

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Yen Cheung Au, 90, retired Pearl Harbor Shipyard worker

"Nineteen seventeen, I marry, I think. And then, 1918, I get drafted. Nineteen nineteen I come out of the Army. Nineteen eighteen, my first daughter get born . . . Bumbai, my wife say, 'Well, we got to go find our own house. Twelve dollars one month we pay, but we no going get nowhere else.' My wife tell me, 'We go up Kalihi.' Look around over here, see? We come over here . . . only one road and all nothing but bushes . . . only get two houses they been build. And I wen look across there is one cattle ranch. They raise cow and horses, you know."

Yen Cheung Au, Chinese, the sixth of sixteen children, was born in Waiahole, Oahu on March 7, 1894. His father was a rice farmer in Waiahole. Yen Cheung helped his father in the fields by scaring away the birds which threatened the rice crops. He also helped the family by catching fish and shrimp. He attended Waiahole School until the fourth grade, then the family moved to Kahaluu.

In 1915, the family moved to Honolulu and bought a house near Liliha and Judd Streets. Three years later, Yen Cheung was drafted into the U.S. Army and served at Schofield Barracks during World War I.

Following his military discharge, he began working as a messenger for American Can Co. in Iwilei. Shortly after, he worked as a meter reader for Hawaiian Electric Co.

In 1925, Yen Cheung started working as a machinist at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. Two years later, he and his family bought a home in Kalihi-Kai--the same home he resides in today.

Tape No. 11-49-1-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Yen Cheung Au (YA)

March 29, 1984

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Yen Cheung Au on March 29, 1984 at his home on Colburn Street in Kalihi.

Okay, Mr. Au, can you tell me where you were born and when you were born?

YA: I born Waiahole, 1894, March the 7th. I stay over there I don't know how many years. Maybe I was about five or six years old, I look down the beach and there's lot of menehunes, see? (Laughs) All da kine baby kind. Indian, eh? Running wild, looking for food, see? Then, I tell my ma, "Hey, what's all this kind Indian over there?"

My mother tell, "No, you no go outside bumbai they kill you." You know, they think Indian eat man, eh, in those days. So, I never go outside. I stay by the back yard and I watch 'em running all over. Bumbai, some of them come by my fence, see? Me, I throw da kine Chinese--you know, they call tea cake, eh? They make down Chinatown. I give some for them to eat, eh? Bumbai, my mother tell, "Ey, come back. Go inside the house." So, I went back in the house.

WN: How you knew was menehune?

YA: Well, because, after that, lately I find out, people tell me that's the menehunes. Then I believe that was the menehunes. I don't know what's menehune, the beginning. I only tell that, that's a small Indian. "Indian" is wild man, eh? But more lately, I hear people tell me, "No, that small kind is menehunes." Then, I learn about menehune, that's all. I don't know how old I was already after that, you see?

WN: You sure was menehune?

YA: It was sure, after that. I know was sure.

WN: How many times you saw 'em?

YA: Oh, one or two times, that's all. Outside the sand beach, they all go for catching fish, eh, for eat. That's all I know.

WN: You sure wasn't something else?

YA: No. Was, was, was. Gotta be. Only small little man, just like black, and then no more clothes on. All, you know, small. Just like a small baby, eh? So, after that, lately, I went all the way to the other side, Kahaluu. Then, people tell me, "You know what is that? That's the menehunes." Then I believe was menehunes. Bumbai, I ask 'em, "What is menehune mean," you know.

They tell me, "Menehune, that means a small Indian, baby Indian." That's all I know, see?

WN: What did they look like?

YA: They look black, just like one charcoal man. Black, that's all.

WN: What did they wear?

YA: No more clothes, bare. All black, see?

WN: Had male and female kind?

YA: No, no can tell which is female or male, they all run alike, just like one small, little baby, you know.

WN: And how many you saw?

YA: Oh, I don't know, many. Hundred, maybe thousand, I don't know. The whole sand beach chock-full. Just like ants, you know, all around the beach. I don't know how many, see?

WN: They were your height? Same height as you?

YA: No. The menehune?

WN: Yeah.

YA: No, like that tall only.

WN: What, about what? Three feet tall?

YA: About two feet, something like that, that's all.

WN: Yeah. And you were five years old, yeah?

YA: Yeah. I was big already, like this, eh? Five years old, I see the small, little Indians running around. They no big, you know. They black, eh? No more clothes, nothing on. And they crawling around just like da kine small baby, like, you know. That's all I know,

see? If they never tell me that, I never know that was one--small baby Indian is menehune, see?

WN: When you tell people that you saw menehune, do they believe you?

YA: Well, I believe, I think so, but they no tell me yes or no. You know, could be, eh? I don't think about they no believe me, but when they heard, they say that to me. One man tell me--one fella that I told him, I don't know, when I was kinda old man already. Forty, fifty years old already. He tell me, "You sure you saw a menehune?"

"Yeah." I say yeah, you know. Then, they say it's all menehune, they never see. But no, they see Indian only, you know. So, bumbai, they tell me menehune is a small, little man, see? They just like a person, but they small, little man, you know. Just like some kind of a people that you cannot see, eh? But so small, eh?

WN: Did they talk at all?

YA: They no talk, nothing. Just run around. You don't know whether they can talk or not. They no come by me. I scared go near them, see?

WN: This was in Waiahole?

YA: Mm hmm [yes]. That's all. After that, I no see no more, you know. Only when I went to Washington--Seattle, Washington--and I see Indian.

WN: Regular Indians?

YA: Regular Indian. Big man, you know. Down the river side, they only catch fish, you know.

WN: What you remember about your father?

YA: I only know he plant rice. That's all he do, he do ricing. And then, he plant plenty rice. When small time, the rice growing up, ready for cut, eh? And then, he tell us go chase the birds away. They give us one da kine kerosene can. You see a bird over there, you whack. Banging. Hit the can, the bird fly away. (Chuckles) See? No more guns, those days, you know.

WN: That was your job?

YA: Mm [yes]. But he had a good farming, though. He had somebody working for him. I don't know how much a month. I think six dollars a month, you know, get paid. And then, they eat over there, sleep over there, all included. My father give 'em all the food and everything, see? And besides that, the rice he plant feed us too, you know. Growing us up, see?

WN: How many workers did your father have?

YA: About three or four. Cutting rice and plant rice, regular farmer. Get about, maybe about ten, fifteen acre rice patch. He lease 'em from the Hawaiian, you know. They lease to you, hardly any money. They just give the land for you to take care, see? That's all I know, you know. But never, we no worry about go fishing, though. We small, but we go fishing down the river. You know, the shallow water, we catch fish. Catch 'ōpae, eh, for bring home for cook, eat.

WN: What kind fish you caught?

YA: Da kine regular goldfish. Or what you call that? You know, da kine sand fish, they call 'o'opu, eh? That's all.

WN: So, you folks used to eat lot of rice.

YA: Yeah, eat plenty rice.

WN: And fish.

YA: Fish, that's all.

WN: Did you father plant anything besides rice?

YA: Well, he get one garden in the back of the house. One big yard. He tell us go plant cabbage. I plant one bed cabbage, head cabbage. Come out so nice, the big head cabbage. My mother go cook some, eat some, and get so many. And then, my father say, "Oh, make salt." We salt 'em, see? Put salt and salt the cabbage. But no, they do the wrong way of salting cabbage. They put the big cabbage on the top. They put da kine Hawaiian salt. They rock 'em, roll 'em. Then they put 'em inside the barrel. And then, they age 'em, eh? And when they bring the cabbage out, the cabbage kinda dry up already. The cabbage so salty, no can eat, you know.

Then when I come Honolulu, I find out the Japanese make cabbage, easy. They no need put outside, the sun. They just put 'em inside the kitchen. They put hot water and cook 'em little bit. Then put 'em inside the container, and then put little bit shōyu or vinegar or something like that. Afternoon, they take 'em out, they eat 'em. See? (Chuckles) That's why, I learn how to make cabbage, salt cabbage. No need overnight. My father keep 'em one month before he bring 'em out. (Chuckles)

WN: That was Chinese way to salt cabbage, the way your father did 'em?

YA: Maybe they learn that from China like that, I don't know. That's how they salt the cabbage, see? And they eat. Mostly, that's why, those Chinese in China, they eat salt fish, eh? Salt fish, salt cabbage. And anything salty, they like. They eat plenty rice, then

they eat a little bit food.

WN: When you were living Waiahole, what else you folks used to eat?

YA: Well, I don't know. They feed us anything, we eat. We don't know what kind of food we eating. We eat any kind, you know. Rice and salt fish, and something else. That's all, see?

WN: Did they have taro patches out there?

YA: Where?

WN: In Waiahole.

YA: Some of them taro patches on the hillside belong to the Hawaiians. The Hawaiians stay there. Get one house in the valley, you know. And then, they own their taro patch there. They go pull their taro, they make their own taro. Sometime, one day, I watching them Hawaiians how to make poi. And I no like eat poi no more, you know.

WN: Why?

YA: They cook the taro. They take the skin out. They put 'em inside one tub, see. And they get one da kine pounder. The Hawaiian sitting over there, pounding the taro, pounding the taro. Put a little water inside. Add a little water, and pound the taro. And then, he get sweat. He rub his head, like this. You know? And then, he sweat, eh? He wipe the sweat out from his face or anywhere. Then he go pound again. Then I say, "Ey, I no like eat da kine." That's why, I no eat poi.

WN: Oh. But you eat taro, though, you said.

YA: Yeah, yeah. Only taro I like eat, see?

WN: How you used to eat taro?

YA: Just boil 'em. Take the skin out and eat like that. Just how you eat potato. The taro is just like one potato. You take the skin out and eat 'em like that. (Chuckles) When I went to school, I don't know how old I was already. I know my schoolteacher, Mrs. March, that's the one that she own all the place. I don't know if she owned it or was the government or what. She owned a big one schoolhouse. And then, she get one big house in the back where she stay. Bumbai, she teach us. First grade, second grade, third grade, she go on teaching. Then, the same room, same class, she teach us up to third grade. If you come good [in first grade], they put you on the second grade. You know, keep on teaching you. Learn more and more. That's why, I too good on da kine multiplying, subtraction and all da kine. Long division, you know. But one day, Mrs. March say, "Now, today, you folks off today, now. Afternoon, no more school." You come in the back of her home. She got a big

home and got big yard in the back. She assign you. "You take one bed. You plant cabbage or anything you want." You fix your own bed, see, and you plant your own stuff, and then you water your own self. Each student get his one. So, she tell me what I like to plant. I say, "I like plant bush bean." You know da kine bean you lift up and pick the bean? What do you call, string bean, eh?

WN: Yeah.

YA: Yeah. So, I plant that. After I plant that, she grow so wild, hoo. Lift up the bush, eh? Pick all da kine string bean. Take 'em to the teacher. The teacher say, "You take 'em home." So, make us take home for the family. You know, the teacher no can use that anyway. She get too much food, eh? So everybody plant his own, and make them take their food home, see? The cabbage, da kine any kind. But me, I take home the bag string beans, that's all. Then, my mother say, "Good. String bean, good." They go fry the string bean in the pot. And then, they put pork. You know, pork, eh? Chop up the small pork in small pieces, fry the pork nice and good, eh? Put the string bean inside and fry 'em, fry 'em, till cooked. And then, that's the kind food we eat, see?

WN: In Waiahole, how you folks got your groceries? Had store out there?

YA: No more. We got to send from Honolulu.

WN: What about like pork? How you got pork?

YA: Oh, the pork, da kine. When my father moved down Waiahole, no more house, yet, see? Down there, no more houses. In Honolulu, only the Mayflower bring the flour, the pork, any kind utensil, any kind. [From] Hackfeld. You know, American Factors? That's German people own that. And then, they call Hackfeld, that's only one name. So, Hackfeld, they get somebody, young fellow like me, go around get order.

WN: Oh, like salesman?

YA: Yeah. And then, only can talk Hawaiian (chuckles). You know? Talk little Hawaiian, and little Chinese. They sell all this kind stuff. My father order all this. Well, he said, next time, he order for lumber. They bring the lumber from California. You know, the one-by-twelve, eh? Then we buy the stove from them. They buy the stove from Hackfeld, eh? They ship 'em down there on the boat. No more ship, only Mayflower, those days. That's one ship. Sailboat, eh? That's all. So, they sail, bring from Honolulu to outside the Kaneohe Bay. They stay outside the big water bay. They use the small little rowboat, and they bring 'em on the shore. Then my father go with the horse and buggy or some wagon, take 'em go, build his own house. And then, all da kine cast-iron stove, they all come on the shore like that. They no can go downtown, get 'em. And he like flour. So many bag flour, they bring 'em on the shore.

And lumber, everything. So, my father order all that, and he go get, see? Sometime, he get rice like that, he bring one horse. Put two bag rice--one bag, one side on a horse, eh? And bring home on a horseback, ride on a horseback, bring 'em home.

WN: From Waiahole to Kaneohe Bay, what, had a road?

YA: No, no more road. Sea beach. You know?

WN: Oh, on the beach?

YA: Yeah, go on the side of the beach. On the ocean side, get one small beach, eh? The horse can go only, see? After that, they started making one road. Before, no more road, see? Bumbai, when we moved down to Kahaluu, oh, they get. They build one horse buggy road. They use a four-wheel wagon, just like in the Mainland they call it "stagecoach." Four wheel with the four horses pull, eh? Pull the load. Go all the way up, that. Then they make the road climb up the mountain, go over the Pali, eh? Go the other side, downtown. That's how they get horse and buggy.

WN: How old were you when you moved from Waiahole to Kahaluu?

YA: I don't know. Maybe ten, fifteen years. Ten, somewhere around like that. So, after that, we come Honolulu.

WN: Before that, what kind house you lived in?

YA: Regular, house. They build. Only they can build da kine house is like this, see? You know?

WN: A-frame? A-frame house?

YA: Yeah, I don't know what they call that. And later on, they build 'em for garage, eh? My father build. One go this way, one go that way, eh? That's the roof, see? And then, when you like make the house more big, from over here you add out, you know. Add out on the outside, make room for sleep. Or cooking, or anything.

WN: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

YA: Those days, when I moved Kahaluu, half of my brothers not living with us already. They all big already. They go find their own business already. They do anything, see?

WN: And the people that lived out Waiahole, Kahaluu side, was it mostly Hawaiians or had Chinese, too?

YA: Hawaiian. Get few half-Chinese. Chinese married to Hawaiian woman, the children cannot talk Chinese. That's the kind, see? Then when we go school, we fight like the dickens on the road, you know.

WN: Why?

YA: 'Cause, you know, we sometime good friend, sometime bad friend. You know, make trouble, you go fight, eh? They fight me, I fight you, eh? You know, get fighting. That's how the people go in the ages. No can help. Bumbai, when 1915, '14 or '15, I moved downtown. There, get only one school in Honolulu. Kukui Street, go to the end, and the end of Kukui Street pau, eh? On the other side is the mountain. And on the back of the mountain is Central Intermediate School. Only one school over there. Everybody go to that school. But that's the only school could go. And I go look, oh, there's one school over here. But we no can go school already, see? We too big already. (Chuckles)

WN: You know the rice that your father had, what he did? Did he sell the rice to anybody?

YA: He sell. He sell to the rice mill. People grinding the rice, see? You know, one company that grind the rice and go sell, eh. That's only one--just like one store, anyway, the business. Only rice mill, they buy the rice. They buy 'em cheap from you, then they charge so much for grind the rice for you. If you like grind ten bag, they grind for you, they charge you only small money. You take the rice home, you stack 'em up in your house, you use 'em for your food. The rest, you no can eat all, you sell 'em to the people who grind the rice, the mill. And the mill, they ship 'em down someplace, everywhere they sell 'em. Business, business, business. Bumbai, when I move downtown, 1915, '16, they get one rice mill over here. You know where Pearl City over there now, the Hawaiian Electric powerhouse? They had one rice mill over there, see? And you got to go order [from] him. Because every week or so they bring one carload out to. . . . They get one big store by Maunakea and King Street corner, see. When we like rice, we go down there, buy. Dollar quarter, 100 pound. Already grind, you know. Polished already. That's cheap rice, you know. But we no can eat all the rice.

WN: Did your father grind and polish his own rice, too?

YA: Sometime, we make our own. We pound 'em with a pounder, and blow all the shell out, and we use that for brown rice for cook for ourselves. You know, we get da kine big pot, eh? Cement pot, eh? We just pound, pound, pound, all the shell come out. Then they put 'em on top there. No more blower, those days. You wait till the wind blow, get good wind, eh? And then, you put 'em on top there, pour the rice on top the strainer, and then the wind blow all the shell away, you know. You know what I mean, eh? That's how they do, see?

Only thing I know, Mrs. March tell me one story. That was about, I don't know how old I was, four or five years old, I think. She says, "This morning we going tell you the story about before,

about Abraham Lincoln was president." She says, "You know, Abraham Lincoln was the president. He rode his horse on top the horseback, go up the mountainside, look where people working. But those days, the white man no can hire somebody work. They no go tell somebody, 'You come work for me. I pay you so much one month, like that.' They buy the slave. They buy the slave just like you buy one horse, see? You put 'em in the house, you feed with the rice, the slave got to work for you for your lifetime. And no more pay, and nothing. Only just work, and work for you. That's why, they called 'slaves.'" And Mrs. March tell me that, "When Lincoln was made president of United States, he rode on a horseback. He go up the mountainside and he see the Negroes still working for the white man making bridges. He said, 'Halt! Why not cease work.' Bumbai, they shoot Lincoln, they kill Lincoln. That's why, no more Abraham Lincoln."

Then she says, "Robin Hood go hunting. No more gun, only arrow. They go hunt wild pig, wild animal for food." That's how. That's the stories I hear from Mrs. March.

WN: This was at Waiahole School?

YA: Mm hmm. She teach us. You know, she tell us the story in the school. When I was about fourth grade or third grade, I hear all the stories, see?

WN: You know, the rice mill in Waiahole, where was it?

YA: Right by Waikane. When you go, where the road go up to Waiahole, go little more down almost near to the Waikane Bridge. They get one bridge over there, see. That's where the mill is.

WN: Who owned the mill?

YA: Chinese guy. Chinese guy, I think he's Lee or Lum, something. Lee, I think. And I know the Lee boy, the one make eyeglass or something like that. You know, before Maunakea Street get one Lee, eh? That's his son, see? The rice mill man's son. And then, he was in the school, too, before with us. That's how he know me, I know him.

WN: When your father moved Kahaluu, what, he gave up the rice field?

YA: He gave up.

WN: How come?

YA: I don't know. He said he too old. He no like work already. He figure, 'nough already. Now all the big boy, they working. You know, go out and find job, and working for somebody else. So, he no like go work. That time, he was old already, you know. Maybe eighty or seventy-five, somewhere around like that. Kinda old, eh? He working hard, you know. Day and night, he work. And he brought up all da kine children, so many. He must be satisfied more than

enough.

WN: What about your mother? Did she work?

YA: My mother never work, only cook. Help cook and little bit for the house. Before, she don't cook. She no work, you know. When we had rice field, my mother no cook. My father assign one man in the kitchen for cook rice, cook foods, anything. And all the workingmen stay over there eat, eh? And us, we go down there, eat, too. All sitting down and eat up. Then, they bring da kine food up to my mother, you know. That's all. That's the cook, see?

WN: The workers that your father hired, they were all Chinese?

YA: Yeah, Chinese. Then they only get about two, three dollars a month. Maybe five dollars, three dollars, or four dollars, I don't know how much. One month, you know, they work. They come here, they make five dollars, that's plenty money in those days, you know. Make one dollar, one day. Plantation only pay you one dollar, one day. They give you firewood and everything, and house. Sugarcane field. But before that was more cheap. When the people strike for more pay, they foolish. The plantation give 'em wood, and give 'em free light, free house. And you no need buy water. Over there get good running water. And then, they get big house, big yard. They raise chicken, raise duck, any kind. And then, they no worry nothing. If they like rice, they just go up by the plantation warehouse, say, "I like one bag rice" or "I want cabbage, I want this, I want that, one can good," and any kind. They bring 'em to your house. You don't have to go and buy and carry home. But the plantation people make a mistake. They figure, oh, the union tell 'em you get so much one hour. You know, strike, eh? Now, they find out. When they move out, the plantation make 'em pay for the rent, eh?

WN: After your father moved to Kahaluu, how you folks made money? How you made money?

YA: No more money. No make nothing. Just only go get food, that's all. Around the yard, around the mountainside. Get mountain apple, get mango, get guava. Come home, make jelly. And catch a fish, bring home for food. And bring home cabbage. No need buy cabbage, you know. You go way up in the valley, you know, the riverside, get all da kine watercress growing on the side of the river. We pick all the shoot only, bring home. We no cut the watercress way down. We just bring the top shoot. Bring the shoot home, and then go eat. And we wen go catch fish, bring the fish home. We no need buy no fish, no food, you know, no cabbage. And later on---we live by the beach, I told you, by the coast. You pass the Hygiene dairy, the beach, and the other side, we stay by the beach, eh?

WN: In Kahaluu, eh?

YA: Yeah. Before you go up Kahaluu, the road, my father build one house.

We stay over there. And we go down the beach, go catch shrimp. Hoo, the wild. Plenty shrimp, you know. Plenty mullet. Like that, long kind, eh? We make net. One-inch, two-inch net. Because we no have to go catch 'em. We just go down the ocean, lay the net, and surround 'em little bit. We go back there. We take da kine mullet out, and pāpio, or whatever, put it on the back. Take half back home. And they no can even eat all. My mother tell, "Put 'em on top the roof, dry 'em up." Make little salt and dry 'em up. Make salt cabbage. I mean, salt fish. And one day, ho, boy, the plenty 'ōpae, you know, da kine shrimps, eh? Da kine they selling down the fish market for six, seven dollar, eight dollar, one pound kind. That's the size shrimp. Wild on the beach, you know. Hoo! Boy, us, we go catch with the hand. Bumbai, my mother said, "Go bring the big basket." Chinese, da kine big basket, eh? Bring the basket and use the mosquito net. Make one scooper like with the two handle with the stick. And then, on the front they sew one cord--wire or what you call, aho or anything, cord. Behind there, they sew the other one, too. They tie the other end with it, just like one bag. Then you hold the bag like this, see. You scoop. Hoo, we scoop one big basketful da kine 'ōpae, come home. One Chinese guy come around from the mountain where their rice field. They get another rice field planter, too, up there. He say, "Ho, get plenty little shrimps, eh?" Me, I was telling my mother, "If we sell that for ten cents one pound, we can make little bit--we get rich, eh?" I ask the man, "You want to buy shrimps? Ten cents, one pound. And three pounds for twenty-five cents. You want to buy?"

You know what the Chinese man say? "Oh, I no like eat da kine shrimp. Bumbai I eat too much shrimp, my eye blind." Ah, stupid, you know, he tell like that, see? Wing Company now. Before, they had Wing Company, Honolulu, eh?

WN: Wing--yeah, Wing Coffee Company?

YA: Yeah, yeah. That's the man, the Wing--Mr. Chong, see? And one day, I was downtown Honolulu, down the fish market, look around. They selling mullet, about six like that, long, for twenty-five cents. Nobody buy, you know. So, we go look again. And you walk from one table to another table. They say, "Oh, buy fish, buy fish, buy fish."

And, "Nah, no like. About how much?"

"Oh, twenty-five cents." Bumbai, I look at 'em, get six fish. Bumbai, "Oh, I give you two more for twenty-five cents." Nobody buy, see? Bumbai we buy some for home make salt cabbage [fish], eh? I don't know, those days, simply anything for nothing you can get, you know.

WN: What about 'ōpae? If you couldn't eat all the 'ōpae, you could salt that, too?

YA: We dry 'em up. We make shrimps. You know what shrimps look like?

WN: Yeah.

YA: Da kine they sell in the store? Hah?

WN: Yeah.

YA: Like that. [Today] you go Shimaya [Shoten], you see all inside the big barrel, eh? Fourteen dollar, one pound. That's da kine. Some big one, some small one, eh? And some nice looking.

WN: That's the ocean kind? Salt kind or freshwater?

YA: All ocean kind. No more freshwater. All da kine, that's from the ocean, see? Us, we catch 'em by the sea coast, you know. My father and mother. . . . The Chinese say, "Oh, I eat that, bumbai my eye blind." So, next time he come ask for us, "You get any more da kine shrimp for sell?"

"No, no more, no more." We no sell 'em, see? We dry 'em up. We dry 'em up, bumbai we put 'em inside another basket, you know. And when it comes very dry, the shell already crispy already, see? Put 'em inside another basket. We use one da kine guava stick, about my hand size. Rock 'em. You know? You rock 'em up, and then you Those days, no more fan. No more electric fan, any kind. So we put one big tray underneath here, and you put the strainer on top, see? Then you bring the shrimps. Wait till the strong wind come. You pour 'em down like that. The shrimps fall down, and the shell fly away, see? That's how they make shrimps. Lot of people don't know how they get the shrimps from. I tell you. You know now, see? Where they get the shrimps from.

But those Japanese boys, men, they go catch shrimps, they get blower. They get machine. They dry up the shrimps, and, you know, they put 'em inside the oven, too. They dry up the shrimps. They no put under the sun. Us, we put 'em outside, the sun. They put 'em in the oven, they dry the shrimps up. The dry shell--they push on another compartment, they grind 'em, see? They grind 'em, and all da kine shell come off. And then, the 'ōpaes drop down and the shell fly away. That's how they make shrimps. You go Shimaya, you see all kind.

Big ones, small ones. The small ones little bit cheaper. The big one cost more. About my finger size, that kind, you know. Fourteen dollar half one pound or something like that, see. We make our own shrimps. The Chinamen come back, they like buy shrimp, we no sell 'em. We tell 'em, "Go catch, yourself." And then, that, not every time get in the ocean. Only season time.

WN: Who you used to go with? You used to go with your friends to go catch fish?

YA: No, go myself. I get one burlap bag. You know, tie the two ear on the end, eh? Cut the little puka, you know. Put the rope over. Tie the bag and tie this end, eh? Put 'em over my shoulder, see? And then, we carry with us. As we catch shrimp, we put 'em inside. Catch fish, any kind, we put 'em inside there. The shrimps, we no have to. We put 'em inside the basket. Put 'em on the side. But the fish, we gotta put inside, you know. Carry the fish with us.

WN: You folks have throw net, too?

YA: Yeah. We make our own. I know how to make throw net. I know how to make hukilau net. Make long net, you know. You go make 'em long. Those days, they sell number ten thread. You remember? Da kine sew clothes kind? One dollar, twelve spools. Now you go buy, no can half dollar. You no can buy one spool. Before, only ten cents one spool thread. One dollar for twelve spools. We use that for make net, you know. And we make the needle for make net. We use da kine bamboo. Wide kind bamboo. We cut the ends like this.

WN: Cut 'em . . .

YA: Cut 'em the V-shape, eh?

WN: V-shape, yeah.

YA: And then, long, eh? Okay. Then, we cut in the center, you see. You know, cut in the center, make hollow, eh, on both ends. You know, right over here, like this.

WN: Both ends of the bamboo?

YA: No, we make the bamboo like this, see?

WN: V-shaped, yeah.

YA: Then, we cut over here like this, make one tongue, eh?

WN: Yeah.

YA: And then, we cut off all this kind stuff away. And then, cut to this end over here. Then, we cut straight over, then we cut up to the edge over here like this. You know? So, we put the thread over, catch that end, go the other end, you know. You know I mean? You put the thread on, you catch this side, go that side; catch that side, go that side. You know what I mean, eh?

WN: Yeah. You sort of weave it?

YA: Yeah. Bumbai you fill up the needle, then you go sew the thread. Bumbai the thread coming longer and longer, all empty, you go fill 'em up again, you know.

WN: They do 'em like that now days?

YA: Yeah, they do that. The same thing.

WN: Same thing, yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: So you folks grew vegetables, and you picked vegetables, and you folks caught fish, and everything, yeah, for eat, yeah?

YA: Yeah. You know, we never buy, you know. Always cut, see. And if we like papaya, da kine, we don't have to plant. You go up the mountainside, get plenty growing wild. You look the papaya tree growing all over, eh? Nobody eat. So we look which papaya come good, eh, we climb up the papaya [tree] and pick the papaya.

WN: You had people living near you?

YA: Not too far away. Couple neighbors. Maybe about from over here to Frankie's--you know, the 7-Eleven Store [i.e., approximately two blocks] like that. One neighbor. One on this other side. Maybe couple of them.

WN: And what, they were all Chinese?

YA: No, Chinese but they get Hawaiian woman, wife, see? Get some children. When we go school, all the children go together with us, go school. One is a--oh, I don't know, named funny kind. Ah Nee and something like that. Ah Lum or Apana, you know, all this kind funny kind name, see? You know?

WN: Yeah.

YA: Oh, anyway, when you small time, you got to fight for fun, anyhow. No can help, eh? And then, come big, then they know, see? They know each other. Some of them, they used to fight with me. Oh, I was small time, I think. Oh, about ten, fourteen, twenty years, I think, you know. Small kid like this, eh? And when I was small, all like that, too. We fight, eh? The mother and father take 'em to Oakland. You know, Portuguese town, eh? Oakland, California.

WN: Had Portuguese living over there, too?

YA: Yeah. Oakland, mostly Negroes and Portuguese . . .

WN: No, I mean, up Waiahole side?

YA: No more Portuguese over there [Waiahole]. On this side, where the Kahaluu side, get couple, see? So, we fight up. Bumbai, the mother move to Oakland, California. And about ten, twenty years [later], I think. He come back Honolulu, he meet me down the market. "Oh, yeah, I remember you. You Au, eh?"

"Yeah."

"I am Pedro so-and-so," like that, see? And he shake hand. "Chee, we used to fight up with you in the district. Every time we fight for nothing. Now we big, we good friend, we no fight." (Laughs)

WN: You used to speak Hawaiian?

YA: I learned all the Hawaiian in the beginning when I went to school. Only Hawaiian we talk. We no speak no English. You go everywhere, they talk Hawaiian. Even go to school, Mrs. March, we talk Hawaiian. They teach us how to talk Hawaiian. Aloha kakahiaka, like that, you know. Yeah, they teach us, you know. And then, teach us mostly this kind Hawaiian song. Kamehameha, Kalaniana'ole, or something like that. All da kine Hawaiian song, we sing. But now, I no can sing da kine song. I don't know now.

And no more road, those days, you know. Only one small little horse buggy road, you know. You know where the Hawaiian Memorial Park?

WN: Yeah.

YA: Get one hill go up before. That's only road that go all the way up to the Pali. They got to use four-horse team to pull the wagon, the four-wheel wagon. They call it "stagecoach." Then when they reach to the halfway house, the Pali, they got to rest. Get somebody over there watching the horses, feed the horses. They change the horses, put another horses go pull up, you know. No can use the same horse, see? So, these two horse they took off from the country down over there, they going leave over there, and they going feed 'em. And then, take care of 'em until tonight. When the wagon come back, they go over there, they change the horse again. They put back the horse, they go. And they rest this horse. They got four horses, see? And one morning, me and my other kid brother was riding one stagecoach coming to town.

WN: How long took from Kahaluu to town on stagecoach?

YA: One day.

WN: One day?

YA: Mm. So, me and my kid brother--he dead already--but he was with me, riding one stagecoach, go to town. The man driving the horses.

Careful, horses going. By he reach to Heeia Beach, you know Heeia, long beach, the horse no like to go. He lick the horse, the horse no go, and then everything, the horse no go. They get Bumbai, my kid brother, he look on the papaya tree. He see one lantern rolling up on the top of the papaya tree. You know, da kine ghost type, eh? Bumbai, he tell me, "Ey, Brother, you look. You see the light on top the tree rolling up and down?"

I say, "Where? Where?" I look, I no can see 'em. (Chuckles) No more, see? That's more like the olden day ghost, eh? Ghost. Bumbai . . .

WN: Was nighttime?

YA: No, morning. Early in the morning about three, four o'clock, see. Bumbai, the man trying to make the horse go, he no go. He even come down the road, whip the horse, no go. He got to take the horse with the rope and then lead the horse, then the horse go. First time he lead the horse, the horse no like go. Bumbai, after that, I don't know what he talked about. He talked some kind of words against 'em, eh? Then he lead the horse go over. (Chuckles) See? Those days are funny, you know. So, certain people can see, but not everybody can see da kine, you know.

WN: Yeah. So, you went along the beach all the way to. . . .

YA: Kaneohe.

WN: Kaneohe. Yeah. And then, from Kaneohe. . . .

YA: And then go up the Pali, eh?

WN: Up the Pali. And what, had trail?

YA: They get a trail. Horse trail, see. You can get a horse wagon with four wheels, but the horse pull only. No more road, you know. All muddy roads. When rainy weather, the wheel go way down by the mud. No can go, eh? And then, no more stone wall, you know. On the side of the trail is a redwood post and barbed wire. Three barbed wires. (Chuckles) But the horse buggy not so bad. If you drive automobile, you mistake, you go down. Boom, you go way down the bottom. No more hope. After they widen the road, then get car go, eh? That's why they put stone wall on. Before, no more wall, you know. Only barbed wire.

WN: How much you used to pay to ride stagecoach to Honolulu?

YA: Oh, very cheap. I think about dollar something, like that. One way, I think, you know. Very cheap, though, you know. They take you. You no have to walk, you know. They take you right up to the house. Now, if they come Kahaluu and if I live way up there on the hillside, I no walk, you know. You drive this horses, take me way up to my

house, drop me off. And if I say I want to go Honolulu, my father telephone. Say, "Tomorrow I like go downtown." They come in the morning, two, three o'clock, early in the morning, and come with the horse wagon. They come inside your house, and they call you, and take you. And the baggage are free, no charge. And when we come home from Honolulu, we buy kerosene. That time, we have kerosene stove already. We buy one---they no sell one can, they sell one case. Kerosene oil inside the can. Two cans kerosene inside one case. They nail 'em up already. They bring 'em home. They have to bring home that, they no charge you [fare], see. All the fare you pay is dollar quarter or something like that, they take everything. Then, they looking for customer. They never mind for the money, see. Cheap, eh? Well, those days are good days, you know, we no have to worry about fishes or shrimps, see.

WN: How many people could fit in one stagecoach?

YA: Oh, they can hold plenty. You know, they get one box like this, eh? You know? And then, the back is open with a door, eh? And then, the two sides fenced up, see? They make the driver in the front here. And then, the horses in the front. Then, over here, the seat for the driver can sit down two or three people. Then, they get about one seat, two seat, three seat, four seat. Every seat can seat four people, see?

WN: Oh, so maybe about sixteen people maybe?

YA: Yeah, they can hold. If dollar something one people, that's sixteen dollar something. They make money, see?

WN: But took all day to get to Honolulu?

YA: Yeah, all day. And you cannot come back home until next morning.

WN: So, when you went Honolulu, where did the stagecoach stop to get off?

YA: No, he stay downtown, Pauahi Street. You know, Pauahi and. . . . Sumida, before, they get liquor store, eh?

WN: Sumida?

YA: Yeah, right by the corner of Pauahi and Maunakea, eh? Sumida, they own all the big building over there. Well, that's the only place. Before, no more Sumida, you know. Only one tower, they build over there. You know, on top was a house; down below is hollow. You know, a tower. And the people go way on top the tower, they look out where they get fire. A fire tower, they call that. They say, oh, certain place get smoke, there's fire. They pull a water wagon. No more horse, no more steam, no more nothing. Oh, about ten, fifteen people. Some push, and some pull the wagon go over there with the water.

WN: No more horse?

YA: No more horse. Get horse, but they no can use horse 'cause fire engine, see? All use man, see? Bumbai, they get over there, they see, oh, the house get smoke coming out. They run inside, look. Oh, yeah. You know, da kine lumber no can burn fast before, see. And then, they go inside there, they bring the bucket water. They pour on top, kill the fire. That's da kine fire engine, before. (Chuckles) And then, over there, right behind the back of Sumida, over there, they get one shack for park the cars, you know. Garage like, see? They build one shack, eh? They park your car inside. And then, across the parking space get one big hall. Hall, like one house like that, you know. They put table, you know. Everybody go eat, ten cents one meal. You eat plenty rice if you like, ten cents, see. They make all kind nice kind, you know. Da kine nine-course dinner stuff. Fishes, and shrimps, or any kind, they cook, eh? All you have to do just eat. Whatever you want, you pick and you eat. And get soup, too. You drink one bowl soup. All for ten cents, you eat--maybe you can eat ten bowl rice, only ten cents, see. And then, right in back of the hall get one long kind benches, all around the side, the wall. You tired, you go sleep. That's all. (Chuckles) No more bed.

WN: How come no more bed?

YA: No, no more house, yet, see?

WN: When you went Honolulu, how come you went Honolulu?

YA: Just go see what they look like, eh? So, I carry my blanket with me and my coat. When I pau eat, when come dark, I go by the bench over there, the side. I go by the corner, where the corner end of the house, and I lay down on the corner and sleep. Put the coat over me, that's all. And the blanket or something like that. That's how we go sleep, you know. No more rooming, no more hotels.

WN: You have to pay to sleep over there?

YA: No, no. That's only ten cents. You go over there eat, and you can sleep over there. Not too many people those days, you know. No more Hawaiians. Hawaiian all stay down the country. Oh, lot of good fun, those days, you know. We eat free. Bumbai, later on, when I come Honolulu, 1915, I go downtown. I look, get plenty Japanese store. Nishime da kine, eh? And they get da kine store. You go eat inside da kine food store. What they get is nishime or boiled eggs, or fried fish. And you order over there whatever you like to eat. I say, well--I go inside look--I tell, "Oh, I like fried fish." I tell 'em what kind fish I like, eh? They fry me one plate fish. Then, they bring on the table. I'm eating with the fish and da kine chopstick, you know. Japanese kind, Chinese chopstick, too, see. Then, they bring one tub of rice over there in front of you. And they give you one bowl, you know. Well, you

Like eat the fish. You like eat the rice, you scoop the rice. One bowl, you come eat, pau. You still hungry, you go scoop another bowl. Some people eat four, five bowls. Some people eat six, seven bowls rice, you know. And then, only ten cents. The rice only ten cents with the fish. (Chuckles)

WN: So, you went Honolulu just to see what . . .

YA: What's going on, yeah.

WN: What's going on. You went by yourself?

YA: Yeah. After that, I went downtown again, Honolulu again, with my brother, see? Then my brother see all da kine (chuckles) ghost stuff on the papaya tree. The horse no Tike go, eh? You remember? The horse don't want to go, you know.

WN: You know, you country boy, and then you come Honolulu. What you thought about Honolulu?

YA: Nineteen fifteen [1915], I come Honolulu, they call me "country jack." Because me, only me. You know, the other kind stay Honolulu already long time, eh? They say, "You country jack." (Chuckles) Those days, we come Honolulu, we don't know nothing about Honolulu yet, 1915. We only move over there. We only know one place, see? So, we walk down Liliha Street, only no more street, yet. Liliha no more street. Get one trail, eh? Go as far as King Street. On this side King Street, where the housing now, is one swamp. Go down, drop down, all the way down.

WN: What housing?

YA: You know, the Mayor . . .

WN: Mayor Wright Housing?

YA: Yeah. Was one gully over there. When rain fall, all the river over there, see? The Liliha Street side get one street go down, drop down, eh? Way down on the other side. Bumbai, they build one house over there. You go look theater in the back, see?

WN: Had theater?

YA: Yeah. Go look da kine moving picture, eh? (Chuckles)

WN: What kind?

YA: Moving picture. Theater.

WN: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

YA: Then they get that. Later on, now, no more the place. All fill up

now, see?

WN: In 1915, you moved from Kahaluu to Honolulu, yeah? How come you moved?

YA: Because the country, pau. The lease pau, see? We have to come, you know, come in town. My father come move, too. Everybody move Honolulu.

WN: Where you lived?

YA: We ask where we can find a place. We go look. We just come around Honolulu, Nuuanu Street, go Judd Street, we go. We find one house over there that's open for sale.

WN: Where?

YA: Right by Liliha, below Judd Street. A three-bedroom house, you know. And big yard, you know. The house belong to one Pordagee guy, Mendonca. And then, we go over there. We like buy that house, see? We buy the house from him. I think about \$3,500.

WN: Where you got that kind money?

YA: Well, those days, Mama get little bit money left. Few hundred dollars, I think. And you no need pay cash, you know. He says, you pay fifty dollar or a hundred dollar down; you pay ten dollars a month. You sign up the contract. So, we lived there. Bumbai, 1917 I think, after I marry, I go in the Army, everything pau. Then, when I see the price come up, shee, the house now going up the land. We can sell our house for \$4,500. See? That's 3,000 something dollar we buy [originally], eh? Two, three thousand dollar we buy, see. Then, we sell 'em for 4,000 something dollar, we make about little bit money already. Then we come over here [YA's present house in Kalihi], we buy this house.

WN: You told me that before you moved to Honolulu in 1915, you used to come Honolulu and stay with your sister?

YA: Yeah, yeah.

WN: Where? Where was your sister living?

YA: River Street. River and Kukui.

WN: Kukui. And what, you used to stay with her little while?

YA: Yeah, she had one coffee shop. So I wen go over there, help them serve coffee for the Hawaiians, see. Stevedore people go over there eat, ten cents one meal. Rice and stew. Big bowl or plate of rice and stew for ten cents, see? Then I go help 'em serve, eh? Then, I look at it, across the . . .

WN: You got paid for that? Paid? Did your sister give you money?

YA: No, no, no. I just help 'em. But when I can stay over there, I eat over there, I get place for sleep, see? So, I look across the street. You know, the Japanese theater over there, before, eh? St. Louis school was over there. The first St. Louis school was open. The small, little cottage. Small, little house. That's the only one, St. Louis school. So, I came in town to help my sister. I was young, yet, see. Say, I think I better go learn some more. I go school. I go across the street, the little river. The River Street no more stone wall, you see. No more wall. You go cross the other side. I go inside. I go ask for, you know, the school. Register for go school. St. Louis school, the people tell me, "Where you from?"

I said, "From country."

"Are you religious?"

I say, "No." I not religious. Those days, they are all Buddhists, you know.

So, he tell me, "You stay over here by the tree and wait, you know. I let you know." He never come back and take me in there for good. So, bumbai, when pau school, everybody go home already, I go back my sister house and stay. So, I say, "Well, never mind. He no want me go his school, that's all right. No need go school anyway."

Then, I went down to look for job that time. American Can, see? They hire me for messenger boy. That's all. I went there.
Bumbai . . .

WN: About how old were you?

YA: Oh, about fifteen something, I think. Fifteen or sixteen. Then, bumbai, I work little while. I no like that, you know. Riding the bicycle, go pick up the mail from the post office, da kine. I no like.

WN: Where was American Can?

YA: You know where Iwilei Road? Where Hawaiian Pine over there? When you go down Hawaiian Pine, on the entrance. Before you reach to the corner, right over there, there's American Can, see? They get all kind machine over there, make cans. Bumbai, I quit that. I no like work, see? Too small pay.

WN: How much you got paid?

YA: I don't know how much, I forget already. Little bit, anyway. So, I wen go Hawaiian Electric. Hawaiian Electric open. They pay me forty-five dollar every two week, I think, you know. Then I no want to take the job, see? Too small [i.e., pay]. Bumbai, they

tell me, "No, you have bonus." So, then I take the job for little while. Was good job, but I no like. They send me out, go house to house, go read meter. Oh, the house to house. Da kine grass, like that tall. You go walk all over. The water wet. You wet your feet. You won't last long. Bumbai, you get rheumatism. You no can walk bumbai. So, I quit the job. And I didn't quit yet, I go down look for Navy yard, see. I found that Navy yard. And I see Dr. Cooper was manager for the labor board of the Navy. So, he take me in, see? He tell me, \$3.20 one day. So, I quit the job over there. Before I quit, I go tell the Hawaiian Electric bookkeeper, "I get another job. I want you give me a recommendation." So, he type me one recommendation, and I take 'em to Dr. Cooper. And I go in the Navy yard. Three dollar twenty cents one day. Bumbai I work little while, the superintendent in the Navy yard, he like me 'cause I good worker, eh?

WN: Yeah. Wait, wait. Before that you was in the Army, right?

YA: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: You got drafted 1918?

YA: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: What happened when you joined the Army?

YA: Well, nothing. Only just they draft me in the Army, that's all. And then, I talk to---too much talking with the captain. The captain like me, see. He promoted me to noncommissioned officer, corporal.

WN: How come you got promoted?

YA: Only for that talking, that's all. No more school, see? And then, he appointed me take charge the, what do you call--one room for teaching the people how to clean gun, eh? I don't know, that was called an instructor. In every the barrack get one warehouse like for teaching the people how to clean the gun. So, I teach them how to take off the gun, clean the gun, put back the gun and everything.

WN: How you knew how to do that?

YA: Oh, because I know. I used to handle guns before, see?

WN: When?

YA: Before, when I was up with my father and mother [in Waiahole]. He had one gun for shoot da kine bird.

WN: Oh, rice birds?

YA: Yeah.

WN: So, where you was stationed?

YA: We stationed Schofield Barracks. And then, the captain like me. Put me go teach 'em. Every morning, teach the people how to clean the gun for one hour. Little while, and then we had trouble with the mess sergeant. You know, they no feed the people enough food, see? I go bring the captain down. Tell the captain, "The people hungry. Get enough food. The mess sergeant get plenty left over, they don't want to feed 'em."

Then the captain tell, "No. I tell you what I do now. If you not enough food, you stay down on the bench and wait for the food. But if you get enough food, you go. You no get enough, you stay and wait." Then, they tell the mess sergeant that they got to feed us until we get enough food. That's how we get the story come out, see. Otherwise, I never complain about that. I wen just only bring 'em down to the mess hall and tell 'em about it, see. Bumbai, he like me. He put me in the office. (Chuckles) He tell me, "You take charge the office." That's all I know. Until the time I take charge the office. And then, the time come for discharge. You know, when the war is over, they discharge. I put in for discharge, too. I no like stay in the Army. I rather be outside free, myself. I no like stay in the Army.

WN: You went overseas at all?

YA: No. After that, I went myself. After the Japanese war. You know? Remember the Germany and the Japan combine and fight with America?

WN: World War I?

YA: World War II, eh?

WN: Oh, yeah. That's later, yeah?

YA: Yeah. I went myself, you know. I went all over European countries. I go London, England, France, Portugal, you know. I go see all the place. Up to Germany. They call that "Berlin Wall," see.

WN: You went to visit, you mean?

YA: Yeah, I go visit, yeah.

WN: You know, just before you went Army, you got married? You got married just before the . . .

YA: No, I married [in 1917] before I drafted.

WN: How you met your wife?

YA: Oh, blind date. (Chuckles) I don't know what she look like; she don't know what I look like.

WN: Who set up the blind date?

YA: Some Chinese man and woman. Talk to my mother and talk to her mother. Then they bring the blind date. That's how get married. I don't know nothing until she come over the house, then I know, see. Those days, they come over the house, they no come with the bare hand, like with the baggage. They get one wagon. Nice wagon, eh? Dress up with the lantern on the side, that kind. They come like that, see. (Chuckles)

WN: Where was your wife from?

YA: From Kalauao. You know, where the place where I told you the Hawaiian Electric powerhouse now? Over there.

WN: Oh, oh, by Pearl City?

YA: Yeah.

WN: So, they came over with the lantern and car?

YA: Horse wagon, you know, buggy. No more road, you know. Only buggy road, see. Horse wagon, buggy road. And all sugarcane field. Growing up on sugar cane, all on the side. No more road, see? Only sugar cane.

WN: From Pearl City?

YA: Yeah. And you know Waimalu Shopping Center? Was one rice field. When flood, rainy weather, the place all flooded. The water run over the road, you know. And then, now, they fill up the place. They dig the canal, eh? And they get Waimalu. Before, was one rice patch, see? And then, they build the place. That's Waimalu Shopping Center now. Kinda low down, eh? Yeah, that's the place. Before, when flood, the water come full over there. All the way up to the road, see?

WN: What kind work did your wife's parents do?

YA: Only plant rice. Plant rice, plant cabbage, da kine, that's all.

WN: How did they meet your parents?

YA: Well, the blind date, you know, da kine. They bring 'em each other, and then they get together and talk, eh? If they no get together and meet and talk, they don't know who they are, see?

WN: (Laughs) Yeah.

YA: No, those days are good days, you know. One good thing, those days, you no can get mixed-up blood, you know. You no can get the Chinese marry a Japanese girl, cannot. They don't marry to you. And they

no can get a Chinese girl marry to a Japanese. No, cannot. Because, you know, they strict like the dickens, see? Not now, see.

WN: What about all the Chinese that married Hawaiian?

YA: Well, that's lately, after that. You know, after the Second World War. They do that, all kinds, see. But before, a Chinese marry Hawaiian was only da kine old Chinese come from China, you know. And they stay with the Hawaiian, they no more place. You know, just like one lonely man, eh? They stay, then they marry Hawaiian, see? If Philippine Island, the same thing. They no can marry their own nationality. But when those single men were sixteen, seventeen years old, maybe twenty years old, they go out, see? They go out of the world, they no stay home no more. They go, bumbai they find somebody. They get friend, they go with the friend. They reach down the country, or Waialua, or Kahuku, or maybe Philippine Island, wherever they settle down, see. Then they see some nice-looking girl, then they get married. That's why, get plenty Chinese-Filipinos, see?

WN: How did your mother and father meet?

YA: I don't know. They meet down in China. They come over here on the sailboat, you know. He sail himself, come on the sailboat.

WN: Oh, yeah? Where is your father from?

YA: From Shanghai. From Canton, but he wen go work for Shanghai.

WN: Shanghai what?

YA: Navy base.

WN: Navy base?

YA: You know, there's a shipyard, eh? After that, he build his own boat. Buy the big log. He cut the log, eh? He chip, and chip, and chip, and make one sailboat. Then, bumbai, he get together with four or five men, make his boat. They all work together, fix the boat. And then, they get together, and then they chip the boat, make the boat good, and everything pau. They go buy all the parts from Hong Kong, see? English place. Then they build the boat up. One night or something in the daytime, they get everything ready in Shanghai. All of a sudden, one time, he get all da kine rice, and water barrel, all da kine he buy from Hong Kong already. And wood, and everything inside the boat already, see? When he sail from Shanghai, off he went. The government don't know he went, eh? (Chuckles) So, he went, and he went. Went all the way past to Philippine Island, Japan, and he come.

And one day, he tell me about how he come. I said, "How do you find the way to come Honolulu?" He say, no, he no need no compass. He

use the sun and the moon. He know what day the tide go up, the tide go down. You know, low tide, up tide, eh? He know all da kine, see. He study all da kine, you know. And the moon come up. Full moon, you know, certain day, like that, they know, see? He say, "Oh, I only watch the sun and the moon, I get Honolulu." First thing, he came Honolulu. . . . No, he never came Honolulu first day, you know. First thing, he land Lahaina first. Bumbai, after that, he come from Lahaina down to Honolulu, see. He stay down Honolulu. And only him and his friend.

WN: How many people on the boat?

YA: Three, four guys, together.

WN: His wife, too?

YA: No, never come, yet, see? Second time, he went back again on a sailboat.

WN: He went back China?

YA: Yeah. No more ship, yet. So, he went back on his sailboat to Canton. Then, he get married, he bring the wife over here.

WN: And they came back on the sailboat?

YA: Yeah. All come on a sailboat. They get one slim chance. If, you know, anything happen, why, you pau in the ocean, that's all, see. But they get here, though. You know? Slim chances, you know. That's just more like the--what do you call certain people? What they call? Magellan or da kine, eh? Something like that, see? He go out for slim chances. He don't know whether he going stay or he not going stay, or where he live or not going live. But he just taking a chance, see? But he get here.

WN: He told you why he wanted to come Hawaii? Why did he want to come Hawaii?

YA: He said, free country. China not free country. Not free country, get emperor. Hawaii, King Kalakaua, da kine, that's free country, see? So, they come here, see? Before, territory, eh?

WN: You know what year he came?

YA: Oh, I don't know. Seventeen something, I think.

WN: Nah.

YA: Seventeen or eighteen.

WN: Eighteen, maybe 1800s, eh?

YA: Yeah, somewhere around like that. I know, I only know he tell me I born 1894, that's all I know. I no can see whether I born that day. He tell me that, see. He report to the Board of Health about what day I born, what month, like that, that's all. That's all I know.

WN: So, after they came Honolulu, they went Waiahole?

YA: Yeah.

WN: And they live Waiahole.

YA: Yeah. They live there, and then they work with the Hawaiians together. All da kine empty places, no more taro, no more nothing. Empty field, see? Then he use horses, plow up the place, eh? Make rice field. And then, he plant his own rice. Then, he make one dike by the riverside. Bring the water inside. And then, he irrigate--the water--the rice field. That's how he build the dike, see? Before, in the river, you can build your own dike, but not now. Before, we used to build the dike in the riverside. We no need go catch fish. The dike like this, high, eh? We live one place where the water come over, you know, on the top. We put one big bamboo basket outside the other side, the waterfall. Nighttime, we tie the basket against the rock. And right on the waterfall---down below get big stones hold up the basket, and the water come, shoot down, and go through the basket. The water no can stay, eh? So, after that, maybe about one or two o'clock in the nighttime, you go over there, collect. Ho, all da kine river mullet. Da kine all go over and stay inside the basket. You no need go catch, you know. They trap, eh? And when you build the dike, you do that, see. And then, some go inside the rice field [when] they irrigate the water like that. When they dry up the water, they cut off the water from the dike, and then dry up the land for ready for cut rice, eh? Oh, see plenty da kine goldfish. And inside the entrance of the--you know, irrigate water, get one. Every time when you let it go, the water go from one patch to another patch. They get one puka, eh? All the fishes over there. We just go pick 'em with a hand.

WN: Had fish in the rice patch, too?

YA: Yeah, not in the field. They might be inside the water, see. When you dry up the water, the fish gotta follow the water. It come down from this side, then it go inside one corner. Where the patch going dry up, all the water come down on the side going irrigate another patch, see? Then, right by the entrance over there get plenty fishes, you know. No need go catch. Just pick 'em up with the basket, take home to eat. Because the land is kinda level, eh? Now, if you plant the rice over here, another patch next, eh?

WN: Lower?

YA: Lower, eh. The water go over, see.

WN: Oh, the water come . . .

YA: And when the water come down, they shooting the water from the corner, they going to make one puka. Then, all the fishes. All stay in the pool, see. Then, go around another pool. Bumbai, when you shut off the dike, all the water dry up, eh? All the fish stay in the pool. You know what I mean, eh?

WN: What kind fish had?

YA: Goldfish. Goldfish, or 'o'opu, da kine. Catfish. Catfish, good eat, you know. My mother show me how to cook catfish.

WN: How you cook catfish?

YA: You got to go fry 'em up. You clean 'em, you know. Take the guts out and clean 'em nice, eh? And they no more scale, you know. Catfish no more scale. Cut the head off, cut the tail off, and put in the frying pan. Fry 'em crispy, see. Fry 'em very crispy. And then, put 'em inside the pot with half pot of water. Then put da kine black beans inside the pot, see. But the black beans, already soaked, you know, inside another container. Then put 'em together. Then boil 'em. Boil until the fish all melt, soft already, everything. Then, the soup so good. And then, everybody drink one bowl of soup. Ooh, the ono, da kine soup. Yeah, that's all. (Chuckles) That's all we do in our days. We no do nothing. We learn how to make shrimps, learn how to make dry fish, eh?

WN: You used to help your father out in the rice fields?

YA: No, no. Oh, maybe he get da kine basket they need, I carry 'em out for him in the field, that's all. No, I never help, those days. So pretty, so nice for me. (Chuckles) I hardly any work, you know. Only just plant cabbage one time in the back yard, and go in the mountain go get da kine wood for burn, eh? You know, da kine dry wood for burn, eh? No more kerosene oil, those days. You got to cook with wood. Wood and cast-iron pot. Cook rice, cook water. The water, we use five-gallon kind kerosene can, see. And then, we used the five-gallon kerosene can. We cut 'em up, wash 'em clean, boil 'em over with the water, clean up the water, and then we use that for cook water. We dip the water out in a bucket and take 'em inside the washroom for put inside the big tub and mix up with some cold water, and then we wash ourself. "Pordagee bath," they call it. (Chuckles) No more go in the river, no more shower. That's da kine bath. And they use a big towel. You know, wipe, eh? That's clean. That's better than shower. Shower, sometime, no clean, you know.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 11-51-2-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Yen Cheung Au (YA)

April 2, 1984

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Yen Cheung Au on April 2, 1984 at his home on Colburn Street in Kalihi.

Okay, Mr. Au, in 1925, you started working for Pearl Harbor, yeah?

YA: Yeah.

WN: What was your first job in Pearl Harbor?

YA: Just, what do you call, da kine classified labor. Classified labor, that's a higher pay labor[er], see. That's what Mr. Cooper--he's the manager of the labor board--he tell me that, see. "They cannot give you no job as any other job because we have machinist union here." Those days, they have machinist union. Come from the Mainland. So, they not allow anybody work on the machine shop to run the machine. Only the union, machinist union, can run, see? So, Mr. Cooper tell me, "Well, I tell you. You was a veteran. You have the veteran's privilege. I put you in there for work as a classified labor. You do labor work under them, but you are a better kind labor, little bit higher labor." You know, \$3.20 one day, now.

WN: How come he put you at higher labor grade?

YA: I don't know. Because he figure I had the veteran's privilege, I think, you know.

WN: You had what?

YA: Because I come out from the veterans, see. World War I.

WN: Oh. Veterans.

YA: Yeah, see? Veteran. That's how they put me on the higher labor. Little bit higher than the labor. The labor get \$2.80, I get \$3.20 one day, see. (Chuckles) So, I work there. Maybe every so often,

they allow. . . . When they doing one job, the union machinist can do, but I gotta hang around with them, just like one labor, you see. And pick up the stuff, and clean up the floor. And then, when he tell me, "You go file the edge off." Give me a file, I go file the edge of the basin or whatever, see. Then, I go do all the work. Bumbai, I work, and get haole superintendent. He come around and watch me all the time. Then Dr. Cooper telephone, asked him how this boy working with you--all right or no, or something like that. The superintendent said, "This boy do more work than my machinists can do. But he do good work." (Chuckles) Bumbai, down from the labor board, he send one application down to the office. The superintendent tell me, "Come in the office. They want to see you in the office." I thought, "Chee, now they going fire me." (Chuckles) You know. No, I go inside the office, they tell me--they put the blank out--and they tell, "You sign here." And I signed there. He no tell me, "You get promotion," or what. And then, bumbai, little while, pay day, I get more pay. Then I think, "Oh, how come?" Then I asked the superintendent. "What I sign the paper for?"

"Oh, you get promotion." (Chuckles) That's all, see. Then, after '25, '26 or something like that, I working better and better, see. Then, I keep on working, working for 'em. Then, when the Japanese bomb over here, '41, '42 was, . . .

WN: [Nineteen] forty-one.

YA: . . . then push me up to machinist, see? (Chuckles) From the time I hold the machinist, was one dollar something, like that. Anyway, \$1.80, I think, one hour. And I hang onto the job. Bumbai, I work for I don't know how long. Maybe couple years, see. Then, another quarterman come around. The quarterman taking charge. The quarterman is higher than the leaderman. Leaderman is just like straw boss, eh? So, the quarterman say, "Can you do this machine work?"

I say, "Yeah, I can." They put me one job. He write one slip, see. Tell me go down the storeroom, get the materials. Then he say, "Here you stay. This machine, you going work."

And I said, "I don't know how to run the machine." They show me how to handle the machine. So, after that, I put the job on, I make the job come good. (Chuckles)

WN: What kind machine?

YA: What the machine they put me on is lathe. So, I run the lathe. And then, they show me how to grind the tool, eh? I grind the tool one time; the next time, I catch on. I make good job, see? Bumbai, they bring some more haoles come from Mainland for work for the Navy yard. That time, no Tnough men, see. Plenty haoles come down there, come work for me. And we work together in the machine shop. And the haoles more dumb than anybody else from the Mainland. So, some haoles that work together with me, I ask 'em, "Where you from?"

"Up the Mainland, you know."

"What you do?"

Oh, cowboy. Some of them plant cabbage, eh? You know. They call that "hillbillies," eh? So, they tell me the stories. So I know what is hillbillies look like, see. The other one say he was down certain places. "Oh, what you do?"

"Over there get snow, you know. Morning time, we get up, we gotta shovel the snow out of the door, see." (Chuckles)

Then, bumbai, I work, I work. The quartermen come around. "I like give you a job to be straw boss." I scared. I no want take the job. You know, straw boss, you got to know all the people, the job work, and you got to write--you know, all the questions, the answers, and go to the office, see? So, what kind job, what the. . . I don't know. I only come from Waiahole, fourth grade. I no can take that job, see? And I keep on working back on my job. One day, one haole come from the Mainland, they bring him. He was working on the same machine making toggle bolt for the ship, see? He put 'em on the machine, one whole day he no can even make one toggle bolt. (Chuckles) And me, only about four hour, I can make about six or ten, you know. The quartermen and the leaderman say, "Oh, no."

The haole come from Mainland say, "The machine is too old. I cannot handle the machine. Cannot make the job."

So, the quartermen and the leaderman tell the haole, "It's not the machine, it's the man back of the machine." You know? So, "You go see that white-headed--you know, this Pake." "This Chinese white-headed man" he call me before. I get white hair, eh? I still get white hair. "He tell you how to run the machine." (Chuckles) And he comes to see me. I show him how to set up the job, grind the tool, mostly, I set up all the tool, job for him, eh? I open the machine and run, and I give him all the idea. You run the machine. You watch the machine go, you know, on the apron. Get one handle, see. When the apron come almost to the chuck, you pull the handle up. The machine going, but the tool not going anymore, see? The apron not going. So, everyone that come over there, he send 'em to me to teach 'em how to run. Bumbai, one day, he says, "You don't want to take the job as the leaderman?"

I say, "No, I no want."

"Well, I tell you what I do, I make you instructor." (Chuckles) So, I take the job as instructor. Teaching people how to set up machine, you know. So, I stay over there. I get little bit more pay than the other fellow get, see. (Chuckles) That's all. They get \$2.00, I get \$2.25. That's all. Only twenty-five cents more an hour. So, I work. That way, more safety for me, see? I teach 'em on the machine, how to handle machine, but I no need pencil and

writing down the book and everything. So, I take the job.

Then, I work until the war is over. Then I see I get enough already, I retire. I put in for retirement. Nineteen fifty-six [1956], I retired. I was sixty something years old. So, I came out now how many years? Almost thirty years I collecting the retirement, eh?

WN: What was your pay when you retired?

YA: Was \$2.25.

WN: An hour?

YA: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: So you started out, 1925, making \$3.20 a day.

YA: Three dollars twenty, a day, yeah.

WN: And then, you retired making \$2.25 an hour?

YA: Hour. That's pretty good already, see? Then when I come out from the retirement, \$200 a month, retire. So, they ask me if I want to leave back percentage for my wife. I ask my wife. My wife say, "No, you better take 'em all." So, I take 'em all. I get \$200 a month. And then, come up, cost of living go up to \$900 today (chuckles).

WN: Oh, yeah?

YA: Not bad, eh? That's all. (Chuckles)

WN: So, you make \$900 a month now?

YA: Yeah, little over now. Because they been taking the tax out now, see. They send me back \$884. So, they show me, the card say \$900 something dollars anyway, you know. But they take the tax. Before, they no take the tax. When they no take the tax, the check come \$900 something dollars.

WN: During World War II, you know when Pearl Harbor was bombed, what were you doing?

YA: I was home sleeping that day. That was on Sunday morning. I get up, and I wash my face, brush my teeth. How come? What's wrong with those guns? They firing, shooting up. Bang, bang, bang, boom, bang. All over. You know? All of a sudden, I hear the radio say, "Turn out. Everybody turn out on the job 'cause somebody bomb here." Then, I know Pearl Harbor was bombed, see. But they must have hit someplace else before they hit the hangar. They hit Hickam hangar, and Pearl Harbor they hit the Arizona. Then the radio say, "Everybody turn out. Go back on the job." We all go back on the job. You go back on the job, and then they

assign you. "You take over night shift from so-and-so hour. You take over day shift, so-and-so hour." Like that, see? Then, no can go with the car, no more. They took us on the train. And when they get to the gate, the train no can go inside. You got to stay by the gate. And the gate get da kine, you know, just like one truck, eh? They call that Leapin' Tuna. Just like one truck like, you know. And then, we go on top the truck. They take us to the shipyard.

Bumbai, when we see Arizona was bombed, that night, boy, in front of my dock. I was working in the machine shop right by the 1010 Dock. I go look outside the ocean. Oh! The sailors all floating all inside the water, eh? All dead, already. The bomb, eh? Chee, terrible, you know.

WN: You could see the bodies?

YA: Yes. All the bodies, they pick 'em up with the speedboat. Then, they take 'em by the 1010 Dock and they use a ambulance. Some, they take hospital; some, they take in the morgue.

WN: You know, the day Pearl Harbor was bombed, what kind work did you have to do?

YA: Oh, same kind. Mostly, you know, repair da kine for the ship. You know, when they assign you one job, you make bearing for certain kind of job. You know, bearings, they pour by the lead already, see? All you have to do is put on machine and cut the bearing into two half. Then, you make 'em to fit, eh? That's all, see.

WN: How did you feel that day?

YA: Oh, we feel funny kind. I no like stay night shift. I like stay day shift, but no can help. Then, that night, when they bombed Arizona, we see those ships coming bomb in there. And they get plenty other boat, they wen bomb, eh? Then, we all go on top the--climb the stepladder--go on top the rooftop, see? We get one fifty millimeter machine gun, you know. We shoot the airplane.

WN: Who shot the plane?

YA: They appointed so-and-so people. So many people go up to operate certain guns, you know. So, you have to go, see. Maybe I'm not the one that operating, but some other people ahead of me operate. I got to be around with them. If a bomb hit him, he die, I operate 'em, too. I take over, see? Another guy take over like that, you know.

WN: But you had to do it? You did it?

YA: No, I didn't do it. I just only go together with the gang.

WN: How come they made you civilians do that? You a civilian, eh?

YA: Yeah.

WN: How come they made you folks do that?

YA: That's how they do. The time they bomb Arizona, all civilians The sailor and marine were watching the other stuff. Plenty things. Like guard all over, eh? That's only machine shop workers operate that gun on the rooftop, see?

WN: You knew how to operate that?

YA: Yeah.

WN: When did you learn?

YA: Oh, I learn from over there. Before they set up the gun up there, they bring you up there, they show you how. They teach you how to handle the gun, eh? But you don't know which one he going take. But the whole group from the machine shop got to go up there. And then, it's just like in the school. They show how to handle this gun, how to handle this, and how to load, and all da kine. You got to watch 'em, you know. You learn from them, see? Bumbai, when you know already, you no have to ask no more questions. You know what to do already. When the thing give signal, you got to follow the instructions. You go ahead and do it, see. That's how they do.

WN: Were you scared?

YA: Oh, little bit, no can help, eh? I don't know whether I get bombed or not, but what you scared for? No can help, eh? The first day when they draft me in the Army, they ask me, "Would you like to go in the Army?"

I tell 'em, "Yes. Why not? I have to fight for my country." (Chuckles) I tell 'em like that, see. (Chuckles) [YA served in the Army during World War I, and was employed as a civilian worker at Pearl Harbor during World War II.]

WN: This was World War I time?

YA: Yeah.

WN: Yeah. During World War II, did they ever think you were Japanese?

YA: In the machine shop, they no think about it. Outside of that, in town, they think I was. But in the machine shop, they no think I was a Japanese. But Japanese think I was Japanese, though. (Chuckles) When I walk on the street, all Japanese, they bow their head, they say, "Good morning," and all kind. Because they think I was Japanese,

too, eh? Well, that time, it's good. Good to know everything, see? When I went to Japan [after the war], the first thing they ask me--they bow their head, they bow to you two or three times, I think--and then, you know, they say, "Are you Japanese?" They ask the question. In talking in Japanese, "Anata Nihonjin?"

Bumbai, I tell 'em--I don't understand too much--but I tell 'em, "No, me, Chinese." I tell 'em like that, see? Bumbai, I hear this two Japanese lady and man outside there talking. "No, I think he not Chinese. I think he Japanese, he talk like that." You know, eh? But that's all right. Never mind. Any kind nationality is just the same.

WN: So, when you started Pearl Harbor in 1925, you were still living up Liliha, yeah?

YA: Yeah.

WN: With your wife and your mother.

YA: Yeah.

WN: How did you get from Liliha to Pearl Harbor?

YA: Well, we find a way how to get there. We been go Pearl Harbor for find a job. And somebody take me there, and then show me how to go on the train, get there, and go ask for job, see? So, naturally, I got to find a way to go there to get a job. Bumbai, when I work Hawaiian Electric, then I know where to go already. From Hawaiian Electric, I go Pearl Harbor, find job. Otherwise, I don't know how. Before, first time, we wen go apply for job. First, when I discharged from the Army, I wen go apply plenty time, but I no can get in, see. And then, that's the different man controlling that time, that's why. And bumbai, I go again. I keep on go down there, find out. I ask the job. And then, just happen I meet Dr. Cooper on a window. Dr. Cooper ask me, "What you doing here? What you like?"

I tell, "Well, I like a job."

"Why, you cannot find a job nowhere else?"

"No, because I came out from the Army, see, and no more job."

And then Dr. Cooper take me in the office. He ask me questions. He fill up all da kine paper. Nice man, you know. Instead of he tell me okay, he take me on his car. You know, from the labor board, get one car. He put me on the car, and he drive me all around to all the shops. Every shop, he stop. He take me inside and introduce me to the quarterman. "This the boy that come back from the Army," and all that kind. Then, I don't know what shop I like. Bumbai, he take me to the place. I think, more better machine shop. You

know, I stay in machine shop. He ask me, "You can run lathe?"

I tell, "Yeah." I know how to run drill press, you know, da kine. Well, I never know how to run lathe, but I tell I know how to run lathe. First thing they put me on the drill press. And I run the drill press good, eh? Then, they know I can run the machine already, see? Then, I make my grade. Some, the drill press, the union men run the drill press no can drill the puka. They put da kine inch-and-a-quarter drill, and drill the hole. And then, they put the machine on. The drill hit the puka, he go like that, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. You know, rock, eh? Bumbai he put me on. I took the big drill out. I put the half-inch drill inside, then I drill one half-inch hole first, see. Then, I put back the big drill. Then I run the machine slow, and then it drill the holes. (Chuckles) If you going run the machine fast with a big drill, the drill no can go inside. You going bounce, you know. So, I make 'em. Then, he no tell me nothing. I make 'em, that's all right. When the whistle blow go home, I go home. I go home, bumbai I find out after that he tell me, "You get promotion." That's all I know, see.

WN: And two years after you started working Pearl Harbor, you moved to Kalihi, yeah? Around 1927, you moved over here?

YA: Yeah, yeah.

WN: How come you moved to Kalihi?

YA: Nineteen fifteen [1915], I was up Judd Street, over there, eh?

WN: Judd Street, yeah. In 1927, you moved over here?

YA: Nineteen seventeen [1917], I marry, I think. And then, 1918, I get drafted. Nineteen nineteen [1919] I come out from the Army. Nineteen eighteen [1918], my first daughter get born in 1918, December. Then, after that, we find out---the house was very cheap before, you know. You rent one house for ten, twelve dollar, one month, you know. Bumbai, my wife say, "Well, we got to go find our own house. Twelve dollars one month we pay, but we no going get nowhere else." My wife tell me, "We go up Kalihi." Look around over here, see? We come over here, no more house, only bushes. Only one road and all nothing but bushes. So, we find, over there, only get two houses they been build. And I wen look across there is one cattle ranch. They raise cow and horses, you know.

WN: Where? From over here? From Colburn Street?

YA: Yeah, from this house.

WN: Yeah, you look across the street, yeah?

YA: Yeah. And then, one house over there. Now, they been broke down,

empty lot, eh? One house over there, one house over here. One Chinese live in that house, so we buy this house.

WN: How much you bought this house for?

YA: Oh, very cheap. I think \$1,500, I think.

WN: House and lot?

YA: Uh huh. But the land was kinda little bit low, but we got to go buy da kine rock and stuff to fill 'em up, eh?

WN: The house was already here?

YA: Yeah, only the house, yeah. That time was a small house. Not this big, like this one, see? Just like the house across the street, the small one. Bumbai, we live here; we fill the land up. And then, I figure, well, more better we raise the house. We get a basement, see, to stay. Only \$500. We get a contractor. He raise the house up, put stone wall all around for \$500. Now, \$1,000, no can make that, I think. And jack the house up together for \$500, you know. So, we raise this house up. One Japanese man contractor tell me, "Why not I jack the house up for you. Instead of one-and-a-half story, two-story high? And I build one big shack in the back for you can do all the laundry work for you." Chee, \$700 or something. Seven hundred fifty dollars, or what. I was so foolish. I never like to build. I didn't want to. If I wen let it go, today, I get nice two-story house with a big shack in the back. Then the man say, "What you going do with the downstairs?" Downstairs, they say, the front part, make just like one storage room, see. You can rent it for somebody to wash clothes, ironing, that kind. But I foolish that time, I don't know, see. If I know that, I would do that. Today, I be more better yet.

Bumbai, I stay here. In front of the other side of the street only swamp land. Deep down, you know. All that house over there, maybe about five feet or six feet below the road, see. One guy, I don't know what company, what people, I forget already. He asked me, "You want to buy this lot?" And I didn't like to, see.

WN: Where? Across the street, you mean?

YA: Yeah, that one and this one. The two lots, you know.

WN: Oh, right across here, you mean?

YA: Yeah. "You want to buy the two lots?"

I said, "No, the place is too low down. How much you want?"

"Five hundred dollars for two lot."

I told him, "If you fill 'em up, road level, I buy." So he fill 'em up road level. I buy \$500. And I build one house next to the lot for \$1,500, I think, the price. They build one house for \$1,500. I sold for \$3,000. Chee, I think I was a millionaire man. Foolish, you know.

WN: You mean, you used to own these houses over here?

YA: Yeah, yeah. Then I sell the other one to that old man, the painter. He asked me, "You like sell this lot to me, I build one house for my boy. My boy going get married." At that time, he was only about sixteen, seventeen years old. I was so kind, you know. I said, "All right. I sell 'em to you." I sell 'em to him with the net price was only \$750. I buy 'em \$500, I get one house. I sell the other one for \$750, I think I making little bit money already. So, if I never sell 'em to him, I build one house for rent, oh, more good, you know. The housing in front of my eye all the time. But no, I sell 'em to him. When I sell 'em to him, what he do? He put two houses in the lot for rent. (Laughs) He catch me. All kind tricks, anyway. People are like that. No can help, eh?

WN: So, before, this place you said was swamp land?

YA: Swamp, yeah.

WN: All the way up to Dillingham [Boulevard]? The swamp?

YA: Yeah. Low down, you know. When rain, full of water, all over the pond over here.

WN: So, had only houses on this side, the makai side of Colburn Street?

YA: Up side, up side, yeah?

WN: Up side no more houses?

YA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Only this side get. I mean, Dillingham is up side, see? And down side no more house, see. 'Cause the water come down, they got to go down, eh?

WN: Did you look for any other place besides Kalihi for your house?

YA: No. That's the only place we think about. My wife like move Kalihi, quiet place. Nobody live around. You know, lonely place, see?

(Chuckles)

WN: Oh, that's why you chose Kalihi?

YA: Yeah. And besides that, we like to live here because down the beach over here, we can go catch fish. And when we first moved here, you know the leper station? Way down Sand Island Road, go all the way

down. Must be Puuhale Road, go all the way down to the beach, see. All the leper station over there. One big, plenty houses over there. Get fence all around, you know. That's where they keep all the lepers, people. And then, us, when we go, we go through the leper station and we go down to Sand Island. We take da kine spear. You know, we make da kine spear with one barb, eh? And one rod. We file the barb with the file, and we put one wooden handle on just like a file handle, see? Then, we go down Sand Island, we go spear da kine squid. Octopus, eh? And we catch plenty, you know, down there. But we no catch the big one, we catch the small one. When we see, we go over there, we walk on the sand. You know, where the white coral, the sand over there, we look. Oh, there's a octopus moving. We know. Okay, we get the spear, we poke 'em. We poke 'em. And the little octopus, he no come up, you know. About that long, see?

WN: About what?

YA: Oh, maybe about . . .

WN: Twelve inches long?

YA: Yeah. So, he no like come up, you know. So, we no can pull 'em up with the spear. He stuck. He hang on, all, underneath the rock. So, we rock the spear. When we rock the spear, all the leg come out, they grab the spear. Then we take 'em out, see? (Chuckles) That's how I learned how to catch octopus, the spear. Before, I don't know how. Hawaiian people take us go, they show us.

WN: Hawaiian people, where did they live?

YA: All down the country. Kualoa. Where the old sugar mill over there, see. My father used to live. . . . When I was small time, we used to go down there. Once in a while, go down Waiahole, Waikane, go some friend house, eh? And then, they teach us how to go catch squids in the ocean.

WN: What else you caught besides squid in Sand Island?

YA: Oh, we only catch squid. No more other kind. Because plenty people over there, you know. Sand Island. Now, no can tell. I no can tell how Sand Island look like now. All fill up already. No more one island over there, see?

WN: So, right by the leper hospital, that's where had the water to go . . .

YA: Yeah, shallow water. You can walk over. But now, no can. Over there, all fill up. And then, from leper station, you come way up. Before, no more Sand Island Road, you know. And on this side of the beach, near the--what do you call that--the bakery over there? You know, where the Big 88, eh? On this side of Sand Island? Over

there was the ocean, see? Ocean and the sea beach. Get one salt pond over there. Mr. Lee run the pond, see. And they raise all the salt over there. Then, lately, they no more the salt pond. They fill up the Sand Island, then they build this road, see? You know? Before, no more this road, see.

WN: Sand Island Access Road? Sand Island Road? What road?

YA: No, no. This Dillingham one. They build 'em right through across the ocean to the other side of . . .

(Visitors arrive. Taping stops.)

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 11-52-3-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Yen Cheung Au (YA)

April 3, 1984

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Yen Cheung Au on April 3, 1984, and we're at his home on Colburn Street in Kalihi.

So, Mr. Au, you were saying last time that you used to go fishing, yeah, around here, by Sand Island.

YA: Yeah.

WN: You used to catch octopus and squid, yeah?

YA: Octopus, yeah. Make my own spear, eh? No more glass-bottomed [box]. No need glass-bottomed, this. Only make da kine spear myself and look in the water. When the water is clear, you can see the coral, eh? Where the octopus stay inside the coral, see? Then, you watch 'em. When it move little bit, you can see move, then you poke 'em, see? And then you bring the octopus, you know. We catch 'nough every time.

And then, later on, sometime, I go down Aiea. You know, Aiea side. Go on the beach. Before, the government---the Navy no control, no bother the people, see. You go over there, dig clam. You know, on the beach, eh? Side of the water, plenty clam, you know.

WN: Where was this? What beach?

YA: You know where the Waimalu Shopping Center? Across, before, was an ocean, eh? Ocean, and then the fish pond. You know, somebody raise fish over there. You go over there, go in the water, go dig clam. Every time we go dig, we dig about quarter bag, you know. Maybe ten, twelve, fifteen pound, eh? Then, bring 'em home. 'Nough for food. But you no can cook 'em [and] eat right away. When we bring 'em home, we put 'em inside a wash tray. You know, where the washing machine, the tray? We fill 'em with the water. And then, put 'em inside there, fill the tray with water. Put some salt inside the water. Then, nighttime, you go over there. When dark time, you go look. The clam shoot out da kine dirty, you know, from the wash

tray. Then, we shoot all the dirty out, and then maybe one day we keep 'em, two days. Then we take 'em out and eat. No more sand, no more dirty inside the clam, see?

WN: How you used to cook 'em?

YA: Just put 'em inside the pot. Heat up the pot little while, then the shell will open itself. When the shell open itself, it's cooked already. You just take 'em out from the [shell] and you eat the clam. And bumbai, we get plenty. We cook 'em all. We take all the clam out--the [meat] from the clam. We put 'em all inside one big bowl. Then we go make noodle. We boil the noodle. The noodle pau, we strain 'em out. We get the noodle already dry up, eh? Then we put 'em inside the pot, and put all the clam inside, mix 'em up. And eat like that. Hoo, the clam noodle 'ono, you know. That's how we eat, see? Every weekend I go. Before, good, you know. You pay five dollars for shooting, hunting. We go hunting or go catch clam, the game warden no can stop us, see?

WN: Why? How come?

YA: No, they stop the people go in the ocean, go catch da kine fish, you know. But you have to buy your license for five dollars for one whole year, and you can go hunting, anything, see.

WN: Where you go hunting?

YA: Go down Kailua, where the Kawainui over there, one big swamp, eh? We go shoot wild duck.

WN: Oh, Kawainui Swamp?

YA: Mm hmm.

WN: Oh, yeah?

YA: (Chuckles) And then, lay down or we sit down by the bank. We wait till the wild duck come. They make noise, they come flap. When they reach over there, we shoot 'em, see? But we no can go in the swamp. The water over there deep. We got to wait till he fly over and we shoot 'em, he fall down on the side, eh? We go pick 'em up. And they get plenty wild pheasant, too, you know, over there. Pheasant look like one chicken, but he got nice color, eh? There's a pheasant, oh, we shoot the pheasant. From Kailua, we bring 'em home, cook. The pheasant tastes better than the chicken ten times. Ho, the 'ono. You know, why? Wild, that's why, you know.

WN: How you used to cook the pheasant?

YA: Same thing. You clean 'em up, and we put 'em inside the pot. We roast 'em. We pot roast. We no use oven roast. We pot roast.

Heat up the pot, and then we roast the chicken. Ho, better eating chicken than put in the oven and roast. My wife used to show me how to cook da kine.

WN: How your wife learned?

YA: Oh, she learned from the mother from China, eh? The mother and father from China, but she stayed down the country [Pearl City] and learned that. They teach 'em how to make pot roast chicken. You know, da kine chicken, they raise, they can make pot roast chicken, too, see. But pot roast chicken not so ono as the wild pheasant, see. Hoo. So, every time, weekend like that, we go out, look around. We go shoot. Shoot wild duck, wild pheasant. And those days, get plenty plover. You know, da kine plover. You know what is plover mean, eh?

WN: No.

YA: Da kine bird. Get kinda little long-legged kind. And then, they fly by flock on the side of the beach, eh?

WN: What you call? Plover? What you call 'em?

YA: They call 'em "plover."

WN: Plover.

YA: Yeah. And we used to wait till the big flock come around. We stay by the beach, and then wait till they come over there. Then, when they come near us, we shoot one time. Plenty fall down in the water. And then, we shoot one more time, some more go inside the ocean, the beach. On the side of the beach we pick up all da kine, take home. But we no clean the feather, you know. We cut 'em open, we skin 'em. Skin 'em, and take the meat inside, and throw away all the feather with the skin. Just like how you kill frog, you know. You never killed frog once?

WN: No.

YA: The frog, you know, that's same thing. You kill the frog, you skin 'em. You take the inside of the frog and then eat. Oh, University get plenty frog, you know. I go over there . . .

WN: Where? University?

YA: Yeah, over there. They get one restaurant down by King and. . . . By University. Right in the back of McKinley High School, they get one school over there, see? That's for university students. And they facing the other way of Kapiolani, eh? Kapiolani and Piikoi, corner.

WN: Oh, oh, yeah, yeah. That's . . .

YA: We go over there eat, eh?

WN: . . . Kapiolani Community College.

YA: Yeah. We go over there eat frog legs. And I wen order frog legs.

WN: When?

YA: Once in a while. And, hoo, the frog legs they bring out, long, you know. Oh, big frog, you know. Then, oh, they good. Ono, boy. I like frog legs.

WN: How you prepare frog legs?

YA: Nothing. Just fry 'em, or cook, or boil 'em, you know. That's all. Put flavor inside, see. Just how you cook chicken, you know. Same thing. But frog legs, you fry 'em, more ono. Crispy, eh? Little more tasty. Oh, we eat any kind. Get wild dove. That kind, we shoot 'em, take home for eat. And pheasant, wild duck. And then, rabbit. Wild rabbit. Ho, the good eat, the rabbit.

WN: Where you used to get wild rabbit? Where did you used to get . . .

YA: They used to have down the country. On the mountainside get plenty rabbit, eh? Now, no more, see. Everybody shoot, then no more. Rabbit, same thing. You skin 'em. You no take the hair out. Just skin 'em. Take the inside, the meat, see. But my wife make frog legs. She skin 'em, she fry 'em. And they put inside the pot, boil 'em. Put 'okolehao inside the soup. Ho, the good eat, you know.

WN: Yeah?

YA: And rabbit, you no have to do that. You just fry 'em crispy and eat like that, ono. One day, I meet one Japanese friend of mine. Him and his wife, long time ago, long-time friend. I make birthday, see? Make fried chicken. Cook everything. Then, I tell 'em, "You come my place, eat." They come. The wife and him say, "Oh, we don't want to eat the rabbit." They no eat rabbit. Bumbai, when my wife cook all the rabbit, just like tempura stuff. Put in the oil and fry 'em crispy. The rabbit and the chicken, two bowls. Separate, see? So, when they come eat, we tell 'em, "This is rabbit, this is chicken." Everybody pick up one for try. They come back. Everybody eat rabbit, no like the chicken. (Laughs) That time, I work shipyard that time, you know. Get friend, eh? I never thought he say, he no like eat. But when he eat one time, he say, "Good." "Oh," he said, "better than chicken." (Chuckles) Me, I no care. Any kind, I eat, you know. As long as good to eat, see. But I like more frog legs and rabbit than any other stuff.

I raise rabbit. Oh, boy. The rabbit grow wild. You raise one or two rabbit, one time they get set of babies, eh? Plenty rabbits, you know. Then when come grown up, we no sell the rabbit. We skin

'em up and we eat, ourself. Only rabbit, I like. When they hatch, they no hatch one or two rabbit. When they get rabbit baby, you know, about ten, fifteen one time. Just like how you see da kine animal, the dog, eh? Then their litter all da kine small dog, eh? One gang, like that, see? Oh, the good, though. Good eat, you know, the rabbit. And they clean. We put 'em inside the coop. We put wire around. If you no more wire, the rabbit chew up the board, and all run out. So, got to put wire inside.

WN: You told me you used to go hunting up Salt Lake, too, eh?

YA: Over here?

WN: Yeah.

YA: I went, but no more nothing. Yeah, up there, had the lake over there. Now, they cut the lake down, you know. Oh, they flat the mountain now.

WN: Golf course now, yeah?

YA: No, golf course is way back the other end. Once had one golf course, see. But one more golf course, Salt Lake, down below by the roadside. That's for the Navy golf course, long time over there. Up the mountains, all was Salt Lake, but no more houses. Only get little bit houses, you know. See, now, they flat the mountain up. Oh, the pretty high-rise apartment. Oh, the nice place over there. My son-in-law, he took me around, he show me. Hoo, boy. He tell me, "You know how much this kind house cost now? Two hundred-something thousand dollars, one cottage." (Chuckles) Before, we only buy 'em sixty, seventy thousand dollars, you know.

WN: What about up Kalihi Valley? You used to go hunting up there?

YA: No more anything up there. No more. We went way up Kalihi Valley. Up there, got single house, eh? Way up in the valley. We went there, no more nothing. So, next time, we no go. Not much place to hunt, over this side, see. All Kalihi Valley all mountain, too. No more houses. Only get one or two house in the gulley, you know, the riverside, eh? And then, get one store right by over there. Get one school over there. And on the riverside get one duplexlike store. One fella ran one store for selling tobacco, cigarettes, any kind. And another one, they rent one store. They make for laundry, dry cleaning, or any kind. Then, the next one, next one here. Kinda long building, see? And the next one, their compartment, they get one barbershop over there. And then, way down the end over there get one small restaurant. You go inside, you eat, eh? Saimin, da kine. That's all, see? Then, now, over there, all different now.

WN: What get now?

YA: Oh, everything change over there, now. They get big kind cottage come up, you know. Up there, I don't know. I never go up there long time, but the road been cut, eh? Oh, yeah, before that, was only taro patch. One Chinese guy, old man, he used to lease one place. Raise chicken, and duck, and all kind. And he raise so many chicken. He raise for go take down the market for sell, see? His son come home one night. I don't know, his son not working. But, I think, you know, loaf around too much, come home midnight, see? He open the gate, the old man shoot 'em. He think was robbery. People rob, eh? Before, you can shoot. If people go in your yard, you can shoot, see. And no more regulation. Not like now. You no can shoot nobody.

When I get orange trees or mango trees growing on the side like that, the mango hanging down, the Hawaiian guy--you know, all this kind young Hawaiian and Samoan kind young people--they come around. They climb your tree, they go pick, you know. Because your tree is outside by the roadside. They go pick. You no can do nothing. Only you can scold 'em. And he pick all he want. They come inside your yard, pick all da kine fruit. You no can say nothing. You no can call the policeman, arrest him or anything. Just let 'em pick 'em, that's all. Those days are good days, not now. You no bother. That's how these Hawaiians, this kind people before, they no get too much go in jail. Now, plenty, you know. Any time make mistake on the road, hold up somebody, they catch 'em, they lock 'em up in jail, eh? Before, no, you go on the roadside, nobody holding up you. But when we go on the road, we no care. We no go bare hand, see. We always carry a piece of wood or maybe a piece of pipe on our hand. When they try to attack us, we hit 'em with a pipe, you know. You see? You know what I mean? So, if you no more nothing to protect you, he going lick you, see?

But me, so far, I went anyplace. Go down Kakaako, go to--what do you call that church?--Kawaihāo Church, eh? The graveyard, I cross the graveyard. I go Kakaako. I see da kine young Kakaako boys. When they pass by you, you no say nothing, you just keep walking. He say, "Hello, my friend." He no come tackle you, you know. I don't know how, you know. I never get any da kine gangster on the roadside and hold me up, you know. Because I always carry something, protection. If they come and gang me up, I get something to fight, see. Or either I carry one belt, you know da kine strap with a buckle on the end, eh? (Laughs)

WN: So, those days had plenty rough people?

YA: No, young boy only. They gang you up and rob, but they no go your house and steal, you know. Not too bad, you know. They only gangster up on the roadside. Maybe about five, six kids together. Only young kind kids. Ten, fifteen years old kind. They gang you up. And maybe eighteen, twenty years old. Some, maybe, couple old men, too. They all gang up. They go gang and fight on the road, that's

all. They no go in the house and steal, you know.

WN: Had any places in Kalihi that you'd never go? You know, you never went 'cause was too rough? Had any places in Kalihi that you never . . .

YA: Never have trouble?

WN: No, that you never wanted to go because was too rough?

YA: No, I forget already. You mean to say, I don't care for go, eh? Well, no more another place I don't care. Only thing, I go down to the salt pond over here, by Sand Island. They get one salt pond. I go over there; and stay around over there, go hunt, you know, da kine plover. You know, plover. Sand da kine bird or dove. That's all I can go. No other place can go, see. But those days are good days. You want to go over there, buy one bag salt. Only about half a dollar, I think. And you buy one bag, 100 pounds, you bring 'em home with a wheelbarrow. Then you no have to worry go buy any more salt. Or you go to store buy, see?

WN: How they used to make salt?

YA: Salt is made from salt water.

WN: Yeah. You know how they did it?

YA: Yeah, they do that. They make salt pond, see. Flat pond, just like. Not deep kind, you know. A regular bedlike, bed. And make bank on the edge. All around the edge, And then, about this high, see? Then they fill up that pond over there with water. Let the sun strike 'em. Bumbai, all the water dry up, eh? Down below is salt. And then, they scrape. When they scrape that salt, they scrape the top [layer], you know. The top one is the clean one. The bottom one, they scrape 'em, they put in the back. They go make ice cream. That's how they use 'em. And then, you can use 'em for salt cabbage, any kind. That's all. Only the top, they make salt. They take the top one, the nice one.

WN: The bottom one was what? Real . . .

YA: Real dirty. They take the first coat for eat; the second coat for make ice cream, da kine, eh; and pau. Another one, they no like, see. That's how they make salt cabbage, salt meats, salt pork, any kind. They use that.

WN: Who owned the salt pond?

YA: Oh, the Chinese used to own, you see. One Chinese man, Mr. Lee, he owns it.

WN: Had lot of Chinese in Kalihi?

YA: No, only few. When I worked Pearl Harbor, get few, see. Before, don't have. Only get about one up here by King and Mokauea Street corner. He get one store, see. He selling, grocery store. Then on the back of this store, all the lots belong to him. He make cottage for rent. That's all.

WN: And the taro patches, what? Who owned the taro patches in Kalihi?

YA: Oh, before, Charlie Aki. He get one taro patch land all the way up to Gulick Avenue. All the other taro patch land is Charlie Aki. That's all. No more nothing over there, anyway. Only this kind place. Then, later on, when I worked shipyard, the Gulick Avenue, get plenty houses on the side of the stream, see. One time get one storm. Big storm. I think the tree fall down, block the bridge. Ho, the whole area overflowed, see. And the water no can go nowhere else. They push the house out of the foundations. That's all, that area. And down below, the other side of the bridge is the pigpen. They used to raise pig. And then, they slaughter cow--slaughterhouse over there.

WN: Where was the bridge?

YA: Right by Middle Street. This end of Gulick Avenue. Gulick Avenue, the river come down this way, see? And then, on this side of the Gulick Avenue, they raise pig and you know. And then, they get the houses over there build up for slaughter. Then when the flood come over, they wash all the pigs all down in the ocean. 'Cause, before, no more road, you know, over here. Only ocean. And the water go way up Sam Damon Park.

WN: That was a bad flood, yeah?

YA: Yeah. Ho, terrible flood, that. Push all the houses away. Even my house. The water flood my house. Before, my house not that high. Before, low down, you know, about four feet or something like that. And then, the water cover up all the road. All my slipper floating inside--you know, just like one boat--inside the floor. But my house no can push away, but only flood the basement and down below. Everyone no more basement anyway, you know. We only get one floor, see? Just like the one across. He get only one--no more basement, eh?

WN: Some people died in that flood?

YA: I don't know. But I never thought of how many get die or no die. I no think about that, see? Somebody get killed, but, you know, we no pay no attention. That's small stuff. We only care for ourself. In case our house no push away, we lucky, that's all. Over here, you know, across the street where that house over there standing now? Get one pond like, and they raise cattle. Raise cow and horses. The pond full. The water overflowed, see? Come way over on my place, but the water only can come over here. No can go no

more. Come back over here, it go back the other way, eh? It go back to the Dillingham, see? Of course, this side high; this side high. The water no can go this way, see? In the back no can go. They come over here, they fill up over here just like one pond, eh? That's all we can do.

WN: How many years you lived before. . . . I mean, you know what year the flood was? How many years you was living here already when the flood came?

YA: I kind of forget. Nineteen. . . . I kind of forget. Nineteen twenty-five or something like that, you know. No can remember what year, see. I live here over. . . . Nineteen twenty-seven till now. We live here too long. We no care for anything. But I think it's about 1920 or '25. [Nineteen] twenty-five or '26, something like that. No can tell what day, what month, what year. Between the '20 to '20-something, you know (1934-35).

WN: When you built this house?

YA: Oh, this house? They build 'em before 1927.

WN: Oh, the house was here already?

YA: Yeah. They build the house before we come buy. That's the year they build the house and we come up . . .

WN: The same house?

YA: Mm hmm. Only thing, me, I pay \$500 to raise the house up, make wall, make basement, that's all.

WN: So, before, when had the flood, you didn't have 'em raised?

YA: No.

WN: Was still low, eh?

YA: Yeah. After the water go and flood it, that's when we have to raise it. Otherwise, you no can sleep inside when the water go on top, see? That's how I raise this house up. Five hundred dollars, raise the house up and put stone wall all around. That's cheap, eh?

WN: What kind nationalities lived around here?

YA: Before?

WN: Yeah, when you first came to live here.

YA: Only Portuguese. One Portuguese live on this corner. And the other one--that's my brother-in-law, the Lum, you know, next to the Portuguese. And then, this side, get one Portuguese family. Cabral

family. The mother used to go and help people how to take care da kine sick, you know, just like. . . . I don't know what they call that, you know. You go over there, they pray for you. And they put the glass of water in front the table, and they talk those kind. Well, certain people get sick, and she go pray that kind for you, see? That's old Portuguese style, you know. That's all the houses. Over here, no more houses. Only this one house over here. You know, the yellow house? The big yellow house over there?

WN: Right up here?

YA: Yeah, right over here. Next to this other one.

WN: On this street?

YA: No, on the same street, but the next house. Now, they've got a big house now, eh? Portuguese family lived there. And then, the place where the Negro church burned down, right next, eh? You see one church burned down over there?

WN: No.

YA: If you go this way, you see one apartment burned down. But it's not the church. The Negro build one church. They buy that house, and then they use the back parking garage. They build one shed for school. Bible school class. Now, you go in, you go up here, and you pass this yellow house, the long house. You see the next house burned. Just like never burned because the concrete building in the front. The back all burned, the house. And all, inside, all da kine mattress and everything, burn up. The Samoan people live there. His kid go play match, catch fire. That's all I know, see. I never know was one house burning away. I hear the fire engine call. Ambulance, you know, all come over here, fire. And I go look. I never thought was a fire.

WN: When was the fire?

YA: Oh, maybe couple months ago, I think. Then, I run up the corner. I look where the fire is. I didn't know was a fire right in the back of the house.

WN: Now days, what nationalities live over here?

YA: Nobody live there.

WN: No, now days, what nationalities live around here?

YA: Filipino. See, another one [house] they build over there so nice? Filipinos. But before, was Japanese owns it, see. Japanese, he working for the union. He's kind of bigshot, take charge the union. Some kind of union leader, eh? Then, he moved down to Waipahu. He sell this place. And the Filipino buy 'em. And then, he live there.

They get about ten or fifteen people living inside the house. Down there. They build one house in the back, eh? They broke down the front. They connect 'em. Now, get all new house. Ho, big house, you know. Upstairs, downstairs. (Chuckles) And then, right next to that house, that's one Japanese. Japanese marry one Portuguese lady. And then, he run one poi shop down below. You know, way down by Kalihi Kai down below, eh? He get one poi shop, see? And then, after that, he die. The wife sell the house. The Filipino buy 'em.

WN: How come got plenty Filipinos now living over here?

YA: Well, they said, the law. . . . They said the Filipinos all like come United States. I see the newspaper say one day, so many thousand or hundred Filipino every month, they apply for citizen for United States. Now, all over. Waipahu, all Filipinos, you know. These days, I think, 250 or so many thousand people, one month, they apply for American citizen. Oh, all Filipinos. Even my downstairs, I rent 'em Filipino. Because no more other people live around here. Only the across the street is the Japanese painter. And he's dead already. His son living there with the family. And then, he rent all the other kind houses on the side to Filipino. That's all you can do. If you no rent it, they no more house. Even across the street is all Filipino. Only one Chinese house over there. If they no rent and they moving in, they like buy your house, too, you know. Because when they buy your house, they expand, see? If they buy your house for the price like last time and the price never go up, \$145,000. They willing to buy. And they can borrow money, too, loan. All okay, then they pay so much. And then, their house, about ten, fifteen people [living in one house]. And then, they collect all over, individual, eh? Maybe \$100, \$150 one person, eh? Hundred twenty-five dollars, husband and wife. And so many, they house 'em, see? And then, they collect all the money. And they pay the note, see. Like over here, next door. Downstairs, four people living. Two hundred-something dollar one person. Husband and wife. And each guy get his own bed and one table in the room. When they cook, community, all behind [the house]. You know, one stove, eh? Everybody cook, pau, they take 'em inside. They eat, pau, they wash all the dishes. They put 'em back inside the table. They no need the big house, see? So, I guess I no have to complain about that. I satisfied they can live. No matter which way how they live, they can live. And they living nicely, eh?

So, I rent this one out. About five guys, you know. Five people. First thing, I only give 'em [for] \$300. You think I make money? I no make money, but he clean my yard. He take care all my yard. And I told him, "If you like to plant anything, go ahead and plant. I no stopping you." And then, one thing I told him. Before, I used fifty dollars electricity one month. You know, all this kind icebox and everything, fifty dollars. But if the electricity go more than that, you pay the balance. That's fair enough, they pay. And the water bill. I usually pay twenty-something dollars every two months, eh? Now, go up to forty-something dollars, they pay

the balance. So, I satisfied already, see? I no like make money, but I live good like that. When I go someplace else, somebody around. Nobody go burglarize your house, see?

Well, Kalihi, that's all I can do. No more nothing. The flood come down here. That time, I work in Pearl Harbor, yet. The flood. And the ocean over there, they already build that road over the ocean from Dillingham all the way down to the other side of Kalihi, eh? They had the road already. And when I work in shipyard, I go home four o'clock; three something, pau work, eh? I came home, oh, flooded. Nobody can go. All block up on top there. Damon Tract all full with water. Da kine car all stop, no can go. This side, we never know. I was going. You know, the water was just below the wheel, see? So, I keep on coming. When I come to over there, the second bridge, oh, boy. No can come this side, stuck over there. And then, the water come that deep, you know.

WN: Up to your chest?

YA: Yeah. So, we all stay on top the bridge and wait till the water go down slow, eh? And good thing get three, four people riding with me together. "You get down. Everybody get down, push the car." (Chuckles) That time, I get one small car, eh? Small car, before. Six cylinder or four cylinder, I think. Somewhere around like that. The Dodge. So, we push the car over. And right over there where the Foremost Milk, over there, all duck-pond-like. Full up. Come way up this side, and you can get out of the road, see. But that's the only time. I came home one night from pau work, afternoon. But I get home, though. We just leave the car over there by the bridge. Wait till the water come down slow, we walk over, you know. Walk in the water about chest-high of water and come home, see?

WN: How long took everybody to clean up? How long took to clean up everything?

YA: Clean up what?

WN: You know, the mess from the flood.

YA: Oh, I don't know. Take, maybe, couple months, I don't know. For my place, more than one month we cleaning up, see. We no can clean 'em up one time.

WN: How much you lost?

YA: Oh, that one, we don't know. We just lost and lost, that's all. All da kine trunk, suitcase, everything. Everything downstairs. Everything, when we move over here, we no more room, we put all da kine down below, eh? Well, we lost. . . . When we take 'em out, it's already damage. Ah, we got to throw 'em away. Put in rubbish. Rubbish wagon come pick 'em up, eh?

WN: Not dangerous for your wife and kids?

YA: No. She stay up here. That's pretty safe. She stay on top here, see? (Chuckles) Well, that's about all I can know.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: How many children you have?

YA: Four. That's all. My grandchildren went to the military academy. I wen go with my wife [to New York]. Catch a Greyhound bus, we go ride all the way up to New York, see? Then the time we was riding the Greyhound bus, they have a round United States fare. And I pay \$216 one trip, one person. Go right around United States. Ride the Greyhound bus, with me, and my wife, and my children. When the bus driver reach up New York, he asked where do we want to get off, uptown or downtown. I said I don't know what is uptown or downtown means, see? What I can do is just tell 'em, oh, downtown. So, they take us way downtown. And then, we go, get up in the morning. Before, they get da kine place. Plenty, da kine supermarket. I forget all the name of the supermarket over there. And then, we walk in the morning. We get up, pau eat, we go walk around. We go up way up Wall Street. We go sit down by the park, go watch da kine pigeon. People, everybody, buy da kine peanut, anything. They feed pigeons. Oh, lot of pigeons flying back and forth all over (chuckles), you know. Bumbai, I tell my wife, "We go look where get some Chinese food." And we go look down there. Down below over there, the hillside, get da kine two-story building. And down below the floor is all the Chinese chop suey house, eh? We go over there, eat chop suey. Then, we come back, we rest. So, those days are very cheap.

WN: When did you go?

YA: Oh, long time ago. Nineteen-something, you know.

WN: So, who went to military academy? Your grandchildren?

YA: Yeah, and then we go visit him. And then, we come home. But I don't know what year now. We went to visit all the place around United States, see. On the Greyhound bus, you know. I think, nineteen. . . . Nineteen fifty-two or something like that, you know. We went all around. We see everyplace. And you can go to Las Vegas. They get all silver dollar. No more paper money. And then, I went to Butte, Montana. All silver dollar and gold coins. Twenty-dollar kind gold coins, see. And then, the bank over there ask me, "If you like change gold coins, you can change." You bring all your silver dollars, he give you gold coins, see. And we can buy gold coins

before, you know. Bumbai, we no like buy no more. So, we come home with da kine gold coins. Bumbai one Korean guy come up, jewelry man. He go sell, make watch, that kind, I think, you know. He says if get twenty-dollar gold piece, they like buy. So, they buy all the gold piece from us. Twenty-dollar gold piece, they give us two dollar extra. Chee, we sell 'em all. We foolish. Whoever can think about that. If you only hold 'em today, thousand dollar, one, eh?

WN: You know, you were born Waiahole. And then, you moved Kahaluu; and then you moved Liliha Street, then Kalihi.

YA: Yeah, that's all we stay.

WN: What place you like the best?

YA: Well, so far, Liliha and Judd Street the best place, you know, for stay. But we already sell our house away. We move over here [Kalihi]. But over here, before, nobody like, you know. They said Kalihi kinda hot, eh? So, we live here for how many years. All our lifetime. We move over here, we stay here till now. I still living here. And now, my wife passed away, but I still no like move away from this place here. I like to stay in the house myself. My daughter tell me move up her house and stay. Aiea. I say, no, no good. Go up Aiea, you not convenient. You no can catch the bus. You no can. Over here, you just walk outside there, get the bus, see? That's why I like live here.

WN: When you catch bus, where you go now days?

YA: Go downtown, fishmarket, King Street. And then, go walk around Chinatown, buy something, come home, eh? Or sometime you like go Waikiki, you just ride the bus all the way down Waikiki. And if you like go different place, you just transfer. Before, I no more sixty-five, I no can get the pass. Later on, I get pass. I no need ask for transfers. I just go to the place. I like go different place, I get off, I catch another bus. Just show the pass only, see? (Chuckles) So, that's how da kine life I get. Good life, you know, but. I no worry, see.

WN: What time in your life you liked the best? You know, all the things you did, what thing you liked the best to do?

YA: What thing?

WN: Yeah, what did you like? You like hunting or fishing or. . . .

YA: No, no. I no like that. No hunting, no fishing. Plenty people from Pearl Harbor, retired, they ask me to go fishing. I tell 'em no. I no want go fishing. I says, fishing more danger than anything. I cannot swim good. Too much, too far away. If my boat turn over,

KALIHI:
Place of Transition

Vol. I

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HISTORY PROJECT**

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