

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Harumi Fujii

"I used to work in the . . . plantation field. Every Saturday we used to work out in the field. They used to offer us jobs . . . from young time through maybe, about twelve years old, I think. . . . And we used to report down, right below our camp, used to get railroad track. We go out early in the morning, maybe six o'clock or so. . . . And then we go in a train car and then . . . they take us to the mill. And then when they come to the mill, we go in the truck, and then go out in the field. So, grammar school time, most hō hana. . . . The luna . . . used to get one . . . bamboo rod. I think about ten-feet long. They measured that, see, because maybe we get one cent per line or something. So each ten feet, they pay you one cent, yeah. Or two cents. If get plenty weeds, maybe three cents, like that. If not too much weed maybe only one cent. They go by, something like contract, yeah. How many lines you clean, you get paid for that."

Born in 1926, Harumi Fujii grew up in Keawe Camp, part of Pioneer Mill Company's sugar plantation. He was the youngest of Japanese-immigrant Jisaburo and Ume Fujii's three children.

Fujii worked in the sugar fields while attending King Kamehameha III School and Lahainaluna High School. After graduating in 1944, he became a full-time carpenter for the sugar company. Later, he was employed as a tractor operator and welder.

Fujii was a leader in his union, International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 142, Unit 32. During the 1958 sugar strike, he was in charge of the soup kitchens. In 1960 Fujii left the plantation to become manager of the Maui County Employees Federal Credit Union.

Retired since 1991, Fujii lives in West Maui with his wife Doris. They raised three children and have two grandchildren.

Tape No. 33-9-1-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harumi Fujii (HF)

Lahaina, Maui

January 16, 2003

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Harumi Fujii for the Pioneer Mill oral history project on January 16, 2003. We're at his home in Lahaina, Maui. And the interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Harumi, why don't we start. The first question I want to ask you is when and where you were born.

HF: Was born in Keawe Camp, 1926.

WN: Okay. What about your father and mother? What were they doing?

HF: My mother was a housewife. She used to take in laundry, like that. But she didn't work for any employer, yeah. My father was a blacksmith. But when I think I was about two years old, he had a stroke and was on disability retirement. I knew he was receiving about fifteen dollars a month from plantation. So as far as income, that's the only income we had.

WN: Oh, okay.

HF: Although I had an older brother and sister. My sister was working, she started working, I think, after grade school. She used to work at what they call Lahaina Ice Company, where they used to bottle soda at one time. Make ice cream, like that, yeah. But my brother, after finishing grade school at [King] Kamehameha III [School], he moved to Wailuku with family friends and went school over there, what is known as the Maui Community College at that time was Maui Vocational School. And he took up machine shop. After finishing machine shop, he worked for (American Can Company as a machinist. It was next to the Maui Pineapple Company building). Was a machinist there. So after finishing grade school, he didn't return home, you know. He lived with the family, then when he started working, they rented a place in Kahului together with some of the other workers, yeah. And worked there.

WN: So is he much older than you?

HF: About six years older.

WN: Six years older.

HF: And my sister was nine. She passed away already so get quite a bit of age difference, yeah.

WN: They were helping supplement the family income by working.

HF: Yeah. Yeah, right. When I was going school because when they left, I was still in school, yeah. When my brother left, so he must have been about fourteen, so I must have been about eight years old, yeah.

WN: How many were there of you in the family?

HF: Just the three of us. We had some children—you know those days my father used to be blacksmith so they used to go way up in the mountains, see. You know, when they dug the tunnels for irrigation, like that. Used to be the blacksmith, so they used to live way up in the mountains, where they were working with the tunnel. So my mother lost, according to the grave that we have, three, four, about five children. Some, I think, one or two maybe one year, two years, but most of them stillborn *kine*.

WN: And this is all before you?

HF: Yeah, all before me. Yeah. Maybe had one born after me, I think. But you know we get grave by the Māla Wharf, over there get four and then get one at Kā'anapali and we had one at Wai'anae, I think, when my dad used to blacksmith.

WN: Wai'anae, O'ahu?

HF: O'ahu, yeah. So I know my mom went with my cousin's folks from Honolulu, go exhume the grave, yeah. But practically get nothing, only the dirt maybe they brought back. So we have an urn in the church, Lahaina Hongwanji.

WN: When you say "blacksmith" now, what did a blacksmith do?

HF: *Da kine*, forging like that, yeah. The tools, you know, when they dig tunnels they used jackhammer, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

HF: You know what that jackhammer, yeah. And get the blade, yeah, where they pound the rock to break up the rock, like that. Those things, I think, and other *da kine* steel tools that he used to make. Most of the time, I think, he was working way up in the hills, I think. Even over here, when they were working in the tunnel, they call that Kaua'ula, above Lahaina Pump [Camp], yeah. He used to live up there, too. But those days are all before my time.

WN: So, when you, by that time you were born and he was living in Keawe Camp?

HF: Keawe Camp.

WN: Did his job change?

HF: No, he was disabled already.

WN: Oh, he was disabled.

HF: Yeah.

WN: I see.

HF: Well I think my mom used to say, when I was about two years old he became disabled. So until then he was working as blacksmith.

WN: I see.

HF: But used to get one what they call shaft, I don't know if anyone mention to you about Crater Village.

WN: Yeah. Hinaharas were there.

HF: Yeah, yeah. Oh you know Hinahara? Which Hinahara then?

WN: Uh, Minoru.

HF: Oh. Oh, you know him personally?

WN: Well, I interviewed him, too.

HF: Oh, yeah. They used to live in a camp.

WN: Crater camp.

HF: Crater Village they called that. And right below in the gully, between Crater Village and Lahainaluna [School], get what they call Kahoma Stream, yeah.

WN: Kahoma Stream.

HF: Yeah. That's the river that come straight down by the cannery, [Lahaina] Cannery Mall.

WN: Okay.

HF: Kahoma Stream and right below the hill they used to get what they call pump shaft. And then, for pump the water out from the ground and then pump 'em up to the hill. And over there used to get one what they call steam plow. Yeah, the thing run by the steam and then they used to get a cable, no elevator at that time. So the (cable was attached to the) steam plow and elevator, which carried the working people down and up the shaft.

WN: Oh.

HF: And my dad used to work over there as a blacksmith, too. For a while, yeah.

WN: I see.

HF: And after he got disabled, they had somebody else take his place.

WN: Do you know how he got disabled?

HF: I know stroke, though.

WN: Oh, okay.

HF: He had a stroke. Yeah, not accident or nothing. But even then, my young days, half, yeah, paralyzed. But his speech was okay. And then only thing, his one side arm and the legs, too. He had to drag his leg. What they used to do, all the yardwork, like that. So, see, he lived until about seventy-six. So even after stroke, yeah, he lived for quite a while.

WN: And he couldn't work, yeah?

HF: Yeah. I think I was about twenty-one, he passed away, I think. But I know he was getting fifteen dollars a month and after he passed away, the plantation made a lump-sum settlement 'cause, I guess, humbug for them, inconvenient, yeah. Pay my mom fifteen dollars a month. So they settle for so much, I don't know, thousand so much. And after that, we didn't get that income already.

WN: And your mom, she took in laundry. How did that work?

HF: What she used to do is—I don't know actually how many Filipino people, but the Filipinos, most of them, were without wives, yeah. So, the camp ladies, just like a contract with them, they take one bundle every week or so. And I don't know if they . . .

WN: So do they pick it up?

HF: Yeah, I used to pick 'em up.

WN: Oh, you used to.

HF: Yeah.

(Laughter)

HF: Because right below the camp, you know where the Cannery Mall is, on the Kā'anapali side, used to get a camp, just like any other plantation camp. They not isolated but the Filipinos congregate one place, yeah, Japanese one place, Portuguese, like that. So the Filipinos used to live over there. That used to be Keawe Camp, too, we call Filipino Camp. So I used to go down pick up the laundry, maybe once a week. And then after she wash and iron then I go deliver again. But I don't remember collecting money though. I don't know how much they used to pay. (WN chuckles.) Maybe about two dollars or so, I think.

WN: And how did she wash the clothes?

HF: Yeah. I used to help her, too, you know. You know that *tarai*, we get one burner outside, *kudo*, eh, they call that, yeah. And then boil the water, and then, I don't know, she puts suds or something, yeah. And then wash 'em in there. Uh, boil the water, dirty clothes, you know the Filipinos, most of them work in the field, yeah.

WN: Yeah.

HF: They go *hāpai kō* or cut cane, like that. So after they boil 'em, she bring them inside the washhouse. You know the plantation had built most of the camp families' washhouse, where they can wash the laundry. And get two, I know two concrete tubs, put 'em in the

tub and then take 'em out and then on the cement floor, and we don't—something like, *da kine* small baseball club, to pound 'em you know.

WN: Oh.

HF: Pound the dirty clothes. Yeah, I used to help her do that. But most of the time she do it herself. But once in a while, yeah. Pound 'em and then after that with the washboard, wash 'em with the soap again. Try get all the dirt out.

WN: And this is mostly work clothes?

HF: Yeah. That's why I still remember it, mostly work clothes.

WN: Dirty then, huh?

HF: Yeah, really dirty. (WN chuckles.) Really dirty. And then she used to patch and iron and then—I know before *da kine* rice bag, you know hundred-pound bag, I think it was. She opened all the seams, and then come out to pretty good size, yeah. And then the laundry, she used to put 'em in there, see.

WN: Uh-huh [yes].

HF: We didn't have any bag or anything. Just that and then fold 'em up, put 'em in there, and then tie up. And I used to bring those down.

WN: And when you collected from them, they would put it in the same kind of bag, the dirty clothes?

HF: Yeah, yeah. Same kind bag. Before, we never get that garbage bag like we have now. (WN chuckles.) Either that or I bring one bag down and go pick 'em up.

WN: Did your mother do other things with that rice bag? Did they sew other kinds of things?

HF: Yeah, they used to use that for—I remember seeing, you know, that rice bag with all the emblem on top, yeah. But I don't think she made shirt or pants or anything. But I know they used to do that for wrapping, like that yeah. But my mom lived to ninety-one, so she lived a long life, though. Hard life but . . .

WN: Must be all the hard work, yeah?

HF: (Chuckles) I think so, yeah. And she was a small lady, you know. My mother real short, short and small. My dad was big. Blacksmith, so he was big and husky type.

WN: And what kind of chores did you have besides helping your mother wash clothes?

HF: I used to work in the field, you know, plantation field. Every Saturday we used to work out in the field. They used to offer us jobs. Yeah, I don't know from what age, but from young time through maybe, about twelve years old, I think.

WN: What did you do?

HF: Cut grass mostly. They call that weeding.

WN: *Hō hana.*

HF: *Hō hana* yeah. And we used to report down, right below our camp, used to get railroad track. We go out early in the morning, maybe six o'clock or so. The train pull cars, see, and then we go in a train car and then sit in the car or stand up and then they take us to the mill. And then when they come to the mill, we go in the truck, and then go out in the field.

So, grammar school time, most *hō hana*. I know they used to—the *luna*, used to get *luna* supervisor, used to get one rod, you know, bamboo rod. I think about ten-feet long. They measured that, see, because maybe we get one cent per line or something. So each ten feet, they pay you one cent, yeah. Or two cents. If get plenty weeds, maybe three cents, like that. If not too much weed maybe only one cent. They go by, something like contract, yeah. How many lines you clean, you get paid for that. (Chuckles) So it wasn't too much.

WN: So one line is like ten feet?

HF: Yeah, I think was about ten feet, I think.

WN: How many lines could you do in one day?

HF: (Chuckles) Gee, I wonder how many. Yeah them young times were. I wonder . . .

WN: I'm just wondering how much (chuckles) I'm trying to figure out how much you guys got paid.

HF: Not even, hardly one dollar, I think, one day. Depend on, and then usually, like young kid time, we get close friends, yeah. So maybe, I used to have one close friend, we worked as partners. And then work together, see. And those days, many of the fields they call, they had *da kine* irrigation system, with only ditch. The water flow down a ditch and then they had something like a gate so the water disbursed on horizontal way on the hill, all go horizontal. So we used to take partner, one guy start from one end and we start working toward the other, yeah.

WN: You mean weeding.

HF: Weeding with the hoe, yeah. Oh, with the hoe. So grammar school time, even high school, we used to work. Most weeding. And high school time, freshmen year, the war broke out, so 1941. So those days we used to get school until about one o'clock, I think. And then after that, we used to go out in the fields because plantation was short of labor, you know, get some many people went out service, yeah. Went into the service so we used to go volunteer field workers. So we used to work out in the fields.

WN: So this is during the war, you work.

HF: Yeah. That . . .

WN: School days, too?

HF: Yeah, school days, too. We used to get out early from school, work in the field.

WN: Was that voluntary or you have to do that?

HF: No, voluntary. But most of them plantation people, yeah. Especially work in the fields so they go out in the field. Like the business people may be there, work with the families, shops, like that. Stores like that.

And the hospital at one time was located right across, what they call Lahaina Center on Front Street. So in the war, because the danger I think, they move 'em up to Lahainaluna [School] temporarily, was relocated up there.

WN: So you went to Kamehameha III School until eighth grade?

HF: Eighth grade then Lahainaluna for four years, yeah. And we were fortunate because even now, Lahainaluna, it could be called technical school. So they had training for carpentry, machinist, and automobile repair and even farming, too, ag[ricultural] department. I was in the carpenter shop so when we finished school, in 1944 graduated, plantation offered us job in the carpenter shop. Carpenter department so we were fortunate that we didn't have to go out into the field at that time. We worked as carpenters to take care of the, maintain the plantation homes.

WN: Okay. I'll ask you that later on. For Keawe Camp you said that there was a Japanese section and across the way was a Filipino section.

HF: Where we used to live, we didn't have too many Filipino. The majority of the Filipinos were living in another camp, separate from what we call Keawe Camp. But they also called themselves Keawe Camp. That was below the highway, you know by the cannery. And we used to live above the highway.

WN: I see.

HF: So I think right below my house, had some Filipino houses but, see maybe only about five, six Filipinos were living there, I think. All others Japanese, yeah.

WN: But your section was bigger than the Filipino section?

HF: Yeah.

WN: *Mauka* side was bigger.

HF: Yeah, *mauka* side was bigger. And I don't remember, you know, other than Filipinos, you know Portuguese or Chinese like that. I don't remember anyone living in our camp other than Japanese and Filipino. And was born there and I live there about thirty years, I think, before they started to sell, not sell but starting to demolish the camp then I moved up here.

WN: What was your house like? Can you describe your house?

HF: Yeah. (Chuckles) My house was just two-room house.

WN: Two rooms.

HF: Three, well three. And, I don't know, the way they put it, just like the camps were built in a stony area where they cannot plant sugarcane. So the kitchen level was a ground level. And then had about three steps going up, then I get one parlor, and one bedroom. That's all we had. And then . . .

WN: Wait, living room, parlor were same thing?

HF: With one partition.

WN: Living room. Oh, okay.

HF: One partition. I think the bedroom and parlor about the same size. See, maybe about twelve-by-twelve, I think. Twelve-by-twelve, so twenty-four feet the length, yeah.

WN: One bedroom.

HF: One bedroom, yeah. And then had one porch, maybe about four-feet wide, run right across the house, with railing and steps going down. So that end of the house was high. So I think had about ten steps going up, I think, for go up to the porch level. So as far as when I remember, I was the only one living. I don't remember my sister or my brother living together with me. And then my dad was paralyzed so he sleep on one end of the bedroom and then me and my mom sleep on the other side. And then get the parlor in there. And the kitchen was all still concrete, cement floor. And then we didn't have chairs like these. We had bench, got long bench, wooden bench. And even the table was one-by-twelve, maybe two-piece one-by-twelve, twenty-four inches and maybe one six-inch one in the center. One long table. You know had one long table, much longer than this.

WN: That's where you folks ate?

HF: Yeah, in the kitchen.

WN: In the kitchen.

HF: The kitchen was the length of the house, too. One side for cooking and one side for eating. All cement so I know every once in a while, we had to wash 'em down. Wash, scrub the cement. And had one window in the eating place and one window by the basin, the kitchen basin. And we had, maybe later on, I think, we had what they call icebox. Made of wooden cabinet, divided in two sections. On top section short, and then we used to buy ice, they used to come around with ice, see. Inside of the icebox was made with, I think, zinc-like material. Yeah, and then they used to put the ice inside, on the top, and underneath the cabinet, used to put the milk or other kind perishable stuff. So the ice cool off the cabinet.

WN: Cold air goes down.

HF: Yeah.

WN: Clever, yeah.

HF: I know we used to have that.

WN: Did you folks have a safe to keep like canned goods.

HF: No. I don't remember. Oh, yeah. We used to have wooden safe. Yeah. I don't know who made, somebody must have made that, yeah. The front two doors, screen door. Then I know my mom used to put inside, maybe the rice bag kind stuff, too. Material cloth so you cannot see inside. But outside is screen and get two drawers, I know, for the utensils. And we had, I think, I don't know, early part she used to cook outside, see. The kitchen

basin, this side, we used to eat that way, had one door going out. Right outside here, used to get *da kine kudo*, you know concrete form with opening on top where you can cook your rice or cook your food, like that. Had two burner, I remember.

WN: What this open fire, you mean?

HF: Open fire. But get the mold like, with concrete. So on top is round, and in front is open, outside is all sealed. But you put the firewood from the front. She used to cook out there, the rice.

WN: Do you remember her cooking that's . . .

HF: Yeah.

WN: . . . eventually did they get kerosene?

HF: Yeah, eventually kerosene. But I know, I can picture that with the *kudo* get, and then on the side, used to stack the firewood. And on top we used to get that corrugated iron, just for roof, in case rain or something like that. But in front, all open. Side, and the top and the back was corrugated.

WN: Corrugated.

HF: Corrugated, *totan*.

WN: *Totan*.

HF: And my dad was disabled so we had small shack right next, where we can take a bath, where he can take a bath *furo* like. But we used to go to the camp bath. Yeah, we used to go to the camp bath. Kind of long distance we had to walk to. Carry a bucket with a soap, and towel and changing clothes.

WN: Well how far did you have to walk?

HF: See, from my house, maybe seventy yards or so, I think. Yeah, was located on the other end of the camp that's why. And right above my house we had a public toilet. Public toilet with a partition in the center. No such thing as man or woman see, just get partition. I know the one side, when you walk in on the right side, they get *da kine* metal, just like big, huge pipeline, before they used to get in the fields, like that. They cut 'em in half and then they put a board on the top, maybe about this high from the bottom.

WN: One foot, yeah.

HF: Yeah. And then get a circle, get three circles when you sit down or used the toilet, and get partition. The outside get three and above get one tank, see. Get one tank where the water automatically go up into the tank and then used to flush automatically off and on. The water used to just come down and wash that thing down. No more toilet paper, or maybe had but we used newspaper, see.

WN: Newspaper.

(Laughter)

WN: Not Sears catalog.

(Laughter)

HF: I remember though, right by the kitchen entrance, we had one hook, you know. Wire, kind of heavy wire, ring on the top and shape like a hook. My mother used to cut that newspaper, maybe about sixteen and twenty inches and then poke 'em in there because one side pointed. And when you like toilet you rip 'em off from there and the paper go off.

WN: (Laughs) So the toilets were actually flush toilets?

HF: Yeah.

WN: With plumbing. So you had plumbing then.

HF: Yeah.

WN: It would flush to the sewer or it would flush . . .

HF: Sewer.

WN: Oh.

HF: I don't know where the water goes, maybe go in the cane field. (WN chuckles.) Could be yeah. I think go in the cane field. And then once in a while, so when you go toilet, you gotta look inside, get somebody in there or not. You get female try go the other side. And then once in a while, you know, kids like that they, oh I don't know if paper or rubbish they throw inside. The thing get clogged up see. So the water overflow. So and mouth right on the side of road, so the water go flow right down on the side of the road (chuckles) until somebody come unplug the jammed part.

WN: Oh, boy. (Chuckles) And when you went, *furo*, you would wash yourself outside the (tape inaudible) first.

HF: Yeah.

WN: So what did they have?

HF: Get big concrete, you know. The men's side had three, I think. Three concrete department and then right outside the concrete, get one bench right through, long bench, so you sit on the bench and you scoop the water from the tub and then wash yourself out there.

WN: And the tub water is hot, yeah.

HF: You can adjust 'em the way you want.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: So if the older people go, they make 'em hot.

(Laughter)

And the younger kids make 'em warm. So we go in, then after you wash, you go in and soak yourself. And used to get, on one end of the wall, cubby-hole like, about twelve-by-twelve, where you put your changing clothes in there. The bathhouse used to be the place where you congregate and *talk story*, like that.

WN: How big was the tub, the *furo*?

HF: Oh, pretty good size though. Think maybe about three feet high and then, see, about four feet to five feet wide. And was . . .

WN: How long was it?

HF: . . . about, let's say, about eight feet, yeah one.

WN: Eight feet long.

HF: Yeah, so because when you run down, the building must have been about twenty-four, thirty feet I think. So was kind of long.

WN: So it was long.

HF: Yeah, was long.

WN: And then had a partition between men and women?

HF: Yeah. The men had let's say three tubs and then get one partition and on the other side, two tubs for the women and one tub for the Filipino. So we had one partition, too. The women's side had one partition between the women and the Filipinos. And Filipinos had one tub over there.

WN: When you say one tub, that's only one person could be in the tub?

HF: No, no. That's the one that I mentioned about five feet maybe. Five-feet by eight-feet. That's the length of one tub. And then one section. And get three of that. Get hot water and cold water.

WN: How was the water heated? Was it open fire or was it . . .

HF: No, not open fire though. Used to get a steam generator, I think, right below the bathhouse, used to get what we call "pump" similar to what they had Crater Village where they used to pump the water from there, going up the hill in the cane field. And then over there they used to get something like a steam generator. And then they used to make hot water from there and then pipe 'em across to the bathhouse. I don't know how they used to heat that, not electricity, I think oil. By oil, I think, some kind of fuel. And heat up the water and then heat up the steam and then go to the bathhouse.

WN: And the whole camp used to share that bathhouse?

HF: Most of the people in the camp. Some of them had their own *furo*, where they burn firewood like that. After I started working carpenter, I made my own tub. Yeah, redwood tub. Small kind box tub. I still have 'em here you know. I brought 'em with me. The redwood and we used to get firewood and then make hot water and bathe at home.

WN: The one that your father used, how was that, was that firewood?

HF: That I think firewood, too. And you know, *furo*, we didn't need too much firewood, you know. That thing heat up and stays hot because the inside of the box, we had copper, see, the floor, eh, copper. So it held the heat though. And then even with the ashes like that, water used to stay hot quite a bit. Yeah, so, thinking, good to get this kind time, when cold.

WN: Yeah. Oh, okay.

HF: *Da kine* toilet I think, in the camp few only, maybe had about one, two, about three or four toilet located in the different parts of the camp. But really, you know the camp all stony area, rocks, on the hillside, too. But plantation built playing basketball court I think for all the camps. Even Crater Village, like Keawe Camp, Lahaina Pump, and Honokōwai like that. They used to get all *da kine*. And used to get light, too, so you can play nighttime, too. And then, over here, this camp too, they call Kelawea Camp they used to have basketball court and I know all the major camps, I think Crater Village, too, they had clubhouse for the people to congregate. So we had a clubhouse, too. And I know one section of the clubhouse used to get one, something like a nursery for kids before school age. I don't know who was running those things but I know had one section for kids, like that. So, each camp was responsible for their own activities. If they like get social in the clubhouse, then that's up to them to plan for that. And you play basketball, baseball, softball, volleyball, like that.

WN: So the plantation was the ones that . . .

HF: Yeah. At one time, the plantation used to run the leagues.

WN: The leagues.

HF: They used to have a league. Then after the strike, I think, we got together, all the different camp people got together and organized their own what we called the West Maui Athletic Association. And then we used to run our own league. You know basketball, compete against other camps. So was quite successful though. We had baseball, basketball, softball like that. And once a year, softball, we used to have bachelors and married people get tournament like yeah. Softball tournament.

WN: Bachelors against the married men.

HF: Yeah married and the single going to be one of the highlight of the softball season.

WN: I see. So before the strike, the union took care of the workers and everything.

HF: Yeah.

WN: But after that, things changed.

HF: Yeah. Right.

WN: So you folks were more or less on your own to find.

HF: Yeah because the union, as far as sports, we didn't have, you know, formal sports program organized by the union. But the camp people work together, the camp people are

essentially union members, all of them work plantation so they were organized their different organization, compete against each other.

WN: When you were growing up though, early days, what did you do to have good fun as a kid?

HF: That's what we used to do, basketball. And my neighbor had a family older than me, the children all older but one of the boys used to take me go diving, we go spear fishing. And you know where that Jōdō Mission is? Where they get a big Buddha statue?

WN: Yeah, right.

HF: We used to walk down there and go to dive around that area. So I still can remember though where the rock formation where we used to go diving. What we used to do is, he used to make spear for me from—before when kids time they had, you know when the child sleep, they get tent netting like.

WN: Yeah. Mosquito net?

HF: Mosquito net, yeah, with frame made of just like metal rods. I know with that rod we used to make spear, you know. And then with *da kine* old tire tube, we make the sling like for the spear. We used to make our own goggles, too, with the wood.

WN: What, wood frame?

HF: Yeah. You see get certain kind of wood though. I think, *milo* I think, kind of soft wood. And then, I don't know how we used to cut the glass but cut the glass round, yeah. Because those days we couldn't buy that goggles. And we used to go diving more small *kine manini* like that. *Manini*, *kūmū*, and we call that *po'o pa'a* but we used to do that quite often. And when we grew up then we used to go diving by Kā'anapali, you know where the hotel is now. And then we used to diving around that area. I used to like my diving so I used to spend quite a bit of time down the beach.

WN: Kept you out of trouble probably. (Laughs)

HF: (Chuckles) And then we used to go surfboard, too, you know.

WN: Yeah.

HF: We surfboard right next to the Māla Wharf, you know where the old Māla Wharf is?

WN: Yeah.

HF: On the Kā'anapali side used to get, you know, not too big waves but used to get waves so used to make a board with a plank, wooden plank. One-by-twelve.

WN: Redwood?

HF: No, regular wood. Any *kine* scrap you find. And then make 'em, not *da kine* long board, maybe about four feet or so. And then we don't surf on the board, just put 'em by the belly. And when the wave, you hold the board and surf with the wave.

WN: I think they call that "*paipo* board" or something like that.

HF: (Chuckles) I don't know. Something like the boogie board.

WN: Boogie board today.

HF: Something like the boogie board. At the older age, we used to go torching quite a bit. We used to watch the calendar and usually new moon time we used to go torching. And those days, too, we make our own torch, too. Get one long rod and get *da kine* fruit cans. And put the burlap bag, put kerosene on top for the light. That was before the gas lantern came out. Yeah, used to spend lot of time down the beach. We didn't have tent but just bring bags and then used to sleep down the beach like that overnight. We're in that Kā'anapali area, we used to go diving quite a bit around that area. But our camp, we used to get only about sixty-one homes, I think. But used to get, you know, many of the families, those days big families, some had even about ten kids but most of them five, six, yeah. Our family was small. So had quite a bit of kids in our camp. Even the sixty-some odd homes we used to be able to put up baseball team, like that, too. And the girls get softball, basketball team, like that.

WN: And you used to challenge the other camps?

HF: Yeah, challenge them. All camps against each other camps. And those days we used to get what they call "weight league." You got to meet certain weight requirement to play in that league.

WN: This for football?

HF: No, this basketball more.

WN: Basketball?

HF: Football, too. Basketball, used to get eighty-five pounds league. So you cannot be more than eighty-five pounds.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: And hundred pounds. So you gotta be—used the scale, see, weigh us when you go before the game. (Chuckles) Hundred-pound league and hundred-twenty pounds. And when you get older you get the beginner's league and senior league, like that. Even football, they used to get—football was we didn't have camp. Lahaina used to get one team, like that yeah. So those days, too. I think the smaller group was about a hundred-twenty pounds maybe. I used to play football, too. (Chuckles) Hundred-twenty pounds, I think.

WN: What, barefoot?

HF: Barefoot, yeah. Barefoot. I get some pictures, old days *kine*, just with sweatshirt, yeah, the jersey. And regular pants, you don't have the football pants or anything. And just shoulder pad, no such thing.

WN: What *kine* shoulder pads?

HF: Not the thick one like now. But it was a regular shoulder pad.

WN: Oh. You didn't have to make your own?

HF: No, no. (Chuckles) We no have to make shoulder pad. We had head gears, too. Not like the ones we have now.

WN: What kind of head gear did you have?

HF: Well, right now, maybe not, we didn't have I think though in here when we started. Yeah, never get gear, I think. Because I remember the picture I gave with all of my friends, just jersey and shoulder pads. No, we didn't have head gear.

WN: So how did Keawe Camp do in all these competitions?

HF: You know small camp but we used to get good basketball team. We had many athletic-type boys. We used to get quite a bit though. I get some old pictures, you know. Basketball pictures.

Mommy, you don't have the old camp pictures? I used to coach the younger boys, see. So I get everybody undershirt, you see undershirt. Undershirt, I take 'em home and I used to dye 'em. Dye 'em, our color was black, see.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: Dye 'em all black and I used to make stencil, put K-A-C, Keawe Athletic Club.

WN: Oh, yeah. And number, too? The number.

HF: Never get number on the team. So I get some, you know, old pictures, like that. And I get some group pictures with K.A.C., maybe hundred pounds, champs or something like that. Yeah, we used to make our own though. I used to dye the T-shirt black, I remember. And then, cut *da kine* stencil on the cardboard, yeah. And used to paint the thing on.

WN: Did other camps do that, too?

HF: Yeah.

WN: Oh.

HF: Each camp had their own. They make their own. They get their own letters, Waine'e, maybe Waine'e. Everybody had different colors. I know ours was black.

WN: Black with what coloring? White?

HF: Was white, I think. But actually, our camp color was black and gold, I think. But we didn't have gold paint, yeah.

WN: Let me turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HF: Yeah, our camp, you know until today, I think we started 1979, I think. We organized camp reunion. We went to a wedding, you know camp wedding.

WN: Oh boy, you have a lot of photos yeah.

(Laughter)

HF: Used to have even some more, too, you know. This the camp park, see. We get the pole with a light, yeah.

WN: Yeah.

HF: This is where we used to go diving, I think. Yeah, used to get some more so these kids used to go wrestle, too, see. (WN laughs.) And this is a float. Yeah, used to get carnival every year. And then competition, the men dancing boat dance. (Chuckles)

WN: So this a float.

HF: No, this is dancing on the stage.

WN: Oh, okay. On the stage.

HF: *Bon* dance.

WN: Where did you have the carnival?

HF: Used to be a Hongwanji place, yeah?

WN: Oh.

HF: The carnival used to be down the ballpark, Malu'uluolele Park. But this dance, I think, was Hongwanji. So this guy, we used to kid him, and go, "Hey, how come you out of step. You get different motion." (Chuckles)

He tell us, "No, you guys all wrong."

(Laughter)

HF: Yeah, so that's the thing we used to do. I used to make names like that.

WN: Mm-hmm. (Looks at photographs.) Wow.

HF: Yeah, we used to do.

WN: Oh, that's pretty good. (HF coughs.) Yeah. Which one is you?

HF: No, I'm not in here.

WN: Oh.

HF: Yeah. I was coaching that team. This is one, 1945 hundred-twenty pounds.

WN: Basketball?

HF: Basketball. It says champs or something, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

HF: *Da kine*, camp *kine*. Me in the center over there, I think.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: (Chuckles) When we had the West Maui Athletic Association, once a year for—this is a girls *bon* dance team. My wife is in there, too. This one I think, yeah. We used to get carnival and competition *bon* dance, like that. And every camp, used to make one float, see. Used to get pretty good, nice-looking floats, though.

WN: Yeah. What is this, papier-mâché?

HF: Papier-mâché, yeah. So each camp used to get a queen contestant. And then whoever sells the most tickets becomes the queen. So ours was small camp so, many times, we couldn't come through the winner but, yeah, was nice.

WN: And how often did, this carnival was every year?

HF: Yeah, used to be every year. Maybe you know this guy, I think. He used to be Department of Education professor, UH [University of Hawai'i]. Araki.

WN: Oh, Charles Araki?

HF: Yeah. (Chuckles) He used to live in our camp.

WN: Charles Araki?

HF: Yeah. (Chuckles) Next time you see him . . .

WN: Are you in this picture?

HF: No, I'm not in this picture. Oh, no, I'm here! Right there.

WN: Oh, right next.

HF: Oh, I know I was in this group that's why. Oh, yeah, this the (tape inaudible). I think it was a hundred-twenty-five pounds. Way down here, I think. That's all we had.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: So what about like holidays, Christmas, New Year's [Day]? Was that like special times for you folks?

HF: Yeah. New Year's, we don't do that as much as we used to. But New Year's, we used to go house-to-house. All the camp people. They make food, eh. So we used to go out and then visit the other families and then you eat and drink, like that. Same thing that we used to do when guys used to go in the service, when the war broke out in 1941. Whenever somebody go in the service, they used get, just like, going away party, like that. So the whole camp gather and then have party for the person that going in the service. And even when people got married, we used to get 'em, not like now when they go to the hotel or

civic center like that. They used to have a hall in our camp, reception like that, the parties for the weddings like that.

WN: And was this a clubhouse?

HF: Yeah, usually clubhouse. Or if get large place in front of the house, some people have 'em in the front of the house if the yard is large enough.

WN: And Christmas, what did you folks do?

HF: Christmas not, I don't remember too much activities. I don't remember, you know, when I was going school, exchanging of gifts and things like that.

WN: Did the plantation have anything where they gave you folks anything?

HF: See, I don't remember though, whether they used to give us something. But I know, I don't know who sponsored that but they used to come around the camp, you know, with a truck or something, with Santa Claus. And then throw packages of candies, like that. I don't know if that was plantation or not. I don't remember *da kine* activities that we have now. Christmas time, you know, family get together and exchange gifts like that. Yeah, I don't remember about Christmas gifts, in those days.

WN: What about movies?

HF: Yeah, we used to go movie once in a while. You know, right below our camp where I mentioned Filipino camp, they used to have one theater over there, too, see. And then even in the camp, they used to come around once in a while to show movies. But only other theater, not when young kids but time I was high school I think, Front Street used to get theaters. Used to get one Pioneer Theater and one Queen Theatre and Nippon Theatre. So, we used to go movies once in a while. Not that often.

WN: Nippon was Japanese movies?

HF: Japanese movies. That was in a back street. And Pioneer Theater is where Pioneer Inn is located now, by the harbor. And then Queen Theatre is right in town, on the Kā'anapali edge of the Lahaina town.

WN: And then those two were English movies mostly?

HF: Yeah, all English movies.

WN: Yeah.

HF: I don't know if they had Filipino, but the Filipino camp used to get Filipino movies, too.

WN: Did you have like socials, dances?

HF: In the camp we used to get, though. (Chuckles) We get phonograph and then once in a while get together and get dances in the camp. But my age, like that period that I was going to high school, I never did attend any dance or anything, never did that. I don't know why but maybe we didn't have suitable clothing in those days for us. Not all but many of the plantation kids, they didn't participate in those activities.

- WN: Okay.
- HF: Yeah, I worked plantation.
- WN: So, you went Lahainaluna School, huh?
- HF: After Kam[ehameha] III. We used to go there, Kamehameha III School.
- WN: When you were going to Lahainaluna, did you have an idea what you wanted to do?
- HF: I was interested in carpentry. I never even think about going college or anything like that. I was interested in carpentry so I was able to get into carpenter shop. But carpenter shop is not the whole school session, see. You need to take the required courses, like English, social studies, civic or math, like that. And then we get carpenter shop.
- WN: I was wondering, the teachers at Lahainaluna, were they mostly from the Mainland?
- HF: I think our time mostly though. Mostly from the Mainland. Although we had some few local teachers. But the carpenter shop teacher, I think, from the Mainland. But he was there for a while, quite a while. The principal, I think, local one, too. Rogers, yeah. But many of the teachers were there, oldtimers. Been there before us and then continued until their retirement.
- WN: And what about Japanese[-language] school?
- HF: Yeah, I went Japanese school until about 1941.
- WN: Oh. I see.
- HF: Yeah, I think I was in the ninth grade when the school was closed down.
- WN: Where was it?
- HF: I used to attend the Lahaina Hongwanji, right above the Malu'uluolele Park. The school is still there.
- WN: So when you were going, like say Kam III School, you went Kam III School and then after that you walked to the Hongwanji for Japanese school?
- HF: Yeah. Close by, yeah. I used to go. But I don't know why though. I remember, see, my older years at Kam III, I used to go Christian church, you know. (Chuckles) Sunday school because maybe I don't understand the Japanese preaching, like that yeah. So I remember going to the Christian church you know, Lahaina Methodist Church on Sunday, Sunday school. They used to get local, young people, you know, teach in the Sunday school classes, like that. And all English. Oh I remember going there though.
- WN: I remember, well Sueto told me that he went to Japanese school in the Methodist church.
- HF: Yeah, used to get over there, too, Japanese school. Yeah, lot of Japanese were going to Methodist church or they had the other church, too, [Lahaina] Jōdō Mission, too. But Jōdō Mission, I don't know if they had Japanese school. Their congregation is smaller.
- WN: What did you like better? You like English school better or Japanese school?

HF: (Chuckles) Me, I like the English school. I never learned anything Japanese or what. (WN chuckles.) But I guess living with my parents, they're *issei* that's why, we speak Japanese, yeah, more at home. So, you know, we pick up Japanese or even now I'm active in the Hongwanji, see. So I'm able to converse Japanese language with people that come visit like that. Good enough to make them understand, I guess. (Chuckles.)

WN: So at Lahainaluna you went to Japanese school until '41.

HF: Yeah.

WN: And then after that you didn't go.

HF: Ninth grade. Ninth grade, yeah, after that I didn't continue Japanese school.

WN: So what was Lahaina, this area like during World War II?

HF: Well as far as the—physically this area was all sugarcane and then lot of mango trees around, too. We used to go pick up mangoes up Lahainaluna, like that. And you know the Kahoma Stream, we used to get *pepeiao*, too. You know what that *pepeiao*.

WN: You mean the mushroom?

HF: Mushroom.

WN: You mean the fungus?

HF: Yeah, fungus. The black one, yeah. That goes with *kukui* nut branches, you know the dead branches or tree trunks, like that. I don't know why the thing grow on the *kukui* stumps, like that.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: Not on the fresh tree, you know. The dead branches, like that.

WN: You can still see that? Do they still have that?

HF: I don't know. But young kid time we used to go.

WN: And then what, you used to just eat 'em?

HF: Cook and eat.

WN: Cook and eat.

HF: Cook good for chop suey *kine* stuff, they used to do that, yeah, the black one. One type of mushroom, too. Fungus you call that.

WN: Yeah, I think so.

HF: Yeah, and we used to go up Crater Village, too, used to get big reservoir. And they used to get goldfish in there. We used to call that *huna* and *koi*. We used to go fish, though, for the goldfish with bamboo pole.

WN: Oh, yeah. Hook 'em and them keep 'em?

HF: We never did eat, though. I don't remember eating the fish but we used to keep 'em. Keep 'em in a bowl or in a bucket or things like that. And I used to like fishing so I used to go catch that mosquito fish.

WN: *Medaka*.

HF: *Medaka*. Yeah, and we used to use that for bait, see, light bait. We used to catch the bottom fish, we call that "saxophone," long one.

WN: Yeah. I never heard that. Saxophone.

HF: We used to call 'em "saxophone." That's on the bottom. Get some similar fish on the top but this on the bottom and that thing go for the *medaka*, see.

WN: Oh, yeah. So this is fresh water?

HF: Salt water. Ocean.

WN: Salt water.

HF: We used to go to the ocean. Those days we used to ride bicycle, go fishing. I don't know what the proper name but we used to call 'em "*yagara*." Good-tasting fish though.

WN: No kidding.

HF: Yeah, I used to go diving and I used to like fishing, too, so all, not pole though. Hand line used to be, my days. I used to do all hand line.

WN: So how did you do the hand line? I mean you just . . .

HF: We make *da kine* spool, and then wind 'em on the spool. And then put the leader, and lead, and then just throw 'em out like that. Throw 'em out.

WN: Oh.

HF: And then we used to—you know [Bull] Durham bag, yeah. We get the Durham bag, we used to cover the lead, on top get the string, yeah. We tie 'em up and cover the lead, and underneath we open the bag, and cut that open. And used to put the chum in there, sardine, *palu*. And then we used to go put 'em in there and tie 'em up, wind 'em up, like that, then throw, and eject them and the *palu* come out. We used to use the Durham for that. Even in our camp houses, we used to use the Durham bag as a strainer. Put 'em on the faucet, in case anything come out from the pipeline, then the thing capture the stuff. We used to use the Durham for that strainer like.

WN: That had many uses, yeah, the Durham bag. Did you make the bean bag?

HF: Yeah. They used to make bean bag with that. The girls like that, yeah. And young kid time we used to play with rubber gun, we used to call that. You know we made with board, long just like barrel. And then behind, we had something like pin, see. And then we get inner tube, and the thing round. We cut 'em maybe about half-inch or so, then we

stretch from one end to the other end. And then we play against each other, see, try shoot the other person with that rubber band. Yeah, that inner-tube band.

WN: Oh, the inner-tube band would hit you?

HF: Yeah, yeah.

WN: Oh, I see.

HF: Can stretch 'em, yeah. You stretch 'em and then some, if you get longer, you can double up, the inner tube, yeah. The rubber band we make. Maybe about like this big, but we put 'em together and then we pull 'em and then try to shoot each other. (Chuckles)

WN: Oh-oh. Was it sore or what?

HF: Oh, not, we don't go that close. (WN chuckles.) But yeah, we used to have that, too, though. Compete against each other.

WN: Did you folks do marbles?

HF: Yeah, we used to play marbles with the ring. And then shoot marbles. Yeah, some guys were good, you know. Some guys get powerful finger, yeah. When they put the group in the center, and they shoot, they can get 'em out. Yeah, all *da kine* games that you make your own.

WN: Did you folks play *peewee*?

HF: No. I used to see them, when I get older, play that with the stick, yeah?

WN: Yeah. And then you hit it.

HF: Yeah.

WN: Wondering, I forgot to ask, did you folks have chickens and pigs?

HF: Yeah, yeah. We had backyard garden. All the camp people had garden. And we had chickens for eggs and then we used to eat the chicken. That was one of my jobs to kill the chicken. What I used to do is tie up the leg and then step on the leg, and bend the neck over and cut 'em. And then get one bowl or pot, we used save the blood, see. My mom used to cook the blood. Save the blood and after the chicken died, I get a bucket of hot water, soak the chicken, and feather the chicken. That's a dirty job, used to be. Hard time, we got to clean 'em all out. Only I feathered chicken and my mother used to prepare the chicken. Yeah, practically everybody had backyard, small garden, and chicken.

And then when I was working already, since my mom didn't work for any employer, she didn't get any income. So what I did was raise pig, hogs, yeah. And then put the business under her name so she can accumulate enough quarters to get social security. Then after so many years, she was able to get social security from that business. She was getting the minimum but still she was getting something. At one time, I used to keep about five sow, you know. Many pigs, I had. So, I made one homemade trailer and had one junk car. I used to gather pig swill in the camps.

WN: You mean slop?

HF: Yeah, slop. I used to come to this camp right above the mill, you know get some family friends. So I used to go pick up swill maybe twice a week. And then my kids were all grown already, yeah. Not grown but they were going school. So weekends, like that, no weekends for us, you know. We go out in the fields, or out in the riverside go look for grass for the pig.

WN: Oh.

HF: So, only the pig swill not enough, yeah. So we used to cook 'em with the grass. We go get---sometimes in the cane field get the, we used to call that "pig-grass." So we used to get the grass and then sometimes not enough so we go get what they call *honohono* grass.

WN: *Honohono*.

HF: Yeah, in the river side used to get. So we used to get about—I actually get one junk Chevrolet. And then put 'em in the back seat and put 'em on the fender, the burlap bag of *honohono* grass. So we used to go, me and my wife and the kids. But the kids were younger so they didn't go as often. But she and I used to go quite often though. We got to get all the pigs.

WN: What did the swill come in? Was it like Wesson oil cans?

HF: Yeah. I don't know if you call five-gallon square cans. And then later on they used to get a round can, something like paint can *kines*. So the people that keep the swill, they keep 'em outside in a can and they put a cover/lid so that the cats or the dogs don't get into it. So, I used to bring empty cans and go and then fill up my cans and then put 'em in the trailer. Open trailer, yeah. And then bring 'em home and cook the swill, and then if we get the grass, cook 'em together with the grass.

WN: And while you were growing up, what kind of foods did your mother cook?

HF: I think was more vegetables and, once in while, chicken. We kill the chicken but I don't—pork we used have, you know. Because the camp people that keep pig, they used to slaughter their own, and then we used to buy from them. I used to go look how they kill the pig, and then they put hot water and shave all the hair off, see. And then they cut 'em up. If you want so much, you buy from them. So we used to have pork, like that, but meat, not that often though.

WN: The vegetables came from you folks' garden?

HF: Mostly but used to get peddlers come around.

WN: Oh, yeah.

HF: They come maybe once a week or so and then used to get somebody from, you know a market. Primarily Nagasako Market. We used to buy most from Nagasako Market. Somebody come out maybe once a week and come take order. That's the only thing he do. He go house-to-house and then take order what you want to order. And then they deliver maybe couple of days later, see. And those days, we no more cash, all credit. So we all charge everything. And it's a wonder though, especially like us we dealt more with Nagasako, you know they allow us to, you know, accumulate the credit. And even when I got married, our family still had balances there.

WN: (Chuckles) So, different stores would send salesmen to come?

HF: Yeah. Not too many stores. Like Japanese stores had Tabata Store, too. And Maui Dry Goods had, too, I think. And Nagasako, yeah. Yeah, *chūmon-tori*, we used to call them, eh. And then used to get peddlers, even from Waikapū, I remember one man used to come. He had a kind of long truck, side open, come sell. More vegetables though. But before, all credit, you know. When you were able to pay, you pay it. It's a wonder that they let you extend the credit that long.

WN: And what kind of vegetables did your mother grow in the garden?

HF: More lettuce, I think. Lettuce and, what else she had? *Nasubi*. Eggplant, like that. Eggplant, lettuce, tomato. Not *da kine*, other *kine* like corn, cabbage, or *won bok*, like that, no. Only one small area we had. Yeah but . . .

WN: You guys survived.

(Laughter)

HF: We never go hungry though. Get enough food, yeah.

WN: And what kind fruit trees grew around there?

HF: My house had one mango tree and later on my brother, somehow, grafted—you know they used to graft the trees—avocado, used to be, I remember that good avocado fruit you see. And, I don't know, because it was grafted, the tree didn't grow too big but real good fruit. Buttery and tasty fruit, used to get. So I was regretting that I never bring the fruit tree over here when I moved, because you can cut 'em and then dig 'em out, yeah.

WN: Yeah, yeah.

HF: And you can do that but—I tried planting avocado but lot of flowers come out and the fruit come out small but all fall off. I don't know what's wrong. One time I checked with *da kine*, University Extension. They told me that you got to get a pair of trees to pollinate.

WN: Oh, is that right.

HF: But I have a friend down here, he get two trees but (chuckles) all fall off, too. The most I had, I think one year, maybe about twelve, I think. But like last year, get lot of flowers and small tiny fruit but all fall off. I don't know. Yeah, we used to get mango and avocado and had, I know my house had one cherry tree, too, small cherry tree. My wife always mentioned that, even when we got married we still had bills Nagasako. (Laughs) Yeah, they really took care of the people.

WN: I'm wondering though, the private stores like Nagasako, you would run up a balance. And then what, pay every once in a while?

HF: Mm-hmm.

WN: But what about the plantation store, did they deduct from the paycheck?

HF: That I don't know though. Sueto [Hayashida] used to work butcher, yeah, Lahaina Store. I think they used to deduct from the paycheck but us no more paycheck, yeah. Nobody

working see. Only my father was getting patient at that time. And I was going school and my mother was taking laundry so I don't know about the plantation stores.

WN: Wondering, too, you know you folks being poor and your father disabled and your brother and sister out of the house, was there any pressure for you to not go to school and just . . .

HF: No, no. As far as high school, I never get any pressure, in that I couldn't go high school. I don't know how much my sister was helping, but she got married early, too, see. So when she's nine years older than me, so maybe she got married twenty-one or twenty-two, if she married twenty-two, I was only about thirteen years old. So, when I was going high school, she was married already. So, I don't know if she was helping or what. I never did find out where the money came from. 'Cause even high school, you need clothing, you need books, yeah, cost money, yeah. And with fifteen dollars a month, cannot do anything. And I don't know how much my brother helping. He was in Kahului. And later on they moved to Honolulu, he was in the service, then he went Mainland.

WN: Can we stop here? We continue another time.

HF: Okay, works fine.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 39-11-2-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harumi Fujii (HF)

Lahaina, Maui

January 23, 2003

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Harumi Fujii for the Pioneer Mill oral history project. Today is January 23, 2003 and we're at his home in Lahaina, Maui. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

Okay Harumi, let's start. Last time we were talking about Lahainaluna and growing up and so forth. So 1944 you graduated from Lahainaluna . . .

HF: Yeah.

WN: . . . High School.

HF: Right.

WN: So what happened after that?

HF: Well, as I mentioned earlier, while in high school, we had vocational classes. So I was taking carpenter shop. So when I graduated, plantation offered us a job, carpenter department. So I work in the carpenter department, see, about ten years, I think.

WN: Did you always know you were gonna work for the plantation?

HF: Yeah. I figured that after high school, I wouldn't be able to further my education. So I figured that I going be in the plantation, yeah. We didn't have to go out in the field right away. So we worked, right, about three of us, I think, from the high school, yeah.

WN: Mm-hmm.

HF: That worked plantation. Carpenter shop there.

WN: Now how did you get the job?

HF: Oh, applied. Because actually during the summer and weekends, we used to work plantation right through, yeah. From young time we worked right through and then after we graduated, we applied for carpenter shop and then we were able to get in at that time because they needed workers at that time. We had quite a bit of plantation homes (in

1944, 1945). But that lasted for about ten years, I think. Then the plantations started to sell the homes on the plantations. So they didn't need that many carpenters. So they cut the crew in half. And we were the younger ones so our jobs were eliminated.

WN: I see.

HF: We had to look for jobs elsewhere in the plantation or you move out. At the time, we had quite a bit. A younger, one year after me, I think they came in. They moved to the Mainland. Some went school. And then went into different field, jobs, yeah. But I stayed on the plantation. So from there I worked for the harvesting operation one year. That's when I used to drive what they called "Fordson," to clean the haul cane road.

WN: What?

HF: Rake. You know, get one rake, you know, eh.

WN: What did you call it?

HF: Fordson. F-O-R-D-S-O-N. We used to call 'em. Something like a small tractor with wheels.

WN: Okay.

HF: And get rake on the end. That is just to clear the haul cane road.

WN: Oh.

HF: Where the cane fall from the trucks, yeah?

WN: Uh-huh.

HF: And then pull the cane on the side of the road.

WN: Okay. Okay so you did that after ten years in the carpenter shop?

HF: Yeah.

WN: All right, let me just ask you about the carpenter shop.

HF: Mm-hmm.

WN: What did you folks do? I mean, you said you [repaired] homes.

HF: Oh, yeah. So, you know maybe rainy season you get leaking roof. People call in to the office and complain about leaking roofs so we get the supervisors assign us, and then we go out. We used to get *da kine* roof paper, yeah? Roofing paper.

WN: Mm-hmm.

HF: Change the roof. We'll put new roof, or patch up. And even the homes, like that, some of the homes get termite eating, run down. So we change the walls, the floors, and the kitchen sink like that, yeah.

WN: Mm-hmm.

HF: More the building itself. Cabinets, no. They take of their own, yeah. The porch, the steps, most of the plantation's homes at that time were, the walls were one-by-twelve.

WN: Uh-huh.

HF: Yeah, one-by-twelve. The floor was what they call "one-by-six T&G," tongue and groove yeah.

WN: Right.

HF: So those are the things that we used to do. But you know, like Pu'ukoli'i, Waine'e, big camps so had lot of jobs, lot of homes that's why yeah. So more repair work. And then when they get the supervisors' home, they get bigger home, get nicer home, then when they need repair we also take care the repair. All repair work. And then also across the gully, like that, they get a water flume, yeah. Wooden flume go right across the gully. We used to take care of that, too. When get leak or rot like that.

WN: The flumes were made of wood?

HF: At that time, yeah. So we used to go out, up the mountains and take care of the repair work for the flumes. And alongside the flume, get a catwalk. Walk yeah. So we used to repair those, too.

WN: Like what kind of damage would there be for a flume?

HF: More water rot.

WN: Oh.

HF: Yeah, water rot and some termite and, I guess, old age that's why, yeah. The flume itself, once in a while, the poles yeah. The four-by-four, four-by-six posts that we need to change. But most of them, the flume and the catwalk.

WN: The flumes were off the ground?

HF: Oh, yeah above. Because they go from one gully to the other. And it's level so above the ground yeah. In fact one place way up above, toward Lahainaluna, was about a hundred feet high you know the flume. Yeah, because get the valley like this, so the flume go above and underneath get a river.

WN: That's all constructed with wood?

HF: Yeah. That was, I remember them saying about a hundred feet high that one. Most of repair work.

WN: So the plantation houses, you did the roofs, the walls, the floors . . .

HF: The floors. Some get bigger. They own bathhouse, bathhouse, like that. Only thing we didn't do was maybe cabinet, the doors, like windows.

WN: Oh that's the homeowner's responsibility?

HF: We take care. We repair the doors or replace the doors, the windows, like that, too. Only the cabinets, yeah. But otherwise, everything else. And then when rainy season, especially, practically every day we going out. More roofing job.

WN: So a plantation resident would call the plantation to say, "Oh, something . . ."

HF: Yeah. They get the personnel office, I think. They call the personnel office, they put in a request for a repair. So somebody, the supervisor or the department head, go take a look and see how bad it is and, I guess, they go according to priority, which one need the repair most. And they take of those first. So each carpenter had their own, big toolbox. (Chuckles) I still get my box.

WN: How often . . .

HF: You get your own tool, see. Say about eighteen inches wide, and about, maybe about thirty inches, I think. And maybe about one foot deep or so with handles on the side. Usually, when we go to particular house, we stay there maybe one week or so. So we all bring our own, each guy get their own toolbox. So we take care, sharpen our own tools. We learn from the older guys how to take care of your tools. We were just out of high school, and then the old-timer has been there long time.

WN: Who were some of the old-timers in the carpenter shop?

HF: Our foreman was Mac Yamauchi. And the department head was this guy Sei Fujiwara. He took care of the carpenter department. Had two gangs. One Mac Yamauchi and one Soma. I don't know about his first name already. But Mac, before Mac, had one, I think, I don't know, first generation Kawamoto, the old man. After he retired then Mac Yamauchi took over. And Mac was one of the ILWU [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] leaders, too.

WN: So, this is starting in '44. So where was the carpenter shop? Where did you report to?

HF: Right across the mill. Across the mill used to get one shop over there where they have all the equipment, machines like that. So we report to work there and then truck take us to wherever we need to work. We get a pickup truck. Those days, especially the Japanese people, when you go out, get big jobs. Maybe about nine o'clock or so, they take out coffee, pastries like that, too. (WN chuckles.) And then when you finish the complete job, sometimes they take out drinks and some snacks. Being in a small community, we knew most of the people that you know, the homes that we go. It's not like going to a stranger's home.

WN: So you folks repaired houses and flumes. Anything else?

HF: Once in a while we go in the mill when they get some wood work, carpenter work to do but very seldom. In the mill, that's about it.

WN: You said bathhouse, too?

HF: Yeah. All the plantation buildings. Camp buildings. We get bathhouse. They get clubhouse, like that, too.

WN: And the houses in those days, how different were they? Were they all different or were they all pretty much the same?

HF: You mean all the camp houses?

WN: Yeah.

HF: Most of them were the same. One-by-twelve walls, they get one-by-twelve and then in between where the two walls, one-by-twelve meet, we put one batten they call. Maybe about three-eighths-by-two-inch piece for cover the joint. So that rain or you won't be able to see outside. And windows were all double hung. You slide up and down *kine*. With pins.

WN: With the sash cord.

HF: Not sash cord.

WN: No more sash cord.

HF: Only with pin. Get window pin so usually, you put 'em up and get the pin locked in the side, and then you pull the pin and put 'em down and get hole on the side.

WN: But they must have differed in size though, different homes. Like two bedroom . . .

HF: Most standard you know. The windows most standard.

WN: No, but what about the size of the homes themselves?

HF: Oh, yeah. The homes are different. The bigger families they get bigger homes. Supervisors get bigger homes. And supervisors, most of them get toilet in the home. Whereas the others, we used to get public toilet. Yeah, we used to fix that public toilets. Public toilet and some can—at that time, still had outhouses. You know, they dig hole in the ground and then you put one shack on top. And then they used that for toilet. Especially where they don't have running water. The edge of the camp. Even our place we had outhouses. So, we had to go repair those houses, too. (WN chuckles.) Smelly too, yeah. And those days, I don't know if they put any disinfectant or anything in there. When the thing get kinda full, they cover and then dig next place.

WN: And then move the shack?

HF: Move the shack yeah. (WN chuckles.) If the shack is still good. So yeah, we had outhouses in the same camp but maybe the outside area, towards the edge of the camp. I know we had one outhouse. . . . Yeah, but those days was good, too, because we get to meet all *kine* people and carpenter work not that bad like going out in the fields, cut cane. One year, during wartime I think, they were short of field workers so many of the younger people, not all but some of the younger people, went out in the field. What do you call, used to go what they call *hāpai kō*, in the flumes. You know, used to get flumes way up to the mountains, see. And then they get the flume chute like this and then . . .

WN: Like V shape?

HF: V shape. And they maybe about, let's say about ten feet long, all separate piece. So I used to get some, they call "flume carpenters," the guys work in the field. And then they join the flume like this, overlap 'em on the next one. The flume like this. Then the next one turn overlap and this one stay overlap like this. So that when the water flow down, and they dump the cane in there, and the cane all the way up the mountain until one chute

way down in the base where the truck stay, see. Truck or the cane cars and then the cane go right into the chute and fill up the cane car, and the cane car move to the next car 'cause get a chain of cars, yeah.

WN: So the water and everything goes into the truck?

HF: Yeah. Not truck, cane car.

WN: Cane car.

HF: You know, there's some growing though. When you see way up towards Lahainaluna and come way down, until by the mill, yeah. And used to get several places, see, because they all different areas, yeah. Even our camp place, behind used to get one flume chute. Launiupoko side used to get flume chute, too.

WN: You can only have flumes on the hilly place, yeah?

HF: Yeah, so that get the flow of the water, yeah. One year, so I was working together, you know what we do is, the guys cut the cane, they cut the cane and they'd leave 'em in a line, see. The men go behind and make a bundle, just grab a bundle, the amount you can carry and put 'em on the shoulder, walk to the flume and dump 'em in the flume, yeah. So, one year I was doing that. And then they needed water boy, the same job. So they tell me, "You go water boy." So I ended up go deliver water. You know we get one pole like this on the shoulder . . .

WN: On your shoulder.

HF: . . . and two side get five gallon water. Five gallon water and then away from the cane field, by the roadside they get one trailer with water tank. So, when the water low, you go fill up water and then you go to the workers. You get cup, yeah.

WN: One cup?

HF: Yeah, with one cup. Everybody share the same cup. (WN chuckles.) And anybody, even though they yell, they tell, "Eh, water boy. I like water." (Chuckles) So you gotta go over and over, fill up the guys. Kinda hard work, heavy and then you gotta go in the rock terrain, they all get ditches, eh.

WN: So use five gallon on each side?

HF: Yeah, *da kine*, round *kine*, eh. Round *kine* gallon. With the faucets on the bottom.

WN: Oh. So they could drink water while they working or they have to take break?

HF: No, no they drink water. But get what they call, each gang get what they call "tobacco boss." (Chuckles) So when the tobacco boss say, "Oh, take a break," it's the time for take a break, and for those that smoke, they get maybe, I don't know, five-minute break or something. But otherwise, you gotta work until the guys say, "Tobacco time." (Chuckles) Yeah, one year, I was in the field.

WN: And those five-gallon cans, did they have covers on 'em?

HF: Oh, yes. I don't know if you've seen that round, like that. Before used to get kerosene in there, too. And come close like this on the top. And gets one small cover, like this. Not the big cover like . . .

WN: Oh, I see. So, you cannot spill then.

HF: No, cannot. One small cover, you turn 'em and then . . .

WN: I see.

HF: Yeah. The cover maybe about three or four inches on the top, yeah.

WN: How much did you get paid as water boy?

HF: See, I wonder, yeah. Was only, I was getting about dollar one hour or something, yeah. Because the other guys all contract, see. Depend on how many acreage they cover, yeah. But water boy was, what they call, they pay regular pay. I don't know if I was getting dollar an hour or what.

(Laughter)

WN: What did you do with you pay?

HF: That all go to the family. (Chuckles) Like I said, nobody was working in my family, yeah. My father was disabled and my mother used to only take laundry so no such thing as, "I going give her so much." The whole paycheck go to the family. Yeah, I gotta talk to my brother (chuckles) someday. He stay in California, you know. How we survived during that time. (WN chuckles.) I never get chance to talk to my sister. She passed away, too. But . . .

WN: Yeah.

HF: Wonder though, yeah.

WN: Yeah.

HF: But the rent, *chee*, I wonder if we were paying rent or what that time. Because my father was disabled, that's why.

WN: Yeah, nobody was—well, you were working for plantation.

HF: After '44, I started working, yeah. So we must have been paying but I don't know how much the rental was.

WN: I guess only your mother would know, yeah?

HF: Yeah. So . . .

WN: When---oh, go ahead.

HF: So, I think, 1944, I worked until 1960. So 1953, about '53 or '52 I started to be active in the union. Although I was a member during the '46 strike.

WN: Yeah, tell me about the '46 strike. You were only working plantation two years.

HF: Yeah. So I wasn't that much involved in the strike at that time.

WN: When you joined in '44, were they signing up already for the union?

HF: Yeah. So we were a part of the union but just members, yeah. And then we just go picket when they tell us, "Go picket." But '58, the other strike was '58, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

HF: Yeah, that strike we were involved. I was one of the relief committee co-chairman. What we used to do is take care all the food, like that. We had soup kitchens, like that. We had three soup kitchens. And then three of us in the relief committee. Each guy assigned to one soup kitchen.

WN: [Nineteen] Forty-six, what was your involvement in forty-six?

HF: Just picket duty.

WN: You were young . . .

HF: Yeah, just was about twenty years old.

WN: Did you understand what union was, or strike was back then?

HF: Well, those days, you know, we just thought that the workers on one side and the bosses one side, yeah. And then the way we were told was that, in order to get, you know, better benefits, we need to organize. And then by organizing you get the strength instead of only one for one, yeah. So, we were just followers during that early strike. So we went picket and then when the guys were pick up for go jail, they had the county jail in Lahaina, they pick 'em up and they stayed one night there, I think, some of them. So we go down there in the nighttime, support them, yeah.

WN: This is like after the strike ended and some of the Pioneer Mill . . .

HF: Yeah.

WN: . . . started trouble.

HF: When they were picked up because they were, they beat up the supervisors. So those days, I don't remember, you know, if we had soup kitchens, like that, in '46. Fifty-eight we were more organized, yeah. We had all different committee. We had committee that had carpenters, that go out, way up Kokomo side. We had connection over there to buy beef, see. So, they wanted to repair and remodel their slaughterhouse. The people that owned the place that we were getting the beef from. So we had the carpenters go out there, go fix up the place so that we could get good deal on the beef, yeah.

WN: Oh, I see. I see.

HF: So, we used to buy beef from them and then had people go up. The farmers, you know they get upgrade crops, like that. Cabbage especially, when they sell the good-grade cabbage and then get others left, they tell us, "Oh, you can go in the field and, you know,

harvest whatever cabbage get." So, we used to get workers going out there, go pick up the cabbage, like that. Fishing committee used to go fishing, too. Get group of people, they go fishing, surround net, like that, yeah. We were pretty well organized.

WN: What was your duty in '58?

HF: I was a relief committee co-chairman.

WN: Relief committee . . .

HF: Relief committee, we take care of all the soup kitchen, the meals. The meals, and then for those that cannot eat certain kinds of meals, they get certain special diet, like that.

WN: Oh, yeah?

HF: Yeah, they need maybe milk, or something like that. They make a request and then the committee decide whether they entitled to it or not. And we distribute these special foods for the people. Even milk though, we used to buy the powdered milk. We used to make our own milk with the water added to the powdered milk. And then, we used to serve the milk.

WN: So people didn't mind drinking powdered milk?

HF: No. No more choice.

(Laughter)

WN: So who was entitled to eat at the soup kitchen?

HF: Everybody.

WN: Even the family members?

HF: Yeah, the family members, too. Not only the strikers, everybody.

WN: And these soup kitchens would be set up like, what central areas?

HF: Yeah. One used to get Pu'ukoli'i, used to get a big camp up there, so get Pu'ukoli'i and then one, you know where the Jōdō Mission is?

WN: Yeah.

HF: Over there, we had one, too. And then one by the tennis court. Used to be one soup kitchen over there. Three soup kitchens. I think we used to serve only lunch and dinner over there.

WN: Was it like a—you folks put up a tent or something?

HF: No, building, structure, you know. Yeah. Like Pu'ukoli'i they had a clubhouse. But (tape inaudible) we had to build a tent-like structure.

WN: So, like the plantation would allow you folks to use the . . .

HF: Oh, yeah. The clubhouse, yeah. We were able to use because that's part of the Pu'ukoli'i village. But the other one that (tape inaudible) one, got permission from them and then we built one eating area over there. And these, by the tennis court, we had built a building before, you know the athletic program we had with West Maui AA, Athletic Association. So, we used that building for soup kitchen. Mostly get plenty cabbage. Corned beef and cabbage, sometime beef and cabbage.

WN: Where did they grow the cabbage, around here?

HF: No, all the one, Kula one.

WN: Oh, Kula.

HF: Yeah, from the farmers. When they get the off-grade crops, like that, we go out and harvest ourselves.

WN: How did you folks get the rice?

HF: Rice, we had to buy. Yeah, rice, we had to buy. But most, I think all the soup kitchens, the Filipinos used to cook the rice, you know. Big, *hagama*, they get crop. Big *kine*, yeah. Cook—I don't know how many cups of rice they used to cook in there. And then we made *da kine* box, instead of nowadays you get the small *kine* stuff for put for the family eat the rice. You make one big box, oh maybe about eight inches high, maybe about eighteen-inches-by-two-feet or three-feet box, yeah, with bottom. All the cooked rice, we put 'em in there. (Chuckles) And then people get just like buffet line, they come pick up their rice, yeah. And we used to buy aluminum pots, like that, all from the surplus. People used to get surplus, army surplus tools. Pans, pots, like that. All *da kine*, big *kine*. Army *kine*.

WN: And to cook, what, do you use gas stoves?

HF: No, firewood.

WN: Oh.

HF: Yeah, firewood. All outdoors.

WN: Even in '58 you folks were using firewood?

HF: Yeah, because cannot keep up with—those days we hardly had gas, maybe kerosene. But firewood, outdoor *kine*.

WN: And then what about coolers?

HF: We didn't have coolers so we had top, yeah. But no more soda or nothing. No more nothing for cool. Only the milk, like that. Milk and water, that's all.

WN: That's a huge job.

HF: Yeah that was a big job though. Yeah, but you know, when the thing left for a long time, you find more and more guys trying to get something else better than what we served in the soup kitchen. So they make requests, like that, but you cannot accommodate

everybody because everybody going do the same thing. Because you get tired of the cabbage. (Chuckles)

WN: So, cabbage and . . .

HF: There was fish, used to get fish, too, yeah. When the fishermen catch fish, we get surround net, like that. Or stew, things that, you know, you can prepare for the masses.

WN: When you said that you had to buy rice, that there was a budget.

HF: Yeah, we had somebody that—a purchasing agent, and he take care of all the things that we need to buy. And then, we had connections, Sacred Heart [Covent] church and get one icehouse over here, chiller, where we can store our milk or if we get beef, we can store in there. We had lot of support from the community.

WN: Do you remember any incidents of hard feelings, at all, between workers and management?

HF: Yeah. Not---well management, too, but get some people that they don't join the union and they continued to work. So, we used to call them scabs, they called them scabs, yeah. Although never get violence but when we set up picket line and they come, they try to cross the picket line, oh, people used to call them names and all kinds. And used to get, even the rank and file people, those that even are in the union, they don't want to participate during the strike. So they stay home and they—on they can afford it, maybe, so they live on their own. So even after, when they go back work, for a while, you get hard feelings. Bound to be like that for, even maybe until today. You know about some people that crossed the picket line didn't support the strike.

WN: And where were the pickets set up?

HF: Usually by the mill or where the entrance to the working place, like that. More by the mill. Yeah, so especially the top leaders, during the strike, they hardly sleep, I think. Plenty work to do. But all in all, I think, the strikers were pretty solid. They supported each other. They worked together, helped out each other.

WN: How would you compare '46 with '58? Were there big differences?

HF: Maybe, I don't know. [Nineteen] Forty-six, I think, maybe we had more violence, like that, and then '58 strike was—well, we went through one strike so, I guess, they knew what to expect. So it wasn't as bad, I think. But '46 strike had more hard feelings, like that. And the supervisors that went to work, that incident that happened. Couple of them got beat up.

WN: So you were in the carpenter shop during the '46 strike, yeah?

HF: Yeah, I was with the carpenter shop. I was there until, about '56, I think.

WN: Fifty-six, right. Then you said you moved over to the . . .

HF: Forty-four to '54, yeah.

WN: Forty-four to '54.

HF: Ten years.

WN: And you said, you sort of got laid off from the carpenter shop?

HF: Yeah. About half of the crew, their jobs were eliminated.

WN: How did you feel about that?

HF: Well, no more choice because we were the younger ones, yeah. Couldn't say anything so what they offer you, at that time, any job elimination, you can, if you qualify, you can bump another person. You know, if somebody get, maybe you carpenter and the other person a painter, then you feel that you can qualify as a painter and the painter gang, you get someone there that get less seniority than you, then you can go after his job, see. You tell the plantation, "Oh, I like his job." And then, if they figure that you qualify, they going give you the job. And the other guy got to go look for job. But, I was involved in the union, I was an officer already. I was secretary, so the union no believe in bumping, see. So I just took what they offered me. I didn't want to go out and take somebody's job. I tell 'em, "No, I don't want to do that." So they had opening, harvesting, rake job . . .

WN: But how come they were eliminating carpenter jobs?

HF: That's when they sold the plantation houses. They sold, like, the whole camp above the mill. Most of them bought their own house, see. And then Pu'ukoli'i, they were selling, too. They were moving out from there and they built new houses up here, too. And our camp, Keawe Camp, they were gonna demolish the camp. And Olowalu had some houses, too. So the jobs became less and less. You know, maybe they had so many homes to take care of, but the homes, when they sell 'em, maybe only half of the homes need to be repaired. The others were all owned by the occupants. They buy 'em out see. So, and they cut down the force until one-half, I think. Had only one gang left. After that, after one year, I think, had opening in the garage.

WN: Oh, let me ask you about the harvesting first then you said, you drove a . . .

HF: I don't know, they used to call that Fordson you know.

WN: Fordson.

HF: Tractor-like stuff, with the wheel, tires. And then with the rake behind. So whenever you see the pile of cane that fall off the truck, you go over there and then you get them off the road. Pile 'em up on the side, clear the road so the trucks can pass. Go back and forth wherever they're harvesting. If they harvesting Olowalu, you gotta go right through until, where they harvesting.

WN: Now how did you learn how to operate that?

HF: Well, I used to drive car so not too bad. Not like, *da kine*, tractor in the field. So by yourself, you go up and down by yourself. Nobody around.

WN: So you did that pretty much the whole day?

HF: Yeah, whole day. You go back and forth, rake the road. Check if there's no cane on the road, you just go until you see batch of cane on the road, then you rake 'em on the side.

WN: So of those two jobs, which one did you like better? Carpenter or . . .

HF: Oh, carpenter. (Laughs) Yeah, carpenter is trade, yeah. You learn, too, yeah carpentry. We get many of the old-timers so you learn the tricks, different ways to do, even hang doors or windows, like that. Or how to do finer works like that. How to take care of your tools, like that. Even now I get one of my good friends that used to work, that I used to work with, he's ninety-something, I think. Yeah, so once in a while I go see him. He lives right near by. He get all kinds of equipment, too. Machines and everything. So when I need some lumber to cut or plane, or do some finer work, I go see him. But he's still *da kine*, the mind is sharp. Although he bad of hearing and then you get, he walks slowly but still sharp yet. Not too many people left.

WN: So when you took the harvesting job, was the pay the same that you had as a carpenter?

HF: No. You get less pay. Because carpenter, you started as apprentice, just like any other trades. Then you get second class, first class, then you come journeyman. And I think, carpenter, I was first class already, see. So I was getting much more than the field job, just like base pay, yeah. I don't remember how much I was getting but at least we got a job. So we accepted whatever we can.

WN: Were you married by then?

HF: No. I wasn't married.

WN: So it wasn't, like you taking a cut in pay, was that hard for you?

HF: Nineteen . . . No, I was married already. I got married in '51. Yeah, I got married in '51 so '54, yeah?

WN: Yeah.

HF: Yeah, three years '51. So I get two kids already, I think that time already.

WN: You married, two kids, and you had to take a cut in pay.

HF: Yeah.

WN: And where were you living at that time, after you got married? Did you move house?

HF: Keawe Camp. Above the shopping center, yeah. That . . .

WN: Different from the house that you . . .

HF: Same house.

WN: Oh, same house.

HF: Same house that I grew up, with a one-bedroom house. One bedroom and one parlor. That's all.

WN: Was your mother living with you folks?

HF: Yeah, my mother was living. My father was gone already. He died in '47, I think.

WN: So you were with the harvesting.

HF: Just one year.

WN: And then, what happened after that?

HF: From there I had opening in the garage. They needed a welder trainee. So I went there in the garage to learn welding, to help the welder. To learn welding.

WN: How come the welding was in the garage?

HF: They kept the welding in the garage to take care of the welding jobs on the automobiles, on the trucks. The big haul cane trucks, like that. Had lot of jobs for the welder. So I was there until I moved out. So about five years, yeah?

WN: Mm-hmm. Yeah, until '61, yeah? I'm sorry, '60.

HF: [Nineteen] sixty, I left.

WN: Fifty-five to '60 you were in the garage.

HF: Yes, for about five years, yeah.

WN: So you were a welding trainee.

HF: Trainee, yeah.

WN: So you went from carpentry to welding.

HF: (Chuckles) Yeah. I learned welding, welding enough to be able to weld, not first class welder but at least I was able to weld and what they call brazing and things like that.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HF: ... what about, seven years or so, being secretary of the union, as my wife say, "hardly home," I think.

WN: When did you become secretary?

HF: I think about '53, you know. I think I was there about seven years, I think.

WN: So, right when you were still in the harvesting . . .

HF: Carpenter yet, I think.

WN: You were still carpenter. Okay, what does the secretary do?

HF: Oh, the secretary, for one thing, just like any other secretary, keep records, take minutes, we used to attend what they call division meetings, executive board meetings in Wailuku.

All the different units get together maybe once a month and had board meetings, and then I also served on the negotiating committee, when we have contracts, like that, as a secretary. And I used to be on a grievance committee. Whenever we get, you know, members file a grievance, they get steps to follow, yeah. And then when we meet with management, like that, I used to go with our grievance committee to argue on behalf of the members, with the management team. Usually industrial relations director, when we come up to the last step, we meet with the manager himself. So, that's primarily what we used to do.

And I was lucky that in my position as secretary, I attended several international conventions on the Mainland, like that, ILWU conventions. I think, two. One in Seattle, I think one in Long Beach. So you get to see the, all the top wheels, those days was Harry Bridges folks. Harry Bridges and, locally, Jack Hall. And that's how I got close friends with Thompson. You said you met, no, Dave Thompson.

WN: Oh, Dave Thompson.

HF: You said you met the wife, I think, yeah.

WN: Right, right.

HF: I got close—he was the educational director. And then whenever we get problems, like that. Grievance or things like that, when we needed information, like that, he was our source of information. And he used to come over conduct session, educational session, like that. So I became really close to him. McElrath, too yeah. He was one of the . . .

WN: Bob McElrath.

HF: Bob McElrath. The wife still active yet, yeah?

WN: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

HF: Ah Quon [McElrath]. She's with UH [University of Hawai'i]. She was with UH.

WN: She's on the Board of Regents.

HF: Board of Regents, yeah.

WN: Yeah.

HF: Those days they had, Bob McElrath. And the union leaders, I don't know if you know Newton Miyagi guys. Joe Kealoha, he was with the longshore[men]. The other guy still living, he was division director, Filipino guy.

WN: Oh.

HF: Waipahu, was O'ahu Sugar.

(Telephone rings.)

HF: (Chuckles) Short name he get, I think.

WN: Yeah. I think he's still around.

HF: Yeah, I saw him, one time, in [Las] Vegas you know.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so you were secretary, who was the president when you were active?

HF: We had one person by the name of Albert Dizon, Filipino guy.

WN: He's from Pioneer Mill?

HF: Yeah. He was connected with the tractor shop, though, I think. I don't know if he was harvesting side.

WN: When you were secretary, what was the name ILWU . . .

HF: ILWU Local 142, unit 32.

WN: Okay. The unit is Pioneer Mill?

HF: Pioneer Mill.

WN: Unit 32? Okay.

HF: And the treasurer was Joseph Sulliban. So we were close. We used to go, weekends the whole family go picnic, like that. And Dizon had big family, too. Sulliban had big family. Our family was small. (Chuckles) Yeah, we used to be close.

WN: So you were able to do all of this while working as a welder apprentice. I mean working full time.

HF: Plantation, yeah. The officers . . .

WN: Did you get any extra pay from the union?

HF: No, we didn't get any compensation from the union. Nothing. And as I mentioned earlier, when tax time, we used to go help the workers who wanted to prepare tax. I don't know, we were charging one or two dollars or what, but I don't remember that part. And alien registration in the month of January was all part of the union program.

WN: So you helped alien citizens register?

HF: Yeah. They had to register within the one-month period. So we used to go camp-to-camp, go out and register. That didn't take too much time to register. Income tax . . .

WN: This was mostly Filipino?

HF: Yeah, mostly Filipino and older Japanese people. We had lot of first generation at that time. But income tax used to take quite a while. So whole day we used to be out in the camps. And that would continue for about three months or so. But that was all part of the union program, service to the membership. Yeah, and I was looking in my records, 1953. I don't know what made me—you know about 1950, I was interested in accounting. So I took correspondence course, international correspondence school for bookkeeping. I took one course in bookkeeping, then '53 we had what they call Maui Community College

now. Used to be known as Maui Vocational School. So, I took up accounting to learn accounting. Accounting, I was looking, accounting two. And then '53, and then six years later, '59, I took up same Maui Vocational School. Advance management course, all night course. So those things came in handy for me when I applied later on job at the credit union. Although, I had a little typing in grade school, by being secretary of the union, I used to do all the typing, too. That part I was fortunate I was able to continue with my typing. And then, when the chance came for the opening in the credit union, I applied. And then I was able to get a job.

WN: So as early as the early [19]50s, '53 you sort of wanted to go into that type of work.

HF: Yes, some different work yeah. Accounting.

WN: Not carpentry or welding. What made you . . .

HF: Because the carpentry, our jobs were eliminated already, see.

WN: Right, right.

HF: I was interested in figures, accounting, bookkeeping, like that.

WN: You must have had a lot of experience being secretary.

HF: Yeah. That helped, too. The union helped me a lot you know. As far as my business, learning business, that portion. I'm really thankful for my seven years or so with the union. I learned a lot from the union activities.

WN: So you were secretary all the way until you left in 1960?

HF: Until I left, yeah.

WN: How did you feel about leaving, you know, plantation work and . . .

HF: Well, I figure, you know, I was trained to be a carpenter and there's no future for me on the plantation as a carpenter. And I didn't care to work outside, you know, contracting. So figured maybe try something else. And then just happen that, at that time, there were vacancies, somebody left that job. And then I knew somebody that used to work plantation, that's one of the directors at the credit union. He asked me—first he asked Imano, you know. Imano was managing Pioneer Mill Credit Union already. Ask him if he like but he didn't care because he was working Lahaina. He didn't want to go Wailuku. Then he asked me if I'm interested. I thought about it. Then, no I never go apply. So I applied for the job.

WN: What was the job? I mean . . .

HF: Managing the credit union.

WN: Oh.

HF: Manager, from welder, you know I was welder trainee at that time. So when they told me, "Oh, you get the job." And I went there. I had a little background with credit union because I was a director on the Pioneer Mill Credit Union. And the manager, Imano, and I real close. I was in fact his best man when he got married. And the wife and my wife are

cousins. So we're close. One period when he went vacation, he tell me, "Hey, you go take over the job," while he go on vacation two weeks. So two weeks, I was taking his place managing the Pioneer Mill Credit Union.

WN: Where was the Pioneer Mill Credit Union?

HF: Right below the main office, you know the building, vacant building.

WN: Mm-hmm.

HF: Downstairs used to get one office space for the Pioneer Mill Credit Union. But now they located across, yeah? They get one nice building.

WN: Oh, yeah? They do?

HF: Yeah, above the mill. Get one big sign, they call that West Maui Credit Union now.

WN: Oh.

HF: So when I went credit union, and then had one lady that was gonna move to Honolulu. She was the manager. And only two people was working. She and another lady.

WN: This is Pioneer Mill?

HF: No.

WN: Oh, no. Wailuku?

HF: That's Maui County [Employees Federal] Credit Union.

WN: Maui County.

HF: Yeah, Maui County Employees Federal Credit Union. So and then she said she was going to leave in two weeks. (Chuckles) In two weeks I had to be there taking over her job, with one clerk. So two of us.

WN: So you commuted, then, from here?

HF: Yeah. From then 1960 until what? Ninety-one. Almost thirty-two years commuted. Worked right through.

WN: But you folks wanted to keep living in Lahaina?

HF: Yeah, we wanted to stay here. And my wife was working, just about then. Sheraton [Maui], yeah. It just opened. So commute right through.

WN: So you became a [white]-collar worker.

HF: Yeah. (Chuckles)

WN: A white-collar one. From a blue collar to a white collar.

HF: Yeah. We were not the largest at that time. But one of the larger credit unions. We serviced all the government employees, county, state, and some federal employees. We started with just the two of us. And the lady that I worked with, the clerk, she stayed right through until she retired, too. That was interesting because you meet all *kine* people, credit union. And it's not like now, the credit union is so big that you no more the interaction with the membership. But those days, we were small. And then you knew practically all the members. And being small, even the manager got to do all the work, too. It's not just sit down and tell the others what to do. (WN laughs.) Only two guys, yeah. So you gotta do just as much work as the clerk. So got to know a lot of people. Was good, interesting work, too. Something like the union where you work with the people, yeah.

WN: Right.

HF: Credit union same thing. Try to help the people, too. Same thing, yeah. Yeah, I was able to go. They sent me to school, too. Yeah, two weeks each summer for three years. At that time, they called that "District Four School for Credit Union Personnel." And then all from Hawai'i, whoever wants to go, they sign up and then can attend the two-weeks class. And those days, we stayed at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles]. Yeah, we went to UCLA campus. And they have a dorm there. You stayed in the dorm, you cafeteria and everything. Two weeks, three summers away. I went two straight years. In the third year just before school starts, I was offered a job with HGEA [Hawai'i Government Employees Association], the union. The union representative for Maui 'cause the guy that was doing the job was gonna leave. And we used to share the same space, the HGEA office and the credit union office, right next door to each other. So I used to know him really well. Yeah, he told me eh, if I like go take over his job because he's going leave. Then talking to him, those days, I don't know if you remember, David Trask was the head for Maui.

WN: For Maui, yeah.

HF: Then told me, "If you like, go apply for the job." So we negotiated and I ask him about the pay. I ask him, I don't know how much I getting but if I can get the same pay that I getting at the credit union. And then, they talked about it but they say, "Oh, been eight-year government, they gotta go by the base and stuff." And then was, going about hundred-something dollar less a month, I think. So, I going stay with the credit union. So I didn't go.

One year during the summer, I didn't go to the school and the following year I finished up that credit union personnel school at UCLA. And that school was a learning experience, too, because the first year when we went, we came home. We had a project, see. You gotta do something to enter, to qualify for the second year. The first year we had to get all the historical information, background about the credit union. How they're organized and all kind of stuff. So in researching the history of our credit union, I found out that, I don't what year, but one year they had embezzlement, the credit union. (Chuckles) Read all about it, and then that became part of the project, too. And even today, I think, people working in there, they don't know if anything like that happened at one time.

WN: You started with two employees?

HF: Yeah. (Chuckles)

WN: By the time you retired in '91, how many employees were there?

HF: We just had, only about six, I think. Because, those days, even manager, I used to do a lot of work, see. But the way I hear right now, they get big staff, so manager don't have to do anything. He just delegate the work, yeah. But those days I used to do everything, practically everything. Make reports, meet with the board of directors, and then when I left, they still are—we were the largest credit union on the island of Maui.

WN: I just wanted ask you about your feelings about Pioneer Mill and the fact that it's closed. How do you feel about that? How did you feel when you found out that the plantation was closing?

HF: Well one thing I was concerned about the people, the people that working there. Especially older people, about whether they going get the benefits that the retirees are receiving. And what kind of severance pay they gonna have or not. But I understand that they got, I think, severance pay. I don't know how much but—and then some of them, they were given the option of early retirement, I think. So they can get retirement.

But, you know, I do taxes for many of the workers here. What I did was actually, during the union, as I told you, we were making taxes. So after I left the union, I still was making taxes because the people that I was doing taxes for, they ask me if I can do taxes for them. So, even I until today, many of the guys, I get plantation people. So I don't charge them like if they would go outside. Maybe twenty dollars or something, that's all. And maybe I tell 'em twenty-five dollars. But some of them they realize that, you know, work involved they get maybe rental income and things like that. So maybe they give me hundred dollars or fifty dollars. Yeah, but more for, just to do it for them.

Yeah, but, you know, I noticed that the government employees, every year they get cost-of-living increase. But plantation people, they don't have that. So you see *da kine* pension they get, small pension. Although we get social security, too. But even the social security, because the pay was small, the income was small. But I gave the plantation people credit, though, while they were working, like that, they were saving the money, I tell you. Yeah, somehow, you know, they managed to save. So they get income from savings and loan, or banks like that. Yeah, surprising.

WN: So where did a lot of people go to work after the plantation closed? What kinds of jobs were available?

HF: Only jobs—well, many of them, especially Filipinos, even they were working plantation, they were working in hotels, yeah. Second job or third job. So they had, you know, jobs. The younger guys, they would have to move away. Lot of them had jobs in a hotel. So that was fortunate for the people in this area 'cause of Kā'anapali, they get jobs over there.

WN: What do you think should be done with the mill?

HF: I think they gotta demolish the mill though. I don't know if they like do what the cannery mall, cannery mall they demolish. They were talking about restoration but they cannot because too rundown already. Dangerous, yeah?

WN: Oh.

HF: Same thing with the mill, I think. I don't think they can—'cause the mill is, get like two stories, yeah?

WN: Mm-hmm.

HF: Get second level. I don't think they can, anybody can afford to restore. Only thing if they want to open up a museum or shopping center, they gotta demolish and recreate the building, yeah. That's what I think. Be too expensive to restore as it is. And then nowadays they talk a lot about chemical and all kind stuff, too. So even after they close, I noticed they dug up quite a bit of area in the mill yard. Where they used to dispose of maybe oil and things like that because of the environment. The building, as far as I'm concerned, I think, gotta go down.

WN: What about the smokestack? People are saying keep the smokestack.

HF: (Chuckles) Yeah. If they can afford it, I would like to have it there but I don't know. The way Amfac saying, going cost big money to reinforce the smokestack, yeah. They cannot leave it as it is. They gotta reinforce it so that it won't fall. Somebody can afford to do it, good and well but I don't know. Would be nice if it was there. But I think Honolulu, they all knock 'em down, yeah? Like 'Ewa, they had, yeah?

WN: 'Ewa and 'Aiea but Waipahu, O'ahu Sugar, I think the mill is still up.

HF: Oh the building and the . . .

WN: I think so.

HF: . . . smokestack, yeah.

WN: They still, I guess they still trying to decide what to do.

HF: Yeah. But this building, I think, even when you pass around there, all rundown yeah?

WN: Yeah, yeah. What about the future of Lahaina? What do you think the future is?

HF: I think Lahaina is okay though. Because of the hotel, I think, yeah. Get the opportunities for the people that want to go into the travel industry business. And if they want another second job, get lot of shops if they don't mind working in the shops. I don't know. As far as *da kine* professional job, those that want professional job, other than teaching. Teaching not too bad because lot of, I understand, get lot of vacancies. Looking for teachers, yeah, throughout the state. Yeah, was surprised the way they mentioned, I don't know what the percentage but get lot of students from Hawai'i that graduating on the Mainland and they don't come back here to teach. They stay up there. So then, I don't know what the percentage, but we looking for quite a bit of teachers. I have a friend that doesn't have teaching credential, so they hired him teach Japanese. I think he took Japanese at UH. So he worked at Lahainaluna. He started last year as the Japanese-language teacher. And he was saying, oh, he don't know if he can come back again. Because if they get somebody else with teaching credential then he gotta go out. But apparently they cannot find anybody because he's still teaching there.

WN: Okay. I think that's it. You want to say anything before I shut off the tape recorder?

HF: (Chuckles) No.

WN: Okay, thank you.

HF: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

PIONEER MILL COMPANY:

A Maui Sugar Plantation Legacy

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa**

December 2003