

### BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Theresa Delos Reyes

*"I [started working] for Pioneer Mill [Company] when I was fourteen years old. . . . Outside [in the] field, cut grass. All of us. Mr.[John T.] Moir told our teacher that whoever likes to work out in the field to apply for the job. [I made] thirty cents a day. . . . I gave [my pay] to my mother. You know what, when I ask her, 'Can I have some money that I earned?' She say, 'Okay.' She put down my money and say, 'This is for your clothing, this is for your food, this is for your shoes.' Was left nothing." (Laughs)*

Theresa Delos Reyes was born in 1922 in Laoag, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. A year after she was born, she and her parents, Ponciano and Christina Dela Cruz, immigrated to Hawai'i (island of Kaua'i). When she was four or five, the family moved to West Maui, where her father found work at Pioneer Mill Company.

Delos Reyes grew up in Pu'ukoli'i Camp and attended Pu'ukoli'i School. During vacations, she worked in the fields for Pioneer Mill company.

In 1942, she married Guillermo Delos Reyes. They raised four children and have eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Tape Nos. 39-19-1-03 and 39-20-1-03

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Theresa Delos Reyes (TD)

Lahaina, Maui

February 4, 2003

BY: Maria Orr (MO)

MO: February 4th and it's almost 2:30 and I'll be interviewing Mrs. Theresa Delos Reyes. And I am Maria E. Ka'imipono Orr.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MO: It's about three o'clock now. And let's start with just telling me, you know, where you were born and raised, your parents, and everything. And then whatever stories you can remember.

TD: My name is Theresa Delos Reyes. But that's my married name.

MO: Yeah, you can also tell us what your maiden name is.

TD: And my maiden name is Dela Cruz. I was born in Laoag, Ilocos Norte [in] 1922. My parents migrated to Hawai'i in 1923. We landed in Honolulu and then in 1923, to Kaua'i.

MO: To Kaua'i.

TD: I grew up there till I was, oh, four or five years old. I don't remember. And then we came to Pioneer Mill in Lahaina in the year 1926 or 1927. That's where I grew up.

MO: What were your parents' names?

TD: Oh, my parents' names were Ponciano Dela Cruz. My mother's name was Christina Corpuz. I have one brother, three sisters.

MO: So what number are you in the family?

TD: I was the second oldest. My brother was the oldest. And then my sisters. My father worked in the plantation as a, what you call that, they haul the cane. And then walk the plank to the, we call *bagón* or something. He starts working from 4:00 in the morning till 2:30 in the afternoon. At one dollar a day.

MO: One dollar. Wow.

TD: Hard life, way before. My mother used to take in laundry to help my father feed us. My father used to keep chickens, a garden, and what else? I can't remember. Usually he fed

the chickens, so much chickens we didn't know what to do with it. Every week, he used to slaughter chickens to feed us. And we were so happy because chicken is meat. Only fish, chicken, and vegetables. That was our diet. I remember before when the bread used to be ten cents a loaf. (Chuckles) And used to be in the canteen in Pu'ukoli'i. They used to slice 'em up, put butter inside, and we bring our own *kaukau tin*. They put the coffee inside and we go home with a ten-cents loaf and free coffee. And that, we eat for breakfast. My mother used to divide the food [among] the three of us at that time. Nobody fight, nobody talk. We just eat, eat, eat. And then go to school.

But before we go to school, we have to do some chores. Like chop up the firewood for the iron, for our bath, and for cooking. My brother and I used to do that.

MO: For your baths?

TD: Yeah. We used to bathe outside. The plantation provided us one big bath place and it's not covered, it's open. But we were small children so we don't know what's what.

MO: Was like a big tub or something?

TD: Yeah. The cement tub, just like *furo*, eh. It was a public bathhouse, you know, for the camp where everybody goes and take a bath. They have showers with a big *furo*.

MO: So, what was it like when you went to school?

TD: Oh, it was good. My teacher was Mrs. Mo'okini. She used to be one song [i.e., music] teacher. She told us before if we wanted a piano for the school, so we said, "Yes." So you know what we did? Every person used to collect bottles and with the bottles we bought one piano. Until today the piano, it's in the Episcopalian Church house. I seen it before one time I went over there. The piano name was Tom Thumb. Nice little piano. Not big, just a little bit over thirty-six inches, I think. She used to play that piano every day and we used to sing. She's a good singer, too. And we used to play, she made us I don't know what kind games, she used to make us play musical chairs. And May Day we used get fun. She used to make programs.

Then Christmastime, we used to make big programs. We used to have 'em in the theater. And I loved to act on the stage, you know, before. We sing, we dance, and then we—the scripts just we play. They make for us script to read and study. And then we had a Santa Claus. They pass out candies, and how I valued that candy because that's the only candy we got in the year. You know, our parents don't even buy for us candy before. And I was so glad. You know what, I would sleep with the package of candy in the big brown bag. And we had all kinds of candies inside, and apples, oranges, anything to eat. And, oh, I feel so glad. My brother and I had two packages in the house. We had so much fun, only he and I because my sister was still small yet. So, my sister used to get candy but my parents could give her all the candies whenever she like. But not every time. For example, one candy a day, the candy going last long, yeah. My parents never like us to eat candy before. And to tell you the truth, I don't know toothache until today.

MO: Oh, wow. So you have good teeth?

TD: Yeah, I have all my teeth, except these two because I went crack 'em before and then the dentist had to take 'em out. And replace with false teeth. Yeah, because we never eat candy, even ice cream. You know, when children used to eat ice cream before, I used to ask 'em if the thing tastes good. I only stared, I don't know what this ice cream was. And

I don't know what this canned goods before. Always fresh from the garden. My mother buy only fish, when the peddler come around and sell fish. That's all. Not meat.

MO: What kind of vegetables did you have in the garden?

TD: My father used to use beans, potato leaf, anything that you find in Filipino food. Especially the *calamungay*, they call. That's the main food for Filipinos. Pumpkin, squash, onion, green onions—that's the easiest to grow. See, everything from the garden. He raise bananas for us to eat, papaya, anything. Eggplants, oh, so much.

MO: What was your father like?

TD: He was a good man, but don't make him angry. Because if he's tired then you make him angry, he's terrible. Every father, I think, is like that. He used to worry about us eating. "You finish eat?"

We tell, "Yeah." And then you go out and play and come back certain time. But if you stay too long, that's the time he give us good licking. So we learn. And you know when he give us spanking, only on our feet.

He says, "I spank your feet because your feet always bring you out and never bring you back." (Chuckles)

MO: What did he spank your feet with?

TD: You know, get the banana [branch], and then you take out the leaves, that one.

MO: Oh.

TD: What's still on the branch. Then he wait for us. Give us lecture first before he spank us. He tells us to go take a bath right away and sit down and rest. And then Mommy going take out the food, we go eat, see. And then my brother and me look at each other. There's something, mystery about this thing because he talk to us real good. Say, "Okay, come in. Go take a bath. Your mother's gonna dish out the food and we going eat." So naturally, we go do that. So we're all eating, and then he asks us if we all *pau*.

We said, "Yeah." And you know our table used to be Japanese-style, you know, small, short *kine*. Because my sister cannot sit on the table, so had to be one small. And all of us had small *kine* chairs to sit on, like stools. So he tell us to stand up, clean the table, put all the chairs in its place. And we clean the place. And then we go in the bedroom. That's when he stopped us.

He say, "I'm gonna spank your feet because your feet is not good." (Laughs) And I was thinking, today, you know that my children used to act so—you know teenagers, they go, they don't come home in time. That's what my father used to tell me. "I spank your feet because your feet bring you anyplace, don't know when to come back."

MO: Well, how could you tell what time it was, though? How did you know what time to come back?

TD: We go home before dark but that's too late for come home. He expect us to come home about three-, three-thirty in the afternoon. After school you go play. So when it's dark already, is too late. He give us good spanking. He spanked both [children]. One guy make

a mistake; it's the two persons' mistake. He no spank only one. He spank both of us. So we blame each other, my brother and me. My brother's job is to rake the yard, and when my father come home, the yard is not raked. And the chicken place not raked. So he know he's falling with his job. That's why he spank us. And I said, "Why you don't come home quick and rake the yard, rake the chicken coop? Now I have to get spanking, too." I used to tell that to him.

MO: What was your job?

TD: Clean the house and help my mother with the laundry, iron. I was old enough already. Ten years old. My mother start teaching me how to iron. Not with the charcoal, though. We had electric already that time. I used to iron on the floor. She said it's good for you, your leg no get swollen [like] when you stand up and iron. So I used to sit down and iron. The handkerchiefs, the T-shirts, tank top. And the *kaukau tin* bag, and those easy kind stuff to iron.

MO: And you said the iron was plugged into the . . .

TD: No, the electric that go come from the ceiling.

MO: Yeah.

TD: The long wire, we plug that. Because we take out the bulb and stick that small, what you call that? To plug the iron inside.

MO: In the outlet?

TD: Yeah, the outlet. And we used to hang 'em on the wall. I mean put 'em on the wall, and then start ironing. I don't know what ironing board was before until I got married.

MO: So, you were talking about what your father was like. What did he do for recreation?

TD: We no more recreation before. Because my father so tired, he goes to sleep early, early. When about seven o'clock he goes to bed already.

MO: How about weekends?

TD: Oh. Before when plantation no give us the firewood, my father used to go out in the fields, where there is *kiawe* wood, for go cut. And you know what, I so surprised of my father. He carried a big, big stump. Oh, I say, "Daddy, you sure can carry all that?"

He said, "Yeah, have to for your mother wash clothes." You know, big *planggana*. I mean, for the clothes to be washed. You know, before, everybody used to boil clothes. My father used to bring big kind wood home and chop 'em up for my mother to use. And he used to help my mother wash clothes. Saturday and Sunday. You have to get 'em all done by Sunday to start ironing on the next day.

MO: Where did you dry it?

TD: Oh, outside on the line. You know before, we starch and iron. When I think of it, how silly, you hang the clothes, and then when you going iron, you wet 'em. (Chuckles) And used to be so stiff.

MO: Yeah. I remember that.

TD: You starch everything, except *da kine* tank top. Everything from underwear to handkerchiefs, to *kaukau tin* bag.

MO: What was your mother like?

TD: Oh, my mother used to be so—she's a stern woman, I'm telling you. She never smiles. That's true. I never seen my mother smile before. No, you think of it, my father does smile. He make fun of us, yeah. But not my mother. She's serious, so serious. That's why no laughing when you not supposed to laugh. No giggling. Used to be so serious, so formal. And then when we have guests come to our house, they tell us, "Go inside the room."

I say, "Why?"

"You folks too young. You not supposed to stay with the old people. Just go in the room. When we call you, you come outside." So, we all stayed in the room, three of us looking at each other. They *talking story, talking story*.

MO: You guys didn't eavesdrop and try figure out what they talking about?

TD: No, no, no. 'Cause we don't understand Filipino [Ilocano].

MO: Oh.

TD: They all talk Filipino. My parents used to talk to me in Filipino, but because we only know English, she tell us to answer her in Filipino. But we cannot. The only time I learn how to talk Filipino is from the magazine. I used to get old Filipino people come around, they talk, yeah.

MO: So you never could understand?

TD: No.

MO: Wow. Interesting. So what did you do for fun after you started school? But you went to school in the morning, you did your chores and you went to school, and then what kind of games did you play?

TD: Oh, I get my girlfriend, until today she's still alive in Honolulu. She's my best friend from going to school until today. And she and I did together anything. Everything that's under this earth, under this world, you know, together. We always ask advice from our parents, especially her mother. 'Cause her mother is modern and my mother was the old, behind kind. She always give us advice.

MO: So what kind of things did you do together?

TD: We played volleyball, we played baseball, and you know with who? With all the Filipino young men. They work in the plantation but they're young. And we used to play volleyball with them. But I'm telling you, the ladies were right there watching. (Chuckles) Not only she and I, all the girls. We had over thirty girls same age with me, with us before. Thirty girls that used to play all together.

MO: Were you guys good at playing volleyball?

TD: When we were young, yeah.

MO: So, what other types of things besides volleyball and baseball?

TD: Oh, like . . .

MO: Recreation, fun things.

TD: We used to play hide-and-seek; we used to go up the mountain. You know, children go up the mountain and pick whatever [fruits] get over there. Come home, eat what we get, and after that—you know what? You know the mother used to teach us how to—we call that *sarsuela* in Ilocano, but, I don't know what you call that in English but . . .

MO: What's it involve?

TD: Singing, dancing, because we used to have a Filipino church and they used to make activities for us. And then the whole camp get involved. And they used to make stage for us to act, perform, you know. And my best friend's mother used to teach us all kinds of Filipino dance. And we used to enjoy it. I used to enjoy. You get all the girls together and she pick all the girls. And she teach all to dance, all together she teaches us.

MO: Do you remember some of the dances, the names of some of the dances? No?

TD: Forget.

MO: Now when you went up to the mountain, what kinds of things did you go and pick?

TD: Oh, get all kinds used to get. You know, usually guavas, plum, mangoes, and on the way we used to look at the plants along the water ditch going down.

MO: When you said you ate the guavas and the plums, who you used to eat with?

TD: No, when we go up, we bring bottles. We got sugar and salt and whatever you put inside. Then we shake 'em and eat 'em. We'd come home. We *talk story* on the way. And plenty of us, boys and girls.

MO: The mango one you had though . . .

TD: Up there, too.

MO: Vinegar . . .

TD: Vinegar and *shōyu*. We used to get *shōyu* and salt. Or else in the camp when the mangoes used to bear fruit over in the trees, we used to go over there and eat. Just play around and eat. And we play baseball in the camp.

MO: You said you used to climb trees.

TD: Yeah. Climb the mango and plum tree. Oh, when I think of that, I used to climb the plum tree to catch the plums. 'Cause you cannot catch 'em with that, you know the hook-like.

MO: Right, right.

TD: Yeah, cannot reach already. So we go way up. And my friend used to say, "Hey look out, you fall down. Look out, you fall down. I no can help you." She used to tell me that.

I used to [say], "Don't worry, don't worry." We used to climb. And when I see her, when I go Honolulu I visit her, we always talk about our old days, when we were young.

MO: Is your friend Filipino, too?

TD: Yeah. She's a good friend. Bosom friend. Close friend.

MO: So, describe the Pu 'ukoli'i Camp, that's where you lived. Describe the camp for me, and where you folks lived.

TD: Oh, the camp is, well it's a camp. I don't know how to describe it. But really a huge camp.

MO: About how many houses?

TD: How many houses? You know the camp went hold 3,000 people.

MO: Wow.

TD: And you must think how many houses.

MO: In each house about five . . .

TD: Yeah, about.

MO: Must have been about six hundred houses.

TD: Yeah, see there's a camp in the middle, and then the road is around, and then the camp around get houses, too.

MO: Oh really.

TD: Yeah.

MO: So you had the camp here, and then the road.

TD: And then outside get the houses. And all around is cane field. Exactly not round, but I mean, you know.

MO: Yeah, yeah. So was the camp segregated, though?

TD: Oh, when we arrived, no.

MO: Everybody mix.

TD: Yeah, mix. My neighbors used to be Japanese. They still living. Was one of my classmates, yeah. Some went to the Mainland and live. And then after the war [i.e., World War II], then segregation.

MO: Oh. So did the people treat the Japanese differently after the war?

TD: I don't know. To me, nothing was wrong. Then come to think of it, I don't know.

MO: So you guys still kept being friends, right, with the Japanese.

TD: We still friends. I don't know. We still friends. When wartime, I figure out the war is the other side so doesn't bother me. See because at that time, before the war, I was working at Kula Sanatorium. So every weekend I used to come home and everything is okay to me.

MO: You had Chinese and . . .

TD: No more Chinese. No more.

MO: No more Chinese.

TD: Most Japanese and Filipinos and the supervisors like that lived in different places, too. Only the laborers lived in the . . .

MO: In the camp?

TD: Yeah.

MO: Whereabouts did the supervisors live?

TD: In the camp, but above. Way up. The school is up there, the church, and the camp is down. As you enter Pu'ukoli'i Camp before, the first thing you meet is the school, the supervisor's community, and the church. And then at the end of the place, there big wide open space, that's where the theater, the canteen, the barber shop, the stores stay. And the plantation store used to be above, outside of the camp.

MO: So, what kind of people were the supervisors?

TD: Mr. Buchanan, Mr. [John T.] Moir, Mr. [J.R.] McConkey, and then the camp boss used to be Mr. Kekuewa, Mr. Rodrigues, that's all I remember.

MO: So you grew up with Filipino culture.

TD: Yeah.

MO: Meaning your food, and the . . .

TD: Yeah.

MO: But did you also do the Japanese things, too? The foods, yeah?

TD: You know when used to get that—I don't know if you still remember the holidays. You know they used to celebrate the birth of [Emperor] Hirohito. They used to have 'em in the park, and they used to make *da kine* sushi. They used to pass around. And all of us used to go over there. And then Japanese style is when New Year's Day they welcome you to their homes. My Japanese friends used to take me and bring me to their houses.

MO: So you ate all the Japanese food?

TD: Yeah. That's how I learned how to use chopsticks. They used to teach us that. The Japanese that had families down there used to be good people. All good.

MO: Did you folks ever go to the beach or anything like that?

TD: My father used to go down the beach and catch this black kind crabs, as part of our diet. So when my mother used to say, "Oh, I like eat the crab," my father used to go pick crab down the beach, walk feet, bring 'em home. And we used to enjoy it because by the bag he used to bring 'em home. He used to cook 'em. We eat 'em, black crab. I hardly see 'em today.

MO: What did you eat the crabs with?

TD: They used to—I don't know how they cook 'em. Dry cook and we eat with our everyday meal, you know, every evening-time meal. Get vegetables and fish, and we eat the crab 'cause my mother like eat crab, so my father went and picked. Beg father. (Laughs)

MO: So, you got along with your father more than your mother?

TD: Oh yeah. My father used to be so good to us, so good. But he spank when he's angry. So he always tell us, "Don't make me angry, my children. I give you guys good licking."

We say, "Yeah, yeah." Always say that. But he was a good father. He never yell.

MO: Do you think your mother was unhappy with being in Hawai'i? Did she miss her family?

TD: I never ask her. I never ask her that question.

MO: Did they ever go back to the Philippines?

TD: No.

MO: Never?

TD: My father either, 'cause my father died young.

MO: How old was he when he died?

TD: Fifty-eight.

MO: Oh. How did he die?

TD: Heart attack. 'Cause you know before when they come home from work, they used to bring *sake*, yeah.

MO: Oh really.

TD: Yeah. After work, before they eat they drink *sake*.

MO: Who made the *sake*?

TD: They buy.

MO: Oh they buy.

TD: By the gallon, from the store. Mostly all the fathers, the old Filipino men and the Japanese get together. They talk—what to drink and good for you and all that, I guess. My father tell us, "Oh, this Japanese man tell me *sake* good. So I buy *sake*." (Chuckles)

MO: Did your mother drink, too?

TD: No.

MO: No.

TD: I guess Filipino ladies were limited to certain things, I think. They don't drink.

MO: Did your mom do anything for fun?

TD: Not that I know of. She's always doing something. When afternoon come, "Oh, I going cook now because little more your daddy going come home." Was all I know. I guess they worked hard, yeah.

MO: Yeah. Ever hear her singing or telling you stories and things?

TD: Oh, she used to tell me but in Filipino, eh. I try to understand. I ask her questions, too. "How did you meet Daddy?"

She say, "Oh, my marriage was arranged." Because she *shimpai*.

MO: What does *shimpai* mean?

TD: That's Japanese word.

MO: Means just arranged or something.

TD: Yeah. And then I tell her, "How come?"

She said, "Your daddy was in a certain town and I was in certain town. Our parents get together and talk about our marriage because we were of age to be married."

I said, "Oh yeah?" I tell that, "Oh, you guys never loved each other?"

"No, only when we get married. See, I gotta do woman's duty as a wife. I gotta work, just like him. And raise three kids. My kids are my responsibilities and he go out and work and come home."

So I thought to myself, "Oh, what a life." (Chuckles)

MO: But was she happy with your father?

TD: I don't know. I didn't ask that. I never asked her.

MO: How old was she when she died?

TD: Ninety-six I think, or ninety-four. She died at Hale Makua. She got married again, see [after TD's father died]. Her second marriage, but her husband died. Because my father was young and she was young yet, too. So she got married [again]. And it's good for us, too, 'cause somebody can take care of her. I cannot take care her.

MO: So, how old was she when she married the second time?

TD: I don't know. I don't remember. But I know that when the husband died we put her in Hale Makua. That's where she died.

MO: So you didn't consider him your stepfather or anything?

TD: Oh, I hardly see them when they got married. 'Cause I was married, too, myself.

MO: Oh, okay. So what grade did you go up to in school?

TD: Eighth grade.

MO: To eighth grade. And then what happened after you get, you know . . .

TD: Graduated. Well, when my mother—I had my two sisters with me. I don't even remember. I wasn't married yet that time. I used to take in laundry to support us.

MO: So you were only like thirteen, yeah?

TD: Fourteen.

MO: Fourteen.

TD: And my sisters used to—one was seven years old, the other one. And the youngest used to be—no eight. The other one was eight. And the other one was six years. She used to go to school already. But my other sister, the one I kept, died. Only my sister and I lived together in the same camp. Only two of us alive.

MO: What kinds of subjects did you study in school?

TD: Oh, well, we take up sewing before, singing classes, and the other studies, like arithmetic, and all that stuff, geography, and science and all that. That's where I learned how to crochet when I was going to school. Our sewing class teacher taught us how to crochet.

I remember once this teacher of ours when I was third grade or fourth grade, she brought one Japanese pattern doll. Until today I used to think, "How she made that pattern?" Nice one you know. You stuff 'em with cotton and then make 'em stand. Her name was Mrs. Matsumoto, the teacher's name. I was in the third grade. I still remember. And she used to be a good teacher.

MO: Where did your clothes come from?

TD: My mother used to sew. And the only time we get new clothes is when school open in September.

MO: Oh, yeah.

TD: (Laughs) Everybody, even the Japanese girls used to say, "What kind dress you going use?"

"Oh, I don't know because my mother going sew my own." 'Cause before, nobody get such thing as someone sew for you. You sew your own. My mother used to sew sleeveless, real fancy though. They have the style nowadays that's straight. And then they have the ruffles down. My mother used to sew that for us. And the pinafores, she used to sew that for us. And then jumpers. And she used to bring me to the store. She ask me what *kine* material I like. I used to choose. It used to be quarter [.25] one yard.

MO: (Tape inaudible.)

TD: I don't remember. Quarter one yard (laughs). And I used to be tiny, so, I think, little bit yards, eh. She used to sew for me two dresses. And that gotta last me a year until September again. Another two dresses for the year. And I felt so happy, you know, when she sew for me dress. I go try 'em on, pinafores with the jumpers and the blouse she sew.

MO: So you only wore the same dresses.

TD: Yeah, every day she wash 'em. We have our play clothes, a different one, and the one going to school, and the one going to sleep.

MO: That's all, only three things?

TD: Yeah. We have to do. And, you know, when you buy a bag of rice, before used to be about two dollar half [\$2.50]. One bag of rice was 100 pounds. In those days, they put two bags inside, yeah. One is the inside one and one the outside one. She used to make the outside one so white, she take 'em, she boil 'em, and she used to make that for our underpants. And you know what kind rubber [for the waistband] they used to use? You know for the tire?

MO: Yeah.

TD: The inside [i.e., rubber innertube], they used to cut 'em. When the Japanese ladies and the Filipino ladies meet in the store, they ask each other what they going do with the materials. And she said, "Oh, I make pants." And they ask what kind rubber we use, "Oh, we use the tire." So my mother did that. Before used to put button. So my mother used to do that.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

TD: And then she used to tell us try not to make 'em dirty. And you know children, they play. Oh, she used to scold. Scrub, scrub, scrub. Boil 'em. (Chuckles) And I feel so happy because get rubber band.

MO: Instead of elastic.

TD: Yeah. The rich people can use elastic. Us poor people cannot. Every penny counts. You have to make the one dollar stretch.

MO: What did you wear on your feet?

TD: Nothing.

MO: No shoes.

TD: Not even slipper. We used to go school without shoes. I remember though, only when I graduated I used shoes. Rain or shine, barefoot going to school.

MO: Do you remember how old you were? So you were like fourteen when you first wore shoes?

TD: Yeah.

MO: Wow.

TD: And I felt so happy, you know. (Chuckles) We go out to Lahaina and buy shoes. We hardly go any kind place before.

MO: So how often did you go to Lahaina?

TD: I don't know when because I never come to Lahaina, if not something very, very important.

MO: So you just kind of hang out at the camp?

TD: Yeah.

MO: Did everybody know everybody in the camp?

TD: Everybody went to the same school. (Chuckles)

MO: You said that when you were playing, you played in the playground?

TD: Yeah, the school ground.

MO: Oh, the school ground.

TD: We have public grounds.

MO: And you said that children from all over. You didn't know where they came from.

TD: Yeah. That's true. But we play together. I even don't know their names. We just play.

MO: From other camps you think?

TD: No, in the same camp because it's a big camp.

MO: Oh, okay.

TD: And afterward, some people meet me, say, "Are you Theresa?"

I say, "Yeah."

"You remember me?"

"No."

Say, "We used to stay at the same camp."

"No. I don't know you." Because they know me and I don't know them. Then everybody separate. Go away. Only the wartime [World War II], everybody go away. Go different places.

MO: So you said your meals were mostly vegetables . . .

TD: Vegetables.

MO: . . . fish or chicken. Did they have names? You know, like fishes have names or something like that.

TD: *Da kine, aku.*

MO: *Aku.*

TD: And *da kine*, red fish with that, get beards. I don't know what you call this. And, what you call that, the fish that's hard to scale? The deep-sea fish.

MO: Like *'ō'iō* or something?

TD: No, no. Good fish that. Good, good, good, fish. And then we have this, I don't know what kind fish, that big fish with. . . .

MO: What color?

TD: Red, black, and sometime they have that horn like.

MO: Oh, the *kala*.

TD: Yeah, *kala* that. Yeah *kala*. You put 'em over the fire. And then *manini, pala*.

MO: *Pala*?

TD: Yeah, they call *pala*. I don't know. Small round fish like that. Good fish, though. Good for frying over the fire. Mostly we eat over-fire kind food. Fishes especially. But before when they used to sell *'ōpelu* and *aku* by the buckets. You know, the people from Honokōwai come up and sell, And used to be quarter [.25] one pound.

MO: What kind people from Honokōwai?

TD: The Filipino fishermen.

MO: Oh, okay.

TD: And we used to walk down, you know. You see that they coming in. We used to walk down and we help *huki* the net. And they give us free fish. And we go home satisfied.

MO: Do you remember whereabouts it was that you have the *hukilau*?

TD: Honokōwai.

MO: In Honokōwai.

TD: 'Cause no used to get plenty houses. All open space before. Not like now. You cannot see the beach nowadays.

MO: Yeah, and was cane fields everywhere.

TD: Yeah.

MO: So do you remember much about Pioneer Mill Company?

TD: Oh, I worked for the Pioneer Mill when I was fourteen years old.

MO: Oh really.

TD: Outside [in the] field, cut grass. All of us. Mr. [John T.] Moir told our teacher that whoever likes to work out in the field to apply for the job. So mostly the Japanese girls and boys work outside field on Saturdays. Only Saturdays. I guess Mr. Moir went ask the Board of Health for make us work. Stay out of trouble. He was good though.

MO: And how much did you make?

TD: Thirty cents a day.

MO: What did you do with the money?

TD: I gave to my mother. (Chuckles) You know what, when I ask her, "Can I have some money that I earned?"

She say, "Okay." She put down my money and say, "This is for your clothing, this is for your food, this is for your shoes." Was left nothing. (Laughs)

MO: So you didn't get any money?

TD: No.

MO: Oh wow. How long did you work?

TD: All summer. Only the summertime.

MO: And then after that you just stayed home and helped your mom.

TD: Yeah.

MO: For how many years did you do that?

TD: I don't quite remember. Until she remarried.

MO: Then you said that your husband also lived at Pu'ukoli'i Camp.

TD: That's where we met.

MO: Was he born there?

TD: No, no. He was born in the Philippines. I asked him how he came from the Philippines. His father was working in the [Pioneer Mill] plantation before. So he brought him [to Hawai'i] to help him make money to send to the Philippines. He was sixteen years old when he came over.

MO: Then he came and lived and worked at Pu'ukoli'i.

TD: Uh huh [yes]. With the father. He says, I don't know.

MO: So you didn't know him.

TD: No. I still get his cards when he came over. He came on the *President Grant*. And in 1929, I think, he came.

MO: The same year that you went to Pu'ukoli'i.

TD: Yeah. But I don't know him. Nobody know each other that time.

MO: So he's a lot older than you?

TD: Mm-hmm [yes].

MO: So how did you meet?

TD: When the camp make—the Filipino people used to have children and we make party. And make dances and that's how we meet. Because at Christmastime, they have an orchestra or band or something like that. They come serenade the ladies. It's good, you know, when they come to serenade you. From house to house they serenade all the girls.

MO: Oh. So they knew whose . . .

TD: Yeah.

MO: Wow.

TD: I used to like that. They come enjoy. They serenade by the window and you sit down and you just watch them. And then we go in already, good night. So they go. Then they go to the other house. I can hear the music because our houses are close together. They going from house to house. Used to be good people over there before. No more fights. I don't hear fights before. Pretty good people.

MO: You were starting to tell me about the inside of your house. Describe the inside of your house.

TD: Well, we were so poor—my first house was one parlor, one bedroom, and one kitchen that is five yards away from the house. We have a stove, I told you, a barbecue pit. It was oblong. We eat over here and we cook here and our sink was right there. That's all. And our table used to be low. Japanese kind table we used.

MO: And then the bathroom?

TD: Outside. The plantation used to provide us. Every house get bathroom outside.

MO: Is it like an outhouse?

TD: Yeah. Outhouse. The toilet, too.

MO: Tell me about that Korean man.

TD: (Chuckles) The old Korean man used to come with one wagon and two horses. He used to come with two horses. And he used to bring out our trough from the toilet, put 'em back, put one clean one.

MO: So you have a trough.

TD: Yeah, trough-like.

MO: And where did he put it, all that stuff?

TD: Way down, far from the camp. When we walked feet, eh, no more car. Walk feet and they tell us, "This is where all the doo-doo go." The Korean man.

MO: So it was near the cemetery?

TD: Yeah. Mm hmm.

MO: Where was the cemetery?

TD: Way down. It's still there. They were saying that they were gonna make it a—they not gonna take it away. 'Cause when we went Las Vegas for our fiftieth reunion, somebody came up and tell us that he's making a history of that graveyard.

MO: Oh.

TD: It's near the coffee field. I've never been there by the coffee field yet but you can see.

MO: Yeah, I think I drove by it. So do you know who's buried there in the cemetery?

TD: I know my brother, my father, and who else? My nephew, my sister's baby. And my uncle, that's all.

MO: That you know of? Do you know about other people buried there?

TD: Oh yeah, plenty.

MO: So somebody should record, yeah, all the names.

TD: Yeah. That's why that guy said he was gonna write about the graveyard was asking us questions for old families was over there.

MO: So you mentioned the theater. Tell me about the theater.

TD: Yeah, we had a theater. For the camp. And who wants to clean the theater go inside free. 'Cause ten cents, I think, or five cents to go inside the theater, us children. So we used to go over there and sweep. Whoever go over there first and sweep, go inside the theater free. And used to get good kind shows.

MO: Do you remember some of the shows?

TD: Oh, yes. Like Tom Mix and Buster Crabbe, and *Little Orphan Annie*. And I think those picture were in the—you remember the picture *Top Hat*?

MO: I remember the name.

TD: With what do you call that smart dance?

MO: Fred Astaire?

TD: Yeah, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Those pictures over there. And with the three sisters that always sing.

MO: Yeah.

TD: I forget the name.

MO: Andrews Sisters?

TD: Yeah. The Andrews Sisters. I used to see that in there.

MO: That means I'm old.

(Laughter)

MO: So here you are living in this camp, a plantation camp, and you go and see these kinds of movies. What did they make you think about?

TD: Nothing. Just good and enjoy it. Yeah, nothing.

MO: You didn't think about other people and how they lived?

TD: No.

MO: If they were living different?

TD: No, because everybody I had lived with, lived the same as me. Because if somebody get something new, like television, everybody know in the camp. (Laughs)

MO: You guys didn't have television.

TD: No.

MO: And what about the churches, what kind of churches?

TD: I was a Catholic so every Sunday used to go church.

MO: What's it called?

TD: The church?

MO: Yeah.

TD: Saint Thomas.

MO: Do you know what kind of order the priest was?

TD: I don't know.

MO: Marianist or Jesuit?

TD: I don't know but our priest used to be one old, old man. I forgot his name already. I forgot his name.

MO: Did he live in the camp, too?

TD: No, he used to live Lahaina way. I forgot his name. My God, he used to be an old man. He used to drive one old, old car. Open space, *da kine* 1929 model.

MO: How many cars were in the camp?

TD: I remember three. I told you three, yeah?

MO: Yeah.

TD: One the fishermen and one the plantation truck and one taxi man down there. That's all I remember.

MO: Let's see. And what about the telephone?

TD: The telephone, only the plantation store get the telephone before. That's all.

MO: Okay. Tell me about plantation store.

TD: Pardon me?

MO: Tell me about the plantation store. What was it like? What kind of stuff did they have?

TD: Well, mostly food stuff, canned goods, oranges, apples. And you know what kind bath soap they used to sell? I can remember my mother used to buy, round kind. Those round soap come in green, pink, blue, yellow. But I don't know how much they sell that before. Cute, nice though.

MO: You don't know what the brand name?

TD: No. Used to be nice, the plantation store before. They have everything except fresh food kind. You have to order that. And big, the store was.

MO: Did you go to that a lot?

TD: I don't know what they have. But I know when my mother used to bring me over there. That's all. And already kids. Inquisitive, they look all around.

MO: So what happened if you got sick?

TD: Oh, we have a little dispensary. The doctor and the nurses used to come after lunch. Used to come every day.

MO: Do you remember getting sick?

TD: Yeah, but they don't bring us to the hospital. They let us stay home and the doctors come around. I used to get the flu. I remember that year the flu, the big flu they had, 1934 I think. Or '33.

MO: Why did they call it the big flu?

TD: 'Cause everybody in the camp was nearly all sick and we had the hospital over here, the plantation, Lahaina. The people used to stay outside from the hospital and not enough room. They have to use the clubhouse and most of them died that time. And I was one of them almost died. The doctor used to come around. And the nurse used to come around.

MO: How did they treat it?

TD: I don't remember, you know. They gave me pills, that's all. I don't remember. But I know lot of them died though. That's why they was going put them out from their house and put 'em in the clubhouse.

MO: Did your mom and father have their own treatments if you got sick or something, too?

TD: I don't know. I don't remember my parents getting sick.

MO: No, but I mean, did they have like Filipino medicine?

TD: Oh, yeah. But I don't know the names. (Chuckles)

MO: What did it look like?

TD: I don't know. You know most of the Filipino people used before, that I can remember, most of them had TB [tuberculosis] you know, and died. Some of them went to Kula [Sanatorium] and died. From working, yeah, heavy.

MO: So how did they treat the TB?

TD: They used to bring the people up to Kula.

MO: Oh, okay. That was kind of sad, don't see them again.

TD: Yeah. They always say before, "Oh, once you up Kula you not going come back already." So some of them, when they have enough money earned already, when they know they have TB, they go home to their homeland and die over there.

MO: Oh, so they go back to the Philippines. Oh, that's too bad. Did the Japanese get TB, too?

TD: Oh, yeah. But you know, we no mingle around with them. Because when I was working Kula before the war, most of them was up there too. The Filipino and Japanese all together. Some of them I know from Pu'ukoli'i. But the big hospital already, not the small one. But most of them go home. Because you know they have cure already. But before our days in 1930-some, no more. The doctors they don't have the cure for TB before. It's only rest, that's all.

MO: Yeah, that's what I remember, too.

TD: Yeah, and you know when I was working up there, Dr. [H.M.] Izumi used to be the surgeon. He used to operate the people with TB. You know when the TB in their lungs, used to take 'em off, and in the bone, used to take 'em off. And of course the person lose his strength but he still alive. And most of them come home.

MO: So he was a plantation doctor? Dr. Izumi?

TD: No.

MO: He worked up Kula.

TD: Kula. He was a good doctor though, Dr. Izumi, yeah.

MO: So in the camp, where did you get your drinking water?

TD: Oh, from the pipe that come from the mountain. Now the hotels in Lahaina side get all our water. Used to be some good water. Ooh, good and cold. And to think the public camp used to be not hot, not cold, just right the weather. Up the mountain, yeah. Was really good, the weather up there. Not like over here, different.

MO: So how many children did you have?

TD: Four.

MO: Four children. They're all grown up?

TD: Yeah, and have their own family. Thank God. I don't have to take care of them.  
(Chuckles)

MO: How many grandchildren do you have?

TD: [Eight]. And [six] great-grandchildren. And not one married Filipino.

MO: Really? Not one of your children or grandchildren? What did they marry?

TD: Different outside the family. (Chuckles)

MO: Interesting. Oh wow. So how many girls, how many boys you have?

TD: My children?

MO: Yeah.

TD: I have one boy and three girls.

MO: So, who did Walter marry? What kind? *Haole*?

TD: *Haole*. From the Mainland. He met her when he was going school. But she's a good wife, she's a good wife. I have a good, good daughter-in-law. Nobody come second to her, boy, I'm telling you. She's really good.

MO: So what kind of work did he do?

TD: Fireman. He was the captain before he retired. He retired at fifty-two. How young.

MO: Wow.

TD: He said, "I tired already." He work only twenty-seven, or twenty-eight years.

MO: Wow. That's impressive. So what does he do now? That's why I find him at home when I call.

TD: Yeah. He's always home. Well, he clean yard. And he do his own thing. He watches the grandchildren. That's his job now. You know, my son, he's about fifty-six now, I think. Or fifty-seven.

MO: Oh, same age as me.

TD: Yeah. And then he take his grandchildren and walk. I cannot believe he's a grandfather. Honest to God.

MO: He looks young.

TD: He fifty-six.

MO: Gosh, he looks so young.

TD: Honest?

MO: (Laughs) You'd never believe he was fifty-six. (Chuckles)

TD: Oh he's fifty-six. To me, he looks old.

MO: You're used to him maybe.

TD: Yeah.

MO: How old are your daughters?

TD: My oldest daughter is sixty. And funny, 'cause say she no look like sixty, too.

MO: Must be good genes.

TD: Oh, I don't know.

MO: See you got good teeth, too. You don't look eighty.

TD: I'll be eighty-one already this year.

MO: I know. You don't look that.

TD: When you see my son's children, they all big, bigger than him. You no believe that's his children. And more of course they all no look like Filipino. That his kids.

MO: They look *Haole*?

TD: *Haole*. Full on the mother's side. Even his grandchildren.

MO: So one of the questions they wanted me to ask you, too, was what do you think of West Maui? You know the way it looks now, or what's happening now in West Maui compared to back when you were growing up?

TD: Well, we have to expect that and accept it. I accept what's going on already.

MO: You mean the . . .

TD: The environment, the hotels, and everything. I accept everything. Cannot do anything.

MO: So it's grown a lot, yeah?

TD: Yeah. When I look around the hotels, oh so many changes. Especially going down the hill, yeah, from Pu'ukoli'i Camp before. Oh I miss that place, I tell you.

MO: Yeah, so when you came down the hill, what did . . .

TD: I mean before?

MO: Before yeah.

TD: Everything was—you can see the ocean right through. No more houses, no more buildings. And the road was right next to the ocean. Not this road right now.

MO: Oh really?

TD: Yeah. It's right next to the ocean, the edge of the ocean. You know the part going down the hill?

MO: Yeah.

TD: Right over there the road used to be, the road going down. The same road going down. And you know where the Wahikuli Park, on the highway?

MO: Uh-huh.

TD: The road is right over there.

MO: Okay.

TD: Go right straight, go inside Kā'anapali Beach, Kā'anapali way, and over there used to be all *kiawe* wood, *kiawe* trees. The last guy who went make picture over there was Rock Hudson.

MO: Oh, really.

TD: Yeah.

MO: You guys go watch or something?

TD: We cannot go watch because too far. Used to get the wharf, where they bagged the sugar, yeah. When they put the sugar to the boat. Over there get the big wharf, right by Sheraton [Maui].

MO: Right, right.

TD: Yeah. Used to be a train go in and out. 'Cause everything was by train.

MO: So what do you think the future of West Maui will be? How would you like to see the future of West Maui?

TD: I don't know. 'Cause they get empty spaces above us and they said could be houses. I don't know.

MO: What do you think of having the houses up there?

TD: What else they gonna put?

MO: Oh. Keep it open space maybe.

TD: What they going do with all the dust coming?

MO: Oh there's dust up there?

TD: Yeah. You know when dry season, really dry season, the dust, unless they leave the field green, like that, with all the weeds. But I don't know if they going build houses like way up that place. Way up by Launiupoko.

MO: So you think putting houses up there is a good thing?

TD: Not so good. I'm just satisfied where I stay right now. 'Cause they were saying—behind my house is where they gonna put the new road.

MO: Oh, the bypass road.

TD: The bypass. But how many years already? Ten, twenty years already. And I feel good because if they leave 'em like that, I feel better. No more noise, yeah.

MO: Yeah. I wonder how noisy it will be.

TD: I don't know because from what I understand, we had a meeting that they was going put one wall. And then they built the road.

MO: But won't it ruin the scenery if they put a wall?

TD: Yeah, sure. For us, never mind. I can see the ocean yet. But not for those guys behind the wall. 'Cause going build a road, yeah. And the road—see, they would take out all the

houses on this lane, this side for the other road, and right behind my house, about five-feet away from my house, I think, the road stay. And then another road, the house behind is gonna be low. They not gonna see nothing. Unless way up Lahainaluna one. But is gonna be real hot when they build that wall.

MO: Why is that?

TD: To keep away the noise, they say.

MO: But why would it be too hot?

TD: 'Cause no more air. The air is coming from the mountain.

MO: Yeah. So you think the wall will block the air?

TD: Yeah. And then without the wall, going be too noisy.

MO: Yeah, yeah. I guess if they want the bypass they gonna have to decide if they want the noise or if they want . . .

TD: Wall.

MO: . . . the heat.

TD: But you know I'd rather have the heat and the wall. Because right now when the car coming down, it's so speed—twice already they almost come into my yard, an accident, yeah. I rather they build the wall if they going make the road.

MO: Anything else you remember?

TD: That's all, I think.

MO: Do you talk to your grandchildren about—do you know?

TD: Yeah. Especially Wendy, my granddaughter, when she was going to college, University of Hawai'i. She always asked me about Pu'ukoli'i. I like tell her what I know. And she ask me questions. She cannot believe the toilet. (Chuckles) "What grandma?"

"No it's true." I tell.

"Oh my God," she tell that.

MO: 'Cause you have to go outside?

TD: Yeah, we have to go outside. Oh, she cannot believe.

MO: And then you said they didn't have the hole. What did you sit on?

TD: *Da kine*, the regular they make one, and put *puka*.

MO: Oh, they did.

TD: Yeah.

MO: A board with the *puka*.

TD: Yeah. And they put cover like.

MO: Was it smelly or things like that, the outhouse?

TD: Yes, smell, of course. But then, when you in the toilet, you no can smell it. But outside, oh. Funny, when we eat out in our kitchen, we don't smell. Because the out toilet used to be out by the kitchen, next to the kitchen. That's where they put our running toilet. The running toilet is really good, you know. When the water start running, oh the noise. Can see the water going down. And where the thing [waste water] go down, go [to the] cane field right by the pigpen. (Laughs) But we think nothing of it, you know. Nothing.

MO: Did it attract flies?

TD: No.

MO: No flies.

TD: 'Cause I guess when the water run down, yeah. Just like every half an hour the water running down. Seems to me like that.

MO: And all the stuff was in the toilet runs down?

TD: Yeah, runs down.

MO: Interesting. And where does it run to?

TD: Way down to the cane field.

MO: And so all the stuff from the toilet just goes into the fields?

TD: Yeah, cane fields. (Laughs) And we think nothing of it. Nothing. It irrigates the cane fields, fertilize 'em, I guess. And they make the water from the reservoir go down, too. Cleans out the pigpen. And they let the water run, carry the pig waste down.

MO: So everything went into the cane fields?

TD: Yeah, before. Nobody think about sanitation.

MO: Yeah, and think about the people now who have to go and cut the cane and all that kind of stuff.

TD: Oh, they burn the cane. So not so bad. (Chuckles) Now you tell me that, yeah, nobody think of sanitation before. But before when used to get plenty mosquitoes, they send somebody to spray the camp. And no more too much mosquitoes. And nobody had malaria in Pu'ukoli'i Camp before, no more. They always come around and spray.

END OF SIDE TWO

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MO: It's about twenty-to-five.

You were saying about how your mother just always cooks food.

TD: Yeah. When they cook breakfast, and I don't know what she's doing in between because I go to school, and she cooks lunch. 'Cause from the school to my house, I used to eat lunch at home.

MO: Oh, you came home for lunch.

TD: Yeah and then go back again. Half an hour. They give us half an hour before. 'Cause no used to get cafeteria. Our days no more cafeteria. (Chuckles) Either you bring your lunch or go home eat lunch.

MO: So you said there's no sandwiches, nothing like that.

TD: I don't eat sandwich. I only eat bread in the morning with the butter the people put inside when we buy, that's all. He slice the bread, yeah. Ten cents a loaf.

MO: So what did she cook for lunch?

TD: Whatever she can. Our vegetables, when we come home from *da kine*, she give us vegetables, that's all. And on the weekends, my father used to kill chicken. Only weekends. And then I don't know, they preserve the food until next day.

MO: Yeah, 'cause you didn't have refrigerators.

TD: Yeah, no more.

MO: Oh.

TD: I don't know what is that.

MO: I wonder how they kept it fresh.

TD: I don't know. Even my father, when he buy pork, like that, he used to preserve 'em. I don't know how long.

MO: They salt it.

TD: I don't know.

MO: Well, thank you so much for doing this. Whenever they get finished transcribing, then they'll send it to 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**