

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: DIMITRIO RIVERA, retired plantation worker

Dimitrio Rivera, Visayan, was born on June 12, 1892 in Manjoyod, Negros, one of four children of Gregorio and Guadalupe Cadusale Rivera.

He immigrated to Hawaii on December 15, 1911 and worked for Makaweli Plantation. He and his wife Fausta (who died in 1953) lived in Camp 2 until 1941 when they moved to Kaumakani. They had five children. Mr. Rivera did not participate in the 1924 strike.

He is a Catholic and belonged to the Hinabangay, a mutual aid society. Rivera attends senior citizens activities in Hanapepe and lives in the Eleele elderly housing area.

Tape No. 5-27-1-78 TR

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Dimitrio Rivera (DR)

November 1, 1978

Eleele, Kauai

BY: Ed Gerlock (EG) and Chad Taniguchi (CT)

CT: Ed Gerlock is interviewing Mr. Dimitrio Rivera in Eleele. Today is November 1, 1978.

EG: I'd like to ask you, where were you born?

DR: I was born in the town of Manjuyod, Negros Oriental. I was born in the year 1892, in the city of Dumaguete. Soon after that I went from the city of Dumaguete in Negros to Cebu. And I lived there in 1910, 1911.

While I was working there in Cebu there's a lot of very difficult experiences that I went through. For instance, I was a kargador-- someone who carries things down at the docks--carrying abaca, manila hemp. Very heavy to carry. I was also working in carrying karbon in baskets. And then, in the afternoon you wouldn't even know that a person were a human being, because he was so covered with the black from the karbon.

1911, there were agents going around who were advertising working here in Hawaii. And one of them was convincing me that I should also go. I didn't want to go because I was all alone at that time. But he was able to get an awful lot of other people to go. They would give you a prize or a reward of \$10 if you agreed to go. Because there were a lot of Visayans going I was also carried along with the group and agreed to go. From there, we went on board ship to Manila. When we arrived in Manila, we were there at Immigration. We were three days at Immigration there, and then we sailed on board ship for Hawaii. That was December. And we sailed to Hong Kong. December of 1911. From Hong Kong we went to Shanghai. When we landed in Shanghai we had no opportunity to get off the ship. We only stayed on the ship. And from there we left for Japan, for Kobe and Yokohama. We stayed one whole week in Kobe because a lot of the passengers on board ship, a lot of the workers were sick. And some of them even died.

EG: Why were they sick?

DR: Well, they were drunk from the sea. Some kind of seasickness. When they died, they just threw them into the sea. There were three that I knew of who died and "buried at sea." They threw them into the sea and they would go down and then pop up above the waves once more, and then down, never to be seen again.

EG: How many were there that died altogether on board ship?

DR: Three. So we were quarantined there in Yokohama for one week, because of the sickness. From Yokohama we came straight here to Hawaii. We arrived in Honolulu, we were at Immigration for about three days. We had to be given medical treatment. They checked out the feces and also urine and also blood. After three days, on the fourth day then assignments were being given out. And some people were sent to the Big Island, some to Maui, some to Kauai. Others to Oahu. So I arrived in Honolulu on December 15, 1911. When I arrived here on Kauai, it was Makaweli, the Hawaiian Sugar Company that I was assigned to.

Our work was really very bitter, very, very difficult. I was carrying sugar cane on my shoulders. There was no contract that was signed, you were doing day work. When I arrived here at that time, in 1911, for 26 days you received \$16. In 1912-1913, the salary went up to 75 cents for one day's work. Finally, it went up to \$1. It was in 1914 that it went up to \$1.

I forgot exactly when it was that the strike of Manlapit happened. It was probably around 1915, I think.

EG: Wasn't it 1914?

DR: Yeah, I guess maybe it was 1914. It was around the time of the first World War.

EG: Wasn't it 1924; the time of the strike?

DR: Ah yeah, that's right. It was after the War that the strike happened. The problem there really was that Manlapit was the only leader. Only he had leadership in the organization. Not like now, any nationality, eh. So before only Filipino take on the strike, Japanese go work. That's why hard time, eh. Japanese go strike, the Filipino go hana hana. No fair. One union good. The purpose of the strike really was to make the salary larger, to up the salary. Only himself [Filiponos]. Only Filipino. Other nationality go hana hana, Filipino go strike. Japanese go strike, Filipino go hana hana. That's why we really couldn't win. There was no victory because of this division.

So that's what happens; the strikers from Makaweli or the strikers there in Hanapepe, they were rounded up by the police and taken off to jail because the plantation complained to the government and the government, then, because it's lined up with the plantations, picks up the strikers and puts pressure on them.

See, what happened in Hanapepe, there was this big banana patch right up alongside the road near the American Factors Building [now called Construction Materials Hawaii]--very big--and the police were up on top of a little bit of a mound, or some kind of a hill. You know, a mountain, that hill over there. The road that goes down from Hanapepe Heights. Over here they get mango tree. That place over there. Three Filipino, they get pistol. Visayan, the one. A policeman was in a mango tree and got shot. The policeman fall down. But the Filipino mostly make, eh. Some Filipino, he go run by the river--Hanapepe River--he go swim.

In the afternoon, the soldiers arrived, coming from Honolulu. They brought along big machine guns and the strikers were taken off to jail. All of them. Those who could run away they didn't take along with them. After the whole thing was over, we just went back to work.

After the strike was over, the company made a map. They give \$2 one day, and he give bonus. He work 300 days they give \$50, \$40; some, they get \$100. We began to work for \$2. Everything all cheap, eh, before. I come over here first time, two dollar half [\$2.50], 100 pound rice. One bag come up, come up, \$5. Ho, the fish, boy. Akule, oh, big one. Twenty go buy, half dollar [50 cents]. Cheap. But the hana hana, too much cheap. Only he make money, da kine hapai ko; they call that, carry that. Hapai-ko carry. And the cut-cane men.

EG: When the strike started where were you working?

DR: On the plantation. At Makaweli, the Hawaiian Sugar Company.

EG: You yourselves, you didn't go on strike?

DR: No, we didn't. We would have gone out on strike. We were in Camp 2, up there in a high sort of a place. And we would have gone out on strike in sympathy with the other Filipinos. The Filipinos who were there were around 500. In Makaweli alone there were around 3,000. Plenty. No more machine, eh. Mule men, hapai ko men, cut-cane men. Oh, plenty. They go kalai, cut grass. Some huki lepo, they call. Like that. Until 1941, I work Makaweli, Hawaiian Sugar Company. Then no agree, eh, that's Robinson and Baldwin, Makaweli manager. So he quit, the Hawaiian Sugar Company over there. And the sugar company take over. Some sugar company now. And then they change the name of Makaweli. Olokele now. Kaumakani. And Makaweli name, Robinson, he take; now Pakala [is called] Makaweli.

EG: Why is it that you didn't go out on strike?

DR: They were fighting; it was a war there in Hanapepe.

EG: Did you know at that time what the situation was, of the strikers? Why is it that your plantation [camp] had very little to do with the strike, then?

DR: Well, one of the reasons is because there was so very little in the way of communications. Some [followers of] Manlapit, they come to Makaweli make meeting by the government road; no can [go] inside the camp. Now, this union now [ILWU today], he go inside the camp. They no scared, eh. Because all nationality, eh, join. So more easy now. See, big family, get two, three automobile now. Everybody own house now. Oh, bigshot. Especially, trouble is pension cheap time, you know. 1957, small. I work, the company only 16 years. So if I go back Philippines, my lump-sum [payment] only \$4,000; over little bit. But now, ho, \$10,000, little more \$20,000, if go back Philippines.[today]. But somebody smart, you know. He take all his, da kine lump-sum [and go to the Philippines]. And then he come back [to Hawaii]. But no can live inside already, by plantation; he live by outside. Like that men, he show to you, eh. He come my house. But then he take his lump-sum, go back Philippines. No can go back Kekaha. That's why, he have no more....plantation pension for take every month. Only security [Social Security] he can. That's why, now, he work part-time, outside yard boy. Well, that's all I have.

EG: When were you born?

DR: I come Hawaii, no more contract. Before, 1911, no more contract paper to go back Philippines. Free to come, free house, free doctor. Tax, three year no pay, in personal tax. Now, they take da kine, for how much you can. Before, I come over here first time, after three year, January, \$2.50. Five dollar, before, our tax, one year. January \$2.50 they take, charge, the office, with my pay. February, \$2.50; so \$5.00. They give the personal tax, eh. Maybe I get some [papers] over there.

And then, I was born 1892. June 12, 1892. In Negros Oriental. My birth certificate went to Manila. So the copy was sent to the company, Hawaiian Sugar Company. But I don't forget my age. Even though I don't have the birth certificate, I have not forgotten my date of birth and my age.

EG: Before, when you were there in Negros, what was the situation of you parents? What was their way of making a living?

DR: When I was a small child my mother died. We were three children in the family; two boys and one girl. My father died while I was here in Hawaii. I got a letter also after the war, that my brother was killed during the war. I don't know exactly what happened to him; maybe he was killed by the Japanese.

EG: How about yourself; did you ever get married?

DR: Yes, I was married here, and I have children. I have five children. One accident over here. He ride the motorcycle, they call "putt-putt." Two boy, he go ride. Bumbai, he come over here by the bowling alley, he go out, he like to Eleele. Bang, one. [Killed in an accident.]

EG: Accident?

DR: Yeah, accident. I get four boy, one girl. My daughter, she married one haole, stay Mainland. My two boys, he stay Waipahu, Oahu. All married to Ilocano women. My daughter, he get five children; one girl, four boy. This one [pointing to a photograph], four girl, one boy. He stay Waipahu. Pension already, this. Fifty years. Pension already.

EG: Is your wife already dead?

DR: Yes, she died in 1953, April 22.

EG: You didn't bother getting married again?

DR: No, no more. I was too old already. Some old men they go back Philippines, he take one new wahine. Ah, waste time. Pau, enough play. Better live myself. Even my son, he ask me to go with them and go live with them, but ah, "You wait, I going think first." More better myself only. Sometime I go Oahu; Christmas, New Year.

EG: Was your wife a Visayan before?

DR: Yes. She was from the island of Siquijor. Siquijor (Sequijor) is a part of Negros [under the political jurisdiction]. Yeah, that's all my story. Forgive me dong, huh.

EG: When you came from the Philippines, here to Hawaii, how did that come about? Were there agents going around? Were you talked into it? What is it that made you come here, though; why didn't you just stay in Negros?

DR: If you stay only in your own place, then you never learn anything new. You're not exposed to other kinds of ideas. No can learn what the other nationality custom. I came here, and now I know the Japanese customs, and I know how to make friends. Even though I haven't gone to school at all, I learned a lot from experience, by knowing, for instance, the Hawaiian customs, Japanese custom, haole custom, anybody. I can respect anybody.

EG: How many were you in your own family, the family of your parents?

DR: There were a lot of Riveras back there in Negros. 1911, I come over here, now 1978; how many year I live over here?

EG: You never went back to the Philippines, after all those years?

DR: No. no. I've never gone back to the Philippines since 1911. I've been living here in Kauai. Go Honolulu, go Maui, just vacation. Go Hilo. If I had just stayed back there in the Philippines, I wouldn't know anything now. I no go [travelling] before [in the

Philippines]. I don't know now. Over here government they take care, the old people. America, they no throw the people, the old one. Lucky they get union, you know. Before, like me, like all the old people, only family. My son or my daughter to take care the old men. But now, all don't care; the son, daughter never mind, government take care. Before, I stay live plantation, plantation house. But the government, they make house for the old people. Up there [above the main road from where he is living] they get low-income house, \$65 one. Over here they get, somebody, he pay \$145, \$170, up to how much income. But the small income, small pay.

CT: How long you live in Camp 2? From what year to what year did you live in Camp 2?

DR: Count that one, over here only two year.

CT: So from 1911 till two years ago you live Camp 2?

DR: No, I mean Kaumakani. Camp 2, long time the Hawaiian Sugar Company quit, eh. That's why the people, Makaweli Camp 2, he broke up. Then the C. Brewer, he take us go one place only, Kaumakani. They get Camp 4, Camp 3, Camp 2, Camp 5, Camp 6, Camp 7, Camp 8. Ah, Camp 8, he get [still exists]. Because Robinson, he take care. Camp 6. [too]. That, Robinson take care now. But from Camp 5, Camp 4, Camp 2; all [were moved to] Kaumakani. Plantation take all.

CT: So when did you go to Kaumakani from Camp 2?

DR: Nineteen thirty-nine to 1940, he make the camp over there, Kaumakani. 1941. 1946, we move. They bring us all on the truck. Plantation truck.

CT: So that 1924 strike time, you were living Camp 2?

DR: Yeah, I stay Camp 2. 1924, until too long. 1941 until 1946. Big strike that, 1946.

CT: At that time, had ILWU, eh?

DR: Yeah, yeah.

CT: But the one before that, 1924...

DR: That one Manlapit.

CT: You told me on the phone that you folks were going to join the strike the next day.

DR: Supposed to, but I want to go work because my mind---I don't like to go join that. That's why I go work that day. That morning

time, I go work. About 9, 10 o'clock, somebody they come call me.
"Eh, big trouble down Hanapepe."

"What?"

"Fight, the striker and the government, policemen."

Us no can go down. Because supposed to--the Filipinos who joined that strike--only two, three men no like, they catch 'em.

CT: Was the Filipino supposed to join the strike?

DR: Oh yeah, because they like up, raise the money like. You know, even you, eh, you like money too, eh?

CT: Yeah.

DR: Well. What you going to do?

CT: But you never like go strike that time?

DR: Yeah. I like only (inaudible). (Laughs)

CT: Lucky you never go, then?

DR: Yeah, lucky.

CT: Bumbai maybe make now.

DR: Make or maybe---you know, the strike men they bring all Honolulu. And he send 'em back Philippines. Philippines government and Hawaii government, they make pay all the boat. Send back trouble maker. Yeah, the strike by the--they make camp over there by.... what you call that? Aala Park, way the other side?

CT: Kalihi?

DR: Kalihi, yeah. They make camp over there. Big tent. All the strikers over there, but the soldier he going watch 'em.

CT: Before, that day when had the shooting, the day before, did the whole Camp 2 decide that they were going strike?

DR: Yeah, they go down. They go down.

CT: How many people used to live in Camp 2, at that time?

DR: Plenty. Little more 500. All together. Puerto Rico, Japanese, Spanish, Filipino. Over 500, I think. Filipino, I think 200 over.

EG: Mostly Visayan?

DR: Visayan, Tagalog. Before that, not too much Ilocano. Visayan, Tagalog, not too much Ilocano. Only da kine, humbug Ilocano. Philippine Island criminal, he steal. Even you criminal or you steal something.

[EG: He's talking about the way it was with the agents who were going around and recruiting people to come here; what it was like.]

CT: How many Visayans were going to strike the next day, from Camp 2?

DR: Us, little more 200, I think over. All Filipino. But no agree, some, you know. Some no like.

CT: Why they no like?

DR: Maybe he like work, he like go back Philippines, he like complete the---somebody get contract for three year. Three year, go back Philippines Island free.

CT: But if you go strike, what?

DR: Somebody go strike--you know before, plantation, be careful you know. Somebody, they going suck you. Throw you out. Plenty guys from Hanapepe.

(Telephone rings)

DR: Excuse me.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

DR: Too old already. I get dizzy, eh. I fall down over there. But my friend, he stay by the door. Lucky I no close, eh, I no break 'em. He carry me up.

CT: You know that time, if you go strike, you no can go back Philippines?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

DR: Ah, me no more free.

CT: No, but the other people that didn't want to strike. They no like strike, but if they strike, they no can go back Philippines free?

DR: I don't know. Because that is striker men. He send back to Philippines, eh. No more pay. The one, striker men. Is free. But some like me, no more free to back to Philippines, you know the commissioner--first commissioner Bilmori. And Ilocano. He reach to Honolulu, then the manager he go take him go around the plantation

Oahu. Nice house. Portuguese house, haole house, he saw. That's not Filipino house. You see, smart, no? And then, he go back Philippines, he go report the government. America government and Philippines before, Governor Wood. He go back there, he take the picture. Oh, good Filipinos over there. Good living.

Bumbai, when Pablo Manlapit, he say send letter to (Philippine) Government. Report this and that, this and that. Bumbai he send the Visaya Commissioner, Varona, Francisco Varona, that's the one plenty plantation they charge to the government because they no take care the Filipinos before. House, all same buta house. Pig house. And they make the contract for go back Philippines. Some Filipino before one, no more free, eh. And accident one, if Varona no come, no more pay. Plenty Filipino cut over here, no more leg, cut the hand from the mill, catch the machine, eh. No more 5 cents. All the good condition, good pay, and they make the Varona Agreement. They call "Varona Agreement." I get the paper, I sign because I like go back Philippines. Until now, no go. I get the paper.

CT: We can look that bumbai, after?

DR: Okay.

CT: What about what after Varona; Ligot?

DR: Ah, Ligot, son of a gun, boy. He come the Filipino over here, he say, "You fella lucky, come over here. Get shirt, get the slipper. In Philippine Island no more." That all time somebody go report to the government. Bumbai, they send Jose Figueras.

CT: After Ligot?

DR: After Ligot. Ah, Jose Figueras over here. Son of a gun, "You fellas, Ligot, he sell you to the company."

CT: Figueras said that?

DR: Yeah. Bumbai, "Anything what you fellas like to report, tell me. I go fight to the company." But Figueras go Hilo, the strike over here. Jose Figueras, he come over here, the strike Hilo. Jose Figueras wild like hell, though. He said, "You fellas no like go hana hana, me no more work. Take you back to Philippine. Go hana hana." Everybody go take the hoe. No more kaukau, no more food. Ah, son of a gun.

CT: You know that time Manlapit came, and he tell the Visayan go strike? 1924 time. Did they tell you that if you no strike they going fight you or something like that?

DR: No. No more. And plantation is strict, don't want the strike. That's why, some hana hana men, the luna before German, the foreman. German, Portuguese, Japanese, the foreman. Oh, all strict, though.

Push 'em same the working men. "Go head!" Filipinos, they get angry already, they take the hoe, hit 'em [the foreman] over here, broke. Make the plantation throw away.

CT: 1924 strike time, nobody said, "If you no strike, I going hit you." They no tell like that?

DR: Yeah. That's why the---"No go strike, look out. You fella must come. Must come." Us no more go strike yet. Oh boy, scared.

CT: What they said? "Look out," what they going do?

DR: That's why, "Nighttime watch out." That one, he got trouble.

CT: Watch out for what? He tell, "Look out, I going punch you?"

DR: No, they no say they going hit you, or what. But what they talking, you can understand, eh, what happen bye and bye. You can understand. So, he no tell he hit you, he no tell kill you, or what. He no tell, but meaning of his talking, what he talking.

[EG: This is typical kind of cultural talk. He's saying that he didn't say directly in words, that you don't strike we're going to get even with you or something's going to happen to you. Consistently, this seems to be coming up. He understood that, though. That they could get at him. They don't have to actually verbalize it, but he knows what it means. That's what he's saying.]

CT: Anybody that you heard of, that got hurt?

DR: No. Trouble is me don't know what is that kind, the trouble, the strike. That's why, I forget, you know. Supposed to be, that one, can make money to sell, eh. Me, know nothing, I not interest that.

CT: I not making money to sell. What we heard from the other people we talked to, from Kapaa, from Hanapepe, from Pakala, they said...

DR: No, Pakala no strike.

CT: Yeah. But now they living Pakala. They said that time...

DR: From Kapaa, Kilauea, Lihue, Koloa, over here. All, Hanapepe, the strike camp. That's why, plenty people know that. But I don't know, the old people, they know that but some go away, died. Only myself this side, I think. They got one more, Kaumakani, called Dionisio Bigno. But too old, too weak already.

EG: According to what some people were saying, they reported that there were people who said if you don't go out on strike, you will be killed.

DR: No one ever said that. But when they spoke to you, you understood what they really meant to say.

- EG: Then the people said that they went along with the strike because they were afraid.
- DR: Oh yeah, well that part is true. You can understand. The meaning, eh, you can understand. They no tell he going kill you, or they going hit you. No, they no tell.
- CT: But who tell, "Look out?"
- DR: They know next day or next week. Because for money, you know, they like raise up the money. But trouble that one, only one leader.
- CT: Kauai had leader too, eh? No more?
- DR: No, just only da kine....just only....leader of the strike only. No more like the Kaumakani [today], they get union president or McBryde.
- CT: Yeah. Now get, but before no more?
- DR: No. No more, before.
- CT: But who was Kauai's strike leader? You remember?
- DR: All make already.
- CT: You remember the name?
- DR: Yeah. Lucio....they call "Grande," that man. Big man, eh. I forget the second name.
- EG: Basquez? Grande Basquez?
- DR: Basquez? Yeah, I think so. Yeah, like that.
- CT: Big man?
- DR: Big man, but make--died--already.
- CT: You think Grande used to tell the other guys, "Watch out?"
- DR: No, he no tell. Just only he go talk, "Come join," like that. He no talk like that. I don't know if he talk the other people, but I go listen by the meeting, he no talk like that.
- EG: What are these meetings you're talking about?
- DR: Well, they're meetings there at the camp. You know, the Kaumakani store, eh. Up there they get church, eh, that one big camp, that one before.
- CT: The Methodist church place?

DR: Yeah, Methodist, yeah. That place, Camp 4, they call. By that one, that government road.

CT: Grande was talking?

DR: That canefield over here, get big ground over there, playground. So over there and the side of the road.

CT: So Grande was talking?

DR: No, Manlapit only. He go listen only, Grande. If somebody, they no understand Tagalog, then Grande, he go da kine, what you call?

EG: Manlapit used Tagalog?

DR: Yes. Tagalog, English. Talk English pretty good. But no can help, only himself. That's why, the company, and the government, Hawaii, they going throw away. Because one time--I don't know how many year now--he come visit his family. He stay in Honolulu. His wife and the children. He stay Honolulu yet. They like visit but no can go down by inside the boat. He ride the boat, I think. Come Honolulu. No can go out. He get watchman. No can. Troublemaker, Hawaii no like.

EG: You yourself, did you ever actually hear Manlapit speak?

DR: It was a meeting, and so we heard him because we attended the meeting.

EG: What happened at the meeting?

DR: He was there to enthuse and to convince people.

EG: Were there any dues for joining this union?

DR: None. None.

EG: No cost?

DR: None. It's not like now, where you have dues. This union now get dues.

CT: That time no more?

DR: No more.

CT: What was the name of that union; that Manlapit union?

DR: Oh, I don't know what name that. Just only Manlapit. (Laughs)

CT: No more name, that time?

DR: I don't know. No more. Not like now. They get da kine, AFL and

the CIO. They get one Honolulu.

EG: How many of you would have attended the meeting of Manlapit?

DR: I never bothered to count them because of the numbers.

EG: More or less, how many?

DR: My estimation would be around 200. From Camp 2, there was no transportation. But us get horse. I work the stable, eh, before, Makaweli stable. I get horse because me luna before. I go take my horse from the stable over there. Two, three men. Four men go join the meeting.

EG: When Manlapit was speaking, was it exciting to hear him speak?

DR: Wow, it was really something. Hoo! He spoke Tagalog and English. Oh boy. Just like a machine gun. Good, boy. I proud, him, for go talk English and Filipino good.

EG: But weren't the majority of the people who were listening to him Visayan?

DR: They were mostly Visayans and Tagalog.

EG: Maybe then they couldn't understand what he was saying?

DR: I don't know for the others. When you're talking about raising wages, there's not much to understand.

EG: How about after the meeting? Was everybody pretty enthusiastic?

DR: Yeah. They were then they went home.

EG: But after the meeting, did they want to become members? Did they want to go out on strike?

DR: The sugar company, if they no agree what the Manlapit idea, going to strike. That's why they call, come strike. But they know the Ilocano, they say, "Okay, we come out tomorrow." But Manlapit, he send the truck for pick up the people go strike. No more, he [the Ilocanos] go hana hana. See. No more good condition.

CT: You mean that time the Ilocanos said, "I going strike too?"

DR: Yeah, they said over there, "Okay, we come out to go strike." But next day, he send the truck, nobody, even one man come out. That's why the striking men, he wild like hell, eh. He go catch the working men by the....you know, when you come over here, they get canefield this side, eh. They get Hawaiian cemetery over there, the side. They catch over there, they bring to the strike camp.

- CT: Why the Ilocano say he going to go strike if he no really mean that?
- DR: I don't know.
- CT: Why he no just say, "Oh, I no like strike."
- DR: You know, Ilocano and Tagalog no understand too much. Ilocano no understand too much.
- CT: You mean the language?
- DR: Yeah. Even the Jose Figueras, he come over here, the commissioner. They no understand. "What you fella need? Report to me, I go fight to the company." But not. Jose Figueras go Hilo, go Maui, he strike over here [Kauai]. Bumbai, Figueras come. Big trouble over here." Hilo strike. See, he no understand Tagalog.
- CT: The Ilocano?
- DR: Ilocano. Mostly Ilocano too much now.
- CT: But at that time, why the Ilocanos tell Manlapit, when Manlapit say that he going strike. If he no like strike, why he no tell, "Ah, I no like strike."
- DR: No, before, the Filipino he come Hawaii, they don't know, like me. No can read, no can write. You understand? He no go school too much before. Plenty. Because only sakada they call to come Hawaii, from the country. Plenty from the mountain. Not the town men or the city men. All outside, hana hana men. Because mountain Philippine Island, the mountain people all working men. They like, they make money from the mountain people. Like Luzon, eh, plenty people no see the ocean.
- [EG: What he's implying here is that the agents who were recruiting people in the Philippines were paid per head. And it didn't make any difference to them what kind of people they sent over here. So they went into the mountains or they got people who maybe had some criminal charges against them. But if they were getting paid per head, it meant more money for them. So the kind of people that they sent didn't make much difference.]
- CT: Working men, even if no can read and write, if Manlapit tell, "You folks come strike," they can tell, "No, we no like strike." But why they say they going strike?
- DR: No understand. Strike what? What kind is strike? Where is that? Tagalog answer, "You strike." You see? Ilocano no understand. "Huelga" is Spanish, that talk. Means "strike."
- CT: So you think the Ilocano no understand at all?

DR: Yeah.

EG: Do you think also that they were ashamed to refuse other Filipinos asking you to do something? Ah, maybe they were just ashamed and didn't say that they would refuse to strike.

DR: Yeah, that's also something. I think they were also ashamed.

I really suffered a lot during my life. I really went through some hard times. From before. From Philippine Island until here. Hoo, hard working man, though. Pick and shovel. "Cut grass. Carry the cane. Cut the cane." All day, all from up, sore like hell. I cry up, though, me, new man time. I like go back. I like go home. Bumbai, until now. Stay over here.

CT: When you married?

DR: Oh, 1933.

CT: So 1924 strike time, you single yet.

DR: Oh yeah. I stay by Camp 2. Single, yeah. I marry 1933. And this one [points to photograph], 1934 birth. The girl, 1936, May 25. The boy, he stay Kilauea. I get one boy Kilauea, married. He get four children. One girl, three boy. All going school now. And I get two son. This one and one youngest one, he stay Honolulu. That bugga only humbug. First time they go marry, he throw away. Now only---he come over here every year, he take any wahine, boy, him. Any girl, he bring over here. Son of a gun, you. Only humbug.

CT: Mr. Rivera, that time 1924, if the Ilocano say, "I going strike," but then Manlapit send the truck, and nobody...

DR: Nobody come out.

CT: Plantation send the truck, or Manlapit?

DR: Manlapit. Plantation, he no send the truck. Plantation no like strike.

CT: Whose truck that? Who own the truck?

DR: The businessmen. Because any businessmen, he like all same. Raise the money [wages of plantation workers] and raise the business, too. Like now, what? Suppose negotiation, the union and the company. The businessmen, he understand he can rich the money, he raise already the price, the business. Rice, everything. He raise already, the price. Because the businessmen, he know. That's why they go help Manlapit. But all same, no win.

CT: So you think the businessmen give the truck free?

DR: Yeah, free. Yeah, he give free.

CT: What businessman that was?

DR: Oh, you know the businessmen. Plenty.

CT: Hanapepe, Waimea?

DR: Yeah, Hanapepe, Waimea. Businessmen, quick understand, though, if can rich the money. They go help the working men.

CT: That time had strike, the Hanapepe camp, somebody come your house ask you for food or donation?

DR: Oh yeah, he go ask.

EG: Did you help them?

DR: Yes, I did.

EG: What did you give?

DR: Rice, or the sardine, or corned beef. But not too much. Because cheap, eh, our pay.

CT: They come everyday for donation?

DR: No, one week. One week, two, three guy come around. But about nighttime.

CT: What if they come daytime?

DR: Da kine, the company, if they catch, what? They no like, eh, the striker come inside.

EG: Among your companions there at the plantation, did they also help?

DR: Yes, they did. You know Filipino, we pity to the people too. Like now, the union. They negotiation company pay, they have to keep what the condition for us. They going strike, they go around get donation. Even down by the store. Ho, big donation get. Like us, pension men. The union, they go picnic to the pensioners, eh. Oh boy, the leader he go all along business, all the store. Any kind he get. He get beer, soda water, any kind. Coke. Then, by the picnic place, they make program over there. Sing, dance, they get da kine, eh....what you call....present, all that.

CT: Lucky number?

DR: Lucky number, yeah. The businessmen smart too, though.

CT: That time, 1924, you was 32 years old, eh? You born 1892?

- DR: Yeah, 1892. June 2. I come over here 19 years old. Young yet, boy, I come.
- CT: That time, 1924, when you look the other Filipino, you more old or same age as you, or more young, or what?
- DR: Well, those people over there make only friend. Young and old. Even now. Any nationality, I go make friend. I respect all men.
- EG: Your companions on the ship, coming from the Philippines, were they old or young, or what?
- DR: When we came over on the ship, we were all broken up when we came to Hawaii. Some were sent to the Big Island, others to Maui. Some were married people, some were single. Maybe I was the only one that was single. Maybe we were 500, on board that ship. Married, family, single.
- CT: But that time Filipino, everybody young, eh? No more old man, eh?
- DR: Yeah, yeah. They no go take the old men. About 30 year old. Over little bit, I think; 31, 32. Mostly young; 18, 19, 20. Plenty Filipino come over there. They show the picture, eh, the cane. Long cane. And he show the picture of some Filipino, the first one come over here. He buy the woolen pants, woolen coat. Ho, make tie, eh. Hoo, I like go Hawaii. (Laughs) Son of a gun, just shirt, though, before. One coat, one pants, and no more \$10. Woolen. But now, son of a gun.
- CT: 1945 time, ILWU strike.
- DR: Yeah, strike. Hoo, rain like hell, though. All the cane dry. But big strike.
- CT: That time, you went strike?
- DR: Oh yeah. Me union. Me, picket man.
- CT: How come 1946 time you like strike, and 1924 you no like?
- DR: Oh, because the all nationality already. Not like before, only Filipino. Japanese-Japanese, Filipino-Filipino union. No more all together one. 1946, the company, they call "Communist," the union. How can? No more evidence.
- CT: You think the union was communist?
- DR: No, not my think. The company. Jack Hall, they said communist. But no more nothing evidence. Now, Jack Hall get respect of Hawaii, though. Even he died now. All the working men, they give one day pay.

CT: Holiday now.

DR: Yeah. They make holiday. All. If no more the union, no more progress, Hawaii. Right? The Hanapepe before, son of a gun, what kind that. You go restaurant. They call "udon," the saimin. He put the red kind bakalaw, salt fish. They put that one. What kind before? Now what? Hanapepe and Lihue, all any place now, progress, though. Some family, five, six baby; got to get two car, three car. They buy house. All bigshot, the hana hana men now. Lucky, though. Now what, candidate governor now. What you think? Who win? Frank Fasi and the Japanese?

EG: Ariyoshi?

CT: Japanese win, eh, this one?

DR: I think so. Because all the union, they like that Governor. And the Ariyoshi, they help Filipino too, get good job. Frank Fasi no more. Only they go help the old people Oahu. Free bus. I saw the picture. Only that.

END OF INTERVIEW

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Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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