

Oral History Program

OH-453

Box #21

Oral History Program

CHARLES K. C. GOO

Copyright BYU-Hawaii Archives

BYU-Hawaii Campus

**BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY-HAWAII
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
Behavioral and Social Sciences Division
Laie, Hawaii 96762**

CHARLES K. C. GOO

INTERVIEW NO: OH-453

DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 8, 1998

INTERVIEWER: Ada Lee

SUBJECT: Life & Laie
Development

INTRODUCTION

Brother Charles Kwan Chiu Goo speaks of his life when he moved to Laie in 1955. Prior to moving to Laie, Brother Goo he owned a Drive-In business in Nuuanu. When he first came to Laie not much existed in this small community, he then opened up a Plantation Store.

Brother Goo and his wife started serving a couples mission in Australia. They spent ten months in Australia, after which they were asked to serve a temple mission in Taiwan. Knowing that they could already speak the language they left for Taipei. They came home from their mission in 1986.

During the Pearl Harbor war with the Japanese, Brother Goo served as a sergeant with the National Guard. There were many experiences and events that went on during this time.

The community that he moved into in 1955 is no longer the same, it has grown. Many new buildings and people have come to Laie over the years. He has seen the community grow or become more civilized while residing in this beautiful place, Laie.

This transcript contains an interview of Charles Kwan Chiu Goo. He was interviewed on February 8, 1998 by Ada Lee. Student Ada Lee did the transcribing, auditing, and editing, and the final assembly was done by Student Oral History Secretary Nani Keli. "[OH-70]" and other such notations tell the reader that an interview of that number has been completed with that individual and is on file in the Oral History collection at BYU-Hawai'i.

William K. Wallace, Director
Oral History Program
Brigham Young University-Hawaii

Laie, Hawai'i
April 13, 1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIDE A

Page

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Moving to Laie; people in Laie at that time as well as buildings |
| 2 | Businesses in Laie and life experiences |
| 3 | Mission with his wife; living with a Chinese family |
| 4 | Bombing of Pearl Harbor; work after war |
| 5 | END OF INTERVIEW |

SIDE A

INT Can you tell us something about when did you move to Laie, and describe how it looked like here?

CG I closed the Hale Nuuanu drive in business before I moved to Laie in August 1955. I had it for five years. We moved to Laie and opened up a plantation store which the building was vacated for four to five years. At that time, they did not have Brigham Young University-Hawaii. It was the Church College of Hawaii. They have a consequent hut that they bought it from the army surpass. There was five buildings: right across where the stake center is, and right across it is a commune store.

INT Were there many different races in Laie when you moved here?

CG At that time, there were not many different races here until later on. The business was not that good. The first arrival came here was the missionaries from Southeast Asia. Bro. Wilson was a superintendent of the building of the College. late on, the PCC came up in 1963.

INT How about the buildings around here?

CG At that time from this temple side around here, there was no home around. There the street corner from the street of Oahi, over there didn't have a street at that time extension from Moana, even the losepa, they didn't have losepa too. All from this side was all vacated, not many home on this side. But, right now you see all filled up with home, and the Church College of Hawaii at that time end up on Moana street up to the stake center of the Laie stake. At that time Laie Hawaii stake now they have a Laie North Stake the boundary is between the two stakes is on the College Road they called it the "the College Road" between the center there up from the temple road to the college to the dividing line Laie stake and the Laie North stake. At that time, they didn't have devoted the Culture Center [the Polynesian Culture Center] open. They didn't have any Maori people, and Fiji, Tongan, not too many Tongans, and they have a

few Samoan, not many as it is right now, and Tahitian. Then all business picked up many different cultures of people from the South Pacific came up here work, at the Cultural Center. So, as business progressed, we don't open on Sundays, we just open six days a week. Monday to Saturday, 7:00 am to 9:30 pm everyday. As time goes on, our children managed the store while I go to have some rest and recreation in the afternoon. As time goes on, the children grew up one by one. They went up to BYU-Provo College. At the end, the last one worked then. She went too. So, we had to hire one employee, the one worked with me so I can go to town to get my grocery once a week or twice sometime. So, I actually retire in 1980, that's was a best time. We recall now, we went through a lot of trial and tribulation.

INT Can you share with us more of your life's experiences?

CG See, at that time, they opened up their shopping center down in the Foodland (where Foodland is right now) but, Foodland wasn't here at that time , so they opened another long building with the only wall and the roof, no floor, and I figured it was 1975. They told me to go down to open up. I said I am going to retire in five years, so why should I go down there, all the money I spent on the improvement of the tour site. I don't think I can recover the investment. So , I stayed up here, and they tried to close me up and I don't know how there would get around the President Tanner of the councilor of the presidency. He gave them the word: as the words down, "let that boy alone!, Let that boy alone!" just four words. So after that they didn't bother me at all. So I retired in 1980.

We have a very great experience running the store. We have a lot of people, even college students came to us, I won't charge! I know that they are not going to come back. Okay! They can have whatever you want. We just like a one man with a Relief Society in Laie, so we just helped everybody whoever want help. I think it is more bless to give. So, that's why we have so much blessing. All my children graduated in college, everyone went on a mission, except one, she had to get marry. She came back with her husband who was called to serve a military in Germany. All of the sudden, they came home with

two children. She had to finish her college degree in the state of Hawaii. So, she is the only one did not go on a mission. But, they all married to returned missionary. So, I have twenty grandchildren now. Fifteen boys and girls. So, we are very blessed that we have good health.

We went on a mission to Australia for ten months. And then, they called here in Laie asking for couple missionary that speak Chinese. They want a couple to go to Taipei, Taiwan for temple work. So, they were already down in Australia. One of the seventy presidency, I don't know who he was? He called [as he asked] do you have a desire to go to Taipei temple. I say "why not?" we can go? So, we go to Taipei after ten months in Australia. When the Taipei temple was dedicated in 1984. So, we came home in 1986. So we have a good experience in Taiwan. There have a lot of fresh fish and vegetables. We have made a lot of friends there, and the temple President every month they have a van to take us all over Taiwan, and we enjoyed our stay there very much.

INT Brother Goo, as we know that you are Chinese. Your parents were also born in China, and they moved to Hawaii. In your growing up, did you grow up in a very traditional Chinese family. What are the values that you remember or what did they teach you? How do you perceive those things in you life?

CG I lived with a Chinese family and relatives in town for about four to five years. Then, I moved to another Chinese family. I worked in the dried food store. I go to school. At that time, I used to get up every Sunday morning about two o'clock to deliver Sunday morning newspaper. I remember going to school in town, the majority was Japanese, and not many Chinese in the class. So, as time goes on, I transferred to another school and then, the war close by. I worked in the Five and Ten store, as a waiter, later on, I became a manager. They gave me correspondent course on scientific development, also the correspondent course on science services, actually, I worked there for seven and a half years. I had a assistant with me, and thirty six employee. When the war came, December 7th, seven o'clock in the morning the Japanese bombed the Pearl Harbor. And a

couple months of day either I have to got army, so I went to Pearl Harbor worked there. After the war over, I went to work on my own business. The war was still going on, but it was kind of calm down, so I went on my own business. A lot of services in town, you can make any kind of business. So, I opened a sort of fountain business, it is my line of work. Then, later on, when the war finished, everything was calm down, no serviceman cooperation as a manger

of a soda fountain. Later on, I had my opportunity to open my own business.

INT As you mentioned about the Japanese dropped the bomb in Pearl Harbor, do you have any anti-Japanese feeling toward those people?

CG They were all considered as American. We don't have anti-Japanese feeling. I was a national guard. So we went around cruising around in Honolulu with [my] sergeant on a truck. Everybody [stayed] from the door of the main door of the house, there was nobody allowed in the street, it was "blackout." If they had troops, they [Japanese] would take over of the whole island. They didn't send those troops, they just bombing and went away. Americans were asleep at that time. They did not expect them. Those serviceman and officers in the Pearl Harbor were dressed up in white clothes and in the morning they were already to go to church. They [the Japanese] dropped the bomb. They were wonder what was going on. All the battle, (the Arizona one) went sunk. Thousands and several hundred men were down in the water inside. No chance at all! In tomb in a grave! Then, American President, with especially the mainland Americans were very suspicious about the Japanese. So, they put the concentration camp [for the Japanese] at that time. In Hawaii, a very few were taken, not many in Hawaii. It was a good experience at that time.

INT Back to Laie here, you have seen the growth and the changes in the community, can you tell us something about it?

CG Yes, there is a big change because the Cultural Center came about. They saved a lot of people [from] the South Pacific came up and they filled up the community that way more homes now. Many of them

migrated from down to BYU-Hawaii. At that time, it was the Church of Hawaii, later on, they changed it to BYUH. I can't remember what year they changed to BYUH or BYU-Provo. We see all the big change. A population filled up. At that time, we were very fortunate, and we can have the so many lots one, two, three, four . . . But now, you can't even get one. You need to pay a big, great money to find one in Laie.

INT Brother Goo, thank you and I really appreciate your time!

END OF INTERVIEW