ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Robert G. Kinzler

August 10. 2007

BY: Arlene Ching (A.C.)

Robert "Bob" G. Kinzler was born in Newark, New Jersey in 1922. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1940 and arrived in Hawai'i in September 1940. On December 7, 1941, Private Kinzler was a Morse code radio operator assigned to HQ Co. 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry (Tropical Lightning) Division at Schofield Barracks. In the early hours of December 7th, 1941, his company was moving to a pre-assigned battle station at the Roosevelt High School football stadium in Honolulu and he witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor. During World War II, he served in the South Pacific, the continental United States and Canada. He retired after 22 years of military duty. He worked as a chemist at the 'Aiea C&H refinery in 1954 and retired as refinery superintendent and assistant manager in 1984. He and his late wife Mary Jane raised their three daughters, JoAnn, Karen and Susan in 'Aiea. He has been one of the U.S.S. *Arizona* Memorial's longest serving volunteers, having joined in 1985 and he serves on the board of directors.

(At the beginning of the interview, Arlene and Bob were looking at "A Journey to 'Aiea Town" in the The Hawaii Herald article by Ron Oba and a street map of 'Aiea.)

World War II

Robert: In 1939, I went to engineering college for a year, then joined the army, and came out to Hawaii. I was stationed at Schofield and my first connection with 'Aiea was when we were looking for that lost Navy officer up in the mountains (in May 1941). We went up at Waiawa, which was probably over here someplace…Anyway, we got into the mountains here, and then coming back, the lieutenant that was in charge of the little section, decided that we would go across from one ridge to the other. So we got to a place that we could then come down. It just so happened that after a couple of days of being lost up there, we ended up at the (Keaiwa) *heiau*, way up here. So we came from way over here to here. So that took a couple of days, (and) a couple of nights. But the thing is, we could see at night, we could see the lights from the town but we didn't know how to find the route toward it. At night, we didn't want to do anything like that. So we finally ended up at the *heiau*. The Keaiwa *heiau*. Coming down, we ended up somewhere around here. Well, here was the (Honolulu Plantation sugar) factory. So we ended up around where the gymnasium is today, in that area, as we came down. That's where the army came and picked us up.

A.C.: This is the gymnasium for the community association? Can you tell me if you looked something like this building here? The caption states it's the high school gym, but they're telling me that this is Aiea Community Association gym.

Robert: That one? Yeah, the gym was up there. A rundown building. Well, the building that was there in 1941. May of 1941. There were some kids running around playing there. That ‘s where the army finally came up to pick us up. So that would have been. The gymnasium today is right around here.

A.C.: Okay. And you‘re pointing to an area, like above the mill?

Robert: Well. Yes. The mill is here and the gym was over here as you go up ‘Aiea Heights Drive where the present-day gymnasium is. Probably this building right here is where the gym was. Then they had the swimming pool down here, which was not in the same condition as it is today. The wife of one of the managers of the Aiea Plantation (Mrs. Penhallow) was sort of a botanist, or something of that nature. She had all different trees planted along the little hillside leading down inside the swimming pool. Trees from all over the place. Some of them are still there and others, I guess, have been removed.

A.C.: Did anyone ever mention that ‘Aiea was named after a plant that was on the campus of the high school?

Robert: Well, I thought from what I‘ve read, that it was some sort of a grass that was used---but how and when, I don ‘t know.

A.C.: Okay. So you must have had a good impression of then!

Robert: Yeah. I always remember it, especially little kids running around. And that was my first visit, you might say, to ‘Aiea, although this Moanalua Road which is still here, used to be part of the route that we would take when we came into town in convoy or in trucks from, uh, Schofield, because this Kamehameha Highway---there was a highway there, but we would come down the old Kam Highway and when we came to where Moanalua Road intersected, then we would come up in that way…Then, when we got to the area where the manager’s home is, there was royal palms going up to the manager’s home. And then the Southshore Hospital was, uh, where Pali Momi is basically today. I know I had to take a physical there when I joined C&H. Dr. Liljestrand was the head, and Dr. Patterson was also involved. My kids had their tonsils all taken out at Southshore Hospital. The Southshore Hospital was actually the hospital for the Honolulu Plantation Company. A Dr. Chandler was the head of that, but he was not there back in 1954 when I joined the C&H Sugar. He had left before that, with Dr. Lilljestrand, I imagine, who had taken over his leadership of the hospital. (Looking at the map) This is Kaamilo Street right here. It was all the way up to where it intersects with Aiea Heights Drive. So this might be the location of the Alvah Scott (Elementary) School. Whether it’s too big or not, I don’t know. But Mr. Griswold was the principal in 1957, when my daughters were there. Well, let’s see. My daughter was born in 1954. So, five years later, in 1959, she started there. (Her kindergarten teacher) sent a note home “Please have JoAnn remain quiet during the rest period. She ‘s keeping the others

awake."

A.C.: Okay. When did you do a year's duty at Schofield?

Robert: Oh, I was at Schofield from September 26, 1940 until December 7, 1941 when our company took up residence at the Roosevelt High School football stadium. Honolulu. Martial law was declared at 4:00 that afternoon. Civil law was thrown aside and martial law took over.

A.C.: What were you doing December 7th?

Robert: I was a Morse Code radio operator, Headquarters Company 27th Infantry and being down at, well, on December 6th, I was over in Kailua beach at a cookout with the company truck drivers. We got back to Schofield around 2 A.M. and then, all the activity started at 7:55. Our job was to get out of there and it brought us down right along the old Kam highway past ʻAiea Bay and Ford Island. We came down this way.

A.C.: You mean, you came from Kailua going around Kahuku?

Robert: Oh no. We came back over the Pali Highway but we were in two-and-a-half ton trucks. It took a while. Our vehicles were theoretically governed at thirty-five miles an hour. You go downhill, you might exceed that but that's why it took so long to get from Kailua to Schofield. And then I left Hawaii the first time in September 1942, went to the Phoenix Islands, southwest of here, about three thousand miles. One week in ʻ43, I had returned. Then I returned for good in March of 1954. Took up residence---well, we lived in the Napua Hotel on South King Street until April.

A.C.: Approximately a month?

Robert: About a month.

A.C.: But still before your daughter was born?

Robert: Yes. She was born in May. By May, I had already found a job at C&H here in ʻAiea. So on April 19th 1954, I started working in ʻAiea. My daughter was born a month later. We were living in Kaneʻohe at that time. Then in April 1956, my daughter Karen was born and in February 1957, fifty years ago, we moved to ʻAiea Heights. (looking at the map) Here. This is Kaamilo and then one mile up from there, is the S-curve, and then, I think was an unnamed street. This is Lohea Street or something like that. Then, this street. Well, actually, it ʻs not a street. It was just called "Sugar Row." It was a private row. That ʻs where we got the A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H. So that ʻs where my---well, Susan, my third girl, was born. We're at home and we suddenly had an urge that we'd better get down to Queens Hospital as soon as possible. That was about 6:00, and at 8:00, she was born. The others were maybe, eleven or twelve hours after we

got to the hospital from Kane‘ohe…I had to go to Queens and come over from Kaneohe also. The first night with JoAnn, we get stopped at the Pali where Castle Junction (intersection of Pali Hwy. and Kamehameha Hwy.) is today. The police had a roadblock there because some boys from the boys' home had escaped. So they were checking but when they saw I had a pregnant wife who was almost giving birth, they said, "Go ahead!" so, we came over.

A.C.: And what was ‘Aiea town like in 1957, 1958?

Robert: Where we are right now (Kauhale Street, one block below Moanalua Road) just up a little. Well, up at ‘Aiea Heights, Moanalua Road was Amona General Store. And as you come the street right over here, you came to the pool hall. Then you came down to about where we are now, was the movie theatre. And that was it. There was a (‘Aiea) Soto Mission too.

A.C.: You said you got your haircut, though---

Robert: Oh yeah. But that was up in the village--- Well, (looking at the map) as you come up Uhaloa Street here, you go up a one-way street, there was a bunch of little stores there. A barbershop. A laundromat. A mom-and-pop grocery store. Sumida Restaurant and that restaurant moved around the corner until it went out of business. (Tape stops and resumes) (The barber Mrs. Koizumi) also did pattern making so she'd have this young ladies in the back room. She was out here cutting hair and then they'd come out and have a question, so the client was sitting there waiting while she went back there to help the student….Life was not too bad here.

A.C.: Of course, you didn't have as much traffic as you have now.

Robert: And my commute was 1.8 miles from there to here.

A.C.: Well, as you were going to work and actually driving around ‘Aiea, were there a lot of traffic lights?

Robert: The only traffic light that was in the area was this one right up here….At the intersection of Heights Road and Moanalua Road. There was nothing else. Nothing over there by Pali Momi.

A.C.: You mean, you could drive on Moanalua Road without having to come to a stop? Or come to four-way stops or traffic lights?

Robert: You would just use common sense. You'd give somebody a little break. But after a while, we had the lights up here by the high school and Kaamilo and here. Yes. Honomanu (Street) or whatever it is on Kam Highway.

A.C.: Now, you and your wife raised your three daughters here in ʻAiea, although you lived in Kaneʻohe for a short time.

Robert: Yes. We lived in Kaneohe for three years, and the kids were not of school age when they moved over here.

A.C.: And when you did move here, it was because you had an opportunity to buy a home from the plantation? Rented?

Robert: No. That's the way it was. The company had this manager's home over here. This area above Alvah Scott (Elementary) School. They had acquired a plot of land up here. They subdivided it into five lots. The homes were built in 1952 for the supervisory personnel. So Jay Mickle had the first. Otto von Schoutshein had the second one. (Cortland) Dodge had the third one. Dave Thomas who was the office manager had this one, and Carl Morse who was the refinery superintendent. He had the fifth one. In 1972, they decided to get out of the real estate business up there. So they, oh, in 1962, they built the home for the manager who was formerly living over here in this big house.

A.C.: Yes. The (manager's house) off Kaamilo Street?

Robert: Kaimu Loop. That was the manager's home for the plantation from way back too. So, until this, his home in 1963 was built up here, across from the five that were there, the company would maintain and everything. Then they decided to, since two of the refinery superintendents either moved back to mainland or one passed away, then nobody wanted to come from the supervisory personnel here. They decided to sell them. So I got the---they were divided into one, two, three, four 10,006 square foot lots and one 11,000 square foot because it was squeezed in. So they went further up. So he has a lot with more, almost a thousand square feet. But it's skinny. So we were given first choice to buy them, so I was given the opportunity to see if I could find $44,000 and I bought ten thousand square feet of land. Now it's up to what, six hundred (thousand). It's still ten thousand (square feet).

A.C.: Did everybody who was offered it, pick it up?

Robert: I'm the only one. So the others rented for a while but they did seldom, the renters went elsewhere.

A.C.: And which lot did you choose? You chose the one you were living, obviously. Which one was that?

Robert: That would be----right now it's the third house in. The first house---the long, the property belonged to the manager. As did the second. But then the

third, fourth, fifth were sold. So the manager, which was Leonard Wood Crosby, at the time, sold the first one to a doctor from Tripler who was a biologist or something. A microbiologist, but he is also a orchid fancier….The second one was….Cho. Richard Cho (he describes the parents). Crosby's rental unit which is still there was built for his in-laws to live in. Then his in-laws continued to get older, and older….and that has been a rental unit ever since. (Describes the owner who is renting it out.) The third one. I'm the third one in.

A.C.: Now is your lane wide enough for two cars? Or is it like a one car lane?

Robert: It's a one-car lane. As you go up Heights Drive, go pass this S-curve, which is right here and this is---you'll see a white mailbox, and ten feet further, you'll see a surfboard and you turn in, between the mailbox and the surfboard. The third house in is mine. But it has a beautiful view. At night, all of this is lit up. The lights.

A.C.: So then, at the end of the lane, does it just go down to the gulch?

Robert: No. It actually---as you go up, there's a road that goes on up here that terminates and that's it. The gulch is on the other side of the road. Akaaka (Street). As you go up, and you make this curve right here, off of Kaamilo, there's a water tank right here by this black dot. This road extends all the way up to here but it comes to a dead end. Then you have of all this. This is a very steep gulch-like.

A.C.: So at night, it must be pretty quiet.

Robert: It's very quiet. About the only noise you'll hear, is some guy with an illegal muffler on his car. Or an ambulance going up to the ʻAiea Rest Home which is right up here. Just before you turn to go up to *heiau*. (They discuss a flock of parrots that fly up the mountain.)

A.C.: You say 1.8 miles? It seems longer when you drive up.

Robert: Well, actually, my house is about one mile from the bus stop here where Kaamilo Street, and then----

A.C.: Because it becomes very rural-like once you get to that certain point, and the road narrows and the houses are closer to road. And of course, no sidewalks. So how did you daughters get to school?

Robert: The school bus came up. I'd meet them. They didn't want me to be down there. They wanted to be independent. And eventually, when they went from Alvah Scott to the intermediate school, I'd drop them off down at the gym and they'd walk into the school. Or I'd take them to the parking lot. I belonged to the PTA. I was

president of that in 1963. But by the time, they got to the intermediate (school), I wasn't quite as involved with the PTA.

A.C.: Your daughters went to all new schools.

Robert: They graduated. JoAnn was the first get to over here, then Karen followed her and Susan followed her. They went from here to here to here. And Gus Webling (Elementary) School was up here. There used to be a reservoir which fed water down to the mill until the school came up. (On C&H property that was condemned) And then, right down here, in Aiea Shopping area was another pump supply that pumped water up. Then we built our own (two) deep water wells over here, between the refinery and the intermediate school. There were two deep well pumps. They've since been removed.

A.C.: Yeah, you had mentioned it was actually pumped water. The water didn't come from Waiahole or Waikane.

Robert: I don't know the source of the water from here, but it was pumped up to the refinery and it was pumped down from Gus Webling [Nomu-ike was a Honolulu Plantation reservoir] until we built our own wells. Then, the only water that was really into the ʻAiea Stream, unless there was a terrific storm or rainfall up here would be two or three million gallons a day we would pump in from the refinery.

A.C.: Does refining sugar take a lot of water?

Robert: Quite a bit. Two or three million gallons of water a day.

A.C.: And where would the water go after(wards)?

Robert: Dump it into the ʻAiea Stream and down into the ʻAiea Bay. Until EPA came along.

A.C.: Or the state equivalent of it.

Robert: So we had to take samples of water that we were dumping into the stream. So it had to be a limited amount of sugar and things like that. And we were also

using diatomaceous earth to filter out the solid impurities from the sugar liquor. That went into the stream. That built up down here.

A.C.: When you said "built up" into 'Aiea Bay?

Robert: So that had to eliminate so we had some ponds where we had some settling ponds until that became a problem with the odor. Then we had to make sure there was some bacteria, anaerobic or something like that, to eat the stuff that was creating the smell.

A.C.: Where were the ponds in relation to the smokestack?

Robert: They were, uh, over in this area, along the side (near the refinery).

A.C.: Was it along the streamside?

Robert: Not quite as far as the stream.

A.C.: Was it near the intermediate school?

Robert: It was in that direction but closer to the Ulune Street here. And another problem we had was the smoke. So whenever the oil blew the tubes or something---

A.C.: You mean to clean it out, flush things?

Robert: We had to make sure it was done at night so you couldn't see things.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

Robert: The raw sugar station that was started in 1974 was just this side of the raw sugar warehouse that was built in 1955 on a concrete foundation to house 18,000 tons of raw sugar. This rectangle (on the map) was refined sugar warehouse. This was the refinery office.

A.C.: The black square that's to the left of the crosshatched rectangles.

Robert: These little ones were outbuildings from there.

A.C.: This is an intermittent stream. Those green lines with the little dots. That means it's not a stream that always ran.

Robert: It flowed. It was a very fast and deep stream but once the storm was over, this was the source of water from here down to ʻAiea Bay.

A.C.: The stream sort of disappears once you get to the other side of Moanalua. It's like a culvert.

Robert: It's all overgrown. Yeah. It's full of weeds and everything else. But that was a good stream. In fact, we've had Halawa stream. They used do some butchering up there, and every once in a while, a cow's head would come floating down past. Or a pig's head would pass the dock at the (Arizona) Memorial.

A.C.: Which is at the mouth of the (Halawa) stream for Pearl Harbor. Well, uh, getting back to your work, you had a lot of responsibilities but you started first as a----

Robert: A technical assistant, because Jay Nickel (who) was the first occupant of the company house up here; he was the plant chemist. He was going back to the home refinery in Crockett, California. They were looking for a replacement for him (in March 1954). That's when I walked into the front office after visiting the sugar mill over in Waipahu. I saw the smokestack and I just drove up there and went in. I happened to be the local applicant as opposed to one who lived in Wisconsin or someplace, so I got the job. But they had to verify the fact that I graduated from college, and they wanted a transcript and all that stuff. So they got that. So I went in there sometime, and then on April 19, 1954, I started.

A.C.: Do you remember what your salary was like?

Robert: Yes. Four hundred a month.

A.C.: And was that what you would have been getting if you were hired on the mainland?

Robert: Probably. Well, that's what I was making when I was in Detroit. I mean, I was living in Detroit working for the Wyandotte Chemical Corporation. Four hundred a month. They may have, out their generosity, raised it to four-fifty or something but I started at four hundred.

A.C.: So, um, with the job responsibilities, you said you were the only one. There weren't a lot of chemists working at the refinery?

Robert: No. You had a plant chemist. He was theoretically in charge of the laboratory. You just had to make sure that those fellas were doing the sampling and things like that, that they knew what they were doing. You, more or less, had to know how to do it yourself. But then you kept the records, so that they would determine if the crystallization, whether it was going up or down. Or the colors were getting progressively dark. You had to be able to determine that and know what to do. So when he left, I became the plant chemist. Then I was also in charge---I was the fire marshal and I was the safety director and everything else. Then when the refinery superintendent left, and I was in line for that. Whenever the manager was out, I was his manager. He was out every Wednesday afternoon, playing golf.

A.C.: And yet the operation had to keep going!

Robert: Oh, it had to keep going. We operated five days a week, for twenty-four hours a day. Whereas the Crockett Refinery operated ten straight days and had four days off. But we could not convince these guys who were part of the ILWU unions to do that. So we started up every Sunday, midnight, and ended up every Saturday, 8:00 A.M. Something like that.

A.C.: And when you were working these hours, where the refinery was going 24-7 as you said, with three shifts, then, of workers?

Robert: Well, we had shifts that worked every two weeks. They shift from midnight to days, to afternoons. But I was always straight daytimes. So one time, when the shift foreman left, then I suddenly did his job too. Then I was working round the shift. But I was still living in Kane'ohe for that.

A.C.: What parts of your job did you enjoy?

Robert: I enjoyed every bit of it. I also, whenever anybody walked into the office, to ask if there was a tour of the refinery, I'd take them around. So I kept the book of where the people were from. They were from all over, Europe, Asia, and mainland. They learned how to refine sugar. Then (in) 1976, we had, maybe a dozen Irainians in the sugar industry, both raw and refined. So I had go over to Maui on one occasion to go through what I have on this paper, refining sugar. Then we brought them over to the refinery, and they lived in this apartment house. And they ran up phone bills of six, seven hundred dollars a month.

A.C.: (Laughs) So truly, refining sugar is an international business. Why would people come to Hawaii to see it, rather than go to the one at Crockett? Do you have any idea?

Robert: Well, the raw sugar industry here was the primary one. Then they'd just go in, for refining.

A.C.: Was the profit margin for refining sugar for the Hawai‘i market, um, you know---

Robert: This refinery from 1906 was refining sugar. Just a small quantity. Then 1947, C&H took a formal occupation of the place. And then, we were producing refined sugar cloth bags. And then we went to paper bags. That was for period of time, strictly for island, state, well, territorial. Then we started producing sugar, twenty-five pound, and fifty-pound bags, primarily for shipment back to the West coast during the canning season.

A.C.: So supporting the increase of sugar, need for sugar. Was that a tremendous increase? Canning took that much sugar?

Robert: Yeah. We would send these forty-foot containers, maybe ten, fifteen of those back at a time. Full of twenty-five pound, fifty-pound bags. Then, when we screened the sugar, we had both blue and red sugar. Blue sugar was the hundred pounds and also went into the other sizes. The red sugar went only into the hundred pound bags. That was for the pineapple canners.

A.C.: So, um, because the canning would need more sugar, you would have to

refine more sugar for the local consumption for Dole and Del Monte?

Robert: Oh year. We were able, I think, to do maybe four or five hundred (tons) a day.

A.C.: For the three shifts?

Robert: For the three shifts. Then the pineapple companies began to disappear. There were nine of them back in 1954 when I started. That was on Kaua‘i, Maui and then, the red sugar just had to be put back into the system. So our daily production went from, maybe four hundred, four hundred fifty tons a day, down maybe three hundred, two hundred fifty. But still over a twenty-five hour period. Then in 1974, we went into liquid sugar.

A.C.: Liquid sugar was used for?

Robert: Coca-Cola. Whatever outfit was taking hundred pound bags and having to put that in solution, we would give them a formula. Develop a formula, which would permit liquid sugar. so they would have to go into this dissolving the sugar, making the syrup. We told them that it would be sixty-seven percent sugar, thirty-three percent water with a pH just a little over seven, alkaline side than sitting side.

A.C.: Then you couldn’t store it in paper bags so then your costs?

Robert: No, that’s where the tanks came in. So that was pumped out into these tanks, and from there, it was pumped into the liquid sugar trucks. The tankers that took it to the various customers that required liquid sugar.

A.C.: So would it go straight, in these tanks? I’m thinking like milk tanks, trucks with ----

Robert: Oh there were big stainless steel trucks. But before we put that liquid sugar in there, we had to flush it out with very hot water for maybe a half hour or so. And then, the sugar that was stored in the tanks, had to have blue light or something like that, to keep the bacteria down. Whatever kind that was.

A.C.: So would it go to wholesalers?

Robert: Like Y. Higa. We had, I don't know, how many customers. The liquid sugar customers. We had about twelve or thirteen of those.

A.C.: So some of it would go right to the next valley, to Halawa.

Robert: Yeah. Or Mapunapuna, where the Coca-Cola Bottling was. Or Campbell Industrial Park for the Coca-Cola plant that produced the Coca-Cola syrup which would then be shipped to Coca-Cola Bottling and we would have to have a, I forget the exact pH that we would have to ship the Coca-Cola syrup in. They would add citric acid or something to it, to reduce that acid way down. But the variety of sugars that were grown on O'ahu when it was a pH of seven or neutral was fairly colorless. But as got the higher pH, it became more straw-colored, which Coca-Cola didn't like. But then they added acid to it, so it took it way down.

A.C.: So you were describing there were different sugar for different elevations, and different spots for having more sunlight?

Robert: Some of the sugars on the Big Island where they had a lot of rain along Hamakua Coast, or something like that, that was the source. On this island, it was irrigated. I'll take some paper I have at home, and I'll draw a sort of diagram. I probably won't have (drawings). I'll have charts.

A.C.: Can I ask if liquid sugar went to clients who were outside of Hawaii? Did it go to Samoa?

Robert: Strictly this island. Refined sugar went to Samoa. Went to Kwajalein. Went to Eniewetok. All those little islands. Vietnam.

A.C.: During the Vietnam War, did it go to bases?

Robert: Theoretically, the Republic of Vietnam.

(Arlene asks whether C&H Refinery had tours)

Robert: We sort of limited to individuals who might drop in at the front desk, at the front office. And if I wasn't too busy, and I never was, I would take them around. Take about an hour. Take them from one station to another. Show them the differences. What the crystal sugar looked like here, as opposed to what it looked like here after it had been put into solution. The color. Where we decolorized it. How we decolorized it. Took out the, uh, filtered the rats and everything that came in with it. Theoretically, the Department of Agriculture said the raw sugar was unfit for human consumption because of the way it was handled in the open. Rats could in. Birds could get in. Molasses was unfit for human consumption. Tanks in the back, which I don't think they show here, were open. Cats would go in it. Then when people from Waimano Home who would come for molasses, and I'd see these guys!

A.C.: (Laughs) But when they say "Pure sugar"---

Robert: By the time we got through with it, it was 99.9% sugar and the crystals were 99.8, 99.9% sucrose.

A.C.: Could we conclude this interview by just talking about what kind of presence the refinery had in ʻAiea town? You were able to see it both as a resident and an active community member, and as someone who worked there.

Robert: Well, the majority of people living around there were all connected with the refinery, one way or another. All of the houses.

A.C.: Along the (ʻAiea) Heights (Drive)?

Robert: Were usually employees. Then they had the camps around here. The Filipino. The Japanese. More or less the higher-ranking employees were living pretty close to the refinery. Miyamoto. He lived right up here.

A.C.: Did you find that most people stayed with the refinery because they were able to find promotions?

Robert: Yeah, the turnover in the labor force was great. There were guys there who carried over from the plantation and they stayed until they retired. And the retirement age was sixty-five. When I started, Benjy Chaves and his brother were working there from early nineteen hundred, and just retired. Benjy went on for years and years, after that. Benjy was a little Filipino, no, not Filipino, Portuguese who right

around November, December, started growing a beard. He'd go down to Big Island and play Santa Claus….We got along.

A.C.: Did the Oahu Sugar sponsor a Christmas parade?

Robert: I don't think we sponsored anything. No teams. Although, there may have been when it was plantation. That was a family. Everybody worked for the plantation. But when the refinery took over, some of these people started scattering out to other areas, so the office personnel would get together, have a Christmas party, something like that. But the men in the refinery, itself, they'd go home.

A.C.: Well, they didn't have to go far either. Because you came to work after the first phase of home buying started, but it continued.

Robert: The plantation sold---most of the employees who lived close by, like Miyamoto here, Norman Nakayama lived just two or three doors from here. They owned their home. Nagai. Matsuo.

A.C.: Then the people who worked in the schools, the businesses lived close by, too.

Robert: A lot of the employees lived, you know, where the post office is. That area there. Jose, he lived almost across the street from the (Soto) Mission down there. So this area, was mostly employees down there. Probably employees.

A.C.: Just my last question. Did your children ever share with you how they felt growing up in 'Aiea?

Robert: I sent them to the Japanese language school at the Aiea Hongwanji for a couple of years. But they seemed to get along. JoAnn, she made friends with everybody. She said, I get some hefty looking Hawaiian girls and I'm not afraid of anybody. They all managed to get by. They didn't have any altercations.

A.C.: Oh no. Their first boyfriends.

Robert: Oh yeah. Joey Uno was JoAnn's boyfriend. Of course, he was a

little shorter than her. She's six-foot tall. Joe and other friends. They were also involved with Rainbow Girls. I was not a Mason but they were desperate for girls so the fathers didn't have to be Shriners or Masons.

A.C.: Well you had mentioned they were active in swimming too.

Robert: There was a swimming pool up here by the high school gym. The high school had a swim team and the local AAU. It was called the Aiea Aquatics. It had a team. It would compete with teams all over the islands. Whenever we had a carnival where the 'Aiea Park was, we would have corn-on-the-cob stand. When there was a football game, we would have the saimin stand.

A.C.: Sounds like a great place to raise kids.

Robert: It was. It was. There were a lot of kids. I had to go around with all these kids. They didn't have to go far to fill up that bag. But I don't think a kid has come to my door the last twenty-five, thirty years.

Well, now they go down to the rec. centers for that (end of tape).

At a subsequent visit, Robert Kinzler shared a diagram that described the operation.

(scanner cut off words "RAW SUGAR" "MINGLER" "CENTRIFUGALS" on the left)

(Top left) C&H Refinery, (Top right) Robert Kinzler
Both of these photographs were from the private collection of Blanche Aisaka, refinery office

(Bottom) C&H Refinery (photographer is unknown)

After the granulated sugar production was closed down, this photograph shows the sugar boilers (top floor), crystallizers (second floor) and the packing machines (bottom floor) (Ric Noyle, Crazy Shirts, 1995)

The granulated sugar bin (Ric Noyle, Crazy Shirts, 1995)