in front of groups and not panic.

MK: And also, at McKinley, you'd mentioned that that school was, like, the recipient of all these high school kids in town. There are kids of all ethnicities coming from many different parts of town. What was your reaction to being with all these different types of people?

Jl: You didn't think much about—you didn't focus on where they came from. You know some kids came from Pearl City. You know some kids even came from Kahana. It was how you interact with them as individuals. In my senior year, the four officers in our senior classes: Adelino Valentin, a Filipino; Hilda Blackman—I don't know where she came from, was a Haole gal. She didn't go to Roosevelt, which is unusual, because in our days, they would go to Roosevelt—I was the secretary, and Masaru Otaguro was Japanese. And, you know, it never really occurred to us until we had to go, one time, put on a forum and go on the radio with a Senator [Guy Mark] Gillette from (Iowa). The [U.S.] Senate sent him here to talk to the population to find out whether we were ready for statehood. And it was pointed out, here we are, four (students of) different (ethnic backgrounds).

Well, I still keep in touch with Adelino. We don't know where Hilda is. And Masaru, when I see him, he's on the Mainland now. He was a brilliant kid, and he and I were real buddies. I had a way of being buddies, not necessarily boyfriends. And we would stay after school after meetings and stuff, and we would chat about anything and everything. Masaru always wore a suit and necktie, because that was a thing you did in those days, and (he) went to Japanese[-language] school. He was brilliant in math, and I admired that. Our senior year, I didn't have a date to the senior prom. Adelino took four of us girls with him. Didn't bother us, we didn't have dates. We had a great time. So there was not a strong feeling (whether) you came from the rice fields of Kahalu'u, or from Waialua [sugar] plantation. We gave them credit for coming that far. So where they came from, what neighborhood, didn't have much meaning. It was what they did in school and how we related to them.

MK: And then, by this time in high school, what had you heard or known about Pālāma Settlement?

Jl: I remember that they had many, many very strong (sports) teams. They would win the swimming meet, or they would win the basketball or something. But I wasn't that interested in it, except that I knew that they had strong athletic programs. And then the reputation was the kids who come from Pālāma are tough. Well, I don't know that I really had any real close friends from Pālāma. The nearest that was to Pālāma was this gal Momi Ting, who became Momi Minn Lee. Momi and I were very, very good friends, and I used to go down to her house, which was almost up to the Pālāma border. I loved Momi, but to relate her in any way to the rest of the Kalihi-Pālāma area didn't have much meaning to me. And she wasn't active in Pālāma. Actually, at that time in her life, she was much closer to the Chinese groups than she was to the Hawaiian ones.

MK: How about dances at Pālāma Settlement?

Jl: How about what?

MK: Dances?

Jl: Oh, my father would cut my legs off if he knew we danced, because to him, that was as bad as pornography today is to some people. (MK chuckles.) You know, be in a man's arms! (I) never told (him but) one of the reasons why I became so active in the [Church of the] Crossroads was every Sunday, we spent all afternoon till evening—we played volleyball, sometimes we had dances, we cooked there, we had programs, and then one of the guys took us home. As long as we say church, it was fine. (He) didn't question. (MK laughs.) So we never told. And we would say we were going to a party, when there was a dance.

Sometimes he knew, like (my present) [husband] Andrew remembers how scared he was when he and his friend Leonard, one time, came to pick me up for a dance at McKinley. He brought me home, and the manners was you take the girl up to the doorstep. When he opened the gate, my father was waiting for us; when we walked up the steps, (my father had) a baseball bat in his hand! Andrew said after that he never even tried to get near to our house. And when you wore long dresses and went to a dance, I'm sure he suspected it. But you never say, "I'm going to a dance." You say to a party. (MK chuckles.) And we were both sure that that was not only true of my family, it was in some way true of (many families).

MK: And after you graduated from McKinley in 1938, you went to the University of Hawai'i. Why the University of Hawai'i?

Jl: Nobody else thought of any alternative. You know, nobody went away to college in the Mainland. If they did, they weren't in our circle. You either were going to University of Hawai'i, you were going to work (at) Pearl Harbor, or you would go to a business school. And there were no choices, except the choice to make the decision that you were going beyond high school was, in itself, a difficult one. My father said to me, "You do what you want." But he says, "I'm not supporting you. I got nothing to support you with." And he said, "Besides, I think (any girl) who goes on to college just wasting their money, because they graduate and they become housewives. So what's the use of going to college?" That was his kind of comment. So those of us who were in the college-bound line never thought of going to the Mainland.

MK: And once you got accepted at UH, how did you support yourself through those years?

Jl: Okay, you worked summers at the cannery. If you saved \$200, guarantee you can pay your tuition for the year. So that was not hard. Once you got into the cannery, okay. And then I got (promoted) in the second year, I became a (reliever); in the third year, I was a forelady. Foreladies made forty-six cents [per hour]. The regular packer made twenty-five cents [per hour]. So you were little better off. Then during the first year (of college), I think, I lived at home. And I worked (for the National Youth Administration in) the UH home ec lab feeding rats and cleaning cages. NYA paid enough for your bus fare and home lunches. The second year, I got a job as a maid across the street where Atherton House is. And I lived in and earned my keep and got two, three dollars extra. And then one year I worked and got better pay and worked down near Lē'ahi Hospital. But that was a problem of commuting. Then, from then on, there was always student aid jobs I could get in the home ec lab. Correct papers, proofread teachers' textbooks or whatever they were putting out, make sandwiches for teachers' meetings and that kind of thing until the war [World War II] broke out. And then you had to live in a practice cottage that the university had for home ec students, so you

couldn't accept a job then. And then it was senior year, so you were out by then.

MK: And then I was wondering, since you graduated in 1942, how did the war affect you?

Ji: Well, immediately schools ended, stopped. I knew one of the teachers at McKinley who were signing kids up to work in the plantations 'cause the laborers were (needed). So you got a job as a timekeeper there until school resumed. The first thing you notice was the air raid shelters that you were asked to build prior to December seventh were now being used. So in our home, Father shored up the one that (would not) cave in with more lumber and so forth. You learned to carry, always, your gas mask. You immediately notice in class that except for four men, the whole four thousand population had dwindled so that there were only women in school. And some of my classmates, women, left because the [U.S. Army] Corps of Engineers and other groups wanted (them), and they could get good pay for that. And they had to make a decision to postpone college. Several of my classmates left then (and our class) became immediately smaller. So when we graduated in home ec in 1942, there were only fifteen of us. You became closer. And you were then aware that the hardships of your Japanese friends, whom you never really think (would never have problems of discrimination). You heard then of the forming of the VVV [Varsity Victory Volunteers] and all the other things. And you noticed that their parents weren't really allowed to go out to visit each other. They were secluded, you know. And some of your best friends' (families) were sent to Minnesota or down into Florida or in the Middle West somewhere (and interned as enemies of the country).

So the classes became much smaller. Of course, my best scholastic year was that last year, too. Partly because you didn't have the distraction of playing around (chuckles) with the guys. And partly because I guess you feel like, "Well, this is it. The last year, I gotta do good." So (the war affected you) economically and socially and even academically.

MK: And, you know, in your home ec program, what were the main areas of study? What did you learn in home ec?

Ji: Well, the main area I was interested was in foods and nutrition. I was a lousy seamstress. I hated it. I had no flair, no style in me. I could do the skilled parts in terms of knowing the mechanics of it, but there was nothing of this glamorous (MK laughs) make-over. And my best friend was Kyoko Fujimoto from Hilo, who was a most wonderful seamstress. Kyoko couldn't handle the chemistry, so I would help her with the chemistry, and she would do with my clothing. And the friendship that developed during these times became very meaningful. We just had a reunion two weeks ago of some of us who finished in home ec. And we—I think partly through the church program—were made aware of the needs of, especially the Japanese friends we had. So there was a real bond with people whom we knew were having it psychologically very difficult. Because brothers were being hooked off. Kyoko's boyfriend was off to Minnesota. And some regretted after they'd joined the Corps of Engineers [headquarters] at Punahou being secretaries or helpers. So life changed that way. And I think I became more aware of pockets in communities where this became more difficult. And I suppose in that sense some of the Pālama areas later on, when I worked for Pālama [Settlement] (I) began to realize how tough their ways were.

MK: And then after you got your degree in home ec, in the College of Applied Sciences, what were you planning to do with your degree?

JJ: Well, I'd already committed to teach. So you had to take TC courses, Teacher's College. And when we finished, we had a degree in applied science. But we were in vocational home economics. So we had to do a whole summer (teaching) methods and preparing projects. So I knew that I was going to be in some kind of teaching using my home ec background.

MK: And what was the first job that you landed with your training?

JJ: First job I got was a call from Hilo—I don't know how they got my vitae and got my name. But I had to accept and be interviewed on the telephone when this job was opening. I went up as a home supervisor for the federal program called Farm (Security Administration), which was then concentrating on helping families to be self-sufficient. Preparing for a long term in the war to make whatever you do helpful because the economy is going to be such, there's going to be shortages and everything else. So I accepted that job. I finished, I guess, the course here in August, and I started the job in September. Went to Hilo, which I hadn't been to since I was a kid.

I was told I had to have a car in two weeks and get on the road. I (didn't) know how to drive, and I had to find a place to live, so I said, "Okay, I'll go." And, you know, you dig on all your resources and improvise. And I knew my mother had a very dear friend who lived in Hilo. Contacted her, (and) rented her (extra) room. Had cousins living in Hilo who knew the Ruddle family who owned the [Ruddle Sales & Service Co., Ltd.] Ford [dealership]. So went in and bought myself a Ford car. And this young man whose home I lived in with his mother taught me how to drive after work. One weekend, my cousin said, "We're going up to Kohala to my family's home. Why don't you bring your car and you drive that whole way and see how it is." So one of my first long drives to test my driving skill was to drive from Hilo along the old Hāmākua road, all the way through the winding Kohala hills, and that's where I finally got my license. I was on the road from then on. Of course, there was gas rationing then. And you were allowed ten gallons of gas (a month). And we were told to pool resources, so the farm supervisor and I would alternate. We would go in the same area, instead of each going his own separate area. So between the two of us, we had twenty gallons of gas. We covered from Hilo all the way to Ka'ū, down along all the back roads of Kalapana, and then all along Hāmākua up to Kohala and Waimea. That's where the farmers were. So baptism by fire, either you survive and become much more daring and much more confident or you sunk in the process.

MK: You survived.

(Laughter)

JJ: Oh, that was a lark. I think back on those days, and the things I did, you know, you're amazed you can do it.

MK: And what did you think about that job?

JJ: Well, the job was challenging, but the more I worked at it, the more I realized that the home ec skills alone were not going to help people change or make it better. You know, you can harangue, you can sit back and advise, but if you don't cut through the human blockage, whatever it is, you are not going to do it. Then at that point, I ran into a social worker in Hilo whom I had admired very much and he became a mentor and a life-long friend. And he

suggested that I might want to go into social work to improve in the human skills area. And after that year, I decided, hey, this is the time to do it. 'Cause the satisfaction of really reaching the depressed and the disenchanted was not going to happen if all I did was set up blueprints that look right and show them how to clean their sewing machine and how to can *takenoko* and stuff. Those were minor (in comparison to) changes that would help them want to help themselves. So I came back, (studied) social work for that one year (at the UH).

MK: And for this one year in social work, what skills did you pick up? You mentioned trying to get into the human side. What kinds of skills?

JJ: Well, there was a wonderful teacher, Martha Hosch, who was very helpful in helping you focus on—not your goals, but seeing what the goals of the people were. Not your standards, but what their standards were. And only if you can show them that there were options that (are) better than they were taking. Less on forcing changes and more on accepting on their level and opening doors. In field placement, I found my ability to contact, to cut through relationships, if I didn't force my kind of viewpoint. And basically I had a skill of connecting, you know, seeing the humorous side of things. Sitting there and being able to look 'em in the eye and being able to see that their viewpoint may not be my viewpoint, but they had validity in whatever they were doing. Again, my self-esteem was pretty good, and I began to take slaps in the face or refusal by people, not so much personally but as part of the situation and part of the thing that they had to overcome. It was not my problem to have to change them, but it was their problem if they wanted to change. (I can suggest alternatives.)

So I guess that was a wise move, because even later on when I went back into home ec, that kind of supplemented and expanded the goals (I had). And of course, it fitted in with a lot of the church philosophy, too. You know, accepting people as equals, as the right to be different, not knowing all the right answers, because your answer may not be the right one for them, and maybe not even for you. So it was combination of church influence, education, and I think a basic personality of liking people, reaching out.

MK: And I know that when you came back, you were placed as the only Asian student worker at St. Louis High School's army hospital. Maybe you can share some of your experiences there.

JJ: Well, the University of Hawai'i—the School of Social Work had this only one-year (study) program. And at first I felt kind of left out.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 27-11-1-97; SIDE ONE

MK: Now, you were saying that you were placed at St. Louis High School's army hospital, and that your situation was different from, say, some of the other students who were placed. Maybe we can continue with that.

JJ: I felt something must be wrong with me. They're not sending me to the established social work organizations. You know, if you're entering into social work, you're thinking of the places that had to hire the most social workers, which at that time, the top of the list was

Child and Family Services and Catholic Social Services and the Department of Social Welfare. And here I get stuck in an army hospital, and I gotta go be with all these wounded, and "What am I doing in this kind of place?" Well, the [American] Red Cross establishment is part of the military social work arm. All the personnel in the Red Cross there—recreational workers, social workers, administrators, clerical workers and all—were Mainland Haole. And for some reason, I've always felt you will make the best of whatever you do. You improvise, you get in, you dig in, and see what comes out of it. Well, the other student selected to be my partner in this was a gal who was very brilliant. She was a wonderful writer. But very shy in many ways, and her shyness came across as aloofness. And in class, she never really related to any of us. She comes from Hollywood. Her father is a well-known scriptwriter for Hollywood. She comes from a long line of wonderful writers. And her name was Lamb, L-A-M-B. And, okay, I going make friends out of Carrie. And our director was (JI speaks with a Southern drawl) a Southerner from Nashville, Tennessee. She was much older. But she was really kind of a feminist of her time.

I go in there and I'm lost. What do I do? Well first thing, I go put (on a) uniform. I have to go through the wards and meet the new soldiers who have come in, ask them if there's anything we can do. And one of the first ones I met, I walked into an orthopedic ward, and this soldier sees me coming in and he yells at me, "Get the hell out of here, you slant-eyed Jap." He'd been taught to hate all Orientals, and he'd been wounded out in battle—I don't know if it was Guadalcanal or Kwajalein.

And so I turn around and I go out, and I say, "Okay, I can't do anything here."

They assign me the maternity ward because they were now beginning to have pregnancies of local girls by servicemen, and either they weren't going to be married because they didn't want to get married, or the military had such strict rules about military and local girls getting married. So many of these kids had to have social-work help in the terms of adoptions. So my job was to go in, and in that way, I think they were correct that my entree to those young ladies was much easier than, say, Carrie Lamb, who already has this distance because of her uncomfortableness. So that was when I worked very close with home chapter Red Cross and Child and Family Services (and other community social work agencies). And we'd refer (the young mothers to them to get help on planning for their babies).

So in that maternity ward, I became their main contact in that area of service. In the other wards—psychiatric wards and everything—lot of the job was to interview the incoming patient and find out of their needs, and second it was to answer requests from the Mainland—parents who had heard their sons are in Hawai'i and would we find out the extent and what the attitude of their sons then were, and so forth. So I go back and talk to my supervisor and I'm saying, "The guy didn't want me. You've got to send somebody else."

And she said, "What did he do?"

And I said, "He yelled at me. He said to me I was another slant-eye."

And then she would say to me, "Well, how do you feel about that?"

I said, "I don't think I should try to interview him. If he's mad, just let him be mad." And of course, many of those patients stayed here for a month or so before they were transferred to (a

Mainland hospital).

And finally that guy, one day, called me over when I went to the ward, he said, "Come here," and he said to me he was sorry that he was mad.

I said, "No big deal. I know where you came from." So it was a challenge to know how much you can handle and what you can't handle. And if you can't handle, that's okay, too. That's part of social work. You drop the ball. If they want to carry it, fine. If they don't, then you'll move on to something else. And I remember the first time I had to interview a colonel in the orthopedic ward about what I could say to the parents of this patient, because you have to be careful how much hope you give them, or how much information. So I didn't want to go. I said, "I'm scared."

"What are you scared of?" my supervisor said.

I said, "This guy's a colonel. I've never met a colonel before in my life."

And, again, she was influential in my life, and she said, "Look, think of him first, he's a human being, like you and me. Maybe you'll get a bad one, he's going to yell (his) head off. (But) maybe he's going to be very kind and help you. And you've got to take a chance. It's just like that (soldier) who told you to get the heck out of the ward. You just go in and just don't let them make you feel like you're scared of them, or that you're lesser than they are as human beings." And funny, that kind of comments a couple of times like that will stick with you for life, you know. So I went in, saw the colonel, he was fine, we got what we wanted and walked out. And she said to me in our supervisor conference after, she says, "You know, hierarchy don't mean anything if you don't let it be." She said, "Somebody wants to push his rank on you, let him go. There's always somebody else to look out for."

And (there was) Captain Heywood, who was head of the ob[stetrics] nursery, the ob-gyn said to me, "You like your job?"

And I said, "Yeah, I do." I said, "Some of these kids won't talk to anybody else, but they'll talk to me." And, you know, sad stories how some of them really loved the guy, and some of them were caught in a situation where they became pregnant. And those days, no birth control, you know. And then I got to know quite a number of the social workers in town. Some you respect and some you learn to (leave space) between you two. And that year was very, very interesting. Carrie and I became good friends. And I found out that she was epileptic, and at times, she would have seizures. She was always scared she'd, you know, expose herself. And the clerk-secretaries became real good friends. They were in Hawai'i, they didn't know things, and they'd ask me.

One time, they took me with them. We were sent plane-load to go cheer the (young) fliers who were based in Barking Sands on Kaua'i. Because there was one Chinese officer there, they wanted a Chinese—somebody non-Haole to go along, because we had to be the entertainers or the partners for these guys. That was a bust. (MK laughs.) The guy was from California. He couldn't speak anything in common with me. I'd start a conversation, and it'd fall dead. And he'd start a conversation, I didn't know what he was talking about. So he was a fellow Chinese, but it didn't work. (MK laughs.) And I said, "The heck with you guys. I (not going) go with this R and R [rest and recreation] business anymore." Because we had a

choice, it was volunteer job. So I didn't after that. But it pointed out that here was another Chinese, and we scored zero, because our backgrounds were a mile apart, and I was getting more fun with the guys who were not Chinese.

Well, the girls and I became very good friends, and they'd ask us about Hawai'i, and I'd invite them home. I was the maid of honor for one of them when she got married. And I'm still in correspondence with several—one in San Francisco, one in Michigan. And they were lasting relationships, you know. And you saw what the war did for them. The one who came from Michigan said she would never have left the farm and gotten this man here and married had not the war come, because she would have been stuck on the farm. But here she saw the war as an opportunity to get away, and she was a very excellent secretary. And her daughter and I are still very close friends. As a matter of fact, Julie's coming out to house-sit for us next time we're traveling. So you learn that from all different walks of life. And so then race and some of the obvious, outward things didn't mean that much. Evander Hagen, (my supervisor) who spoke as Southern as they come and whose bearings were Southern taught me some wonderful lessons.

After that, I finished school (the Red Cross) asked me if I would stay on. They would hire me. And this was now getting late in '44, and it was obvious that the war was going to end. And it was time to move on to a job with more permanency. Somebody had heard about me working for the Red Cross, local girl, (trained social worker). And so [Pālama Settlement executive director] Ted [Theodore R.] Rhea called me up one day and asked me if I'm interested to come down and talk with him about a job with Pālama [Settlement]. And so I went there, and they suggested what they wanted. And I said, "But I'm only a recent graduate. You want somebody more experienced."

And they said, "Well, we're willing to gamble."

We talked, and I said, "Well, I wouldn't be comfortable or secure unless I have supervision. Because I don't want to do this alone and do a bum job, and then that would kill any of your future hope. And I don't want to damage my own professional career and do something that I would look upon with some shame or some feeling of disappointment that I didn't do a good job." I knew that I was pretty good about referring, 'cause I had done it. I knew pretty well that I could work with any kind of staff, practically. I knew that I had some good confidence, but I was new in the game. And I didn't know all of the agencies in town, and I hear my friends who'd been Child and Family Services and Department of Social Services and all of their contacts, and I'm feeling I've lost out in that part. So we worked it out that I would go to Pālama as their intake worker, social caseworker, provided I get supervised by Child and Family Service, and that I would have a secretary to do my records, so I didn't have to do it all by hand and so forth. And I looked into this opportunity and the things that they were doing, and it seemed to fit into the kind of thing that I would feel comfortable. I had never been really afraid of new challenges, so I said good-bye to the Red Cross and went to Pālama.

MK: You know, when Ted Rhea approached you, did he ever say why he wanted you?

Jl: I can't remember that part. All I remember is the interview went very well, between Ted and Paul B. Anderson and myself. And they would ask questions like, "Are you afraid to walk into Mayor Wright [Homes] housing?"

And I said, "Maybe the first few times, I would have some qualms." But I said, "If I walk into a hospital room with a 150 patients and I get somebody scream at me, 'Get the hell out of there,' I don't think that could be any worse than walking into someplace in Pālama." I said, "I'm a local girl. What can they do? They're not about to swallow me." Because by then, I had developed this kind of consciousness that most of the dangers are reflected by your fear or lack of fear in a situation. (When) you walk in confidently, knowing what you're doing is right, then (you) would be generally safe.

Very interestingly, at the same time, somebody at the State Department of Health had gotten my name. And they wanted me to go out and work in their sexually transmitted disease section. And that one is spooky, 'cause you gotta go look up the prostitutes, and you gotta look up the contacts and follow through. And I weighed those two, and I said, "No, that one, no way am I gonna get into. 'Cause I'm not comfortable in that area. I don't know how to handle it." But where I am in the settlement house, the kids who come in, where I'm dealing with intake, I felt that my skills in intake was fairly good; I could talk to young people, old people, and I had pidgin on my side, and some of the other things. So that's one of the decisions that made me go Pālama. And Pālama was a well-established agency, long time there. And I felt maybe there was a future there.

MK: And at that point, what did you know about Pālama Settlement, and what were your feelings about Pālama Settlement? Not having started working there yet, but your preconception of it.

Jl: Well, obviously, it was an era when it was mass sports. And you know it the minute you walk in the front hall, because the display cases (are) all full of trophies and everything. But if you know Ted Rhea, and you know Paul Anderson, the warmth and the desires and the aims were pretty much similar to what I may want to do. Their whole pitch was, "We want to make a more cohesive community. We want to help young people from getting lost. We want to help the (immigrants) in this community"—because the war was still on—"find a safe haven. And we want to build the individuals into programs that we have to offer, that will help them become productive persons." They'd moved away from just immigrants, language, cultural practice to make them feel at home. It was more now, "We need to grab these younger people, use group work as a tool by which they can build their strengths and conquer some of their weaknesses." So the group focus, which is right in with the (center) of professional group work, group therapy and all, was the appeal, you see.

MK: Before you went to Pālama Settlement, had you heard anything about Ted Rhea or Mr. Anderson?

Jl: Not about Paul, but Ted had done a beautiful job with the TB association. In the community, he was very well accepted. Ted is the kind of a personality that you warm up (to) immediately. He's kind of a younger Santa Claus. (MK chuckles.) He looks like Santa Claus, too, when he'd laugh. But part of my decision was based, also, on this mentor in Hilo who had started me on the track of social work, Morris Fox, head of public welfare. And he was there in Hilo. And I think he may have dropped my name in some of these places. We would spend hours talking about these things. And we would speak of these for hours, too, in terms of, "What is the Christian message? What is the church doing?" And of course we ended up both being in this [Church of the] Crossroads. When they came back from Hilo, his family, they became members of Crossroads. So we had these in common. You know, I've just been lucky. I've had wonderful mentors, you know, people that grabbed me in the sense that they

knew what they were doing. And he had told me about Ted, and how Ted was a pioneer in many things in this community. So I was willing to take that route.

MK: And also you talked about their general aims, and you were the first professional caseworker hired. Prior to your being hired, was there anyone trying to implement their aims? Or were you . . .

JI: Well, they had some good generalists in programs, various programs like music, art, shop, (and home economics). But they hadn't had—and I don't always promote, quote, "the-professional-with-the-degree" person. They hadn't had somebody who really tried to bring in the members who did come into meaningful relationship. That's what they were talking about, relationship, not skills so much. You build relationships through skills. And it struck a chord, because they (had) wonderful instructors (of) all kinds. But this was also a national trend. You know, you can't avoid it, you'd read literature on it and so forth. And they kind of talked me into seeing it, that this was the goal they had. And that they hoped, after they'd gotten me on board, that there would be more trained group workers who would then implement the group therapy part to kids who got into small groups and used the skills as part of enrichment and of the glue that held the kids staying with the program (and the families being integral part of the Pālama program).

MK: Now I think I'm going to end the interview here, and then the next time, we will continue.

JI: From Pālama.

MK: Pālama. This was the goal for today, to get you to Pālama.

JI: Okay.

MK: So this is very good.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 27-12-2-97 and 27-13-2-97

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Jennie Lee In (JI)

Mānoa, O'ahu

March 12, 1997

BY: Michi Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Jennie In, at her home in Mānoa, Honolulu, O'ahu, on March 12, 1997. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, I think we can start today's interview. I guess we can continue with your being hired by Pālama Settlement in 1944. When you were hired, what was your work?

Ji: Paul Anderson and Ted Rhea, who were the directors—and Paul was the director of group work—said that they were entering into a phase where they wanted to use group work as a method of integrating people in the neighborhood into cohesive groups to support each other, and also to be the base by which we can help others in the community who were not of any group, become an integral part and feel a belongingness to the settlement. And they were hoping that a case worker would help to interview people who came in for membership, and tried to work them into a strong group so that they can feel part of the whole settlement. They were also looking for someone who would have one-to-one skills, who would be able to help persons that they had identified who hung around the settlement, or came into the settlement, and were obviously having problems with themselves and others, because they would disrupt program, and they would be searching. And hopefully that we could use a case worker to help these nonparticipating persons into one of the groups that was established. The third objective, as I remember, was to contact community organizations around and have them refer to us, people who were having problems in interpersonal or relationships within the community. So they were the public schools, the public health nurse, and the people in the clinics that were connected with Pālama. Those were the three main jobs I saw as ones they held up to me at the time of employment.

MK: And I think earlier you had mentioned to me that, at times, you would also go into Mayor Wright housing?

Ji: Yeah, you would go into the community. Especially with kids who had maybe joined, or been on the edge of wanting to join, and never following through. And they were the ones that, (were referred agencies who felt the family might) see Pālama as being a (positive) force to help them in (their) children's or their own development in the community.

It was not probably articulated at that time, but one of the problems was we were in the midst of the war, and we had, particular with the Japanese elderly, those who were at home, were

kind of stuck in their own homes because of the military regulations that they were not to meet out in groups. And we'd invite them to the settlement house for English classes, music, or home ec courses. And that became quite a draw for a certain number of Japanese. Actually, I guess they were first-generation Japanese, because many of them didn't speak English well.

MK: You know, because they didn't speak English, did you have bilinguals on board as workers working with these Japanese first generation?

Jl: (In our English classes) the two ladies who did this were sisters from Idaho who had been in mission work (in Hawai'i). They didn't speak any Japanese. But in a sense it was good 'cause it forced the non-English speaking Japanese to have to learn. We had some people on staff who were of Japanese ancestry, and they were sometimes called to help in interpreting. But actually, (those) groups became one of the strongest—there were several classes (of them)—during that war period because the Knepper sisters were very skilled in including them in social activities, as well as learning English, and would take them into community affairs which they wouldn't be able to go by themselves.

MK: And in those days, what kinds of programs were available for children at Pālama Settlement?

Jl: Okay, there were the mass athletic programs, like big swimming classes. There were basketball courts that the kids played (on). There were some established baseball and things, out in the field. There were art classes of all grades, (but) mainly elementary kids because by the time they were intermediate and high, many of them were working. There was a game room, which was free play. We (would draw from this group to ask them to become members). One of my jobs was to spot the disruptive ones who would come and just run in the halls or run in the game room and kind of not know what to do. And I would approach them and eventually try to (lead) them into one of the established classes.

MK: And you mentioned classes. What types of classes did they have?

Jl: There were swimming classes, besides the free swim. There were classes in home ec, young people as well as the elderly. In the day—I was telling you about some of the (immigrant) Japanese women there would go into smaller groups and do cooking classes. Again, the art classes. There were some that were specially for ceramics only, or for painting only. And there was music, group singing. Across [Vineyard] Street there was the preschool. We didn't do too much work with them. They had their own self-contained groups already, and they were an ongoing kind of thing. Oh, there were also groups for Boy Scouts, there were judo classes. These were staffed by volunteers, and some were paid. There was a woodwork class in the back of the gym.

MK: I remember that in our pre-interview, you mentioned that it was also part of your job to find out if any of these kids taking these programs or classes were having problems. And you mentioned specifically that once there was problem with the piano teacher. Can you talk about that?

Jl: (Chuckles) Yes. After we had been doing this for a (while), some of the results of my interviews with parents (who were asked), "What would your kid like to do?" It came up quite often that they wanted music lessons. "In what?" Piano was the most popular.

And of course, we couldn't hire (for) all kinds (of instruments). Mr. Rhea (hired a) man from New York who was a piano teacher and willing to come out to Pālama. And I guess the interview was all held by mail and by phone. I can't even think of the guy's last name, but he came over, and supposedly (was) a very good piano teacher. But his human relations was lacking. And he was not a "hang loose" guy. And our kids, they're, as a whole, kind of timid. They don't talk back and they do what they're told to do. And one of the things they were told, they had to come (for) piano lessons with shoes. And you know in Hawai'i that doesn't sit too well. Some of the after-school kids don't wear shoes. So he was very stern, he was very strict. And if they came without shoes he says, "Go home. I don't want you here. You can't have your lessons today."

And after a while we noticed that he wasn't getting many students. And some who started never came back. And I had the list of the kids that had been referred to him for music, so we would check back on attendance, and there was a number of them who (didn't) come. So I was asked to go and find out why. One of the kids said was that (the teacher) was too strict and that he wouldn't let them play the piano in either bare feet or with zori, with slippers. So Mr. Rhea talked to him and said, "You know, you're gonna have students or you're not gonna have students."

And he said, "Well, my standards are, they gotta wear shoes."

So Mr. Rhea said, "Well, you know in Hawai'i, many of them don't own shoes."

So he [piano teacher] finally found it very uncomfortable and he left. So with his leaving, the whole piano program dropped off. Well, there were other demands (but the settlement didn't feel there was funds available). But that was kind of a cute one because it shows you how you might be intent in your particular skill, but insensitive to the human element around and the cultural kind of practices.

MK: You mentioned that those two sisters came from the Mainland, right?

Ji: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: To work with the Japanese immigrant work. Then you have this music teacher who came all the way from New York. Now, would you kind of know what types of salaries Pālama Settlement could afford back then, and how it managed to get people to come all the way from the Mainland to do work here?

Ji: Well, the only one that was brought in specifically was this piano teacher. He was not even the music teacher. We had a music teacher, choral person and group singing. And she helped in all of the group programs where they needed or wanted music for their groups. Most of us were—most of the staff—were people from Hawai'i. The two sisters, the Kneppers were already here. The younger one was a deaconist for the Episcopal church. So she was doing some work with the church. And her sister came along with her. (They were found when they) offered to do volunteer work, and eventually the settlement put them on staff. I don't remember exactly what our salary was, but I think it was in about, like \$200 a month, which in those days, you know, the [19]40s, that was probably in line.

Of course, the first attempt then, my being the first, "professional social worker," did bring the

settlement to a conclusion that they wanted to invest in local persons to go away, get (advanced degrees) and come back. And so in exchange for three of ours going to [Case] Western Reserve [University] in Cleveland, the settlement brought in three graduates from, again, Western Reserve, because (that school) was one of the leaders in professional group work at that time. And the three girls knew each other and they wanted to come together. And they were brought in while the three local girls were sent to Cleveland to get their master's in group work. So the investment of money was there in hopes to build future professional services at the settlement.

MK: You know, now that you've mentioned that, who were the three that were sent to the Mainland, and the three that were brought to Pālama?

Jl: Okay. The three who were brought to Pālama were Bettie Witzel Burner, June Okerlund Dondlinger who is now in Connecticut—Bettie Burner still lives here—(and Elaine Paulson Wildman), and she's in Dallas. And they all, the three of (them lived in the staff cottage here in Pālama).

The three local girls who went away, wartime, on ships that crossed the Pacific, zig-zagging, you know, to dodge any torpedoes, submarines, was Janet Kuwahara Nakashima, Michiko Uno Higa, and Ruby Dewa Chuman. Ruby left years ago to live on the Mainland. Michiko and Janet continued their careers (here). Janet being in various forms of group work (in Hawai'i) and Michiko branching off into public school teaching after a while.

MK: You know, for these local women to go off to the Mainland and receive further training, was there any condition that they would have to come back to Pālama Settlement and apply their training at Pālama Settlement?

Jl: Well, it was---I don't know how specifically it applied, but if I can think of my situation, it was the same. I went away after almost two years at Pālama and went to New York School of Social Work with the settlement helping me find living quarters in New York, and the community scholarship program supporting some of the tuition monies. And the understanding was that I would return to spend at least one year back at the settlement. And I'm almost sure that probably was the same condition that Janet, Ruby and Michiko went, because they did come back and spent several, a number of years (here) until there was a change in leadership at the settlement and different things happened (in their personal lives).

MK: We know that Pālama Settlement supported your going away and those three women going away. Did the settlement continue that practice later with other people?

Jl: I know they did it with Paul Anderson, who hadn't had a degree and he was our boss. So he went to Pittsburgh and got his master's (degree) in social work. I believe he went once, came back (after) his first year, and went again for his second year. And then came back. Then eventually settled in Denver, and finally in Nashville, Tennessee. So there was that kind of investment in staff, to bring them back so the settlement wouldn't lose all of the investment that (it) had put in people.

MK: Did Pālama Settlement also invest in people in other fields other than social work? Say, the medical side or the public health or the dental side?

Jl: I don't know that. I only know a little about the Strong-Carter [Dental] Clinic, because it was probably one of the strongest arms of the settlement besides the group work. And Dr. [John H.] Dawe [clinic director 1934-59] was an old-timer here and really quite the dean of dental work, brought in a lot of, I guess you would call them interns. And they were mostly local fellows. A guy name Pinky, I can't think of his full name [Dr. Ping K. Yee], who became director of Strong-Carter after Dr. Dawe retired, stayed for years there as their director. And they continued bringing in local guys who worked in the dental clinic. So that part I knew. I also knew that Pālama had some extra space, and invited a lot of agencies (to) work in the settlement house (and made) space for them. The strongest one probably being the mental health clinics. The Mental Health Association for years was housed in the settlement house.

MK: Changing the subject back to the children at Pālama Settlement, we talked about some of the programs on site. What would you remember about the programs away from Pālama Settlement?

Jl: The main ones were the summer programs. There was a camp down in Waialua called Pālama-by-the-Sea. And that was a strong program during the summer, of course. We took hundreds of kids out there. Nationally, it was (often) referred to as the "fresh air camp." And the whole idea was to take city kids and give them a chance to get out of the city, out into the open. That was a wonderful situation for involving kids who needed group (activities as it was a twenty-four-hour program).

Social workers would refer such-and-such a family who couldn't afford (a) private camp. One of the jobs that we did in the year preparing for summer was to look for kids who might benefit from time away from home, who might need the group associations not only for the summer but for a continuing kind of relationship. And again, the public health (nurses and) the schools near summertime would send (us) lists. And one of the jobs I did was to screen those, talk with some of them, consult with the group workers, "Can you manage this type?" You know, you (had to weigh if) an individual (would) break the group up. And you can't bring in too many who had individual problems, and then you wouldn't be able to have your group activities. So one of the skills I had to learn was being able to identify whom might realistically fit into a week or two-week program. And if we had to weed them out during the process of that time of the two weeks, it would mean having to explain to the child and the family why we couldn't continue at camp. There was also a day camp at Pālama Settlement grounds, and maybe that child will fit better there so that in the day, he or she could go on home and not have to feel the pressure of living with the group.

So those were the two main functions of out-of-the-settlement outreach.

MK: And we talked a little bit about the programs for adults, mainly the one for the immigrant Japanese. Were there other programs for adults?

Jl: The home ec classes were open for adults, too, as well as for groups that wanted a home ec teacher to help them with special dinners, basic cooking (or sewing skills). The art classes would have some night classes when adults could come. Then the group workers during the year, other than summer, would have adult, young people groups. Matter of fact, Janet and Michiko had some wonderful young adults (groups), and those groups stuck for years. They became a really cohesive group. And they would come for speakers, for learning specifics on whatever it was that they were doing. They were other than high schoolers, they were working

people. So those groups lasted for a long time, even after their relationship with the settlement may have stopped, they would have outside gatherings together.

MK: And you mentioned there was sort of like a membership cost.

Ji: Mm hmm [yes].

MK: In those days, what was the cost?

Ji: Oh my goodness, I think like two dollars.

MK: For everything?

Ji: Yeah, to give them a membership, they paid two dollars. And then they would be processed for a (physical) exam, so that it would be detected if they had a heart condition or they had chronic infections, or something. And there is where we would work with the medical department, to be seen by Dr. [Joseph] Lam and his staff. I don't think we required it of adults. It may be that the membership for adults was five dollars. The entry into summer fun and summer camp programs also meant interviewing and setting fees according to ability to pay. And those referred by Child and Family (or) Department of Public Welfare, usually (were) paid (for) by the agencies. And the others who were on their own, we had set a kind of a sliding scale.

MK: I'm wondering, back in those days when you were working with these children and adults, what sorts of problems did you notice among the young people, among the kids?

Ji: Some of them just hung around because parents didn't have anything for them or they were working (and) felt like this was a safe place to go. And they sometimes disrupt the program because they may have wanted to go into a program, but would hesitate when we would offer them. And would feel uncomfortable or would feel, "Nah, I don't want to do this regularly. I want to run from one thing to the other." There was a public library (branch) right there at Pālama. And many of them came for that and would out of curiosity be interested in our program, and we would invite them (in). There were kids who would want to have come in as members, and we would try to seek the parents' support, because I think they had to sign a waiver and sign an agreement, and we wouldn't get any response even with visits to the home. Oftentimes those parents themselves were inadequate to program anything for their kids.

The kid who isn't accepted at school would (likely) not be accepted on the playground or in the groups. And those we would probably have known from the public health nurse or the schools, anyway. Because it was really community kind of effort, and that was one of the reasons (the settlement) felt professional social workers would be helpful (in) bringing the community resources together as well as being the agency that could provide the services.

And the nurses (or teachers) would tell us, "Why don't you have this?" or "Why don't you have that?" and "How come this kid isn't into this or that?" And it would be kind of a talking session when we would then say can we or is there a possibility for our opening other kinds of programs for the kids. And I think the attempt at piano lessons was one attempt to meet a community request, which didn't work (out however).

MK: Nowadays, we have problems with, say, drugs or children being involved in crimes, alcohol, problems of that sort. Were there problem like that back then?

JJ: There was some of it, but certainly not what we know now. There wasn't the affluence that made drinking, drugs, as available. There were three or four guys that I was asked to try to get close to because they hung around the settlement, oftentimes under the influence. They had—the three I'm thinking of, now—had some kind of relationship with our athletic department. In other words, they hung around enough that they were known by names, and they sometimes could be productive. I remember having Bobo who was one of the kids who was really in trouble, having him go with us (to) precamp (activities at) to Pālama-by-the-Sea. We had work groups every weekend to get the cabins ready. And we would involve them, and they would work. But we couldn't count them as steady, ongoing, and any attempt to try to get mental health help for them was something they wouldn't accept. And one of them, I remember, couple of years later he committed suicide. And so there were that kinds of problems.

We didn't have graffiti problems. We had some break-ins, but not drastic. You will find that settlement houses are somehow honored with a kind of protectiveness by the community if you've done a good job. I noticed that in New York when I was there.

Our three girls from Minnesota, the ones I told you came from [Case] Western Reserve [University], were all Haole, you know, and they were kind of blonde. And during the war there constantly were jeeps coming up, pick them up for dates, and so forth. And in the beginning we noticed some of the local guys would sit around, and kind of whisper. And we were afraid that they may get into incidents, because the men in the military had use of jeeps, and that was a privilege, because gasoline was rationed. And they came, and had these lovely blonde girls, and they would go off to dances, and so forth. There was a bit of jealousy, and so forth. But some of our male staff members, particularly in the athletic department, and Ted and Paul, we would sit around in the evenings. And the kids would say something, and we would say, "What's the problem?" And we would talk about it. And we never had any incident of where there would be a fight over the girls, or attempt to puncture their tires, or anything, which we thought was kind of a good sign that they respected that there would be some privileges that some of the staff members would have. And that was something we laugh when we think about it now. Because you could have really had a riot, you know, of misuse of jeeps, and so forth.

MK: Because Pālama Settlement was a settlement, like you mentioned those girls from the Mainland, they lived on site, yeah? How about yourself?

JJ: I did, after (the Mainland girls) left, because there was room only for three staff members. That was before some of the rooms in Strong-Carter (Dental Clinic and) the medical (clinics were) empty downstairs. I guess the VD program and some of those were wiped out, so there were empty rooms, and those were converted into dormitories. But there were only three rooms available. So when they finally left—because Michiko them came back—some of us had the privilege of the choice of living there. Even before we lived there, anyway, lot of us hung around. I know many nights I didn't go home till eight o'clock, because the program was going, and you get into your part of it. There was a wonderful camaraderie during the war there. And we could keep the program in later part of the war years up till eight. In the beginning (we) had to close (earlier because of the) blackout (hours).

And I can't say enough about the leadership, Ted and Paul. If there was a basketball game going, and we, staff, were playing some of the "pickups" around, (they) would join. The staff was there, really, much of the time, weekends particularly, and evenings. We may start work little later in the day because the kids don't really come until two o'clock after school. And lot of my home contacts and community contact were done—not right early at eight, but after the workers have been in. So there was a trade-off. We weren't overworked as such. And besides, this was (wartime and) there wasn't much we could do on our own. But under the sponsorship of the settlement, there were programs that you could (participate in).

MK: You talked about the camaraderie that you had. Maybe you could explain a little bit about the things you folks did together, or your relationships.

Jl: Well, Michiko and I would get up at 6:30 [A.M.] and we'd go jump in the pool and swim. And the caretaker would be out there cleaning, and he'd razz us (but) accommodate us. Michiko would go from there to her piano lesson. There was a piano; she'd make her own lesson time. Then she'd go upstairs, get ready, breakfast, go ahead and do her book work. And I would (go to the reception room), where I was at a strategic point for people coming in for the first time.

When a group went out to camp, we would always seek extra staff, because it's not only for protection but for company, and to service other things. Many a times, this case worker was (asked) on to do group cooking. (MK chuckles.) You know, the cook doesn't show up or nobody else knew how to cook for fifty, and you have to pitch in. We used all different hats. There was no fear about, "This is my job. I'm a case worker. I only do this." A group worker would be sick; I've known to take groups who were promised they would go to Waikahalulu Stream and fish, and I would go with them. (MK chuckles.) So the camaraderie was such that you became whatever needed to be done. And you had to trust each other, and you had to know a little bit about each other's skills.

And lunchtime, we would take off, including the secretaries, the janitor if he wanted to (for saimin or *bentōs*). And somebody had a birthday, and Ted Rhea would say, "Let's go down to The Willows [restaurant] today." And you interact, and you talked shop sometimes, and you played around. And again, it was wartime, and this was wonderful diversion, and wonderful times to socialize and play, as well as to talk shop.

MK: You talked a little bit about Ted Rhea. What do you remember about his background and about him?

Jl: He was into public health service, I believe. And he was director of the TB association for years. He was a warm, gentle, outgoing, compassionate person. He was blind about color. He hired a lot of women on his staff, you know, this was before we talked about affirmative action. He was never too high-powered or (uppity) that he couldn't come in and even use shovel and pick if we were cleaning out—(a) man who radiated warmth. Sometimes we would get upset over his dwelling on human elements instead of administering a problem. And sometimes we felt he was unfair because he didn't look at it as an administrator. We felt that the overall policies were sometimes missing, and therefore, (whoever, complained got his problem cared for). But he never was too proud to sit down and ask your opinion and how you felt about things, and he'd do that with many of us. His office was quite open, windows were always wide open, doors never closed. (He) was interested in your families and how things were going (for us as individuals).

One of the things that broke our heart was he had a two-year-old blonde son called Towhead. And during the time I was there Towhead died unexpectedly of a rather rapid infection of some sort. We would see the sadness in him. But I think he pulled through partly because he had the support of all of us. And his wife, Lynn, was also part of the family of us.

We went by first names. We called him "Mr. Rhea" when we talked about him (publicly). We would come home from camp (piled in the settlement station wagon), and he loved to sing (and would start on) some of the old songs. Paul would sing tenor, and Ted would do bass, and one of us might fake alto and others would (be) sopranos. There was kind of a joyful, group family feeling, which is part of the settlement house philosophy. You were not only bosses and drones, but you were part of the family.

MK: And then Paul [B.] Anderson, what kind of person was he?

Jl: Paul was a wonderful singer. Paul had (difficulty) adapting to local ways (at first), but he learned fast. Pidgin was hard for him, but he got so he could talk to our (Filipino) custodian. Paul was kind of a visionary. He was really sold on the idea of professionally trained social workers. I think sometimes to the dismay of some of the people who had been on staff and didn't have any degrees, (he was hard on them). Knowing that he was bringing in professionally trained workers, and he himself wasn't trained, you can understand some of the (resentment).

His wife was a trained social worker, and she was wonderful. She wasn't hired by the settlement (then as) she had two children she was caring for. (However, she, Billie, was) very helpful to think through (philosophy and goals and set up policies). She would gather with us at evenings around a picnic (table or into her living room and have long sessions together).

Those two [Anderson and Rhea] were very good together because they were compatible. Some people may have thought they went too far on this business of professional-(trained workers and group work with small groups). Pālama had served (successfully) many people for years in mass athletic activities. They couldn't understand why baseball (and soccer teams were) no longer that great; and the Olympic[-sized] swimming pool wasn't being used to the maximum for competitive swimming. And they (would) say, "Ahh, the whole Pālama lost already. These *buggahs*, they only like new ways."

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Anyway, we were talking about Ted Rhea and Paul Anderson. Now, because, say, Paul Anderson was really stressing professionalism, bringing in professionals, how did, say, board members or the workers or the community react to this change?

Jl: I don't think some of them were aware of the (philosophical) changes. They were only aware that we were (a different breed of) workers there. So some of the old-timers really felt hurt. The man who was probably one of the greatest contributors to the settlement's gift to the community (in the early days) was Nelson Kawakami. And he probably had as much as an

eighth-grade education. But he ruled that locker room and all the athletic facilities there. And he was kind of rough on the edge. And I know couple of the social workers were not too happy (with) the way he bribed the kids (or disciplined them). They didn't feel it was professional enough. But he ran that program for years (and developed skills and pride in) kids who remembered Nelson for years.

(One of) the custodians had been there for years. And you know and I know that some of the best contributors to an agency are the people who are ongoing, who know the families, know the kids in and out. And I know sometimes he'd tell me, "No waste time on that family. We had 'em for twenty years that way, you not going change; they going be like that. Go try something else." And you know, they had wisdom (and contributed in relationships that helped individuals and families in the settlement community. It wasn't openly talked about but there was ill feeling about the pay scale.) You know that if you had gone away for training, and with the directors being aware that this is what they (wanted, you were pain better than the ones without professional degrees). There were (part-time workers) like the judo (and shop) teachers, and the scout masters, (who) were effective doing what they did. And I think Paul and Ted tried to be fair (in compensating them).

And there were some on the board (of directors) who felt that we weren't doing enough in what Pālama had been known to do (best) before. (No longer were there big headlines of famous Pālama teams and athletes in the sports sections of the daily papers.)

MK: Were there any workers that lost their positions as a result of this shift?

Jl: I was not aware of that.

MK: I was wondering, back in those days, was there anything comparable to Pālama Settlement in the islands?

Jl: (Pause) I don't know, really. I don't know if Mō'ili'ili Community Center had come up by then. I know a little bit about Waiākea [Social] Settlement on the Big Island, and they were shifting to trained professional help, too. People like Bob Stenger, and John Beukama. But I never visited the settlement house there, so I didn't know for sure.

MK: When you look back on those years, how would you have characterized Pālama, the neighborhood, the area that the settlement served?

Jl: You (are) talking about geographically?

MK: The people who lived there.

Jl: I think we were reaching mainly the lower middle class, and attempting to reach some of the aspiring families who have lived there many years, but hadn't aspired to be great athletes, and were now coming to Pālama for other things than that. But there was definitely not only for strong, great teams or groups that would give honor to the settlement through (athletics). It was a real attempt to serve the ordinary families. Particularly those within the geographic area bounded (by) Liliha, King, Houghtailing, and School Street.

MK: That was good to know, the geographic area. (Chuckles)

Jl: Those were our main areas; some came [from] outside of there. Particularly the interest groups. They came from wider areas to include Dillingham, and as far as Waikahalulu, toward Nu'uuanu.

MK: You had mentioned earlier that Pālama Settlement sent you to the New York School of Social Work. You went from 1946 to '47 to get a master's. Was that something that you initiated or that Pālama Settlement initiated?

Jl: No, I had always thought that I would finish the second year some time, because the University of Hawai'i only had the certificate program of one year. And the choice of going to New York was mine. I had been accepted also at Simmons in Boston, which is also an excellent school. But like many who select schools based on (where) your mentors had gone to, Pennsylvania, Simmons, Chicago, and New York School of Social Work were the main ones the people in social work (whom) I respected went to. I chose to go to New York because (I) had always (thought of it as) the center of great activities. So when I got accepted there, I said to Ted that I would want to go and get my degree. And (typically of) Ted, he went down his list of settlement houses. Helen Hall was then director at Henry Street Settlement in New York. He arranged for me to live there, (and) work a bit (for) room and board. And then had told me of the available scholarships in town, and the community scholarship fund was then available. And so I applied and got a grant for some tuition help. In the meantime, I had been saving after '44 when I became gainfully employed. So in about three years I was able to get enough saved on my own to take care of that.

MK: You mentioned that you went to the Henry Street Settlement House. What kind of comparisons can you draw between that New York situation and what you were familiar with at Pālama?

Jl: I did not get deeply into the workings of (Henry Street) because I was there for only one year, so some of my comparisons may be shallow. Henry Street settlement had lots of things to offer. They had arms outside of the settlement house itself. It's in the Lower East Side neighborhood, which was traditionally known as a poor neighborhood where immigrants gathered first, and then worked their way up (or out). One of the things which was really eye opening was their very, very good play house. They had a theater which was located about three or four blocks away. They had a really decent music school. Real big going. It was a big operation compared to Pālama. Their ceramic shop was well equipped. The gym was down on the lower floor (and) enclosed. It always stank of perspiration and, you know, unclean shoes, and so forth.

The adjustment for me was mainly to the neighborhood, and to my reaction and my ability to become part of the community instead of standing out like a sore thumb.

They had many, many kinds of offerings, all day long, all night long. Pālama Settlement, it was kind of dead during the day except for the few adult classes. They had a credit union (and counseling center). They had adults coming in for not only English classes. They had (well-established) artists. The gal who lived next door to me was one of the refugees that left Czechoslovakia. And she was a first-class ceramist.

The children's program I was involved in was mainly the play group, what we called the game room, which was, again, a free play area where I issued equipment and tried to intervene so

there wouldn't be any big fights. The kids were pretty much like (here at) our settlement. Some who came regularly knew what to do, played well. Others who (came tried) to break up the activities.

The big thing I remembered in terms of its contribution to me was how Helen Hall attempted to use the staff as an example of how you can come from all (places and backgrounds) and become a cohesive and caring group. Many of us were students, some from Juilliard School of Music, some from school of social work, some from nursing schools. (Dinner) was a formal affair; we all had to dress and march into the dining room. (Miss Hall) would shift us around so we'd get to know each other. And at the end of the dinner hour, we always had some kind of a program. She would use staff members; the music person would lead us in singing, the Episcopalian priest would do a story telling. The priest was not part of the settlement but he lived in the neighborhood. Some of us would have to tell a little bit about where we came from and what we did. So that part was really interesting (and helped us to feel like) family. There were older women and younger students like us.

The other thing I learned was, I used to have to take the bus and the subway to go from Lower East Side to where the school was. And often at nights we wouldn't get through doing library work till midnight. I would come home by subway, and then take the bus over the Bowery, and walk several blocks from the bus stop to the settlement house. I had not been there maybe more than a week. One night I was walking home. And in those days they had what they called cellar clubs (where gangs hung out). We had been told a few things about being careful, to make yourself known that you're part of the neighborhood and you're not just wandering around. I came home, and I saw this group of young guys, maybe teenagers or young adults. And just as I was approaching, I heard one of the fellows yell out, "Henry Street." One of the (other) guys (was) trying to approach me (by) walking up the steps. And immediately, the fellow stopped, and I went by. There was silence. I was alert enough to know that the person who approached the steps was probably wanting to intercept me in some way. And just the scream, "Henry Street," stopped the whole thing. So there was a respect in that neighborhood for the settlement house. And after that, I never really worried too much, even if I came home late at nights. If you were identified as part of the neighborhood where (the settlement was) serving people, you were safe. So it was a good lesson.

MK: You were mentioning getting adjusted to the place. How was it for you? I mean, you're a woman, you're Chinese, you're from Hawai'i, and very young. How was it for you to get adjusted to this place?

Jl: Well, maybe the first night would tell you something. I had come in with two bags: one bag with my clothing and things, the other was my portable typewriter. That night, I got up and I began to itch. And I finally turned on the lights, and I recognized there were bedbugs in the bed. Now, I know bedbugs 'cause when I worked up in the army hospital, that's one of the first things you look for when the soldiers come from overseas. So I went down to the telephone operator (in the morning) and I said, "I can't sleep here tonight. There's bedbugs in my room."

And she said, "How do you know?"

I said, "Look, I got all these bites, and I know what a bedbug is."

So she told the head custodian, and he came by, and he said, "You sure you didn't bring it?"

And of course, I was pretty mad at that. And I said, "Look, I've come from Hawai'i. I've spent four weeks in Denver at a camp. I've visited friends in Chicago, in Pennsylvania, and my first night in New York I get bedbugs." I said, "I haven't had bedbugs all along. If I brought it with me, it would have bitten me (sooner)."

So they fumigated, and I stayed out that night with some friends up in (the) international house. And the second night I went back. When Abe [the custodian] asked me about that bedbug, he gave me the sign that Chinese were known to be dirty and carry bedbugs. Ahh, I don't care. That's all right. Then we had a French lady who did the rooms. And before I went to school every day, I was in the habit of making my own bed. I didn't know you leave the bed and let the maid (do it). And I used to go out—I was so starved for something green or flowering. My budget was twenty-five cents a day for lunch. And Thursdays I would skip lunch. There was a florist near the school, and I'd go buy one carnation, or whatever I could buy for a quarter and put it in the room. And that was the gift to myself for the week. One day I was leaving the room, and Marie came to do up the room. And she looked at me, in her English that was quite influenced by French, (JI speaks in a high-pitched tone) "Ah, Miss Lee, you Chineese. Your room so neat, so clean, (so beautiful)."

I thanked her, and I thought, what do you expect? You mean Chinese don't? You know, that was the stereotype, you see. And Abe had done that to me, in a way, about the bedbugs. So after that, I just left. I said, "Don't say nothing, just be yourself, and maybe they can change their minds." I was the only Chinese in that setting. You know, there were refugees from Europe, and Blacks from (U.S.). (Murtis) and Bill were Blacks, and Jean and others were from different parts of the state. So the race thing became something you had to handle. And I know I was ignorant, I'd walk in the neighborhood, and I'd see a sign that said, "Gentiles Only" and I didn't know what that meant. So I come in the dining table, and I said, "What does that mean, 'Gentiles Only'?" And you talk about Jews, we never had dealings with Jews, so I didn't know.

"Ah," somebody would say. "That's Jewish kind of habit." Well, my best friend Eve, the gal from Czechoslovakia, she and I used to run away Friday nights when they had fish at the settlement, and we couldn't eat that. We would go sometimes to a Chinese restaurant, and I would take her. And she would take me to a Jewish restaurant. So I learned about kosher, which I knew nothing about. But Eve was not Orthodox, so she could tell me a lot of this without feelings. And she would tell me about what Gentiles meant and what it implied was Jews weren't welcomed. So coming from Hawai'i, you don't know a lot of those things.

I remember one sunny winter day, I looked out and I thought, gee, I'll go to dinner—I'm not going wear a black suit, so I wore aloha shirt, which was not raggedy or anything, I thought it was okay. But I walked down the street, and everybody turned around and looked at me, because nobody wears in the middle of winter, aloha shirt, even though it was hot, you know. (MK chuckles.) And I learned to say, "Oh well. That's what we do." I would not be afraid to be myself in that sense. So you learn to respect what was new and what was there, but also, hey, if the sun is shining, and it's nice, why do you have to wear a black sweater or a black T-shirt or something? And they would tease me. They would see me go by the neighborhood. And at that time there was Arthur Godfrey Show, and there was a Leilani in it.

They would yell out, "Leilani!" and I would wave. (MK chuckles.) Because they had recognized it was Hawai'i, but they couldn't—they didn't know my name. So I'd [say] hi.

MK: And then how was school for you? You had gone through social work training at the UH, and now you're at New York.

Ji: It wasn't such an adjustment. It was pretty much the same. There were some instructors that you loved dearly and they were leaders, and there were some who were kind of flaky and fakey. And I learned that New Yorkers and Easterners talk and volunteer a lot, and take a lot of discussion time in class. I became a more silent Asian. You know, if I had something to say, I might. But otherwise there was no need to constantly have to expound on whatever. But there is that stereotype of the "mouthy, know-it-all Easterner."

My field placements were very interesting. The main field placement was in relationship to my thesis, which is using group activities to help the population that was growing older at that time. And the famous center at that time was Hudson Community Center (for) senior citizens. And I went there twice a week and did field work and also gathered material for my thesis. It was very interesting because that kind of group work kind of tied in with what Pālama was doing. (My) supervisor there (was wonderful) and it was (a) very good experience.

In addition, I had to do field work in the public welfare section. It was very depressing. Some of the things I did then, as I looked upon it, today I wonder how I dared to do it. My route was in the lower side of Brooklyn in a place called Williamsburg. And one of my clients was a young man who was on drugs. I had to go see him once a week, and I had to go interview him in his room, in a closed door. I think (today, why did I do that stuff)?

I had a number of pregnant teenagers in a section outside of Long Island City, where the only real scare I had in my year in New York was walking the street one day to one of the girls' home. A big black car came along next to me on the sidewalk and went around once and then came back again, and slowly followed (my) footsteps. At first I pretend I didn't notice. Then finally I stuck my hand in my pocket where I kept a notebook for all of my interviews, took the pencil out and starting putting the car license number. And then (the car) shot away. So it was kind of scary at that point, but you use whatever wits you have at the moment to be careful.

Aside of that, New York was a wonderful experience. I guess having all my life learned that you had options, and that you have to be aware of your surroundings, you just go. You were young, you were (daring), you didn't really (MK chuckles) care about danger as such, but you were not naive either.

MK: And then when you came back from New York, based on what you had learned or experienced during your stay there, what did you apply at Pālama? Or what helped you at Pālama when you came back?

Ji: Well, I think the main thing it did, it gave me little more confidence in what I had been trying to do the two years before. And you weren't hitting in the dark so much. You had known that these things were also being tried other wheres, and they've had their failures and successes. At the senior center, they were trying to integrate lost people on the street or elderly who sat on the park benches all day long into a program where they use journalism, art, music and all

of that to get them to feel community and also (use) past or latent skills (to) rejuvenate their desire for living. So having had that feeling of confidence in that we were not lost in the Pacific, that some of the things we were doing were right, and these were the things that you aimed for, and of course, be more realistic. You don't get so mad at yourself you can't get Bobo to go down to the mental health clinic, that there'll always be a fringe that you're not going to be able to help. So my confidence in that kind of setting made it possible to do what I had to do a lot easier. Then our three girls from [Case] Western Reserve were (back) there, and we would try as much as we could to work with the schools, health department and all, to put as many of these kids who are kind of lost, into established groups.

By then the war was over. We were focusing on helping young people think more of vocations. I remember one of the good things that Pālama did in their group settings with the high school groups was setting models and goals for them. One of the groups that Janet Nakashima had, had a couple of real smart kids at Farrington [High School]. And the man whom I was later to marry was working at Dole [i.e., Hawaiian Pineapple Co.]. And he said to me one day, "Don't you have some good kids at Pālama?"

I said, "Well, there're plenty good kids there at Pālama. What are you talking about?"

He worked in the section which (was called) the IBM (office), and what today would be the computer center, I guess. He was looking for some people who can handle clerical work, and do analysis. Up till then, Dole was only hiring from St. Louis School, because St. Louis at one time was known for building accountants, you know, the kind of business school types of kids.

So I remember asking Janet, "Give me a couple of names." I said, "This friend of mine wants to hire (someone) at Dole (from Pālama). He said we should keep some of the jobs in our own community. Why only go to St. Louis High School?"

So we referred two people. Years later, after Jim and I had been married, and he was getting ready to retire from Dole, one of these guys, Henry Mishima, worked for social security. And he said, "I remember you because you gave me my first chance." From Pālama's connection he went into Dole and he did all of his student-time work at Dole. And then continued his education in finances, (and business), and ended up at (the) social security office. It was quite pleasing for me that through us at Pālama, we're able to get this young man (into his career). Of course, he turned out to be very, very helpful because when Jimmy [JI's first husband] died, (Henry) said to me, "Any time you have problems with social security, or where to go, or how to do it, call me." So he returned the favor when I was widowed, and showed me how to take care of the medical expenses, and what to do to help my kids get some grants.

So that was part of the attempt to help the young people feed into the community. Janet and Mike worked with Farrington School in many of these (situations). I think Winifred Ishimoto was helping at our settlement house (about this time as a volunteer). And she was enamored with the social work that was being done, (and went into the profession. She ended up teaching at the UH School of Social Work.)

Another one who started at Pālama as athletic volunteer and part-time worker was Katsugo Miho, (who) became a judge, (now retired). (He has said that) the experience (at) Pālama and (his) concern for young people (had some influence in his becoming a lawyer).

- MK:** Were there any other changes that you were aware of compared from the time that you had left and the time that you came back at Pālama?
- Jl:** The leaders were more aggressively working on increasing the impact of group activities to enrich the lives of young people, and also to help the ones who were having difficulty, move into (group) [activities]. Now, Michiko Uno [Higa] did a lot of work when she was at [Case] Western Reserve with a (psychiatrist) named Fritz Redl. He was one of the pioneers in using groups as a therapeutic means for people in difficulty. I remembered over and over Michiko talking about the time she was at Redl's camp—I believe this was in Chicago the summer she worked there—and how she saw this happen, and this is what she was doing.
- At the same time, however, we were being criticized by some folks, including some of the old-timers, that we were spending too much time and too much money on too few people. Because when you limit yourself to smaller groups, you don't have as much energy or equipment or time to spend on mass activities. So that part, when I left Pālama, always seemed to be still a kind of struggle that people saying the small groups were fine for what they were, but they were too expensive and they were too limited to reach out to other groups. And they may be right, you know. I notice that today, Pālama is still focusing more on the smaller group, but even more (deeply) maladjusted people. And maybe those in our times are saying, "You're spending too much on those. It's that middle group that's not getting enough attention." So whenever you make changes there's a residue of those who really feel that you bummed out on those who got so much (previously).
- MK:** I also know that during the time that you had been away, they started something like the Kalihi-Pālama Community Council.
- Jl:** Oh, they had that at that time, too, (perhaps not by that exact name).
- MK:** They had that before. . . .
- Jl:** Yeah. The businessmen, (the educators, politicians of the politicians of the area were involved in trying to plan and coordinate long-range plans for the area. I think of people such as Stephen Kanda of DOE, Frank Loo, Lloyd Wong—politicians—business people like the Pratts, Rathes, and Dillinghams.)
- MK:** Were you involved in . . .
- Jl:** No, I was not at that time.
- MK:** I know that you were there at Pālama for one year, yeah?
- Jl:** Mm hmm [yes].
- MK:** [Nineteen] forty-seven to '48. During that one year, again, what was your main work? Was it a continuation, basically?
- Jl:** Yes. I don't think they had filled that position when I left, because they knew I was coming back. But in the meantime, Janet and Mike and Ruby had known what I had done because we had worked together that one year after they came back. They were attempting to reach out. I

think one of them was assigned, for instance, at summer camp. That was a (busy) time when you had to talk with agencies, and you had to either accept or not accept [referrals]. Sometimes (those referred) were the hardest kids, the kids who were having the most problems. You always had to weigh whether you were going to kill the group by bringing in somebody who needed help, which then you don't have the treatment for them anyway. Or you would bring only one or two and hope that the group is strong enough to overcome some of the disruptive things that they would do. And I think because we had worked together, they were able to discern some of that.

For me, I can honestly say that my skills in group work became sharper. And thereafter they always kidded me, "You're only half case worker, you're a group worker," in a sense. But my skills became sharper. I knew what areas I could do group (work), and I also became more confident I could run groups. And in (my) future work that I did I was (at different times a) camp director, (a) summer school director, (a) camp social worker with the family service in New York where we were bringing kids who were having rough times, into a camp setting up in Ossining, New York. And all these things that I had experienced made it possible to move into that direction.

MK: I was wondering, why did you leave Pālama Settlement?

Jl: Well, I was getting married and going to live in the East, which I did for six years. It was hard, but that's a choice I had to make, because my prospective husband wasn't going to come back to Hawai'i.

MK: And then during those six years, what did you do on the Mainland?

Jl: Well, I worked in the Jewish community center as a game room attendant on a part-time basis. I worked as a schoolteacher in Connecticut and taught home ec. I worked in a school system in New Jersey as a visiting teacher, but the kids called me "the hooky cop," because my job was to go search for the kids who didn't come to school and reasons for them, and then work with the families. And sometimes, even take them to court. But it was a job that was very, very interesting because there were a lot of good things that came (out of it). Sometimes you'll find out that the kid had a broken leg and nobody had known and would have been out of school for a month or two. Then we would order home instructions for that. Then there would be pregnant teenagers, even then. Then other times it was going into bowling alleys, and in families' basements where the kids would get. . . .

END OF SIDE TWO

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MK: We were just talking about your being the hooky cop, and your going down to basements.

Jl: And into bowling alleys, and wherever it was thought that the person not in school may be hanging out. And always reporting back to the parents, who, many of the time, didn't have any idea that their kid wasn't in school. It called for a lot of contacts with families. Some of them worked during the day so I would meet them at night. Then eventually, also working

with the community psychiatrist and the social workers in the community. Eventually some of them had to be taken to court, and I would have to do all the write-up and present material. I never got myself into situations where there would be any kind of confrontation of a physical type. Because if I couldn't get the parents agreeable to come to court, we had a working relationship with the detectives in the town police department who would deliver the summons for me.

It was fun because you got to work with all kinds of people. I learned fast that this isn't only happening to low-class, low-income, poor families. I can still remember the doctor's family in the community, where we had nine of their kids. When I came along I had number six and seven. But the police and other people remember that this family had problems all through their life.

I was in the minority, but I felt I could handle that very well. I had proven it. So it was no big deal. There were mostly Italians and Irish people that I had to deal with. I still have friendships from those days.

MK: I know that after spending, let's see, you were there till about 1954, then you divorced and you came back. And when you came back to Hawai'i, I'm curious about the type of social work that you continued here in the islands.

JJ: Well, it was to take a different form. (I) was being a lobbyist for children's legislation. At that time there was a Commission on Children and Youth, which still exists today, although there's talk about wiping that department out. I think currently, they have twenty-two workers. We didn't run programs those days. There was only me and a secretary. My main job was to get the main agencies that dealt with children and the court, the health department, education, social service, and labor department to talk to each other. To handle particular problems that cross all those lines, but they had never really taken time to sit down and figure it out. Of course, one of the biggest things we did while I was working there, was to provide the first community service for the—today called the mentally challenged, I guess. In those days we talked about mental retardation. And that was when the schools were ordered by the legislature to begin to have classes for the educable, (and the health department to set up clinics for diagnosis and treatment). So that was a job that required a lot of meeting times with all the different heads, and then writing up reports that's agreeable to all of them, and then presenting it to the legislature to provide (for funds and positions).

That job lasted till I was remarried and was pregnant. I went into retirement, so to speak, for twelve years just raising the family. Then very quickly after that, when the daughter was in the sixth grade and my son was in the second grade, it was time for me to get back into a job. My husband was to retire in about four years, and there would probably not be sufficient funds to send them through college.

I went back and worked first, in part-time jobs with the state hospital as a social worker, as a nutritionist lecturer at (a) senior center, then as a lecturer for Head Start staff with the University [of Hawai'i], then part-time worker with Teacher Corps, which was trying to train teachers to work with disenchanted, unmotivated kids.

Then I finally got a full-time job with the state Department of Education, and went into a job that I loved very dearly, because it combined my experience and my training both in home ec

and in social work. With another teacher, (we) started a class for the pregnant teenagers on the windward side which drew (students) from Kahuku to Waimānalo. We had it in an elementary school. (I) enjoyed that job wonderfully for thirteen years. And saw it develop from just a few classes to a full (day) program. (We were) able to give them credits in a whole variety of subjects with the help of couple of part-time teachers.

MK: I think you mentioned that sometimes you've met these girls . . .

Ji: Oh yes.

MK: . . . who are now women.

Ji: Oh yes. I see them on the street, and we talk about their families. (Some) of them now have children who are old enough (to graduate from college). Some of them are out in the work field. In that job (I was able to) use many, many different skills from all the different kinds of jobs that I've (had) in the past.

MK: As you look back on all your experiences in social work, you retired at age sixty-two, what you say were Pālama Settlement's contributions to the community? As a social worker looking at Pālama Settlement?

Ji: I think Pālama really tried to meet community needs at the different levels. There was a philosophy of not having to keep only the old ways going. And the need of the community was such that they had to change programs with the times. To Pālama I give thanks that I was allowed to kind of free wheel in my time, in an area that they were trying to promote. They were really quite brave to invest in a brand-new social worker out of school. They were smart enough to protect me and them, to some extent, by hitching us to a established child and family service to kind of guide and make sure I didn't just go off the deep end, and they wouldn't do the same. I'm grateful for the times at Pālama where there was such a focus on the need to establish your own community even in your staff. Because any lack of that would have defeated the program that you were trying to do, because you would be always taking care of your own little ego, or your own little prestige. But there was a wonderful leadership and situation created where you had your say and you also had to listen to others. So, in the lifetime of work, perhaps three years is not that very much, but you can say that at the young stage of employment that I was in, it was very helpful. And the fact that there was this urging to go on and get more training and learn more, and be more confident and be able to look at your activities and see if you were heading in that direction, and if not, not to be afraid to pull back and do something else.

MK: I think, too, your sharing that yourself and those three other women were sent for further schooling, shows that Pālama Settlement made an investment in people. And the community really reaped the benefits, not just Pālama itself, but the larger community.

Ji: That's right. Even if it wasn't always at Pālama, it diffused into other agencies and other states, even.

MK: As you look back on Pālama, what kind of feelings does it bring up in you?

Ji: I guess just kind of awe that we dared to do much that we did. Perhaps it's providence that it

happened during the wartime, where for us, it was personal involvement and connection in the community. Because wartime can be a time when you disperse and you go on different tracks. I like to think that Pālama also learned from us that the group offerings can be helpful in many different ways, and the old model is not necessarily the only and the best, but you can change and you can also keep what is good.

MK: Thank you for the interview.

JI: You're welcome. We've taken a long time.

END OF INTERVIEW

Reflections of Pālama Settlement

Volume I

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