

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Leo Patacsil, Jr.

July 20, 2007

BY: Arlene Ching (A.C.) and Jordon Higa

A.C.: I'm A.C. Ching and I'll be interviewing Leo Patacsil, Jr. at the 'Aiea Intergenerational Center (on Kauhale Street in 'Aiea).

Kauhale Street Businesses

Leo: There was a Viernes Tailor. My brother used to work for the Viernes Tailor during the summer. He would clean the tailor shop, empty rubbish, do whatever was needed, and the tailor would make him pants for school. Back then, it was called drapes. Today, it's known as bell-bottoms. The bell-bottoms that we used to wear, the size of your waist was the size of the bottoms. I remember having bell-bottoms "24" and my waist was twenty-four or twenty-five.

A.C.: And where was the tailor shop?

Leo: This is Kauhale Street. Underneath the Aiea Plantation Store, used to be a pool hall. We used to call the Shack. Aiea Shack but it was a pool hall. The man who used to rack the balls was Speedy. He was so slow; he was pathetic. He walked like this. We nicknamed him Speedy and when you cut class from Aiea Intermediate or Aiea High School, you always ended up going to the pool hall. Cost you a nickel to play pool. One game and you'd bet your lunch money with other guys. You're supposed to be eighteen, but you know, back then, nobody bothered. It was above the Shack. My sister's classmate used to work in there. She was from Waipahu. I got to check with her.

A.C.: What did the plantation store look like? Was it really big?

Leo: Oh, it was big! It was big, this big. I remember one floor. Wooden floor. A single level, but there was like a belfry on the edge where there's more stuff. I'd say, would be, uh, (whew) wow. Took a good portion of this (street) corner. Outside of it, used to have some stores over here. I don't remember the name. Then there's a big banyan tree, and this was where the bus, the O.R.&L. (Oahu Railway and Land Co.) bus would come down and pick up people. So, inside, in front of the store, there was a big glass window. You know, it was real large. You could see stuff that was in there, from folder paper to paper clips to tobacco.

A.C.: Did it have a sign?

Leo: It said Aiea Store. The Aiea Plantation Store. I don't know who owned it or ran it. My sister's good friend used to work there. She used to go to church with her. She worked there. There was another Japanese lady. You could buy fabric. You could buy folder paper... It was like a large Ben Franklin (Store), more or less. Only thing, little bit more, because--- I don't remember it having any kind of fresh produce. But you could buy bread. Canned goods. Mosquito punk. Insect repellent. Stuff for the yard. If there was anything, vegetables, anything, it was somebody who grew it and brought it into the store, and you could buy it. My dad had an account over there.

Kaulainaha'e Street

Dad raised five kids in 'Aiea. Mom and Dad divorced when I was five years old. Our home was built in 1948. We moved into 'Aiea in 1949. The cost of our house, some years, when I was growing up, I was amazed that the cost of a used Toyota was the cost for fee simple land. It cost my father \$12,800 for house and land. Corner property and a brand-new house. \$12,800 was big-time money back then.

A.C.: Do you know who built it?

Leo: My father brought the property from the plantation, because right in back of us was Mr. Hank Omiya. Next to us was Mrs. Reece. She was already in there.

A.C.: You were the first family to live in there?

Leo: No, we were the fifth or fourth family in that valley on Kaulainaha'e Street. The dead-end street that went down. You go up Aiea Heights Drive. You pass the gymnasium around the curve. And right before you start climbing up Aiea Heights Drive, you bear right. You go down into the valley. You go down into that valley and it's a dead-end road. The mountain on this side is Halawa. The mountain on this (other) side is 'Aiea. Dead-end road in that valley where the Uchigaki was the last house. The Chongs was the last house. There's a river, the 'Aiea Stream. Across the river are all those million-dollar homes. They tried to push that road, coming through our neighborhood. My father put a block to that. My father and his gang.

A.C.: You had said, in a previous talk, like a club?

Leo: Oh yeah. The Kaulainaha'e Club...(Our street was so small and there were plans to have our street connect with this new homes. Million dollar homes. They made a petition, had the inspectors come out to measure the street. Afterwards, it evolved into a club.) My father was one of the founders of the club. Being that he was an electrical engineer. He worked for---he volunteered for SCALA. My father was good was good with words. You looked at him; he looked like the best-dressed garbage man in 'Aiea. But when that man opened his mouth, you know, "Eh, that folk's Filipino but he's

educated.”

A.C.: Let's get back to 'Aiea town.

Leo: Okay. Missing here is the Viernes Tailor. Underneath the Aiea Plantation Store, right directly underneath, was a pool hall. But the man who worked the balls, we named him “Speedy.” It was a two-table pool hall. Two, maybe three. I remember two... Next to it was a taxi stand.

A.C.: Was that Pete's Taxi?

Leo: I don't know. Pete's Taxi started down by where Kuroda Service Station was. But actually, Pete's was down where there was a bar down on this side. I'm trying to think of the name.

A.C.: (A.C. offers him pen and paper to draw a map since the map shows 'Aiea in the 1930s.) Are you talking about the fifties? Sixties?

Leo: I'm talking about the fifties, sixties, and seventies. I'm talking early fifties. This is Aiea Heights Drive. This is the community center. Star Theatre. Moanalua (Road). Umm. It used to come down like this. (A.C. asked a question about the curving of Kauhale Street.) Kauhale was more or less, kinda straightened out, but it's still kinda curvy. OK. Right here was Aiea Store. Plantation store. Underneath the plantation store was a pool hall. And out here, there was, like a home. It was a taxi stand. I think it was a home because they used to raise chickens. I don't know whether they really had chicken fights or not. Then Kauhale (Street) comes down like that. Then you had the Nagamine store. Over here became Speedy's. Over here had a bar in the fifties and sixties.

A.C.: Was it on Moanalua Road?

Leo: Oh no. It's down. Right next to the stream. You had to go down. And Pete's Taxi was right along that fence... Kuroda was on the top over here.

A.C.: The Aiea United Methodist Church? There used to be a bar over there?

Leo: No, no, no, no, no. You know, we talk about the saimin (stand) to lower 'Aiea. Right across the street there? There's a long building and there's a building come this way.

A.C.: In the shopping center where Speedy's was?

Leo: Yeah. The very last, end was a bar... My friend's Clifford---one of my neighbors, Clifford. His father was PWC (Public Works Center) painter. Clifford's

mother was a hostess there. I don't know who owned the bar. It's in the last---you know where 'Aiea Stream is? I'm trying to think. But there was a name of the bar. This end. Then it became modernized when they built that concrete building.

A.C.: But, um, in the fifties, were both theatres still operating? Star Theatre and the Aiea Theatre?

Leo: Oh yeah. Yeah.

A.C.: What was the difference between those two? Did they show different *kine* movies?

Leo: Different *kine* movies. Yeah, different *kine* movies.

A.C.: Were the prices the same?

Leo: As far as I remember, yes. The movies. Aiea Star Theatre. Dad used to give us thirty cents. Sometimes, fifty cents. The sodas were a nickel. See moi was ten cents or a nickel. If you bought the big pack of *see moi*, it was fifteen cents. But it went up to a quarter later on. But you could buy popcorn for a nickel. Soda for a nickel. Candy for a nickel. Movie theatre, going in, I think, was fifteen cents or twenty cents.

A.C.: What kind of movie do you remember seeing?

Leo: Oh God. It used to have, uh, what do you call it, double bill. Lone Ranger. It used to have Frankenstein. All the spooky kind. Cowboys. Cartoons. It used to have, before the main feature came on, there were newsreels. Okay? I'm trying to think of the guy. You see him on the commercials ever so often. You see the old-fashioned newsreels. After the newsreel was a cartoon. After the cartoon was the main feature. Soda was served. You could buy soda in a bottle.

A.C.: Was it an open-air theatre or was there air conditioning?

Leo: Nah. Air conditioning? No. No such thing. I can't even remember a fan. And the seats were individual seats like in auditoriums. Wooden auditorium chairs. And if you went all the way in the front, had benches. You know, the *kine*... But toward the back, it was dark. Porky Pig. The cartoons were the best. You got two movies for like, less than a quarter! And one of the good times you could buy, one of my favorites, but they always ran out, was, you know, that sweet cuttlefish, the one that looks like a piece of paper? Oh man! That was a nickel. Oh God, yeah!

A.C.: So they didn't have popcorn? Buttered popcorn?

Leo: I don't remember buttered popcorn. They had colored popcorn and regular popcorn.

A.C.: Okay. But you liked the see moi.

Leo: I liked the *see moi*, the soda, the cuttlefish. Soda was a nickel. Came in a bottle. Kauluwela Soda, it was. I can't even remember the other one. You know, I saw we had an Aiea Soda Works. (Looks at Ron Oba's map in the [The Hawaii Herald](#) article "A Journey to Aiea Town") I remember a soda works.

A.C.: This is from the thirties.

Leo: I remember there used to be---well, a soda works was Mrs. Kaya. If this is the theatre down here someplace, you're missing Omiya Saimin Stand... I'm talking about the early fifties.

A.C.: See. It's always interesting, that when you recall the past, you remember the food.

Cane Haul Road (Ulune Street)

Leo: Oh yeah. You know, what I remember too, portions of 'Aiea Heights Drive were paved. The upper portion part was still dirt. Was being paved. Was dirt packed with oil, especially when the sugar mill was open. You know, when you come to the top of 'Aiea Heights Drive, there's like a T. You turn left. You turn to where the old sugar mill used to be. That used to be a curve. Never had homes over there. Used to be shortcut. Climb the dirt. Stairs from the plantation where the water truck used to come. I used to play on top. My sisters used to get mad at me, where the water come down through a faucet on Cane Haul Road, then you walk up Hakina (Street), all the way up to the top and you go down into the valley. That's when we took the long way home. The shortcut was through (chuckles) what is now freeway! You go all the way up to (sighs) Ulune (Street).

A.C.: That's the back way though.

Leo: Oh yeah. That's the back way. That's Cane Haul Road. Ulune was Cane Haul Road even before you come to where the river is. Behind that river, you found remnants of, I guess, we used to call it the paper tree. Where the water tank used to be, and then you'd cut through the cane field, go to Uwau (Drive).

A.C.: Well, you know, over here, Ron Oba's article shows, this is it in the thirties. Is this a good representation of the curve... going up to the heights?

Leo: Right. Going up Aiea Heights Drive. There's a big curve, goes around.

A.C.: This is the old train to haul out the sugarcane.

Leo: Well, the train track wasn't there already.

A.C.: These were camps where people lived (in the thirties). Now you're talking about (the fifties) You lived, like, over here.

'Aiea Reservoir (Gus Webling Elementary School)

Leo: This is the reservoir where I learned to swim.

A.C.: So the reservoir was still there?

Leo: The reservoir was up by someplace close to where (Gus) Webling School was. Yeah! Used to swim in the flumes too!

A.C.: Did you call it Nomu-ike Reservoir?

Leo: I don't remember. We just called it, going up to the (Aiea) Reservoir. (looking at the map) Okay. Aiea Hongwanji. This is in Filipino (Camp). 'Aiea Elementary School. This map is way off. (Discusses the map) I mean, Red Hill was one lane up, one lane down. One of my uncles used to work for the dairies up there.

Patacsil Family Life

A.C.: Well, let's talk about now. You were born in 1945. Your parents moved here in 1949. Your parents divorced after that?

Leo: Yes.

A.C.: Did you live in a different home before the divorce?

Leo: Same home. After the divorce. My dad raised five kids. The three older kids were from my mother's previous marriage. My father adopted them. They only know my father as their father. It was my father's good paying job and his, uh, his tenacity to keep the family together. My father never remarried too. He loved my mother even after my mother was married four times.

A.C.: But even as kids, were you able to be in touch with your mother?

Leo: Oh yeah. My father used to help my mother's husbands. Two of the husbands learned how to read blueprints. How to better themselves. (Discusses family) We don't even use the word "step." We don't use the word "step." They were just like my family. Period. I mean, my older sisters raised me! My older sister kinda took care of me, because I was a brand-new baby. Then when my other brother came, my second sister kinda took care of him because Dad had to go to work at Public Works Center. Dad had to be at work by seven, so Dad would leave at 6:15 or 6:30, and we

would walk to school. Unless it was raining, then Dad would take us to school. Most of the time, even if it was raining, we had raincoats. As I grew older, Dad would drop me off at St. Elizabeth's. I used to serve mass in the morning before I went to school.

A.C.: Did your family go to Aiea Elementary?

Leo: Aiea Elementary and Intermediate. You know that little stage that's built out there? In front? The little stage was built by my sister's graduating class before they went to Waipahu. (High School) You'll find pictures out there that says, "Always forward. Never backwards."

A.C.: I've heard of people talk about the stage because their class built it, and they were really proud of it. So, the elementary school. Oh. You're bringing out an album.

Leo: This is my father's autobiography. He wrote it himself. He put it together. There's a story behind the way he made this. This is the beginning of my father's life. I have a copy that my ex-wife had put on computer. This was written through me, and hounding my dad while he was injured. You see, I quit my job two years in a row to take care of my dad. My dad wrote his life. My dad could use words.

A.C.: It's in his handwriting!

Leo: Oh yeah. Everything's in his handwriting.

A.C.: It's beautiful. This is so precious.

Leo: (Meanwhile, looking through the album) I want to show this (school) stage. My father drew this. I have a family tree. This is my dad growing up in the Philippines. My dad working, uh, at the university. My dad graduated in the Class of 1942. I mean, my dad kept all of this. I didn't even know until he started writing this. Stuff like---my father could draw too. He was in charge of the University of Illinois power station when he was being an electrical engineer. My dad used to write for the (Honolulu) Star-Bulletin too! He used to write about "Filipinos in Paradise." My mother colored this by hand. This was the picnic my dad told us stories about. Now, this is me. These are my three older sisters... This is my great-grandmother's house... This is me. I was born. My father's first-born. This is us, going to church. My sister was going to get her first communion. This is our house in Kaulainaha'e. This is the mango tree my father bought for fifty cents. Folgers Coffee can. It bloomed. It used to give us mangos forever. This is in front of our house in the valley. Here.

Aiea Elementary and Intermediate School Stage

"Always forward. Never backwards." That little stage? Here. My older brother and my sister's graduating class. The boys in the truck. They built this for the school. Actually,

Mr. Griswold was the...first principal. Then, Mr. Abe. Oh god! We used have corporal punishment. I could tell about the paddles, oh ho!

A.C.: At the public school?

Leo: Oh, we used to get lickings!

A.C.: What would you be doing to get lickings for? Like, just talking back?

Leo: Not so much talking back. Uh. Cutting class. Smoking in the toilet where you're not supposed to.

A.C.: (Laughs) Okay. This is a graduation picture from the class of 1954? 1955?

Leo: '54. '55. Something like that.

A.C.: This is elaborate! Look at this. "Forward Never Backwards" with the backstage. And dressed like --- This is graduation?

Leo: This is front of the house. This is when I graduated from high school. My older sister and my older brother---they used to dance and greet the DC-10. Do you know the old Lagoon Drive? My sister belonged to the Kent Ghirard Hula Studio. My sister was a hula dancer.

A.C.: Your sister Loretta?

Leo: No, my sister Betty Jane. She was a hula dancer at Kent Ghirard. Mom and Dad's first home was in Waikiki on George Street.

A.C.: Oh. Kapahulu.

Leo: Yeah, Kapahulu. My sister Loretta had asthma. I had asthma. We moved to Pu'unui. Pu'unui was too cold. So we moved from Pu'unui to Waiawa. Stayed with my grandmother, my mother's mother in Waiawa, right by the stream, until our house was built. Then we moved up to 'Aiea where the weather was suitable for us. So we moved.

A.C.: So, I see your older sister graduated from Waipahu High School because there was no 'Aiea High School.

Leo: That's right. There was no Radford (High School) either.

A.C.: (Telling Jordon) Leo was in the first graduating class of 'Aiea High School.

Leo: 1964. But uh, I'm very close to my nieces and nephews. You're going to find all kinds of pictures in here. Anyway. I'll show you another thing too, about our family. My dad, like I said, created these two books, the family tree, and his biography because he was laid up in bed. I didn't want his mind going because his body was really bad. He had a back operation. He had something like meningitis. They had to take a piece of his hip and graft it to his spine; otherwise it would have been dead in a matter of hours. He contracted some kind of disease from the water in the Philippines when he went to visit back in the seventies. So my dad was bedridden. I had to take care of my dad. I quit my job to take care of him for two years. My dad's annuities helped us survive with family help. At the same time, my sister had her first stroke. I took care of her. My second sister. I took care of her in the evenings when my brother-in-law worked at the Leeward Bowling Alley. He was the mechanic for the bowling alley. He'd drop my sister off at night, and in the morning, he'd pick her up. So I took care of both of that. I said, "Dad, two things I want you to do before you die. Tell us about our family, from you." He always tells us stories. "Put it down on paper." I was smart enough to tell my dad this was what I wanted so I could pass it on. My sisters already had kids. I envisioned me having kids. I already had a son and daughter. My son was going to high school in Texas. My daughter was still a baby, um, back in the seventies. So my dad, being in a body cast and being cantankerous, I gave him something to do. Pen and paper, and kept his mind active. So he wrote this. And he also drew this, our family tree. When he drew the family tree, we drew like one tree! He did research. He did all kinds of research! When he went to the Philippines, he had first-hand knowledge of everything.

A.C.: Going back to the 1700s!

Leo: Oh yeah! Yeah. The story is---this is the way he began it. In the Philippines, you have villages. It was not uncommon for a relative to marry a distant relative from the same village. It was said that my great-great grandfather married another Patacsil, my great-great grandmother. Something like that. But it was not uncommon. He even traced the name. It was fantastic what my father did. And all of this has been transcribed into copies like this, and put on disc, so my father left a legacy. My daughter is the youngest of his grandchildren. She is now twenty-five. My father had eighteen of them. Among the four, five of us who had kids, there were eighteen grandchildren. Now my father has great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

Patacsil Family in Nanakuli

I was fortunate enough to see when I was growing up in 'Aiea. We traveled from 'Aiea on a two-lane road, one going in, one coming out of Nanakuli, going up to Mikilua, which is behind Hakimo Road in the back. My great-grandmother had a piggery... Dad would pick us up. We'd go buy French bread by the loaves, three, four loaves and take it to my great-grandmother. I was fortunate enough, as I was growing up, I have a good memory. My grandmother, my great-grandmother and my mother. Sit at the same table. Drinking coffee in a coffee cup that had no handle. It was an old military white mug and

in the middle of the table, a bowl of guava jelly and a board right in the middle. They would talk and they would do that and eat. And I used to watch them. Then, when my dad and mom them, either they decided to go home and pick us up later on, on Sunday. We got there Friday. Or they all would sleep over. I had the privilege, because I was the baby at that time, I used to sleep with my great-grandparents---my great-grandmother, under the mosquito net in my great-grandmother's room in the Quonset® hut. That was their home. And I used to wonder why my great-grandfather would--- why, my great-grandmother---they slept in separate beds. She never had to say anything. She was a silver-haired lady. She was Filipino-Chinese-Hawaiian descent. She would sit at the edge of the bed. My great-grandfather would bring an old porcelain bowl and a towel that was made of old rice bags. He would wash my great-grandmother's feet before she went to bed. Every night. I used to sit there, wonder "Why?" You know, not knowing. If you had to use the toilet, there was a little pot underneath there, because back then, we had outhouses. You didn't want to go out at night just to make shi-shi. You put 'em in a pot with Clorox®. We grew up that way, plantation style. So this is our family. When you see this kine stuff, you can go through it and look at. I never leave this with anyone. I made a copy of my father's biography for you. Do you remember the cross? I marked it for you.

A.C.: Oh. Thank you.

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE

Leo: This is the story of my dad. He tells you all the work that he did. Lot of it was top-secret. "In the interest of the community." Let me find it at the beginning. The pages are numbered. My ex-wife did it. My son's mother.

Mr. Leo Patacsil Sr. and Camp H.M. Smith Cross

A.C.: (Reading) "In the interest of the community, the huge lighted cross at the Camp Smith headquarters was installed by PWC," which is Public Works Center," designed and contract administered by me." Wow! "Originally a cross was put up by the Marines, using fluorescent lights but it never worked satisfactorily, because the lamps got shorted out when it rained. So the commanding officer of the Marine Corps asked PWC to replace the cross. My design made use of weatherproof ballast and the neon tube lighting made to my specification." Your father's a great writer. He writes like an engineer, you know. Everything's in there.

Leo: My father spoke the way he wrote. Look at the beginning of this. Instead of saying "In the beginning." (Mr. Patacsil wrote a Latin word.) What kind of word is that? (A.C., Jordon and Leo examine his prologue) This is my father's original handwriting, and as he wrote, he asked me to get boxes and boxes. Not only being one of the founders of the Kaulainaahe Club, he also wrote the rules and regulations, and measured the width of our road, explaining to the contractors and the City & County of Honolulu, "You can't put a road through our neighborhood to go to the million-dollar homes!" You know, this

was in the sixties!

A.C.: Now what were your father's hobbies?

Leo: It's in there. Bowling. My father, when he retired, he worked for SCALA, Senior Citizens Advocates for Legal Assistance... My ex-wife did this. Transcribed it. So every one of my father's grandchildren have a copy of this. There's also a cookbook! Now look at the title of that page. "Kamehameha Toastmasters Club #720."

A.C.: (Laughs) "The Commentator!" That's a good play on words.

Leo: My father's newspaper. He founded that newspaper. Look at the title and the degrees on it.

A.C.: Okay. You know, there wasn't anything he couldn't do.

Leo: Practically. My niece who is a holder of a master's degree at HPA, Hawaii Preparatory Academy, dedicated four years of her life to my father in her high school graduation... She was the class president and gave the valedictory speech at Pearl City High School. She thanked her mother and father but she dedicated her graduation to my father. My father did things for his grandchildren. He never did too much for us, because we were a different generation. But, from making posters and signs---

A.C.: This is a wonderful story of celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday and (laughs) it was at Momilani Recreation Center too... He looked great at seventy-five too!

Leo: Uncle Norman Ching helped out too. Uncle Ching from the Ching family. Uncle Norman Ching and my brother-in-law are like brothers.

A.C.: Kupuna Norman Ching. Okay. Leo---

Patacsil Family Life on Kaulainaha'e Street

Leo: We grew up in 'Aiea. 1949, our home was built. Our home was blessed after my dad and mom divorced. Our home was so brand-new. Our home was blessed by the Catholic Church, St. Elizabeth's, where years later, I became an altar boy and the family went to church there. My father was excommunicated by the Catholic Church because he divorced my mom back in the early fifties. So when we asked the priest, we called the priest to come bless our home in 'Aiea, the priest found out that Dad wasn't going to church. So Father Filbert, I believe, was the one who I served under later on as an altar boy, said to my father, "Leo, you let the church down. How come you don't come to church?" And my father, I remember those words, and I was young, he said, "Father, I didn't let the church. The church let me down." And my father was not an outspoken man, but when he spoke, and he made a point, he could kill you with words. He could spank us with words! My father never needed to hit us, to tell us that we did

something wrong. And it followed down to my generation. When I had my own kids, I never had to spank them. As much as my daughter was a rebel, just like me, I mean (grunts) yeah, I can tell you stories about that one! Right now, he's working at the OR (operating room) at Castle (Medical Center). Got the brains. My son and my daughter got brains like my father! Most of the grandchildren, the ones that are in college, all took after my father's side of the family, for the brain department.

A.C.: Did your father ever feel that he was racially discriminated against, because he went to the mainland, went to college there and excelled?

Leo: Well, not only racially. It was "do or die." Back then, I don't think, if there was any kind of racial discrimination, he never really touched upon it growing up. He just said, he knew the difference. I mean, when he worked on the Mississippi, he told us stories about he lied his way, got a job as a cook. My father couldn't cook! But he cooked for a rich man who owned a pineapple company. It's in the book.

A.C.: Yeah, it's all there. There was a certificate or something.

Leo: My father cooked on the yacht. My father was the cook for seven or eight people and there was one deckhand. My father cooked real easy kine food for those rich people. But when they went on the Mississippi, and they landed there, and these rich people were known around, where they went, they asked---the white community asked my dad to come speak to the church because they'd never seen a Filipino who was educated, you know. They were like aborigines or something. And then, the following night, I think, or couple days later, the black community asked my dad to come down and speak to their community. They never saw somebody brown who was educated or going to college, you know.

A.C.: Who knows? He might have inspired some people to follow his leader.

Leo: A few! My father---look at some of these recommendations that my dad (murmuring) These white people talking about my father, you know! (Pause) Stuff like, uh, there was a word in here about my father's being intelligent and willing---if you read it, you can't but realize that these people were talking about someone beneath them. (reading) "He's found to be...keen, alert and intelligent of pleasing manner address, thoroughly trustworthy"

A.C.: So do you think those experiences helped shape your father? He looks like---it seemed like he could talk to anybody. He was so helpful. He offered his services to all kinds of people. People knew they could come and ask him for help.

Leo: Oh yeah. Within our family, uh, up until, right before he died, my father had taught relatives of ours, how to read blueprints. How to use the slide rule. Taught them math so they could better themselves. Taught my mother's husband. Now that's his ex-wife's husband, who worked Martin & MacArthur how to read blueprints and how to

read the ruler and tape measure so he could make furniture for Martin & MacArthur! He taught my cousin who retired from Naval Shipyard, higher mathematics and more blueprint reading, just how to read blueprints and he retired from Naval Shipyard.

A.C.: Great. Let's get back to when you were growing up in 'Aiea though. You went to 'Aiea Elementary School and the intermediate school, which went up to the eighth grade (actually went up to ninth grade). Is that correct?

Leo: It was Aiea Elementary and Intermediate. The classes before me, when they went to the ninth grade, Radford was just being built (Radford High School opened in 1957) so they went to either Radford or Waipahu. There was no Pearl City (High School which opened in 1973). There was no Moanalua (High School which was established in 1972).

A.C.: Why would kids in 'Aiea go all the way to Waipahu?

Leo: Because there's no other school for high school. The next one, over the hill, would be Wallace Rider Farrington (High School). So being that 'Aiea or Red Hill was the borderline for country, you went to Waipahu. The old Waipahu (High) School, which is now the Waipahu Intermediate, I believe.

A.C.: Did kids drive? Did they still have the train? Or did they take the O.R.&L. buses?

Leo: My sister then went by buses. O.R &L. And then, when my older brother was old enough to drive, he got his first car. He drove. But it was O.R.&L. Back then, there was no such thing as school buses. O.R &L. Oahu Railway and Land Company. And if you went all the way downtown to get off on Richards Street, you caught H.R.T. electric buses, but O.R.&L.---I remember going down Mikilua, past Lualualei Road, we had to stop because the train was coming out of the ammo dump, going along the (Wai'anae) coast. It was in the early fifties. Whether it was carrying ammo or not, I don't know. But my dad, also, had access to that. My dad had high-security clearance. We didn't even know what high-security clearance was. We didn't know what NASA was!

A.C.: But he could have gone into the Lualualei area?

Leo: Of course! I went with him.

Aiea High School

A.C.: But now, going back to the fact, that you got to attend the (Aiea) high school (which opened in 1961), you saw the high school being built then?

Leo: Yes!

A.C.: And what was there before?

Leo: Cane field.

A.C.: That was cane field?

Leo: Yeah.

A.C.: That was cleared?

Leo: That was-- the high school was being built. Enchanted (Hills)—Kaamilo Street back there was being built up. There was nothing but cane field there.

A.C.: That's right. So there weren't even the streets there.

Leo: Yeah. Enchanted Hill. Enchanted Hills was the lower part where the manager's house, where the big white house... Moanalua Road. Kaamilo. Never had the freeway. Have to show you where the Fujinaga chicken farm was, too (in Kalauao Valley).

Southshore Hospital

A.C.: Do you remember the Aiea Hospital?

Leo: The Aiea Hospital, the first name of that hospital was called Southshore.

A.C.: What? How do you spell that?

Leo: Southshore Hospital. Where my great-grandmother passed away. Then it became Leeward Clinic or Leeward Hospital for a while. That was the only hospital then.

A.C.: Do you remember that hospital, like in the early fifties?

Leo: Oh yeah! There used to be a veranda. Used go and sit out there. You know, old plantation style. There was this little haole girl whose father--- we never knew who she was. We know she was "high-muck-a-muck" haole girl, and little did I know, in my age of sixty, fifty-eight, fifty-nine years old, this little haole girl got her degree and worked for workers' compensation company. We sat and we reminisced because, "you remember that old Southshore Clinic?" "Yeah." "Well, my father was the chief-of-medical staff." "Oh, you must be one of the little rich haole girls who used to run around, think you owned the hospital." She said, "Yeah, yeah." Her name was Liljestrand (Dr. Paul Howard Liljestrand). I'm trying to think the older daughter's name. She was my workers' comp counselor up until last year.

A.C.: Small world! Small world, that you would grow up in 'Aiea.

Leo: Huh? Yeah! And she remembered. She said, "We remembered all the plantation kids used to come and see their sick relatives. We used to be there." I said, "Yeah. I said, "You guys were terrible! You guys used to ride the wheelchairs like you owned the damned place!" We used to laugh! We used to call that, used to have the old white ambulance. We used to call it, (laughs) "The Old Meat Market" because anybody who went to that hospital never came out alive. They dead! It was old plantation hospital. Normally, when you went to the hospital, if you're old, you went there, you died! That's it, you know.

A.C.: Nothing else could be done, I guess.

Leo: It was Southshore Medical Center or Southshore Hospital.

A.C.: And where was it?

Leo: Where (Kapi'olani Medical Center at) Pali Momi is right now. Up on the hill.

A.C.: That same corner?

Leo: Right on that corner. Because, you see, where Moanalua Road is, that was nothing but cane field. That mountain was cut down. You know the mountain right here, where Kaamilo and Moanalua Road is? Going down like that?

A.C.: So they did level it some?

Leo: Yeah, a little bit, so you come down like this, and you made a left along that stream, you go along the stream, you know where the hospital and California Pizza Kitchen is? That's Moanalua Road! That little road? That's Moanalua Road, all the way past Macy's until you come to Kaanoi. Ho, Moanalua Road never had all that!

A.C.: And it was a two-lane road, right?

Leo: Yeah. Right. Cracked up my car over there, watching this new, big screen of --(laughs)

Kam Drive-In

A.C.: The Kam Drive-In?

Leo: Yeah, Kam Drive-In, where my older brother became one of those ushers.

A.C.: Oh yeah?

Leo: Yeah. My brother was an usher at the Kam Highway Drive-In and when he moved to Waipahu, he was an usher at the Sunset Theatre. I remember when we were in high school. We used to sneak. Later, we know they already knew but you know, if they knew, they didn't say anything! The new guy came in, then he'd open the trunk and everybody piled out. One boy, one girl in the front seat. Or maybe two couples pay for the movie. But the car would be dead weight, down like that, going in. And four, five guys in the trunk, (voice goes higher) "Hurry up! I cannot breathe!" Franklin Souza. Steve Gifford, who became a fireman. Franklin Souza became a painter. Harry Akana, who owned the Akana junkyard. All--- we used to all, growing up in 'Aiea as a baby boomer was the best time of my life. Went swimming in the reservoir. I didn't even know the name of the reservoir until you showed me the map.

A.C.: But there were lots of places to do things. There were lots of fun places you could go and spend the money at?

Leo: There was going up on Aiea Heights Drive was like a stone wall. Was so smooth, you could ride, on your blue jeans, you could slide down, all the way down.

Ohara Store

A.C.: What was on either side of it?

Leo: Homes! Just like you see where Aiea Medical Center was? The Kurodas had their home there. Across the street where the shopping center, the bowling alley is? Used to be the Ohara Market. And when the big time came, was when you buy a Coke from a vending machine for a nickel!

A.C.: And it was cold!

Leo: Was cold! Had ice. Had ice. And you could buy a Milk Nickel for a nickel!

Mr. Leo Patacsil Sr. at ED & DON'S of Hawaii

But my dad spoke five languages. And right, prior to his retirement, he took up Japanese. And he would speak Japanese with Mr. and Mrs. Ohara, who owned Ohara Market. And if you closed your eyes, or if you were in another---you heard this guy speaking Japanese, and you came around the corner, and you saw this short little Filipino guy, dark like chocolate, he was speaking; you'd think, "This guy Japanese or what?" Because my father could speak Japanese. I picked up bits and phrases from him, when I went into the tourism business. But my dad could speak, read and write five languages (Philippine dialects, English, Spanish, German and Japanese). My brother and I at one time, worked at ED & DON'S Candy, and we had omiyage. I was working at the City & County (of Honolulu) as a computer operator. My brother needed someone to drive a delivery van

part-time, which was me. That's how I learned to drive buses from way back. I drove trucks. We handled the omiyage going back to the airport. Okay? We needed somebody who could take orders in Japanese. We had one girl but she couldn't work seven days a week. So, my brother said, "You know what? Go hire Dad." I said, "I cannot be my father's boss! Are you nuts?" "Okay. We'll hire Dad." Just, "Dad doesn't know what to do. You better tell him what to do." I said, "Why don't you? You're the vice-president of the company, ED & DON'S." "No! You're older than me! That's going to be your (job)." So. I had to be boss to my dad. Tell him, "Okay. This is the label. We want you to write it in Japanese." I don't know what kind of Japanese. But the label of the box of macadamia nuts going to Japan; we need the address in, whatever. My father said, "Oh. Katakana or hiragana?" I said, "What the hell you talking about? I don't know. Just in Japanese." Papa said, "Well, what do you want? Katakana or hiragana?" My dad could draw Japanese characters. And he'd write them in English. And in the evenings, when I worked, when I went to work there part-time, he rode with from 'Aiea. Sat behind the desk. Took orders. Practiced his Japanese language. And it all came to pass, where (Chuckles) how many sons can say, "Oh, my father was one of my workers." Usually it's the other way around. And my younger brother, being vice-president of ED & DON'S and the head candy maker, he didn't want to be boss to my father. But he said, "You know, we need somebody. Go hire Dad." I said, "Why me? You're the vice-president of the company!"

Waimalu Shopping Center

That's a great family story. Getting back to 'Aiea, do you remember when Pearlridge (Center) was being built? [Pearlridge Uptown opened in 1972 and Pearlridge Downtown opened in 1976]

Leo: When Pearlridge was being built? Yeah, of course!

A.C.: And the apartments going up? Do you remember what the community felt about that?

Leo: Back then, there was mixed reaction. We couldn't--- it happened so, sort of---it wasn't one big explosion. It was little by little. Before time, there was 'Aiea, cane field, then Waimalu (Shopping Center) came up. O-o-oh! Big time. (Wallace K.) Kazama opened Waimalu (Shopping Center with its grand opening on March 14, 1963), you know. More cane field and then Pearl City. What's in-between there now, was just gradually built.

'Aiea Stream

You know where the golf course is? We used to take go take our BB gun and our pellet gun to hunt doves. Pack two tuna sandwiches, one canteen water, go hiking. That was the mountains, where I was playing. Even when we used to--- my sister used to make sandwiches for her brothers, we said, "We're going hiking today." But going up to 'Aiea

Loop Trail, we used to call it “Trail One.” It was too far. So we used to go up across the mountain to ‘Aiea Stream down Kaulainaa Street in the valley? ... Go right across the stream, but we never know, “How come funny kine stone walls over here?” ... Yeah, in our valley! You know, Kaulainaa Street is in the valley... Kaulainaa means “Squid drying place.” That’s where the Hawaiians used to come and dry their octopus. “He‘e.” Octopus. “Squid drying place.”

A.C.: I didn’t know that.

Leo: In that valley, behind Mrs. Raymond’s house, which (inaudible) the camps, the Nishikawas, different Nishikawas, all that homes, there’s a stream. We used to go across that stream and play in that mountains. We used to go hunt doves and we’d come up to the flume, toward the end. There’s a pipe that goes up into the flume, where the water came. We’d swim in the flume and somebody would catch you before the water went underneath. We used to go on the inner tubes. Okay? Back then, it was girls or boys, didn’t matter. You’d swim in your panties and BVD. Nobody cared.

Bomb shelters near Aiea Intermediate School

There were bomb shelters (above) where the sugar mill is. Where the Aiea Intermediate is now. There were bomb shelters...where the school is. We used to pass the bomb shelters going to school in the cane field. That’s where the Navy put bomb shelters. We used to play over there. Eventually, as progress came, they took out the bomb shelters. You could still see the telephone pole trail going up to where the reservoir was. If you had to settle a fight. someone say, “Eh! Leo and Frankie going to fight at the paper tree!” We’d settle things man-to-man. You fight by the paper tree. Everybody would watch. And if you got lickings, you got lickings, okay? Then you shake hands and go have soda together. You became good friends, but you settle it. “You stole paper from me from fourth grade, eh!” (he bangs the table) “Fight you after school.” Then the word goes out, “Eh! Beef, after school! Beef after school!” “Who?” “Lippy! Joe Canterbury or so!” You know, so-and-so. You fight. You settle it. You know nowadays--- back then, nobody pulled knife. Nobody pulled gun. You fight! In fact, my brother gave me licking when I had a fight, because I wen cry. This guy was bigger than me. He stole my folder paper. I was seventh grade. He was ninth grade. He took my folder paper. I couldn’t fight back, so I wen challenge him to a fight. Wrong! Outweighed me by thirty pounds. Taller than me by three inches. But I was going to fight him because, you know, honor was there, and people would say, “Oh brah, you going to let him get away with that!” And a good-looking girl was watching to see what I was going to do. Valerie Trinidad. Never knew what happened to her. Oh, I was in love with that girl, but we had to go fight. Word got around. By fifth period, everybody was aching for a good fight and all of sudden, we all went up to the paper tree, right by that big silver water tank. Takes off his shirt. Slap your muscles (slaps his arms) and I got dirty lickings! And I wen cry. My older brother, he just sat there watch me get dirty licking, and when I started to cry, my older brother picked me up, slapped me couple times, threw me in the flume so I could clean up, but he threw me in the flume and beat up the other guy for me! And then when

everything was broken up, I said, “I want to go Yoshimura store, I like buy soda.” No! Get home. My brother kicked my okole all the way up that Cane Haul Road for crying when I wen fight. For crying. Not that I lost. So the guy was bigger than me, but I wen fight. But for crying! “Nobody cry. What’s the matter with you?” Kick my okole all the way the drive. I neveh forget. I was seventh grade.

Bette Midler and Melveen Leed at Aiea Intermediate School

(Mentions that he was at the intermediate school when his brother married Stephanie Koslowski. Mentions her brother and sister.) Their next door neighbor was Bette Midler. I went to school with Bette Midler. I mean, you know, we knew of Bette Midler. Bette Midler was weird.

A.C.: Even then, she was “different”?

Leo: Yeah. I was seventh grade. Bette Midler was eighth grade. Back then, getting into seventh grade was big time, because you got to change class. You get to go from room to room, right, just like high school kids.” One of the girls that used to cut class with us to go swimming was Melveen Leed... Melveen Leed’s a singer. Melveen Leed, later on, went to Radford, but intermediate days? When she was from Halawa? When the new Halawa housing (came up)? (Leo recalls a lunch wagon outside the fence. This was well-known for its cone sushi and sweet potato tempura. “Walter’s Wagon” was owned by the same man who had a small saimin stand and a restaurant in the lower Halawa Housing. This was close to the Halawa Fire Station. His brother-in-law worked at that fire station.)

Halawa Theatre, Halawa Shopping Center, Snowflake Bakery

The old Halawa housing where my mother lived. Saratoga Drive. Where the fifty-yard line was, where the open-air theatre that my dad used to take us to. Open-air theatre. Right on Salt Lake Boulevard. In the middle cane field was one theatre.

A.C.: In Halawa Housing, there would be a theatre?

Leo: Right. You know where Salt Lake Boulevard is? Right before the bridge? You know the little bridge? By Aloha Stadium parking lot, there’s a little bridge.

A.C.: Is it close to the cemetery side or is it the bridge that’s closer to the (U.S.S. *Arizona*) memorial?

Leo: No, no, no. They got a small little bridge where the (Halawa) stream’s going. You know where they have the freeway---

A.C.: Oh, oh, yeah! Yeah, it’s like the culvert comes down.

Leo: Yeah, the culvert. Oh, there used to be a river. We used to go swimming over there. Used to be old Halawa stream. That was the lower Halawa Housing back then. That's before uh, there was the public, I'm talking about the fifties. Used to go swimming over there. (Leo recalls that Halawa Stream was called the Dam by the kids who went swimming.) Used to have one old restaurant. That was a theatre. There was an open-air theatre.

A.C.: You know, near that Halawa Housing, was this where that shopping center was? (A.C. shows photographs of Halawa Shopping Center with the Piggly Wiggly Supermarket)

Leo: Yeah! ... You know where the cemetery stay, right on the corner of 'Aiea? Right there. They used to have one bakery down there, too... You know where the interchange is? If you're coming down Kam Highway, you can go this way, up to Red Hill and go to this way. It's a little mountain over there. You can see remnants of that mountain where the graveyard was? That's where this was. We used to get haircuts over there for fifty cents, from a Filipino barber. That's Piggly Wiggly where my uncle used to work. And the man I used to caddy for, because he worked at Piggly Wiggly. His name was Billy Arakawa, the first head pro at Mililani (Golf Course).

A.C.: And your uncle's name?

Leo: My uncle worked at Piggly Wiggly. Lorenzo Alfechi.

A.C.: And was this as big as the plantation store?

Leo: Oh, this is bigger. This is back in the twenties, or thirties, right? The Halawa Shopping Center.

A.C.: I'm not sure what year this was.

Leo: You had to go up the hill. There used to be a, I think, a Ben Franklin® or Stewart's Pharmacy. There was a barbershop. There was a bakery. Oh, you could smell the bread when you're on Kam Highway, driving. You know, you know, the overpass where St. Elizabeth's is? You're on Kam Highway. You're coming down this way. Used to get the Flying A Kuroda service station. Okay. That's where the old Halawa Shopping Center used to be. Piggly Wiggly. The supermarket. There used to be a barbershop. A shoe repair. Lot of that stuff moved to the old Moanalua Shopping Center, which they had broke down and rebuilt. The barbershop was there. And when they built---progress came by, and they knocked that mountain down. You know across from Richardson Field? There's an overpass coming from St. Elizabeth's Church? Right up there. That whole big section. It used to have one---you had a bakery. I believe, if my history serves me right, that bakery was Snowflake Bakery [run by Spencer Weaver who later developed Spencecliff restaurants], which was the Snowflake Bakery that came from Kaimuki, I think, and later on, that bakery that we used to smell all that good-looking

bread, was bought out and became Holsum. I think that's the way it went. I may be wrong, but I think that's the way it went. But we never have to go all the way to Kalihi to Liberty Bakery to buy French bread for my great-grandmother. We went to that bakery.

A.C.: You could just do it right in your neighborhood. You know, um, I want to change the topic since we're talking about that area, but recently Rainbow Park got all that stuff cleared away. Rainbow Park is now to the left of McGrew Point. There's a park down there. Recently they cleared all the stuff (shoreline bushes and trees)—

Leo: And they put a bathroom over there.

A.C.: Yeah, but if you notice, to the left-hand side of that, between the boathouse and Rainbow Park, they cleared all of the mangroves. Have you noticed that lately? Anyway, what was the shoreline like? From behind Halawa Shopping Center?

Leo: Overgrowth. It wasn't as nice as it is now. You're talking right across, what's the name of that, old Willy's Market.

A.C.: Willy's Market?

Leo: Yeah. You know that big green building where it used to be Napa (Auto Parts)? Now it's a running store with shoes and stuff, and in that parking lot, then you've got Dixie Grill. Used to be Willy's Market.

A.C.: Willy's Market? Wilbert Ho?

Leo: I don't know who owned it. Willy's Market and right next to it, used to be the service station my brother used to work in. He was his first job. When he got older, he became the tow truck operation, but my brother used to pump gas, fix tires. Steven's Super Service, back in the fifties and the middle sixties. My older brother.

A.C.: And after that was Forty Niner.

Leo: Oh, Forty Niner was there forever. The Chagamis. Chester was my classmate. We used to beat up Chester whenever we'd get free *saimin* every once in a while. But Chester was, you know, we're like brothers, you know. "Chester, I no more money, you go your uncle's place." "Oh, you hungry? Oh, I cannot do that." "Oh, come on, Chester." Slap your head... That was I think, today you'd call that hijacking. That was selling them insurance.

Joe Moore at Aiea High School

Joe Moore was like that. (Pulls out the 1964 Aiea High School yearbook) I borrowed so much quarters from Joe Moore and the girls of 'Aiea. Ah shucks! Yeah, Jon Wakayama, our class photographer. All these pictures by him? If my pictures never were printed in

this annual, three times, dirty lickings from him. This guy, Ebiya, became a personnel manager for Standard Oil California. San Francisco. Mr. Ikehara, my band teacher. Helped me stuff envelopes for Ben Cayetano and George Ariyoshi. I was at the Young Democrats. Now, let's see, Joe Moore. (turning pages) Joe Moore was the class president, believe it or not. (turning pages) The old Aiea gym. I remember that too. Okay, the senior class. That's the baseball team. Our cheerleaders. First year in the OIA, we lost only one game. We went to Kailua High School. It was a double-whammy for us. We lost the championship game... I think we played it at Kailua or Radford, when we played the championship. The OIA was never split up, you know, white and blue. (Softly) I want to find Joe's picture. When he was on KGMB television, (A.C. exclaims when shown the yearbook picture) Joe Moore used to be football star! Eh! He was equipment manager as far as we're concerned, water boy, third string. But Joe was a good guy. Joe never graduated with us. His father, senior year, I think, it was his senior year that he was supposed to graduate with us, his father got transferred. Joe Moore and his father had a unique thing. Father and son both served in Vietnam at the same time, in the same company... His father got, you know, it was Camp Smith or someplace where the father, and Joe had to go follow him. But Joe was there from the time the school was being built, too. He's two years younger than me. My kid brother's classmate.

A.C.: We're going to have to wrap up in a few minutes, and we will pick this up again. I will continue interviewing you. Can you tell your family's recollections of December 7, 1941? Was your father already in school (on the mainland)? But your mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, (they) didn't talk about it?

Leo: Remember my father didn't come to Hawai'i until later. He graduated from the University of Illinois in 1942. Now, right after he graduated in 1942, he got conscripted by the U.S. Army to go and work at Rock Island Arsenal.

A.C.: Oh, so that's how he did his service, then. He was conscripted to work, like doing defense kind of work.

Leo: Yeah. Right out of college, my father became a civil-service worker.

A.C.: And your family wasn't affected by the building of the freeway through 'Aiea?

Leo: Our home and everything? No. My father's Kaulainaha e Club. No. We're way up the heights, but my father was active with the old (Aiea Community Association). As the years went by, my father got older and the community association stopped being a community association, afterwards, for a while. But back in the fifties, my dad was very active with the Aiea Community Association. Our family, like I said, our house was built in 1948. We moved in 1949. And then, Dad raised five kids by himself after my mom and dad divorced. He never remarried; made sure we went to church every Sunday. And uh, growing up in 'Aiea town, was the best years of my life.

Businesses on 'Aiea Heights Drive

I can tell you where the old post office was. The old post office was where the Shell Service Station is. That's where the bus stop was. I remember where the "old malt shop" (Aiea Grill), the old barbershop used to be. I graduated in '64. That used to be our hangout. Cutting classes, stupid thing, cutting class, you know.

A.C.: Do you remember the train stopped coming?

Leo: Pardon me? I don't remember the train ever coming to 'Aiea. I remember the trucks picking up the cane field workers at the community center where the Aiea Star Theater was, which is now where Aiea Shopping Center is... Oh yeah, the trucks used to come, pick up the workers, they would get in, go to the fields. I remember when Oahu Sugar went on strike. The old pumping station was in the corner of the parking lot where that... (Recycling trailer) right in Aiea (Shopping Center) parking lot at the end where Starbucks is in there? Well, that whole area, the Aiea Shopping Center was our community center. Tucked away in the corner where the old Aiea Chop Suey is, used to be Aiea Star Theatre. But there's an open field.

St. Elizabeth's Church Drum and Bugle Team

Did you know that 'Aiea had a drum and bugle team from St. Elizabeth's? Yeah. Half of the boys were all Filipino from Filipino Camp or Aiea Heights.

A.C.: They must have looked good!

Leo: Oh, St. Elizabeth's Drum and Bugle Team used to practice all the time. The Yurong brothers.

A.C.: Is that a nickname?

Leo: No. The Yurongs. That was their name. Norman Yurong. Grew up. You see, in our valley, Y-U-R-O-N-G. Laurence Yurong had three sons. Leo Patacsil had three sons. We grew up on the same street. When our house was being built, my dad bought me and my brothers to see our house was being built. The Yurong brothers were stealing wood and sand from our pile. We said, "Eh! What you doing on our property!" So the lower Kaulainahee Street was ruled by the Yurongs. The upper Kaulainahee Street was ruled by the Patacsil brothers, but we all became like brothers later on. Norman Yurong became a sergeant in the police department. "Butchie" Yurong. My family name (for me) was "Butch" too. They called me "Butch." "Butchie" Yurong was the shipyard worker. Danny Yurong was at, later on, he went to the seminary. He dropped out of the seminary. Then he became the head of the ambulance service for the City and County of Honolulu. He retired. I went to the retirement ceremony when he and his brother Norman retired, twenty-five years service at the Blaisdell Center. Norman became an agriculture inspector, a screener at the airport. Danny became head of the ambulance

service out at Pearl Harbor. Okay. The Yurong brothers, Norman and Danny both played---Norman and “Butch” both played bugle. One-button bugle. It wasn’t the flugle. It was a bugle.

The Filipino boys, uh, the ones that used to blow the trumpets when our flag was raising up. We had not, canned music, you know, we had guys from the drum and bugle team. One guy a week would blow the bugle when the flag was raised at Aiea Intermediate. Real bugle. Was beautiful. When Aiea Sugar Mill (horn) blew, that’s when the trumpet went off. You had to be in class. That means, everybody in school by eight.

A.C.: You mean, when the mill’s work horn would blow, everyone knew that they had to be in class?

Leo: Oh, seven forty-five! You had to be in class. At eight o’clock, you would be in class already. Five minutes to eight. Either five minutes to eight, or at eight o’clock, this guy named Clemente, we used to call him “Menty” would grab his bugle, walk outside to the flagpole. (He mentioned that Antonio “Tony” Roldan used to play too.) Two guys on the J.P.O. unit would raise the flag and he would play. Face the school and play his trumpet.

A.C.: No recording. They’d play it live.

Leo: Oh, play it live. Yeah!

St. Elizabeth’s Church Parades

A.C.: And then, when the drum and bugle corps for St. Elizabeth’s... when would you guys perform?

Leo: Oh. When they would have parades in ‘Aiea. They would perform for the different communities. My sister got voted Cinco de Mayo queen and there was a parade from ‘Aiea ball field to St. Elizabeth’s Church. My sister had to walk and they carried a statue of St. Elizabeth’s, which is right in front of the church.

A.C.: The church used to have a parade?

Leo: Oh yeah! Cinco de Mayo. Flores de Mayo, also. They had a CYOB baseball team. They used to play baseball. Baseball was big-time in this plantation town! Up in the OIA ball field.

Aiea Community Association Carnival

We used to have a carnival every year.

A.C.: Where would that be?

Leo: You know, Aiea Ball Park. Yeah. Down by the gym. Oh yeah. Everybody looked forward to that. Every year. That's when the Aiea Community Association used to make money. When you had a dollar scrip, if you buy one book for five dollars, you could have a ball!

A.C.: So, they'd have rides, like from E.K. Fernandez?

Leo: Oh yeah. They had the kine, not the nice kine rides they have now at E.K. Fernandez, but E.K. Fernandez was there. And Wally Yee was another carnival operator. And then Wally Yee died, and then there was only E.K. Fernandez. But Wally Yee rides. You had the swing. You had your merry-go-round. Bumper cars were popular then. Cotton candy.

Businesses near Aiea High School

I mean, you know, you could buy, growing up in upper 'Aiea used to be the Koizumi Barber Shop. Used to be one feed store which is now the laundromat. Okay? After the feed store was the Fuji Store. And little did I know, that Mr. Fuji's son Clarence Fuji, he and I would be computer operators for the City & County of Honolulu data center, later on, in my years. Okay? And he remembered me. "Damn, you little punk! You used to come steal gum!" "Yeah, that's me!" "You're working with me? I can't believe this stuff!" His name was "Buster" Fuji. Okay? Next to the Fuji Store was Mrs. Kanda's Saimin Stand, which later on, became Mrs. Omiya's Saimin Stand, when they moved from Down Theatre up, and Mrs. Kanda wen retired. Okay?

Jordon: Is that the same Omiya Store that opened until the mid-nineties?

Leo: What? The Mrs. Kanda's (stand)?

A.C.: No, the Omiya.

Leo: Oh, Mrs. Omiya's was open all the way up to the mid-nineties.

Jordon: I went to school with one of the Omiyas. I guess, the daughter something? On field trips, when we came back from field trips, we would always stop by Omiya's and have saimin.

Leo: Kanda's, used to be Mrs. Kanda. Mrs. Kanda made the best ten-cent cone sushi. You could buy a forty-cent plate lunch. You had two hamburger patties. Plenty gravy over two scoops rice. A macaroni salad and a Green River (Soda). Winner.

END OF INTERVIEW