BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: PATRICK WONG, retired teacher

Patrick Arnold Jack Wong was born June 6, 1899 in Papaikou on the Big Island. His father had emigrated from China in the 1880s. Very soon after Patrick's birth, his parents moved to Waialua, where his father became an interpreter for W.W. Goodale, first manager of Waialua Sugar Company.

Patrick left Waialua at an early age to go to St. Louis High School, the University of Dayton and later to Hong Kong and Brazil, but he still has many memories of his childhood there.

In Hong Kong, Patrick's marriage to a girl from Canton was arranged. They were married and had eight children, two of whom died in infancy. In 1953, Patrick's family returned to Hawaii. He then worked for American Security Bank until his retirement.

At present Patrick, now a widower, lives with his son's family in Kahaluu. He makes daily trips to Chinatown to visit old friends and write letters for those who cannot read or write.
(The following are notes from an unrecorded preliminary interview. Information later repeated for a taped interview is not included in the notes here.)

Mr. Wong's father had a store just a quarter-mile away from the mill. He closed shop in 1917 because the plantation manager, Mr. Goodale, allowed the Japanese to open their own shops thereby decreasing Wong's father's business. Mr. Goodale is described as "a real aristocrat" who "never wasted a smile."

Wong's family had a cottage ten yards away from their store. A few hundred yards from their house was a Japanese school. There he studied Japanese for two and a half years at his father's suggestion. His ability to speak Japanese helped immensely during the War when he was living in Hong Kong which was then being occupied by the Japanese. The Japanese soldiers became kinder as soon as he spoke even a little Japanese.

Wong attended the old St. Louis High School on River Street. Tuition was two dollars a month. He lived on Vineyard Street and washed dishes, cooked and set tables to earn money. A St. Louis graduate would earn $75 a month at a commercial job in contrast to $65 a month for a regular graduate because St. Louis students were known for their good handwriting.

During the 1918 flu (1920?) mostly Japanese died because they put ice on their heads so the flu turned into pneumonia. The Chinese remedy was white sweet potato, dried oysters and gai choi (mustard cabbage) boiled together and drunk.

A Chinese man, Mr. Liu, had a boil on his finger so painful and itchy that he could not eat or sleep. Neither plantation doctor nor the Chinese herb doctors could cure him. Wong's father successfully tried a medication he read about in an old medicine book: sesame oil and gam cho (anise) mixed together and put on the boil.
VL: This is an interview with Mr. Patrick Wong. Today is August 27th, 1976. We're at the Hawaii Chinese History Center Office.

PW: Correct.

VL: Okay, Mr. Wong, could you tell me when and where you were born?

PW: I was born in Papaiko on the Big Island, 1899, June the 6th.

VL: And your father....

PW: Was Wong Hau. He was a camp boss in Papaikou. He had five hundred Chinese working under him.

VL: Could you tell me how he came from China to United States?

PW: He went to San Francisco first when he was only 17 years old. And then because he could speak English, he was chosen by Colonel Austin of Papaikou, I think. Then he went to China a couple of times and get hold of more laborers for the plantation in Hilo.

VL: Do you know why he left China to come to United States?

PW: All the Chinese in that area, they all will go to the United States to be laundry men. He was a laundry man for some time.

VL: In San Francisco?

PW: Yeah, yes. Right.

VL: What area is that in China that he came from?

PW: Oh, he came from the See Yup District. See Yup District. That's why up to today in San Francisco, you have all See Yup talkers. They all talk See Yup because they were there. They run laundry since those days. And my father used to carry a load of laundry. Yeah. And then when he heard about opening of sugar plantation in Hawaii. So, therefore, he thought, well, "We go over." So he came over. That's all.
VL: Were there recruiters in San Francisco to....

PW: No, not here. But when he heard that they were putting up a plantation, he came over. That's all.

VL: How did he learn to speak English?

PW: That's a funny thing, because he actually had only two years of Chinese.

VL: School?

PW: Yeah. Then he had to work in the fields, you see. But when he reach San Francisco, he found out that if he wants to get ahead, he has to learn English. And he learned to keep on talking, that's all. He could only write English in his own name. That's all. For any other words, he doesn't know a word, because he learn just like a child. You know, the child can learn English without knowing any words. He learned it that way. And he could speak pretty good. Then when he went to--he was supposed to get out to work in the fields just like any other laborer.

VL: At Papaikou?

PW: At Papaikou. Then they found out that.....one day, I think he ordered---in those days, they walk around, they have lanterns, eh. To walk from one district to another (with) kerosene lamps because no electric lights, eh. (Laughs) And then I think he ordered that and a pair of pants or something from the plantation store. They made a mistake without charging him for the lantern or something. Then he went up and talk to the accountant, eh. Well, on the day he say, "Eh, you did not charge me for this." And they were only getting $12.50 a month.

VL: $12.50 a month?

PW: Yeah. And then there was ten hours of work for $10.50 a month.

VL: What kind of field work did he do?

PW: Oh, just hoe. Just do irrigate....the sugar cane. Then the fellow heard him talking English. Then they said, "Eh, you better come up and talk to the manager, Colonel Austin." He said, alright, he come up. And he was a very trusted person. Colonel Austin took him very seriously. And then, afterwards, he was even made the head of all the Chinese there because he could talk English, eh. Well, naturally, he was not only there, but in the courts of Hilo, they require him as a interpreter. He wouldn't...

VL: Did he get paid for all this?

PW: Yes, of course, he got paid for it. Not much, of course, in those
days. Cheap, eh. And then there was one case that should be recorded. I know that it should be. In those days, they have slave drivers from after the Civil War in the States. They came over to be lunas, foreman, the lunas. Hawaiian word for a luna. I got hold of this thing by my cousin who died a few years ago. He remembered the whole thing. Another, of course, a lot of these fellows, Wongs, eh, because my father was a Wong and he go grab hold of all those fellows. "Oh, you want to go to Hawaii? Come on!" And then that's how they came, you see. And then, one of the foremen—if you check up in the archives, you may know what his name is. I don't know. Because one of the foremens, when the gang of workmen would finish working in the field, they going home. But this foreman, a white man from the South, I think he must be, he liked to use his horsewhip. That was a sad thing. They going home! Why he want to whip them for? He just like to have a—what you call. He just like to make use of a whip and the horsewhip. And he whip this fellow. He was rolling on the ground, eh. And they keep on whipping, eh. And then what happened was this. He yelled to the nephew. He said, "Hey, nephew, if you want me, you better come and help!" He was rolling on the ground. He was just whipping. This youngster, he was only 19 years old.

VL: The one being whipped?

PW: No. That was the uncle...that was being whipped. I think it has to be in the papers somewhere. 1898-99. 1898, I think. This nephew of Wong Tin. His name was Wong Tin. I remember the name, even. (Laughs) Wong Tin. He just grab hold of his hoe. He went up there and that fellow was whipping the uncle. He just use the hoe and crack the fellow right here (forehead). Whack! That piece of bone went inside and he dropped dead. (Laughs) Drop dead. And naturally, he went to hide, eh. But my father think it's silly to hide. They'll get you anyway. So my father ask him, "You go and give yourself up." When the people went to the house and told my father that Wong Tin already killed the white foreman, my father said, "Tell him to go give himself up the police station." (Laughs) I think my father spent four days and four nights figure how to save his life. (Laughs) Ever since I could remember my father has white hair. Ever since I could remember. (Laughs) My father used to have a queue. In 1904, he had the queue cut, eh. Most of the Chinese in those days have queues, eh. They get the long hair and then bundle it up. And then they tie it, the thing around the head.

VL: Why did he cut it?

PW: Because of one Chinese reformer, Kang You Wei. Kang You Wei. K-A-N-G Y-O-U-U, I think. Wei. W-E-I. He's a big reformer, a great writer. Oh, yeah. He even petitioned the king in those days. He even went up and petitioned the king that they have to cut the hair and then women should not bound their feet.

VL: So this spread to Hawaii?
PW: No, not exactly spread to Hawaii. But my father will admire him so much that he went and had the hair cut, eh. (Laughs)

VL: Okay. What happened to Wong Tin?

PW: Alright. My father tried hard to have the case—try hard to exonerate that guy. But somehow, one of the interpreter—they didn't allow my father to be interpreter—but one half-Hawaiian, half Chinese. In those days, they have already. And then, the witnesses were a little frightened. My father have to say that, "Well, tell him that he was beating that Wong Tin also." You see. In that case, he'd be justified for killing this....(Laughs) My father knew the laws pretty well. But, the verdict was, oh, it was a big case! The Chinese consul of his Imperial Government took a trip up to Hilo to witness the trial. Then the judge fine him only five years in prison. My father got him out in three years. Parole. And after his parole, that time we were in Waialua. You see, when I was a month old, he had to change— he follow Goodale to start that plantation in Waialua. In those days, a lot of Chinese work in the plantations, too, eh. And also, they have Chinese working in the sugar mill. I used to know those people very young.

VL: Can you tell me how Goodale--this is Mr. Goodale--how he got your father....

PW: Yes. I don't know the details. But when he wanted somebody who could speak English to help him to recruit the Chinese to work in the Waialua Plantation, you see. But there were a lot of Japanese came right in. Lot of Japanese came in, and they were doing pretty good work. And the Chinese were....I remember one Mr. Fung. He's a Chinese engineer. He took care of all the machinery in the mill. And then there was one old man who was real good engineer, by the name of Dickens, you see. A Mr. Dickens. I think his daughter taught me when I was a little kid, eh. And in those real old days, the Japanese gradually come in more and more. And then they even recruit Koreans. And whenever they had a batch of Koreans who come in, we were the ones in our shop—we have a big range, a Chinese wok, eh, to do the cooking and so forth. To prepare the first two meals for that men when they came into Waialua. And I remember those days. I think I come across some Koreans, they say, "Oh, yes, I remember when we were working there." (Laughs.)

VL: Can you describe what your father did exactly for Mr. Goodale?

PW: Oh. He was just a simply interpreter. Whenever there's anything to be done where they require an interpretation, all my father. And then my father has a shop. Only about a few hundred yards from the sugar mill, you see. After a few years, he forgot my father. Because then...

VL: He didn't need an interpreter any more?

PW: No, he doesn't need any more because they have Japanese interpreter.
Japanese were coming in. When we were in there having our own store, selling things like that....well....he supposed to take care my father. But if there ever was an aristocrat American, he's the man. He won't smile. Stern all the time. Tall. Stern. He has nothing left now. The son was kill when he went out the Kahuku way. He flying a plane and drop, eh. That's the oldest son. And daughter, Catherine, I think she died already. I have to ask my---she used to be in Honolulu. Those are the only two. And then, you see, Goodale, when there are more Japanese coming in to work in the field, he has to satisfy them. He allowed the Japanese to put up their shops. And naturally, all go to buy things from the Japanese shops. They leave our store alone. And our store were only supplying to the dwindling---getting fewer and fewer Chinese, eh.

VL: Why were the Chinese getting fewer and fewer?

PW: Because more Japanese come in.

VL: And so the Chinese left?

PW: Yeah, left. They found out that they can get a better wages some other place, eh. Then they left. They just started leaving, eh. Up to the time of 1914, '15, there was still a few hundred Chinese.

VL: In Waialua?

PW: In Waialua. And in Waialua at that time, on the Waialua side, not far from the Waialua school, there used to be a Chinatown there. There used to be a Chinatown when Chun Tim (owner of Yee Hop Store) was there, eh. When that Yee Hop store was there. And then, further over, in Haleiwa, there's a Yee Chan. The store. But, I forgot what's the name now. That Sam Wong's....I think he's around. The father used to have a dry good store in Chinatown. And there was even the Chinese drugstore. And Chinese restaurant and so forth around Waialua. And now all gone. All gone. And then, they have one part Chinese. He put up a big family. That's Achiu. Leong Achiu. Leong Achiu. And then they have another Chinese shop near the bridge over in Waialua. Just below the bridge there. I remember that well.

VL: So, quite a few Chinese stores and restaurants?

PW: Oh yes. That time, quite a few Chinese stores. The Wong Lee before. And that Lew. That Hook Chen's father. He had a shop over there in Waialua side. You go there, you see Chinatown. You see all Chinese talking and they play Pai Gau. 'As the Chinese...

VL: What is that?

PW: Pai Gau is a Chinese domino. Playing that kind of game. We no more Mah Jong those days, eh. No Mah Jong. They don't know anything about Mah Jong. Oh, they have even the Chinese druggist. They have one Chinese restaurant. I think we used to like to go there to buy one of the best coconut pies I ever tasted. You know, they chop up
the roasted peanut and then they mix up with a shredded coconut. Oh! That taste so good! (Laughs) I wish somebody will make that.

VL: How much for one slice?
PW: Oh, that time 25¢.
VL: For the whole pie?
PW: Of course. Even less...
VL: Was that a treat for you?
PW: Oh yes. We used to go there whenever we go over, we buy. Because real good. The crust, everything made good. And the Chinese make bread there, too. All kinds. Then that time---what's it called there? That Ho. I think that Ho has a daughter working for the Hawaiian-Chinese bank. I don't know what you call that bank. Opposite to....on King Street. K. J. Look's bank. Don't you know that bank right here, Central Pacific Bank. Right opposite, there's one Chinese bank. K.J. Look's bank. That's another bank. What they call it? Hawaiian National Bank. And then the Bishop Bank call itself First Hawaiian Bank. This one is Hawaiian National Bank. Well, oh, those days.

VL: Can you give me some examples of your father interpreting for Mr. Goodale?
PW: Yeah.
VL: I think you told once about where a man was killed in an explosion. Can you tell about that?
PW: Yeah. Right, right. You see, those days, they have certain pumps, eh. Those steam pumps for the irrigation. And I remember that pump well. I think the Pump #2, they call it. Not the Pump #3 is way up the hills. But that's #2 on the way---I think I can still point out the place. I think they still have the pump there for irrigation. And there's this fellow by the name of Yung Kwai. His name Yung Kwai. He was taking care of the pump. And then the boiler exploded. And he was, of course all...they say that the feet, the whole thing came out like a....you know, after the boiler, the steam was so terrific, that the whole thing came out, look like a shoe. The whole feet, eh. (Laughs) That somebody describing that to me. And then soon as the thing happen, Goodale, of course, he has to come and get my father. I remember it was after 2 o'clock in the morning or 3 o'clock in the morning. And then my father had to go out and help him carry the thing. Help him---they were carrying him in a stretcher to the hospital. And then, that man, he died in a few days, eh. They didn't know how....I remember the father---at the time, there was a Chinese plantation, rice plantation in Mokuleia. The brother of somebody was working there. And then they came. And then my father, he say---nobody would do a thing like this--but my father went after Goodale
and said that he has a family in China, and you have to give him—I think he got back about three or four hundred dollars. That time, plenty money, you know. And then my father help him to send the money back. That's why these Loong Doo people, they like my father so much, eh. Others will never bother with it, eh. But my father, always like that. He was a very helpful person.

VL: That was the province that this Yung Kwai was from? Loong Doo province?

PW: Yeah. Loong Doo district. In hong San. Well, I have to be going.

END OF INTERVIEW
VL: This is the second interview with Mr. Pat Wong. Today is August 31st, 1976. Okay. Can you tell me some about your early school days in Waialua?

PW: Yes. In those early days, that Waialua School was open when we were about six years old. And then we had to walk the distance from the sugar mill over to Waialua, unless there's a rain or something. Then we paid the 25¢ to get the horse hack.

VL: How far was it?

PW: I think about two and a half miles at least. Two and a half miles at least. Maybe three miles. We keep on walking, go through two bridges, and then we reach the school. But that school has been all torn down and now is building a fireproof thing now. That area.

VL: What do you remember about your education?

PW: Oh, that education—in those days, most of the teachers—well, one of the teachers, she mix up English with the Hawaiian sometimes. (Laughs)

VL: Oh, she was a Hawaiian woman?

PW: Yeah, Hawaiian woman. She go say, "Mea, mea," like that, and then making some remarks and...well, it wasn't very pleasant when we had one.....shall I name her? No, I better not. That Miss S. Say Miss S. Oh, she was a holy terror! (Laughs)

VL: In what way?

PW: She beat up the students!

VL: How come?

PW: Well, in those days, well, she just use a ruler and whack the poor boy over the face, and then they be bleeding all over. Oh, and then she has a kind of a---I don't know what kind of disease that she cannot
use her right hand. And she has to use her left hand to write, and use that left hand to beat up the kids. And then she didn't know a thing about music and then yet she has to conduct the class in singing, and all the other teachers just hold their mouth and laugh because she was that way, eh. (Chuckles) And one of the teachers died. I remember we had to go to her funeral. Yeah, and in those days, they believe in punishing the students. We had that Mrs. C. She was a principal. And once in a while, if a student misbehave, then she'll take him out to the one room and give the student a good strapping. Whack, whack, whack! 'As why the student started to scream and yell. Those were the days.

VL: What kind of naughty things did they punish the students for?

PW: Well, in those days, even if you cannot recite your words or something like that and then you get punish for it. And then they whack you on the hand so many times. (Laughs) Not like now. Oh...

VL: Did you use to have homework?

PW: Oh, yes. We have plenty homework. In those days, we had plenty homework. And I think one of the....maybe one or two teachers still living. I don't know.

VL: This was about 1905 when you first went to school?

PW: Yes. 1906, '07, '08. And I remember one teacher, she's a Mrs. C now. At that time, she was Miss J. (Laughs) And I saw her. She goes to our church, and she must be 85 years old now. That's the only one I just talk to her. I said, "Eh, you remember?" Yeah, she still remember.

VL: Were most of the teachers Hawaiian?


VL: In general, did you like school or not like school?

PW: We have to like it, eh, because you're sent there by my parents, eh. And then you have to--you cannot do anything. Well, one thing I might remember to tell you. And that is the plantation doctor's wife once invited one class up to the house to have a little lunch like that, eh. And I remember this very clearly. Before we left--we were three kids, my elder sister, who subsequently became a teacher there for over forty years. Right there. And my parents, well, rather strict and they say, "Now, remember. After the lunch, before you come home, you go up to say thank you to Mrs. Wood." We're the only three. (Laughs) Myself, my elder sister, and my younger sister. She's still living, the younger sister. We went up there to say thank you. Next day, that was a talk of the school, because that teacher was so proud that we were the only ones that went up to say thank you. The others, well, they
just simply ignore the whole thing and came home. Eh, I think that was a wonderful training for us. And in those days, although my parents were rather strict, but I think they gave us a very good training. I appreciate that. (Laughs) If I hurt anybody or do anything wrong, we have to apologize, otherwise no food.

VL: Oh. Did your father used to spank you for...

PW: Oh, yes. Very bad. They spank me. In those days they believe in not... they have a saying, eh. What you call? "Spare the rod and spoil the child." (Laughs) They know that. And we Chinese, well.....everytime when I get into a fight with some Japanese boy, I go home, I get a spanking first without asking any question. You see.

VL: Did you used to fight often?

PW: No, no. Not fight often. We don't care to fight often. And one of the best things I ever had was we had about seven, eight nationalities in the class.

VL: Did you get along with every nationality?

PW: Oh, yes, you have to get along, eh. We play and so forth, eh.

VL: There were no troubles?

PW: No troubles. That's why, subsequently, when I lost out in business in Hong Kong, I had to teach. I was the only teacher that could handle a mix class of Portuguese and Chinese boys. I'm very proud of that fact. Because if they use a Portuguese teacher, he'll get into a fight with the Chinese student. That was in Hong Kong, eh. But I cannot because I don't know any prejudice. I cannot. And in those days, they have the mule teams, eh, and they have those drivers from the States, eh. Negroes. They handle the team of 16 horses for the plow, eh. The big team of horses to draw the plow for the land. And then no such thing as steam plows in those early days.

VL: They had Negro workers?

PW: Oh yes. Only a few. Very few.

VL: About how many?

PW: Oh, as far as I could remember that in the plantation there were only one.

VL: Oh.

PW: There was only one. He drives the team of horses and he knows all about taking care the horses. And I remember, when I was three or four years old, I use to be deadly afraid of him, of the Negro fellow. When I see him, I just ran home as if to hide. And then, when my father found that out, he gave me another good lesson. One day, he invite
that Negro to come and sit on our back porch. They slap each other
and laugh each other and get a good time out of it, that he was
joking with him, eh. And then after that, I was cured. I had no more
fear of any Negroes. And I'm glad that I get along with all kind
nationalities and so forth. I don't know how to be prejudice.

VL: Do you think there was any prejudice in Waialua, or any problems
between ethnic groups?

PW: Yes. In those days.

VL: Like what kind?

PW: Now, those poor Korean boys, they have to suffer because they were---
Japan took over Korea in 1910, you see. And then those Korean boys,
well, they supposed to be subjugated by the Japanese, eh. And the
Japanese just take advantage of that poor thing. I sympathize with
the Korean boys at that time. I do.

VL: These school boy age?

PW: In the school, boys, yes. School age.

VL: They were teased?

PW: Yeah. Hah. They were tease, and, oh, they were just simply.....
they slap 'em.....treat 'em bad, in other words. I never liked that.
I never liked that. I use to have a number of Korean friends. One
of them who was treated so badly, I heard that he is now a famous
doctor in Philadelphia by the name of Pot Pam Koo. Yeah, Dr. Pot
Pam Koo. I remember him very well. He was a brilliant student, but
the Japanese boys just simply took advantage of him. (Chuckles)
The other day, I came across a man who remembered my father very well.
He's an old man. I mistook him for somebody, but he came and have a
nice talk with me. And then he talk about the Reds in China. About
the Reds. The Reds that.....oh, well. I have never had any use for
the Reds, and then I read up everything about the Reds, and I think
China, right now, in mainland, is the biggest prison in the world.
Biggest prison, because my wife's sister had to send a petition in to
get out of Canton to Hong Kong eight years. She was finally allowed
out only last year. And they were under such austerity that they
were afraid to eat, even. Well, in....I don't want to change the
subject. (Laughs)

VL: Okay. Can we go back to Waialua?

PW: Yeah.

VL: I remember one time you mentioned you had a baby sitter. A man who use
to....

PW: Right, right, right. When I was about two years old, he use to be a
VL: When your parents would leave?

PW: No, no. He just simply took care of me, you see. Because my mother may be busy with my two sisters. Then he came along and he just grab hold of me and took me all over, eh.

VL: Oh. Was he paid to do this? Did you...

PW: No, no. No, no. The only thing he got is couple of meals at my place---at our place, eh. He was an old man. And I wish that...for many reasons, those Chinese in those old days, they learned certain things that we forgotten, that we never had a chance to learn. If I were only older....I remember that I would have learned a lot from him.

VL: For example?

PW: For example, that Chinese engineer, Mr. Fung was right next....our neighbor, close neighbor. When he got the first child, a girl, this man, Mr. Hu....

VL: Your babysitter?

PW: Yeah. He was not exactly a baby sitter, but he took care of me, carrying me around. I use to be inquisitive and ask, "What is this? What is that?" And all that kind of thing. That man (Mr. Hu) said--Mr. Fung, he was an engineer in the mill. He said, "Ha! If Mr. Fung wants to have a son, he has to go back to China and get another wife. This woman will never give him a son." Subsequently, he got seven daughter. (Laughs) Now how he knew that, I want to know. He could just tell. That's all, you see. And then afterwards, a Mr. Lau who rented part of the building right next to our shop. It was a coffee shop. He makes doughnuts, bread, and pies and things like that. Yeah, that man, he told us that for three generations, for the parents, eh, for three generations, they did nothing but to pick animals. Dogs, cats, and buffalos. They can tell the behavior of those animals very well. And I remember one time, I was about 11, 12 years old. Suddenly a cat came along. Don't know from where. And then this Mr. Lau look at that cat and say, "Huh. That cat is a good rat catcher, but has one bad defect. She will climb up high to urinate." (Laughs) And after two weeks, nothing happened. And he said, "No. It'll happen. It'll happen. Just watch." And sure enough. That cat will run up to a high--the beams of the shop, eh. They have wooden beams. He'll always go up there and squirt. (Laughs) And then, of course, they squirt on everything, you see. Ah, yeah, but this man was very patient with the cat and just let 'em pee. And then just wipe and clean up the place, but it was a mess everytime. But how he could tell that? That's the main thing. That's something that we ought to know.

VL: Did you have any chores to do as a child?
PW: No, not much. Not much. Because Mother use to do everything. One of the things that I....I think my father did a very wise thing, sending us to Japanese school. He said that, "Well, don't waste any time." We come back to school half past two. He said,"Why you want to waste? Just play around." He said, "Go to Japanese school." And after that, we go to Japanese school for three years. That saved my life three times during the War. Just because I could speak it. You don't know the advantage of knowing another language. It's just simply something wonderful. I would always tell people that. I say, "You study any language. You can get along better by knowing several languages. At least three."

VL: Is Chinese your first language?

PW: Yes. I spoke that at home.

VL: And when you got to school, you learned English?

PW: Right.

VL: Was that very hard?

PW: No, no. Very easy. Because I started listening to everybody. And everybody talking---about six, seven years old, they're talking English already, see.

VL: What about the use of pidgin?

PW: Oh, not much in those days. Only except that the Japanese laborers, they come to the shop to buy. They use pidgin English, that's all. Otherwise we talk pretty good English. Because they don't allow us to use any kind of....

VL: And what would you use to do for fun as a child?

PW: Play ball. Play baseball.

VL: There were organized teams?

PW: Yeah. They have all kinds of....well, those school teams, eh. We play that, eh. We play that in school.

VL: You mean, one school against another?

PW: Not much of that. Just by themselves. Just you put up a team and then you play with another team in the same school. Yeah. There's no other school, anyway. Where do you go?

VL: And what about your upbringing as a Catholic?

PW: Oh, as a Catholic, well, I did not become a Catholic until I was 16 years old. Hard to get into St. Louis College. Very hard. And then we get the priest of our district, Father Ernest. We got him to
write a letter. That's how I got into St. Louis. Yeah.

VL: Had you been going to his church before that?

PW: No, no. Never. Don't know a thing about it. (Laughs) Don't know a thing about it.

VL: Your parents really seem to value education.

PW: Oh yes. Very much so. Because my father, well, he's pretty well verse in Chinese. He learn that himself. He found out that he has to know Chinese. And then he learn English by just talking.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

VL: You were talking about....

PW: Those people, the Chinese in Waialua, eh, they use to have four or five hundred of them. But then dwindled down. And then, of course, we use to have a group working in the mill. I have a distant cousin, he worked in the mill. And, of course, Hook Chen Lew (another interviewee). You met him. (Laughs) If he could tell you something, eh. I remember his parents very well. If I see them in the street, now, I could recognize them. The father was rather hefty build. And then they---actually, there was a Chinatown in Waialua.

VL: You were telling me about that (in the first interview).

PW: Yeah, yeah.

VL: Did your father make enough money to keep you folks....

PW: Yes. Yeah.

VL: ....quite well off?

PW: We were supposed to be well off, eh. Yeah. Because in those days, we had the only store there next to the plantation store. You see, the plantation store is only about five minutes walk away from our store.

VL: Did you sell different things?

PW: Oh yes. We have grocery as well as dry goods.

VL: The plantation store did not?

PW: The same thing. But we had a tailor who use to be right in our shop. You see, we had to hire a tailor. And then he makes clothes and everything for everybody.
VL: Chinese man?

PW: Oh yeah, Chinese man.

VL: Did your mother also use to sew?

PW: Yes. My mother use to make our own clothing. Yeah. My mother use
to do that.

VL: So you got all your food from your own store?

PW: Oh, yes. Right.

VL: Did you have a garden, too?

PW: Yes, we use to have a garden. We plant some vegetables. I suppose
to have an adopted brother.

VL: That's right.

PW: The Chinese were smart when they know those things. This fellow who
told my father, "Mr. Wong, you are lucky if you have only one son."
So, at that time, when he brought my mother to Hawaii, she was not well
at all. She was very sickly. And then the friends and relatives say,
"You better adopt a boy, because I don't think she'll be able to
produce any children with you." And then.... when I was born, I was
less than a year old, he (the adopted son) suddenly died. Therefore
I'm the only one. Yeah. I'm the only one.

VL: Can we talk about kinds of crime that used to happen in Waialua? Do
you remember any?

PW: Among those old Chinese there, several hundred, there's only one thief.
He use to go around, stealing chicken and things like that. (laughs)
And then when he was caught, he was given a prison term of two, three
months. That's all I remember.

VL: By the plantation or the city police?

PW: No. It's the police, you see. And then he was caught and taken to
prison. That's all I remember. One of them. But for Japanese, never
knew that they had any criminals or anything like that. We were
rather peaceful.

VL: Why did this man steal? Was he poor?

PW: No. I think is his practice of stealing. Something like a kleptomaniac,
eh. He has to steal. I remember him very well. My father give him a
scolding and so forth, ah. Just like the day my father was telling
about when he was in Papaikou. He had over five hundred under him.
Of course, you get all kind of people. One chap keep on going to the
foreman's house. They called a foreman a luna. L-U-N-A. And this
chap keep on stealing. When he stole, well, he was sentenced to three months. Okay. When he came out, he go back to the same place and steal again. You see. (Chuckles) And then, the luna--I don't remember his name--came and report to my father. He said, "Eh, what's the matter?" He said, "This is the third time I caught him stealing chicken from my yard, and then, look after three months, he come out and he does it again." My father told that foreman, the luna, he said, "Well, next time you catch him, take him down to the valley where his screams could not be heard, tie him to a tree, and give him a strapping with your horsewhip. That cure him." (Laughs) That's a very wonderful way, eh, my father show the man. He said, "You do that and then don't give to the police. You just take him down and then give him a strapping. That'll cure him. That cure him." (Laughs)

VL: Is that what they did?

PW: Yeah. He did. The luna took him down and give him a horsewhipping and then he would be alright.

VL: Your father was a strict man, then?

PW: Oh yes. No, not exactly strict, but that's the only way to do it, eh. You know, in those days, too, on the Big Island, so many people, naturally, you have deaths, eh, sometime. And one fellow was possessed by the devil. You know what that means, eh. The ghost or the devil get into him and then he starting to talk nonsense, eh. And then they came, get on horseback and got hold of my dad. Soon as my dad walk into that camp, he's gone. That fellow is normal again. (Laughs) Eh, the fellow is normal again. My father has that kind of a....well, I don't know. The Chinese--he has a personality that he's so strict and so straight that even the devil has to be afraid of him, eh.

VL: You were telling me once before about these single men and some trouble. They would try and flirt with some man's wife and get into trouble.

PW: Yeah, yeah.

VL: Can you tell me about that again?

PW: The Chinese who use to own the large pineapple plantation, his brother get a pretty good wife, see. And then, naturally, being a nice looking wife, the Chinese in that area, well, one of them, maybe he's a little super-sex, well, he get after that. And then this Mr. Au, he went and told Oscar Cox. (City and County policeman) He said, "Next time I see this man in my house, I'm going to shoot him. He (Cox) says, "Okay." Then just drop. Then no case, even. They didn't even go through the court. (Laughs) Those were wonderful days.

VL: He killed the man?
PW: Yeah. He killed the man. Killed the man, Mr. Ma. I remember him, yeah. (laughs)

VL: Were there any other incidents like that?

PW: Well, one Chinese guy, he's a very strong healthy fellow. I think he went after some Japanese woman. They put a bomb under his house and he was killed, of course. (laughs)

VL: The Japanese woman's husband did it?

PW: Yeah. They put a dynamite for blowing stones, eh. They just put that under the house. Boom! Then he got killed. That's all.

VL: You remember these things, or you...

PW: Oh, yes, I do. I do. Funny. I have a wonderful memory for all these things. I could repeat and repeat. Yeah.

VL: Were most of the Chinese men married?

PW: No, no, no. Most of them not married. Then they have to go into a Japanese house.

VL: Some of them marry....

PW: Very few. All those that own shops have wife. Just like Hook Chen's father and mother. And there's this Sam Wong's father and mother. And then this Ho. Mr. and Mrs. Ho who used to plant taros. I think has a daughter working in Hawaiian National Bank. I think she's there.

VL: Were there rice plantations in Waialua?

PW: Yeah, that rice plantation is Mokuleia and Kawaihapai. Two places.

VL: What do you remember about those?

PW: Well, they import water buffalos and import all the implements for cultivating rice from China. They have those old things. Oh yes, we used to go there.

VL: Wasn't that quite expensive to bring from China?

PW: No in those days, it's not expensive at all. That's why they could afford it. But they have a small little gasoline engine to clean the rice, eh. They clean the rice, eh. (Makes machine sound) Like that. That we heard that all the time. That's only short distance from our house. Mokuleia. That's where the rice used to go over the States. Not like now. Coming from the States.

VL: Did they use to sell some locally, too?
PW: Oh, yes, yes. We use to sell those rice and we use to buy.

VL: Did most of the Chinese work for the plantation or work outside the plantation?

PW: Mostly work for the plantation except a few that do their own planting.

VL: Of what kind of crops?


(Laughter)

VL: So they grew vegetables and they had...

PW: Oh yes. Big vegetable gardens. Oh yes. I remember one in Waialua before we go to the second bridge, there's a big area where they plant all kinds of vegetables. Yeah.

VL: Were the Chinese planting taro also?


VL: And then, eventually, most of the Chinese left, or did they die?

PW: Left. They die and then the children refuse to do that kind of work. And then they come out, and get a better education. They do something else, eh.

VL: Uh huh. Did the Chinese have any cultural events that they celebrated altogether?

PW: Yes. In those days, they celebrate Chinese New Year, 15 days. For New Year. And then they have the Moon Festival. They celebrate that plenty. But that time, it's only twenty cents for a mooncake instead of now $1.50, eh. (Laughs)

VL: How would they celebrate it?

PW: Oh, they just simply, well, they burn firecrackers and things like that, eh.

END OF INTERVIEW
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