BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: HAROLD SHIN, heavy-equipment machinist, Waialua Sugar Company

Harold Y.H. Shin was born on April 15, 1921 in Lihue, Kauai. His father, a Korean immigrant, left his job with the Salvation Army to work for the sugar plantation. When Harold was a boy, he and his family moved to Waialua where his mother supplemented their income by raising pigs and doing laundry.

After graduating from Waialua Intermediate and High School, Harold did field work for the plantation and then was transferred to the machine shop. In 1945, he quit the plantation, thereby losing his protective draft status, and was drafted into the Army. For 18 months, he served in Hawaii, the Philippines and Okinawa. He then re-joined Waialua Sugar Company and has worked as machinist ever since.

Harold married a secretary for the ILWU in 1954. He has been active in the union and the anti-Vietnam War movement. At present, the Shins live in Wahiawa.
Tape No. 1-20-1-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harold Shin (HS)

Wahiawa Library, Wahiawa, Hawaii

June 14, 1976

BY: Perry Nakayama (PN)

PN: An interview with Harold Shin on June 14, 1976 at Wahiawa Library. Did your father ever tell you how he came to Hawaii and why he worked for the Salvation Army instead of a plantation?

HS: Well, chee, I never really did get an answer from him, as far as the particular question is concerned, but all I know is he served in the Salvation Army, and one of the handicaps he had was, he didn't know the English language—couldn't speak the English language fluently. So he couldn't get promotion, actually, in the process. The highest he reach in the Salvation Army was, uh...his title then was sergeant-major, I believe, that was his title.

Then, after that, he got married to my mommy, here. And when he start raising his own family, he found that the Salvation Army pay couldn't make ends meet. So he left the Salvation Army to become a sugar plantation employee.

PN: When did they get married?

HS: Oh, this was in the...oh, shucks...it was in...before 1920, actually. I was born in 1921. So it wasn't long after they got married I was born.

PN: And how many children in the family?

HS: Well, we got two brothers. Now, I've got one brother and two sisters, actually, in the family so, that made four children in the family, yeah. I'm the oldest in the family.

PN: How did he come to, get a job at Waialua, like how did he know he could get a job at Waialua?

HS: Well, I was born on a sugar plantation on Kauai. Then while I was still a young child, my parents moved over to this island, and settled at Waialua Sugar Plantation. Then I attend the elementary school, and intermediate, and high school at Waialua. And after I graduated, well, I felt that maybe working for the sugar company would be a good deal. So at's the reason why I started my employment with the sugar company, after I graduated from high school.
PN: Well, what camp did you folks live in?

HS: Well, there was this Helemano Camp up in the hills. Then we moved down to the lower part of the hills, but it still considered hill country. There was Opaeula Camp. Then later on, we moved down to the main plantation camp at Waialua.

PN: Maybe you could tell me more about your mother. You said she took in laundry to bring in more income?

HS: Well, yeah. When my mommy worked for the plantation for a short while to help supplement the family's income, cause my dad was the only one really working... then. She also took in sugar workers' laundry.

Then, we raised pigs on the side, and when they get big enough, we slaughtered, and sold it to the plantation workers in the camp. Whenever we had a pig slaughtered; our family practice was to give the plantation section boss the hind leg, ham, of the pig. The main intent of our parents was to be on the good side of the boss and to help my dad retain his water distribution job. And we raise our own chickens in our own back yard. We had our own family garden. We did everything. Because my mommy was the type of woman that knew what hard work was, and she knew how to save money, too, eh?

And in fact, our life in this islands, actually, was more or less guided by her sad experience she had in Korea, when on two occasions she almost starve to death. That sort of left a mark, a scar in her. And when she came to Hawaii, she never did forget that experience. It was all work and trying to save her money, and foremost in her mind was she didn't want her own children to go through that unfortunate experience that she went through in Korea.

PN: Do you know what exactly happened to your mother and how that came about?

HS: She came from a poor family, actually. See, I remember talking to her on one occasion. She was getting tired eating this millet and rice as combination deal, you see. She just happen to have a girlfriend that was little more--well, she was a little more fortunate than she was, come from a more prosperous family. On occasion she used to trade her simple meal of rice—that millet grain add in, because that little girl that came from the richer family—prosperous family never did that things, you see, so she enjoyed that, eh.

And she mention another experience like on one occasion, too, she used to pass the restaurant in Korea and she used to have the smell of barbecue meat, you know. Because she come from such a poor family, they don't get occasion to eat meat, you know? So she got sick from smelling that, barbecue meat smell, eh. And she get pretty well sick, and then her parents asked her, what was wrong. Then she told that she would like to have some barbecue meat, eh. So they got her some, and that got her well again. That was one experience she mentioned to me that I still remembered, yeah. Getting sick from passing the
restaurant and smelling that cooking meat there, which she never had
the opportunity to have at home.

PN: And you said that somebody arranged the marriage between your father
and mother. Who was it?

HS: It was a conver, actually. She happened to know my dad here, you see.
And she also happened to know my mommy. So she personally felt that
they would make a good match, so she took the initiative of writing
to my mommy's family back in Korea and pointing it out to them that
there was a young man here in Hawaii interested in getting married.
So that was the start and that started the ball rolling, and in the
end, they got together, and they got married, eh.

PN: Did your family keep in contact with lot of relatives back in Korea?

HS: Well, that's one of the unfortunate things, actually. That didn't
happen in our family. My dad---well, he was just like the last of
the Mohicans---the last of the Shin and his family line. And until
today we couldn't find any trace of any of his relatives. Living
relatives, anyway. And as far as my mommy---well, I think she's got a
brother and couple sisters back in Korea, but we never did really
established any real contact with them. Someday, it gotta be done, eh.
Maybe I should check into that.

PN: Did you help your mother with the laundry work, and things like that?

HS: Yeah, when I was young I did everything. I helped my mommy with the
laundry work. That was weekend duty. I didn't enjoy it, you know, how
boys feel about...

(PN laughs)

HS: ...having to do laundry work, but I did it. Lot of time against my own
will. I objected like hell, but still then....You know I always think---
she did it to supplement her family income, so I went along, help her
out.

We had pigs, like I mentioned. She raise pigs. She even used to---in
the end, she even mate pigs together, you know what I mean. Then, that
way, you know, the per pig cost would be much cheaper than buying the
young piglets from someplace else, huh. And one of my chores when I
was young was to feed the pigs every morning. Before I go to school and
in the afternoon, I used to go around the camps to pick up the garbages
from the workers' home, and then prepare the meal for the pigs in the
afternoon.

Then I had one stage, too, my mommy used to take care the plantation
camp bath house and so it was part of my job to scrub the cement floor
down, and also, to keep an eye on the heater while it's boiling the
water, because we had a sort of a defective heater. They needed someone
to watch over it all the time. Cause the fire on many occasions, just
wouldn't burn steadily, so that there was this adjusting of the fuel valve to keep the fire going on steady, eh.

PN: This is for washing clothes?

HS: No, this is for the plantation camp bath house. Where the employees here take their bath after their hard day's work out in the field.

PN: She used to run that?

HS: Yes, she used to take care of that. Was actually a part-time job, actually, from the plantation.

PN: Do you remember how much they charge for baths?

HS: No, those days was free. Those bath house--plantation bath houses was operated by the plantation and it was like a service to the employees, eh, so they can get themself clean and get in at least a bath a day.

PN: Did she get paid for it?

HS: Yeah, she got paid. Small sum, actually. Which was a part time job. I wouldn't know exactly how much that would amount to, but you can just imagine. It would be a small sum, because those were the dollar-a-day days, eh. So, on a part-time basis, it would be far less than the dollar-a-day, eh.

PN: Do you remember how much she charged for the laundry that she did for other workers?

HS: Yeah, it was on a monthly basis. I think it was, chee, if I'm not mistaken, it couldn't have been more than $3 a month, I think.

PN: Where did she do the laundry?

HS: Well....during those days, the plantation, they'd set up the facilities for their employees, so that we can wash our clothes, and we had access to free water, too. And the plantation used to provide the firewood, too, free of charge, eh. So it's just a matter of just putting our muscles to work, yeah. Yeah. We had free firewood, and we had free water, hm. It's just a matter of soliciting the clothes from the employees and just wash them, eh.

PN: Sounds like (chuckles) you were doing a lot of work. Did you have time to play with other children, and....

HS: Well, being the eldest in the family I was kept pretty busy. Well, as a result of my mommy's sad experience in Korea, she kept us busy all (Laughs) our growing period. Well I had my time to play and associate with the camp, young men and women. But I'd say I was one of the busiest one in the entire plantation camp, because I've got all these chores that I had to perform. But then it still left me some time to go out
and play with the other young boys and girls in the camp.

PN: Where did you live in? Among what nationality?

HS: Oh, that was predominantly a Filipino camp. And those days the outlying camps, a great majority of them were Filipino employees, because they were the mainstay of the employees working out in the fields, doing the field work, you see. So in that particular camp, the great majority of them were Filipino employees. Single Filipino employees that came over by themselves, eh. There was a few married one, but they left their families back in the P.I. (Philippine Islands). Great majority of them came over by themselves. There were two, three Japanese family in the camp, too. And there was one other Korean family, so outside of that, all the people who was living in that camp—Japanese, Korean, and Filipino family, but the great majority were Filipino field workers.

PN: So your mother did the laundry for mainly Filipino workers?

HS: Yeah, the single men. Both at Helemano and Opaueula.

PN: What did your brothers and sisters do? Did they help you in your chores or s...

HS: Well, my sister used to help me wash the clothes and she was assigned the ironing. That part of the operation. She used to do all the ironing. I got to learn to do a little ironing, but it was sort of limited. And my mommy needed me on the washing end instead of the ironing end. The ironing end was simpler, so my sister carried much of the burden as far as ironing is concerned.

PN: Did you go to a Korean language school, or....

HS: Just for part of the year, cause then we had to walk down all the way to Waialua. Which was about a distance of about four or five miles, eh. They had a Korean language school established at the Korean camp at Waialua. But except for short period that I attended, I quit after that.

PN: You didn't like it?

HS: Well.... I don't know if I liked it or not, but I think it was the distance more than anything else. Long walk we had to take to and from the school, eh.

PN: Did your parents practice Korean customs of any sort, or....

HS: No, well, as a Korean family, because we lived in the outlying camps, our association with other Korean families was very limited. Except for our good friends, family friend, which was the Kim family, we never did associate with any other Korean families, actually. Because of the fact that we were living in the outlying camps. So, all my life, if
anything at all, my real friends were people of other nationality, except the Koreans.

PN: You know, when you were young, what kind of games or sports events or things did you play?

HS: Well, those days we had very limited equipment to begin with, eh, I remember playing on a ball team. We never used to have uniform, which even the young kids today have where they're dressed up like professional ballplayers. Our days, if we had a camp and a shirt with a team name on--and that was the uniform we wore, you see. Mhm. I was interested in football, maybe cause I was little bigger than the rest of the boys. But the small boys didn't want to play (Chuckles) football, and they much preferred playing baseball which is a not a body contact sport. So I did play quite a bit of baseball with the other kids in the camps. And shucks, we used to skip rope with the girls, too, and....

(PN laughs)

HS: And hopscotch. Yeah, those days, we did everything, actually.

PN: You guys used to go swimming in the ditch like that?

HS: Oh, yeah, we used to go up swimming up to the ditch, too. In the irrigation ditches, whatever chance we got, eh. So we used to run up and we used to go down into the valley--Anahulu Valley--and when the mango season is on, well, we used to pick up quite a bit of mangos there from the valley.

We used to go fishing then. Those days, at least, the water used to run down the stream, so that there was opu to be caught, eh. We used to wait every year for that big flood to come down, because when the big flood used to come down, it used to bring down, the opus that was growing up in the mountains, eh. And we caught quite a bit in the lower end of the river. So that was one of the big deals, you know.

(PN laughs)

HS: Waiting for the winter month for the flood water to come down to bring down all the fishes that was living up in the mountains and bring it down to the lower area. That's the way we used to go and catch it.

PN: How you guys ate the opu like that?

HS: Well, opu, in my opinion, is one of the best freshwater eating fish. I really enjoyed eating opu, especially the grey type, not the black type. But there's this type of opu which is sort of greyish in color. And it was a matter of frying it in a frying pan. Just plain frying in the frying pan with salt. And it really tasted good. I really miss the opu, in fact. Cause you just can't find it. Very scarce, especially on this island.

PN: How did you go to school? You said you went to Waialua Elementary. Did
they bring a bus or did you walk?

HS: Yeah, well, when I used to go through the elementary school and early part, we used to walk to school from the plantation camp where I used to live. Then later on the company did provide transportation, so we took advantage of the transportation. That was, of course, when I was in the intermediate grades when the plantation first offered school transportation for the children in the outlying camps.

PN: So during your elementary school days, you walked?

HS: Yeah, it was a matter of walking, yeah.

PN: Four or five miles?

HS: To school. Back and forth, yeah.

PN: Could you describe what was a typical day at elementary school, if you remember?

HS: Well, those days, I think it's a world of difference because the teachers, if anything at all, was a hell of a lot more strict. Those were the days when we used to take spelling test. And when you misspell a word, well, the teacher even used to request that you take your hand out and she used to spank your hand with a ruler, you know.

(Laughter)

HS: And shucks, they were so strict in school then. The principal stood out like a god, you know. When he walked by, everybody was practically shaking in the pants, eh.

(PN laughs)

HS: That also applied to the janitor, you know. In those days we used to have so much respect, not only for the principal, the teacher, but also for the janitor.

(PN laughs)

PN: Did you bring home-lunch or did you buy a school lunch?

HS: As far as school lunches is concerned, let me think for a moment. Yeah. During my early grades, in elementary school, I used to bring home-lunch. Then, later on, my parents used to give us lunch money for school lunches. And I would like to mention that those school lunch program was really good those days. And I still remember those school lunch days for the fact that while I was in the sixth grade, the teacher used to give the students a test every week, you see. And the student that had the highest grade in those test had the privilege of going to the cafeteria to collect school lunches the following week. And just happen that I was one of the better math students in our class, so, on
various occasion, I was sent to this school cafeteria to collect the school lunch money as they came to buy their lunches.

And I remember those days, they used to give you ample serving, and the beautiful part of it was that they used to give you a fresh fruit everyday. They used to alternate between an apple and orange and those days, a lot of those fruit was really good. Not only were they big, but they was really good tasting. Yeah. I'd say an apple like that today would cost you quarter or more in itself, you know. Because those were really big fruits I'm talking about. And that was on top of this ample serving they gave you of stew and all the other dishes they used to prepare. And used to cost a student only a nickel then, you know. That was a really good deal. I still haven't forgotten those days, yet.

PN: What else do you remember about school?

HS: Oh, all I know the teachers were very strict. You had to do your homework. And I think in a sort of way, too, some people would call it respect. Like I say, we had high respect for the teachers and the principal and even the janitor. But to a certain degree, it was fear. To a certain degree, it was fear.

(PN laughs)

HS: It's the reason why we had so much high respect for the teacher and the principal, and for that matter, even the janitor. But I think the situation is all changed. And especially like, in my case, coming from a plantation family and living in the outlying camps, I tend to be more, maybe more humble than some of the students living in the main camp, eh. We were more country jack in other words, eh.

(PN laughs)

HS: So maybe that sort of explain my behavior, you see, towards the feeling towards my teacher, the principal, and the janitor.

PN: What nationality were your classmates?

HS: Oh, we were all mixed in. There was Portuguese's boys and girls. Filipino boys and girls. Oh, there were quite a few Japanese boys and girls, too. A few Chinese, too. A few—they were in the minority, actually, when I used to go to school. So it was a mixed group, if anything at all.

PN: What about the teachers?

HS: Oh, the teachers....well, I'd say, by and large, they were huge creatures.

(Laughter)

HS: They were Hawaiian more or less. Part Hawaiian, I mean, in ancestry,
but there wasn't the same sweet type of young looking teachers we got now days in school.

(Laughter)

HS: They were more motherly appearance. They were a hell of a lot older, I would say the average age, yeah. They were more matured, if anything at all. But I know they were more strict then. They wouldn't stand for any monkey business, eh. And they wanted to see that you did your homework and that you got your studies done.

PN: Was there...a big difference between elementary school and intermediate school?

HS: Well, when I went to the elementary school—that was the earlier days, eh. That was in the '30's, yeah. Then from then on, there was more or less a gradual slacking from the good old days, I think. If anything, it would always sort of slowly be progressing to modern times, and it was probably, I would say, the first step towards the so-called modern times that we are enjoying today. So that the intermediate grade and my high school's school was I'd say, easier than during my long elementary school days then. Cause, when I graduated high school, that was back in 1939, you see. When I started elementary school, that was in the '30's yeah. So like I say that it was just like the first step—'39. Those days were more or less just like the first step towards modern days we having today. So everything's tended to be a little more lax, if anything at all.

PN: Did most of your classmates in elementary school graduate with you in high school?

HS: Well, I think that during those days, '36 when I started in the ninth grade, yeah, I'd say the large majority in the '30's did go on to continue schooling until high school. There were a few that dropped out due to hardship reason. They had to go out and find employment. Like, for example, to help out the families, eh. The large majority, I think, during my days, had the opportunity to go continue on to high school.

PN: What did students do, like after school like? Did they run around or what?

HS: Well, those days was sort of old fashioned days. Like in my case, since I lived up in the so-called hills in the outlying camps, our activities were sort of restricted, eh. Well, to begin with, I had my regular chores to perform then. I had a garden to take care of every afternoon. I had my animals to take care of. So that activities especially on the outlying camp were sort of limited. The plantation did install a small playground which consisted of a basketball court, and gave us the equipment to have volleyball game. But the fact that it was a small plantation camp and sort of outlying, sort of up in the hills, the recreation activities was very limited, I would say. We didn't have the same type of program activities that was carried on down at the main plantation camps.
PN: Did your parents, you know, emphasize education a lot?

HS: Ah, that was limited. Actually, the amount that we could learn from our parents was very limited, because they weren't able to speak the English language fluently. So whatever they could teach us was sort of limited as far as English language is concerned.

PN: Did they encourage you to go to school?

HS: Yeah. Especially my mommy. She wanted me to attend University of Hawaii, but at that time I was a student that was really weak in English. In my other subjects, I had more than adequate passing grade, but because I was afraid of the English language, so that's the reason why that kept me from continuing my education. When I look back today I don't think it's a very valid reason at all. I thought at that time that University was an institution of higher learning and the main subject was English, English, English, and...

(PN laughs)

HS: ...I found out later on that wasn't necessarily the case, you see. So in that sense I regret that I didn't take my mommy's advice and continue my schooling, but my parents did want me to continue my education.

PN: I see. During the time you were going to school--the early '30's, that was the time of the Depression. Did you remember anything unusual or....

HS: Well, in the '30's, too, I was sort of a young individual yet, and, uh.... I cannot say that we went through any death and hardship or anything like that because my dad had a steady job working for the plantation, eh. And my mommy was busy doing this and doing that. And we were busy so that if anything at all, I'd say I just glossed over that period, you know, without anything significant happening to myself or to my family. Yeah, I truthfully have to say that at that age, eh, I don't remember anything significant about the Depression days and all this and that, because, all the families that was living in the sugar plantation camp all had jobs to begin with. There was nobody unemployed in our sugar camp, eh. So the fact that all the families had job to begin with, well, it made it easier for everybody concerned.

PN: Were you in high school when this apprenticeship school started? I read something about the plantation tried to encourage students to take up courses that trained you to work on the plantation?

HS: In that regards, I remember that when I first started working for the plantation, they had this classes in the evenings, yeah. They provided an instructor for those courses, but they didn't carry those courses out for long. But I remembered participating in some of the classes which wasn't for a very long period, eh.

PN: What did they teach you?
HS: Ahh, they teach mathematics, and mechanical drawing, eh.

PN: To help you in you work on the plantation?

HS: Yeah. To help us work on the plantation. But that experience has been rather limited, if anything at all. I would say it didn't last more than two years at the Waialua Sugar Plantation, as far as I participated in the course. I don't know how long they held the courses before I enrolled but I can remember that I don't think I participated in those classes for more than two years. After that, they dropped those courses completely.

PN: Not enough attendance, or....

HS: Well, I don't know actually what was the reason. But I was enrolled in one of the courses, and it was for just a couple of years, actually.

PN: You said you worked on the plantation during the summer months? This was during high school?

HS: Yeah. Well, when I was first got hired by the plantation when I was 14 years of age. During those days an individual had to be 16 years of age before they were hired by the plantation. But we had to falsify our age a bit.

(PN laughs)

HS: We knew the plantation knew they were falsifying an age, but they gave us job even at age 14. So it was an every summer deal. While we were going to school, they used to give us job, working out in the field cutting grass. That particular operation is not available any more, because today they spray herbicide to kill the weeds out in the field. But those--were the pre-herbicide days, and they didn't use any weed herbicide those days, so all the weeds out in the field had to cut out by hand, you see. So that was a big amount of labor involved in that particular operation, and they utilize all the young boys and girls to handle that particular operation.

PN: Do you remember how much you got paid?

HS: Ah, those days the standard for young boys and girls were a dollar. So that the fastest worker in the gang used to earn a little over a dollar. And the slow ones used to earn less than a dollar. In fact, some of them, we used to earn about 60¢, 70¢ for the whole day work of weeding.

HS: That was piece meal incentive work. The plantation those days, because there was no union, what they used to do is set a price in the morning, and see how much you'll work; the boys earn during that noonday lunch period which was half day, actually. And if the boys in the gang earned up to 75¢ for the first four hours of work, the first thing they did was to cut down the price in that we were working in the same general vicinity. The weeds might be plentiful as ever, but they used to cut
down the price so that in the end no matter how much effort we put in, the leading boy in the gang used to earn little over a dollar, see. So then, I wouldn't call that piece contract work at all, eh. I think the workers should've gotten wised up to what the plantation was doing, but those days, we were taught to work, work, work, eh, so we didn't question those things, eh.

(PN laughs)

HS: Even though they cut down the price in the afternoon and we working in the same general vicinity, we just took it. We had no choice, actually.

PN: The money you made, was it all yours or did you turn some over to your parents?

HS: Well, those days, I don't know how the other families used to handle it, but in our family, my mommy used to be the treasurer, and so whatever we earn, all went to her, and she gave us a little for, you know, movie money and little for spending money and for school lunch money. Outside of that, you see, all the finances went to her. It's not the same set up that we have in a lot of the families today.

PN: What else did you spend your allowance on?

HS: Well, to begin with, we hardly had any of our own money, to begin with. It wasn't a regular allowance deal. I remember especially when we were real young, you know, even drinking a bottle of sodawater pop, that was a real treat. In fact, we used to wait for New Year's to roll around, eh. And even on my own birthday, you know, it wasn't no special occasion, and we were lucky, even then, to get a bottle of sodawater pop then.

(PN laughs)

PN: What did the soda pop cost then?

HS: Ah, it was, uh, nickel a bottle then. I remember, at least, my mommy used to give us 10¢. That was the price for, you know, a movie admission, eh. We regularly went to the show at least once a month. And if she felt generous enough, well, we used to squeeze in twice a month, but that was sort of rare, but we at least had the consideration of going to the show at least once a month.

PN: Did you date when you were in high school, or attend dances?

HS: Uh, no. (Chuckles) I never gone through that stage actually. In fact when I graduated from high school, I was such a shy individual. I used to blush, you know, standing beside a girl.

(PN laughs)

HS: And I think, by and large, the average student were like that during
those days, you know. They not like the present students of today. You know, in the stage of, you know, permissiveness and all this, and that. Our days was little bit more strict, yeah, so we didn't grow up as fast, and we didn't mature as fast as the young boys and girls today. But in that respect I got no regrets because life is a long period of time, yeah. In fact, I feel sorry for lot of the younger generation that grew up too fast because they tend to burn themselves off faster. Some of them grow up so fast that before they hit 20 years, they all burnt out already, so life has no meaningful significance to them, eh. So in my case, I grew up late, but I got no regret. I found out that--today I'm 55 years of age--that life, like I say, it's a long period of time, if anything at all, you know. I don't think a man and that applies to a girl, too, should be too anxious to grow up too fast, because they got all the rest of their lives to grow up.

PN: Did you travel to town often? Wahiawa or Honolulu?

HS: No. Those days, my family didn't own a car. So on a few occasions, I had the opportunity to ride a car. I used to really enjoy riding those cars, because those rides used to come so far in between, eh. In fact, even till today, I haven't gotten over riding anything. I enjoy riding. And maybe I enjoy riding so much even today is because I missed so much of it when I was young, and was growing up.

PN: Whose car did you ride in when you did ride?

HS: Ah, that was mostly Filipino employees. The ones that used to work out in the field on the hapai ko job. They used to pack the cars and cut cane in the field, and those were incentive operation. So by their hard work and sweat, they had chance to earn some extra money, you see. And they live very simply, too, and saved their money, and some went ahead and even go as far as own cars, eh. But they were very few employees, especially when they were young they'd own cars, yeah. And on rare occasion I used to get a ride from them.

PN: What other jobs did you hold, you know, after you graduated? You know, after a while, I guess, you worked during the summer on this cleaning job...

HS: Mmm. Out in the field here. Well, when I started working for the plantation, I was assign...

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

HS: Well, after working a year in that concrete products, the plantation send me to work in the machine shop. And after that, I got tired working in the machine shop. I actually quit the plantation for a couple of years. In the process of quitting the plantation, I got drafted, and served 18 months in the Army. Then after a period of six months resting, doing nothing, I figured that I should go back to work, so I went back to the plantation to seek employment with them again. And I
was fortunate enough to be picked up by the plantation again. And that mean that I had to start all over again, so I was assigned out in the field doing stone bouldering work, carrying flumes and doing field work in general. Then I had my break. They send me back to the machine shop due to the fact that I had previous experience. After I work there for couple of years again, I decided I wanted to go into the mechanical field, repairing engines, and all this and that, so I got transferred to the tractor shop. Then after working in the tractor shop, I went over to the heavy equipment shop which handle the harvesting equipments. There's a little story to that reason why I got transferred to the heavy equipment shop. There was a mechanic, a union member of mine. He was working in the heavy equipment shop and he was unhappy there. A fact that he had to do night work. He came to me with his problem and predicament and, being a union official, I felt sorry for him, because I can see that not only was the job he was on was affecting him, physically, but also mentally. So out of consideration for him, I switched jobs and let him come into the tractor shop where I was working so that he can be, you know, working only on day shift. I went over to take his job, so that I had to work the shifts and all this and that. But later on, I got tired of working the shifts, and went back to the machine shop again, and that's where I'm still presently working.

PN: Could we go back little bit, and could you explain what did you do in the concrete products shop?

HS: Ah, the concrete products shop, at's where we—lay out all the cement flumes, and we set it up, and then we got the mixer there which mixes up the cement. Then we got to pour it into the forms. Then after the concrete flumes are hardened in the form, we disassemble the form to take out the concrete flumes, and we'd transport it out in the yard. Then from the yard, it's transported by trailer out into the field, to be laid out to help out with the irrigation of the fields.

PN: How much did that job pay?

HS: Ah, that was cheap, because this was way back in '39, eh. We was on incentive then, and, oh, shucks, even in the good months, we was earning less than $100 even those days. Even while working on incentive.

PN: And from there, you went to where?

HS: Oh, yeah, well I got assign back from the concrete products. Then I was assign to the machine shop. Those days there were no union then, so the plantation just pick the individual and assign them to the different company operations.

PN: They just sent you to the machine shop?

HS: Yeah, they just assign me to the machine shop, because knowing that I had a high school education behind me, and this was a matter of working with machines, and working with miters and calibers and all this and
that, so they figured that potentially, I probably make a good machinist. And I think if anything at all, they found out that maybe I'm deserving of working in the machine shop, because that work down at the plant, at the concrete products was really hard labor. And maybe they figured that I pass the test, as far as doing hard jobs. They decided to give me a break.

PN: What did you do at the machine shop?

HS: Well, in the machine shop, we did everything which is normally done in a machine shop and in our case, we did all the repairing for the machines for the factory, and for the machines that the plantation used in its operation out in the field. So that included, oh, threading pipes and bolts, and, making shafts. Fitting bearings and, oh, everything imaginable. In fact, those days they used to still have the locomotor running then. So we used to work on the steam locomotors, too.

PN: Did they send you to school to learn about how to fix these things?

HS: No, was just matter of working on the job, and like I mention earlier in the tape, for the short period of couple of years, which they send me to pick up mechanical drawing and all this and that. I had no other opportunities to actually learn the job as far as book work is concerned. It was a matter of job experience is how I picked up.

PN: Was this the job that you quit the plantation from?

HS: Yeah, while in the machine shop, well, I got tired working for the company at that particular period. So, I decided to try my lot in the outside world, so I quit the plantation. And as a result of quitting the plantation, I lost my protecting draft status, because those days, any employee working for sugar plantation was considered and classified as an essential employee. So they was exempted from serving in the Army, you see. But when I quit the plantation, I immediately got a draft notice to report for induction into the service, then. (Interviewee's added comment: The plantation industrial relations director at that time was a member of the draft board.) So that's how I got drafted into the Army. And then after serving my term, and after resting about six months, I went back to the plantation to ask for a job again. And the fact that I had a good work record before I quit; they was considerate enough to give me a second opportunity.

PN: Were they sorry to see you leave when you quit the plantation? Did they try to stop you?

HS: Yeah, well, they didn't want to see me quit the plantation, but I had strong personal reason for wanting to quit. So they couldn't stop me, so they reluctantly, if anything, let me go.

PN: What was your reason for leaving, I mean, did you just want to work somewhere else?
HS: Yeah. I wanted to try working on some other job, and there was something else involved.

PN: Could you tell me a little about what you did? You know, during the War, after you got drafted during the War?

HS: Yeah, well, when I got drafted into the service, inducted into the service, four days later, Japan surrendered. So by and large, I served in the peace term army. During those days thousand of servicemen were being discharged, on a point system, based on the number of months they spent on the actual warfront. So here we had a situation where, on one hand, thousands of servicemen were being discharged from the service, and here we got inducted as new draftees going into the service. There was lot of turmoil and commotion during the particular period, you know. And in fact, I'm one of the few individuals that had the unique experience of having to take basic training twice during a short Army career. And during those 18 months, actually, I was assign only for two months to a permanent company before I got discharged. So I've got no war record. Nothing enviable about my service record to talk about.

PN: How come you had to go through two trainings?

HS: Well I had to go through two basic training, the first basic training I took at Camp Roberts. That was the normal 13 weeks of basic training. But then after that, they didn't know where to place us, you see, because there was so many guys being discharged. And also the fact that the War has ended already, they probably couldn't find room for us exactly, at that particular moment. So they ship us over to Fort Ord, and while we were waiting there, they figured that instead of letting us sit on our fanny and doing nothing, they started to let us go through our basic again. So went through our basic training again, pending you know, for the outcome as to where we were going to be shipped or where we was going to be assigned.

PN: Where did you go after Fort Ord?

HS: After Fort Ord, we came back to Fort Kam here. That was a repo-depot then. At Fort Kam we missed an opportunity to be shipped out while being station at Ford Kam, because that particular weekend, there was a carnival scheduled at our high school. And I had a buddy of mine that came from the Waialua community, we decided to take in the carnival at the high school. Well, that weekend, I'd say about 90% of the boys waiting to be shipped out at Ford Kam decided to go out on a choo-choo pass, on an illegal pass.

(PN chuckles)

HS: And we all went out.
And when we arrived back Monday morning, the company commander, gathered us all together and informed us that we were supposed to have shipped out that weekend. But the boys simply weren't around. Because so many men was involved, you know, he couldn't penalize each and every one of us, but instead what he did was gave us a warning that next time he wanted us to stick around the company. Just happened that so many went out on a choo-choo, illegal pass, that when we came back, he couldn't, you know, punish all of us because there were too many men involved in that deal.

PN: What happened after that?

HS: Well, after that, well, they send me over to 13 Replacement Depot here at Wahiawa. And I believe I waited there for about six months to be shipped out. But while waiting, we had nothing to do actually. So my daily job, actually, was to go down to the river bank and clean the fish that the boys caught and to cook the fish for the boys. I did that on a daily basis.

And an interesting experience happened to me while I was here at Wahiawa was that one morning I was walking towards the dry earth latrine that they had during those days and there was this serviceman, a sergeant, in fact. He accused me of beating him up at Wahiawa town the previous night. And the odd thing about this thing is that I haven't seen this character in my life before, and here he accuses me of beating him up in town the previous night! He reported me to the sergeant in the orderly room. And then, the sergeant called me in, and he accused me of beating the man up, and I think, they were friends, you see, the one that got beat up by somebody else. And he was giving me a bad time, assigning me to KP on weekends and all this and that. I felt that he was taking it out on me personally, because I come from this island and the fact that I had to do, you know, KPs on weekends, restricting me from going on my weekend passes. So at one stage, I got so mad I told the staff sergeant that if this is they type of treatment I'm going to get, I prefer belonging in the stockade. He called me up on that, you know, and he called the MPs and they shipped me to the stockade. I served couple of weeks in the stockade, and then I had a summary court martial held. And I explained the whole situation to the officer who conducted the hearing. And at the conclusion of my presentation, he told me that I was restricted to the camp. He let me out of the stockade. But actually, this you know, shouldn't have happened in the first place, because I was guilty of no crime, fighting, no beating-up of nobody, and yet I ended up in the stockade. It's one of those unfortunate, you know, incident. But then, things like that do sometime happen in the military.

PN: Where did you serve out the rest of your term?

HS: They shipped me down to P. I. (Philippine Islands) on a slow troop ship going down to Philippine Islands. I was there for couple of weeks. But then, during those days, it was not safe to have a GI with Oriental features down in P.I. And so what they did was, kept me there for two
weeks, and they shipped me over to Okinawa. While I was in P.I., I might as well mention this incident, I used to go to the Red Cross to have coffee and doughnuts there. And maybe those Red Cross Filipino workers, they didn't know that I came from Hawaii, and I'd lived with Filipino folks, and when I go over there for my coffee and go stand in line and pick up my coffee and doughnuts, they would be cursing under their breath, you know, swearing at me and using those foul language. But they didn't know I understood all those things, and I didn't feel too good about that experience, you know. I didn't make a scene or fuss there. I politely accepted my coffee and doughnut and all the time hearing those guys cursing me, you know, under their breath, eh. So it wasn't a pleasant experience, actually.

And the camp that I was stationed for about a week. That was a former Japanese troop camp there, and all the facilities were all run down, and in fact, the first night I got there, I had to sleep on the floor, you know. Because while they had mountains of bunk there available, all of all of them, for some reason or other, had parts missing or the canvas was cut and all this and that. And struggling, trying to get a decent bunk that night, I couldn't find any, so I had to sleep on that floor there. With my blankets, eh.

And those days, they used to get lot of this trading with the civilians there--what do you call that word already. In fact they used to get a special line there leading to the prostitutes out in the field, eh.

(PN Laughs)

HS: They used to operate, you know, right outside of the Army camp, and what used to happen was that when those lines used to form, you know, and the MPs used to come on, you know, now and then, and that lines would break up, and when the MPs go away, you see the line would from again out into the bushes.

(Laughter)

HS: And you would see this instances where the civilians, you know, would enter the camp and be carrying out a whole duffel bag full of clothes to trade for food with the boys in the camp, you see. And I seen all that happen.

And we used to take a shower there. And they used to get a canvas thrown around, you know, the canvas would have ripped and this civilians, you know, boys and girls would be walking past by, and here we're trying to shower with it, you know, in those inadequate facilities, eh.

(PN laughs)

HS: That was quite some going there, actually.

PN: You know that incident you talked about here, you know, with that sergeant that accused you of beating...

HS: Yeah.
PN: Did you think that it had any connection with you being an Oriental?

HS: Well, I don't know. Maybe—I think more than anything else, it was a case of mistaken identity, yeah. On his part. I don't know what he was doing in that night previously in town. He could have had a few drinks and was feeling high and happy, ran across another Oriental boy, and maybe he wanted to take revenge, I don't know, and just happen that I was the first Oriental boy he met that morning, eh. Maybe he didn't feel too good about the beating. So I don't know just what his basic motives were, but if anything at all, I'm sure of myself that I was the victim of, you know, unfortunate circumstances. Yeah, cause, I can't remember beating an individual in my entire life to begin with. I was a victim of unfortunate circumstances.

PN: From the Philippines, you said you went to Okinawa. How long did you stay there?

HS: I was there for two months before they flew me all the way back to Hawaii. I like to point out one observation that I had in Okinawa. Well, I associated with some Okinawans here in Hawaii, and I like the people. So I had pleasant, you know, memories and thoughts for that pleasant relationship with that. And the same thing happened down in Okinawa. They were poor, you know. Well, the GIs took over and there was some battle going on there, and yet in spite of all the hardship there were going through, and the people were really hard working and really nice and really honest.

In fact, they only incident of black marketing, the only offer I had from them was from a little boy who's fluent enough, intelligent enough to understand the English language. I don't know where he picked up the English language, but he was able to converse in the English well, and he offered to buy, you know, packs of cigarette from me, but I wasn't that type of guy to go black marketing, so I turned his offer down.

But I really respected the Okinawan people there, because while they had nothing, as a result of being a victim of the War there, but yet, they were honest and hard working and they were nice people. In fact, I remember—well, I've got a soft heart to begin with. I remember gambling and when winning I would go to the PX and buy, you know, pillowcases full of candies, and when we used to go on our trip on weekends around the island, I used to go around there and toss it out to the folks, you know.

(PN laughs)

HS: In fact, I remember of this one incident where we went to visit, oh, my friend's mates. We had to take a side road and as we approach the side road at the intersection, there was elderly man and a young boy waiting, so I told the driver of the car to stop, and I gave the man a pack of cigarettes and the young boy, I gave him couple bars of candy. I gave that elderly man a pack of cigarettes and the young boy, I gave him couple bars of candy. I gave that elderly man a pack of cigarette, and a box of matches. Then went to visit my friend's friend in the camp there. And
on our way back, I noticed that the elderly man and the son was still standing at the side of the road. It was very evident that they was waiting for me to come back, and (Chuckles)...

(PN laughs)

HS: ...and when our car stopped, you know, the young boy approached me and he had a fish in his hand. Was about a foot long, and he wanted to offer it to me in appreciation for what I gave them, but I told them, "No, I don't want that fish. You folks take 'em." I don't think they understood me, but by sign language I told 'em, "No. I don't think they understood me, but by sign language I told 'em, "No. I don't want the fish."

And that was another human incident I remember in Okinawa, too. This was rather late in the evening and we went back, you know, to our camp and my supplies of candy and cigarette were all gone, and we were passing this particular village. And like I say, it was almost sundown, too. And we didn't have time to stop, because we were late, so, I got a cigarette and I tossed it into the barb wire, you see. Those days they used to have the Okinawan people all live in separate camp, you see, with barbed wire surrounding the camps. And had a girl standing at the gate. Oh, she was standing inside here. And I had intended a pack of cigarette for her, see. But then there was a boy that standing on the outside of the gate. When he see me toss something, he rushed forward, you see, and he got to the pack of cigarette before the girl did. I had intended to pass the cigarette on to the girl. And you know, that thing kept bugging me, bugging me, you see. I felt sorry that little girl that I had intended to toss the cigarette then again, somebody else got it, you see. So after that I try to locate that village. I still couldn't locate that village, you know. But, uh, I haven't forgotten that incident, you know. I feel sorry for the little girl. I only wish that she picked up the pack of cigarette. I could feel good, you know, even till today.

And I did a few, you know, illegal things (Chuckles) while I was there, too. Well like my blankets, when I knew I was being shipped back to Hawaii. You know, I gave it all away. My handkerchief, my underwears, and everything, I gave it away. In fact, on several occasion, I used to steal something and to give it to them.

(Laughter.)

HS: Yeah. I remember incident, too. I was assigned to this machine shop. And, there used to be a group of Japanese PWs i.e. POWs (prisoners of war) there, working in the machine shop. They wasn't all shipped back to Japan then. And there was some native Okinawans working in the machine shop, too. And on weekends they used to go back to their camps, you see. To their homes, and we used to—the Army used to provide transportation for that, and I used to see them, you know, pile all the good ply boards, you know, on the bottom of the truck. They'd throw all the scrap lumber on the top, you know.

(Laughter)
HS: And, make it seem as though they taking away only junk scrap of lumber home, eh.

And, the first time I went with them to the camp, when I got to the camp, when I got go the camp, I noticed the kids crowding around the truck, you see. I didn't understand them and they didn't understand me, but I got to know what they wanted, you see. They wanted candy. But I told them, I didn't have any at that time. I said that, next week I'm gonna come around, you see. So I was lucky, I had some money, so I bought, you know, pillowcases of candy and everything. So I went down to the same village again. And when I got there, oh, I was practically mobbed, you see, cause the kids knew I had candy. So I tried to, you know, sign language to them don't rush me because I've got enough in the pillowcases to give everybody at least one, you see. But, then, they didn't seem to understand me, so they still kept crowding me. So the only alternative I had was to jump on the truck bed, you know, on the back of the truck bed, and to pass the candy---toss it out, in fact. I couldn't give it to them individually, because they all wanted a candy bar. They didn't want to be left out, eh. So I just had to toss it all out to them. I still remember that.

(PN laugh)

HS: But they were hard working. They were—they were an honest people, sincere people. Like I said, there was only one incident of black marketing that I ever ran across while I was in Okinawa. Just one instance of black marketing.

Another thing I used to enjoy is that when they used to hitchhike, you know, they used to get one guy station out in the front. But when you stop for that, (Chuckles) you know, he goes and he tell you to wait. He calls all his friends, you know, that stayed in the community, and they all ride the truck, and, when once they get on the truck, you know, we in a hopeless situation, because we don't understand them and they don't understand us, so we gotta just take 'em down to their doorstep before we on our way back.

(Laughter)

HS: To our camp, you know. We cannot tell them, "Oh, we just going here, eh. So you guys all drop off." No. It was a deal where, because we didn't understand them and they didn't understand us, that we had to practically take them to the doorstep. But the part that, you know, sort of, got me was that they only had one guy standing out on the outside, hitching. So you feel it's a matter of picking up one guy, eh, but once you stop, well, they call all their friends that wanted a ride, eh, and they all jump in the truck. Oh, but that was all fun. That was all fun. Yeah, and it was, an Army truck and that was Army gas (Laughs), so, you know, it was no strain on our part, actually.

PN: When you returned to Hawaii, what did you do for that six month period?

HS: Oh, I was just loafing. I thought I'd take it easy. Just resting the body, you know. Well, I figure, I wasn't that young then, but, I figure I could spend, you know, about six months of my own life, just waste it by resting, eh.

(PN laughs)
HS: Living it up a bit, huh.

PN: And then you went back to the plantation? In what department did you work then?

HS: After I went back to the plantation, well, I was treated like a new employee. My past, you know, services was terminated as a result of quitting the plantation. As why I had to start off as a new employee.

PN: What year was this?

HS: This was in '46. And the union were established then. During the organizing period, I was away. When I came back, the union was established already. The fact that I started employment with the plantation again, they treated me as a new employee. So I started working out in the fields, eh. Doing field work and setting up cement irrigation flumes and all this and that, and driving the tractor for a short period of time. But then they wanted somebody in the machine shop. Knowing that I had past experience, you know, I was able to work my way back into the machine shop again.

PN: Did you participate in any pre-union activities before?

HS: No, no, no. Those were the periods that I was away. While in the service, too, I terminated my employment with the company. So during the early organizing days, I wasn't around, so I wouldn't be able to relate anything along those lines.

PN: But you were an active member in the union after you came back?

HS: Yeah. After I got back, working for the plantation, again, I been active and more or less active all of this time, even till today.

PN: How did you get involved with the union?

HS: Well, I had a friend of mine, and, uh, he was a union official. Well, the fact that I had a high school education and he didn't have a high school education, some of the union communication that was referred to him, he couldn't very well interpret it, eh. So he used to show it to me, you see, so I used to read it and interpret it for him, so that he would understand what the communication was all about. Yeah. And lot of my friends serving in the union, so I got interested, too. Being the type of individual I am, I automatically took a liking to the union, so I got myself involved.

PN: Just changing the subject a bit, but when did you get married?

HS: Oh, gee, I been married for about twenty odd years, now, actually. And when I was 33 years, actually.

PN: You met your wife--where? On the plantation?
HS: Uh, my wife was working at the division as a secretary for the ILWU, and just so happen I got elected as a business agent, for the Waialua-Kahuku district. And as a result of our work, you know, we got to know each other. And when I went back after I served my term as business agent, well, we followed through on our relationship, and, finally, it ended up in a marriage for both of us.

PN: When were you a business agent?

HS: Uh, that was in the early '50's. I served only one term. And the reason why I served only one term then was the fact that I wanted to give somebody else a chance to take a crack at the job. And during those days, too, you see, I ran against a Filipino brother who was seeking the same business agent position. And for some reason or other, I beat him in that race. So, even till today, individually, I'm sort of convinced that, well, there might be some racial block voting within the union. But it's still possible, where you have a good union leader, that might be able to, you know, beat out a Filipino leader. If he's a good capable individual. And in that case, in that election, like I mentioned, I ran against a Filipino brother, and there are very few Koreans, you know, actually on the plantation. And predominantly, a large number of them are Filipino workers. But still then, I was able to beat out this Filipino worker.

PN: Did you receive any kind of training as to how to participate in the union?

HS: No. Well, we had our union orientational classes and seminar classes, and I went through all of that before I got elected as business agent, so that I had little background knowledge of what the job was all about. We have an adequate education program within the ILWU union to help acquaint and orientate, you know, our leaders of our union.

PN: What single event brought about the most change in your personal life?

HS: What single event brought about the most change in my personal life? Hmm. Well I always been interested in people. Always been interested in the world. Interested in politics, too, for that matter. As a young student, I remember I used to go to the library, and read all what I can, you know, about current events and world events and all this and that. I try to keep myself well-versed to all the happenings in the world then. And I've got a tendency of reading a lot, too. And, uh, then I became a member of the union, and I had the opportunity of serving in various capacity. And, to a large degree, I say, the union gave me the opportunity, was a vehicle to broaden, you know, my educational knowledge of people, and about politics, and, from that on, I branch out, you know, trying to be helpful and useful, you know, cause, I believe in living a good life, and couple with the fact that my dad taught me some basic philosophy. Koreans believe in peace and dying with their eyes closed. He told me that when a man lives a bad life or lives a violent life, that he dies with his eyes open. And I always kept that sort of basic philosophy in the back of mind to guide me throughout life, you
see, so that, when you think of living a life of peace, that means, a
man must go out and, you know, make something of himself in a good,
constructive way, you see. And, as I mentioned, the union, as a
vehicle, gave me the opportunity to serve my fellow working people and
couple with a few, you know, religious philosophy I got of mine. Like
for example, I believe that I'm not the highest being on this earth.
That there must be somebody above me. And I like to believe in life,
that there's somebody above me. Because, it teaches me, you know, to
be humble and obedient. A man of humility. And I like to believe
that, and, well, I feel that even though some people might, you know,
question the fact that I'm not a religious individual on this earth,
except trying to live a good life, but I feel that if I should pass
away, there is such thing as heaven and earth, you know, in this universe
of ours. That being the type of individual I am, and living the type
of life I've been living, I think I'll be able to serve the good Lord
24 hours a day, if anything at all. So actually, if anything that
happened in my life, I'd have to give credit to the union to a large
degree for giving me the opportunity and being the vehicle to, you know
broaden myself, you know, mentally, spiritually and physically, eh. So
that today, I feel to a large degree, I'm a better man because of my
union.

PN: What were one of your happiest, saddest, angriest, or boringest times
in your life?

HS: Well, I don't think that I could recall at this very moment because, I
try to live life calmly, if anything at all. And I think the happiest
moment in my life, and, I think I still feel the same way, is when
I'm in a position to help somebody else. When I'm of service to
somebody else, you know. I don't like to sound like a saint, but I
feel good when I help somebody else. And that's why I give so much
credit to my union, because in the union, you associate with so many
working men and women, you got the opportunity of serving and of being
of service to somebody else. Well, maybe it's in my blood, you know,
and I feel that in life, that there are several things that I cannot
accept. One of the thing is in our way of life, we seem to place so
much emphasis on money and the material things in life. I don't think
they're the most important thing. Well, I feel money is a necessity in
our way of life, but to place so much emphasis on it is all wrong, and
I feel to a certain degree is warp, you see. So, coming down to your
question, I would say that in helping someone, some other individual,
and it doesn't necessarily have to be myself. I find great pleasure
in doing that.

You know, the-the other thing is this-this arm is been sort of been
affecting my mind, too, yeah? (Laughs) (Refers to injury to arm from
his job) I hope that the interview has been adequate.

PN: Oh, it's been more than adequate.

(Tape recorder turned 'off' then back 'on')
HS: And, uh, this is secret wish or ambition, you might call it. And that is to be able to sing, you know, adequately in front of individual. I feel since only me and you here, and I like to sing couple of songs, and have 'em on tape. And maybe, as you make your rounds, you know what I mean, instead of listening to just plain discussion, maybe, you can squeeze my song in between. Like give my song some exposure, and all of this and that, eh. So how about taping just couple of my songs that I wrote.

I just like to point out that I got interested writing this songs. Actually a peace song during the Vietnam War. I just happen to be an amateur singer, but I'd like to get some experience as far as singing it. I like to give my song some exposure.

PN: I can stop you right here? Let me put on another tape, and then...

HS: Okay. Yeah, okay.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE 1-21-1-76

PN: This is the continuation of an interview with Harold Shin, 6-14-76, at Wahiawa Library.

HS: I would just like to mention that, as a result of the Vietnam War, I got interested in writing peace songs. I'd like to point out that I'm strictly an amateur composer, song-writer, and a singer, but if you folks will bear with me, I would like to sing a couple of my songs that I personally wrote. The first song is titled "Soldier Lament" and it goes something like this.

(Sings song. Lyrics for songs are attached to HS's file.)

HS sings "Soldier's Lament" and "Let There Be Peace".

PN: That's very good. (Claps) How about just singing all your songs.

HS: Well, let me first sing you one last song. And I'd like to point out that, I wrote to Pete Seeger--he's supposed to be one of the outstanding folksinger in America today, and he told me that if I was interested in writing, you know Vietnam songs, that I should attempt to spell out the issues, you know, to tell the story, yeah, of the war. So with that viewpoint in mind, I wrote this song which is titled the "The Song of Vietnam" and it goes something like this.

(Sings song.)

PN: (Claps) That's terrific, man. You wrote all that?

HS: Yeah, I wrote all of this songs and several other compositions.

PN: Very good.
HS: I got so moved as a result of Vietnam War, and when I look back at what I attempted to contribute, what I did, I feel proud, because the whole world will have to agree with us all that the Vietnam War was a rotten part of our history, eh.

PN: Yeah. May I keep that (Refers to HS's songsheet containing lyrics to his songs.) and make a copy of this and I'll return it to you?

HS: Yeah. Mmm. Well, in fact, I got copies of this song at home.

HS: This is actually part of the songs that I actually wrote. But, you know, it just happen that I'm lazy type, so I never did get around, you know, trying to hustle this thing—hustle my songs too much. But I remember at the Church of the Crossroad, at one of the meeting, I sang couple of my composition. I mustered enough courage so I stood up in front of the crowd, and sang couple of this song that I composed.

PN: Very good. Right on.

HS: Well, I, for one, felt that I didn't just want to merely protest during while the Vietnam War was going on, so I wanted to do something you know, extra, little above the (Chuckles) regular call of duty, and so I got myself interested in writing this songs.

PN: Very good.

END OF INTERVIEW
Soldier's Lament

I don't want to be a soldier,
Oh my Lord, till my dying days.
Oh why, oh why have they
Got me tied to a gun?

I don't want to be a medal winner,
For shooting and killing a score of my brothers.
Oh why, oh why must I stain this earth of ours,
With the blood from human souls?

Let me roam and let me wander,
Let me live and let me breathe.
Let me joy and let me dream,
Let me sow peace and let me sow love.

I know that I'll never sing again, as long as flowers are over my grave.
Oh why, oh why was I ever born
If man can fate me to die?

(Repeats first verse)

Let There Be Peace

I hear people are singing
And it's ringing 'round the world.
I hear their words so clearly
Let there be peace, let there be peace
On this earth.

I see people marching
By the hundreds, thousands and more.
It gives me a wonderful feeling
Because there's peace in their hearts.

Now let us all march beside them,
Now let us all fight beside them,
Now let us all stand beside them
Till the end of time for peace.

I know people are stirring
Their conscience bare to the truth.
By God why all this killings
When there can be peace on this earth?

(Repeats first verse)

The Song of Viet Nam

Let me tell you a story of our country,
SONGS BY HAROLD SHIN, CONT.

We claim we were invited over,
But an invitation of death and hell.
We claim we were attacked at the Gulf,
But what a controversy that was.

Chorus:
Viet Nam, Viet Nam, tears are in my heart.
Viet Nam, Viet Nam, the world is at your side.
Bomb not, bomb not for heaven's sake, bomb not.
Peace now, peace now, in God's name peace now.

Let me further relate this story,
A tale of credibility gaps.
Viet Nam, Viet Nam shall stand forever,
We shall never see her die.

(Chorus repeated)

We claim Red China is a threat
So North Viet Nam now gets the bomb.
We claim we got commitments, too,
As though we are the only ones.

(Chorus repeated)

This is only part of the story,
History has recorded all the rest.
Let the world forever note
That this story must never be told again.
That this story must never be told again.

(Lyrics copied from Harold Shin's songsheet.)
Tape No. 1-46-2-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Harold Shin (HS)

Wahiawa Library, Wahiawa, Hawaii

July 12, 1976

BY: Perry Nakayama (PN)

PN: This is a second interview with Mr. Harold Shin on July 12th, 1976 in Wahiawa Library. Harold, since you worked in the machine shop, and dealt with mechanized things, could you tell me some of the changes that came about in the years that you worked in Waialua.

HS: Well, actually, the sugar plantation is a far cry from what it used to be long ago. Since I was born on a sugar plantation, was raised on a sugar plantation, grew up on a sugar plantation, worked for them all my life, practically, I had the opportunity of observing the changes that took place on the plantation, especially in regards to mechanization. Long ago, the plantation used to hire thousands of workers when everything used to be done by hand. And I don't envy those operations, because it was very hard physical operations to begin with. I'm glad that the plantation through the years—through mechanization has been able eliminate lot of these hard, back-breaking labor which used to take place on a sugar plantation. Now, as far as mechanization, it's a good thing in many sense of the word. But then, it had a profound effect on reducing the number of work opportunities or job available for young men and women in the community. So, today, as a result mechanization on the plantation is highly mechanized.

In fact, there was an FLSA hearing with Judge Metzger ruled that plantations today actually are factories out in the fields. And that is exactly what plantations are. It's not an agricultural industry anymore. But actually, it's a mechanical industry out in the field in view of the fact that so much equipments has been used out in the field. As I stated, as a direct result of mechanization, the number of work opportunity, job opportunity has dwindled down to a barest minimum. So, today, all sugar plantations throughout the state of Hawaii is operating with a minimum number of men.

PN: What kind of new machinery, have you seen come into the plantation?

HS: Well, take out in the harvesting field. That's where the hardest physical effort was required. Long ago, every stalk of cane was cut by hand, loaded into cars by the workers. But today, they get mechanical harvesters and mechanical loaders. All big, huge diesel type of equipment that's doing all the work. And, in a sense, they're doing
the work adequately enough, I think there's some disadvantages to that particular type of operation, because in the process of mechanical harvesting, the plantation is losing quite a bit of juice as a result of grabbing the cane and the cane being thrown around on the equipments. So, by and large, it is a more economical form of operation but it has its minor drawbacks, too. I don't think there's a better way, actually; in harvesting the matured cane by doing the operations by hand. But then, in this modern technological age, because of the production cost and everything, I think the best bet is mechanical harvester.

PN: You said you used to work on the locomotive engines before, too?

HS: Well, as a machinist on the plantation, I did work on the locomotor parts, repairing locomotors. And those were the steam locomotors and they gone out of the picture now, and are being replaced by the huge diesel equipment which the plantation is operating with today.

PN: What changes did you have to go through in terms of when they switched from locomotive to tournatwos?

HS: Well, actually, basically, the machinist's job on the plantation is to repair whatever parts that are broken or worn down. And as far as the repairing of the mill, it's more or less the same. The only difference in the mill repair work is that they've been utilizing bigger rolls and all this and that. But basically, the job has been the same all through the years.

PN: Has the work force in the machinist shop varied?

HS: Well, I understand that at Waialua, we've got a small machine shop work force compared to some other sugar plantations. What the reasons for it is, well, I don't exactly know. Because I didn't have a chance to really go to the other sugar plantation and to make a check on the operations there individually. But Waialua, we operate with a small work force compared to the other sugar plantations.

PN: Has it decreased in number over the years?

HS: Well, I'd say now, because of this thrust towards mechanization, I don't think that the number of men in the machine shop can dwindle down any futher. If anything at all, I think, the plantation will have to add more members into the machine shop work force as a result of this big concentraton towards mechanical operations.

PN: So, even though there has been a greater increase in mechanization, the work force has remained the same?

HS: I'm talking in terms of the machine shop. But as far as the overall of the plantation work force is concerned, it's dwindling down very considerably.

PN: Wouldn't, like, more machines mean that there'll be more work for the
machine shop?

HS: Well, not exactly. In a sort of way, with more equipment in use, there tend to be more wear and tear. But then, the present equipment are built so that it can stand a hell of a lot of work. So that, it doesn't actually mean that the more equipment you get, the more machinists you need to have. But in terms of the overall plantation work force, it has reduced a terrific amount of...we have a far less amount of workers working on the plantation. Like I mentioned before, in the olden days, Waialua Sugar Plantation used to have work force numbering into the thousands. Whereas today, I think, we get about five hundred employees operating the whole plantation.

PN: Can we talk about the paternalism on the plantation? I think, often times, they associate that with the perquisite system.

HS: Well, the plantation paternalism is quite vivid in my mind, because I lived through it as a kid. I remember those days, every Christmas time, plantation used to send out its locomotor and pick up all the employees and members of their family and give them a train ride on the locomotor and take you down to the main plantation Christmas program. And at that program, they used to pass out candies and fruits to all those individuals present. And to the babies, they gave them some toys, too, for that matter.

It was a once a year occasion. And as young boys and girls, we used to always look forward towards that Christmas program, because it was a real treat for us, because that means some extra fruits and some extra candy at that particular time.

PN: When was this?

HS: This was back in the '30s, as I mentioned, when I was a young man.

PN: When did it end?

HS: It more or less slackened off during the War period when the union came into existence. All those paternalistic practices went out of the windows, too. Of course, they have a so called community Christmas program which the plantation is a participant in the program. But, as far as having a special Christmas party for only the sugar employees, like in the old days, they don't have that type of party anymore.

PN: What other kind of benefits did you receive from the plantation?

HS: This paternalism thing, like the Christmas party, that was about the big thing during those days. But outside of that, they tend to take the individual approach and try to help each individual sugar worker on an individual basis. And then, they used to do this and that favor. The point is that today, we have a different situation. Some of the activities that the plantation used to carry on before, some of the services that they used to perform before, they don't do it anymore,
because they expect the union to take over in those areas. So, today, actually, there's no such thing as paternalism down at the plantation level anymore.

PN: Like the Christmas party was one of the good things the plantation did during the early '30s and '40s. What about some of the so called bad things the plantation did during those times?

HS: Oh, let me mention another program which the plantation used to carry those days. They used to sponsor athletic activities, like boxing, baseball, and all this and that. Down at Waialua, they built their own gym. And they even had a athletic director trying to help provide recreational activities for the workers then. But that was before the union. But after the union came in, they sort of phased away from areas like recreational activities and all this and that. I assume, because, the plantation felt that maybe the union was going to take over in those particular areas.

PN: I think I asked you this question before, but, how did you get involved with the union?

HS: Well, after I got discharged from the service, I took it easy for about six months. And when I was good and ready to go back to work, the fact that I was a plantation boy practically all my life, I thought I'd go back and seek employment with the company again. So, that's the reason why I went back and work for the sugar plantation again.

PN: And how did you get involved with the union?

HS: Yeah. After I got back on the plantation, the union was a new thing to me. So, I didn't participate actively from the start. In fact, it took me about a year before I signed up with the union. Course I didn't have anything with the union, but the fact that I didn't know anything about the organization, that's the reason why I was hesitant in signing up from the start. But at that particular time, I was working in the tractor shop. And these other individuals were union officials. And they used to show me union communications and all this and that. And the fact that I was a high school graduate and they weren't, they used to ask me to help interpret the union communications for them. And I used to perform those services for them. That was actually my first taste and introduction to union activities. As an individual, I'm strongly in favor of the principles of trade unionism. From that meager beginning, I got myself involved more and more after I signed up. And later on, I felt that as part of my obligation as an individual and as a worker to try to help in the general interest of everybody concerned.

PN: So, what was your job within the union?

HS: Well, I started off as a camp steward and I work my way into the unit executive board. Then, in 1950, I ran for the business agent's position. I got elected to the position. However, I served only one term. I
resigned at the end of that one year term for the fact that I wanted to see that position rotated around by the other union officials so that they would have a better understanding and appreciation of what the union actually amounted to. I feel that the individuals working, getting first hand experience as to how the union actually functions and operate, would be a good experience for everybody concerned.

PN: Could you tell me, what is the job of a camp steward?

HS: During those days, we used to have quite a bit of outlying sugar plantation camps. Today, those outlying sugar plantation camps are all eliminated so that down at Waialua, we have just two main plantation camps. The one at Kawaiola is getting smaller and smaller if anything at all. But in those days, I used to live in one of those outlying camps. As camp steward, when there's any union program, it was part of my job to go around and get in touch with the workers and to explain to them just what the union program is all about. And I remember during the longshore strike, because of the fact that I was a union official and camp steward, the longshoremen used to come and ask for bum, contribution while they were out on strike. And one of my main job during that time was to take them around to the camps on a monthly visit and ask the individual sugar workers to help the longshore strikers.

PN: This longshore strike, could you tell me a little bit more about what happened?

HS: Well, the longshoremen are fellow brothers of ours, so, when they went out on strike and knowing that the employers had attempted to break the longshore union, and if they had succeeded, they would have affected us sugar workers, too, by virtue of the fact that we are in the same union. So, we went all out for the longshoremen. And as I mentioned, I took them on a "bumming" trip around the plantation camp. And at that time, too, I used to raise vegetables for the soup kitchen. I used to drink a lot of milk then. And all the empty bottles, I used to accumulate. And at the end of the month, when the longshoremen strikers' truck came over, we used to load it with those empty milk bottles and bring it down to the stores. And whatever bottle deposit I had, I used to turn it over to the longshoremen. So, my individual effort at that time was to take the longshoremen around the camp. Then, plus the empty milk bottle deposit, I raised vegetables, and I made it a practice to donate at least ten dollar every month from my personal pay to help them out in the struggle. We used to go in town, too, and participate in the picket line, too. Being new in that game, too--this was in '49--I was determined to see to it that not only the longshoremen won, but to see that our union wasn't hurt in the process.

PN: Do you know why the sugar industry workers did not go on strike in support of the longshoremen?

HS: Well, in '49, I was a new member then, compared to the other individuals, so I haven't gotten that information as to why the sugar workers didn't join the longshoremen in that particular strike. But I personally feel that the longshoremen had enough strength, militancy and a determination
to be able to go out and hold their own. All what they wanted was to have support. The sugar workers played that supporting role by giving them kokua. And as the record shows that in the end, they settled that longshore strike. And I think it was a victory for the ILWU. So, I feel that at that particular time, there was no need for the sugar workers to go out on strike, because the longshoremen could have handled the situation adequately on their own.

PN: What did you do as a unit executive board member?

HS: Well, I help various position in the unit executive board. In fact, on several occasion, I was the unit chairman down at Waialua. Our main duties and responsibilities is to service the membership, especially when it comes to grievance, and to see to it that a contract was being observed by the company. I think, in the main the duties and responsibilities of any unit official is to see that a contract is preserved and protected and to see that the membership, whenever they have any beef or grievances are properly handled.

PN: And could you tell me what did you do as a business agent during that time?

HS: Way back in 1950, they had a different set up than what we got today presently. I was elected from the Waialua and Kahuku Sugar Plantation. And my job was to take care of the problems and the needs of the workers at Waialua and Kahuku. Since we were part of the division, I was assigned, on occasion, to go out and help at Ewa Sugar Plantation and help out at Aiea C and H. Because I was the division secretary not only did I handle my business agent chores, but whenever I could be utilized on some other plantation where they need my services, I was assigned to help them out, too.

PN: Did they give you a union car to travel from one plantation to another?

HS: The Local used to pay for our gasoline and oil expenses, services expenses. And gave us allowances for car depreciation, also.

PN: Do you know how the negotiating committee operated?

HS: Well, actually, I haven't been assigned to the top committee as far as negotiating committee is concerned. But I've been member of the full negotiating committee. What happens is that if the negotiations is going to take a long time to settle, the union operates with a subcommittee. And three of the members are composed of one member from each island. And with this subcommittee, they go in and negotiate with the employers. When they have something definitely worked out, then, they call in the full negotiating committee and discuss what has been done. After the full committee has a chance to express itself and has taken a position, the subcommittee goes back and negociates with the employers again. Generally speaking, that's the procedure that takes place as far as our negotiations is concerned. It's no different. Every negotiation, the pattern, the procedures are more or less the same.
The main bulk of the work is done by the subcommittee. But the final decision must be made by the full negotiation committee, before any settlement is made with the employers.

PN: And how does these negotiating committees know that the decision they have reached is okay with the membership?

HS: Well, on this sugar negotiating committee, it consist of all the unit chairmen from all the different plantations. And since the unit chairmen are the respective head of each sugar unit, they more or less the fact that they're down at the rank and files level, more or less, have the feeling and the pulse of the individuals members. So, they should know just how the members feel about the whole thing.

PN: Have you ever run across a situation when they made a decision and the membership didn't agree with it?

HS: Well, not in my case, though, as unit chairman. I had no difficulty as far as settling the negotiated agreement. But down at Waialua, we did have problems where we didn't quite agree with the full negotiation committee's decision. And we did have some problems along in that area.

PN: Could you explain more what happened?

HS: Yeah. Well, in a case like that, the fact that the majority decides even though Waialua as an individual unit does not accept the settlement proposal, we've got our hands tied, because we've got to go along with the majority. And that has happened on several occasion, already. That's one of the drawbacks of the democratic procedure. Once that proposal is taken back to the individual plantation, the majority decides whether there is a settlement or not. They might have one or two plantations that might not like the settlement. But the fact that majority decides---and in a sort of way, there cannot be a more democratic procedure than letting the majority make the final determination.

PN: Could you tell me about the changes that has occurred in the union from the beginning up to now?

HS: Well, like the plantation as I mentioned, the union, today--and this is my personal opinion--is a far cry from what it used to be. During the early days of organizing there was lot of hustling and bustling on the part of not only the leaders, but the rank and file. Because under the old plantation system, there's no question of a doubt that the workers were poorly underpaid and were neglected in more ways than one. So that, during the early struggling, they used to get the union set up, there was a lot of enthusiasm and lot of team work and lot of cooperation. But, I feel that, like any other organization, after that organization has been set up and it's gone through its struggles, well, everything tends to get a little lax. And in some organizations, I'd say that even some extra fat might accumulate. And I think that's what is happening to our union today. We don't seem to have that same pioneering spirit that was prevailing during the early days of the struggle. I think we tend to be a little bit more complacent, today. Trying to rest on our fruits
of victory in the past. And I think that is not good for our organization and for the workers, because today, if anything at all, it's a more challenging period. Get lot of problems coming up in our country and in our nation. And I think it's of paramount importance that the unions should be on its guards and on its toes at all times. We don't seem to have that same old fighting spirit that the ILWU was noted for. We tend to take things more easily, trying to use more tact and diplomacy. I don't think that many of the problems that we're confronted with is going to be settled by using only tact and diplomacy. We must have a strong, militant union to back up our demands, our position, and our program.

PN: Can you point out one thing why you think the union has become less militant?

HS: Well, benefits, wages and all this and that has increased tremendously since we were first organized. And like in anything else in the American way of life, when people are satisfied, they tend to get complacent. And our union is no different than all the other hundreds of organizations we got in our country. It just happened that I think we accumulated a little extra fat. And we getting lax in the process.

PN: Do you think that that's the fault of the union leaders or the union members themselves? The rank and file?

HS: Well, trying to place the blame and the responsibility is a pretty difficult thing. But from my own point of view, the fact that I'm a rank and filer, I tend to put the blame, point the fingers at the leaders. But then, I know the leaders, they tend to react the opposite way. The fact that they're leaders, they don't want to shoulder the blame or the responsibility, so they blame the membership. So, it's a hard question to answer for the fact that we have a situation where the rank and filers are accusing the leaders of being lax. And in return, the leaders are accusing the membership of being lax themselves. So, we sort of accusing one another.

PN: In an earlier meeting with you, you mentioned that you knew Jack Hall. Could you tell me some of your experiences you had with him?

HS: Well....I'm sorry to see Jack Hall leave us at such an early age, because we sure could use his leadership today. And I worked with Jack. And I've got profound respect and admiration for the man. Not only was he steeped in trade union principle, but he was an honest, dedicated individual, too. And had a good head on his shoulders. And all the sugar negotiations that he participated, he did yeoman's work in trying to arrive at the solution at the settlement with Louis Goldblatt. And the fact that he's away now, there seems to be a vacuum left in our organization. I think anybody that had known Jack then, worked with him get every high respect and high regards for that individual.

PN: Could you tell me more about Jack Hall. Like you said you challenged him at a convention or something. Could you recall that?
HS: Oh, yeah. Well, Jack was the regional director. He had his own ideas as to what our organization should be and how it should be set up. And at one stage, he wanted to have the power to appoint the individual full-time business agent. And this is nothing new, because in lot of other trade union organization, that practice is adhered to. But, I opposed him on that idea. And this matter was brought up at the convention floor. Well, I can see some merits in his idea of having the power to appoint individuals to certain position. But the fact that in the ILWU--because of the fact that we pride ourself as a democratic rank and file union--I felt that as a matter of principle that all full-time officials should be elected by the membership. And then, if they win the election, then, they should have the privilege to serve in the union. In other words, I was against this idea of appointing any of our full-time union official. I preferred having them elected by the membership. Letting the majority decide as to who their respective union official was going to be. So, as I mentioned, this was brought up to the convention floor. In the process, Jack's idea was defeated. And I don't take great pride in pointing out this particular incident. I don't think it proved anything at all. The reason why I actually opposed Jack was the fact that I wanted to keep our organization as democratic and as rank and file as possible.

PN: Did you have any other kind of working relationship with Jack Hall?

HS: Well...at negotiations when I was sent in as a representative from the unit, I had the opportunity to see and observe Jack Hall in action, in the part, the role that he played at the negotiation session. And I think he did a really wonderful job for the rank and file. There's no two ways about it.

PN: You say that when he left the union, he left a vacuum in leadership. Could you tell me more about how the union operates now? And why isn't it as good as before?

HS: Well, the point is any organization, when they have one of their best leader leave the organization, it automatically going to create a vacuum. And Jack was one of those type of individual that had outstanding ability, qualification. Was dedicated trade unionist. And it's hard to find a man of his stature and his nature today. So, that is the reason why I say that he really left a vacuum when Jack left us all.

PN: Who do you say runs the union now?

HS: Well, they've got the same set up as in the past. They got the slate of top officials. And we've got our convention on a biennium basis. So, that basically, sets the course of our organization, our union. And whatever convention action is taken and also the slate of officers is elected by the rank and file filers to run this organization.

PN: You said you were a witness in the Smith Act trial? Could you tell me more about it?
HS: Yeah, in the Smith Act trial, I acted as a character witness for Jack Kimoto. Well, it was a big responsible thing to me, because the fact that the government was trying to throw this so-called Smith Act defendant into jail. I knew Jack Kimoto and I always did admire him as an individual. I knew that he was close to the working men and women of the state of Hawaii. So, when they ask me to testify as a character witness for Jack Kimoto, I was more than willing to do so.

PN: What were your reactions to the whole trial? And the outcome?

HS: Another reason why I was willing to testify in the trial was I knew Dr. Reinecke and Aiko Reinecke. And they always had impressed me as being honest, sincere, dedicated individuals who have always championed and supported labor causes. And I respected them because they were such a...

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

PN: You considered them humble individuals?

HS: Yeah. Well, I always had high respect and considered Reineckes as very honest, trustworthy, and humble individuals. And when the government was trying to charge them with trying to conspire to overthrow the United States government by force and violence, well, I just couldn't buy that. And I couldn't believe that. Because knowing the Reineckes like I know them, not on any single occasion did I ever hear them propose and espouse any violent action or program. In fact, everything what they said, if anything at all, were beautiful things. So, it was for the simple, human reason that I didn't believe the government had any case against the Reineckes, because they're not violent revolutionaries. They were nice, plain, honest, down to earth individual. And that was one of my compelling reason why I was more than willing to participate in the Smith Act trial.

PN: This was period known as the "Red Scare" period, you know. What is your reaction to communism and....

HS: Well, my personal feeling, as far as political philosophy is concerned, is based on this reason. We have about three billion people living on this earth, and hundred of different nationalistic governments. Amongst the three billion people in the hundreds of different governments and nations that are set up in this world, it's impossible for all the people of the world to have just one common philosophy as far as economic system is concerned. I tolerate communism because of the fact that with the huge amount of people living on this earth, certainly, we must tolerate differences of opinion. So that when a nation is socialist or communistic or capitalistic, it doesn't make any difference to me. I think the true test of any government is not what name you're called. But the true test is whether that government can provide for the needs and wants of the people. I think that's the important criteria. Not what you call it or by what system they have.
PN: During that period of time, many people were "blackballed" or put on trial. Weren't you afraid that you may one day be put on trial?

HS: That didn't occur to me at all. I wasn't afraid of that fact because like in the Smith Act trial or like anything else in life, I always try to be decent and be honest about the whole thing. I think if anything at all, that was the last thing that occurred in my mind, that I should be afraid of anything.

PN: Do you know what happened to these seven people came out of the Smith Act trial?

HS: Well, they were found guilty here in the local courts. But then, they appealed the case to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in California. And at that level, the Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decision of the Hawaii court. So that was the end of that case and all the Smith Act defendants was set free. I don't think the government wanted to appeal the case further up to the Supreme Court, because losing the case at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal, they felt that they didn't have any chance winning the case in the higher court.

PN: Have you ever been "red-baited" in your life?

HS: Well, I don't think that I can say that anybody actually "red-baited" in the front of me, but I have the suspicion that I could have been possibly "red-baited" behind my back even though I don't have any direct evidence or proof.

PN: What were your reactions to some of the witnesses who supposedly squealed on their friends? That they went up on the witness stand and gave so called false testimony?

HS: Well, in a case like that, the government put up their own friendly witnesses. Well, I wasn't on their team. I was trying to help out one of the defendant. And it was because of plain human principle and reason. And for individuals in a case of the Smith Act trial, when they try to pin the rap on the innocent individuals, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' decision pointed out, well, there's only one word with regard to them. I think they was acting a stool pigeon role. Nothing else.

PN: What did friends say to you about testifying for these so called communists or people conspiring to overthrow the government?

HS: Well, I never did have any adverse reaction about my role in the Smith Act trial. I always have been an honest, sincere labor leader, so whatever role I played in the Smith Act trial, well, people just respected me for my role. And they figured that I knew what I was doing. So that I had no adverse reaction from nobody as a result of my participation in the Smith Act trial.

PN: That happened in '51. Also in '51, there was the Korean War. What were your reactions to the Korean War?
HS: Well, I remembered in 1951, the ILWU convention was held at the Queen's Surf, which is not there anymore. I took the floor and spoke up against the resolution on the Korean War. And I still remember I made a statement that it doesn't make a difference whether I'm a North Korean or a South Korean. The main thing is that I would like to see peace established on this earth, for everybody.

PN: What stand did the ILWU take?

HS: Well, the ILWU was against the Korean War from the very start. In fact, it was in that war that our international president was thrown into jail for a few days. At that particular time, I remembered also, that the ILWU sugar workers were in negotiations. And we told the employers that we didn't intend to negotiate as long as Harry Bridges remained in jail. So, the way the situation turned out, he was released from jail immediately. So that we didn't have any problem as far as negotiations was concerned. Because after his release, we went on and continued negotiations until we reached a settlement.

PN: What did the union do to try to get Harry Bridges out of jail?

HS: Well, like I said, the sugar negotiating committee took a position that we don't intend to carry on further negotiations until Harry was released from jail. And Harry actually stayed in jail for a short period of time. So, that didn't interfere with future negotiations at all. But we took the position that we didn't intend to carry on any negotiations until President Bridges was released from prison.

PN: Can we go back to World War II, and I'd like to ask you what changes you saw since you left the islands for about a year and a half, and then you came back from your war experiences. What changes did you see in Haleiwa and Waialua?

HS: Well, I always did consider Waialua-Haleiwa area as a one horse town in a sort of way.

(PN chuckles)

HS: A sleepy town, actually. When I resigned from my job, not long afterwards I got inducted to the service, and stayed in for some 18 months. Then I came back to Waialua-Haleiwa again, my old hometown. Well, being a one horse town, it actually didn't change much during the particular period that I was away. And it was actually, just a short period that I was away.

PN: The union became established while you were gone. What was your reaction to that?

HS: Prior to 1945 when the union was established, I actually didn't know about trade unionism at all. The fact that I was away from the sugar plantation, especially during the sugar strike, that was a tough period. I was in the service then. So that I had no immediate reaction then.
PN: During 1954, the Democratic Party rose to power. Could you comment something about that?

HS: Well, during those days, the union political action program was to urge the individual to participate and be members of the Democratic Party. Based on the union's recommendation and program, I joined up with the Democratic Party. And I think we had good results, because if we were to check the records, it was as a result of the union playing party politics, with the Democratic party that we were able to establish ourselves. And I think the record will show that in Hawaii, we have certainly one of the most outstanding labor legislations in the whole nation.

PN: Could you tell me about some of your involvements in helping the Democratic Party?

HS: Well, I participated in the Democratic Party politics. I went to their convention. I went around signing people. Registered people. And I went to all the different political rallies. And I went campaigning on election day. During those days, there was no electioneering law that prohibited you to stay away from the poll. You know, so many feet. We could campaign right on the doorstep of the political booths. So I participated in all of those activities.

PN: You mentioned a particular incident in terms of a bid for the Speaker of the House?

HS: Oh, yeah. Well, it was during the last territorial legislature. When there was a fight to elect the Speaker of the House. We were very active in Democratic Party politics, the ILWU. Well, there was a struggle between the Tom Gill camp and the ILWU on one side. We favored Elmer Cravalho to be the Speaker of the House. And so what we did was we got about six Democrats and got together all members of the minority Republican party, legislators, and they acted as a block. And they were able to outvote the majority Democratic Party. So that in the process, we were able to get Elmer Cravalho elected as Speaker of the House.

PN: I guess, looking back on the ILWU's involvement, would you characterize it as being good or bad that they got involved with the Democratic Party.

HS: Well, I think we made some really outstanding gains for the workers, here in the state of Hawaii so that I don't have any reservation as far as our participation in the Democratic Party. But the record will prove later on and presently today, we're taking an independent political action position. So that our participation in party politics is sort of nil.

PN: Could you explain more why the ILWU and the Democratic Party split?

HS: I don't know the real innermost of the thing, but I think, there was some dissenion on the top level between the Democratic Party leaders and the ILWU leaders, so that in the end because the differences couldn't be resolved, the ILWU took up the old traditional labor political action
position of independent political action. So, that's how we stand and that's where we stand today. We feel that in the best interests the working men and women here in the state of Hawaii, maybe, we shouldn't be tied in to any political party, but should act as a separate political organization in trying to attain the maximum benefits for the working men and women.

PN: Did you participate in that '56 strike to protest the Eastland hearings here? There was a shut down on Waialua.

HS: Well, actually, that shut down we had at Waialua, I believe you refer to the lock out we had in '53. And that had nothing to do with the Eastland hearing at all. But down at Waialua, in 1953, the sugar workers stayed out for some four months, because we had some difficulties and some problem with the plantation and with the industrial relations department. We try to resolve the thing peacefully, but in the end, we felt that we had to take some position as the only way of resolving the thing. At that time, one of the major problem we had was that we was getting the run around with lot of the grievances that we filed against the company. And also, there was this matter of our interpretation of the agreement where the company felt that they had the right to unilaterally impose any incentive piece plan without the union approval. We felt that that was a gross interpretation of the agreement. We had all these other problems piled up on the company, we felt that the only way we can resolve the thing was to go out and do something about it. And we accused the company of refusing to negotiate with the union in good faith. And that's the reason why we had that lock out in 1953.

PN: This isn't that thing with the...firing of the Filipino supervisor? 
(Did not mean firing but the demotion/transfer of the supervisor in '52)

HS: No, no. That had no tie in. There was nobody fired as far as that particular dispute was concerned. It was the run around that we were having from the industrial relations department and also, the unfair interpretation the plantation was trying to impose on our contract. Especially in regards to production incentive, piece work plans.

PN: No, I was also making mention of that Eastland hearings they were having here. And what we read was that the Waialua Plantation shut down in protest of these Eastland hearings. You don't remember anything about that?

HS: I can't recall that at this moment, actually. You know, in all honestly, I don't think I can recall any such incident, actually, at Waialua.

PN: What about the '58 strike? That was a big strike.

HS: Yeah. The '58 strike, that lasted about three, four months, in duration. And I think in the end, we got a very good settlement on the thing, even though it was tough while we were out. But we was able to band together, stick together and see the thing through.
PN: Do you remember if soup kitchens were set up and things like that?

HS: Yeah. Well, like in the past in all strikes and dispute—even during the lock out we had soup kitchens set up—so in '58 was the same arrangement. We felt that the soup kitchen approach was the best approach, because it gives the workers a chance to get together especially at dinner time. And also, for the fact that the workers are not working, by providing them at least with their meal that we're able to carry on the struggle further. So that soup kitchen arrangement is a very good arrangement.

PN: Did you participate in some of the work programs that were done during the '58 strike, like helping the farmers in Haleiwa?

HS: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, in the case of Gary Kunihiro, he's a personal friend of mine. And in every labor dispute, we always approach him for aid and guidance on how to raise vegetables and all this because he's a professional farmer. And we got a working arrangement where we provide some of our idle sugar workers to go over to his place and give him a hand on his farm operations. And he would in return donate farm produce to our soup kitchen. So we have a good thing going with him. Everytime we are on strike.

PN: Would you say most of the Haleiwa farmers and merchants supported the '58 strike?

HS: Well, we went out and asked for donations and this and that. But we try to depend on ourselves, actually. As far as in the case of Gary, the fact that I'm a personal friend of his, well, he always did try to help us along, you see. But it was a give and take proposition where we help him with labor, farmhands. And then he in return will donate to our soup kitchen.

PN: Statehood came about in '59. What were your reactions to statehood?

HS: Well, I think statehood is a good deal for the fact that technically speaking, it made first class citizens of us. Prior to then, under the territorial set up, we didn't have the right to vote for members of Congress. Governor was appointed. But then, statehood actually changed all that, so we became one of the full-fledged states. And I felt that also made us first class citizens, too. So, I think it's a wonderful thing that statehood came to the people of the state of Hawaii.

PN: Did it have any personal effects on you?

HS: No, no. I welcome that development. And I think it was a good thing. And that's how I look at it today.

PN: I guess, during the '60's there was the Vietnam War and in the last tape you sang some peace songs. Could you give me your views on the Vietnam War?

HS: Yeah. Well, to begin with, America had no business getting ourselves
involved in the Vietnam War. It was a situation where as a result of the colonial period, France took over Indochina and ruled that territory for almost a hundred years. And with a trend toward self determination and self independence, all the so called backward nation. Well, the people of Vietnam was no exception. They wanted to have the right to decide their own fate, their own destiny, their own future. So they wanted to set up an independent sovereign nation and to throw out the French rulers. Well, the people fought in a war. They defeated the French government. The French government had to leave Indochina. And in the process, for some odd reasons, United States step into the picture and started playing internal politics in South Vietnam. We got ourselves involved so deeply that we had to fight a war, and that was a losing cause, because we were participating in a war that had no social justice or no justification at all. It was a war that we couldn't win, even though we had the military might and the power, because it was a wrong type of war and it was for the wrong type of reason and for the wrong type of cause.

PN: The Ewa mill closed in '68 and the Kahuku mill closed in '71. Did that affect Waialua in any way?

HS: No. Waialua is too isolated from either the Kahuku or the Ewa plantation. So that the closing of that two plantation didn't have any bearing on the Waialua Plantation set up. The only thing that Waialua Plantation benefited a bit was that they was able to utilize about half a dozen of the better workers from Kahuku Plantation. In other words, they provide a few job employment to the workers that was laid off at Kahuku Plantation. Over at Ewa when they merged with Waipahu, there was no lay off involved to begin with. But in the case of Kahuku Plantation, it wasn't a merger, but it was a matter of liquidating the entire sugar plantation. And what Waialua did was to offer about half a dozen jobs for the laid off workers from Kahuku Plantation. They took advantage of the situation in the sense that they picked up the better workers from Kahuku Plantation, so we got the better of the deal in the process.

PN: Can you compare your life now with your life thirty, forty years ago in terms of material wealth, happiness, freedom, relationships with other people in the community? I guess, relationships with the bosses and the workers?

HS: Well, I must admit that I'm a more mature individual now. And as an individual picks up more maturity, he tends to temper himself more. I don't think that I'm the same individual that I was some thirty, forty years ago when I was younger then. But, I think the important thing in my life is not my age, but it's a man's ideal principles and philosophy. So that, like I say, it's not the age that's important thing. I like to fight and I like to do what I believe is right. Not only for myself, but for everybody else. Actually, I feel that in a sort of a way, I'm an oddball in our society, because for one, I don't cherish material wealth. I think money is the last thing I care for anyway. As a matter of philosophy, I don't expect much in life. I don't intend to be a rich
man or a millionaire when I end up. And I feel that the real happiness I get in life is when I end up. And I feel that the real happiness I get in life is when I can help some other people besides myself. I certainly take a pleasure in lot of people that tends to want to help themself. Cause, in other words, the personal interest and welfare comes first. But like I said, maybe, I'm those oddball, I guess. I just don't feel that way in life. I feel that I'm one of the three billion people trying to survive here on this earth and I feel that instead of going about in life by myself that if I join together, by working together, I think we can accomplish the maximum results that way. So, that's how I am.

PN: You've got anything you want to say more? Or can we end...

HS: Oh, I think I said quite a bit, you know. I think I've been sort of erratic in spots. (Laughs) But, this is my first experience, actually, being interviewed in a situation like this. I sort of feel uncomfortable to tell you, honestly speaking. But I only hope that in the process that I did contribute a little to whatever cause you folks are working on.

PN: Oh, I think you helped us a lot. And I know I feel a bit nervous, you know, talking in front of this microphone.

HS: Yeah, I must admit it's a wonderful experience. I really enjoyed it.

END OF INTERVIEW
WAIALUA & HALEIWA
The People Tell Their Story

Volume II
KOREANS PUERTO RICANS

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