ROMANIA HYDE WOOLLEY

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Romania Hyde Woolley

(1894 - 1975)

Mrs. Woolley, a former professional violinist, was born in Utah where she met and married Ralph E. Woolley, an engineer and builder whose family had settled in Hawaii in 1895. She came to Hawaii in 1920 on her honeymoon and has made her home here ever since.

From 1923 to 1925, Mrs. Woolley was a music teacher at Punahou School and organized the school's first seven-piece ensemble. She was also active in musical and theatrical groups.

Both of Mrs. Woolley's parents, Joseph S. and Jeannette A. Hyde, worked in Hawaii for a time, he as a Mormon missionary during King Kalakaua's reign and later as a federal auditor; she as the Collector of Customs appointed by President Calvin Coolidge.

Mrs. Woolley relates many experiences of the Hydes in Hawaii, as well as family history and her remembrances of old-time Honolulu.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH ROMANIA HYDE WOOLLEY

(MRS. RALPH E. WOOLLEY)

At her Arcadia apartment, 1434 Punahou Street, Honolulu 96822

In late 1971

W: Romania Hyde Woolley

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: . . . such as your correct name.

W: My name is Romania. Now think of Roman and put I-A on it. (Lynda laughs)

M: Okay.

W: Spell Roman and put I-A on it. Romania H. Hyde. You put Hyde in it. H-Y-D-E. Woolley. W-two O's and two L's-E-Y.

M: Okay. Maybe you can tell me something about how you came to Hawaii. What were your reasons for coming?

W: Ah, that was a thrill. I met a man, a builder--Ralph Woolley--who had built the Mormon Temple and all these big buildings and he came to the Mainland to buy furnishings for the Temple and there was a longshoremen's strike on--just what we're having today. They didn't know when he could get back. In those days there were no airplanes, you see. When he came it was 1918 or 1919. So they couldn't give him any word as to what to do, how to do so. He was a graduate engineer from the University of Utah, so he thought, "Well, I'll take a train [to Utah]." It used to take about twenty-four hours and a half to get up to Utah on a fast train. [See p. 22]

I met him one night at eleven o'clock through another friend of mine, another fellow who had been here in the Islands, and the next night he asked me for a date. He stayed around about six weeks because the strike was still on, and Matson [Navigation Company] said that they would phone him when the strike was over. The night before he left he asked me to marry him. It was just six weeks. (Lynda chuckles) So I said, "Well, I had been engaged to

a medical student at Harvard [University] and I've got to get squared off there." So he said, "If I come back next year, will you marry me?" And I said, "Yes, that's fine. It gives me a chance to correspond and get everything cleared up and feel my own pulse." And then he came back a year later and we were married there, so I came here on my honeymoon.

M: My goodness. (laughter)

W: I had a feeling for Hawaii because my father [Joseph S. Hyde] was here in 1884. He taught school among the Hawaiians and when he came back he, of course, spoke the king's Hawaiian and he was just so imbued with Hawaiiana that he wanted me named after the queen, Emma, who was on the throne at that time. [King Kalakaua was ruler, 1874-91.]

Well, I'll tell you how I got this funny name. I was to be taken to the church to be christened. I was the first daughter and my mother wanted me named Josephine because my father's name was Joseph. He said, "No, she'll always be called Jo." "Well," he said, "I'd like to have her named Emma, after the queen." He had just come back from the Hawaiian Islands. She [Mother] said, "Oh, I don't like the word 'Emma'." And just then the doctor came into the house to make the call. She was the second woman in the United States to get her degree in obstetrics and her name was Romania Bunnell. So she said, "Why don't you give her my name?" And my father and mother said, "That's fine. We'll name her Romania." And that's how I got my name. (Lynda laughs) Isn't that amazing?

M: Yes.

W: She was, as I say, very famous. She lived to be ninety-five years old and carried that with great dignity and, of course, she apparently made a fuss over it.

In the meantime, by the time I was eight years old my mother put a violin under my chin and I became a professional violinist for years, up until the year I was married. I played in Europe and toured the United States and all, and that name has been a plague because they never would spell it right. If they announced it from the program, they'd call me Lamania, Lamonia. And then later I taught at the University of Utah and one kid called me Pneumonia. (Lynda laughs) That's why I hate it. It's been a plague; it's so hard.

And when I go where I have charge accounts, if I start [saying] Mrs. Romania H. Woolley, they look up just blank. I've learned now to say, "All right. Can you spell Roman?" "Yes." "All right. Just put I-A on it," and then that relieves them and they get it correctly for

my charge account. (laughter)

M: Were you born in Utah, then?

W: I was born in Utah.

M: In Salt Lake [City]?

W: Salt Lake City, um hm, [on August 2, 1894].

M: Could you give me your parents' names?

W: Yes. Joseph S. Hyde and Jeannette A. Hyde. She was the Collector of Customs here for ten years under Cal [Calvin] Coolidge [President of the United States, 1923-29]. She had a terrific career [for eight years actually, 1925-33].

M: Your mother.

W: Oh my gosh, yes. When she landed here, opium was ten dollars a teal. You know what a teal is--T-E-A-L? It's the amount. They used to sell opium in tin cans and they called it a teal. T-E-A-L. When she left, it was a hundred and twenty-five dollars a teal. She was trying to keep opium out of here. And of course it was during the days of Prohibition [1920-33] and there was a lot of liquor trying to be smuggled. She didn't believe in Prohibition but she said, "I've sworn to uphold this office," so she had to arrest old people like [Jascha] Heifetz that came off [the ship] with liquor and Lord Allenby that came off with liquor and, oh, some famous people, you know. (laughter) [Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby, 1861-1936]

M: How did your mother happen to come here?

W: Well, she was on the executive committee of the Republican National Party, right at the top, not down at the grass roots. She was right at the top with [Henry] Cabot Lodge and Will H.Hays. Did you ever hear of Will Hays? He was the movie director right out there [in Hollywood, California] in the Censor's Office. He was made Postmaster General [by President Warren G. Harding, 1921-22]. She had a terrific personality and she knew how to get along with men without using a hammer. She was very reserved but had terrific judgment.

They'd had so much trouble out here with the customs. Oh, it was just wide open. You could come through with anything, including all these big shipments of opium. So President Coolidge said, "Would you go out there and clean that up?" And Will Hays said, "Say, I want her to come help me in the movie industry to censor. She's just the

one to help me to censor the [motion] pictures." My mother had highest moral standards but she wasn't a nut. She wasn't a prude but she knew what was good for a family and what was not. So I happened to be here, already married. "Oh," she said, "I'd rather go to Hawaii." So Cal Coolidge said, "Well, all right. I need you down there. We'll let the other collector go." He was a drunkard and just had a wide open port. And so that's how she came. She was here for eight years until the Democrats got in, then she was relieved.

M: And what about your father?

W: Well, he did estate [auditing]. What do they call it? It was before they had the [income] tax but it was an inheritance tax. They had inheritance taxes before and he went all over the United States auditing the big estates.

M: Oh.

W: And he came down here. He was here for awhile too but the heat got him. They didn't have air conditioning then and he had high blood pressure, so he asked to be transferred back to the San Francisco office. And later Mother was finished here and they both went back and he died in Salt Lake City. She died here. She was here on a trip when she died here, but then we shipped her back. [See p. 22]

It was a very colorful family. He was an ardent Democrat and my mother was an ardent Republican. (Lynda laughs) We learned politics from the soup to nuts at every meal. (laughs) Always pleasant. I never heard my parents ever quarrel. They would tell the funny jokes on each party that would come up. It was a riot, the jokes that happened in a political campaign. My father ran for the Senate and my mother ran for the Senate. My mother won and then she was mad at the Democrats because they didn't elect my father (laughter) when he was the good man. [Both ran for the Utah State Senate.]

All right now. Most of my memories are of living in this old home in Manoa valley [at 2349 Oahu Avenue].

M: Is that where you came to immediately when you came?

W: Yes, my husband bought the old Montague Cooke home. You knew where the Montague Cookes were? [See p. 22]

M: Uh huh.

W: When they got so much money, they sold us that home and then they moved up where Waioli Tea Room is--the big rock house up there. And this home had a beautiful lanai. I'm

bringing this in because this is for some of the old-time things [that] happened. This beautiful lanai went around half the house and it was beautifully shaded and it was on a knoll--quite a high hill--and we looked down into this garden. Mr. Cooke had been interested in botanical things and he, a rich man, took a yacht and went down to the South Seas and brought back many wonderful specimens of breadfruit and different types of plumeria and other things and he planted them in that yard. (clock chimes) Well, we came and got the benefit of all his wonderful plants, so we had orchids growing wild and we had vanilla vines there in our garden and the different exotic fruits that he brought from the South Seas.

Anyway, this home was built on this high knoll. You had to go up quite a steep driveway to get to it, and then you could see down into the garden. The old Manoa River used to run through that lot. See, now people don't know that. The riverbed was still there. But we looked down on the top of these trees in the garden. It was the most beautiful sight. And it was almost to the University [of Hawaii]; it was about two blocks away from the university and near there, so we got a lot of the university people. Our next door neighbor was the president of the university and we got a lot of information as to the development. I went to the university and took some Chinese history. Oh, he was such a famous man, not then but now. I can't think what his name was. It was just in walking distance, and all those pleasantries. There were only about three thousand students in the university then. There were just a few buildings. [President and Mrs. David L. Crawford]

M: How old were you when you came here then?

W: I was twenty-five. [Twenty-six, according to her daughter.]

M: Did you keep on with your violin?

W: Well, for awhile I dropped it. My husband got into politics. Is this going to be recorded now?

M: Um hm. Do you want me to shut it off?

W: No. He got into politics and I helped him in some of his campaigns and that's how I got in touch with so many Hawaiians and different races. And then we had a big social life because of his business here and because of his politics, I think, and I had this young child, this baby girl, [Virginia] and I just couldn't swing everything. But later when she grew up, when she went off to college, then I took a boat and went to Los Angeles and I did some studying there, some coaching. I went back two or three times

and stayed two or three months at a time, then came back. I was in the symphony and then I was concert mistress for one winter here and I was a soloist also for one. And then my mother died and I felt sick and, oh, there were a lot of things that entered into it. I just couldn't swing everything and so I let my music drop after I got out of the symphony.

As I say, I still play a little bit now but after all, you know, you can get some beautiful canned music so that it's embarrassing to listen to yourself play. Before, when we had to produce music for us because we didn't have the Victor records or the radio. . . . I was one of the first ones to play on the radio here when they first installed KGU down at the Advertiser Building and, oh, the piano was so badly reproduced. It was like an old tin pan. You have no idea the improvement they've made in broadcasting the piano. The piano was the worst of all instruments; it was worse than any tinkling guitar. So I've come through that development here of the music studios and the symphony and all that.

What else now? What else do you want me to answer?

M: I wanted to ask you more about when your father came here the first time. He came to Hawaii, why?

W: He came here as a Mormon missionary and he taught Hawaiian in the Hawaiian schools. He got his teacher's certificate from old Walter Murray Gibson. The little old house is still down there--you know it's the oldest house--and he had to go there to get his commission from Walter Murray Gibson who was then really running the kingdom. You've heard of Walter. [See p. 22]

M: Yeh.

W: He was a great guy. He was really a great fellow. And then he [Father] went out to Laie and taught and he spoke the king's Hawaiian. He spoke beautiful Hawaiian. He had the gift. He went to Molokai and he met up with old Father Damien [Joseph Damien de Veuster, 1840-89] and that leprous mess over there. He went to the different islands and after three years, then he went back and he married Mother. She had just graduated from the Brigham Young Academy, which was then quite something. It's a great school today. Do you know it's the biggest parochial school in America--coeducational? It's the biggest coeducational, parochial school in America--about thirty thousand or thirty-five thousand. They have a marvelous plant down there. So that's what brought him here, as missionary.

Of course when he came back here later, when my moth-

er was made Collector of Customs, he went around and visited. Of course many of the old Hawaiians had died, many were still alive that he'd taught as children and, speaking such beautiful Hawaiian, they had him to all kinds of functions. He was haole.

M: That must have been quite exciting.

W: There was a very interesting woman by the name of Rawlins here. Is this being recorded?

M: Um hm.

W: Millie Rawlins. And she was a student of Hawaiian. I don't know; I think Millie was born here and she kept some kind of an agency down there in the Hawaiian Trust [Company]. Well, my father had to go in to audit her books or her father's books of the estate--I don't know what it was--and she was very upset, as most of us are when the federal agents come and they go over the books. And in Hawaiian she'd speak to fellows that had come in. She said, "Oh, this haole from the Mainland, he's poking his old nose in here," and going off in Hawaiian. Of course he understood every word and he never let on until he closed her books and said, "Now I'm leaving Miss Rawlins," and then he let it go in Hawaiian. She nearly collapsed. (Lynda laughs) He spoke better Hawaiian than she did. (laughter) Oh, this is a great place. Of course she got the joke of it and they all had a good laugh, but after that she was his great friend and he wasn't such a bad--you know we don't like these government agencies poking in our things.

Oh, he could have told you some stories. When he used to have to go down and go over the C.Q. Yee Hop [and Company Limited accounts]. Now he was the great fish merchant down in Maunakea Street. How they would do everything to bribe him! Do anything. He couldn't accept a cigar even. No, he couldn't. And the funny things that would happen.

It was interesting, his tale of meeting Father Damien, He said that he was going up the mountain. He was on horseback. Of course he took a sailboat over there. I don't know. I guess it was a cattle boat that took him to Molokai and he was going to go down into the [leper] settlement because there were some L.D.S. with the Mormon lepers down in there. He was just like any priest. He had a priesthood; he was going down there to preach to them and on his way. . . .

How it came about: I said to him, "Did you ever have any experience with your father after he died?" His father was a great man. By the way, he re-dedicated the land

of Jerusalem in 1841 for the return of the Jews. That's the most prophetic thing you ever read. It's all being--we've seen it just being [fulfilled].

M: This is your father's father [Orson Hyde, 1805-1878].

W: My grandfather. Oh, he was a great prophet and whatever he said in that prayer was written; it's a part of history; it's a part of church documents and everything else.

Well anyway, because of the very great gifts that his father had--and my father used to be his what they call amanuensis, his secretary, and he took down a great deal of my grandfather's experiences on his trip to Jerusalem in 1841 and all those things--he was just like a great hero to him. He spoke five different Indian dialects beside German and French and Hebrew.

So I said, "Well, did you ever, after your father died, have any experience?" And he said, "No, only once." And this is the way it was. He was on his way to Molokai and it was hot and he was on a mule after he got this mule to go up the side of the mountain after he landed. He was sitting under a tree, waiting to go on, and he said this fellow came on a horse or a mule--I don't know which it was--and he said he was the most terrible sight he ever saw. His face had gone in bags. You see, he had leprosy.

Now my father had seen leprosy because, being among the natives, he'd seen it, he knew what it looked like, but this fellow was in the last stages. He looked at my father. My father was just a young fellow, eighteen or nineteen. Of course a fellow of nineteen in those days was much more mature than they are today. But he asked him his business. "What are you doing here on Molokai?" He said, "I'm going down to see some of my parishioners down in the settlement." And he let out and cursed my father. It was the most terrible thing. [See p. 23]

He [my father] said, "I have heard of how people act when they are possessed but I've never seen it until I saw it in that man." He said, "I was completely wilted and I just felt that I had no more strength left in me--the terrible spirit in which he tongue-lashed me, just an innocent young fellow sitting there under a tree." And he said, "I partly dozed off and my father came to me. He said, 'Joseph, arise and go forward and don't go back. Don't go backwards; go forward." And he said he heard his voice just very plainly, so he got up and got on his mule and went down into the settlement and did what he had to do there. But he couldn't stand Father Damien. He said he was the devil's instrument. He said he was possessed.

So those are just some of the things that happened to him when he was here. But, oh, he had some marvelous experiences. But so did my mother: her encounter with Lord

Allenby, [1st Viscount and British army officer].

M: Wait. Let me check to make sure this thing [recorder] is working. (recorder turned off and on again) It's fine.

W: Was it still going when I ceased to talk?

M: Um hm.

W: Well then, you lose a lot of tape that way if I stop.

M: That's okay.

W: Well now, here I've been telling you all about them. This is about my mother meeting Lord Allenby. Being who he was, they wouldn't arrest him on the dock so they said, "Will you go up and see the Collector of Customs?" She said the first thing that upset him: that he had to come under the jurisdiction of a woman. An Englishman--Lord Allenby--that was absolutely the greatest insult, that he had to deal with a woman. He berated the law and he berated the government. She said, "Lord Allenby, I didn't make this law, Congress did. I agree with you but I am here to see that it is administered, and you'll have to give up your liquor and you'll have to be fined five dollars." (laughter)

He marched around and he had a little English--I don't know what they call these whips. The military, they have these little whips, you know. It's a part of a sporting outfit. What do they call it?

M: Yeh. A crop.

W: A crop, that's it. And he went around the office, hitting his boots, he was so mad. "Well," he said, "I have to have it for medicinal purposes." She said, "Well, see your doctor. I'm sure if you do the doctor will give you a license to get some liquor." Of course most Englishmen, and especially in his position, they have their nips before dinner every night and before they went to bed. Anyway, he stomped out of the room and just was furious.

And then she said, "Well, you know, maybe we have something in common, not this liquor." And then she told him that when he went into Jerusalem and took it. . . . You see, during the First World War he drove in with his English troops and took Jerusalem away from the Turks that had it. And according to Scripture, it said that they would take it without [bloodshed]. It didn't say England but it went on to say different. . . . I'm afraid there's not enough time there [on the tape], but you can see that England was destined to go in there and help that nation

get on its feet and take it away from the Turks that had had it for four hundred years. According to Scriptures, it was to be taken without loss of blood. And he marched in there with his retinue and I don't know how many of the battalion or what they call them--regiment--went with him and took it over. And of course you know England had it for many years and then they appointed a Jewish governor, Samuels. I forget his first name. He became governor of Jerusalem until the time when the Jewish underground ousted him and all the British. Do you remember that?

M: Yeh.

W: How old are you?

M: Thirty-two.

W: Well then, you remember the time that those young Jews--talk about terrorists and rebels. The British wouldn't give it up and they said, "You've got to. Now we're going to take ahold of this thing and we're going to run our own government." They made it so hot for the British they had to get out. They were bombing hotels and banks and schools. You know, the Jews are smart. They're marvelous, they're so smart. They outsmarted the British.

Well anyway, my mother said to [Lord Allenby], "My father-in-law (clock chimes) predicted this very thing, as well as the Scriptures, and you helped carry it out." Well, she began quoting Scripture and he was amazed. She said, "You've done the very thing that the Scripture said you'd do, that you would take Jerusalem back, away from the Ottoman [Empire]." It didn't say Ottoman Empire; they call them the Gentiles there or something. I forget my Scriptures. "And it should be taken without loss of blood." He said, "You're right, madame. There wasn't one ounce of blood lost." [Father-in-law: Orson Hyde]

But my father said later that my grandfather said, while he was there in 1840, the morning he went into Jerusalem there were heads lying in the gutter where the Turks had been the night before and just slew them and they were lying in the gutter. They were vicious, they were terrible; the Turks are awful.

So then he said, "Well, I had one of my aides by the name of Hyde." And of course we come from English stock; we come from the Earl of Clarendon, the Hyde Park--that whole tie-up there. And then of course that started, then they were good friends, to think that he had one of my grandfather's relatives in his regiment that morning, that he really did fulfill Scriptures. Mother made him feel so great. (laughter)

And then when Heifetz came in, it was his first visit

to Hawaii. Someone, some local fellow, had told him, "Oh, you put the liquor on you. They won't bother you." And he had this--I don't know whether it was a pint or quart of whiskey or what it was--and when he came off the boat, the guards felt him and searched him and there it was and he was just frantic. So they said, "Well, you have to go up and report to the Collector of Customs."

When he came to see my mother he said, "Oh madame, I will give you tickets to my concert (laughter). Just please let me go. Don't let President Coolidge hear about this." This is the funny part. He said, "I just made application for my naturalization papers and I won't be able to get my citizenship if this gets in the press. Don't tell President Coolidge about this." (laughter) See how naive the poor fellow was.

And so Mother said, "Well, I'll tell you. You can have as much of this as you can carry under your belt." In other words, he could drink it right there in the office but he couldn't take it with him in a bottle. Well, he said he always liked a little before his concerts. Mother said, "Now you'll play just as well tonight without it." Then he offered her these tickets to the concert. And then, of course, Mother--it was so sweet; it was so typical--said, "Well, I have a daughter that plays the violin." (laughter) She began telling him of the Russian teacher I'd had in Berlin in those old days. I thought, "How sweet; how like a mother." I didn't mean a blessed thing to that man (laughter) but he had to stand there and listen because he was under arrest.

So anyway, she said, "I'll tell you, Mr. Heifetz, you can have the pleasure of this drink, so you go over to the sink and you can pour it down." As it gurgled when he poured it down the sink he said, "This is the most sorrowful day of my life, madame." (laughter) Oh, she had some great times.

When the big steamers--the Dollar Line then, it was called--were coming in from China, these poor Chinese immigrants had jade sewed in their jackets in little bits of swatch.

M: They were smuggling them in.

W: Yes. And she said. . . .

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

She never went to the docks; her deputies always went. She stayed in her office. But her main deputy said, "Now, Mrs. Hyde, I think you'd enjoy seeing this. We're getting a lot of Chinese and they're coming out of steerage this morning. You watch them. When we go down the line they'll

start to shake. Those fellows that shake are the fellows that's got the jade on them and gold jewelry or something." So she went down the line--they had them lined up on the dock--and sure enough they started to shake. (laughs) So the deputy said, "Come here." And they got the interpreter. "You get out here. All right, take everything off. Uncloak. Disrobe them." And sure enough, there were these little long slits sewed in their padded coolie coats. There was the jade. Well, of course they confiscated all the jade and then about every nine months, when they had enough accumulation of contraband, then they had a public auction. And of course many people went in and got lovely things those days. Beautiful lingerie. Oh, the beautiful stuff that came out of Shanghai in those days. Shanghai was the Paris of the East then. Hong Kong was nothing. All those beautiful things would come in. Oh, there were all kinds. The White Russians and Jews and French and English all just going down there into Shanghai.

And of course the great Jewish family--the Sassoon family--had had their big merchants down there and they got all this--things from all over the world--so it was a great port. And naturally people, even the Americans, coming out of there tried to smuggle stuff.

But as I say, this was a very easy port until my mother got ahold of it and then she made things. . . . And oh, they hated her. The newspapers went after her. They said she was a carpetbagger. She said she had three things against her: first, she was a woman; and she was a Mainlander; and she was a Mormon. And she said, "Those three things they couldn't take. It was just too much." (laughter) But before she left here they came through and they wrote very beautiful editorials about her. They realized that she was reasonable. She said, "I didn't make the law. I don't agree with this Prohibition--it's ridiculous--but I'm here to uphold it and I will."

And I know that some of my husband's very good friends, they'd have their poker parties and they'd have their liquor, their highballs, and they called her Mother Hyde. She said, "Listen, buddies, it's just wonderful to be with you and I love you all but if I catch one of you coming off that boat I'll double the fine." You know, she was afraid they'd take advantage of her friendship. "I'll double the fine on it!" (laughter) Oh, she had a lot of fun with them.

Well, I think now I've told you about enough of that. These are some of the things I remember, going into the family. This home, as I say, was just about a block and a half from the university on Oahu Avenue, built on this high knoll, and this beautiful lanai went all the way around the house. On the lanai there was a bench built in so that you could get fifty people on that lanai, just

sitting on the bench that outlined the edge of the lanai. Bunches of great big, high white gingers came up just to the top of the bench, so if you sat there you could just lean over and pick the beautiful white gingers as they bloomed. It was the most exotic thing to sit there and have all of the gingers blooming right in your face. You see, because you were up above. And that was the interesting part.

Well, many times when we would be having a party and our guests would park down below on the street, oh, maybe about eight-thirty or nine o'clock we'd hear music. These Hawaiians would come from way up in Manoa. They lived in little old grass shacks--not grass but very poor huts. They'd stroll down there and they knew we had guests so they'd come up the driveway and they'd sit on the steps or on this lanai and they'd sing and play. Then we'd go out to offer them and they never would take any money. I never remember a time that they ever had taken money, but my husband would have the maids take out some food to them. And we'd call out, "Oh, you play my favorite." "Well, what is it?" "Oh, 'Awapuhi'." That's ginger flower or my sweetheart. They were just charming. Well, that went on for many years and of course after the war, all of that went. This was before the [Second World] War; before Pearl Harbor.

I remember so much. About six-thirty in the morning, especially in summer, we'd hear this little squeaky cart coming up the driveway and then we'd hear this plaintive voice right outside our window: "Flowers. Gardenia. I make 'em cheap today. Gardenia." You'd look out and some cute little Japanese mama-san would have an old, broken-down baby carriage (Lynda laughs) and it was full of gardenias. We could get a whole huge bunch for twenty cents, so many you could just have a huge bowl to put them into. We waited every year, when the gardenias would come, for the cute little mama-san to come down, pushing that old squeaky baby carriage full of gardenias. (laughter) There she was in a cute little blue kimono and walking pigeon-toed. You see, they all walked pigeon-toed those days.

Another thing that was so lovely--oh, then there was what they called the Manapua Man. Do you know what manapua is?

M: Um hm.

W: Well, do we have to explain it here? Manapua is a rice cake and it's filled with ono goods [minced sweet roast pork called char siu]. Well anyway, he'd come down the valley and he had this long pole and two cans. Now these cans would have been oil cans--he'd taken them from some

oil station--and they were full of manapua. Sometimes he had some hot coals in the bottom--those buns he wanted to keep warm--and in the other he didn't. The other was just full of wet ti leaves. And he had the different kinds of manapua. "Manapua. Manapua." He'd call out and all the kids would run down to the street. "Hurry up! Here comes the Manapua Man." (laughter) That was always a weekly scene coming down Manoa valley and, oh, how the children loved it.

M: I'll bet.

W: Then there was another thing at that time. Most women when they gave luncheons. . . . Leis were so cheap; they were only twenty-five cents for beautiful plumeria leis. Well, you'd call up your friends and most people had plumerias in their gardens and the maids--we all had plenty of help--they'd sit down and make the leis so that when you went into the dining room, there on the back of each one's chair was a beautiful plumeria lei or a ginger lei, depending on what season it was. It filled the house with perfume and it was such a sweet custom, so that as we took our seats we all decorated ourselves with the leis. That was really a Hawaiian start.

M: Yeh.

W: Oh, that was a charming thing. Of course none of those things happen nowadays. All of our servants in those days had their kimonos and pretty little obis and beautifully clean-shod feet with the white tabis. They would always go around in the house without the slippers on but with their cotton tabis, so that it was quiet--when they were doing their work you didn't hear them around--and it was clean. Each doorstep would have a pair of those straw slippers they slipped on. What do they call them? Go-aheads, the one that went between the toes [with thongs].

M: Zoris.

W: Zoris, yes. They had that. Then, of course, when it got really rainy and muddy, then they'd come up from the servants' quarters in the wooden ones with quite a high platform on blocks of wood to keep their feet from getting wet. They made really a noise. They made me think of the old wooden shoes in Holland and they'd go clack-clack, clack-clack. Then you knew that it was raining and it was time the maids were coming in the kitchen.

Now let's see. There was something else here about the leis. Oh! In Manoa we had what they called Visiting Day and that was, we'll say, a Thursday. And Nuuanu val-

ley had another day. Those women would get dressed and come around in their cars with their chauffeurs and they'd leave their card at your door. In those days we had to have a silver card tray. It wasn't good etiquette if you didn't have a card tray. If you were in, they only stayed a minute but that was the calling day. This was the way we got a lot of not gossip, but I'll say news that you wouldn't discuss on the phone or otherwise and that made a very pleasant thing. If you knew Manoa was Thursday, you knew that most people would be home on Thursday. And if you knew Nuuanu was Tuesday, you'd expect to find them home on Tuesday. They used to publish it in the paper, the little schedules of the days that the women were at home. (laughter) And they kept that. It was wonderful. You see, we had no outside contact. It took us ten days to get to the Mainland on a boat and we had no radio and so this was the way we kept our social life going. Oh, it was hidebound but, of course, because we all knew each other in each valley, if any of us had houseguests then they just turned heaven and earth up and each gave a party--and they were wonderful parties--to greet the relative of so-and-so. So it made the social life most gracious and charming. (clock chimes) Oh, it takes me back. My goodness.

M: Was this done among ladies of a certain level?

W: Oh yes. Well, I'll tell you, you didn't necessarily--if you weren't working, and there weren't many wives working in those days. Oh, the people of lower income groups, they visited. They would take their Hawaiian quilts. They were beginning to imitate the Hawaiians and do Hawaiian quilts. They didn't do too much knitting; it was too hot. Not until the airplanes came in and we went back and forth to the Mainland did we start to knit much, except there was always someone who was doing some knitting for the Red Cross or something like that, but there wasn't too much. They did a lot of hand-embroidery. Beautiful hand-embroidery.

Then, of course, I know that so many of a certain class--of the wealthier class--they'd send their children away to school and they had taken music and art and literature and the play [drama] and all that. We had to make our own amusement and the result was they had always a little-theater movement and, I tell you, the plays here done by our local people were as fine as any that were ever put on in San Francisco and the Community Theater today has carried on that same tradition. We drew a lot from the Army and Navy for talent. There were some women who had been professional actresses and married into the Army and Navy, and the same with the men. But we had won-

derful shows.

The playhouses were terrible. I remember the best playhouse we had those days was on Bethel Street. Only halfway up it was boarded, then the other half was chicken wire, and then a corrugated roof. Well, at least it wasn't too hot when a whole crowd got inside--maybe four hundred people--but if it rained you couldn't hear what was going on because of the roof--the noise. But actually most of our shows were put on right there on Bethel Street and, oh, what a great day it was when the Hawaii Theatre was built. I think that's still up on [Bethel] and Pauahi streets, isn't it? [1130 Bethel Street]

M: Yeh, uh huh.

W: And we had a great artist do the proscenium arch and we had a great gala opening. It had good acoustics. Then the symphony started up and they used to give some of the concerts there, then later at the great Princess Theatre. The Princess Theatre was really the best one of all and the symphony moved over to there.

But if we had a concert in those days--a high-priced concert--we had it down in the Mission Memorial and that's down on King Street and that is the hottest place in Honolulu. There was no mauka breeze and only those little slits [for windows]. You see, it was a New England type of building with narrow windows and we'd all get in there on these skiddy, collapsible chairs. If the chairs weren't squeaking, it was so hot that somebody was fanning you to death with the program to keep yourself comfortable. The platform was way too high so you sat there with your necks kinked up. But in spite of it, we had our concerts. (laughter) We had string quartet concerts--some of the faculty from Punahou [School].

By the way, I was also on the faculty at Punahou at one time, teaching the violin and orchestra [1923-25], and I organized the first orchestra in Punahou School. It isn't known very much but I had a seven-piece orchestra over there. As I always said, there wasn't too much talent because there was too much New England blood there. (Lynda laughs) You know, that's right; the New Englanders are not for music, they're good for literature. They had all the beautiful literature back there.

But all of these cute children came from second generation missionaries. They were the third generation missionaries and they'd all had exposure to good music and by this time Victrolas were coming in. Oh, when we had a Victrola and the five-dollar Gold Seal records, you know, that was a premium. We used to give that to each other for gifts to build each other's library up because we had to wait so long between boats to get a new tune, a new

record. So you see how the culture part of the community was built up because these children of the third generation and the second generation had been away to school and they'd had very good exposure to the big eastern universities and on the West Coast too. Wherever they were, they saw that their children went to the operas and heard symphonies, and they always had some instrument [that they learned to play]. But it was an uphill job in trying to get any real music out of Punahou those days. (laughter) You know, you've got to have a certain temperament to be a musician.

As I say, some of the orchestras today don't have enough Jews in them because the Jews have temperament and they have a quality that the Gentiles don't have. I can go into an auditorium and I can tell you whether there are Jews in that first string section or not because they don't have the same quality of violin production. I mean, the Gentiles can't produce it like the Jews can. There's a quality there and we didn't have any Jews here--very few Jewish families, maybe four or five families, and they didn't enter into the cultural life; they were in the business [field]. So it was an uphill job to get music started and any good report came from the outside--came from the Mainland. I don't remember if anyone here locally was really gifted, that was really startlingly gifted, but all came from the Mainland. But we had our very happy times in making our own music, you see.

M: Um hm.

W: Now let's see. Here I have a . . .

M: About what year were you at Punahou?

W: Oh, 1922 I think. [1923-25] About 1922. Oh, isn't it funny. I put notes here and I can't read my own writing. It shows you the condition of my age.

There was one thing: we used to have Chinese come and case our garden every year. We had three beautiful lichee trees. (laughter) Mr. Montague Cooke had brought these famous trees back and we had the best of everything in that yard. They'd come up, you know. "Missy, you like to sell this lichee tree? I give you plenty. I like buy." And I'd say, "Well, I'll ask the boss. We ask the boss." So we'd say, "How many pounds do you think?" He'd say, "Oh, I don't know. Maybe plenty this year, maybe no. Just depends rain." You get too much rain, you wouldn't get any. In a dry season, it was good.

Well, they'd come. We'd sell [the lichee nuts on] those trees and we'd get enough out of it to pay our taxes. They were very expensive and there weren't too many people

that had these trees. It was very good. They [the Chinese buyers] would always give us a great big bag [of lichee nuts]. They'd bring their own little kids to strip the trees and then they'd give us a big bagful besides the money.

And then they'd get their eye on--we had some very fine mangoes that Montague Cooke had brought to crossbreed with some of the other mangoes here, and also the star fruit and alligator pears [or avocados]. Those Pakes [Chinese] would come around and they'd get their eye on that, so we were a marked family. (laughter) Sometimes they went, too, during the night so we just figured, well, it was all right. They got them. We had a lot of joy out of it anyway.

Now let's see. Oh, this is the thing though.

M: Wait. Let me check this [recorder]. (recorder turned off and on again)

W: The Manoa trolley ran up Oahu Avenue. And those blessed conductors! Of course they knew us all and several times when I'd come home--I wasn't driving my own car then, I was too afraid--I'd get off at the stop right at the bottom of our driveway. He'd put on the brakes. He'd say, "Lady, I'll go up and get your umbrella. Where is it, on the lanai?" I said, "Sure." "Well, you wait." He'd run up the driveway and get my umbrella and bring it down and help me off the trolley car and wish me Godspeed and up he'd go to the valley. Now that's the kind of service we got. (Lynda laughs)

Then also, if we wanted a newspaper: "Eh. I didn't get my newspaper. Will you get me one?" "Sure. Next time we get down here King Street, I get off the car and get you one." And they'd stop the car to get the newspaper and I'd sit there [reading it] when he'd go over the swamp. That's when we went down to Waikiki. There was a whole swamp in there, you know. You know where the Waikiki canal [Ala Wai Canal] is? That canal was a part of the swamp. They drained it into that canal. We had cattails and ducks and everything else in there. They'd built up the roadbed so that we [on the streetcar] could zip across it, but both sides were just wild. Anyway, when we'd go over there, there wasn't much to look at so we read the newspaper. But those blessed men would do those things for us.

M: Hm.

W: Oh, then the steamer days. That was the funny part. You were out of luck if you went to town to do any business in any particular office on a steamer day because nine times

out of ten you'd go up to the door of the office and there'd be a note: "Gone to the steamer. Be back pretty soon." (laughter) Well, you knew just about when the steamer got in at 10:00 a.m. and by the time they were unloaded and they put the leis on. Many people went down. They didn't have any friends [arriving], but. . . .

There was one man here by the name of Harry Lucas. He was a bachelor and a charming fellow. He made it just his duty and joy to go and meet all the Matson [Navigation Company] boats that came because he knew there'd be somebody--old kamaainas or some friends--getting off that boat and he'd get the first news out of San Francisco that way, you know. So he'd go down with an armload of leis and stand there and wait, you know, when the band was playing and the hula girls were hula-ing. Old Harry was standing there with his armload. "Oh yeh, here comes someone. Here's a lei for you. Mary, here's a lei for you." So he'd have maybe half a dozen or a dozen leis he gave to different people. And some of the men he'd give them to. "Well, how's business on the Mainland?" And they'd give him the latest maybe on the insurance business and all things like that. But other people--I know some of the dentist office, they said, "Oh well, we've gone down to see who gets off the boat today." You were delighted if you got to a place where they didn't hang a card out saying, "We've gone to the steamer. We'll be back pretty soon." (laughter)

Oh, and then we had a hula-cop. On the corner of Fort and Hotel [streets]--you know where Woolworth's is?

M: Yeh.

W: All right. That was the main corner. All of the streetcars passed there and if you wanted to know anybody, you stood on that corner and you'd see everybody in the Islands. The traffic got quite heavy so they had a Hawaiian cop in his khaki outfit and he had a little stationary umbrella on a stand on a little [traffic] island and he did the hula to direct the traffic. In other words, it was this way with his hands to go right and that way to go left (Lynda laughs) and this was straight ahead. We'd stand and watch that fellow. No music, but, oh, the fun we'd have. We'd holler out.

Later on, when we could drive down Fort Street, I'd just stop the car right there on the corner. He would always ask me in Hawaiian, "How is your navel?" That's "Pehea oe a piko-piko?" [Pehea ko piko?] That means,

"How is your navel today?" (Lynda laughs) Well, that's Hawaiian, you see, but we say, "How's your health?" They say that the main seat of our health is by your diaphragm --your solar plexus. You see, the Hawaiians knew the solar plexus is here and the navel, the piko-piko, was over --that was the navel, so "How is your navel today?" "Oh, mahalo, it's fine." (Lynda laughs) So that was what we called him: the hula-cop. That was a charming era. Oh dear. Bless his old heart. Maybe we'd have a bunch of grapes and haul out and hand him a bunch of grapes and toodle off down Fort Street. Then of course it was a sad day when they took the hula-cop away and they had the [traffic] lights put in.

Oh, this is the good one, though, and this actually happened. You know, we were getting more cars all the time and the HRT--that's the Honolulu Rapid Transit Company--was feeling it. The people weren't using their [street] cars so much. And so at this particular time, they put in this--whether they still have it or not: it said "Don't walk!" You remember? That when we go down, it says "Don't walk! Stop and don't walk." Well, this woman had been reading all this propaganda: "Don't walk; ride!" You see, ride the buses. And so this sweet old thing was going across the street against the red light-- against the Stop--and the cop came out and said, "Don't you see that sign, Lady?" She said, "Sure I see it." He said, "It says Don't walk!" (laughter) She said, "I think this is HRT's funny business. It says Don't walk! They want to make us ride." (laughter) That actually happened.

You see, the streets were so narrow you could whistle across the street to the fellow on the other side. Well, you know how it is today. We could carry conversations on almost. "Well, how's Aunt Mary?" "Oh, fine." "Baby come yet?" "No. Little more baby come." We'd holler across the street. (clock chimes) Well, it was just a beautiful way, a gracious way of living. I think I've told you all I can now. I don't know anything more. Maybe after you go I'll think of these things.

M: I wanted to ask you one thing about your husband. He came here . . .

W: He came here in 1895. He was a nine-year-old boy and he and his brothers were the only haole kids in the Hawaiian schools and they learned beautiful Hawaiian. He spoke better Hawaiian than he spoke English. When he was fifteen, his father realized that his English was getting very bad because they only spoke Hawaiian in the home and that he would have to send him to the Mainland. So he sent him to the Mainland and those days, if you were smart

enough, you could make the high school in three years. High school was always in conjunction with a university so he went to the University [of Utah] prep school, as they called it, and in three years he got through but his English was very difficult. He just had to learn it, that's all. But he made it.

And then he went through the university and he was graduated in mining engineering.

M: Was this at Brigham Young [University]?

W: No, no, this was the University of Utah. No, the BYU didn't have an engineering course then. And, of course, all the West being mining-minded, they had big schools of mining in Colorado and California and Utah. Anyway, the day he graduated the mines closed down. There was a big slump and so he said, "What am I going to do? I owe five hundred dollars." And that was a lot of money in those days, to get your education. His father was a missionary and he didn't have any money, so he said the boys would have to do it on their own.

So he got a position teaching mathematics in one of the high schools in southern Utah and he was there two years. And then he said, "Well, I'm going to put in my application to teach mathematics in the Agricultural College of Utah" which was in the northern part of the state. You get a bigger salary and it was better--everything.

So he made an application and when he got there the president of the university said, "Why, you're not the Ralph Woolley that I was corresponding with." He said, "I certainly am. Here's your letter." There were five Ralph Woolleys in the state and three of them were engineers and two of them were architects. The president of the university just got the wrong Woolley but my husband answered him and he liked him and so he got the job and he taught mathematics there. He became a very fast friend of this president who later was made president of the University of Utah. He was a very famous scientist--a Norwegian scientist--in dry land farming, [John A. Widtsoe].

So after he got this school teaching [job] he said, "This is no life. I'm going back to the Islands." And I said to him, "Well you know, there's no place to dig in the Islands but sand. There's no mining and what in the world will you do?" He said, "I just figured I'd come back here. I'd get along better." And so, when he got here, the president of the Mormon Church had dedicated the ground out at Laie to build a temple and the plans were drawn up for it. And as he. . . . [See p. 23]

END OF INTERVIEW

Re-transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen

NOTES BY VIRGINIA JEANNETTE WOOLLEY (MRS. JAY A.) QUEALY

Page 1: Mrs. Woolley was not quite sure of the year she met her husband-to-be, Ralph Woolley (1918 or 1919). It must have been in 1919, as the Laie Temple dedication was on November 27, 1919. If he returned a year after their meeting, and they were married on December 8, 1920, I would say 1919 was correct.

Page 2: Joseph S. Hyde came to Hawaii in May 1884 as a missionary for the Mormon Church. I have this date recorded in his own handwriting and therefore assume it is correct. [Mrs. Woolley had said he came in 1882.]

Page 4: Mrs. Woolley's father, Joseph S. Hyde, died on February 27, 1944 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her mother, Jeannette A. Hyde, died on August 15, 1936 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

When Romania and Ralph Woolley were first married, they moved into a rented cottage on Kalia Road between Fort DeRussy and John Ena Road. That area is now part of the Hilton Hawaiian Village complex. Then, about one and a half years after I was born on September 30, 1921--probably 1922--Ralph Woolley bought the first home of the Montague Cookes at 2349 Oahu Avenue in Manoa Valley. The Cookes then built a larger home on upper Manoa Road. It was on a large pie-shaped lot that ran between upper Manoa Road and Oahu Avenue. It ended where these two streets converged. At that point the property was opposite the entrance to Waioli Tea Room. As I remember that house, it has a lava-rock foundation and Normandy or English Tudor-style architecture, with a high lava-rock wall around the property. In the long narrow part of the property, Mr. Cooke kept a small herd of Holstein cows.

Page 6: Walter Murray Gibson was appointed president of the Board of Education by King Kalakaua in February 1883. I remember my grandfather, J.S. Hyde, saying he went to Iolani Palace to obtain his teacher's certificate from W.M. Gibson. I never heard him mention "the little old house," which I assume Mother meant was the first missionaries' home across from Kawaiahao Church, but perhaps that house was used as headquarters for the Board of Education. However, since Gibson was also Prime Minister of

the Hawaiian Kingdom, Grandfather could have gone to Iolani Palace to have Gibson sign his teaching certificate. Grandfather Hyde taught in the school at Laie.

Page 8: Orson Hyde, 1805-1878, re-dedicated the land of Jerusalem on October 24, 1841 for the return of the Jews. [Mrs. Woolley had said it was in 1840.]

Her father, Joseph S. Hyde, was twenty-one or twenty-two when he went to Kalaupapa. [Mrs. Woolley had said he was eighteen or nineteen.]

Page 21: The interview ends abruptly [because the tape ended]. Here is a brief conclusion in my words:

His father, Samuel E. Woolley, was the president of the Mission at Laie and he asked Ralph Woolley to supervise the construction of the Temple. After the Temple was completed in November 1919, he started his own construction and contracting company.

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.