

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Teiki Yoshimoto, 83, former Honolulu City and County worker and taxicab driver

"I used to be crazy for movie. We play hookey. There used to be Hawai'i Theater, small one. Right across, the Empire Theater. And ten o'clock (a.m.), we fool around the ice cream parlor and all da kine. The show start at ten, see. Go into Hawai'i Theater till about twelve o'clock. Finish that, go across the street, Empire Theater. And then, finish about two o'clock. Then we start walking, going back. Go Japanese school. Attend regular every time. But Haole school, we take off. Plenty cut class."

Teiki "Turkey" Yoshimoto was born in Honomū, Hawai'i, in 1903.

His parents, Chukichi and Tsuyo Yoshimoto left Kumamoto, Japan in 1899 to work at Hakalau Plantation on the Hamakua Coast of the Big Island.

The family later moved to O'ahu to work at Honolulu Plantation in 'Aiea when Yoshimoto was just four years old. He recalls seeing Halley's comet and remembers also when many Japanese families were ordered off the plantation during the big 1909 Japanese Strike.

Some of those families, he says, went to work for Dillingham on the first drydock in Pearl Harbor and lived at Watertown in huge tents set up by the company.

He first started work in the pineapple fields of Libby, McNeil and Libby in Kahalu'u, studied to be a Buddhist priest at the old Japanese High School near Fort Street, and went to Stockton, California to lease farm land in the fertile delta of the Bay Area near San Francisco.

After returning to the Islands, he has resided in Waikīkī and Pālolo.

Tape No. 13-50-1-85 and 13-51-1-85

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Teiki Yoshimoto (TY)

March 27, 1985

Pālolo, O'ahu

BY: Michael Mauricio (MM)

MM: This is an interview with Teiki Yoshimoto at his home in Pālolo Valley on March 27, 1985. Interview conducted by Michael Mauricio.

Okay, Mr. Yoshimoto, can you tell me little bit about your family? Like, where did your father come from?

TY: My father come from Japan, Kumamoto-ken.

MM: Did you know what year he came?

TY: Ah, I think about 1899, I think. Because my brother was born 1900, see? So, they got to be here before that, 1899.

MM: Why did he come over here?

TY: He came as a immigrant (contract sugar labor). But immigrant law passed and all dissolved, see. So, only about three months, and they were out of contract.

MM: Oh, he came to work on a plantation, then?

TY: Yeah, yeah.

MM: Which plantation was this?

TY: He was sent to Hilo.

MM: To Hilo? To work at the Hilo Sugar Company?

TY: Honomū Plantation, I think. No, no, no. Hakalau. Hakalau, that's where my brother was born. Yeah, Hakalau.

MM: Oh, okay. What about your mother?

TY: My mother [and father] came together.

MM: They were married already?

TY: Oh, yeah.

MM: What was your parents' name?

TY: Chukichi Yoshimoto and Tsuyo Yoshimoto.

MM: Did your mother do any kind of work on the plantation?

TY: Well, she worked. Plantation, just a little while. Yeah, helping. You know, wahine, they go around da kine holehole, and all da kine, no? Hoe, cut weeds. We call that hō hana.

MM: Oh, she used to work plantation, too?

TY: Yeah, yeah. All of them. I think nearly all of them who came first. Oh, yeah, some of them, they never left town, eh? Yeah, most of them, they all go plantation.

MM: You know how much money they made back then?

TY: Oh, men was getting about eighteen dollars a month, and the wahines less than that, you know. Yeah. I don't know exactly, but I think less than that.

MM: Okay. You said your brother was born in Hakalau? Your oldest brother?

TY: Yeah, Hawai'i, Hakalau. Yeah, in 1900.

MM: Nineteen hundred. How many brothers and sisters you have?

TY: I've got a real sister, one only. But one was adopted.

MM: Where was she adopted? She was adopted here?

TY: Yeah, adopted here. Honolulu. We stay Honomu, Hawai'i just for a few years, and then came over here, Honolulu. Waimalu, they call it. 'Aiea Plantation, but it's a place named Waimalu.

MM: When were you born?

TY: I was born in [1903 in] Honomū, Hawai'i.

MM: Honomū? You were born in the house?

TY: I think so. No hospital those days. Maybe they have, but not for that kind of birth.

MM: You had midwife, then?

TY: Midwife, that's right, yeah. Some of them, without midwives, too.

MM: Without midwives?

TY: Sure. Japanese, they're strong, you know.

MM: What do you remember about that area? Do you have any recollections of Honomū?

TY: I don't know very much about Honomū, but after forty-five years, I went once. I heard it's altogether different like before. There used to be a railroad track and they turned that into a highway. And you try and pass around that.

MM: You remember seeing trains passing when you were small?

TY: No, I never see. I came out Honolulu when I was about three years old, maybe, you see.

MM: When your father moved to Honolulu, he brought all you folks?

TY: Yeah, all of us. We went 'Aiea Plantation.

MM: He went to work on the plantation, 'Aiea . . .

TY: Yeah, yeah.

MM: Oh, that's Honolulu Plantation, then?

TY: Honolulu Sugar, that was, I think.

MM: Okay. What year was that, [when] you guys came over?

TY: Oh, I think was '07--1907 or '08, though. I'm not sure.

MM: And where were you guys living at that time?

TY: Waimalu. Yeah, that's a little past 'Aiea--Waimalu. That's 'Aiea Plantation, see. Honolulu Sugar, anyway.

MM: You lived in a camp, then?

TY: Yeah, we lived in a camp.

MM: Could you tell me just about where that camp was? You know, maybe, you remember like Moanalua Road?

TY: No, inside of Moanalua Road. Way inside. They used to have a pump over there, see. To pump [water]. Big one. And that's where I used to go. All around the Honolulu Sugar Company--'Aiea Plantation, anyway.

MM: That was in the valley, then?

TY: In the valley, yeah.

MM: Have you been up there recently?

TY: Yeah, I went there about ten or fifteen years ago, look around. Altogether different, see.

MM: Is that the place there's the pig farm over there now? Minami Pig Farm?

TY: Oh, Minami? No, past that.

MM: It's past that?

TY: Yeah. Past that, and then into the valley. Yeah, Minami was a great man on the piggery.

MM: Yeah. You know that family?

TY: Yeah, I know that family. In fact, the wife, we went school the same time, see.

MM: So, how long did you folks stay [in Waimalu]?

TY: I think [until] about 1910. So, about two or three years, I think. Two or three years. They had a big strike those days [1909], see. And we were all kicked out of that place there. Dillingham just started that drydock, you know. The big drydock. And that's where the guys over there, Waimalu bunch, move over to Watertown.

MM: Watertown?

TY: Yeah, what they call Watertown. Right in Pearl City. Yeah, this side of Pearl City, they used to call. The Navy yard, anyway. The Navy yard wasn't like that before.

MM: Was it across from 'Ewa Beach side?

TY: No, way on this side, yet. Yeah, way on this side. Across 'Aiea. [Watertown was located where the present Hickam Air Field is.]

MM: Was there a lot of people living over there?

TY: Oh, Japanese, yeah. Plenty guys living there. It was a small town, see. But we were in a camp, a tent house. Big tent house, you know. Just like warehouse. We stayed there little while and work on the drydock, see. But, oh, just about few months later, they kick us out--the whole Japanese bunch. They said they [Japanese] cannot work like the Russians do. Russians on the other side of the railway, and Japanese on this side. They kick 'em all out. After that, I think we moved to Honolulu after that, yeah. And we lived around 'A'ala Park. The 'A'ala Park before was small, but there used to be a camp on the other side, see, tenement.

MM: When you were living at Watertown, you said there was tents?

TY: Yeah, large, big tent, oh, boy.

MM: That was all temporary temporary housing?

TY: Mm hmm [yes]. Big tent, you know. Oh, real big one.

MM: How many people lived under that?

TY: Yeah, hundreds of them. But big tents. Just like a building, you know.

MM: Who provided that?

TY: Dillingham. They just started that drydock. And the first drydock blew up, see.

MM: Blew up?

TY: Yeah, and so, [built a] second one. That's the second one.

MM: Is that the same drydock they said had the shark god . . .

TY: Still the same one, yeah.

MM: . . . and they had to have some kahuna come over there?

TY: Yeah, that's what they say. Kahuna. Kahuna bust 'em up. You cannot build anything over there, that's what the Hawaiians said. So, they get the head of the chicken to sacrifice or something like that. And then, second one was okay. So, the Haoles still believed that, too, you know. That's why, even the stadium, they said they did something, yeah?

MM: Mm hmm, yeah.

TY: This new stadium, Aloha Stadium. But they had that kind, really superstitious. But sometimes it works. Because long ago, I never see one, but they said there used to be ghosts.

MM: Ghosts?

TY: Yeah, they used to go around here.

MM: Yeah? What kind of ghosts?

TY: Human being ghost. I hear that, you know, they used to call that Red Hill, eh? And the road was going way around that way, and going back over there nighttime, it was a rainy day. They said it goes around. Many people seen that. Not only one or two. Many guys.

MM: You saw?

TY: No, I never had a chance to see, so I never believe it. But I believe what the other guys say. What they say true. Maybe imagination, I don't know.

MM: What did they see, though? Did they see just like lights?

TY: Yeah, the round [ones]. That one, I believe. Because, you know, when things get rot, they get the certain kind of blue color or something like color come out. That's the one all pile up, and go like that, and come out, see. That's the real stuff.

MM: What they call that?

TY: You go way up in the mountain, you see the rotten wood, eh? You look nighttime good, that thing shining with blue light. Yeah, even now. But I think human bodies stronger than that. So, that one comes out from that. Somehow, they come out, and then get together, I guess. That's what the Japanese call that hi-no-tama. But I don't know what the Haoles call. That fellow, my first cousin, he saw. He said, that thing, when that thing is in the front, it's all right. You feel all right. But when the thing in the back of you, you know, you feel funny. Doesn't do anything, you know. That thing just go around this way and float around.

MM: Oh, well, you never saw that, eh?

TY: No. I never see it, but I heard that.

MM: You mentioned when you were little, you saw the comet . . .

TY: Comet, yeah. That one, I saw that. Morning and night. Oh, it's beautiful, real beautiful.

MM: How long did it last?

TY: Oh, I think about ten days.

MM: Ten days? Halley's comet?

TY: Halley's comet. That's the one, uh huh. So, I see in the paper, the other guy was saying--eighty-two [years old], he say he's going to see Halley's comet again. So, I think I'm one of them, too. Eighty-two, well, that's just about that age they can just see, you know. Nighttime, it's hard to see. But we can see, clear nights. In the morning, all bright and, oh, just like a sun coming up. Beautiful.

MM: That bright?

TY: Yeah, bright. In the morning, yeah.

MM: During the day you can still see it?

TY: No, nighttime, you know. Daytime, you cannot see. But nighttime, you can see far away, see. So, I see that comet that way. See, east to west. Yeah.

MM: The thing had any kind of color?

TY: Yeah, bright color. Nighttime was better. Kind of red, kind of pink, kind of white. I think look rainbow color, all mix up. Beautiful, yeah. Morning and night, it's different in the color. Yeah, because distance, eh?

MM: I meant to ask you, what did your father do when he worked at 'Aiea . . .

TY: Plantation?

MM: Mm hmm [yes].

TY: My father was not a lazy guy, but he tried to work with his mind mostly. And he never want to work on the field much, see. He had all kind of sickness called rupture [hernia], I think. Because one side of the testicle, big, you know. All the guts go in there, I think. So, he cannot work. He work little bit, and that thing, oh, bulge out about this, you know. And they never think of operation or anything those days, you know. That plantation doctor gave you epsom salt. This kind of. . . . What that other oil, now? Castor oil? Yeah, that's all they give. And then, maybe they had some aspirin. Yeah, that's the kind of doctor. They don't operate.

MM: They had hospital, eh, in the . . .

TY: Yeah, they had a [plantation] hospital, 'Aiea, but I don't think they [the workers] did. Usually, when big sickness, operation like that, they come to town. You know, the hospital was only about three dollars a day, those days? Three dollars a day.

(Laughter)

MM: To stay in the hospital?

TY: Yeah. No, my old man never---he never worked very much in the field, so he took care of this kind of cook house, kitchen, you know. Anyway, they call that o-gokku--cook house.

MM: O-gokku?

TY: Yeah, kitchen. All the single guys, they come around and eat over there, see? Oh, and they charge 'em by month.

MM: Just in the camp, though?

TY: Yeah, that's in the camp. There's plenty o-gokku. He took care of that and, usually, furo--that bath, eh?

MM: Oh, yeah? The furo?

TY: Yeah. So, that's what he was doing. He was doing all right without

working [in the fields], but the strike came up. That's when we have to leave.

MM: What kind of food did he cook for the [workers]. . . .

TY: Oh, real terrible. Terrible stuff. Yeah, but they get along. Cheap, you know. Eighteen dollars a month, so they have to only pay about five dollars or six dollars a month, I think, for the food.

MM: All the working guys?

TY: Yeah, uh huh. But they get along all right.

MM: When you were living over there, what did you do as a small boy?

TY: I was kid. I was kid, so I have to go to school, eh?

MM: Oh, you went to school?

TY: Yeah, I went 'Aiea School, one year. One or two years, I think. Yeah, I started over there.

MM: What kind of children were over there?

TY: All kind. Portuguese, Spanish, very few American. I think, Haole, no more. Yeah. Chinese, Japanese, Korean. Yeah.

MM: Had plenty?

TY: Plenty. No Haole, no Filipino boy. Not one Filipino, those days.

MM: Oh, but when you came, they [Filipinos] were just starting to come, I think. Yeah? Nineteen six [1906].

TY: I think they came, I think, about after 1912, I think, huh? [Nineteen] twelve or '13, that's when the Filipinos start coming in.

MM: The first group came in 1906.

TY: Nineteen six? Oh, was very few here and there, I guess, huh?

MM: Yeah.

TY: Yeah, Filipinos are good workers. Yeah. Those days, but they were a lot of rascal buggers, they were. Most of them they shoot crap, gamble, and all da kine, you know. They rough bunch. But they were good workers, yeah.

MM: Japanese did that too, eh?

TY: Same thing, but not so much like Filipino boys. Filipino boys, nearly every one gambled. And the trouble is, you know, when they come with wife, it's all right. Not much wahine. And certain guys,

married guys, come around. You know, there so many single, they just want to fool around, see? That what happened to Japanese, same thing. They kill each other sometimes. Yeah, and plenty husband, the good ones, they get somebody's wife stolen. He ran away. He get disgusted and went Mainland. Plenty guys. Filipinos, same thing. They fool around. But they were more educated than Japanese in American way.

MM: Oh, yeah?

TY: Yeah. First-class dancing. Ho, boy, going around, fox-trot, and everything. Gee whiz. Wonderful. Yeah, they're good.

MM: So, anyway, you was in school. What kind of classes they teach you?

TY: Oh, about the same, I think. But the teachers, those days, were mostly from Mainland, you know, Haole wahines.

MM: Haole wahines?

TY: Yeah, they were very good, very kind. That's the kind of teacher we need. Yeah, better than local teachers.

MM: Why you say that?

TY: They so sweet. Nice, kind. That's the kind. From the heart, they teaching, see? Yeah. But now days teacher, oh, boy. There's no such thing as strike and all that those days. I think the teacher's life, they should sacrifice, see? Yeah, now days kind, they all go for money. No such thing as sacrifice.

MM: What kind of games you guys played as a small kid?

TY: Oh, oh--you mean marble?

MM: Marbles.

TY: Yeah, and peewee. You used to get da kine and hit 'em, eh?

MM: What is peewee?

TY: Peewee is a long kind of stick stuff, you know, made of stick. One side sharp [of the short one]. And about three inches, some of them five inches. They get one stick, extra stick, and hit that thing. And that thing bounce up, you hit that thing. The farther it goes, you count the step with that stick.

MM: With the stick that you hit?

TY: Yeah, hit 'em far away. Yeah, peewee. P-E-E-W-E-E. I don't see them playing anymore, that kind. Yeah, marble. Bet marble and all that.

MM: Yeah? What kind games you guys used to play with the marbles?

TY: They call that Pākē hua, the rough kind of marble. Not the agates, you know. Yeah, agates (glass marbles), very few.

MM: Pākē hua?

TY: Yeah. That's one kind of marble made in China, I think. Was made of stone, rough. Yeah, we used to play. Make a ring sometimes, shoot that out. Whatever is out of the ring, that's yours, see.

MM: Yeah. I never heard that term, though. Pākē hua.

TY: Yeah, Pākē hua. But now, I don't see this. All agates, and made of glass.

MM: You guys used to play chase, ringer, hāpu'upu'u, you know, and . . .

TY: And probably hide, eh?

MM: Hide?

TY: Hide-and-seek.

MM: You ever played a game they call "hide egg?"

TY: Oh, I never did very much. We hardly can see any egg, those days. . . . When I was a kid, yeah. Oh, yeah, I used to go steal chicken egg, once in a while. And we didn't know how to eat [the egg], so we just sucked that thing.

MM: Raw?

TY: Raw. If you take 'em home, the parents go for us. "Where did you get it?" There was one Chinaman over there. He had a big banana plantation of his own, see. Maybe he had about five acres, across the river. All banana. And this guy, fellow named Ah Kan.

MM: Ah Kan?

TY: Yeah, and he had a straw roof house, all around. That's where the chicken climb up from the hau bush, and then laid eggs. We go over there and steal 'em, see? Yeah, plenty.

MM: That wasn't the fighting chicken, though?

TY: No. No fighting chicken those days. I never see one. Yeah. Maybe Honolulu, they had maybe, but not in the countryside.

MM: You said the river. What river was that?

TY: Yeah, there's one running right out to Waimalu. Still. The river is still there.

MM: Did you ever go fishing over there, crabbing?

TY: No. No such thing as that. No fish, nothing. Just every once in a while come real dry. And then, when rainy season, that thing come full over there. So, not steady kind.

MM: You didn't go swimming inside?

TY: Yeah, I went swimming in there. I almost die one time, drown. Just like a pond.

MM: Just like a pond?

TY: Yeah. It was a river all right, but when big storm, rainy days, hoo, that thing is all fill up. Danger. When I used to go to school, we pass through the river. See, there's rocks here and there, and jump on top that, and then we used to go school.

MM: Where was that 'Aiea School?

TY: We went to 'Aiea School. Pretty far away, shee, boy. About three or four miles, I think, from Waimalu.

MM: That was below the mill?

TY: Go through the sugar cane field and, yeah, just terrible, oh, boy. I used to hate to go to school, but I get licking if I don't.

MM: You ever had to go to Japanese[-language] school?

TY: No. I never go Japanese[-language] school, but some guys went. Yeah. You know, the people down 'Aiea. Yeah. I think Waimalu people went, too. Very few, though. Pretty far, see. You go to Haole school, nine o'clock [a.m.], and then, two o'clock [p.m.], it's over, eh? And they go [to Japanese-language school] about three o'clock to four o'clock [p.m.], maybe five o'clock. Japanese[-language] school, two hours. Yeah. But I didn't go that.

MM: What did that Pearl Harbor area look like?

TY: Oh, nothing but bananas and mangoes; and some place, sugar cane. Not much.

MM: They had rice?

TY: Yeah, yeah. Rice, they have. Taro, plenty.

MM: Plenty taro?

TY: Yeah. Mostly taro over there on the beach side.

MM: On the Pearl Harbor shore side?

TY: Yeah, yeah.

MM: Who used to run that, though?

TY: Well, all individually.

MM: Individuals?

TY: Yeah, uh huh. You know the Sumida Farm?

MM: Sumida, the water . . .

TY: Used to be all taro over there.

MM: Watercress?

TY: Yeah, after that, watercress. Before, no more watercress over there.

MM: Oh, they [the Sumida family] were living there when you folks were over there?

TY: No, no. Sumida was in Honolulu. They started here [in Honolulu]. He was a good massage man, see. Yeah, that Sumida. Then, he started down there. That isn't very long. Maybe fifty years. Before that was all taro.

MM: All taro? Hawaiian people or. . . .

TY: Hawaiians? I think Chinese, mostly.

MM: Chinese? They had one taro factory someplace nearby?

TY: Taro patch was all run by Chinese. Hawaiians, very few, unless they own a place over there. One acre, half acre, like that. Hawaiians usually are lazy people, you know. Not lazy, but they don't care. They just live today, today; tomorrow, tomorrow. That's the kind of type Hawaiians are. They're good people, but don't want to work hard. But when they go outside, they work. They good. Hawaiians, mechanically, they're very good--intelligent. Yeah. You know, the truck drivers and all, mechanics and all of that, Hawaiians are good at it. But when come to work in the field like that, he's no good. He just want to be a foreman or something like that. In general, Hawaiians are good people.

MM: Okay. So, when you folks moved from Waimalu, from Watertown, you said you guys moved to Honolulu?

TY: Yeah, Honolulu.

MM: Where did you guys stay over there?

TY: By 'A'ala Park. They had tenement houses over there.

MM: Tenement houses?

TY: Yeah. The 'A'ala Park on the other side was all filled with camps. Buildings, hotels, and all da kine. Oh, was properous place over there. All around there.

MM: What did your father do then?

TY: Old man was running that bathhouse over there--furo.

MM: Where was it [located]?

TY: Right on 'A'ala Street. Everybody, they all go to public bath, see? And they pay so much. But the old man wasn't making very good. See, some nights, only thirty-five cents for the whole night. So, he have to move from over there. Then we went down the countryside. Kahalu'u. Where they had the pineapple [fields]---little bit pineapple, see.

MM: So that bathhouse . . .

TY: Only about a half year or one year, I think.

MM: All you folks used to help him out?

TY: No, I did nothing. We used to go school.

MM: What was the time that he ran that? I mean, when did he open the bathhouse so that people . . .

TY: Oh, that's nighttime.

MM: What time?

TY: From about five o'clock [p.m.], maybe, to about twelve [midnight].

MM: To twelve [o'clock]? They would take a bath that late?

TY: Sure, some of them, eh?

MM: What kind of people used to be in that area when you . . .

TY: Plenty Japanese over there. Yeah. Chinese, too, plenty. Chinese and Japanese, mostly.

MM: This was little after the [Chinatown] fire, though, so . . .

TY: After the fire, yeah. I don't remember the fire.

MM: They were still rebuilding? Could you still see, like, burnt areas?

TY: Yeah, one pole over there was over there for about maybe forty years after the fire. That's the only pole. Half-burned, was still

sticking up.

MM: Yeah? Telephone pole?

TY: That's on Pauahi Street. But it was all rebuilt already when we came, see.

MM: There wasn't any plague? Did they ever have an outbreak still yet?

TY: Plague? No, no, no. I never heard of any bubonic plague like that. Hawai'i governor, I think, was crazy guys. Why they want to burn certain place? Why don't they watch that place? Break up some of the ones first, and then put a . . . They got to get the fire trucks and all da kine. They shouldn't have burned that. By mistake, they burn the whole block over there. Not only [one] block, maybe two, three, four, maybe. Big fire. Unnecessary kind. But you can't blame 'em. You know, those days, they had a fire engine, horse-driven, you know. Yeah, the horse has a big hoof like this. I don't see how they can. . . . That engine stuff, I think, not very long. Before that, was all horse.

MM: All horse, yeah. You guys used to travel by horse before?

TY: Those days was wagon and a horse. Afterward, they get this half mule, half horse. They call that hoki.

MM: Hoki? What's that?

TY: That thing was little bigger than the jackass but smaller than a regular horse. But they were tough. Hawai'i mule, they call that, hoki.

MM: Oh, that's a Hawaiian word, then, hoki?

TY: Hawaiian word, yeah. Yeah, we used that plenty.

MM: Did they raise that someplace on the Big Island or . . .

TY: Yeah, I think so. I don't know where that come from, but somewheres around here, yeah. American mule, they're big, eh? Over here kind, small, you know. Not so big. But they were tough. American mule, I think they used that jackass and the big American horse. So, they get a big one. But over here, they haven't got that kind of big horses, see. You know the horse that Budweiser pull 'em? That's the kind of horse they have plenty. They have plenty in Oregon and California, and all that. They're good horses. Very good.

MM: That's the kind of horse that used to pull the fire wagon?

TY: Yeah, that's the one.

MM: Clydesdales?

TY: Yeah, very few. You can just count.

MM: Okay. So, you were in Honolulu from about, oh, see, this would be about 1910, then, when you moved to Honolulu . . .

TY: Yeah, 1910, '11, maybe.

MM: That's after that big Japanese strike, the 1909 strike.

TY: That's when we came out, see. Yeah.

MM: Okay. So, from Downtown, then you folks moved back out country?

TY: Yeah, Kahalu'u. Windward side.

MM: What did you father do over there, then?

TY: He had to cook and make kitchen, just the same.

MM: Same thing?

TY: Yeah, cook house. Restaurant, we call that.

MM: That's for the pineapple cannery?

TY: Yeah. And season time, you know, plenty people come around there, you see, to work. Maybe two, three thousand. So must be a prosperous place over there. We used to feed all the Filipinos over there. There were hundreds of them, season time.

MM: Oh, by then, had plenty Filipinos, then?

TY: Oh, yeah. That's when they had plenty Filipinos.

MM: What company was this?

TY: Libby [Libby McNeil & Libby]. Yeah, Libby had the whole thing, Windward side. From Waiāhole to Kahalu'u. And afterward, they bought that. . . . Dole Pineapple had a place right below Pali, you see. Libby bought that up. So, they were running the whole Libby pineapple way around Windward side. Whole thing.

MM: Dole didn't have one cannery over there, though.

TY: They had a cannery in Kahalu'u. Yeah, big cannery. That thing running long time.

MM: How long was Libby over there, then?

TY: Oh, long time, though. Before I went, so, I think they were running over there nearly fifty years.

MM: Fifty years?

TY: Yeah, was a prosperous place, before, pineapple. But the pineapple is lousy compared to this side. Wahiawā side, they get a good pineapple. That side, I don't know. Kind of too much rain, I think.

MM: Is that why they gave up raising pineapple that side?

TY: Yeah. Cannot produce much. Not like Wahiawā.

MM: But they had big area, though?

TY: Big area, yeah. I think half as good. . . . Libby had some in Wahiawā, too, you know. And then, afterward, they close up the cannery there; they move 'em to Kalihi. And then, build up the Kalihi Libby. Still there, I guess, I don't know.

MM: Now, they have just like a warehouse. They have stores over there.

TY: I wonder if cannery there. No more?

MM: No.

TY: Too bad. Used to be a real prosperous place.

MM: So, you folks stayed in a Libby camp over there?

TY: Yeah, Libby camp, uh huh.

MM: How many families in that camp?

TY: Oh, they had about 200, I think.

MM: Two hundred families?

TY: Two hundred families, yeah. Yeah, season time, oh, boy, about 3,000 . . .

MM: Where was the camp, though?

TY: It was on a beach. I think they call it St. John by the Sea, they call it now.

MM: What was that name?

TY: St. John by the Sea. Yeah. It's still there, St. John by the Sea.

MM: And still get some of the old houses there?

TY: No, no more. All park over there now. Park.

MM: Is that Kualoa [Regional Park]?

TY: No. That's way on this side, Kahu'u. Between Waiāhole and He'eia.

MM: When you were living over there, then, where did you go school?

TY: We go down Ka'a'awa School on the boarding school, see.

MM: Ka'a'awa Boarding School?

TY: Yeah, yeah. Four years there.

MM: That means you stayed over there?

TY: Yeah, stayed there. And only vacation time, come home.

MM: Summertime?

TY: Yeah, shee, boy, I wouldn't send my kids to boarding school like that.

MM: What was it like going [to] that kind of school?

TY: Lousy! Yeah. One classroom, there's about fifteen [students] there, from first grade to eighth grade. But afterward, they split 'em. From third grade up went to the old school [at Ka'a'awa]. And they rent the Japanese[-language] school, and then they used to get one teacher and teach from first to the second grade, I think. And before they rent that Japanese[-language] school, no school. We cannot go school, so we just fool around about two years. Just play around, the whole day.

MM: For two years?

TY: The old man took us back. "What's the use?" he says. "No more school." [Except for the Japanese-language school.]

MM: Public school?

TY: Public school. When they had the colored teacher over there, that's how. And afterward, they improved. But, oh, was way back. That's why, I start to play hookey and all da kine.

MM: What school was that?

TY: Ka'a'awa.

MM: But you said, they closed that down?

TY: They never close 'em, but they never had any. Only one school, they cannot take the whole thing [all the students] in. And only one teacher. Yeah, education system was just terrible those days.

MM: How you get to school from over there? Was there a railroad?

TY: No, there's no railway. Railroad used to go around right straight around to Kahana. They stopped. And then, you get off, pack your

baggage and walk from Kahana to Ka'a'awa. About three miles, maybe more.

MM: Yeah? That's quite a long walk, eh?

TY: Oh, more than that, I think. Yeah, long walk. Yeah, it was terrible. But from here, this side, we can go with the stage[coach]. In the olden days, the four horse used to pull a stage[coach].

MM: Oh, yeah? Stagecoach?

TY: Yeah, we have a stage[coach] going every day back and forth.

MM: How did that thing go? I mean, over the [Nu'uanu] Pali?

TY: Yeah, over the Pali. I give that Japanese credit, boy. Chee, driving that kind of stuff on the lousy road like that, and the curves, oh!

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MM: So the stage[coach] used to go over this Pali?

TY: Yeah. Over that, every day.

MM: Was real windy over there, too? Still yet?

TY: Windy. Same thing. Yes. Sometime, windy, terrible.

MM: How did the Libby cannery ship out the pineapple?

TY: Oh, the boat used to go around. Yeah. Not Inter-Island [Steamship Navigation Company], though, but the small boat, you know. They still had that around there. Like J.A. Cummins and I forgot the name. Had about three or four [freighters]. The boat go over there and take all the pineapple, sugar, and all da kine stuff. They had the wharf over there, see, pier.

MM: And the steamer used to come into the harbor?

TY: Yeah, steamer used to come around. But no passenger kind.

MM: And all the supplies used to come in on those freighters.

TY: And then, later, they used to take 'em with a wagon maybe. But usually, for stores like that, they used to get it from the steamer, I guess.

MM: Okay. So, you were living Kahalu'u, then, up . . .

TY: Yeah, four or five years.

MM: What did you do over there, then, when summertime? When you weren't in school?

TY: Oh, we used to work. Plantation. Thirty-five cents in the field. Thirty-five cents a day.

MM: How old were you then?

TY: Oh, I think about twelve or thirteen. Twelve to fifteen, anyway.

MM: And you was making all that money?

TY: Thirty-five cents a day.

(Interview stops, then resumes.)

TY: Season time, they used to work in the cannery. And some of them, they get a regular job on the cannery. Some kind of this and that, see. Rest of the time, they go to the field. Pineapple field. (Bell rings.) That's when they used to go down, catch fish, and all da kine. Oh, plenty fish, those days. Yeah, get one net and go around, you get enough to eat. At that place over there, Kahalu'u, it's funny, you know. That reef is way out. We can walk till way out the end. Oh, about a mile out, see.

MM: And what you folks used to catch? What kind of fish?

TY: All kind. Weke, any kind. Squid. There used to be some Hawaiians living around there. They living on the fishing stuff. They go out and catch this kind of squid, and they'll come around and sell. And you know, the aku boat? They used to go around there to catch nehu, you know, da kine iriko. Small fish. That's what they use for bait, see. Sometime they see a school of aku, they hook over there. Well, going around to Honolulu going take time, so they sell 'em out over there, Kahalu'u side.

MM: Aku?

TY: One aku like this, two bits, fifty cents. Yeah. Jesus, now, boy. Dollar up, eh, one pound.

MM: That aku is about what? How many pounds?

TY: Yeah, big. Oh, maybe about twenty-five pounds.

MM: Twenty-five, thirty pounds?

TY: Yeah. Plenty before. Sometime, the smallest they bring, about this [TY indicates size with hands]. That's good size, you know. You can get 'em for about two bits. Yeah.

MM: Was that cheap, eh?

TY: Sure. Because instead of wasting time coming around town, they sell 'em out over there, see? Them were the days we eat plenty fish, ho. And da kine mahimahi, yeah? That's the round-head one, eh? Da kine, they don't want 'em. They used to give 'em away.

MM: Oh, yeah?

TY: You bet. This long one [TY indicates size]. Nobody want to buy those things. Now, Haoles, they rather have that than ulua. That's a good-eating fish. Haoles, they're funny. They don't care about fish very much. Now, they start eating, but, oh, about fifty years ago, they never touched fish.

MM: Who was running those aku boats then?

TY: That's a bunch from Honolulu. I know they're at. . . .

MM: They were Haole people?

TY: No, Japanese. Yeah. They were going on like that. . . . That Yamashiro bunch all died, but, yeah, they used to own that 'A'ala Market over there. They used to get about five or six [boats]. Mostly individual. They owned that thing, and they catch 'em, and they sell it to them, see. But afterward, I think that so much aku, and fellow named Walter MacFarlane, he went out fishing with them. And he see that. "Jesus Christ," he said, "You got to do something about this."

So, he started a factory [at] Ala Moana. They start to bring all the aku over there. From that time on, you never can sell aku like this for twenty-five cents. Nothing doing. They all bring 'em up there. Little bit rotten, that's all right. Yeah, they can 'em up. Really prosperous over there. And the old man, MacFarlane, used to own this Union Feed Company. They changed the Union Feed into the cannery, see. Oh, they had that place running long time. Then, afterward, they get better, so they move 'em to Kewalo.

MM: Kewalo?

TY: Yeah. Right now, they have the cannery, [Hawaiian] Tuna Packers, eh? But then, they sold out. The fellow named MacFarlane went broke.

MM: Kewalo Basin side.

TY: He was a nice, good guy, but I don't know, something went wrong. Something unusual happen. He was married to one of the princess, you know. Princess [Alice] Kamokila Campbell. But they never get along fine, so divorce. And he was a poor man when he died. And he sold that cannery and everything. You heard about Kamokila Campbell?

MM: Yeah. She used to live out. . . .

TY: 'Ewa.

MM: 'Ewa side. But she died already.

TY: That's one of the Campbells, yeah.

MM: She was married to MacFarlane?

TY: Yeah, she was. The old Kamokila, you know.

MM: Yeah, the first.

TY: Yeah, first one. She was doing all right. She's the Princess Kawānanakoa's sister, see. That's [James] Campbell's daughter. They're great people. Yeah, big shots. You never can talk to those guys those days.

And the fish, aku, start bringing over here. No aku reached down there unless you buy. And now, it's about ten dollars a pound or more. Jesus.

MM: Ahi like gold.

TY: But how can a firm like Castle & Cooke go broke? Gee, boy, surprise. They're one of the biggest in Hawai'i.

MM: They ran that Bumblebee [cannery].

TY: Bumblebee used to be different name before [Hawaiian Tuna Packers]. Castle & Cooke bought 'em, and then they put that. I think they been sticking money too much--investing too much, I think, no? What they heck they want to put up money and go buy Mainland stuff? They never can compete with Mainland company.

MM: Anyway, summertime, you worked in the cannery . . .

TY: Yeah, work in the field, work in the cannery, . . .

MM: You worked in the field?

TY: Yeah, season time.

MM: In the field, what kind of work did you do?

TY: Wahines used to take all the, what they call "top."

MM: Yeah, the crown.

TY: Yeah, and then clean 'em up, and let 'em dry 'em up. And they get contract. So many hundred, they get paid, see.

MM: To plant?

TY: And we get that in the sack. Go around the field. We wen go after they plow and vandal that place up. We spread 'em around. And the guys who plant come around. Filipino boys, some Japanese. Plant. You know, now, they have a slip on the side, eh? They use that. That's faster and good, but, before, they never use that. The top only. Slow, you know. Yeah.

MM: They put the tar paper before?

TY: No tar paper old days.

MM: They just stick 'em in the ground?

TY: Yeah, stick 'em in the ground. That, not long ago. Not even fifty years, I think.

MM: That they use the tar paper.

TY: Yeah, that helped, plenty. Hold the moisture, less weeds. Yeah, that was a real good idea.

MM: How did they plant the crown, though? They plant 'em single file?

TY: No, two. Two in a . . .

MM: Double row?

TY: Double, yeah. That's all.

MM: Yeah, because for a while, in the beginning, they just planted one row, eh?

TY: Yeah, long ago, one row.

MM: Then they started to put 'em [the rows] closer together.

TY: Yeah. Soon as the tar paper, they make it two in a row, double.

MM: And you used to work in the cannery, too, then?

TY: Yeah, I worked in the cannery. As I told you last time, [they would] pay us fifty cents, but I make my money's worth. I go there, take a leak about fifty times, a hundred times a day.

MM: (Laughs) You had more money, then, for working in the cannery than in the field?

TY: Yeah. That fifty cents. Fifty cents a day. That was easy job. That kind is okay, but, ah, you know, those days, you don't care for money. You just want to fool around, see. Good, they stopped the child labor. Child shouldn't work. Let 'em play, exercise, more

better. But you know, Japanese like that, they get hard time. Just even thirty-five cents a day, how many. . . . Ten days, you get what? Three and a half [dollars]..

MM: You ever went hiking up in the mountains, since you guys live kind of close by, eh?

TY: Yeah, I went hiking many times with just a few kids, you know. On the top of that Ka'a'awa School, right on the top, I climbed. I remember when I was maybe about twelve [years old]. Yeah, five of us, we went up. That's the only hiking I did. I quit after that. I never go with everybody. Hate to go myself. That's not worth it.

MM: You go back in the valley, Waiāhole Valley, where they have the tunnel?

TY: Yeah, I was living Waiahole little while.

MM: They had a tunnel, eh?

TY: No, I never go as far as the tunnel, but. . . . Oh, yeah, after Kahalu'u, the old man went Waiāhole and. . . . No, no. That was before.

MM: Before Kahalu'u?

TY: Yeah. We went to Waiāhole. Stay about maybe one year, two years maybe, in the field, plantation.

MM: But you ever operate the furo-ba at the Kahalu'u? The furo?

TY: Oh, yeah, yeah. That's right. Furo-ba and kitchen. Usually, the old man take up da kine, see. There's only one furo over there. The old man was pretty good at that kind. He never want to work outside.

MM: What did the furo look like?

TY: Oh, big one, big one. Oh, just about this here [TY indicates depth], get two. Wahine and the man, they make 'em separate. When I was Waimalu, they're all together, see. But afterward, they stop that, see. They get two this kind. One, the other side wahine, this side. But in between is all just a lath-like stuff, you know. The water go back and forth.

MM: Yeah, and cannot see?

TY: Cannot see, yeah. Get a wall. Japanese, they don't care. They want to get in together, but plenty Filipino boys came around, see. So, those guys are really, this. . . . They believe in sanitation, and they like take a bath, you know. And you know, young people, young guys, single, eh? They want to peep, eh? You go Japan, still,

there's some place, man and woman together. I went in many times. But with this age, you don't feel anything. Young days, I just look at the naked kind, you feel good.

MM: (Laughs) Okay. Later on, you folks moved to Pali Camp, eh?

TY: Yeah, yeah. That's when, Pali Camp, there was a store over there, small store. General store, you know. And that boss and the missus got killed by the bunch of--six of them--Filipino boys. They wen rob the place all right, but they took the husband and wife way out in the field. And you know, cars don't pass like now, see. I think they tried to rape the old lady. I think they did. That was all right, but the old man tried to run away, so he shoot him, see? So, old man died over there that time. And not only that, after shooting, they wen wreck 'em up with the knife. Yeah, cut 'em all up.

MM: They killed the two of 'em?

TY: No, the wahine ran away. She was saved.

MM: That was the store owners?

TY: Yeah. So, we know that bunch, see? The son is still over here. One of them running that radio shop. So, my old man--we know each other--so he bought that place. That's when we moved to Pali Camp, below the Pali, see.

MM: Your father bought the store?

TY: Yeah. That was, I think, 1917. Yeah. And then, we moved over there. Oh, was terrible countryside. Plenty mosquitoes, hoo.

MM: That was [still] a pineapple camp?

TY: Yeah, pineapple camp and store. And then, after that, we run the store right straight along from 1917. Right straight along.

MM: Your father didn't fool around the kitchen and the furos anymore, eh?

TY: No, pau. All store.

MM: This camp, you say, was right below the Pali? Below the lookout?

TY: Right below the Pali, on the old road. [TY says about three miles from the lookout.]

MM: There was a lot of people there?

TY: Plenty, yeah. Farmers here and there, and plantation had maybe about 100 [workers] all year around. Yeah, we had all kinds. Filipino, Korean, Japanese.

MM: That was the only business over there, the store?

TY: That's the only store, right around there.

MM: You had some kind of delivery system or. . . .

TY: Delivery?

MM: Yeah. Somebody would come by . . .

TY: Oh, we would go back and forth on a wagon. That's when they built that new Pali Road. But not this one, the old one. It's concrete, so was all right. Plenty transportation. Sometime trucks go around. Transportation was done by truck mostly.

MM: You guys had a credit system? People come in or they no more money?

TY: Yeah. All credit. Mostly credit.

MM: And how you guys kept track of the credit? They had bangōs?

TY: That's right. They had bangō, yeah. And then, I think, plantation used to deduct. Some of them just trust. Some of them run away. Ha! All world that way. Every place just the same, no matter how good. Sometime they get broke, they can't afford, they cannot do anything. That, you can't help. I wen run away once. From Stockton, California, I think I owe about \$270. So, we cannot go hard on anybody who try to sting me. I was a lousy crook one time, you know. Bootlegger. . . .

MM: Bootlegger? You used to make . . .

TY: Bootlegger, plenty, down there. The depression years, 1930s. Yeah, bootlegger. This kind of 'ōkolehao.

MM: 'ōkolehao? Where you guys used to make that?

TY: Oh, from the rice--and not the ti-root kind, you know. Yeah, rice and kōji, and sugar. Let 'em ferment, and then distill the bugger. Oh, nearly everybody, especially Okinawans, all bootleggers. See, moonshiner. And the old man, my brother was the agent. He take 'em in and out.

MM: Who you folks sell to?

TY: Haoles. Yeah, all, any kind. Haoles, they glad to take it. All the rich men around Manoa and all of that. Before, rich men, all Manoa, see. Not Kahala side. They move out from over there. Yeah, big business. But \$3.50 a gallon, you know, only. Boy, that tough thing, they can make a highball out of.

MM: That was real strong kind liquor . . .

TY: Strong, yeah.

MM: How many gallons you folks used to make before? I mean . . .

TY: Made plenty.

MM: . . . once you start distilling, how many gallons you guys could put out one day?

TY: Well, that one, there's certain guys here and there, they make their own, see. So, I don't know. But from the barrel, I think you can get about five or six [gallons]. Maybe more sometime. The police were really greedy buggers, too, those days, you know. They go on a raid, but when they're not over there, that's all. They can just bust 'em up, that's all, eh? But local police around there, they wen catch 'em and they says, "Hey, we want this commission," see. They keep quiet. That's how things were going.

MM: Oh, so they had vice over there, eh? Vice squad.

TY: They take care. If the vice squad come around, they say, "Hey, they coming around, check, so you better watch out." They know, see. Even if you go commission, same thing. You make money, little bit. And they never kill you, those days. Now days [marijuana kind], when you go on da kine, you go [snooping] around there to search for [marijuana], they shoot the bastard. Yeah, but before, not. And no such thing as killing before. You may get licking sometime, but. . . .

MM: Well, everybody was doing it, so, you know . . .

TY: Everybody was doing it. No can help. Down and out. Even dollar a day, get no jobs. What you going do?

MM: Your father was running this store all this time. Did your mother help him run the store?

TY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MM: By this time, you were kind of old already . . .

TY: I was teenage.

MM: Teenager?

TY: Yeah. I went Honolulu school, board. Nineteen twenty, '21, '22.

MM: Nineteen twenty to '21?

TY: Yeah, '20, '21, '22, I was in Honolulu. Boarding school. Japanese high school. That's when I learned all about that [Buddhist] religion. I tried to be good Bon-san. Ah, then I went the wrong way.

MM: (Laughs) What school was this?

TY: Japanese high school. Hongwanji. They call it Pali Highway now, but used to be Fort Street.

MM: Used to be Fort Street?

TY: Yeah, Japanese high school. Buddhist. I board there three years.

MM: But they taught you Japanese language. . . .

TY: Oh, yeah, uh huh.

MM: And you were training to be a Bon-san?

TY: I try to be, but no good. It's all spoiled already.

MM: You really tried, though. You were planning to be a Bon-san?

TY: Nah, I was a lousy bugger. I fall in love with every wahine I see.

MM: What kind a social life you had? How did you go out, you know, meet girls, like that?

TY: I was a really good-for-nothing those days. And I was slow, see. I grew up to be a man after twenty-one [years old]. Before that, I was just like a inferiority complex, they call it. I just fall for everyone I see, that's all.

MM: You went out to dances?

TY: Never go dance. I never can dance.

MM: You couldn't dance?

TY: Those days. Yeah. Because Windward side, there's no dancing. No school for da kine and . . .

MM: What about theaters? You went to movies?

TY: Movie, plenty. I used to be crazy for movie. We play hookey. There used to Hawai'i Theater, small one. Right across, the Empire Theater. And ten o'clock [a.m.], we fool around the ice cream parlor and all da kine. The show start at ten [o'clock], see. Go into Hawai'i Theater till about twelve o'clock. Finish that, go across the street, Empire Theater. And then, finish about two o'clock. Then we start walking, going back. Go Japanese[-language] school. Attend regular, every time. But Haole school, we take off. Plenty cut class.

MM: You ever had to go to like McKinley High School? No?

TY: Yeah, I went to McKinley one year, two years. I flunk. I'm one of

the dropouts of McKinley High. Our days was Hiram Fong, this kinda Alvin Isaacs, Alky Dawson, and [Masaji] Marumoto was there. [Richard] Sakimoto--doctor, eh? [TY adds Kenji Goto and Chinn Ho.]

MM: Sakimoto?

TY: Yeah, woman specialist. He's a great doctor. All that bunch. All same time. They all great men. Great shits. But I think I live happier life than those guys.

MM: What year was that you went McKinley [High School]?

TY: McKinley, I think that was (1923 to 1924).

MM: Oh, did they still call it McKinley [High School], or was it being called Honolulu High School before?

TY: McKinley [High School]. We were the first ones to get in the new building, you know. Yeah, that [the old building] was Lincoln School. McKinley [High School] was on this side, across the street. We were the first ones to get in that new building.

MM: After you got of high school then, what kind of work were you doing?

TY: You mean, after I drop out?

MM: Yeah.

TY: I was working Lewers & Cooke for maybe a year, I think. Less than that. Yeah, less than that.

MM: Doing what?

TY: Oh, just a office boy. After that, I went Mainland.

MM: To where?

TY: Stockton, California. Yeah, I stayed there seven years after that.

MM: What made you go to Stockton, though?

TY: I had an uncle over there. I never know he was in a far way out in the sticks. But I went, anyway. That's when the land law passed. Aliens cannot lease their land. We go over there, we lease here and there for them, see, and let them farm. We the boss. Pretend I'm doing the farming.

MM: Oh, you were U.S. citizen, that's why?

TY: Yeah, citizen, uh huh. Yeah, plenty guys went there. Too bad. If I was little bit older, all right, I made money. But twenty-one, twenty-two, yeah, waste time. All for a good time, and they make a sucker out of you.

MM: What kind of stuff were you growing in Stockton?

TY: Potato, onion, corn, and all da kine. Farm on a delta, see. Yeah, delta--Stockton Delta. They build up a dike right straight around, and then dig a ditch, canal, and they pump it out anytime, that place get plenty water, see. And then, the elevation of the land is lower than the elevation of the river water. They siphon that to. . . .

MM: To get water out of . . .

TY: Yeah, to get the water. We call that subirrigation. Yeah, just fill up the ditches. You know, small ditch, about two feet. One foot by two feet (deep). That's the kind they have, about 1,000 (feet long). Every hundred feet they have that thing. Fill it up and you can tell how much water (to adjust). . . . You can tell the depthness, see. That's how they raise 'em over there. Not from on top. They don't irrigate from the top--from the bottom. They call it subirrigation. And that thing grow. You know, so fertile, you know. Yeah. Some potato, about this (one foot) long.

MM: Oh, that's about one foot.

TY: That's the way George Shima made money, see. And why he came a potato king is, usually, they raise potato over there in the delta. They ship 'em out on the boat to San Francisco. And San Francisco is a cool place, you know. Like that all year around. No need icebox. They leave 'em in the wharf over there. They use that as a storage, see. No refrigeration needed over there. He buy 'em all. Everyone come. The boat come in, bring their stuff, which George used to buy that, keep 'em for himself. See, everything, he buy 'em all up so he can control the price of that potatoes. That's why he came a potato king. But he wasn't a bad buy. He wait and see if everybody come around to him. "Oh, we want potato."

"Price is this much. You pay me just two bits more." Then he give 'em maybe 100. He never let anybody in San Francisco starve, see. He put 'em out, but he controlled it. That's why he came a potato king.

MM: Who's this? George Shima?

TY: George Shima (called the "Potato King of California"). Long ago. About fifty (or sixty) years ago.

MM: He was a Hawai'i boy?

TY: No, he's from Japan. Yeah, he was a great man. Those days, any Japanese who made about \$6 million dollars in California was a great man. Now days, \$6 million dollars nothing, but before \$1 million dollars was big money. You bet. Now days, money no worth too much.

MM: Oh, that was in the depression days, too, eh?

TY: Depression days. And just before that. And he went broke, though. Yeah, he went buy a place in Oregon because he cannot (farm in California because of the alien land law). He had a idea, see. That big company, they operate that delta farm, they fix up the island like that. And this George Shima go over there and contract. Take up the (island). . . . For three years, he doesn't pay rent, but he improved that place. Free rent for three years. That's how he made money. And then, he fix up and put a pump over there. This canal and ditches, and all da kine. He go from this island to that island and all da kine. They call it island, because it's all divided up, see, (in the delta).

MM: In Oregon?

TY: No, right in California. This delta, Stockton Delta. And Sacramento, same thing. Sacramento Delta where the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River goes in, and that's when all fill up with all. That soil is kind of different, you know. Just like a tobacco, that son of a gun. All that decayed matter, see. Very few dirt. If you smoke (cigarette), you forget, then throw that cigarette over there, in summertime that thing burn, you know, the ground. Yeah. It's just like ashes.

MM: But real fertile, then?

TY: Yeah, very fertile. Mix that up with the bottom [soil], and then they plant the potatoes. That son-of-a-gun potato grew plenty. Anything, not only potato, everything. Onion and all that. Yeah, very fertile.

MM: What kind of people were working over there, you know, when you was . . .

TY: Filipino, Hindus, (Chinese) . . .

MM: Hindus?

TY: Had plenty. Japanese, Chinese. Yeah, Chinese, they specialize in potato. And this kinda Japanese, they specialize in onion.

MM: How come Hindus were there?

TY: I don't know. There were plenty over there. Yeah, they had . . .

MM: Turbans?

TY: Yeah, that's right. Ragheads. They never come Hawai'i, but Mainland, plenty. And good workers. Big, but they really just like Filipinos. The hands good, you know. Oh, those kind, they can work.

MM: Any Mexicans that . . .

- TY: Oh, Mexicans, plenty, yeah. Mexicans another--what you call--good people. Yeah, really inside good. They clean just like Hawaiians. Yours is mine, mine is yours. That's what they are. Easy-going people. But plenty guys don't like 'em. Because--I don't know why. They get a idea. . . . They don't care to take up English. When you talk to them, they speak in Spanish. "This my country, what's the matter?" That's the kind of attitude they have, see. But they good people, though.
- MM: You left Stockton about. . . .
- TY: Nineteen thirty [1930] during the depression.
- MM: And then, you came back to Hawai'i?
- TY: Yeah, I came back Hawai'i. Went down the Kāne'ohe side. Kāne'ohe. My brother moved the store from Pali Camp right below toward Kāne'ohe, see. And he was running the store over there, Kokokahi [Road].
- MM: Kokokahi?
- TY: Mm hmm. Right where the Safeway Store is now. Yeah, he was doing real good over there until that Safeway come around and. . . .
- MM: Kokokahi was all sugar plantation yet?
- TY: (Sugar sixty years ago. Pineapple field after that.) Was a pineapple plantation long ago, but the pineapple quit long time ago, so there's farmer here and there, see.
- MM: You was married by then, then?
- TY: Oh, yeah, I was married. Yeah, 1930, I was married.
- MM: Where you met your wife?
- TY: I went back once [after getting married], and we stayed one year [in Stockton] and come back again [to Honolulu], see?
- MM: You went back to Stockton?
- TY: Yeah.
- MM: Came back over here again?
- TY: I thought over here was better, so I came back. That time was hitting depression the other side, see. It's a lousy place to live way out in the countryside. If town, it's all right, but guys like us, we not made for living in the countryside, see.
- MM: Was it hot over there?
- TY: Hot and cold, yeah. But not as bad as the East side. You can live

without heater and all that, see. But I feel sorry for the family, you know. The wife, especially. Brought up in Hawai'i, hard for them. But live in town, it's all right.

MM: So you met your wife back over here?

TY: Over here [in Honolulu], yeah.

MM: How you met her?

TY: Oh, matchmaker.

MM: But she's originally from Kaua'i, though, yeah?

TY: She's from [Kōloa,] Kaua'i, yeah.

MM: So she was here, and then how did you folks get together anyway?

TY: Oh, the matchmaker come around and bullshit about this guy good, about this guy, and all this and that. Yeah, never believe any matchmaker. They all bullshit.

MM: But that was somebody who knew your family, though, eh?

TY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MM: Knew the two families?

TY: I never know the other family. But that's how it goes. Some friend of our family tried to help us out, see. That's how it goes. Last pretty long. I married her when she made just eighteen.

MM: Just eighteen?

TY: Yeah, those days, everybody married wahine, eighteen. So, they all not spoiled, see. And you train 'em up after that. Eighteen. My girl was born when she [TY's wife] was nineteen. So, they look like sisters. But I get only one. I never want 'em when I see my sister raising kid every year nearly. Oh, I get disgusted. They can't even feed 'em yet. If they have welfare like now, it's all right, but those days, no more. Before, no more welfare. You have to go on your own. So, the old man was a son of a gun. He was a good worker, he's got a heart, but he was some little crazy guy, see. Cannot save any money. And that was all right, but he was giving another guy all kind of trouble. Try to hook that guy, try to hook that guy. At last he went to hell, boy. (TY spits.) I think he's in hell right now.

MM: (Laughs) How many children you had?

TY: Me, I get only one.

MM: Only one? All these pictures over here are all your grandchildren?

TY: Yeah, yeah. Two grandchildren, boy and girl. Yeah. This my daughter. She graduated from Mainland, St. Louis. Fontborne College in St. Louis University. She was a schoolteacher who married a dentist, see. Here's my granddaughter. She lives with us now. She's a dental hygienist.

MM: She's going to the University? That's the one I met last time I was here, eh?

TY: And I get one grandson. Here. He took up everything. He tried to be a dentist, too, but chemistry not so good, see. So, he couldn't pass. And then, he went over here, tried to be male nurse. He passed the University over here, took up the test. You see, these guys, I think they don't want any male nurse. They give the kind of test that you don't learn in school. Something else. Just to get rid of him, you know. So, now, he's working for a airline. Dallas, Texas, I think. Continental or what?

MM: Oh, he's on the Mainland now?

TY: Yeah.

END OF SIDE TWO

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MM: Well, let's see. What were you doing then? Right when you got married?

TY: I just fool around down there, Kāne'ohe, little while, help the store. Then, I get into politics. I play politics and then I get into. . . . Those days, you know, nearly all Republicans. Strong, see. This kind politics, you play smart. As long as you benefit yourself, you go to it. Never mind what party. No make any difference. Then I got into City and County job, see. And then I moved Downtown, Waikīkī. That's pretty long. How many years now? I think thirty years almost.

MM: When did you move to Waikīkī?

TY: Nineteen thirty-two [1932], I think.

MM: [Nineteen] thirty-two? What was the area over there like, 1930s . . .

TY: Where? Kāne'ohe?

MM: Waikīkī. They just finished like building the Royal Hawaiian [Hotel], eh?

TY: Yeah, Royal Hawaiian [Hotel] was there. You know, this side was

all refilled with coral, you know. [TY says there were cottages and many empty coral-filled lots.]

MM: Was coral road? Kalākaua [Avenue]?

TY: No, the road was all okay [asphalt] our days when I came in. But this side, before, was all swamplike (with duck ponds), you know. Yeah. On the Ala Wai side. But way down there, house was building up already, see.

MM: That land was all filled up, eh?

TY: Fill up, yeah, coral. You can get 'em real cheap, but, those days, people. . . . Haole---rich guys, they bought 'em. But they should have bought that, really. Yeah. If was going to be like that, boy, if you had about two or three lots there, you sitting pretty.

MM: That's a lot of money now.

TY: Oh, yeah.

MM: How come you moved over there, though?

TY: Over there? Because (there were plenty of housework and laundry jobs for women).

MM: You wasn't working over there, though?

TY: You get a chance to make extra money over there, see. I was working taxi nighttime (and city road maintenance during the day).

MM: Driving in Waikīkī?

TY: Yeah. And then, I worked for City and County. But they used to give us only about three days a week like that. So, I had to work for taxi. Used to be a two-bits cab, those days, you know. That mean two miles, two-bits. That's the kind of cab they had. Still, you can make a living. And the guys there, Waikīkī, them guys used to--mostly tourists, eh?--tip us every time, see. Yeah, so was very good.

MM: What kind of tourists stayed in Waikīkī?

TY: From America. From the Mainland.

MM: Oh, mostly Mainland?

TY: Yeah, there's no such thing as Japanese tourist.

MM: Rich. They're rich guys, eh?

TY: Most of them. But, you know, Haoles, they believe in their traveling and good times, see. So, even if not rich, they get enough, they

take a trip. But they were good sports, really nice guys. Haoles are good guys. Yeah. But the Japanese tourists, I tell you something. They pile 'em up, you know, just like tanomoshi. They pile 'em up, pile 'em up. And then, when they pile that up, they come around here. Just to look around the place and show (off) that I went Hawai'i, you know, and America, and da kine. And you get more chance for promotion, see. So that they come around. So, they haven't got very much, just enough. But they get a crazy idea of always carrying the cash around the pocket. That's a bad habit Japanese got. They no believe in da kine traveler's check and all that. When I go, I take little bit cash and all the rest going to be traveler's check. But Japanese are funny people. If they get about \$10,000, they want to hold 'em in the pocket. Damn fools. That's when they get the bingo [hit on the head, robbed], yeah. I don't think you can cut the habit. Even the business and everything in Tokyo and all Japan, they hold money at home. Most of them. No such thing as banking. Bank is the best thing.

MM: So, you drove taxi, then, Waikīkī?

TY: Yeah.

MM: And your wife worked in the . . .

TY: Right around there. Housework (in private homes) and . . .

MM: Kapi'olani Cleaners?

TY: No, that was way late (1933).

MM: That was way later?

TY: Yeah. First, she was working housework and. . . .

MM: She made side money doing . . .

TY: Side money on the laundry.

MM: On laundry? Everybody used to . . .

TY: They sure make plenty laundry. She used to make 'em real good.

MM: Was there certain families she used to take care of?

TY: No, not certain. . . . She goes over there maybe two hour--two hours over there [to do the housework].

MM: Oh, she used to wash the clothes at the house?

TY: No, no, no. At home. They [the different families] bring 'em. Yeah.

MM: She would bring 'em back? She would bring back the clothes?

TY: Yeah, sometime. Yeah, she used to make good [money]. Real good.

MM: And all these families she took care of, what? They lived on the beach?

TY: Right in Waikīkī.

MM: Right in Waikīkī? All different . . .

TY: Yeah, Diamond Head to way down the Ala Wai Canal side. She used to walk go. You know, all the wahines, those days, doing the same thing. They doing fine. You bet.

MM: They must have had lot of laundry for wash over there.

TY: Yeah, sure. Cheap, too, you know. Cheap but still, if you healthy. That's when I bought a [washing] machine. Before that, it's all by hand. Yeah, machine--washing machine. Everybody doing the same thing. So, they get no trouble.

MM: Before you bought that washing machine, how they used to wash clothes?

TY: Yeah, boil and everything. All hand. But they sure [got it] easy now days.

(TY pulls out list of people.) And you know, when I was looking at this, the one that I mark, is the one you should see 'em. That's all Waikīkī bunch. The one I cross 'em out is dead already.

MM: Oh, okay. I'll go look at this later. There was a lot of Japanese people living in your area?

TY: Japanese people? Before?

MM: Yeah.

TY: Yeah, plenty. All live around the same place. Most of them work in the hotel. Bartender and all da kine. Housework and all, laundry, and. . . . Yeah, the Waikīkī bunch was doing real good for Japanese in the depression days.

MM: Were there Filipinos by then?

TY: Filipinos, work in the hotel like that. Was very few.

MM: Not too many of them lived over there in Waikīkī?

TY: Not very much. Very few. I think still now, very few, eh, Waikīkī?

MM: Yeah.

TY: But they get some other place they live, yeah. Filipinos are good workers, really.

MM: You lived in the 'Ōhūa [Avenue] area, yeah?

TY: Yeah, 'Ōhūa [Avenue]. 'Ōhūa [Avenue], Lemon Road, and Paoakalani [Avenue]. That's when all Japanese was there.

MM: You lived right on the roadway? On Kalākaua Avenue or in between someplace?

TY: Yeah, right on Kalākaua Avenue right back of Aoki Store. But Aoki Store is. . . . There's a big hotel over there. Holiday Inn, I think. Yeah, right around that area.

MM: That's the old Aoki Store, then?

TY: Old Aoki Store, yeah. Right there.

MM: Right across from Kūhiō Beach . . .

TY: That's 'Ōhūa Avenue. Yeah, right back. So, just a walk from the beach.

MM: You know where the Cunhas used to be?

TY: Cunha? Yeah, Cunha was down the corner of Kapi'olani Park, I think.

MM: Corner of Kapi'olani Park? They lived on the beach?

TY: Right on the beach, yeah. Oh, they had a big fire over there. We run over there and try to help 'em out. Get all the stuff out.

MM: What happened to the house? Burned down?

TY: No, never burn down the whole thing, but, I don't know, somebody bought 'em or else condemned by the government, I think. Nothing there now. Beach.

MM: Now it's all beach [park] property.

TY: Yeah, yeah. It was a good property, too. Good building, too. That kind of house, olden days, they had a good kind of tough wood, you know, like oak and all da kine, and mahogany and all that. That thing catch fire, oh, it burn like hell, you know.

MM: Did you know some of the people who lived on the beach?

TY: Steiner them?

MM: Steiner. Did you know the Steiners?

TY: Yeah, I know that family, uh huh. Yeah. Steiner, and the Emmons, and (Cleghorns). . . . Oh, big shots around there.

MM: The Cunha family, you knew?

TY: Cunha was way on the other side. Yeah, big shots. Long time ago, they used to own nearly all the front. They sold that. Like Castle is the one that owned that big club over there. What is that now?

MM: The Elks Club?

TY: Elks Club, yeah. I wonder if still there. Busted up, no?

MM: The old house is gone already.

TY: Yeah, I think so.

MM: But the club still on that property. You remember what you were doing when World War [II] broke out?

TY: I was working down the County. Yeah, County garage. Yes, that was terrible, real terrible. Goddamn that Japanese son of a guns. You can't help it. Same thing, America go over there and bomb that Hiroshima. Same thing. So no can kick, da kine wartime. Now the son of gun, I heard, the Iraquis using the poison. That's bad, that. If every country start to use that, good night.

MM: So, you were working in Downtown when they started bombing?

TY: Yeah. And that morning was Sunday, see? So I went to the yard, corporation yard, just to take a look at it, you know. Just for the fun, play around there. I see, (TY makes whizzing sound) inside the park, boom! I think, "Chee, I wonder if they have this kind of practice maneuver." No, that was a real shot.

MM: Yeah? What was that, a bomb or bullet?

TY: Then I see the Pearl Harbor side, all black smoke going this way. I see in between that, just like a bird flying in and out, you know. Yeah, was just terrible.

MM: They didn't fly over Downtown?

TY: That night they did, yeah. At night.

MM: The Japanese?

TY: Japanese plane, yeah. Oh, that was terrible, real terrible.

MM: So, what happened when you had to go home that night?

TY: I came back and told the bunch, and nobody believe. They said, the old guys, "You think, Japanese do a thing like that? They very modern people and educated people. They never do a rough thing like that." But that night, no more light. We got to go back down the yard to work. Everybody got to report, see. We went. Everything dark. We never eat till about ten o'clock at night. Yeah.

MM: That was blackout already?

TY: Blackout, yeah.

MM: So, when you went home . . .

TY: Next morning.

MM: Everything was all blacked out? Had to be blacked out . . .

TY: Yeah, blackout. Even the window ledge--we have to put a black paper and cover 'em up so no light go out.

MM: You guys had a special light bulb, eh? Da kine blackout light bulb . . .

TY: Yeah, on the car, yeah, uh huh.

MM: And then, what did they do to Waikīkī Beach then?

TY: Oh, nothing. They never do---oh, yeah. They put the barbed wire all around. Yeah, all around the beach. Yeah, nobody can go down the beach.

MM: Since Fort DeRussy is right there, they had a lot of military guys coming around, checking up? Not too much?

TY: Not too much, not too much. You see, the Civilian Defense and the police used to.

MM: You had anybody in your camp like that taken away to internment . . .

TY: Yeah, checking up, eh? Yeah, had. . . . What you call that kind of buggers? They get a sign, OCD [Office of Civil Defense].

MM: OCD? There was federal guys came over there and checked up on the aliens, eh? No?

TY: Yeah, some of them, uh huh. They grab 'em, no check. "Hey, come on. Let's go."

MM: Oh, yeah? You knew anybody that was taken to an internment camp?

TY: Sure. Plenty. But Waikīkī, not much. I think only about one, two, oh, just a few, Waikīkī bunch, Japanese. But the other places, oh, they pick 'em up. The one who was fooling around with this kind of Japanese Consul and the one that used to help on the school side, the Japanese[-language] school, like that, and a church. That's the guys they got. Oh, plenty guys, not deserved. Some guys really, picking up that kind is not necessary people. Sometime this American government is damn fool. Not the American government. That's FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], I think.

MM: But later on, then, the military kind of took over, though, Waikīkī, eh?

TY: Oh, yeah, yeah. They controlled the whole beach side. You cannot fool around.

MM: They took over two hotels? [MM is referring to the Moana and Royal Hawaiian Hotels.]

TY: Yeah, yeah. Even schools. St. Louis [High School] used to be a hospital. Schools were all closed.

MM: Martial law?

TY: Yeah, martial law.

MM: During the war years, then, you were still driving taxi, too, on the side? No?

TY: No. That time, I never drive taxi.

MM: You quit already?

TY: Yeah. We cannot go around. And not only that. I can go around, driving around. Very few of that. But we get black ring around the--what do you call--restricted badge.

MM: Oh, yeah?

TY: You bet. That was really terrible stuff to do, boy.

MM: Restricted badge? What do you mean?

TY: Yeah. Get a black ring around the badge, it says "restricted." Cannot go anyplace. And they watch you. (Bell rings.) Other guys, like other nationalities, all, the Chinese like that, all clear kind. They can go anyplace.

MM: After the war, then, they took away all the barbed wire?

TY: Yeah, uh huh.

MM: You remember a tidal wave? The 1946 tidal wave?

TY: Oh, yeah. That was 1946, I think. Yeah.

MM: You were home that day?

TY: Yeah, I was home that day. But Waikīkī lucky. Wasn't very heavy, you know. No damage, I think. But we went out on the beach and see, and chee, the whole thing is all dry, you know. And then, little while afterward, the thing coming up. But Waikīkī was easy.

MM: Yeah? What was that, big wave or small?

TY: No, wasn't big. Just the tide. The time I saw. But some of the guys, they said that thing come like this, eh? I never see that heavy.

MM: Oh, you just saw the water come up one time?

TY: Yeah, uh huh. One crazy guy was out with the surfboard and try to swim. He never know what tidal wave was, I think. Or else he died, but I never heard anybody died in Waikīkī, so he must be safe. But some people are crazy, you know. When you see thing like that, something strange, don't move.

MM: Yeah. But did you guys know was a tidal wave? I mean . . .

TY: Yeah, I heard on the radio.

MM: You guys lived kind of further in, so . . .

TY: Not too . . .

MM: . . . the water didn't come all the way up to your guy's place, though.

TY: Well, we were on a dangerous spot, you know. If that thing go over the Kalākaua Avenue, our place going be all filled. But only Waikīkī, just the tide went out, that's all. Yeah, no damage on the beach side. But some other place, I heard, like all around Lā'ie side, that's the northern side, eh? Windward side.

MM: They got big damage?

TY: Big damage, yeah. And even that, certain place, they said no harm, damage--I think the reef is way out there holding that back, see? Some places, the reef way in the back and, you know, hold the wave back. That's where the thing come in, I think.

MM: When did you start noticing when the tourists started coming in? Before, didn't have too much tourists, you know.

TY: Oh, they get steady. Steady. They coming here. Those days, tourists was nice. Not like the present-day guys, no.

MM: Okay. When did you guys move out of Waikīkī?

TY: Nineteen fifty [1950], I think.

MM: Nineteen fifty. And you guys bought this . . .

TY: We bought this place here.

MM: . . . this place. Okay. Well, I think I stayed little bit too

long. I better let you go now, so that should be . . .

TY: Yeah. Come again anytime, see? Yeah, I'm free every morning nearly.
But now, I'm going operation [for cataracts].

END OF INTERVIEW

WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES

Volume I

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