

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Albert O. Adams, 75, retired civilian defense worker

*"There was the Luke Field before, the air force. And they was looking for people that had experience, see, because the airplane--all the fuselage, wings, tail section, all was made out of fabrics. All fabrics, and in order to work there, you had to get experience where you worked on fabric before. So I have that--I used to work with awnings and all that. So I never had no problems getting in."*

Albert Oliveira Adams, Portuguese, was born May 21, 1909, in Nuuanu, Oahu. At age seven, Albert and his family moved to Ashford Street in Kalihi. He has remained in Kalihi ever since.

Albert attended Kalihi-Waena School, completing the sixth grade. He held a variety of jobs: awning shop worker, caddy, stevedore, and dock watchman. He was also active in community-sponsored sports activities.

In 1929, Albert began his career as a civilian defense worker at Luke Field, working primarily in the dope and fabric department. In 1936, the entire operation was moved from Luke Field (Ford Island) to Hickam Field. Albert worked there until his retirement in 1965.

Today he lives in Kalihi Kai with his wife. He attends senior citizens' activities and is an active member of the Kalihi Thundering Herd Club.

Tape No. 11-3-1-83

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Albert O. Adams (AA)

December 6, 1983

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Albert Adams. Today is December 6, 1983, and we're at his home in Kalihi, Oahu.

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

AA: Yeah, [near] Laimi Road on Henry Street.

WN: That's in Nuuanu, right?

AA: That's Nuuanu; and I was born May 21, 1909.

WN: What was your parents doing in that area?

AA: Well, my father come from there, he lived there. We stayed there. I never forget my grandma used to cook bread, you know, on the outside with this Portuguese oven. And she had a bunch of grandchildren. I was one of them, and she used to make little, round bread; they used to call 'em "bolings, bolings," you know. And she used to give each one of the grandchildren one of 'em. And she used to slice 'em, put lot of butter on 'em. And I never forget I was walking down the road eating 'em, bunlike, and all the butter running down my mouth, you know. And this Puerto Rican guy--this is true--he came, he say, "Hey, you know what you eating?"

I tell him, "Yeah, I know what I eating. My grandma made this, give this to us."

"But that not butter."

I said, "Yeah, she put plenty butter."

He said, "No, that come from your nose," he told me. And from that time on till today I never eat butter. That's the truth--yeah, never eat butter.

(Laughter)

WN: You believe the guy or what?

AA: I was small, eh, I thought was the truth, eh? Yeah.

WN: So what you put on your bread now?

AA: I put cheese, I like cheese. And cheese, you know, you can taste little butter. Jelly. Anything else but butter. If you make, you know, cake or something, if I can taste the butter, I don't eat 'em. Yeah, and I used to go hunting with my friend and the wife used to make--well, she forgot--she used to make sandwiches with butter and I never did eat them. I used to go eat guava inside the mountain--yeah.

WN: And you folks' oven, how big was the oven?

AA: Well, about one cooking, I think, about eighteen breads, you know, set 'em in. Was a good-size oven, and we used to get old wood; up there never had kiawe trees, was all guava trees up there.

WN: Up Nuuanu?

AA: Yeah, and we used to go gather guava wood and bring 'em to my grandma and then she would use that for, you know, heat up the oven.

WN: How you heated up the oven--the fire was underneath?

AA: Yeah, they had a regular dome and we had concrete. And then they would put all the wood inside the oven, and then I think they have something underneath where the ashes would fall down the bottom. And would be all clean on top, and then they put the bread on there.

WN: Oh, and how long would it take to bake?

AA: Oh, really I don't know, but I think it would take few hours. I never know too much about, you know, them ovens.

WN: Your grandmother used to give them [bread] away or. . . .

AA: No, she used (it) for the family. And those days they get a big basket or something. They put the bread in the basket and then they cover them up with some nice, clean, white sheet or something. And that bread never used to get mildew. Oh, yeah, I think that bread usually last over one week. Then when it's (gone), you make another batch. The whole family used to eat because was plenty children; I had lot of cousins.

WN: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

AA: One brother, two sisters, one half-sister.

WN: In that Henry Street area, were there a lot of Portuguese living in there?

AA: That's all you had, Portuguese, and few Puerto Ricans--few. Most Portuguese.

WN: Where was your father working?

AA: Well, I don't know. I never heard of him working. He used to drink like hell, that's about all. That's why my mother left him. Because he never used to support us.

WN: So when you were about seven years old, you moved away from Nuuanu?

AA: Away from Nuuanu. I remember how we came down, hanging (chuckles) on my mother's dress. Them days, they wear long skirts right down to their ankle, and my younger sister--she had to carry her in her arms--and the rest of us, we used to hold on her dress coming up that Laimi hill. And then, we got out on the main Nuuanu Road, and then we rode that streetcar--they used to call 'em the streetcar--run on tracks with the trolley on the top. Five cents a ride that time.

WN: Where did it run?

AA: Run all the way down Nuuanu; come all the way down Nuuanu. I don't know from there where they go. Then we got off on King Street, then we catch the bus coming up Kalihi.

WN: Bus or trolley?

AA: Trolley, the same kind, all the same kind.

WN: How much was the fare?

AA: Five cents. Five cents. Them days they had mules and horses, too yet, they still was using them. Yeah.

WN: Laimi Street intersects with Pali Highway, now--today?

AA: No, no, she comes out right to Nuuanu--Laimi comes out to Nuuanu. [The section of Nuuanu near Laimi Street is now called Pali Highway.]

WN: Nuuanu, right.

AA: Yeah.

WN: And that's where you caught the trolley?

AA: Yeah.

WN: And it goes all the way downtown?

AA: All the way to town, come down on Nuuanu in town. And we get off on King and catch the King Street trolley coming up towards Kalihi. They used to call them "streetcar" before.

WN: And so, where did you move in Kalihi?

AA: We came to Ashford Street, my auntie's place. We stood with her.

WN: With your mother, and your brothers and sisters.

AA: Four children. Yeah.

WN: And your father stayed back in Nuuanu?

AA: Oh, he was out. He was out. He was finished, he couldn't come around.

WN: And was your father Adams?

AA: No, his name was Olivera.

WN: So you took the name of your . . .

AA: My stepfather.

WN: Okay, so when you moved to Ashford Street, how did you feel about the move?

AA: Well, we couldn't do what we want, because I had a lot of cousins living there, too. And I had couple uncles living there and, you know, they had more aloha for my other cousins. You know, they wouldn't bother with us too much. No, wasn't too good. We couldn't do what we wanted, one sure thing.

WN: Well, did you fight or what?

AA: No, not fight. We never used to fight, but we just used to keep still. Yeah, my mother was strict. My mother was just like father to us, too. If we went over my auntie's house and we start playing, she would say, "Okay, get in that corner, sit down until I'm ready to go home." And that's it, never move from there.

WN: So what did you folks do as kids growing up over there?

AA: Well, nothing. Just stay in the yard; we couldn't go out. They used to get this [sugar]cane car used to come with the train. They used to deliver cane from Kapalama, down Palama, they had a cane field down there.

WN: Oh, yeah? Where was the cane field?

AA: Right where Kapalama Stream runs down and what the big store you get

over there?

WN: Gems?

AA: No, Gems is down this side, down this side. You had Oahu Plumbing and you got plenty other firms over there. Up side of King Street, all that was cane field and down below, they had a railroad track running right through the cane field going to--what's that railroad depot? The trains used to go over there.

WN: Aala side, Aala Park?

AA: Yeah, Aala Park. That train track used to run there and when they come and gather the cane, they would come through there and take them to Aiea Mill.

WN: So where Kalakaua School is now, was that cane field, too?

AA: No, that wasn't. It was in the back, in the back of Waiakamilo Road. Waiakamilo Road, in the back, was all cane field, all the way down to Palama, I would say, where you get that--what the heck that bakery down there? Had one bakery over there. But anyway, used to be all both sides of King Street. And then afterwards, they get that Houston Arena, I think.

WN: Houston Arena?

AA: Yeah, they used to get that professional boxing, yeah.

WN: They had boxing there and they also had Civic Auditorium downtown, huh?

AA: Shee, I don't know. I don't know if they had Civic Auditorium [then]. If they had Civic Auditorium, they wouldn't make that over there, I'd think.

WN: Houston Arena was there already when you came?

AA: No, no, was way afterwards. Way after. Maybe that was when I got about eighteen years old, I think.

WN: And you folks used to play around the cane fields?

AA: Oh yeah, they used to dump all the rice husks, you know. And they used to dump 'em by Waiakamilo off the road next to the cane field--big pile. We used to go there, and jump on top, and play with 'em.

WN: How come had rice husks--had rice field or something?

AA: Yeah, Moanalua had rice fields. Lots of places had rice fields.

WN: What did they do with the rice husks by the cane fields?

AA: I never found out what they would do. They just left them there. I don't know if it was any good for anything. Funny how it didn't catch on fire. I guess them days, I think maybe those kids don't play with matches or what.

WN: About how high was it piled up?

AA: I'd say---well, it's like a mountain, you know. I'd say had about, oh, about twelve feet, ten feet high.

WN: Did you get to see any of the workers, the cane field workers?

AA: Down there?

WN: Yeah.

AA: No, we never used to go that far. We only used to go right in the back from Ashford Street where that house was. The railroad run right in the back. And my auntie had a gate and a fence where you can open the gate and go out. So that's how we used to see the train with the cars going with the cane; and a lot of that cane used to fall down, you know, when they going. And my uncle used to go outside and pull some from the car, and then afterwards we used to pick 'em up.

WN: And you used to eat 'em?

AA: Oh, yeah, we used to bring in the yard, and I don't know--taste very good that time. Yeah. (Chuckles)

WN: That's interesting, yeah--cane fields in Kalihi.

AA: Yeah, yeah. Lot of people don't know. I don't know, maybe there's some parts of that track over there, yet.

WN: Oh, yeah?

AA: Yeah, because that track run right between Kalakaua School and Kamehameha Housing--all the way.

WN: When you were young, was the Kamehameha Housing there?

AA: No, they never had no housing. Afterwards when I moved to Kalihi Street, I know they had Kamehameha Girls' School there. I don't know when it started.

WN: Then you moved from Ashford to Mokauea and Kaumualii?

AA: Mokauea and Kaumualii.

WN: Did you have more freedom over there?

AA: Yeah, was way better. But we used to stay in the yard because our mother was too strict with us. We couldn't go outside and play with other kids.

WN: And in this area, when you were young--was it mostly Portuguese?

AA: Mostly Portuguese. Kaumualii Street, that's all there was, Portuguese. Very few different nationalities--and we used to call this street "Bazook Street."

WN: Bazook?

AA: Yeah, Bazook, that's what we used to call it.

WN: What does that mean?

AA: Because the way how they act, you know? They just like was one family or what. And how they used to sit down across the street, on a bench with a piece of cloth on their head, around, you know, tied to their neck and talking across the street to one another. Just like, you know, I think that word "bazook" mean talking to one another, you know. I don't know what they're talking, maybe about somebody else, you know. But that word still goes as "bazook" yet, till today. But most of them not here--most of them move out already, they went either Waianae or Kailua, and the Filipinos took over.

WN: So the Portuguese that lived around here, what kind work did they do?

AA: Some of them worked on the railroad, the railroad station. They had all kind of different jobs; they all worked but they all managed. Lot of them work this HC&D [Honolulu Construction & Draying Company]; some of them worked for T.H. [Theo H.] Davies.

WN: How about the military?

AA: Military?

WN: Oh, you know, like Fort Shafter or defense jobs?

AA: No, we never had too many. I don't know of any before, because I don't think that time they used to hire. They had, you know, maybe was all military [personnel] doing the work.

WN: Most of the Portuguese in Kalihi lived in this area then?

AA: Yeah, they lived from, what do you call, King Street, down to anywhere down to Kahanu Street. They class that as upper Kalihi. Then you come down from Dillingham; from down here Kaumualii Street, they used to call that "bazook." That's where all them Portuguese stay. And from Dillingham below--they used to call that 'alamihi crab, that's Hawaiians. You know what's a 'alamihi crab? The ones that



used to go in the mud, run around in the water by the rocks? So they used to call 'em 'alamihi crab.

WN: Why?

AA: Why, nickname for them, and then up . . .

WN: You talking about by Democrat Street? Lower Kalihi side . . .

AA: Yeah, that's all, what do you call, most Hawaiians down there. And then when you go up above King Street, up Kalihi Valley, lot of Portuguese. I'd say about 90 percent was Portuguese up there. We used to call 'em "mountain goats."

WN: How come?

AA: Because the mountain was so close. Another thing, when they used to come down to go to the show, Kalihi Theater, they used to come down; and when they walking towards the show, we used to tease them. We used to say, "Hey, they open the gate--all the goats coming down." (Laughs) Yeah, that's true, you know? Yeah. They used to get wild --oh, that Mrs. Perry, right away she would call the cops. But you know, took little time for the cops to come because they never had radios in them days, you know. By that time, we take off already.

WN: She used to call the cops because you folks used to tease them?

AA: Yeah, because we used to tease them, the mountain goats, they open the gates, the mountain goats come in.

WN: Were they very different from you folks?

AA: No, they was all right, but I don't know, we never used to mingle with them. Our group was all mixed up nationalities. We had Hawaiians, Portuguese, Japanese, Chinamen; no more Filipinos them days, no more colored. Yeah, no more colored.

WN: And the Japanese lived where?

AA: Japanese, most of them lived in the back of Kalakaua School. That land was all Bishop Estate land, and they used to lease them land; and then they used to get flower gardens. Some of them had chickens --you know, they raise. They would sell. That was their area from Dillingham, all the way up back of the Kam School--the Girls' School.

WN: Where the Kam Housing is now?

AA: Yeah, and then all the way back to Waiakamilo Road. That was their area, all Japanese. Yeah, behind Kalihi-Kai School, all Japanese.

WN: Lot of the farmers that lived up Kalihi Valley, was this Japanese or . . .

AA: No, you had some Korean, Joe Kim.

WN: Oh, yeah?

AA: Yeah, he come from there. Yeah, he used to raise his own cabbage and used to make his kim chee--that's the father, I'm talking about. Portuguese, like Perry--they used to work for Scotty Schuman, you know, the place that sells the Cadillacs?

WN: Schuman Carriage?

AA: Yeah, Schuman Carriage. That's where he used to work. Lot of them used to do pig hunting.

WN: But in this area, Kalihi Kai--were there farmers here or farms?

AA: They had. They had flower gardens back in Puuhale [Road]. They had vegetable gardens down by where this Antone Joe [Joseph] had his dairy--across the river, was all vegetable gardens.

WN: And that was run by Portuguese?

AA: No, you had Chinese vegetable gardens; Japanese, the flower gardens. Puuhale right here, right in the back.

WN: Puuhale Road?

AA: Yeah, big flower garden.

WN: Where the prison is now?

AA: No. The prison is further down, further below. But straight, like where we at, straight in the back, where they got them apartments now.

WN: Oh, oh. Oh, yeah.

AA: Yeah, was all flower garden.

WN: What about where the Hawaiians lived? What was over there mostly?

AA: Well, you had a lot of empty lots over there, all full of kiawe trees over there. Towards, you know, Oahu Prison, all back--all the way down to the water they had a lot of empty lots over there. They had Kuramoto, he was a big fisherman--he used to (lease) from Damon. He lived on that side, too.

WN: Kuramoto?

AA: Yeah, he had the fishing rights over there. He had ponds and then they had a little slaughterhouse over there--Chinese own this slaughterhouse. They used to kill pigs and not too many cows. And

they had salt beds over there, where they make the salt--they had them back there.

WN: Who operated the salt beds?

AA: Chinese. Some Japanese had salt beds, too.

WN: Did the Hawaiians have any businesses over there?

AA: No, they only Hawaiian down there was Kupahea. He had some fishing rights down by the leper settlement. They had a leper settlement down there.

WN: Oh, yeah?

AA: Yeah, right where they have that concrete ready mix like down there-- just below that, on the water edge. Was beautiful place, trees, grass, houses, everything, but not now. I used to go down there-- they had a lot of lepers was over there. And then, Kupahea was little further on this side. He had fishing rights--I guess he had land, too, over there.

WN: Today, it's all industrial, right?

AA: Yeah, that's where the industrial area used to be. Yeah.

WN: As a youngster around here, what else did you do to have good time, if you remember?

AA: Oh, yeah, we used to go fishing in Akana's fishpond. He used to get a fishpond on Dillingham--you know where's Gibson, all them places in there?

WN: Oh, Mapunapuna?

AA: Yeah, Mapunapuna was all fishpond over there, from Puuloa Road all the way come back this side, up to where you turn in--you know where you turn in to go to that Mapunapuna, what you call 'em? There's a road there, you enter in there. The fishpond was that big, from all the way to that road, all the way back up in Moanalua and from there back to Puuloa Road. And we used to go, well, I would say steal, because we used to get our bamboos, you know? We used to put any kind hooks, big hooks. And we used to catch this kind of o'opus. Nothing special for bait, you know.

WN: Yeah. What did you use for bait?

AA: O'opu, the kind . . .

WN: Oh, you used o'opu for bait?

AA: Yeah, the salt water o'opu.

WN: Yeah.

AA: Ugly looking, just like bamboo handles or something. Goddarn, we used to catch 'a'awas--about ten, fifteen pounds; papios, six, seven pounds.

WN: The fishpond was salt water?

AA: Salt water, yeah. But the house was way back, you know, way back toward Puuloa Road, eh?

WN: Somebody owned the fishpond?

AA: Yeah, Akana. He had the lease from Damon, but that was all water, and he was the owner of that fishpond. And by the time he would come around, we would already take off. We had one old canoe, you see, we used to jump on the canoe with all the fish and take off, eh?

And I never forget, had one Hawaiian one time, when we was fishing--he came over there and he say he wanted to fish, you know, and I never liked the idea. So I said, "You go find one stick or something." So he came with one old mop handle, and we (chuckles) gave him some line from the crab net. We used to go pick crabs, lot of crabs them days. And we gave him one big hook. That's the truth, he was fishing like that, holding that darn thing--I don't know what wen take his bait. That goddamn thing take off with the stick from him, and the son-of-a-gun was going in the water, up and down like that, you know. Must have been one big fish--never got him, yeah.

Yeah, and then, well, we got--not exactly caught. My friend, he got caught, and then they was looking for me. They said, "Who's that guy?"

He said, "I don't know, I don't know that guy, I don't know where he came from. He come out there by himself." Yeah, Akana wen report.

Then we used to go inside Salt Lake.

WN: How did you get from here to the fishpond?

AA: The road was open. Not good, not very good . . .

WN: Was old?

AA: Yeah, well kinda old road, not too good, no? But we had canoe.

WN: Yeah.

AA: We used to call that the "stink bridge." We had a canoe inside there where the slaughterhouse was over there. And why we call 'em the "stink bridge," because they used to kill pigs, kill cows, and

they used to throw the waste in the river, and it would float down, you know.

WN: Where was this bridge?

AA: You know where Gaspro is over there? Yeah, right next to there, get the water. You can see the water still going down over there. And we used to get our canoe in there. Then we--maybe about two, three of us--we jump on the canoe, we ride all the way going down on the outside; don't take long. And then we come back way out by that place, we park the canoe--maybe the pond was about from here to that house.

WN: Had signs, "no trespassing," or something?

AA: We never noticed. I never noticed if had, and even if had, we never care, we used to go.

WN: Had other kids doing that, too?

AA: No, we was the only ones. I don't know how we found out about it, had fish in there. Yeah, lot of fish. Oh, we used to do a lot of that. I used to go into Salt Lake--I was big already. Salt Lake, we used to go in the night with a net.

WN: What kind fish had in there?

AA: Salt Lake had big mullets, had big 'a'awas, āholehole, plenty of āholehole. The mullets, if you got 'em too big, wasn't good because when you fry 'em, they turn just like shoe leather, you know. Tough like, you know. The āholehole was good.

WN: There's a golf course [Honolulu International Country Club] over there now, huh?

AA: Yeah, that's the place, right there. We used to fish all in there. The Pake would come in about three o'clock in the morning. He would come catch fish, too, because he take 'em down the market, eh? We used to be sometime maybe about 150 feet away from him, you know, towards the shore place--and we used to put our head way down in the water, watch him, you know, laying his net, catching his fish, eh?

WN: And anybody could fish in Salt Lake?

AA: Not supposed to. Was private. Chinamen lease 'em from Damon, too.

WN: That's all Damon land?

AA: All Damon land, that was all Damon.

WN: Damon Tract, you call it?

AA: Well, that fishpond, we used to call 'em Halemanu Crater. Below the railroad track you had another railroad track over there. That's on Dillingham, I think, on makai side.

WN: You also told me that you used to catch chickens, eh?

AA: Oh, yeah! Me and this Chinese kid, See Kai, (chuckles) we used to hang around together, eh? Nothing to do, we see some chickens in the school yard, eh, so next day we cut little cracked corn, you know.

WN: What school?

AA: Kalihi Waena. And Spencer used to own the chickens. And we go there, and we throw a little pile [of corn]. We put one corn in the hook, you know, stick 'em through slowly.

WN: Fishhook?

AA: Yeah, we wet 'em [the corn] a little bit, come soft, you know, and we put 'em in. And we put over there, first thing the chicken eat the corn, and then he start pulling away and we start pulling him to us, you know. Then we take him down the river, we clean their feathers, everything, and we kalua 'em. Yeah, and eat 'em. And then, they got wise on us, so we quit because came in the paper that fishing was a good sport but not when you fishing for chickens.

(Laughter)

WN: How many chickens you caught altogether?

AA: I think the most we caught was about three of 'em. The first one bite the hook, we'd catch 'em.

WN: So, only you two would eat?

AA: No, sometime we would meet this guy we call Mel Kahuku. "Small Kahuku," we used to call him.

WN: That was his last name?

AA: Ah, Rodrigues, his name was.

WN: Oh, how come you call him "Kahuku"?

AA: I don't know, maybe he wen come from Kahuku or something, you know. He used to give us the money. That time, no such thing as money. We used to go buy a loaf of bread. With the chicken, was our lunch or supper.

The other thing, back of Kalihi-Waena School was all taro patches, too, you know, over there.

WN: Who owned the taro patches?

AA: Ah, Chinese. I think most was leased land, I think. And then we used to go over there pull taro and we clean them. We get the river water, we get one gallon can--you know them old rusty-looking gallon cans--and we used to put the taro inside, boil 'em and eat 'em. Not only us, even the big boys over there, they used to eat 'em, too. Oh, we used to do the devil.

WN: You never got caught?

AA: No, but we used to get smart because we kind of watch how we pull our taro. We don't pull too much in one spot, you know, because that Chinaman going know, eh?

WN: This was wetland taro?

AA: Water, water taro. Never had dryland taro, before. Everything was water. Ah, we used to do the devil.

WN: Anything else you remember? You did anything legal? (Laughs)

AA: Legal? Well, I don't know but before, they had this detectives before. I know two of them, Louis Camacho and this other--Akana. They used to come with them snake whips, you know, rolled around their hand, and they used to get old Dodgers.

WN: Old what?

AA: The kind Dodge cars.

WN: Oh.

AA: I think was the cars they used to use. And we used to hang around the park--Fernandez Park--nighttime, sitting down. Well, when they blow the whistle eight o'clock, everybody supposed to be off the roads and home. We used to still hang around there, and they know, them buggas. Then they used to come, shee, chase us with their goddamn whip, and when they hit you, they fast. Oh, they hit you across the goddamn legs, you fall down, you know. And I never forget --I think that night I was extra fast--I run so goddamn fast I went up Gulick Avenue. And right in front of Kalihi-Waena School had a house. I know where the place was, eh, and I ran in the yard, I was so damn scared. And I went under one chicken coop. Plenty people raise chicken them days, and they sleep on the roost, not like how they keep in little houses now. And I went under there, I was sitting down, and a chicken was taking a crap on me. Yeah, I was so scared I never come out. I waited kinda long before--you make sure they not out there, eh? Oh, yeah.

WN: You said somebody blew whistle for you folks to get off the street--that was curfew?

AA: Siren. They blow--they had siren them days.

WN: Where did they blow it from?

AA: Shee, I don't know where the hell they blow 'em, but we knew when the hell was eight o'clock, too. We were so scared of them guys. They used to patrol, they come around, two of 'em.

WN: Just the kids, or---not everybody, huh?

AA: No, most was da kine our age. Sixteen, all that, you know. The ones used to make all the trouble, eh? We used to do lots, but never used to get caught. You know why? Because the policemen, they wasn't prepared like today. They got radios, quick, they would get there, eh? We was scared of Mel Smith, too, but we used to know when the bugga come around. He had one old car, that one light go up and one light shine down, eh? When we know he coming, we already hitting the road.

WN: Mel Smith was a strict cop or something?

AA: Oh, he was a strict cop, very strict--mean, too. Either he going slap you, or he going kick you straight in your ass. No more trouble when he's around--there's no trouble around there.

WN: How many policemen had, patrolling in your area?

AA: In Kalihi, up Kalihi corner, you only had one. Mel Smith. He would take the whole Kalihi area: from Kalihi down to Moanalua, down to Kalihi Kai, then 'alamihi crab place, up Kalihi Uka and maybe, I'd say, till Waiakamilo Road, maybe.

WN: That's a big area.

AA: And he used to take all that.

WN: What about the other two guys? Akana and . . .

AA: Oh, Akana, I think that was vice squad or something. They was a special--where they come around for that, you know.

WN: Oh.

AA: Yeah, and this is the truth. When Palama, you know, get out of line, they send him down Palama. We used to enjoy that because he's not around here, shee, we play big shots, you know, we hang around the corner, eh? Then afterwards, I guess he get Palama all straighten, you know, then Kakaako start making humbug. Then he goes down to Kakaako.

WN: That was his territory, too?



AA: No, they put him special detail just to get them buggas. They all scared of him already. Soon he going come down there, they know what they going do, eh?

WN: So the tough spots was Kakaako, Palama and Kalihi when you were growing up?

AA: Yeah, but I never used to hang around there. 'Cause we don't want to get licking, we never used to go around there.

WN: Around where?

AA: Kakaako. The big boys, yeah, they never care, but we was kinda small. But I used to like hang around older people than me--yeah, I used to like that.

(Laughter)

WN: Did Kakaako kids hang around here?

AA: No, they never used to come around, never come around.

WN: What about Palama, you used to go down Palama side?

AA: Well, Palama not too bad. We used to ride, not walk--ho, bumbai we start running, eh? We used to ride the streetcar, when we go someplace you have to pass there. But not get off and walk around there.

WN: Was Palama more tough than Kalihi then?

AA: No, they wasn't any tougher. I think Kalihi had some tougher guys than Palama. They would call them the bull, eh? Yeah, funny though, eh?

WN: You know, when you were about nine years old, during the war, World War I, you folks moved from Kalihi to Fort Shafter, yeah?

AA: Yeah.

WN: Why did you do that?

AA: Ah, my father got in the service--I think they drafted him or something.

WN: Your stepfather?

AA: Yeah, my stepfather.

WN: Adams?

AA: Yeah, we got in the service. I enjoyed up there. Up there was nice,

big, open ground, eh?

WN: Did other Kalihi families from your area have to move, too?

AA: I don't know of too many of them, no. But they had a lot of local GIs in there. They used to call 'em the Hawaiian Infantry. Plenty local boys was in there.

WN: You mean, Hawaiians?

AA: Yeah, Hawaiians, Japanese--all kind, mixed up. That's why they call 'em Hawaiian Infantry. Yeah, that was a nice place--big area.

WN: You still kept in touch with your friends in this area?

AA: [AA mishears question.] There's not too many left. Plenty of them was older than me, you know. And plenty of them is dead. Most of the hunters that I used to go with--we used to hunt wild pigs before, you know--all of them are all dead.

WN: By that time you were at Fort Shafter?

AA: No, no.

WN: Oh, now?

AA: Yeah, most of them is dead. But Fort Shafter, they had most haoles up there. Kids, I mean, my age, some younger, bigger, but most haoles. We never had local kids in there for play.

WN: Was this the first time you lived near haoles?

AA: Yeah, the first, yeah. That's why one wen get my goat. They had one papaya tree down the river, you know, and tall, this papaya trees. And this haole kid, he couldn't climb 'em. Every time I look, hey, there's a ripe papaya on top I can climb 'em. I would go get 'em, bring 'em home, eh? So he used to get, I think, pissed off with me. So he took one ax down there, and he wen chop the papaya tree down. And then I caught him--I gave him good ticking. Yeah, just because he couldn't climb, he wen get wild.

(Laughter)

WN: And he was from Mainland?

AA: Yeah, Mainland. We was always doing something. We used to go pick kiawe beans, pile 'em up--get 'em all ready. Then this guy used to come in there with the truck, pick 'em all up--twenty-five cents a bag. Man, used to be lot of kiawe beans--in no time we used to pick up a bag.

WN: What people did with kiawe beans?

AA: They used to use 'em for the horses; they used to use them for cattle.

WN: Feed?

AA: Yeah, because I don't think you had any dry food, you know. I think they used to use that for dry food or with the grass what they cut, I think.

WN: So, the haoles that you lived near--did you get along with them pretty well?

AA: Yeah, no problem, no problem, no problem. We never had chance to make humbug anyway. My mother would beat the hell out of us.

WN: The house that you were living in Kalihi Kai, what happened to it? You folks had to move, eh, to Fort Shafter?

AA: Yeah, right here, from (Ahuula) Street.

WN: So what happened to the house that you folks had before that?

AA: It's still going--still up.

WN: But who lived there?

AA: Ah, now?

WN: No, who lived there when you folks had to live in Fort Shafter?

AA: That's not our house--only pay rent.

WN: Oh.

AA: Yeah, pay rent. The rent was so goddamn cheap, I think, them days.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, then after the war ended, about 1921, you folks moved to Rose Street?

AA: Yeah.

WN: Kalihi, yeah? Where did your father work?

AA: After that? Let's see, let me think where the hell he worked. I'm pretty sure he was working for the military place, the arsenal.

Where they had ammunition and all that stuff.

WN: So he was still government then?

AA: Yeah, he still was working for government.

WN: And at that time, you were going to Kalihi-Waena School?

AA: Still going Kalihi-Waena School. We used to walk all the way from Rose Street, cross the taro patch, cross the flower garden--because they had beautiful American Roses. And we never used to pick 'em because the Japanese know, you know, because we walk there from school on their property, eh? Then we walk across the taro patches, and go to school. The only time we couldn't go was when they had this big rain, you know. The river got really swollen, you know. Then we had to walk around, go down Gulick Avenue, and take King Street, and then come up Kam IV to Rose Street.

WN: How long took you?

AA: Well, coming through the taro patch and the flower garden was fast. I'd say, maybe take us about fifteen, twenty minutes at the most. But going through the road was, you know, little longer. We never used to fool around because we had to go straight, you know, we never did play with nobody there.

WN: The Rose Street house, you folks rented?

AA: Yeah, rent--all rent. Till we came to Kalihi, then my mother bought one.

WN: How was Kalihi-Waena School, for you?

AA: Well, I think I played too much, I think. Yep, I got expelled from Kalihi-Waena School. I was in the seventh grade.

WN: You mean, Kalihi-Waena [School] went up to seventh grade? [Kalihi-Waena School went up to the eighth grade.]

AA: I went up to the seventh; I never complete the seventh. I guess the only room I was really smart was in history, because this teacher, her name was Mrs. Ward, and she was a huge teacher. Oh, she had about six feet or over, big, strong, and I was so scared of her that I never played. I used to study--oh, I study and every time we get a test, I was exempted. Because I knew all my lessons terrific.

But the rest of them, I don't know--I think they was too easy, like Mrs. Souza. Then Mrs. Sawyer, she was in the spelling. Mrs. Stewart was in arithmetic; arithmetic was the worst for me. I was really stupid in arithmetic. Then Mrs. Sawyer, I remember her. I was in that class after lunch and I don't know, something happened. I told her something, and she reported me to Mr. Cox. He was the principal;

big fellow with white hair. And he came in there and he grabbed me by the hand and took me to his desk--the desk right across from the room. So I know what he was going to do because I used to see him beat up on them other kids. He used to take 'em in the storage room, where they keep the mops, brooms. But he took me straight to his desk. So when I went there, he was holding me by one hand and he was bending over for bring out that razor strap--you know the one where you sharp that razor?

WN: Yeah.

AA: So I knew what he was going to do already, so when he was bending over, I had one hand free so I kinda put my hand in the back by his backside and I shoved him, and he went right over inside the drawer. And I took off. He let go my hand, eh, and I ran and I never come back from that day.

WN: What did your mother say?

AA: Oh, she was angry. She was really wild, and I say, "No, I don't want go school," but already you know what my idea was--hanging around at the corner, eh?

She said, "Okay, you don't want to go school?" She say, "You want, I can see Blaisdell," that Chief Blaisdell before from Fort Street fire department [station]. Not the son, the father now.

WN: Father of the former mayor [former Honolulu Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell]?

AA: Yeah, she was good friend with them. He used to be the fire chief over there, and he used to come always over to Nelson's [Tent and] Awning Shop. And I say, "No, I don't want to go school." So she got the job for me working down Nelson's. That Blaisdell was going get me in up St. Louis, you know?

WN: St. Louis school?

AA: Yeah, I don't know if they had seventh grade them days. I don't know where the hell he was going get me in some goddamn school, but I didn't want to go.

WN: So Mr. Blaisdell helped you get a job at Nelson's?

AA: No, no, my mother got the job; she was working there already.

WN: Oh, I see.

AA: She was working for Nelson kinda long, you know. She was the seamstress in there.

WN: I see, and the fire station that Blaisdell was chief of was right near Nelson's Tent and Awning Shop?

AA: Yeah, I'd say, maybe about fifty yards away.

WN: So you quit school when you were seventh grade . . .

AA: I never quit, I got fired.

(Laughter)

WN: Okay, you got fired from school in the seventh grade, just about 1921, and you went to work at Nelson's Tent and Awning Shop on Fort Street, right?

AA: Yeah.

WN: So what did you do?

AA: Fort and Beretania.

WN: Fort and Beretania.

AA: We used to bend pipe, make pipe frames for the awnings. Galvanized pipe, half-inch, three-quarter-inch, and we used to fix--make drop curtains. Most I used to put them up, I used to help. Then once in a while, we used to sew--not with the machine--by hand. Then we used to help Nelson with his big sails from that kind schooners; he had another shop down Pier 2 someplace. Because them sails was too big, we used to go down there and help 'em and pull 'em and lay 'em out, and he used to do the heavy work. They still had them schooners coming in Pier 2 with lumber, you know.

WN: How you got from your house to Nelson's Tent and Awning?

AA: Oh, every morning--I was staying Kalihi Street--would walk up King, catch that same streetcar from the rapid transit, and get off by Nuuanu Street.

You know, I going tell you one part I couldn't help but laugh, you know. I used to feel pity for this old man, Portuguese man, kinda nice husky build, and he used to wear one old dirty-looking coat. And I used to watch him, you know, just inquisitive what he was doing. Every morning I'd just meet him, so I see him going in garbage cans, and he would look, pick up one rotten apple, put it inside his pocket. So I say, chee, how the hell can he do that, maybe he really. . . . But he took husky, fat and everything. So one day I couldn't help but I watched him. He looked at me, that son-of-a-gun, this is the truth, he wen turn around, he let go one fart, you know. So, I kept walking. Then I wen tell Ornellas; he was still older than me, he used to work for Knot's Plumbing Shop, right next to Nelson's shop. I say, "Hey, Ornellas, chee, I don't see the old man come around now--every morning I walk up, he's not around."

"Oh," he tell me. "That son-of-a-gun died, and that son-of-a-gun had over \$50,000." You know, \$50,000 was big money that day, and he said, "He's from Punchbowl--he was living up Punchbowl." And Ornellas came from Punchbowl, eh? Yeah, and that guy was doing that, you know.

(Visitor enters. Taping interrupted.)

WN: Should I go now?

AA: No, no. Yeah, that old bugga, he was---\$50,000.

WN: He was rich, then?

AA: Yeah, I mean, he could buy lot of land, because right down here they were selling land what--behind Oahu Prison, all them empty lots--they was selling 'em for \$300 a lot, 5,000 square feet. And I guess plenty other places--lot of people no more money, eh?

WN: At Nelson's Tent and Awning, how much did you make?

AA: Oh, that's a good one, that. I used to get fifty cents a day. We start at 7:30 [a.m.], we work till 5:00; half an hour lunch. Then Saturdays we come to work and finish at 12:00 [p.m.]. I used to get \$4.50 a week. My mother used to take \$4.00 and give me half a dollar.

WN: Four fifty a week?

AA: Yeah. Excuse me. . . .

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so you got \$4.50 a week? So fifty cents a week you got to take home?

AA: That's my pay. My mother take the \$4.00 (chuckles), give me the odd fifty cents.

WN: What about your brothers and sisters, were they working, too?

AA: Ah, well, no. My other brother had it easy, he had it easy. He was two years younger than me. My oldest sister, she was about the smartest from all of us. She was working for some lawyer. Not that time, she wasn't working that time. She was continuing going to school. See, they all graduated. I'm the only one, so naturally I had to go work because stay away from trouble.

WN: Okay, so at that time you folks had moved from Rose Street to Kalihi Street already, yeah, near Kalakaua School? After you worked Nelson's Tent and Awning, where did you go work?

AA: After Nelson's Tent and Awning . . .

WN: After how many years?

AA: I work for him?

WN: Yeah.

AA: Chee, I think it was about three, four years, maybe three years. And then after that I got job for Libby's [Libby, McNeil & Libby].

WN: What did you do?

AA: We worked down the barge, and we used to unload pineapple for the cannery and we used to load foodstuff--take 'em out to Molokai for the people up there; we load 'em on the barge and we used to load the empties [boxes] on the barge. Yeah, that was routine--every day. Was a dangerous job because they had a derrick that used to pick 'em up on a sled like--we used to call 'em "skip." And they used to pick them up, and sometime that damn hooks used to slip out and boxes come tumbling down, you have to run.

WN: How many pineapples in one box, about?

AA: All depend how big they are. You can put in at least maybe ten to a dozen. They was pretty good-size boxes.

WN: How many crates to a skip?

AA: Oh, you had, let's see--one, two, three; three, six--I think, nine boxes. and I'd say they was about four or five feet high, about five feet high, anyway.

WN: And how much did you get paid doing that?

AA: Twenty-five cents an hour.

WN: So that's better than Nelson's?

AA: Yeah, was better, yeah.

WN: You were still young yet, so that was about the boy's wages?

AA: Yeah, that's what the cannery used to pay. Yeah, that was good pay considering working [for] the cannery. You work in the cannery, you might make about fifteen cents one hour.

WN: And you got paid twenty-five?

AA: Yeah, twenty-five, and that was darn good pay.



WN: Because the work was harder?

AA: Yeah, harder and, I guess, dangerous.

WN: Where did you folks load the barge?

AA: I know where the pier is, but I didn't know what number it is. It's on Nimitz Highway. You know where they got the Young Brothers now, where they load the barges to go to Molokai, and all that?

WN: Yeah.

AA: Right there.

WN: Was it Young Brothers at the time?

AA: No, Young Brothers wasn't there. They used to be way on the other side, towards Aloha Tower. Never had Aloha Tower them days. They had Pier 2, Pier 15, and Pier 14, that was the big piers.

WN: You reported to work directly to the barge or to the cannery first?

AA: No, right down to the barge.

WN: How many years did you work cannery? I mean, for Libby's?

AA: Libby's, we only used to work on summer. You know, that summertime for about, oh, maybe two, three months, that's about all.

WN: What you did throughout the year?

AA: After the cannery---pineapple season, we pau. Yeah.

WN: And then what you did?

AA: I started working down as watchman for the pier. Was off and on, too, the kind when the boat come in you get a job, if no more boat you don't work. But the pay was better than cannery. We used to make at least--when we working sometime three days a week, four days a week--we would get about twelve dollars.

WN: Well, what did you do as watchman?

AA: Oh, watch the merchandise on the pier, watch the stevedores don't steal stuff in there. I used to steal more than them.

(Laughter)

WN: Like what?

AA: See, when they get damaged boxes--they get lot of damaged containers come in--they bring it up by the office where the insurance man come

and check out, eh? We used to help ourselves. I never forget one time these guys on a boat, they had that Mahoe, it's a tugboat that help the steamers come in, you know.

WN: Mahoe was what, name of the tugboat?

AA: Yeah. And was a powerful tugboat. And I used to know all them Hawaiians on the boat--all Hawaiians. Every time they used to come talk to me because I was kind of young, eh? And I like make friends with them because they bigger than me, maybe they can help me out, eh? (Chuckles) They used to come in, say, "Hey, Adams, what you get?"

I say, "Hey, get some nice Panama hats, you know, the kind for McInerny." That was real good hats that time.

"Could I have one?"

I say, "Wait, we go try fit one on the head."

"Chee, fit good." They used to put feather lei on it. Okay, so he went. Chee, first thing, the rest of the guys all came looking for hats--I had to give because I scared them, yeah, about ten, twelve guys, so I had to give them all one hat. But the boxes broken, they don't know how many hats was missing. Yeah, they don't know.

WN: So, only when the box was broken you . . .

AA: Yeah, and this one was a good one. This guy Taylor. We used to work together--he would stay down and I, maybe, I stay by the office. The boss was Charley Piper. [One day], he wasn't around, I was sitting down in the office. I open this drawer; inquisitive. When I look, I saw this gun, one automatic, nice little gun, so I was acting like a bigshot. I come out with a gun, so I say, "Clarence, come up!" So he come up. I say, "Look."

"Where you get that?"

And I say, "Was in that drawer from the office."

"You know how to use it?"

"Oh, yeah." I say I know how to use this, so just happen I wen press one, I don't know, one goddamn clip or something. That stuff underneath with the shots, what do you call that? You know, the clip that hold the shots--fell off. So I say, "You see, now, no more shots inside," I told 'em.

"Oh, yeah, you right." So shee, I don't know how the hell I never fix--I went to him like this: bang! Had one shot in the chamber! Ho, that damn thing came out, just miss his feet! Lucky never hit 'em--if wen hit 'em, I'd be all screwed up, they think I wen kill him, you know. Oh, I take that gun, quick I wen put 'em back inside.

I never fool around with that gun no more. Yeah.

WN: And what, he was mad at you or what?

AA: No, he say, "I thought you know how to use 'em?"

I say, "Well, I never know had shot in the chamber, I figure was empty."

WN: Who were you employed by?

AA: Ah, this guy Piper. He was the boss--he used to take care of that Eastman liners; that's the one used to bring all the stuff. The name of the company was Eastman Liner.

WN: E-A-S-T-M-A-N?

AA: Must be.

WN: And his name was Piper, P-I-P-E-R?

AA: Yeah, Charley Piper.

WN: How you got the job?

AA: Through this Taylor. They used to work down there so they recommended me. He was a nice guy, that guy Piper.

WN: You were telling me earlier that to get the job you were only seventeen . . .

AA: Yeah, well, usually for that kind of job, seventeen years old, you know, how scared--you still scared, yet. Especially, shee, when they had this Fukunaga; they was looking for Fukunaga . . .

WN: Myles Fukunaga? [The following refers to the incident in 1927 in which a Japanese youth named Myles Fukunaga kidnapped and killed the son of a prominent businessman. Fukunaga was later tried, convicted and executed.]

AA: The one that he called himself "The Four Kings." You remember that story about this guy Jameson. [Fukunaga's] sister, she was a maid for him. And then he [Fukunaga] got so goddamn pissed off with that guy Jameson, eh, he wen kidnap his kid--the son. And he took 'em--that time Waikiki no was built up, eh? Was all da kine brush yet, and he took him over there and he wen kill him. But, they never find out who. He got some money, I think, because he wen put for ransom, eh? He got money. He went down Haleiwa. I think he stood down there for, maybe, a little while. But while I was working at Pier 15, I used to be scared, because I wonder if the bugga hiding inside here because they all scared of him. They made him like was one real criminal. Then they used to take lot of guys

down, pick 'em up just for nothing. I know one Japanese taxi driver, they took him down; boy, they beat the hell out of him, if he had something to do. He never, but they almost half-killed him.

WN: Who, the cops?

AA: Yeah, them cops, before, they was terrible, because I got picked up few times for investigation. I never forget me and this guy, his name was Tom Black. Sometime we used to call him "Deep Sea," because one time he wen dive shallow place, his head kinda stuck in the mud. Was down Moanātua, we used to go catch crab. So they pick me and him up--that time was Eddie Ross, and John C. Kelly; big, husky bugga. He was the head of that division. You had to go see them, and they gonna ask you questions, and they gonna beat the hell out of you, you know. And this something that happened up Kalihi. Somebody wen rob the drugstore from Kalihi. You know, when you hang around, they pick you up for investigation them days, you know. First they call that guy, nickname "Deep Sea," you know, Tom Black. And then afterwards, they call me. They lock you in separate places, eh, and they tell me, "Oh, we got all the dope already." I look, I don't know what the hell he mean, you know. Then he said, "That other guy squeal on you already." He say, "You went in the drugstore and robbed that drugstore."

So I told him, "Shee, I never do nothing like that." Ho, one punch in the ribs, you know, in the stomach? And oh, I hold my stomach, only young kid I was. Because from over there I supposed to go detention home, but I give the wrong age every time. I used to like act big, and they give me one kick in the goddamn shin. I no can tell was me. Then he said, "Oh, that guy told me. . . ."

I say, "Why don't you bring him over here and let him face me, that he say was me."

Then he say, "Well, in a minute or two, we gonna make you puke out the truth."

I say, "Well, I don't know, you can lick me all you like. I can't tell you was me if I didn't do it." And then they never hit me. They never take three days [before] they caught the right guy. Yeah, that's what they used to do down there before, they'd beat the hell out of you. The old police department, they had one runway, I'd say, about seventy-five feet long; maybe about thirty feet wide. And then a building upstairs, that's where they had the cases. They still got 'em down there.

WN: Where is this?

AA: You know when you come down Bethel Street . . .

WN: Oh, downtown?

AA: Yeah, behind in the back towards the water side was that place where they keep the prisoners for investigation. So I was back there. I saw one Puerto Rican come in, so they took him up that night. When he came down, I saw them guys bring him on a stretcher, 'cause right next cell, eh? So, shee, I say what the hell--make you scared, too, you know. Then, next day I went over, they had one padlock. So he couldn't come out. The people from upstairs can look down, you know, how you get some lawyers up there, they can look down because his body was just lined up with stripes--where they beat the hell out of him. Yeah, that's what they used to do before. Terrible. Scared, that kind . . .

WN: Nobody did anything about it?

AA: No! They all--no such thing; no such thing. Even the boys' school down Kahuku, lot of these guys scared go down there. They say lot of them young boys, when they run away, they get so much licking or they make 'em stay in the taro patch--they used to get all taro patches and cane fields. They tell me they had lot of German instructors, these big, mean bastards, and lot of them young kids--when they run away and got caught, they got so much licking that they died. And every time they would die, the family don't know. They would put down "pneumonia." That's how mean they was before. Plenty of these young boys, they scared go down Kahuku. That's the school they used to call before--Kahuku. I was glad I never go down there.

WN: So how many times you actually got taken in?

AA: Even if you don't do anything wrong they pick you up as long as you hang around up there.

WN: Where did you hang around?

AA: Kalihi Corner.

WN: Where's that?

AA: You go up Mokauea Street, straight--you know where's [Kalihi] Queen's Supermarket--right there in that area.

WN: Oh, that's supposed to be one rough area or . . .

AA: Yeah, rough area, because right there had one taxi stand, had one pool hall, then across the street had one little saimin stand; the Japanese used to push the car--you know, that kind car with the charcoal? Yeah, he used to come around Kalihi come sell. He cook right on his car, with the little top on, and we sit down right there, we order and eat the saimin.

WN: Yeah? And what, he had everything? He had char siu and everything with him?

AA: Yeah, he get everything inside there; everything. He get the fire, make his soup, his gravy, and everything--make 'em right there.

WN: Yeah, and what kind of bowl he gave you?

AA: Regular saimin bowl.

WN: Oh, and you just give the bowl back?

AA: Yeah, when you pau eat.

WN: And where you used to eat?

AA: Us?

WN: Yeah.

AA: [AA misinterprets question.] Oh, I used to like that food from Kam IV Road. Shee, that one where they got that bank over there, First National Bank.

We used to go down the golf links--caddy, you know. They have to like you for let you go down there. If they no like you, they gonna kick your ass, slap your head, punch you so you don't go down there.

WN: Which golf links?

AA: Moanalua Golf Links. You make pretty good money, you go caddy. Was two bits [twenty-five cents] a round. When I first started, I went down there, oh, I had couple good kicks in the ass from Billy Boggs. I was still going Kalihi-Waena School, you know. I must have been in the sixth grade or something--so he told me, "You keep the hell out of here, don't go down there," you know, so I figure I ain't going, because he was kinda tough bugga, eh? Then this other guy, friend of mine, he gave him [Boggs] good licking, and he told him, "From now on when you see Adams down there, you don't even look at him." That's how I went down. And I used to enjoy, I made few extra cents.

And then, I used to come up this Rosie's Restaurant, right in the corner, Kam IV and King. She had one small restaurant. Oh, that Japanese, I used to eat her chop steak rice, and she put that kind pepeiao inside. I used to sit down there--too bad I no can eat two, because the money not enough, eh? But I used to enjoy eating that. When I eat that, I never come home and eat. (Chuckles) Oh, Rosie's, she used to make terrific--I used to enjoy her chop steak rice.

WN: You used to mix the rice with the chop steak?

AA: Yeah, she put the rice and you put the chop steak right on top and you eat 'em. Was cheap, I think twenty cents. Big one, thirty

cents. Soda was five cents.

WN: Saimin was how much?

AA: Fifteen cents; ten cents--cheap. Go show was nickel, ten cents.

WN: What theater you went?

AA: Kalihi Theater.

WN: How often you used to go show?

AA: Oh, we used to sneak in. Shee, but I don't know how we used to take the chance. (Chuckles) You know, this Kalihi Theater, well, it's high. They get upstairs, downstairs. One guy would go in, he would open the window; they get the kind metal window where you open out, like that, eh? Then had some houses on the side of the theater--I don't know how far the span was from that window to there. And we used to get one two-by-four; we climb on the roof [of the house], we put that two-by-four across from the house to the window and walk on top that two-by-four and come in the window. Yeah, no more money, eh? We used to sneak in.

I never forget when the roof fell down--not the roof, the ceiling. Was on a Saturday, matinee, and I was sitting down and--I don't know what had--had one picture, I think Charlie Chaplin, or something. Shee, first thing I look, just like all lights on top, you know. I knew was something wrong.

WN: What do you mean, "lights"?

AA: Ah, from the wires--you know the wires? The electric wires.

WN: Sparks?

AA: Yeah, because was broken already, you know. And I knew the side door--they don't close 'em and leave 'em like that where you shove and open 'em. They put one wooden bar across, so like us don't sneak in, you know. So I had in my mind, I wen stand up, I wen run, boy, for that goddamn side door. And I wen grab that stick. I wen throw that stick up in the air, and by the time I open that door, push 'em open, the stick came down, hit me in the head. And they get that kind pipe rail outside; I went right over the pipe rail. Shee, you hear people screaming and everything; some people wen broke their legs. Ambulance was busy picking up lot of people in there. And my seat where I sat down, boy, had one big cement, you know, from the top of the roof fell down.

WN: Oh, yeah?

AA: Plenty people got hurt, from that. And then the owner of the theater, he say no, he never had the stick on the door. The stick was on the

door, but I never did say anything.

WN: When did this happen?

AA: Oh, this happened in, I'd say, maybe '22, '23, something around there. Yeah, that roof came down.

WN: Where was the old theater?

AA: You know where they get that Salvation Army now? Right there got Salvation Army, you know, Puuhale Street going down?

WN: Puuhale Road, yeah.

AA: And then, right next to that building; right next to Puuhale Street, I think it's Goodwill, I think. They get right there.

WN: Near King Street?

AA: Facing right on King Street. And in fact, they used to get Star Theater, eh? When you look from underneath, it's spelled "Rats" Theater.

(Laughter)

WN: You mean, that's another theater, Star Theater?

AA: No, the same theater [different from Kalihi Theater], but you know the lights where they get 'em for display?

WN: Yeah, marquee, you mean?

AA: Yeah, yeah.

WN: What showing, the name of the theater?

AA: No, no, no, just the name of the theater.

WN: Yeah, oh, yeah.

AA: And they had one about like that wide, maybe about six feet long, and they had S-T-A-R, but if you read from [upside] down, you look, it's a "Rats" Theater. (Laughs) And they had big rats in there.

WN: Oh, yeah?

AA: Hoo, them bastards running around over there; big rats.

WN: Yeah, what kind shows had?

AA: Oh, they had all the kind--Helen Holmes, Eddie Polo, William S. Hart--all that kind old pictures. When they shoot their pistol, the



goddamn shot go right around the corner. (Laughs) Yeah, we use to enjoy--five cents go inside, then every time they had continue. Oh, next week.

WN: Yeah?

AA: Like Helen Holmes, they used to tie her on the train, you know, in front of the train? And the train going, one other train coming this way; just going hit--ah, next week.

WN: (Laughs) And this silent?

AA: Silent, all silent. They get the kind, [written] words, words, yeah.

WN: Oh, kill fight [frustrating], yeah, that kind?

AA: Yeah, next week, you think, ah, the other guy, I think going make. Nah, that bugga never die. He make, pau. The show no can show.

WN: So, five cents, you can go in to see?

AA: Five cents; bumbai ten cents.

WN: So you had your eating and then you had movies; what about--was there anything in Kalihi that the whole community came out [for]? Any kind celebration or festival or anything like that?

AA: Well, they never had. I no remember the kind parade like they get now.

WN: Did you folks have the Holy Ghost [Festival]?

AA: The Holy Ghost, over here, they had the feast day, eh? Then, they had one other theater with no roof on, and they used to march. March up and down the streets with one drum. And then they had the banner, two guys hold what picture. That's the only way they used to advertise what picture for the night, so the people could know, eh? And they used to boom, boom, boom, boom, and holding 'em. That's all these bazooks, them bazooks, had one theater. One family, and they used to march down King Street--come down Mokauea, go down these streets.

WN: They had their own theater?

AA: Yeah, you know where they got all them bungalows? You know where's that little park on your left hand side?

WN: On what street?

AA: On Mokauea, going up. There's one little park over there.

WN: Yeah, yeah, a real small one.

AA: Yeah, small one. Well, right above the park, they used to have all bungalows over there. Well, they used to take, I think, maybe three bungalows--used to be the theater over there, open.

WN: Oh, open kind?

AA: No more roof.

WN: Yeah.

AA: From over there to Puuhale.

WN: Yeah? And what kind of picture they showed?

AA: William S. Hart, Eddie Polo--you heard of Eddie Polo?

WN: No.

AA: He was strong son-of-a-gun.

WN: What, cowboy?

AA: Ah, no, he was not cowboy. William S. Hart was cowboy, Tom Mix.

WN: Tom Mix, yeah.

AA: Oh, all kind. Well, that's the kind picture they have. Nice. I used to enjoy.

WN: Yeah, so the open-air one--you had to pay or was free?

AA: Pay. Five cents, you sit down on the kind benches, not seats, benches.

WN: Oh, so you could either go to the Kalihi Theater, or the . . .

AA: No, no, that one was before the Kalihi Theater. Because that one there, one wind came. And that wind wen broke everything--was all corrugated on the side, you know. Wen broke all the statues they had--they had statues on the stage. One bust everything, so wen completely out. Then they made another one up here--right where American Savings--they made one up-to-date roof and everything. The same family that had that.

WN: Yeah. And when Kalihi Theater came up?

AA: Kalihi Theater came, I think, little later.

WN: Getting back to that saimin man, he was Japanese?

AA: Japanese.

WN: In the cart, had the fire in the cart?

AA: Yeah. And his son still living there.

WN: Yeah?

AA: You see the barbershop? Right next get one barbershop over there. Where the bus stop.

WN: You mean where [Kalihi] Queen's Supermarket is?

AA: No, across the street. Get one barbershop over there; small one--the Filipino John over there.

WN: Yeah.

AA: And the next place, where you see some cars parking inside there.

WN: Yeah.

AA: You see the cars parking in there? His son still living over there. Was his father's place. The barbershop is his father's place, but they don't (sell). Muraoka wanted to buy 'em before.

WN: Muraoka?

AA: Yeah. Then American Savings bought 'em from---he wouldn't sell 'em to Muraoka. I don't know, maybe he had some ill feelings or something, and he wouldn't sell that plot to Muraoka.

WN: What's his name?

AA: Shee, I don't know his name. I talk to him every time. I think I called him "Slim." He's tall, eh, and he know all the Kalihi boys used to hang around there. Because they had one fence over there, where the board was about eight inches wide, and we used to sit down on that fence, and talk, and eat saimin.

WN: How did he wash the bowl?

AA: Oh, the house right there, he lived right there.

WN: Oh, oh, oh.

AA: He lived right . . .

WN: Did he go far with the cart? How far away did he go?

AA: Oh, he used to come down here. He used to go on the road.

WN: Kaumualii?

AA: Yeah, I mean, he must have had some kind of container with water or something. Yeah, pretty good-size cart, you know.

WN: How big?

AA: I'd say, about little bit longer than this table.

WN: About five feet?

AA: Yeah, something like the table. He had one little roof over 'em.

WN: Oh, yeah? Had any other car, besides saimin cart?

AA: Well, this guy was the only guy I see came around. They used to get manapua before--they come with that stick, you know how they put 'em on their back.

WN: Yeah, yeah. How much was manapua?

AA: Manapua was ten cents. Yeah, most stuff before is ten cents; five cents must be very small. Most of the stuff was like that.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 11-5-2-83  
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Albert O. Adams (AA)

December 12, 1983

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Albert Adams. Today is December 12, 1983, and we are at his home in Kalihi, Oahu.

Okay, Mr. Adams, in 1927 you got involved in barefoot football teams, yeah?

AA: Yes, we have.

WN: How did you get involved in that?

AA: Well, we had nothing to do, we used to hang around the Fernandez Park. We used to hang around the park, and Mr. [Manuel] DeCorte organized the boys together. He was always in sports. In fact, he started some City-Wide leagues and all that, you know. Then, he got the boys together, he formed the team. He had this Sonny Pai--his name was Sonny Pai--he was the coach. DeCorte was just like the manager. And then, that's how we started.

WN: Was the team started in '27 or was it started before then?

AA: Well, we used to hang around the park, you know, kick balls and play touch football; but it started in 1927, that junior barefoot league. [Senior barefoot league began in 1922.] Hundred and thirty-five pounds. And if you couldn't make the weight when was game time--just before they played--you disqualified.

WN: Who else was in that league? What other teams were there, in that junior league?

AA: Ah, they had Kakaako--Kakaako Sons; they had, I'm pretty sure was Pawaa. . . .

WN: Pawaa?

AA: Yeah, I think so, they had Pawaa and I think they had couple more teams, but I can't think of the names. But they had couple more

teams. Kakaako was supposed to be the strong team--they had a strong team.

WN: You call it junior barefoot league?

AA: Junior barefoot league--135 pounds.

WN: And there was a senior league, too?

AA: There was a senior league, they was called Kalihi Thundering Herd. They were the 150 pounds. And I'm pretty sure they had that weight limit, too. If you couldn't make 'em, you was disqualified for that game, that's all.

WN: The Kalihi Thundering Herd was the senior team. What was the name of you folks' team?

AA: Ours was the Kalihi Junior Team.

WN: Not Junior Thundering Herd?

AA: Well, some guys call it that way, but the main thing was the big boys, the 150 pounds. And Benny Waimau was the coach.

WN: Of the seniors?

AA: Yeah, he was a good coach. Boy, he'd make them pull the car right around the block. Fernandez [Park]. That old Essex car--he would get maybe about couple guys, just pull 'em. Pull that car right around the block. I'd say it's good---about pretty close to quarter mile.

WN: And did your coach, Sonny Pai, did he make you folks do that kind stuff, too?

AA: Well, we trained pretty hard, but we never did pull no cars. Benny Waimau was a real excellent coach, I would call him really excellent. They had a clinic, and this Knute Rockne came down. The Kalihi club sent Benny Waimau to the clinic with other good coaches, you know, coaches coaching high school. I guess maybe Otto Klum was there, too. He used to coach University of Hawaii. What we heard afterwards [was] that Knute Rockne asked the coaches some questions, you know, and then they would answer. Then, Benny Waimau asked him a question, and he looked at Benny, and he told [asked] Benny what team he was coaching. (Laughs) And Benny said, "Oh, the barefoot Kalihi Thundering Herd."

He [Knute Rockne] said, "Well, you better get in something bigger than that." Because he [Benny] was really a good coach.

WN: Uh huh. In barefoot football, how does that differ from regular football? How many players to a side, for example?

AA: Well, I figure on maybe thirty. About thirty players. And then they only played with T-shirts. Sailor moku pants--some of them with sailor hat, barefooted.

WN: Uh huh. Could you wear shoes if you wanted?

AA: Yeah, tennis shoes.

WN: But, most kids were barefoot or . . .

AA: All barefooted. I think we only had one boy that played with tennis shoes. And he was the fullback. Frank Kahalaliu--he was a good fullback. He was the only one playing with tennis shoes.

WN: You folks didn't have any padding?

AA: No paddings. No paddings.

WN: And you played tackle?

AA: Oh, yeah! Pile on and everything.

(Laughter)

AA: They really used to play hard. When they used to play, they go for blood. But they never had that serious accidents like, you know, when they landed in the hospital. Because what I figure, they wasn't scared. Usually when you play football, if you scared, you going get one crack, you going get hurt because you scared already.

WN: What position did you play?

AA: Right guard, for the juniors.

WN: That was offense and defense?

AA: Yeah, we played offense and defense. We was inter-island champions. You know, from all the islands--we beat that Kahului Jackrabbits.

WN: For the championship?

AA: For the championship--I think the score was 13-6 or something.

WN: So you won the Oahu league first?

AA: Yeah, the Oahu league, then we played for inter-island.

WN: Did you folks play over here or in Kahului?

AA: We went up Maui to play them, but the weather was really bad. Then they came down here and we played them on New Year's, I think.

WN: New Year's Day?

AA: I think so, we played them on a New Year's day. Out at the old stadium.

WN: The old Honolulu Stadium, or Moiliili field?

AA: Honolulu Stadium--we played them there.

WN: Was there an age limit to that league?

AA: No age limit. As long as you was 135 pounds.

WN: So you could be like forty years old and play?

AA: (Laughs) Forty years old, I don't think they will play because was little bit. . . . You know.

WN: And were these for kids that were not in school? What about the kids that were going to, say, McKinley High School or something? Could they play, too?

AA: Well, I think they could play, I think they can. I'm pretty sure they can, but ours was most of them guys that wasn't going school. Just hanging around. So they won't get themselves in trouble.

WN: Your team, were they mostly from the same area or were they from all over Kalihi?

AA: Most from Kalihi. I'd say about 90 percent from Kalihi.

WN: Up from the valley, too?

AA: From the valley, from Kam IV, Kalihi Corner and Kalihi Kai.

WN: That was the only team from Kalihi? That Junior Thundering Herd and Thundering Herd?

AA: That's the only two teams they had from Kalihi in them days. They played pretty long, I think they played till 1933. And they break up. Used to get Harvey Chilton, he was well known [for] rubdown. He was the one used to take care the boys--the big boys, Kalihi Thundering Herd. Harvey Chilton--he was well known.

WN: He was a rubdown--what is that?

AA: In case they get hurt, he would massage 'em or something like that.

WN: What kind of a man was Manuel DeCorte?

AA: He was a wonderful man. He was a schoolteacher in Kalihi-Waena School. He used to teach carpenter. When I went school, I was attending his classes. He had one hand, I think he lost his left



hand. But he was really for sports. In fact, they got a fountain named after him. Yeah, what do you call--I don't know what kind of fountain they got. I don't know where they had 'em, up Kam[ehameha] Field or someplace--they had a fountain named after him.

WN: You said he was a teacher at Kalihi-Waena School?

AA: Yeah.

WN: Was there a Kalihi-Waena School football team, too?

AA: Oh, yeah, they had good teams, Kalihi-Waena School.

WN: Was this a barefoot league, too?

AA: Barefoot. Them days they won championships, they used to play with good schools--Kaiulani, Likelike, Royal School.

WN: So was just between schools, then?

AA: Yeah, between schools, and they won champions. They had Harry Nobriga before, he was a good player. He played for the barefoot, too--he was good. He was all-star in St. Louis. They had this guy Peter Sambo, he was good.

WN: You could either play for Kalihi-Waena School or for the Thundering Herd--could you play for both?

AA: No, they never had Thundering Herd that time.

WN: Oh, was before that?

AA: Kalihi-Waena School was before.

WN: Then when the Kalihi Thundering Herd started, what, they disbanded the Kalihi-Waena team?

AA: Well, I never heard too much about them playing football.

WN: Was Kalihi-Waena School up to sixth grade or eighth grade?

AA: It was up to eighth grade.

WN: So what do you remember about the [1928] championship game at Honolulu Stadium against the Kahului Jackrabbits? How many people attended?

AA: Oh, they had at least about two, three thousand; that time was a good crowd, eh? And I think they only paid twenty-five cents to come in.

WN: Had cheerleaders, too?

- AA: Oh, yeah! They had the backers there and was lot of fun. They gave us a ring--inter-island champions--purple and white, the ring was gold. That time was cheap, I think that ring only cost \$8.50. They made 'em down Dawkins Benny's.
- WN: The whole team got, each team member?
- AA: Yeah, each player got. I guess we sold some Portuguese sausage to help pay for the ring.
- WN: Was there sponsors of the team? You know, like businessmen or some people that help . . .
- AA: Yeah, we had this guy, Tommy Beck, he lived right up there. He used to work in Pearl Harbor--he had the loot that time, he had the money. You know when you work that kind place, you get the money, eh? He would sponsor--he would buy the jerseys for the Thundering Herd. I think that time maybe the jerseys only cost two, three dollars one, I think. Good jerseys. Then they had this guy. He's a bigshot, too. I can't think of his name. He lives right up there, too. I have his name in my head, I forgot. But he donated plenty, too. In fact, he paid, I think, for this guy Peter Sambo--when he died--paid for his funeral. This guy Peter Sambo, he was a good player.
- WN: How do you spell that?
- AA: Peter Robeiro, but we used to call him Peter Sambo, nickname.
- WN: S-A-M-B-O?
- AA: Yeah, Sambo. He got killed. I was sitting up by the corner with him on the curbing. This guy used to pick us up and we used to go for a ride. Kalihi, they used to get one dipper, by Bannister Street, where the railroad track pass and the road goes down and come up--we used to call 'em the dipper. And we used to go over there and ride with him and shee, that guy used to go one time and down, and you bounce up in that pickup truck, and you hit your head on the top. That day I didn't go, but this guy Peter Sambo went. He was on the tailgate. And this guy was good for somersault. Them days used to get the streetcar--you know the streetcar running on the track? And he would stand on the rail board on the side, he would just jump down and make one somersault and land on his feet.
- WN: Oh, boy.
- AA: Yeah, he was so darn good, eh? But I don't know how he died. He landed on his head when the truck went down the dipper. I think the tailgate came up--he came up with the tailgate, but when he went over, he landed on his head. He had hemorrhage. And the ambulance picked him up, took him down, and he died. They had a big funeral. Really big funeral. We stood guard, the undertaker. And then, they

marched--I think was from Palama till St. John's Church. Peter Robeiro--oh, he was really good football player. Dark--he was dark, that's why they called him Sambo.

WN: Did any barefoot league player go on to say, high school football stardom, or UH [University of Hawaii]--anything like that?

AA: Yeah! Some went McKinley. Alec Beck [another interviewee], I think, went play for McKinley, and he played for Kalihi. Yeah, they had few guys that went.

WN: What kind of rivalry did you folks have with Kakaako?

AA: Oh, after the game, some of them guys wanted to fight. Them two teams when they play, boy, they really played hard. I hear they scratch and everything. (Laughs)

WN: Had referees at your game?

AA: Yeah, they had referees and they was all right. They was scared, too, I think, because maybe football team would make 'em run or something, you know. (Laughs) Yeah, they was scared.

(Laughter)

WN: Where were they [referees] from? Parks and Rec[reation] or. . . .

AA: Yeah, they was from the recreation, parks. They had this guy Polson, he was a big gunner in that, too.

WN: Polson? Speaking of rivalry, was there any kind of rivalry between, say, Kalihi-Kai and Kalihi-Uka?

AA: In what--playing football?

WN: Yeah.

AA: No, when we played football, everything was just like one whole family. Yeah, no more ill feelings against one another. You had some nice football players from Rose Street. That's up Kamehameha IV Road. I used to hang around with them when I was small, eh? You had this Duckie Swan, he went to the University.

WN: Duckie, yeah?

AA: Yeah, Duckie. He went, he made some kind of, I think, all-star up on the Mainland where he played for--I don't know if was Santa Clara or who he played. Then you have Duke Thompson--he played for the University, he was on that Wonder Team. He was a end, he was a good football player.

WN: He played with the Thundering Herd, too, before?

- AA: No. He didn't play, but I guess maybe he was going school University, I think. Charlie Fernandez, he was a good baseball player, too. Yeah, they had some good football players from up in that Rose Street area--Mendonca, the one that just got . . .
- WN: Oh, Duffie [Mendonca, another interviewee]?
- AA: Yeah, he was good. He played for University.
- WN: You see that article in the newspaper?
- AA: Yeah, I read about him, yeah.
- WN: Did they have other sports besides football?
- AA: Yeah. They had track meets, basketball, volleyball--they had all that.
- WN: And was Manuel DeCorte active in all that, too?
- AA: Oh, yeah. He was in all the sports of Fernandez Park.
- WN: Where was Fernandez Park?
- AA: When you go up Kaili Street---Kaili is where the Susannah Wesley home.
- WN: Yeah.
- AA: Then you go up that road--you see by the dead end where you go into some houses area, then you turn left towards Gulick Avenue.
- WN: Oh, oh, yeah. Okay.
- AA: You see that little park right there?
- WN: Yeah, yeah, near Beckley . . .
- AA: Yeah, Beckley and Gulick Avenue. It was a big park--it was from Gulick Avenue till Beckley. But they shorten 'em up. I think they made the freeway, or they went make some stuff around there.
- WN: And who was that Fernandez--who was that named after?
- AA: Fernandez, he was the circus . . .
- WN: E.K. Fernandez?
- AA: E.K. Fernandez--he used to live right across from the park and he had a big area over there. The son played football for University [of Hawaii]. Eddie Fernandez, he was the coach for Kalihi, too, afterwards. Eddie Fernandez was the coach for Kalihi. They had about three, four coaches. They had Johnny McColgan, that's all the

later part after Benny Waimau. They had Julian Judd, he was a coach, too. But they came all afterwards. After Benny--Benny was the best.

WN: Benny was Kalihi boy?

AA: Kalihi boy--lived right up here, Kahanu Street.

WN: Did you participate in any other sport--the track and field, and basketball?

AA: No, I played basketball for the junior team. But I used to get foul every time.

(Laughter)

AA: You know what I mean (laughs). Goddamn referee every time call foul on me.

(Laughter)

AA: Maybe I was clumsy.

WN: Maybe too rough?

AA: No.

(Laughter)

WN: Track and field, that's interesting--where did they have the meets? In Fernandez Park?

AA: Kamehameha Field. Where they used to get all the interscholastic games. They used to get 'em all up there, they used to call 'em City-Wide. They used to get all the clubs, Palama. . . . Used to be good.

WN: And track?

AA: Track, pole vault all that. Then they had basketball, they used to play with one another.

WN: You know the Kalihi teams, like the Thundering Herd and everything like that, nationality-wise, what was it mostly?

AA: You had lot of Hawaiians, and you had Portuguese, Japanese. I never see too many Puerto Ricans. But I think that Japanese, Hawaiians and Portuguese was the most.

WN: And Palama's team--was it mostly the same thing, too?

AA: Yeah, they had Japanese in there. They had one good player, he used to play for Hui 'Elehu. I remember this fullback--Tabooch. Clean

player, he was.

WN: Tabooch?

AA: Yeah. He was a clean player, good fullback. Yeah, almost every team they had. Kakaako same thing, because I think all them districts before living in that area, that's all you had before. Hawaiians, Japanese, some Chinese--yeah, they had few Chinese. Kalihi had some Chinese, too.

WN: No Filipinos?

AA: Gee, I can't think of one.

WN: Okay. So as you look back at your football experience, did that help you get out of trouble? I mean, people say that organized sports helps kids get off the streets like that?

AA: Right. Because we used to stay together every time in the park. Sit down and wait for the time to go out and practice. That and then down at the golf links--it's about all we used to do.

WN: You mean, caddy?

AA: Yeah. Caddy. And you never had too much trouble, like stealing. The worst one is when they would fight maybe, you know, fight with some other gang or something, but wasn't too much because they never used to go down their areas and fight. And up here they was afraid of this policemen, just like that Mel Smith, eh? Yeah, because if you make some trouble, he would kick your ass so hard then he would tell you stay away from this corner--don't come around here no more and you gotta stay away. (Chuckles) Yeah, I never forget this guy, Frank--well, we used to call him Anahu. I don't know what he done. I think his mother must have told Mel Smith to get on him and kinda warn him. Chee, Mel Smith got 'em one time and shook 'em up, and told him, "I don't wanna see you around here for one month." He stood away for one month and he never come around, and how much he used to like to hang around with the boys, he never came around.

WN: What was his name again?

AA: Anahu, we used to call him--Frank Anahu. He's dead.

WN: That was his nickname or his . . .

AA: Well, that's his hanai name. Frank Kahalaliu is his real name. Anahu is like his adopted name.

WN: So, what else did you folks do besides---you had your organized things like football, and then you guys used to hang around. Before I move on another subject, you have any more things you want to tell me about what you did when you were young?

AA: Well, they used to play cards--blackjack--but everything was pennies. Not big money because them guys was all broke. Penny ante game, they used to pass the time.

WN: Where you used to play?

AA: Right in the park. We used to play right in the park.

WN: The Fernandez Park area, was that considered like a tough area?

AA: Well, Sundays, they would hang around the park. They would play this indoor ball, you know, underhand ball. And used to get guys--maybe forty years old--they just pick so many guys, you know, then they would bet for drinks. They would pass the time up there and get all kind games. Most was that ball game--that indoor ball, they call 'em indoor or outdoor ball. And then Kalihi used to get baseball team, too, you know.

WN: What was the name of the team?

AA: Just Kalihi Club--everything was Kalihi Club, that's about all.

WN: And they played at Fernandez Park?

AA: No, Fernandez Park, you couldn't play baseball over there. You can play outdoor ball, or volleyball, or basketball. But they would play up Kam Field, the baseball. Kamehameha Field.

WN: You were telling me last time about your jobs, you worked in the . . .

(Dogs barking)

WN: . . . Nelson Tent and Awning, you worked for Libby's, you worked as a watchman, yeah?

AA: Yeah.

WN: Then you said, later, after you worked as a watchman, for a few years of one summer you worked for your mother's awning . . .

AA: Well, off and on I used to work for her. Even though when I was working out Hickam I used to go work [for her] on Saturdays, Sundays. You know, I would go out and install the awnings or drop curtains.

WN: Where was your mother's shop?

AA: Kalihi Street--812 Kalihi Street.

WN: Was that near your house?

AA: We used to live right there. She had a little space in the back

where she used to sew all her awnings, get them ready. I used to make all the frames for the awnings.

WN: Who were her customers, mostly? Shops or. . . .

AA: Yeah, shops. People would call her because she was. . . . It was legal, it was in the phone book and . . .

WN: And it was called Kalihi Awning Shop?

AA: Yeah, Kalihi Awning Shop. See, you never had no overhead, I think. That's why a lot of people would give her the job because everything was cheaper because there's no rent to pay, and she never used to pay me. I just used to do that for her as a favor.

WN: How did she learn all that?

AA: Oh, she used to sew awnings at Nelson Tent and Awning Shop. Not only awnings, she used to sew anything.

WN: So she thought was better to have her own business than to work . . .

AA: Well, Nelson fold up, so when she got out, she started. I guess maybe she liked the job so she wanted to continue. So she started going doing her own business. Not in a big way.

WN: Did she pay you?

AA: No, I never used to. . . . Because I was working.

WN: Because about 1929, 1930, you started working . . .

AA: Hickam.

WN: . . . Hickam?

AA: Yeah. Just about there, 1930, I think.

WN: How did you get the job?

AA: Well, there was the Luke Field before, the air force. And they was looking for people that had experience, see, because the airplane--all the fuselage, wings, tail section, all was made out of fabrics. All fabrics, and in order to work there, you had to get experience where you worked on fabric before. So I have that--I used to work with awnings and all that. So I never had no problems getting in.

WN: How did you know about the position?

AA: Well, my stepfather was working down there and they had openings, so I started as a helper, not permanent. So afterwards, everything



worked out.

WN: Was it pretty easy to get a job with the federal government in those days?

AA: No, wasn't too easy because if you was no good they can fire you right on the spot. No such thing as unions. And if you get a raise, you had to get a raise. Maybe Congress had to give you the raise. We used to get a raise--oh, sometime five dollar raise--in one year, I think. Yeah, I remember I used to work over there, we used to sew--most we used to do hand sewing. And the wahines used to make the covers out of the fabric and we used to put 'em on the wing. Then we used to dope 'em, because there's nitrate dope. They call that nitrate dope.

WN: Nitrate dope?

AA: Yeah, nitrate dope. And we used to put 'em on the surface, off the fabric. And we give so many coats. Dry fast, dried fast. And then when she was finished would be just like a drum. Stiff, strong, stiff.

WN: That was used for the . . .

AA: For the airplanes. On the fuselage. We had some bombers over there was pretty big, we used to sew the fabric on. Well, they had the frame of the airplane, but we used to sew 'em around the frame, and then we used to dope 'em.

WN: What was the reason for sewing around the frame?

AA: So she won't pull out, and then we used to put them breaker strips on, rib stitch 'em. Beef 'em up, too, because you had to sew the twine right through the fabric around the rib. Then you had to locknut 'em. The first thing when you get all through, you put one coat of dope on, let 'em dry. I think was every four inches we used to put a locknut so in case if she came out, she won't run.

WN: Seems like it was kind of brittle, huh?

AA: You like I show you some pictures? I get some . . .

WN: Yeah, afterwards maybe.

AA: You never see them pictures over there. Lot of guys never see them pictures.

WN: No. I mean, how come it didn't break?

AA: Well, when we sewed 'em on, and the dope and the breaker strips . . .

WN: Breaker strips were made of what?

AA: Fabric. And their edges was all tinted so they wouldn't pull out. And then the rib stitching--that's what made them strong. And then we give one coat before we put all them breaker strips on. Then after we get all that down, almost finished, we would give 'em at least four more coats of dope. Usually, before the last coat, we had really smooth sandpaper--maybe double 0--and we used to just run the sandpaper smooth. Then we give 'em the last coat. Then the spray gun operator, he would spray 'em maybe yellow or OD [olive drab]. By the time he got through, maybe we had about--with the paint and everything--about seven coats. And she come stiff, boy.

WN: This is actually the outside of the plane, then? The outside . . .

AA: The outside, all on the outside. Fuselage is outside; the wings, that's all outside; tail surface, the rudder, aileron, stabilizer--all that was made out of fabric. Today is all metal. They got few stuffs, yet. Some of the tail surface or the aileron is made out of that, because it's light, eh? To operate, yeah?

WN: The material you said was like a drum? The kind drum you beat?

AA: Yeah, when we got through doping 'em on and all that--you know, just like a drum, how you'd beat. Terrific. We made a glider down there one time. They wanted to go for some record. Take 'em down the Pali, you know. Nice glider, but I don't know, I hear nothing. That bugga wen crack up, I think.

We had some nice officers down there. Them days we had the kind airplanes. We had P-12's, that's something like small pursuit planes. Look like the Zero, I think. Then we had the A-3's; they was the kind fighter planes. They had machineguns in the wing. Then we had the B-5 bombers--all fabric. That's the ones [when] they had a eruption up Hilo, they went to drop bomb so the flow--- they would turn the flow of the lava in different direction, eh? Yeah, they done that up Hawaii someplace, and I heard that when some of them planes came back--when they landed--they had some kind trouble. Airplane caught fire and when the airplane was burning down, they parachuted and one of the guys, that darn parachute wen pull him right in the fire. One of them airman. So they say maybe that's the kahuna because they went over there, bomb the--Pele--the volcano.

WN: What caused the fire? The volcano?

AA: No, no--when they came, landed in the flying field. On Luke Field, something went wrong. Yeah.

WN: The material that you folks put on then, wasn't fireproof then?

AA: No. They wasn't fireproof. That dope burn fast.

WN: You know when they switched from fabric to metal?

AA: They start switching about '36, '35, maybe little earlier than that. Because when I came down Hickam, in '36, we was moving out of Luke Field. They was getting metal already. They had some good-sized planes down Hickam.

WN: So when you first started working for federal government--the operation that you were involved in was first at Luke Field, which is at Ford Island?

AA: Yeah.

WN: Who did you actually work for? What was the name of your organization or what department?

AA: Oh, our department was dope and fabric--dope and fabric.

WN: After the frames were made, then it went to . . .

AA: Yeah, they had all different shops. See, they had where they would dismantle. Then they had lot of them wings was made out of wood--thin wood. Even from the bombers. The fuselage used to be out of metal. But the wings and the ailerons and the tail surface, was made out of wood. That's why they had ribs, go from one end like that, kind of shaped round, and then the bottom would be straight, you know.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay--how did you get from your house to Ford Island?

AA: I had a car--1931 Chevy. Sports model, the roadster. I bought 'em brand new. Them days was cheap, but you have to get the money. I think cost \$835.

WN: For brand new?

AA: Was brand new, I bought 'em down Waipahu Motors.

WN: How you got the money?

AA: I had another car. Was a touring, and I turned 'em in to them for \$450. So the balance I paid every month, you know, notes. I used to pick up--my stepfather was working down there--I used to pick him up and another Japanese, Roy Koshima. He was on Waiakamilo [Road]. And we used to go down the cold dock in Pearl Harbor. And we had to catch the ferry from the cold dock. They had a small little

tugboat. Used to pull the ferry along, and then the ferry would dock at Luke Field. We used to get through about 4:15, then ride back. That went on for years. See, we would come right in the main gate to Pearl Harbor, then go all the way down--I think that darn place we used to call 'em Bishop Point or something. Never had Hickam that time.

WN: So the government moved the whole operation from Luke Field to Hickam in 1936?

AA: About that.

WN: And you folks moved with them?

AA: Yeah. And still lot of them buildings wasn't finished when we moved in. Because when the war started, lot of them hangars wasn't finished; the big arch hangar wasn't quite done. Lot of them shops wasn't done.

WN: What happened to Luke Field? What did they do to that area?

AA: The navy took over. The field was named after Colonel Luke. I think he was an ace in the First World War.

WN: You were actually employed by the air force?

AA: Yeah.

WN: And at Hickam, had a residential area called Watertown before?

AA: That's before we moved there. That was all Watertown. They had a school and everything down there.

WN: Who lived over there?

AA: Local people--all local people.

WN: You mean, before that, Hickam was not owned by federal government?

AA: No, no. Was sugar cane--they had sugar cane; and right along the coast, you know, that was all Watertown. All shallow water was in there. I heard they had lot of people working navy yard, too, over there. Most was local people.

WN: You know who owned the land before?

AA: Down there?

WN: Yeah. Was that part of Damon Tract?

AA: Could be, because he owned from the mountain right down to the ocean. Could be--I think was Damon. I think the military bought 'em from

him.

WN: Watertown, was it mostly Hawaiians or all kinds?

AA: Hawaiians, Portuguese. Some Japanese. But mostly Hawaiians and Portuguese.

WN: Did they break down the houses?

AA: Yeah, because when I came from Hickam, I never saw no houses down there--was all level. The school and everything, you can see where the---right now, I think the school is where they get the administration building.

WN: I wonder why they called it Watertown.

AA: Close to the water. Right close to the water.

WN: You think that lot of the residents of Watertown used to work for the navy?

AA: I'm pretty sure. Maybe plantation, too, because the plantation used to run right down there.

WN: What plantation was that?

AA: Aiea. Aiea plantation. I think they used to work. Yeah. I hold lot of different jobs, you know, when I was working. See, when I first started, I started as a helper for dope and fabric. Then after we moved to Hickam, I still was in dope and fabric. Then afterwards, when the war break out, that's really when I started getting different type of jobs, see? Then I started working survival--on life rafts, and I worked on parachutes. You know, packing parachutes. Then when the second war started, I worked on self-sealing tanks. They were made out of rubber. When bullets hit 'em, the gas would leak little bit and it would dissolve the material and plug up the hole. Yeah, we used to get lot of tanks come back with bullets in 'em. So I worked on all that. I worked on leather, canvas, all together but--all in the same department, you know.

WN: All having to do with fabric?

AA: Yeah, all having to do with that type of work.

WN: What were you doing on December 7 [1941]?

AA: On December the 7, I went out and drink some beer. So we don't work--that was on a Sunday. And I remember I was in the tub taking a bath. Shee, when they start dropping them bombs and people yelling, I came out and I was wondering what the hell wrong. I didn't know, still little bit groggy, yet, eh?

WN: You were here, at this house?

AA: At this house. And then we listen the radio. And the radio told us to come down--you know, to work. So, okay. I got dressed, went up, I picked up my stepfather. I went over for pick up Roy Koshima, he was up. So I say, "Roy, you going?"

No, he told me, he wasn't going, just like that--he never go. So me and my stepfather went down, all the way from this Middle Street coming out, all the way down till Hickam, we had to go, stop, go, stop. There was cars on the road, you know--about four abreast like, going--go, stop, go, stop. Till we came to Hickam. Lot of them guys, you can see taxis bringing them sailors back, some of them throwing up. And we went all the way down to the bank at Hickam. We never go in the yard because the guard stopped us, told us to go in the parking lot by the bank, wait there. And then afterwards, they send us home, we couldn't go in.

WN: So you didn't work that day then?

AA: No, we never worked, because was maybe too dangerous, I think.

WN: Did you know right away what it was, what was happening?

AA: Oh, yeah.

WN: Some people say, well, they thought was maybe a test or something.

AA: Well, my father-in-law told me he thought it was a test because he had my two kids on the car. See, they went down to Waiau, he take the kids for a ride and same time go buy some watercress. So on his way back, he say he stopped. That's where the Arizona, I think, was parked. So he was, you know, show the kids, eh? So first thing he see this plane coming overhead and flying, coming low down by the water, eh? I think that battleship, parked on Ford Island side, you know. You can see from Aiea landing--and he said he was wondering what the heck is that. So when they dropped that torpedo that goes on the water, he figured that's target practice. So he watched and watched--chee, when they see the ship, you know, with that crack and kind of roll one side. Oh, he said he wen jump on the car and he took off home. So he had a good view--he had a good view. Yeah, he say he was so goddarned scared, and machine-gun fire and all that, eh? He had a good view.

WN: Too bad he never had movie camera, yeah?

AA: Yeah.

WN: And so the next day, you went back to work?

AA: Yeah, next day we went work.

WN: What was it like?

AA: Well, mostly cleaning up. Cleaning up the mess.

WN: What kind of mess had?

AA: Glasses--you know, all kinds of---from the bombing. Yeah, just cleaning--getting ready for work, cleaning all the mess so nobody get hurt. Then the captain gave us a little pep talk. Then we start working. That time, the dope and fabric was dying out already. Wasn't too much, you know. So we was working most on survival, life rafts . . .

WN: You know, you told me that, that day when you went to go pick up that Koshima? What's his name?

AA: Roy Koshima.

WN: Koshima? And he said he wasn't gonna go--did he tell you why?

AA: Well, it's a long story. I don't---because him and my stepfather, they used to argue. I used to get tired. Maybe you like cut this out, I think.

WN: Oh, okay. I'll cut it out. [Note: Permission received from AA to leave in.]

AA: You see, my stepfather was from the navy, retired. You don't remember because maybe you was too young or no was born or what. But they was starting already, you know, how Japan and Germany--they was all getting, you know. Just like you can tell going be war, no? And them two used to argue every time. And he used to tell my stepfather, "You know, America no can beat Japan because Japan, their navy too big." He say the navy, shee--they get a terrific navy. And then, you know he [stepfather] would back up America. And sometime I used to get disgusted listening to them two. So anyway, he [Koshima] was for Japan--he was strong like, you know. Then when the war break out, I don't know if he knew anything because we had some Japanese working. We had about two, three Japanese girls working, sewing--seamstress. Tatsui Miyamoto, Catherine Fujii, and they never used to talk, you know. So, when the next day we went in--I picked him up--he went. But I told him--because I was so goddamn wild because him and my stepfather always arguing about who's strong--"Roy," I say, "you know, starting tomorrow, you going look for one different rider--you know, ride with somebody else."

Then he told me, "Oh, you heard what the captain said, no get ill feelings."

But I said, "No, that's all right, you look for another rider," I told him. Because I didn't want that goddamn situation be--maybe he wouldn't talk because already the war started, eh?

And then afterwards, they took all them [Japanese] out. Some good friends I had like Jimmy Kirimitsu, he was a good friend of mine. His son is a lawyer now--you hear about him?

WN: Kirimitsu?

AA: Yeah. Kirimitsu--nice guy. In fact I wen teach him how to dope because paint shop was going take over the doping. And he appreciated that very much, you know. So, they took all them guys out, but they never lost anything. They wen work for the engineers--U.S. Engineers. And then after the war was over, I think to me, they had a better deal than us. Because I think they made more pay working for the engineers, and while they was working for the engineers, all their time counted. They had sick leave and all that. They called them back--they came back and work.

WN: And you continued after the war, too, yeah? Working for Hickam?

AA: Oh, yeah. During the war and after the war. See, the First World War, I was too young for go in. The second one, I was, I'd say about thirty, I guess. But still yet, we was working for--what they call that? They need you working just as much as fighting.

WN: Oh, [civilian] defense job . . .

WN: Yeah, right.

WN: So you never had to . . .

AA: So I missed the two wars (chuckles).

WN: Oh, well--that's good, huh?

AA: But I wanted to get in the navy. Because the fleet used to come down here every four years, come down to Hawaii. When they come down, boy, Hawaii loaded with sailors. That's when they make all their money, too, these businessmen, you know. And that's the only time they would pick some local people. So I was old enough to get in. I wanted to get out from here and join 'em so I went in town by Pier 2 someplace for register for get in. I never get in, but lot of my friends got in--they pick up so many, you know, from the islands. That's the only time you can get in the navy, only when the fleet come down.

WN: How come you never get in, you think?

AA: I don't know, maybe them guys had better record than me, you know, like when schooling, where you fill up all something like that.

WN: So you worked until you retired after how many years?

AA: I worked 34-1/2 years. And I retired in '65. I was fifty-five



years old, right on my birthday. I wanted to get out.

WN: Right on your birthday?

AA: Yeah, I never miss. I went up the personnel, this Zane, I know him well. He tell me wait, I say naw, I going out. Plenty guys tell me no be damn fool--stay in, he say, work some more years, I say no. (Laughs)

WN: So what did you do after you retired?

AA: Oh, just take it easy--went fishing, mostly fishing. I used to help somebody if they doing some work. Not to get paid, never get paid. I didn't want to work for nobody--I had chance get jobs, I was offered jobs.

WN: Yeah, like what kind jobs?

AA: Like I had chance go down Hickam. Recreation, down Hickam.

(Telephone rings; taping stops, then resumes.)

AA: But I didn't want to work for nobody. I figure on what the hell I going work when I could have stayed over there and made good money. Because I came out only fifty-five years old; forty-four [thirty-four] years service. So I said, the hell--take a rest. That's what I done. Money wasn't too much. I was getting about \$375 or \$300--I was supervisor down there, making about \$2.00 one hour, \$2.95--at Hickam. And where we made out all right is the cost of living. You know, when cost of living go up?

WN: Cost of living allowance?

AA: Yeah, that's where we made out. Otherwise, \$300 or \$375--you no can live on that today.

WN: From the time you started to the time you retired, did you have pay raises?

AA: Cost of living. Most was cost of living. Yeah, that brought us up good, all the guys retired. Japanese boy took my place, and the pay came up. I think he was making about fourteen dollars one hour, and I was making what, about three dollars one hour.

WN: It went up that much?

AA: Yeah. Came way up.

WN: Is the pension pretty good?

AA: Retirement now? I don't spend like when I was young, eh? You know when you old, you don't care for dress up, you don't go too many

places, so in fact I'm satisfied for what I'm making. Even if I don't get a raise now, I'm satisfied because I don't spend 'em fast enough.

WN: So today, what do you do to keep busy?

AA: Me? Can't do too much. I'll trim my yard, but for lawnmower and all that, I get hard time. I get, you know, pain in the chest. See, I had a major operation. They took one of my kidneys out; was cancer. And they repaired the other kidney. Then my heart went on a blink.

WN: Well, you look pretty good now.

AA: Yeah, I look pretty good. I put on weight, but I like---sometime I run that lawnmower, you know. Goddamn, I feel the pain, eh? So I had the Filipino come clean yesterday.

WN: He does nice job.

AA: Yeah, he done good job. He trim my bonsai in the front--you saw the bonsai?

WN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AA: He wen trim 'em. Just take him about an hour and a half. Me, take me about four hours.

WN: How big is your property?

AA: Five thousand square feet.

WN: That's good size.

AA: Well, that's the legal size, supposed to be. Five thousand.

WN: You know, we went through some of your experiences you had in your life. Would you have done anything different? As you look back at your life?

AA: Oh, sure. If I go back to the young days, I would go back to the young days.

WN: Would you do something different or do the same things you did? If you were to go back?

AA: Back in my young days? Oh, I enjoy that life. I enjoy that life--chee. No, wasn't crowded as now, never had automobiles like now, nice fresh air, you don't have to wear shoes or slippers, run all over the place. We used to go swim in the river naked. Even girls, just like nothing--you don't even think nothing about it. Yeah, them days was good. You can catch chicken with the hook.

WN: (Laughs) That was illegal, too, though.

AA: Yeah, never had cops like now.

(Laughter)

WN: What about Kalihi--as you look back on your life in Kalihi, what do you think?

AA: In Kalihi?

WN: Yeah.

AA: I like Kalihi. Yeah, it's nice. Now I tell you the truth. I don't care because I don't go out like travel all over. Like now, I don't think too much about Kalihi because Kalihi, all you got here is Filipinos. All them Japanese, Portuguese, Hawaiians--all disappeared. I get no trouble against the Filipinos. They good neighbors--only their standard of living. . . .

WN: The more recent arrivals?

AA: Well, I think the local ones is all right. But the PI's [Philippines Islands], the one come from PI, they not so hot to me because. . . .

WN: Culture is different.

AA: Yeah, they eat dogs. You have to watch your dogs. The way of living, they not clean. Here's one example. [AA looks down his street.] Look one over here. Lumber all over. The fireman told him that he have to clean up because this place, if it catch on fire, go up like a bomb. And I say, "Why don't you folks do something about it?"

He [fireman] say, "No, we can't do nothing; the neighbors have to complain."

WN: So Kalihi, when you were growing up, you think it was a good place?

AA: Yeah, when I was growing up, oh, yeah--I enjoyed. Yeah, take the shine shoe box, you can make few cents. Five cents a shine, go over to the taxi drivers--Japanese taxi drivers--most taxi drivers was Japanese before. Go down Moanalua, catch that kind 'o'opus, Pake 'o'opu, some goldfish. All open spaces, eh? Air was good.

WN: You think Kalihi was different from other neighborhoods?

AA: I think all the neighborhoods was same like Kalihi. I think Kakaako was the same way. Maybe Kakaako was better because they used to have the beach right close. They had squatters down there, all houses; not now. They get all commercial stuff over there--industrial, eh? Kalihi get, they starting but. Because from Puuhale [Road] all

the way down the other area [i.e., toward the ocean] is all industrial. Then from Dillingham [Boulevard] below [i.e., toward the airport], all industrial. So the only place you no get industrial is from Dillingham up to King Street. You know, this area. Only small portion, and it's going to change.

WN: You think it's going to be more . . .

AA: More industrial.

WN: You want to see that happen or not?

AA: That's what I don't want, because then you going to be crowded. Because the buildings going be up high, eh? This small house over here, all big buildings--you can't even get no wind come in. No air.

Susannah Wesley home [on Kaili Street]--that area still big, eh? Or did they get rid of some?

WN: Still lot of houses over there.

AA: You know why, because when I remember they had fence all over--that fence used to come way down. You know where's that telephone . . .

WN: Company. Yeah, next door, huh?

AA: Yeah. That used to come all the way down. Then used to go all the way in the back, I don't know how far back. And then on Kaili Street, all the way up to--I don't know how many houses they got above Susannah Wesley home but was a big area and they had a big dormitory like--big house. And they used to house only girls in there. Was all girls--no more boys. I don't know if was for that kind family that was, you know, poor . . .

WN: Orphans, too, huh? Orphans?

AA: Yeah. And all them girls, they used to go to Kalihi-Waena School.

WN: When people read your interview, maybe in thirty, forty years, Kalihi will probably be a really different place, yeah?

AA: Oh, yeah. The picture going be different.

WN: What do you want them to remember about Kalihi the most?

AA: The back, in the '20s. Yeah.

WN: Before I turn off the tape and end the interview, you have any last words you want to say, about your life or anything?

AA: There's a lot of stuff, some of them is no good.

(Laughter)

WN: Okay, well, thank you very much, Mr. Adams.

END OF INTERVIEW

**KALIHI:**  
**Place of Transition**

**Vol. I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL  
HISTORY PROJECT**

**Social Science Research Institute  
University of Hawaii at Manoa**

**JUNE 1984**