ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Pauline Higuchi

2003

BY: Sarah Gag (S.G.)

S.G.: I'm doing an oral history interview with Pauline Higuchi here at Leeward Community College. My name is Sarah Gag. Pauline, can you tell me when you were born?

Pauline: I was born July 25, 1919 in ʻAiea.

S.G.: Do you know what hospital?

Pauline: No. We had a midwife. Um-hmm.

S.G.: Can you explain further about the midwife?

Pauline: Well, I was told by my mother that in the olden days, they didn't go to the hospital to give birth. They had midwives come into the house to help deliver the baby and I was born at home, with the help of my father on the side.

S.G.: And Pauline, can you tell me your full name? At birth?

Pauline: My full name is Pauline Higuchi and I live on Honohono Street.

S.G.: Can you tell me your maiden name?

Pauline: My maiden name is Pauline Yokouchi.

Aiea Schools in Kalauao and ʻAiea

S.G.: What elementary school did you attend?

Pauline: I went to the (first) Aiea Elementary School. The first elementary school was located where the Pali Momi Hospital is now, and I attended there about a year and a half. Then the (second) Aiea Elementary School was built and I transferred to the Aiea Elementary School.

S.G.: Okay. Can you tell me what you remember about your childhood elementary days?

Pauline: Oh yes! We used to walk from where I live on Honohono Street. That's close to the Aiea Baseball Park and Recreation Center. But it was right below this… Actually, I lived in front of the HSPA, formerly the Honolulu Plantation, so I used to walk from there all the way to the school where the Pali Momi Hospital is located now. We had to walk through the cane fields. And somehow in those days, we weren't afraid to walk through the cane fields or anything because I guess we were all doing that, you know? Nobody had car to take us to school. We had to walk so it was a very good experience walking to school, and I have fond memories of that place, although I was very young.

'Cause they didn't have---I don't remember having a cafeteria at this school! But then when we moved to the Aiea Elementary School, then I remember, yeah, we had a cafeteria and I remember going to the cafeteria during school. You know, we had, at least once a week or so, that we had to go to the cafeteria and helped to prepare lunch for all the students and the teachers. And through that I found, very much, experiencing cooking. You know, a lot of those big pots. We had to wash those big pots. Like today you have cafeteria workers that do that. In the olden days, we had to do all the washing; it seemed like half of our body was in the big pot! (Both laugh) And I think that it was really interesting learning, you know, how to set the table, and prepare the food and all those things. And the day that we worked at the cafeteria, we had free lunch. (tape stops, then resumes) Part of the---when I was going to school, they stressed home economics a lot. That was, I guess, part of the home economics was to teach us, you know, the girls how to cook, how to clean house, and all those things. And that's where I learned a lot. By working in the school cafeteria. And still, to this day, I enjoy cooking very much.

S.G.: What did you eat for lunch? What kind of meals did you guys prepare?

Pauline: Well, the first---I always remember and I thought that was the greatest thing. The first meal when I went to help in the cafeteria, we had to make stuffed cabbage. And when the cafeteria teacher said that we're going to make stuffed cabbage, I thought to myself, "Stuffed cabbage? Now what is that!" you know? We had to wash the head cabbage, peel it and then wash it. And we had to mix the hamburger and stuff it and roll it up and then put it in a pan and put it in the big oven. And I thought, "Gee! That's the greatest thing!" And somehow I got to like stuffed cabbage, being the first meal that I prepared in elementary school! Lunch wasn't that fancy in those days. It's not like today. Like today they stress, all the vitamins in your food, what's essential for you. In those days, I don't remember going into all these things that the school is doing now to serve lunch to the children.

Honolulu Plantation

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what you remember about growing up in 'Aiea?

Pauline: Oh yes. I lived right in front of the Honolulu Plantation Company and the warehouse where is HSPA now. I used to play a lot around the plantation, you know, the

office. The office was right above, close by, to where the HSPA is now.

My mother used to do a lot of the washing the hand towels for the office workers. So naturally, I used to go and help my mother go and pick up the laundry—towels and bring it down. And I played a lot around there. We had railroad tracks right in front of my home. And behind the plantation office, there were all railroad tracks and all the sugarcane was hauled on the train back of the office. Then the sugar mill, the Honolulu Plantation was right there. So I enjoyed, and I know, ah, I was really on the rascal side. I used to go and help myself with the sugarcane that's on the train car, hauling the train, because it would just stopped there. They had to wait, the cane cars at that time, to have it manufactured into brown sugar. And I enjoyed eating the raw sugar and everything! That's how I grew up.

Homemade Toys and Games

And you know, in those days, we never had all these toys that the children have today. We had to make our own toys and play. And I think that was something that, I really enjoyed growing up.

S.G.: What kind of toys did you guys play with?

Pauline: Well, actually, we made our own toys. I remember my father made me stilts, wooden sticks and we had to learn to walk on that. You know, it takes coordination to walk on those stilts! And I remember getting those canned goods. We tried to get two of the same size canned goods. We used to call it the kiawe beans. You know it's kinda sticky. We rubbed it on the can. My dad used to make a hole on both sides and put a string there, and we'd walk with that. That's the kind of things we had for toys! We used to play this—it was called, like "spinning the egg" or something like that. It was all with stones. You know, we never had the original toys. It was all with what we had around the area. We played with that.

Japanese Upbringing

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what kind of school or education you attended after elementary school?

Pauline: Well, I wanted to go to school, continue going to school. But in those days, times were hard, too, in the plantation. Our parents didn't make much. I told my dad, "I want to go to school." He told me, "What do you want to be, when you graduate from school?" I said, "I think I would like to be a school teacher." He told me, "School teacher. I don't think that's for you." I said, "What's I going to do?" He said, "I'm going to send you to sewing school." I said, "Sewing school?" He said, "Yes, because if you know how to sew, even if you have children, you can make their own clothes. You can stay at home and make income. Then you don't have to go out to work. You can support your children by taking in sewing." That is what I did. I took up about four years of

Japanese kimono sewing and dressmaking. So naturally, you know, that was my trade as a dressmaker 'til I retired.

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what goes into making a kimono?

Pauline: I beg your pardon?

S.G.: Can you tell me, what goes into making a kimono?

Pauline: Well, a kimono. You know we used to sew all with hand. We didn't have sewing machine like today. They sew it on sewing machines. But in those days when I used to go to sewing school---kimono sewing was done all by hand. We had to sit on the floor. We didn't have chairs. We had to sit on the floor and the teacher was very strict. We had to sit, like a regular Japanese people on our knees. We cannot have our feet stretched out to sew. You know, I think at the same time, we were taught manners too, but we went to sewing school. That was stressed very much to us, that you have to sit nicely like a woman, like a girl should sit. Not spreading your legs. You know, things like that, and I think it was good, too, to learn all those things. And I enjoyed sewing,

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what is the name of the school you attended for your sewing training?

Pauline: Well, it was at the church. And the church is still there. It's called the Aiea Soto Mission. And I went there because my parents belonged to that church. And that's where I went for sewing, to learn Japanese sewing, and American dressmaking, I had to go to another family friend's home to learn sewing. I went for dressmaking about four years for Japanese kimono class.

And my father stressed etiquette for woman, like flower arrangement, tea ceremony. But I was never interested in those things because I was such a tomboy. You know, having four brothers above me, I couldn't be bothered. My father would pay the tuition and the teacher would say, "You don't need to pay tuition Mr. Yokouchi. Your daughter is <u>not</u> coming to class." You see how rascal I was at those days! I'm happy that my parents stressed sewing when I was growing up because I think that played a big part in my life and in raising my children until they were in intermediate school before I went out to work. I stayed home and I raised my three children. That *kinda* helped with the family income too. Because my husband was working on the plantation and you know how small pay they received. It was only about $75 a month.

Marriage in 1942

S.G.: When was that?

Pauline: That was when I got married to my husband. That was in 1942 and he was working for the Honolulu Plantation and he was making $75 a month as a plumber. He

learned to be a plumber. And that helped.

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me how you and your husband met?

Pauline: Well, actually I met my husband because, my husband was a good friend to my brother. So he used to come over to our home and um, you know, play with my brothers and we used to play together. And I guess that gradually, I think more like that, we grew up together. Being my brother's friend and then we got married in 1942 right after the outbreak of war, during the blackout season. So I remember, we couldn't have any elaborate wedding. But we had a simple family wedding and the blackout was at 6 o'clock. So we had our wedding reception during lunchtime.

S.G.: Can you tell me where your wedding took place?

Pauline: Well. I was brought up as a Buddhist but because of the war situation, all these Buddhist ministers were taken to camp. They were taken away. So my neighbor belonged to a Christian church. And she knew the minister and he was a very well known minister. His name was Reverend Hiro Higuchi. He had the same last name. We were married in his private home in Pearl City Peninsula. I had a very simple marriage. Just my husband and I, and you know, a best man and a matron of honor. And that's where we had a simple party, just for close friends because it was wartime. We couldn't have anything fancy.

Home Seamstress

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what kind of jobs, what kind of work did you do?

Pauline: Well, I always worked as a seamstress at home. Taking in dressmaking. Sewing for the people. Friends. When I think about it, for the time involved in sewing, we just used to charge---I, actually, I used to charge them only $2 for a cotton dress and $5 for a silk dress. That was, I guess, my main trade that I enjoyed sewing for people. I got to make a lot of friends. They all brought the sewing to me, saying, "Oh, someone recommended you to me." That's how I got involved in sewing. And to this day, I love sewing. I love to do craft work.

S.G.: Now Pauline, now can you tell me, was the business at home, your side job or was it your fulltime job?

Pauline: I did it at my home and even in those days, well, I got my license to take all this, and I had to file income tax and all those things. I thought that it was very important, because I can't go out to work. I myself filed income taxes so when I get old, I can receive Social Security. I never thought that I would go out to work, where I can make enough to receive Social Security.

Pula pula

But you see, when I was growing up, I worked in the cane field when I was twelve years old. I worked in the cane field, and then I worked at the pineapple cannery. The cane field, when I worked the cane field, we used to make 35¢ a day, you know? My mom told me, "You know, your lunch cost more than 35¢" but she said, "The main thing is to keep you out of trouble!" We enjoyed lunchtime, sitting around with friends, sharing our lunch, "Oh, what did your mom make for you today?" We look into each other's lunch boxes. It was those little cans that you don't get to see those. They're two layers. The bottom has the rice and the middle---right on top, we put all our meat and vegetables on top. My mom had this bag made out of denim material, and you know, tie it around with a string hanging. Then we would put it over our shoulder. And that's what we had! But, I remember the first paycheck that I had when I worked in the cane field. I didn't go to work that day. My mom said, "Aren't you going to work today?" "No, today is payday! I'm staying home! I'm going to make sure that I have my first paycheck! " And my first paycheck, I remember I had $4.50! And I thought, "Wow! This is something!" After that, when I was sixteen, I went to work at the Libby Cannery to do packing. In those days, it was 25¢ an hour. So it got a little better. But I enjoyed, because I love to be among people.

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me about what kind of work you did on the cane field, and how that was like?

Pauline: Well, on the cane field, they used to plant a little cane. You didn't go to work when the cane was tall. It's just this little---they used to call it *pula pula.* Those little plants. We used to pull the grass around there. Pull the weeds. With our hoe. I guess because we were so rascal, I can say that---because I was rascal, you know, I would just cut! You know, because, in order to cut the grass around the *pula pula* it takes time. You have to be patient because you cannot cut the tip off. That's where the sugar would sprout out. I would just cut the top out, and put the top back into the ground. That's what I did! And we had this, we had to call him *luna*. He'd come around and check. He used to call me "Yoko." He'd say, "Yoko, why is this like this?" I'd say, "Because it's faster than trying to cut around this thing." That's what we did!

And we rode this, I'm sure you've seen in the old pictures how the cane was hauled on the train track, you know, all the cane cars. Well, that's what we used to ride and go to work with. I used to go to work at the place called Pu'uloa and Watertown. Today, that's all the airport and the subdivisions of the airport. But that used to be part of the Honolulu Plantation. And we used to go on the train. But we never thought that it was dangerous. We'd just sit on the edge of the---there's nothing to hold. It's just a flatbed thing. We just dangled our feet outside, and then train was going "Poot poot poot" you know! And we're just chatting. You know, when I think back, I'm so happy that I had the opportunity to go through all these, because today, the children don't know about those things, you know. They would think, "Ooh, you're so crazy to work for such a small thing." (Tape stops) Our parents had a hard time on the plantation. They didn't make much. They tried to make the best of things, living on the plantation and raising the

children.

Christmas at Honolulu Plantation

S.G.: Pauline, can you describe to me, Watertown and Pu‘uloa, what it looked like?

Pauline: Well, it was a little town, but you see, actually, I only went there to work. I didn’t go there to play or anything like that. But all I know, is during the Christmas time, every year in December, the Honolulu Plantation used to get workers and their families, their children and all, go to Watertown and Pu‘uloa, to pick them up to come to share the Christmas program and the candies and the games and things like that, that they had. It’s right over where, you know, where the sugar mill, where the Honolulu Plantation sugar mill was torn down a couple years ago? It’s all within that area. There used to be a very big warehouse where they used to store the sugar. And in December, they would go and pick them up, so we didn’t really---I didn’t go to Pu‘uloa or Watertown to play. But all I know was there was a town like that, where we used to go to work on the train.

S.G.: Do you remember what it looked like?

Pauline: Well. I know that Watertown was close, to I guess, they called the Hickam area? I’m not really sure. We used to go swimming there, you know? I remember that. And fishing, but Watertown, as I said, because I didn’t go there much to play, I cannot recall, but, it was, just like a plantation town. To me, it looked that way, when I was going there.

S.G.: And how old were you at that time?

Pauline: Well. I would say I was between ten to about fifteen. Between that time.

S.G.: Pauline, can you describe to me, the Christmas party in December that was sponsored by the plantation?

Pauline: Oh yes. We used to have games. They use to give prizes for the games. The more participation you take in the party, you’d have the more toys to take with you. And after all the games were over, they would give each of us a bag of those hard candies, an apple, and a little toy. That’s besides the toys that when you take part of the games that were given to all of us. And I really looked forward to it. But towards the end, it came to the point that I didn’t care for those. Even today, I’m not too fond of those hard candies and the apple, because my father worked at the plantation. He worked in the supply room. So, when, you know, after the Christmas party was over, they used to have so much left over. They would tell my dad, “Mr. Yoko, you have lot of children. Take these apples and these children for your children.” But you know, those hard candies? When you have open air, it gets sticky together. I remember my mother getting a

toothpick and breaking it down. She'd put it in a little package for us everyday, so we can have the hard candy. And the apples, in those days, it wasn't so delicious as those apples we have today. I think I was fortunate that my father was able to bring those things home for us to share among my brothers and all of us. So my friends used to tell, "Oh, you're so lucky you folks have Christmas candy!" But I'd say, "But you try and have that every year." The candy lasts so long because we don't care for it! You know, somehow, when you have lot of those things, you don't appreciate them. And when you just can't get it, that's when you really appreciate things!

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what kind of games you played and what kind of prizes and toys you received?

Pauline: Oh well. I tell you the games that we used to play. You know, sack race. Sack. You remember those burlap bags. You have to have partner, two of you would put one foot each and then jump. You know, race. You have couple of feet in a two be one feet. Get in that bag and hold the bag up. I have to go from one here to get to a goal. From starting to the end. And you turn around and come back. And the one (who) reach the goal first would win a prize. And uh, besides that, well, they have the racing games. Some of them, I can't seem to remember, but you know, the sack race was so popular!

S.G.: What kind of toys did you receive as prizes?

Pauline: Well, those toys were those little---it's just like stuffed toys. It's just like the kind of toys you see today---of course, there's no five-and-ten cents store today, but you know, something like the kind of toys that you find today in the department stores. All these old toys.

Kauhale Street in ʻAiea

S.G.: Pauline, could you describe to me the stores in ʻAiea of your childhood days?

Pauline: Oh yes. Right where these (stores on) Kauhale Street (are) right now, they have the shopping center one side. Well, that was called---my brothers and I, we used to call that "the cowboy town." You know. Right where the Kauhale shops were beneath the Moanalua Drive? Both sides had stores. All the wooden stores. It's something like those cowboys towns that you see in the pictures, lined up, all the stores, next to each other. And there were stores like, a place where they sold medicine. A market. An ice shop. They had the seed store. They had this sewing shop. The tailor shop there. We had a saimin noodle shop there.

S.G.: Do you remember the names of the stores and their owners?

Pauline: Well, I know that there was a family with the name of Tachino. The children are still living in ʻAiea. They used to sell candies and I remember going to the

store a lot because they used to sell cracked seed. In those days, you know, cracked seed. They would have a little package, about two by four or something like that, and they would just cut the top off, because they cannot fill to the top because it's going to cost so much. But they'll cut it to halfway, and they fill the seeds in there. And that's how they used to sell. Five and ten cents a packages. About how much you want to buy. That's the kind with hard candies.

And then they had this ice, um, shop, where they would deliver this ice to our homes, because in those days, we didn't have a refrigerator. We had to keep our food in the---it was called the "ice box" and they would deliver the ice to your home. Those block ice, you know? The ones that you see now and then, when you go to these carnivals and places where they're making the shave ice, you know? But the little bigger one, they would deliver it to the home if you need. Of course, you know, it's not free. And the family's name was Yoshimura. I *kinda* forgotten it. But the grandchildren are still living.

And then we had, until it closed on Kauhale Street, those of you who remember, the Speedy's Market? But they were one of the people who had a market that sold meat and fish and vegetables and dried goods. It was called Speedy's Market.

S.G.: What year?

Pauline: Gee. That was way before the war. In the thirties, I remember. I think the stores were running from about the twenties. I'm not really sure. But as young as I can remember, the stores were there.

S.G.: Can you remember any other stores?

Pauline: The stores and things like that? I can tell you, you know where the Shell Service Station is? And where the Aiea Medical Building is? Well, right there, there used to be a little hill, you know? Before the service station lowered down to the street level. That's where we used to have our post office, the Bank of Hawaii and there used to be a store there that sold meat and everything. But I remember that store---it was the plantation store but actually, it was not. It was run by a Chinese family. But see, the people that worked on the plantation, was able to go there, purchase whatever there, and you could charge it. And they would deduct that from your pay. You know, like my father was working for the plantation. As he'd owed "Mr. Yokouchi, this is the amount you owed the store," and it was called Aiea Store. And you know, my father would. He used to charge. Because in those days, they really had a lot of charges because most of the stores, down the district I called the "cowboy town." They had the Speedy's. They had charge account. You know the Tabata Store. They had charge account. They were able to do that. But like today, you know, times have changed so you have either credit card or cash-based.

S.G.: Can you tell me, Pauline, do you who owned that store, the Aiea Store?

Pauline: It was run—I don't know if any of the relatives are still living up 'Aiea Heights Drive but it used to be run by a Ching family. I think the grandchildren or somebody might be living. They had a big property up the heights. But from there, they moved to across the street, where they made a bigger store with more things and more supplies. And it was still called the Aiea Store.

S.G.: When was this?

Pauline: It was before the war, between the thirties, you know?

S.G.: Can you tell me what was the Tabata Store?

Pauline: The Tabata Store. They had more of the medicine and they had---I remember having ice cream and you know, those things.

S.G.: What kind of medicine did they sell?

Pauline: Well. You know, in the olden days, like today you have to have a prescription from a doctor. But in the olden days, uh, you didn't need to get prescriptions for lot of this medicine. I guess because most of the medicine that they used to sell, I'm not quite sure, but it was brought from Japan. That's the kind of things they had. Like aspirin and things like that. I know that Tabata Store had a soda fountatin. I remember that.

S.G.: Can you tell me what kind of medicine in particular?

Pauline: Well, it was mostly everyday medicine, like for stomachache or rash and things like that. I guess, when there's something serious, then they had the Honolulu Plantation Hospital, you know, where people went to get medication. People that worked on the plantation used to go to the hospital and they'd have free medication, free doctor's care and all those things. Up to and after the war broke out, and then the place was called the Leeward Hospital.

Aiea Plantation Hospital in Kalauao and 'Aiea

S.G.: Can you tell me where the Aiea Plantation Hospital was located?

Pauline: Well, it close to where Pali Momi is, that's where it was. On one side, there was the hospital. On the other side was the old elementary school. I *kinda* remember…that's when I was six years old when we had to move to the (other) Aiea Elementary School. But I remember the hospital being there and the school being there. But I think it was after the school was torn down, that's when the hospital came up, because the former Honolulu Plantation Hospital was where the road is right now, where the Aiea graves---graveyard is located by the gym. That's where the Honolulu Plantation Hospital used to be there, when I first remember it. And from there, they moved to---they

built the new one where Pali Momi is standing today.

S.G.: And when was that?

Pauline: This is all in the twenties, before the war. I think that the hospital by the ʻAiea graveyard was built way before I was born.

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me, what the health care like?

Pauline: Well, uh. In those days, a lot of people, because like my mother told me, we used to go and visit---bring flowers to this grave and the name was not familiar to me. I knew they were not related to us. So I asked my mom, "So why are going to that grave when they're related to us?" And my mom, "Well, that man came from the same place in Japan, the same country, and he died with no family here." "What did he die of?" "He died of appendicitis." I think in those days, a lot of people who came from Japan, they didn't know, like today, appendicitis is so common. But in those days, I guess a lot people must have died with appendicitis and um, that's what I *kinda* remember. "Oh, he died of appendicitis." It was always something like that.

S.G.: Do you remember the name of that person?

Pauline: The person that died? I cannot remember.

S.G.: What graveyard was that at?

Pauline: That ʻAiea where the old ʻAiea graveyard is right now, across from the stadium. But you see, the highway, the Kam Highway went through the graveyard, so they put lot of --- when they dug, the graveyard up to make room for the freeway, this man that parents were taking care of the grave, my mom said they cannot keep up taking care of it. You know, my mom had another one on the side that belonged to the family. But what we did, my sister had---I was told I had an older sister that was buried at birth so I remember before the road went through, that all those who were being affected by the road, we had to go and get our bones or whatever was buried. In those days, they never had cremation; they were all buried then. So, my brother told me, when they dug up for my sister, there was nothing left, so they just got a little dirt that's there and put it in a little copper can and we have that in the family plot.

S.G.: What was her name? Your sister?

Pauline: You know, I think she was stillborn or something. I don't know. But it was something like Ayako or you know, similar to Ayako or Yaeko, or something like that. Because, you see, I don't remember her because she's way above me, you know? So I don't remember. All I was told was, I had a sister and that's her graveyard right there. I was told about that.

Japanese Death Customs

S.G.: Pauline, can you explain to me about Japanese burial customs? The process? The funeral?

Pauline: Well, I'm not really--- all what I know is through my experience, you know, the family and the relatives dying. In those days, well, the plantation used to make the coffin, you know? The plantation used to make the coffin for the plantation people that passed away. It was, I don't know, they called it (inaudible) by twelve or something like that. They put black, uh, muslin material around it. That's all I can remember but in the olden days, the Japanese custom, when you passed away, they never did have funeral home, where you have the service and things like that. It used to be done mostly at home. You go to the funeral parlor just to have it cremated and just get one big family service for the friends, that's open to the public. But I remember, as I growing up, that, I went to this close friend of ours. She was killed by a truck because she was playing on the road. She didn't see the truck. She was run over by this huge truck. That girl that died, the family friend, she was about three years older than I was at that time. I was only about seven or eight at that time. But I remember because they were close friends of my parents. We went over to her house and they gave her---they called it a last bath. Today, the Japanese work was "ukon." You gave them a last bath. I remember they had a big tub. A galvanized tub. I remember they gave her a bath at home. Washing her down. Watching them pour water, you know, the friends and relatives all around. And then we had a service. In those days, we used to have wake service, the night before the funeral. We would go to the funeral parlor and stay over night and watch over the body of the deceased. Then the next day, they would have a funeral. But you see, I belong to the Buddhist church, But there's so many different religions and they're all have different ways of doing this funeral services. So some of would say, by listening to these people, "Oh, I got the idea from that religion. I got from this church." I got---you know, when our parents came from Japan, they didn't have nothing. They came with nothing to Hawaii, not knowing how the life is going to be. So, I don't think they were really prepared for this. I have no idea. (Discussion on the end of this side of the tape)

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

S.G.: And then we'll probably want to talk still about the railroad and some other things about the community. Pauline, can you tell me about what the stones and the markers were made of, and where they came from?

Pauline: Well, in the olden days, I am not sure about the stones, but they would just go and get the stones from the beach. Or something. Sometimes that's nice. It all depends on the family, how they want. They would find a nice stone. They would carve the name on the stone. You know, where they came from Japan and all that. Besides the stone, they used to put, I think, about five by five, they write all in Japanese, the name of the person deceased, where they came from Japan and what year he was born. What year he died. All on that stick. And it was about, oh, I would say, about three to four feet.

And they would stand right in the grave.

S.G.: Did the plantation give the person anything besides the coffin? Provide anything besides the coffin?

Pauline: I have no idea because that's way back. That was in the twenties when I was growing up. My mother was a very quiet woman. She just told me the essential thing and when I was *kinda* inquisitive, when I wanted to know, then she would tell me. But, I remember, going to this Buddhist funeral when I was young. I remember going to this Christian funeral when I was growing up, because I had friends who were Christians. But you know, they're all different, so it's how you're accepted. You cannot say, "This is better. That is better." All have good points in how they conduct a funeral. That's how I look at it today.

S.G.: Pauline, do you remember any kids dying at your age when they were young?

Pauline: Oh yes! My neighbor. You know, 'til about 19—until after the war broke up, I used to be so scared to go near anybody that passed away because I had this neighbor. She and I were the same age. We used to play together. I don't know what kind of illness, but she died.

S.G.: What year did she die?

Pauline: She died, let's see now, in the twenties. She was only about five years old. You know, they had everything at home, as I said, as I mentioned a little while ago, about, bathing the dead at home. My mother said, "Oh, she passed away, so you have to go. She was your good friend. You have to go there and give her her last bath." But I told my mom, "I don't want to go. I'm scared! This all superstition, but they used to say that if you died a certain day of the calendar year, the Japanese say, it's not a good day to have a funeral. That dead person, if you were a good friend, they would come and get you. That's the kind of story they used to tell us. We used to be so afraid! And I was so afraid because she was such a good friend and heard my mom telling me, you'd better go and bathe her. That she might come and get me. You know how children are growing up. I just couldn't go. But my mom said, you have to go or she's going to come and get you. You know how they scare us, these old folks. This first generation. So we're brought up that way, you know. But today, well, we don't think that way. It's different, yeah? So, you know, I just---my mom had to drag me over and I gave her a bath. She looked so peaceful. Just like she's sleeping! That was the first time I ever came into contact with a dead person. In the same room…After that, I wasn't afraid about death.

S.G.: Is she buried at the 'Aiea cemetery?

Pauline: Yes, she was buried at the 'Aiea cemetery. But the family isn't here anymore so I don't know what happened. Whether her remains were in the way of the

freeway that came up. That, I have no idea.

S.G.: What---what was her name?

Pauline: Her last name was Ito. Her first name was---I cannot *kinda* remember. There's so many young children that are around our neighborhood. But the last name was Ito. That much I remember.

S.G.: Do you know what she died from?

Pauline: I have no idea what she died of. You know, in those days, they just said she passed away. And when my mom said she passed away, that's when I really got scared. When you're about five or six years old.

Honolulu Plantation Trains

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me or explain to me about the railroad?

Pauline: Oahu Railroad? Well, you see, where I live. My nephew still lives in the old house where I grew up. Right in front of the HSPA (Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association), that's where I grew up. I wasn't even a year old, when my parents moved into that house. So I grew up, you know, with the railroad track in front of my house. I know that at night, they used to bring, the train. The train used to come there with all this rail tracks, and all the logs to make the tracks, you know, the train tracks. That much I remember.

When I used to work in the plantation, the train is right there, so in the morning, all my friends would leave their hoe in my yard, so they don't need to take it home. You know, because you had to take your own hoe home and bring it back the next morning in order to work in the cane field. But you know, there were about six or seven or them would leave their hoe in my yard. They'd come and pick up their hoe, and just, cross the street, and get the train car to go to work.

And even, you know, the track. It used to run through where the Aiea baseball park is. The train's track used to run through there because the cane used to be hauled through. All the cane tracks before being taken to the sugar mill, used to be parked right about where---you know, there used to be a hill. I don't know if you folks are familiar with where the Honolulu Plantation was. But you know, right about the office was tracks. Three or four tracks that all the cane cars would be parked all there. I know this train.

My father used to work in the plantation supply, and his office was right in front of the entrance of the HSPA office now. The office used to be there. The supply room. The supply office, I mean. The train track used to come right there. The boxcars, where they bring all the molasses or whatever it was, used to be parked there.

December 7, 1941

So when the war broke out, one of my nephews was playing outside. It was a Sunday morning, you know? And the next thing, we heard these shots. "What is that?" My brother said, "Gee, it looks like we're having trouble!" Of course, you know, they were kinda prepared for the war. They knew it was—but nobody expect Japan to attack Pearl Harbor. Then the next thing my nephew came running home. They said a shot went through the boxcar! I said, "What you mean?" My brother said, "What you mean?" So being right in front of the house, my brother went to check on it, and sure enough, there were two holes in the boxcar. So my brother, "You children better go home," and you know, he told my nephew, "Come in the house." So by the time I came went out to look at it, there was a hole there.

Honolulu

Uh, Pauline, can you tell me anything about the depot? Or going into town? Or riding the train?

Pauline: Oh yes. Yes. Yes. Uh-huh.

What was that like?

Pauline: Well. You know the train used to run, I think, right on the shoreline. The depot used to be right by the stadium. Right by the beach area. You know, the Pearl Harbor there. The track used to run there. In order for us to go to downtown, to catch the train, we had to walk down there, to the depot and catch the train and get on the train and go to the Honolulu Depot. There's still the depot in Honolulu. It's still there, the King Street and the Iwilei. I *kinda* forgot. It's still there; that's where we used to get off. That's where the train depot used to be.

S.G.: And where did you go from there?

Pauline: Oh, from there we walked. You know in the 1920s, the first Kress store, the five-and-ten cents opened on Fort Street. I remember going to that five-and-ten cents store. Oh my. I have a relative that was living in Kakaʻako and during the summer, I used to go and stay with them. And they said, "Oh, we're going to take you to this five-and-ten cents store." So I had to catch the bus. But then, I had a family friend who worked for this old plantation store, Aiea store. He used to drive the truck and go and get the supplies from downtown. So when he goes to town to pick up the supplies, being a family friend, and those days, you could ride anybody's truck. They're not particular like today because there weren't many cars. He would take me and drop me off in Kakaʻako. From Kakaʻako, it's not too far from Fort Street. We used to walk to my relative's. "We're going to take you to the five-and-ten cents; it's open!" That my first time in a five-and-ten cents store that opened, so you know, "Wow!" It was so big compared to this plantation store, and the stores that we had in ʻAiea town. That's how it was. We

used to enjoy riding the train.

S.G.: What was your favorite thing to buy in the store?

Pauline: Well. In the store? I loved this, um --- knick-knacks, and the little --- you know. Some of my friends say, "You still, you know---you update. You always have nice necklace." You know, those things --- beads used to catch my eye, and rings, you know. Earrings. Today, little girls, they want rings and dolls. I remember buying the Kewpie dolls. I remember making dresses by hand. Sewing those Kewpie doll dresses. Of course, you could buy, but you know, it wasn't cheap those days. So if you could make it, it was cheaper.

O.R.&L. Trains

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what else tell me what else do you remember about riding the train and going to town? And you know, coming back to 'Aiea?

Pauline: I thought it was a wonderful thing to have that train. And after the train stopped, we had these buses. But I think the train was something. I don't know how to explain this. But the feeling you have of riding the train. I felt so proud to be riding the train. Even the seats. You were able when you're facing that way, you were able to turn the seats over. I don't know if they have that. But I'm sure, on the bus you could turn the seats around. You know, the seats were made of wood. It had the mesh back; I remember that. So if you want to face face-to-face with your friends, and talk, you just turn the seat over. It could be used to lean your back or for sit down. It was used for double purpose, you know. And uh, I thought it was such a thrill to ride those trains.

S.G.: How much was the train fare?

Pauline: I think, it was, as far back as I can remember, my dad paid ten cents or something like that. It was really cheap one way.

S.G.: What year did the train transportation stop?

Pauline: Stop? The train stopped, I think, after the war. I don't remember, you know. They were using it for certain purpose. The train, the trolley bus, the streetcar in Honolulu. We used to catch that. But we did a lot of walking from the depot. Those days, you do a lot of walking. So a lot of people, the young people today, they say, they don't have a lot of exercise. We old people, the first generation, we walked a lot, so that's the reason why we're healthy today.

'Aiea Bay

S.G.: (Pause in interview but the taping continues on the tape) Pauline, can you tell me what trail or what path you took to get to Pearl Harbor as a child?

Pauline: Well. I can tell you because where I'm living now, we used to walk down the street, and then go through that Kauhale Street. There used to be a back road, then you can go through there. Then you can go to Pearl Harbor. You can go to McGrew Point and to this point.

You know, we didn't have a regular swimming pool. The only swimming pool that I remember (was) right on the, now, I think the street name is 'Ie'ie now. There used to be a fresh spring water pond, a big one. That's where we used to swimming in the fresh water. It was really cold and that's where I learned how to swim too! We would go down to Pearl Harbor. People used to live close on the shoreline. They used to go fishing. You know, the fishermen used to be on the shoreline. They used to go fishing and crabbing. They had their own boats.

Besides the fresh pond swimming, we used to go to Pearl Harbor to swim in the muddy waters. We used to go clamming. There used to be a lot of crabs down Pearl Harbor. We used to go clam digging along the shoreline, where the train depot was. So we used to go do that. We used to go swimming in the Pearl Harbor, and it was a wonder, when I think, when I think back in those days, because I used to go swimming a lot there, too. That with all the muddy water and all the waste going into Pearl Harbor that I didn't get sick! You know, you would think, that something like that, health, like now, they won't allow you to go swimming in places like that. I thought that I was really fortunate that I didn't contact any major illness by swimming in all those muddy waters with all the jellyfish floating around. Then they had these fishermen. They had their boat parked on the wharf and things. But the Japanese had a funny way of saying that they don't want their women to go on the fishing boat. Bad luck! We were told, when I was growing, and I didn't know when we swim across from the wharf to the boat and (when) we're done, the owner of the boat would come and yell at us now, "You don't get on our boat. Bad luck, you know!" Well, we didn't know those things, you know. But, so, I came home and told my mom about it and she said, "Yeah. The fishermen don't like women on their boat, because that's bad luck." You know?

S.G.: What type of waste was in the waters of Pearl Harbor?

Pauline: All those waste because we didn't have sewer line. I don't remember. All kind of floating, you know, that the regular, feathers and whatnot, you know, just floating around. It was all this muddy water. And you know, as I said, it was wonder I didn't get sick, eating those crab and those clams. We'd bring it home for our meals.

McGrew Point

S.G.: Do you have anything else you'd like to share about Pearl Harbor as a child?

Pauline: Well. I used go a lot to Pearl Harbor to swim by the train depot used to be.

I used walk a lot around there, like the McGrew camp. We couldn't get in, because it was like, off-limits, like Ford Island. You cannot go in. They had guard, yeah, um-hmm. Those things. I remember that. You cannot go here beyond that. Even the Pearl Harbor swimming area, some of the people that lived on the shoreline would not let us swim there. But you know us, as child(ren), we like to (inaudible) we say, "Why is it we can't go in there?" You know, "Why can't we swim there?"

Aiea Gym

…When I think back in those days, I was really thankful that I had the opportunity from the days from the plantation life to what it is today, to see all the new subdivisions. See all the cane fields taken away and the subdivisions and this new ballpark up where ʻAiea Heights Drive and the recreation center which came up in 1933. Mr. Alvah Scott built it. You know, the recreation center. There used to have social dancing there and I used to go to the social dancing. You know, we had some kind of recreation within that.

Dr. Cooper Home on ʻAiea Heights

As I said, we walked a lot. I used to walk from where I'm living now to *heiau*, way (up) in the mountains to go and pick mountain apples. Rose apple. There used to be lots of them, you know! To think that we'd walk all the way. There used to be a doctor. I don't remember his first name. But his name was Dr. Cooper. He used to be a plantation doctor. Well, he used to live at the top of the *heiau*. He had a house. I didn't know whether that was his own home, or whether he rented that. I have no idea. But because he was the plantation doctor, he became good friend with my dad. When we had this moonlight, my dad would ask Dr. Cooper, "Can we come up and have moonlight picnic at your grounds?" He'd say, "Yes, yes, bring your friends then." I remember my father asking one of the plantation men to drive his truck. They used to have truck go up to the *heiau* and have moonlight picnics. They (would) make sukiyaki and things like that. You know, we had Dr. Cooper come and join us when he was home. When he was not home, he'd say, "Just make yourself at home."

So when I think of that, I really had a young childhood that I was really happy. I can say that I had experiences with all these things. I was able to see all these things, the changes in ʻAiea town, you know? Because when I talk to some of my friends, they say, "Gee, Pauline, you really have an interesting life," you know? I say, "Well, I guess being brought up among boys, a tomboy and everything, I got to go to the mountains and all those things." You know, when I remember growing up, all I remember playing is volleyball and ping-pong. I don't remember. I know that my brothers played baseball and they used to play football. Because my mom and dad had to go to work, they had to take care of me. I had to tag along with my brothers, which they detested taking me along, you know, to have a sister go with them. But you know, but when they didn't have enough players, they would tell me, "Okay now. You can go out in the field and chase the ball." They let me go chase. Now, when it came to touch football, they didn't have enough people. "Okay now. You can come in here and play touch football with us."

That's how I was brought up. So I was really a tomboy. Just last week, I was talking to one person and he's a retired principal and he told me, "You know, Pauline, I remember you as a tomboy.".

World War II

So, um, you know, I had hard time. I had a very hard life, but I have no regrets about my life. I'm thankful that I had the opportunity to go through the suffering and all those things that took place during the war, you know? You know, being separated from my husband for thirty-two months and taking care of his parents and his younger brothers and sister. We all lived together and I took care of my in-laws when they got sick. So that made me, I think, a better person from the time when I was growing up. And a lot of them, "Why and how did you get so involved in your church?" So I said, "Well, you know as a certain generation, they have this thing about the first son taking over the family." Well, I was married to the first son, so naturally my in-laws expected my husband and I to take over the family. So we had to send the children to school and whatnot. My husband supported the family, working on the plantation. With that hardship that I went through the war, I feel I was very fortunate because my husband came back alive. We had children. (She spoke about hardship and her mother's advice about life's ups and downs.) I really learned from all these hardships I went through, that I'm happy.

S.G.: So the first day that the war broke out, where were you? And what can you remember?

Pauline: The morning the war broke out, I was living in front of the HSPA that was the Honolulu Plantation. So, my nephew, as I was saying earlier, you know, they were playing outside. So we were told we had to evacuate, you know? So we evacuated up the mountains. I don't remember whose home it was up on 'Aiea Heights Drive, but there's this huge house. There were a couple of houses. They made a street. We had to go up there, take the children. At that time, I was living with my brother and he had two children, no, three children. So I had to help my sister-in-law because my brother was with the CD or something with Civil Defense, yeah? He was with the Civil Defense because he was working for the plantation, so he had to make sure that the people in our neighborhood had left to go up the mountain because it wasn't a safe place, you know, so close to Pearl Harbor. So my sister-in-law and I slept with the three children. And they're all running up to the mountains but we couldn't go, because my brother said, "You wait here until I get back. I'll do my duty and come back." So we were about the last ones to leave where we were living. We went up to the mountains and we stayed all then. We came back late, about six o'clock. They said it was safe to come back to our home. But when we came back home, we couldn't get into our home. We had a rose bush on the side. It was about six feet wide, you know. We had beautiful roses, you know! We couldn't find a trace of the rose plant. It was a shell or something must have come and we couldn't find the shell. To this day, we can't find a trace or find what happened to that shell. But it made a big hole and all of the dirt under the rose bushes

was on the front porch, so we couldn't get into our house before---then all the dirt, then we were able to do in the house. But we were so afraid! You know, after seeing what had happened in the yard, so my sister-in-law's parents lived in what was called the Filipino Camp. So it's safer there, so we stayed with them for two weeks while the thing was going on. When it became safe, they said everything was okay, so we came back.

After that, well, that was in December 7th, and in '42, I got married to my husband. And we were married for only seven months, and then he volunteered for the 442nd, he and his younger brother right below him. Both of them volunteered. My in-laws were very upset, you know, because they told him. "Why is it you volunteered?" He said, "You know, the children are all young yet. I have to go defend them. I'm going to do my duty as you know, go and volunteer with the rest of them." So from the 'Aiea community, we had quite a few volunteers and my husband was the eldest among all those boys. He was twenty-eight years old when he volunteered and he went. But he was in the Camp Shelby. His brother was a sergeant and he said, "You stay in the (inaudible) because you're married. You have a wife." It was a good thing we didn't have any children so I was able to work to help support the in-laws and whatnot. He stayed back. He didn't go to Italy until about the last three weeks before the war ended. He was on the ship going to Italy and that's when the war ended. But he stayed in Italy for about seven months. And then he came home when they could all come back. My brother-in-law got wounded twice, you know. (Pause) His name was Kakuto Higuchi and he was with the 100th. Actually he went with the 442nd but then, you know, he was recruited to the 100th and that's when he got hit.

You know, when the war broke out, anybody, when anybody got hurt, they would come and let the family know, "Oh, your son got wounded" and this and that. You know, if they passed away, they would come and say, "He had died in action." And you know, two doors away from us, we saw this captain, this Army captain come and my mother-in-law was so excited, that she said, "Something happened at that house. I hope they're not looking for our house. They're not here to tell us that my son died," you know? But no, it was two doors away that they had reported that their son had died. (Pause) I couldn't remember his first name. I remember Hadano, one of the Hadano boys. You know, to have someone close by to our home get killed in action, made my in-laws really depressed to have two boys. So I was always the contact person, writing letters to the son. My brother-in-law. His name was Kakuto Higuchi, and you know, he got wounded in action. Today, he's still living. Now and then, we still talk about the days.

You know, with all those things, going to war and not knowing whether your husband is coming back or not, when he came back, you know, he went to Italy three weeks before the war (ended). I felt, "Gee, life is calling to me. It doesn't mean you suffer all your life. There's good and bad in life. There's times to suffer. There's times to be happy. So all the more from that, after he came back from the service, I got to feel more thankful about things. I appreciate life more.

S.G.: Pauline, can you tell me what was life like in the Japanese community

during the war?

Pauline: Well, uh, the life, you know, it was---we had to go to work. I was working at that time because we didn't have any children. We had to carry our gas masks. You folks remember the gas mask, you know? We had to carry it with us at all times. To go to work, I had to carry the gas mask, and gee! How are you going to—will we have enough time to put the gas mask on? That's the kind of thing you worry about. I'm at work. My mother-in-law and my father-in-law are at home. Gee, are they going to be able to handle that kind of thing? Those kind of things *kinda* bothered me a lot.

S.G.: And what about rationing?

Pauline: Rationing? Oh well, the food, the gasoline was rationed. The food was rationed. The liquor was rationed, too. I remember that because my father-in-law just loved his drink. His beer, *sake*, whiskey. He had to have. None of the children were of the age to buy the liquor. I was the only one, see? But because he was so used to drinking all those, so much, so I could only buy one a week. That was not enough to supply him. But I got my brother to buy the drink. He bought to give to Grandpa. My brother's name was Shigeru Yokouchi and he worked for them in the carpentry department as a supervisor there for many years. (Pause)

And even the meat and the fish market were all rationed, you know? But I was fortunate enough. I had a very good friend. She knew I had in-laws and growing children and she said, "Pauline, I have some extra fish. Send somebody down because you have such a big family." Because my husband was in service, well, I was allowed $21.00 a month. Today, what can you do with $21.00? But in those days, that was big money; because I didn't have any children, that's all I was allowed, $21.00.

It took about two years before he was---they weren't told, if you have a wife, you can go to the commissary, you know? Apply for commissary privileges. His chaplain, would you believe (for the) 442nd , was Reverend Hiro Higuchi that married us? He saw my husband and he told my husband, "What are doing here?" And my husband's name---we used to call him Charlie. "Charlie, what are you doing here? You're married. You have a wife." But he said, "But oh, but chaplain, I volunteered!" "Did you get commissary privilege for your wife?" He said, "No." "What's the matter with you?" My husband wrote a letter. "I got good lecture from Reverend Higuchi for not getting all these things you could get." So then, I was allowed to get $20 a month commissary privilege. But you know when you have six boys and one girl, there are eight in the family, how much can that take you? So at the commissary, I used to buy most like, bacon, ham, you know, things I cannot get outside. My in-laws had a vegetable garden. That took care of it. But the meat, you need to have meat, fish. But because I had this good friend who had a fish market, whenever she had, "Send someone order to pick that, Pauline," Even today, she's one of our church members. I always thank her, you know. Jane Asada, her name. She and her husband ran the fish market. They're right down in one of those Kauhale stores. I always tell her, "Do you remember you helped me, during the wartime. How you gave

me." "Did I? I don't remember. I only remember you and I are good friends." She's still are good friends. We grew up together. We went to school together. I think, gee, how wonderful to have friends like that. My mom used to say, "In order to have good friends, you have to be good, too." You have to give and take. You have to appreciate things. (They discuss her father's wish for her, as the only daughter in the Yokouchi family, to learn to sew.)

END OF INTERVIEW