

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Frederick Higuchi

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Frederick Higuchi was born in 1921 and raised in the Pioneer Mill Company plantation camp of Pu'ukoli'i. The fifth of seven sons born to Goro and Kiku Higuchi of Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, Frederick Higuchi attended Pu'ukoli'i School until the eighth grade, then Lahainaluna High School, graduating in 1940.

Upon graduation, he began working for Pioneer Mill Company as a tractor driver and haul-cane-truck driver in the harvesting department. In 1945, he transferred to the company's tractor repair shop.

In 1955, Higuchi moved into the power generator plant, where he served as assistant to the power generator operator.

Higuchi retired in 1982, after a forty-two-year career with the company. He lives in Lahaina with his wife, Tokiko Yamada Higuchi, whom he married in 1946. The couple raised three children and has five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Tape No. 39-26-1-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Fred Higuchi (FH)

Lahaina, Maui

February 7, 2003

BY: Maria Orr (MO)

MO: It's about six A.M., and I'm at the Baldwin House Masters' Reading Room with Mr. Fred Higuchi. And this is Maria Orr.

(Taping stops, and resumes.)

. . . your life history type of interviews, (FH laughs) so this is your life. So in a way it's like this could be something that your grandchildren, your great grandchildren, and your great-great grandchildren would be able to read someday all about, as well as people in the general community, who never worked for a plantation company, and so they would be able to read this and say, "Oh this is what it was like."

So to start off with, can you tell me about like where you were born and raised, where you grew up, your parents, and your family? So you can start with your name.

FH: My name is Fred Higuchi. I was born in Lahaina, the old Pioneer Mill Hospital, where it is now the Hard Rock Cafe. I spent my young days in Pu'ukoli'i, a village of more than a thousand people. We had a public school, kindergarten to eighth grade. We had a Japanese[-language] school and we had a Methodist church, a Buddhist church, Catholic church, and that's about all as far as churches and schools.

Pu'ukoli'i Camp is located north side of Lahaina and we had all kind of people living there: Japanese, Filipinos, Chinese, Portuguese, Hawaiian, all nations, and we really got along together. We played ball, we went to school together, and best of all, after we graduate or leave the camp, when we see people outside we tell, "Hey howzit!" You know, we kind of still remember their face and might be the name is kind of fuzzy but we still remember those days when we used to play [together in] Pu'ukoli'i.

And my parents, both of them came from Fukuoka, Japan. They had seven boys, no girls, and I was fifth one of seven brothers. At present we have only three of us left; two of them died about couple years back. The one right above me went to World War II and never did come back.

Pu'ukoli'i School, we had from kindergarten to eighth grade, and we had a big space below, the playground was really large. We usually played softball. We had a basketball court. So during recesses, those days, we can keep busy instead of just sitting down and *talking story*. After I graduated from Pu'ukoli'i School, I went to Lahainaluna [School]

for four years and I graduated in 1940. I started working for Pioneer Mill as soon as I graduated from high school.

I started out in the fields as a tractor driver in the harvesting department. After a few years, I might say about five, six years, I moved to the tractor shop, where they repair all those equipment. After ten years, I think, in the tractor shop, the job was getting a little too heavy for me, so I moved to the power generation plant where I was an assistant to the power generation operator. That ended my plantation life after forty-two years.

We joined the union [International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union] about 1946 and we had that big sugar strike in 1946. I was still living in Pu'ukoli'i then. We had a big soup kitchen, where all the workers got together, had lunch and dinner. People were assigned to different jobs. Some went fishing [to supply the soup kitchen with fish], some went up to the Kula farmers to help them and in return [the farmers] were giving vegetables for our soup kitchen. The ladies, even the men, helped cook the food, and everybody really enjoyed it. But luckily just about that time there was a lot of 'āweoweo that came inside, big schools. So that really helped our soup kitchen. Some people brought food from home and sometimes, you know, the Filipinos they cook dog and mix 'em up with the meat and they fed us.

We [were on] strike for about three or four months and everybody was happy after that. That's how we started improving our lifestyle. And I remember when we were in grammar school, summertime, we used to work in the plantation cutting grass or planting [cane] seed. We used to plant by hand. Put your bag in front of you and just plant the seed as you walk around in the line.

MO: Did you have a name for that?

FH: I wonder (laughs).

MO: Mm-hmm.

FH: And I remember when we were kids, there was a big reservoir about couple hundred yards from the camp. We used to go there swimming. And farther up the hill, there was something like a pond, about twenty-five feet wide and about hundred feet long. And they had rails in the bottom of the pool. After they cut the seed—they call it *pulapula*—they put 'em in a bag in a empty car and the train pulled it down into the water so that the *pulapula* get soaked and won't dry out. Then after that they pull it out, they used to go plant that. And where they take out the cars, it's a nice place to go swimming. So most of us used to go swimming in there because it was real nice and long.

And they used to have a lot of goldfish in there, *funa*. And where the water goes into the reservoir was covered, the top was covered with cement so that people can walk across. So during the night when they started filling up the reservoir, the water covered up the ditch. So you go in early in the morning and you jump on line right into the entrance of the ditch, unless they're using the water for irrigation. The fish came all into the net and we used to bring home a lot of nice fish. Some of them were red, some white. All mix up.

We used to go up the mountain and pick up guavas. Or [depending on the] season, sometimes mangos. We had a lot of things to do.

We had a old way to enjoy ourselves. Today, you buy anything. Those days, we don't have money so we couldn't buy anything. And the toys were different from today. You

had to make your own, not those expensive kinds, those electrical cars that the kids use. But we were lucky that we really enjoyed. We all worked together, we played sports together, we go swimming, we go down the beach.

And another thing is that Maui County had a real good athletic program. They used to have the Alexander House [Settlement], and they provided sports for all Maui. In Lahaina we used to have our own league and we used to get basketball. They had different weight [divisions]. They had 95-pound, 100-pound, 120-pound, and beginners. And then we used to compete with all the camps, like Waine'e, Honolua. We played our championship game down at the Campbell Park in Lahaina. That's how we use to know people from other camps, make plans with them. And as we went to high school, we knew who's who. That was something that I really enjoyed, but today they don't have that. They have more organized things like soccer. They get for kids basketball, football, and all kind of sports. Pu'ukoli'i was someplace that many people didn't know about, you know, it was so large but it wasn't well known. We had some good athletes come out from Pu'ukoli'i. One of them is Bobby Lee, he was a boxer and he was just inducted into the hall of boxing, Hawai'i [Sports] Hall of Fame. He was one of the most popular athletes that came from Pu'ukoli'i.

MO: Tell me something about your parents and what were their names and what were they like.

FH: Well, my father's name was Goro, G-O-R-O, and my mother's name was Kiku, K-I-K-U. They came from Japan and my father used to work in the fields and my mother stayed home to take care of the seven boys.

MO: What did your father do in the fields?

FH: At first he was a butcher in one of the stores in Pu'ukoli'i and then later on he became an irrigator in the cane field. He was such a—he didn't scold us much. I really used to like him a lot because he wasn't that aggressive. My mother was a little strict but I guess that's because of the seven boys that she had.

MO: So what did they do for recreation?

FH: Who?

MO: Your parents.

FH: Well, raise the kids, I guess (chuckles). Those days they don't have much things to do. Not like today. Even the young kids, the only thing they can do is go to the movies or go dance. We seldom had dances. We had our own club up Pu'ukoli'i, they called it Pu'ukoli'i Young Peoples Association, and we used to have a New Year's dance every year and we elected our officers. Sometimes we had parties together. And the best part of living in Pu'ukoli'i was on New Year's Day. You know Japanese custom, all of them prepared food and anybody could come and introduce themselves and sit down. We used to go in groups. We go to my house first and then we go to the next house. So we go right around till we end up at the last [house] and we all dead drunk already, you know (MO laughs). That I cannot forget because I really enjoyed that part of life that I spent in Pu'ukoli'i.

In 1970, I moved to Lahaina [from Pu'ukoli'i] because the plantation was trying to get rid of people [i.e., remove people from company housing] and they could own their own

home. So that was Paunau where I lived. It was the first subdivision that Amfac opened up for the workers [to purchase]. And they had sixty-four lots. And what they did was pick numbers, you know, as they go. I was number sixty-five. Out of the sixty-four, I was the sixty-fifth, so I figured I'm sure I'm going to get one, because a lot of people couldn't get their loan, or they couldn't afford it. So I was lucky enough I had a property and I built a house on it. Those days Hicks [Homes] was the contractor so they built all our houses. I bought my land. My property is close to 9,000 square feet. And with house and lot I paid about—a lot of site improvement—\$21,000. But today I don't know how much I can sell it for (laughs).

MO: It's worth a lot more than that.

FH: Oh more, more than that.

MO: Yeah.

FH: But, you know, I really enjoyed my life. Now what I do is on Wednesdays they have this lunch program, Mondays and Wednesdays. So a lot of people go Monday, some of them go on Wednesday, but I told my wife, "I think we go one day enough, because they take too much time. You take over half a day sitting down and *talking story*." But we go out once a week, on Wednesdays, and we enjoy ourselves. We have the '*ukulele* group. And I am with the harmonica group.

MO: Harmonica.

FH: Yeah. So we go down to the day-care center and entertain. We go out to the [Lahaina] Cannery Mall to take part in the Christmas program, or we have some kind of program that we take part in. And we have another club for seniors, they call it the Lahaina-Honolua Senior Citizens Club. That club we meet once a month in the second Thursday of each month. We go to excursions. They're talking about going to Moloka'i. I think two years ago a group went to Moloka'i for the day and they're talking about going again. I don't know if I'm going 'cause I don't care for that. And majority of them make trips to [Las] Vegas. Not too long ago one group went to Brazil. We were much younger and I was still working. We used to go to Disneyland or we used to go away to World's Fair in the Mainland. We travel from here, then Florida, we came back to Louisiana, New Orleans, and we ended up in Vegas. So most of the people, all the seniors at least, went to Vegas at least once. That's the topic [of conversation] all the time. And another thing, we have two excursions. And they always furnish the bus, and they make arrangements so you can go to wherever you want, to Kihei, up Kula, and they even have gone up to Hāna sometime. They have the program in Hāna so if you want to go you sign up and you can go to Hāna.

MO: You go to Hāna Taro Festival?

FH: Nah. I know a lot of people who went. And the last one that we were supposed to go, the bus was supposed to come and pick them up but they had some kind of accident on the *pali*, so the bus couldn't come over. So the people stayed home and they couldn't go, so they were really discouraged by that. Too bad, but one of those things.

MO: You should go sometime to the taro festival 'cause I do that.

FH: Hāna one?

- MO: Yeah.
- FH: Yeah, you live in Maui?
- MO: No, I used to live in Hāna.
- FH: Hāna?
- MO: Yeah.
- FH: Oh.
- MO: And I started the [Hāna] Taro Festival.
- FH: I know lot of people from Hāna who used to go high school with me. Roland Chang.
- MO: Mm-hmm.
- FH: You know him?
- MO: Yeah.
- FH: Roland Chang was my classmate.
- MO: I didn't know he was with you from Lahaina.
- FH: He went to Lahainaluna. He was a boarder.
- MO: A lot of them came and boarded, yeah?
- FH: Yeah, a lot of guys from Hāna up there. Even the Sumida brothers were up there.
- MO: Yeah. What was your birth [year]?
- FH: Nineteen twenty-one. Eighty-two years old.
- MO: Yeah. (FH laughs.) Still looking good.
- FH: No.
- MO: Yeah.
- FH: Aches and pains.
- MO: What was it like growing up with so many brothers, and you were right in the middle?
- FH: Well, we didn't have any humbug because our brothers were kind of thin, not rough, so, we got along really well.
- MO: Did you do any kind of family-type outings?

FH: Well we used to go down the beach, though not anything special because those days we didn't have any cars. We didn't have transportation. The only thing we could do is have parties at home, and New Year's.

MO: So what beach would you guys go to?

FH: You know where the old airport is?

MO: Uh-huh [yes].

FH: That's where we go, walk right down. Lot of times, couple of boys go down, bring their spear, bring the rice ball, and go dive for fish. And they used to cook the fish down there and have lunch down there. You heard about the *kiawe* tree and the roots, the dry roots?

MO: Yeah.

FH: We used to cut 'em up, [when we were] about sixteen, seventeen, and we used to smoke it. Oh boy that had lot of nicotine though. Because the roots have lot of spores.

MO: Spores?

FH: Yeah. So we used to light it up.

(Laughter)

When I was going to high school we used to ride the bus go to school. And some boys used to smoke and they used to roll cigarettes. Those days cannot—[no] money to buy cigarettes so they used to buy the Bull Durham. Those days you roll your own. So I used to try, yeah I was good at it. I tried smoking but I never did like the taste of cigarettes, so in my whole life I never did smoke. And I am glad that I didn't have that habit of smoking.

MO: So when you went diving, what kind of fish did you guys catch?

FH: Oh we had a lot of *manini*, *kūmū*, [gather] *wana*, oh a lot of those rock fish. And down there used to have lot of the seaweed, Japanese call 'em *ogo*. We used to pick 'em by the bags. And we used to go to Waiākea-Uka on the Big Island, we used to play home-and-home baseball with the Little League. So when it was our turn to go to Hilo, we went down to the beach and picked up *ogo* because in Hilo they don't have that. So we used to bring 'em by the bag. You know those onion bags?

MO: Mm-hmm.

FH: We used to fill up about four or five bags and we used to take it over for them and they really, really enjoyed it very much. That was about 1960 that we started. And that home-and-home series is still going on yet in over forty years. A lot of people that I knew when we went over I think are all gone already, the older ones.

MO: So what else did you folks do for fun? You guys went diving or you went up to the reservoir to go swimming or to catch fish.

FH: Yeah, we used to go up to the mountain . . .

MO: And you went to the mountains . . .

FH: . . . walking.

MO: . . . and pick guava.

FH: We had basketball league. I played basketball. We used to play softball in the school yard. Just among ourselves. And we made our own games like marbles. You get all kind of games when you play marbles.

MO: What was camp [life] like?

FH: Well we, as a whole, we all got along together, no matter what nationality we were. There wasn't much fighting going on. We had some arguments, and actually that's common, right? But otherwise everybody worked together. So, you know, we had no problem especially as [far as] discipline goes. Even now, we meet some teachers that used to teach at Pu'ukoli'i, and just by coincidence our president from the Lahaina-Honolua Senior Citizens Club, she taught at Pu'ukoli'i School, she taught my kids.

MO: So you got married in 1946.

FH: I got married in 1946 in Pu'ukoli'i in the Methodist church. I have three children, one son and two daughters. My son lives in Las Vegas, and the oldest daughter lives in Wailuku. She works for the [Maui] County, and my youngest daughter lives in Lahaina with us. And she works at the Hyatt Regency. I have five grandchildren and one great grand[child].

MO: So was your wife from the camp, too?

FH: Yeah, my wife was born in Pu'ukoli'i, too. In fact she and I (chuckles) stayed in the same hospital when we were born.

MO: Really.

FH: Only five days different, she is five days older than I am. So we were in the hospital same time and we still living together.

(Laughter)

You know those days when you—you don't go home [from the hospital] two, three days, you stay about a week.

MO: Where are her parents from?

FH: They're from Japan, too.

MO: From the same part?

FH: No, no, no, Hiroshima.

MO: So did any of you ever go to Japan?

FH: Well, my wife and I went on a trip long time ago. But actually we didn't go to where our parents were born. We just went on an excursion. We couldn't actually go to our parents' hometown.

MO: What's your wife's name?

FH: Tokiko. To-ki-ko, T-O-K-I-K-O.

MO: What was her maiden name?

FH: Yamada.

MO: Yamada. Lot of times when you read the oral histories and they just refer to their wife or their husband but they never tell the names (FH laughs). Well who were they married to?

(Laughter)

So okay. And so what did she do then, did she work for Pioneer Mill, too?

FH: No. They had a restaurant store in Pu'ukoli'i, that's where she worked as a saleslady. Then after that she worked at the [Baldwin Packers] cannery. Then when the cannery closed, she worked for Royal Lahaina [Hotel] for over twenty years.

MO: What did she do there?

FH: She was a seamstress in the housekeeping [department].

MO: You said you worked for Pioneer Mill.

FH: Mm-hmm [yes].

MO: After you graduated from high school, what did you do?

FH: When I worked for Pioneer Mill, I used to work tractor driver.

MO: Oh that's right, okay so I got that, okay, that's right here. I don't remember what else now. And so did you play with your brothers a lot when you were growing up?

FH: No, not that much because they always busy doing something else.

MO: Did you folks have chores to do every day?

FH: Oh yeah.

MO: Yeah, what were your chores?

FH: Clean yard (laughs). And we used to raise chicken, and we used to have a garden. 'Cause feeding seven kids with one income is kind of hard. And those days things were a little cheap, one bag rice, hundred-pound rice, cost five bucks or something like that.

MO: So in your garden what kind of things did you have?

FH: Oh, we had lettuce, cabbage, onion, beans.

MO: What kind of food did your mom cook?

FH: Oh, Japanese food.

MO: Do you remember any of the names?

FH: Yeah, chicken *hekka*, or *nishime*. You know that Japanese stew. That is about the more common stuff.

MO: Did you learn to cook from her?

FH: No I didn't. I cook at home now because I used to like cooking. Not "like" cooking, but I want to try at least something, so I cook *hekka* once in a while, I cook stew, and [it's] good fun.

MO: Did you have the *mochi* tradition?

FH: You know, when we used to live in Pu'ukoli'i, we used have families come to get together before New Year's and pound *mochi*. And everybody bring their share of the ingredients. After that we sit down and *talk story*, ate, made food. And eat the *mochi* and all. It was something that we all used to like 'cause they had a lot of food. Those days, not everybody can buy soda water. Only New Year's you can.

MO: Only New Year's you had soda?

FH: Yeah, we used to have Lahaina Ice [Company]. And they used to get one pint of soda that was really, really good called Howdy. It was orange soda. We had all different type; we had root beer, strawberry, but that was the best one that really everybody wanted.

MO: So they gave it for free or people just had it for New Year's?

FH: Oh no, they got to buy it. We used to have a big plantation store where people can go and buy and then they used to put 'em on a tab. Then payday they go up and pay the bill.

And they [Pu'ukoli'i] had a small little store, and we had barbershop. We had a theater that burned down. We used to have a public bathhouse, you know big bathhouse, one for the ladies, one for the men, and one for the Filipino families. The other groups, like the *Haole*s and the other people, you know, supervisors, they have their own bath [inside their homes]. But the regular people used to go down to the public bathhouse. It was good fun.

MO: Do you have any kind of stories about that?

FH: Oh yeah but I don't want to tell.

(Laughter)

MO: The peeking stories (laughs). What do you think of West Maui today as compared to when you were growing up?

FH: Oh, when we were young there was no such thing as smoking *pakalōlō* and not too many people got real drunk. And another thing, today cannot leave things unattended, right?

MO: Mm-hmm.

FH: Like before, we used to live up Pu‘ukoli‘i, or [when we] moved to Lahaina early part of 1970. We didn’t even lock the house when we go out. You know, we trusted everybody. But now, ho, you got to lock the door when you go out, no matter what, no matter how short a time.

MO: What do you see for the future of Lahaina?

FH: I don’t know, ’cause they get too many outsiders coming in and trying to change everything that was something that we used to have all this time, and they come here trying to change everything.

MO: Like what are they changing?

FH: Well, especially in the other side [i.e., Kīhei], they trying to ban cane burning. And they only thinking about making money and building, building, building. We have enough traffic congestion on Maui, we don’t need all those things.

MO: You were talking about when you went from house to house to house to house and then by the time you got to the end at New Year’s everybody was drunk. What did they drink?

FH: Beer.

MO: Oh, beer.

FH: Well some houses have—Japanese that’s why—they have *sake*.

MO: *Sake*.

FH: Not too many people used to drink the hard liquor. It was beer.

MO: What kind of beer?

FH: Before it was Primo.

MO: Primo.

FH: Yeah, Primo beer. Today you have—ah, can’t count ‘em on two hands. So much. Too much type of beer. I see lot of beers I never seen before, never heard of ‘em. They have imported beers. Some people like that, that’s why.

MO: And where did the *sake* come from?

FH: Oh, they used to sell ‘em at the store.

MO: Store, okay. Did people make their own?

FH: I don’t know, I think some of ‘em did but not that I know of. Mostly they used to make ‘ōkolehao.

MO: Oh, really? Who made the ‘ōkolehao?

FH: Most Hawaiians, I think. Some they make it out of ti root, some [from] pineapple. Most of them were the Hawaiians. They use the ti root.

MO: And did you ever try it?

FH: Nah.

MO: So did you have any kind of interaction with the other ethnic groups, you know, go to celebrations?

FH: I like *talk story* with them 'cause even when I went to the supermarket, when I stay in line, somebody following me I tell 'em, "Eh, where you from?" Then we start *talking story* and I like that. It doesn't bother me that they are here 'cause it's good. I like to know where they come from.

MO: When you were growing up did you eat like Filipino or Hawaiian food, or Chinese food?

FH: Oh, I used to like that. I used to like the Filipino food, the majority of it. I like Hawaiian food; that's the best.

MO: And so what were some of the things that you ate, the Filipino food for instance?

FH: *Pinakbet*. They made out of eggplant, bitter melon, tomato, and maybe shrimp. You cook it all together, slow fire. I used to like the adobo, that's chicken or pork adobo. I can eat lot of Filipino food. Some that I don't like is the one that they cook with the blood. I don't know what they call that.

MO: Yeah, I forgot the name.

FH: *Dinuguan*.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MO: And then what kind of Hawaiian food did you eat?

FH: Oh boy, *kālua pig*, *lomi lomi salmon*, *pipi kaula*, oh.

MO: But you guys didn't have that at home. Your mother didn't cook that.

FH: No, no, no, she didn't cook that.

MO: You ate that at other people's houses?

FH: Yeah, parties or whatever.

MO: Oh, parties. So your friends at Pu'ukoli'i Camp, did you guys exchange foods or something like that?

FH: No, the only time is when we go out in the field, work. You know, everybody bring their own food. And at lunchtime we take out our food and put 'em all [out so] that everybody start picking what they want. So if you're a slow eater, you the loser (chuckles). If you only want to talk and talk and talk and don't eat, you're the loser. By the time you start eating (chuckles) everything gone.

MO: So it was like a buffet, everybody—potluck.

FH: Yeah, bring what their parent makes for them, or your wife make for you.

MO: That's interesting. So tell me something about the work that you did, like the tractor thing.

FH: Well, the first thing when I started, I used to work as a brakeman in the field. You know, where they bring the empty cars up into the field, where [they] load the cane, and we would bring it [the load] down. And we were the brakemen to adjust the load, come down the hill into where the train is waiting. Then after that I was promoted to a rake driver. That is where they drive the tractor to push all the cane into one pile so the crane can lift it up. And after that come the haul cane . . .

MO: Haul cane.

FH: . . . driver, where you bring the cane down to the train station. We had lot of exciting moments though.

MO: Oh yeah, what are some of 'em?

FH: You know, especially on the hill when we come down with a load, sometimes you don't have enough brakes on the cars and the tractor cannot hold it back because it's too heavy. Gee, that's when the troubles begin and you end up in a big pile up on the bottom.

MO: Oh, so did you ever get hurt?

FH: No, no, no. I was thinking to myself, I don't see why I did that job because it was so dangerous. You got to go between the two cars, and while it's going you used to have a safety chain between the two cars so if the pins come out the chain will hold it. We had to take it off before they reach the main road to the train. So we used to go between the cars and take it out and the next one. Now I think, why the hell I was doing that? Really. Dangerous. But after that, well, I worked tractor driver and I went into haul cane driver, so not too bad. After a while I figure, ah I think better change jobs so I can do the tractor shop, repair all the heavy equipment.

MO: You were like a mechanic?

FH: Mechanic. Tractor, cranes, dissemble and put back. Put in parts and all that.

MO: So you liked that better?

FH: Well, it was a good job but as I grew older the parts were getting heavier and heavier because they used to buy larger equipment. Because Lahaina has a lot of stony areas, they had to get bigger equipment. So one day I thought to myself, I think better change jobs. They had a job opening at the power generation plant. So I applied and I was lucky enough to get the job. So I was there till I retired. What we do is we take care of the

gen[erators]. They had the regular operator in the building take care all that, but we were the ones that take care the minor stuff, adjusting this, adjusting that.

MO: In the boiler what kind of fuel did they use?

FH: Well, to start off, they use diesel.

MO: Diesel.

FH: Yeah. Then once get kind of warmed up then it switches to crude oil. But when they're harvesting, they use bagasse. Shut off the oil and they use only the bagasse.

MO: So they got that from the . . .

FH: From the mill, you know from the mill across the street. It comes across on the conveyor.

MO: Bagasse, was that good fuel?

FH: Oh yeah, free because it's all dried already. So by the time they come into the boiler it's already burned, so they have some kind of centrifugal force that throws the bagasse into the furnace (makes a sound of the gas burning) you know, just spread it out so [it doesn't] pile up all at one place.

MO: Speaking of fuel, what kind of stoves and stuff did you guys have at home?

FH: At first we used to have gas stove, no electric stove.

MO: Electric stove?

FH: Yeah.

MO: They had electricity [eventually] at the camp?

FH: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. (Pause) And the plantation used to furnish us with *kiawe*, *kiawe* for burn to wash clothes and all this and that.

MO: 'Cause they have to borrow water or something?

FH: No, we had a good water system up there, so we had real good—as far as Lahaina is concerned, I think Pu'ukoli'i had the best water 'cause direct from the mountain.

MO: That came down from ditches or . . .

FH: No, [from] up the mountain come down into a reservoir, so we used to get a supply all the time.

MO: And after it got to the reservoir, how did it get to your house?

FH: They had the pipeline that goes into the camp.

MO: It was like cement pipes or what kind of pipes?

FH: No, no, no, regular pipe.

MO: Oh, the lead pipes?

FH: Yeah, yeah.

MO: So is there anything else? Any stories or something like that?

FH: No, not much already.

(Laughter)

MO: What would be the one thing that you wanted most of all to share with your grandchildren or great-grandchildren?

FH: I want them to know that we had life that was different from them, 'cause we were raised differently. Our parents had their old Japanese way of living.

MO: What would make the old Japanese style different from today?

FH: Well, you got to respect the elderly.

MO: Mm-hmm.

FH: It's just like you get Japanese shirt yeah, get Japanese words on top.

(Laughter)

You not Japanese though?

MO: Part, my grandmother was pure Japanese.

FH: Oh yeah?

MO: Yeah.

FH: That's why you get a little Oriental look.

MO: Yeah, and then my grandfather was little bit Chinese but my Oriental comes more from Japanese. But when she was two weeks old her mother died so she was *hānaied* by Hawaiians, so she grew up Hawaiian.

FH: So you married an Orr.

MO: Orr is *Haole*. But we grew up in Kailua.

FH: You local then?

MO: Yeah, from Kaua'i. But my grandfather Sammy comes from Lahaina and Waiehu.

FH: What was his last name?

MO: Aki.

FH: There's one Sam Aki up there.

MO: Yeah, my great-grandfather's brother was Sam Aki, so that's his line, his family line that's here.

FH: Yeah, he used to live up Homestead.

MO: 'Cause my grandfather moved, I guess, to O'ahu. Either he moved there from Maui or his mother left and went to O'ahu and then he was born there so I got to go look it up. But she was from Waiehu.

FH: Oh, small world, yeah?

MO: Yeah.

(Laughter)

FH: Well, I guess that's about all.

MO: Okay. Thank you so much for doing this and I know you guys when you get together you have lots of stories (FH laughs) and stuff but sometimes it's hard to remember. Will be fun to get all of you together at one time.

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**

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