BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: ALFREDO SANTIAGO, retired foreman, Waialua Sugar Company

Alfredo F. Santiago, Puerto Rican-Portuguese, was born in Honolulu on May 12, 1908. His father came with his four brothers from Puerto Rico and married a Portuguese woman from the Big Island. Alfred grew up speaking both Spanish and English. His father died when Alfred was eight, leaving three younger children for Alfred and his mother to take care of. He quit school after the fourth grade and began working for Waialua Sugar Company in 1923.

The plantation sent Alfred to night school where he completed the eighth grade. After fifty years of working as a mule driver, locomotor brakeman and foreman, Alfred retired in 1973.

Alfred has six children and many grandchildren. He and Mrs. Santiago still live in Waialua.
NC: This is an interview with Mr. Alfredo Santiago at his home in Waialua. Today is July 21st, 1976. Mr. Santiago, thank you for letting me come to interview you. How are you feeling?


NC: Oh, that's good.

AS: You're welcome to come here to my house.

NC: Thank you. I'd like you to tell a little bit about yourself. Where were you born?

AS: Honolulu. May 12th, 1908.

NC: Where did your father come from?

AS: My father came from Puerto Rico.

NC: Do you know what town?

AS: No, I couldn't say. He came from Puerto Rico with his first wife. And then his first wife died. He had four children. One boy, four girls. Then he married my mother in Pauwilo.

NC: And where did your mom come from?

AS: Pauwilo. She was born in Pauwilo.

NC: That's the Big Island?

AS: Si, senora.

NC: (Laughs) We have to speak English. Okay. Now, do you have any idea what year your father came?

AS: No I couldn't say. Impossible.

NC: Do you know when your mother was born?
AS: I don't know either.

NC: You were born in Honolulu. Did you live in Honolulu for a little while?

AS: Yes. I lived in Honolulu.

NC: Do you remember anything about your childhood in Honolulu?

AS: As far as that, yes. My father was working in town for the water works. And then my uncle was working for the water works, too. Mercedes Santiago, eh.

NC: He was your father's brother?

AS: Si, si. Yes.

NC: (Laughs) How many brothers came with your father?

AS: My father had four brothers here.

NC: Did they all come together?

AS: Yeah. They all came together from Puerto Rico. Was Mercede, Tio Agustino, Tio Loreto, and Bernardo Santiago, my father.

NC: What was your mother's name?

AS: Rosa Santiago.

NC: Do you remember her maiden name?

AS: Well, as far as that....she was Ferreira, eh, from Pauwilo.

NC: Was she Puerto Rican also?

AS: No, Portuguese.

NC: Portuguese. Your father worked in the water works, Honolulu. Do you know what he did there? What type of work?

AS: Well, they used to dig these cesspools for the company there. I don't know what else he used to do, because, you know, I was small then, see.

NC: Yes. What age were you? How long did you live in Honolulu?

AS: I was eight years old when he died, you see. Because he died on 1916 when the War (World War I) just about ended. Before the War end, he died. He passed away.

NC: Were you in school when he died?
AS: Yes, I was in school.

NC: Do you remember what school you went to in Honolulu?

AS: Before he died, I used to go to Kalihi when I was small boy. And from Kalihi, graduated first grade and then go to Kaliihiwaena. And then from Kaliihiwaena I went and then I kept on going until my father, you know, passed away, see.

NC: What happened to the family when your father died?

AS: Well, that's a problem. Because the olden days, the women, they don't get married till one year. So my mother had to go to work. See, them days, the women don't go out shopping. Only the men. The olden days, the men do the shopping. They buy material for sew clothes and everything.

NC: I didn't know that.

AS: So my mother went work for Hawaiian Pine. Cannery. We was living very poor, you know, them days. She used to bring the pineapple core for me to eat with bread, see. The...

NC: How many children?

AS: Four of us.

NC: Four of you and how about the children from the first family? Where were they?

AS: Oh, they all big. They all married, already, eh.

NC: Oh, so they were gone.

AS: Yeah. Before that, my father brought from Puerto Rico, Pedro, Pola, Angela, America. There were four girls and one boy. Ellas estan.

NC: Where are they now?

AS: One is in town. Angie. And Pete, he's in the Mainland, Mountainview. And America, she's in south San Francisco.

NC: Are the other two dead?

AS: The other two died. Passed away.

NC: So, you were saying that your mother used to bring the pineapple cores?

AS: Yeah, for we eat. (laughs) We used to eat that. That time, they used to sell one loaf of bread five cents. No was cut. We had to cut 'em home.
NC: Yeah. And who took care of the children at home?

AS: Me, I was the oldest. I used to go school and then come home and take care the children. We were staying with my sister, eh. Angela. And, I don't know, we got into a little fuss with my mother and... put us out. So, we had one friend by the name of Tino. Puerto Rican man. And he took care us. Till my mother got married to Matias. After that, then Matias picked us up.

NC: Was Matias Puerto Rican?

AS: Si, senora.

NC: Yes. And where did he work?

AS: We came to Schofield for work, see. He was working up Schofield. And stood there for little while. Then, he came apply in the plantation here. And then he worked in the plantation for a while, see. Till he retired.

NC: Did you get to live on the plantation, then?

AS: Yeah. We was living in the plantation.

NC: Where did you live when he was working at Schofield?

AS: Right in Schofield. They had apartments over there for people that worked for the Schofield government.

NC: And then, around what year was that---do you remember that you moved to Waialua Plantation?

AS: Well, I work Waialua Plantation. I started 1923. So beyond that, I think, 1924, was up Schofield. 1924.

NC: Oh, wait a minute. He was working at Schofield. Then he got a job on the plantation.

AS: Yeah.

NC: Mr. Matias? And then, you started to work on the plantation in 1923.

AS: Yes.

NC: Okay. So, what kind of house did you get on the plantation? Do you remember?

AS: Well, the houses wasn't so bad. The house that we had three bedroom, parlor, and kitchen. Of course, the toilet was outside, you know. The olden days, eh.

NC: Yeah. Did the Puerto Ricans refer to the outside bathroom, toilet
with a special name?

AS: Well, they used to have the wash houses outside. The only time you had pipe in the kitchen was only for cooking. No such thing as that you could take a bath in the house. You had to take a bath in the wash house outside.

NC: Oh. Was the wash house close to you?

AS: Well, it was about maybe about ten feet away from the house.

NC: Was the wash house one for each house or is it...

AS: One for each house.

NC: Oh. So, it wasn't that you had to share it with a lot of people? It was private for you.

AS: Private.

NC: And was there anything else done in the wash house like the laundry?

AS: Wash clothes. The laundry, you know. And take a bath in there and then you come in the house.

NC: Now, how many were there in the family, when your mother married Mr. Matias?

AS: Four.

NC: Did Mr. Matias have any other children?

AS: No.

NC: So there were four of you, your mother and your stepfather, Mr. Matias. Six people.

AS: Yeah. He took care us till we all got married.

NC: Where did Mr. Matias come from?

AS: He came from Puerto Rico, too.

NC: He was born there?

AS: Yeah.

NC: Do you know what town he may have come from?

AS: No. (Chuckles) I didn't ask him, see. 'As was my mistake. To ask him where he came from. He was Mayorquin, see. He's from the white side of the Puerto Ricans. He had blue eyes, too. Yeah. He came from Puerto Rico. What part of Puerto Rico, I don't know. I never
ask him that question, see.

NC: Did he ever talk about his family back in Puerto Rico?

AS: Yeah, he used to talk to us little bit, but my father's families, some are still there. I think one is Mercedes Santiago. He's in Ponce, I think. He lives there. Because my brother, when he went to Puerto Rico, he met him. And they were talking about another family, see. And when he came here, he was a soldier. And he was camping right below---I mean, Schofield. The 13th Replacement. That's where the Puerto Ricans used to be, the soldiers. So, he came here to visit us.

NC: Which war was that?

AS: The second World War. Mercede. And my brother met him in Ponce. And he asked for how we were making out in Hawaii. Then he came visit us and all, see. But I never seen him ever since, see.

NC: Have you ever been to Puerto Rico?

AS: No. Never did.

NC: Do you know why either your father, Mr. Santiago, or your stepfather, Mr. Matias, did they ever talk about why they came?

AS: Well, they came on the immigration, you see. And when they came from Puerto Rico, they went straight to Hilo. See, they were immigrated to go to Hilo. And some would come to...you know, they were divided. So many go to certain plantations. So, they were shipped to Hilo. I don't know if the four brothers was shipped to Hilo. But, as far as I know, I think, two were shipped to Hilo. Mercedes and him. As far as I know. I don't know about Loreto and Tio Augustino. That, I don't know.

NC: Did those uncles come with a family or did they marry here?

AS: That, I don't know.

NC: Oh, okay.

AS: Tio Augustino is buried in the Pearl City graveyard over there. 'As where he's buried. And Loreto, he's buried up in the Mainland someplace. He passed away.

NC: As you grew up, were you aware of any of them....were their wives Puerto Rican ladies, or were they other...

AS: They were.

NC: They were Puerto Rican ladies?

AS: I remember that. They were all Puerto Ricans.
NC: I was just trying to see if they married here, if they already started marrying in the other...

AS: You be surprised, because, all of them, their wives died. And not one got (re) married. They lost their first wives. Only my father got married second time. But the other three brothers, no. They never got married. They just was married to one wife. That's all. My father, yeah. He got married twice. His first wife died, then he married my mother.

NC: When you moved to Waialua, did you go to school here?

AS: No. The only school I went to, Ewa. Then, I was a small boy here, see. And I started to work in the plantation. They was paying me twelve dollars and a half, a month.

NC: What was your first job?

AS: (Laughs) I was in the boy gang. They used to call 'em the boy gang. You know, you pick up the scrap of the cane and pile it up. With the womens. They had women with us together, see. And then we load the cane cars with the step ladder, eh. And from there, I rode up till I got into the harvesting. Driving mules. Hauling cane out, see. And I stood there for quite a while and then from there, I went to the locomotors as a brakeman. I stood there for a while. I went back to the harvesting and that's where I ended up.

NC: Oh. How about on the locomotives? Where did the locomotives start? Near the camps?

AS: Well, they had 'em down here by the mill. They had their round house you know, they had up to six, eh, the numbers. Six locomotives. From one to six.

NC: They would have six trains going? Was that a train?

AS: Yeah. Well, they had all the six working one time. The plantation.

NC: Yeah. Were there several cars to each one or was there one...

AS: Well, no see, they had labor cars to haul the labor in the morning.

NC: Oh. Can you describe the labor cars?

AS: Well, they had seats, eh. But now, you don't see them no more.

NC: No, we haven't seen them.

AS: They had seats on the labor cars. You know, where you turn the back-side either way, see.

NC: You're facing either way?
AS: Yeah, either way you like face. But they don't have them no more.

NC: Was it covered or was it open?

AS: No. No covers.

NC: It was open like the cane cars?

AS: Open, yeah. Well, had cane cars, too. They had them sideboard, see. They had two types. That you hammer the pin and the door falls off, see. And then, in the mill, well, they get these hooks that brings the cane down. Not like the system they get now. Now is different with the turnahauler, see. 'As where different now.

NC: Well, with the old system, the track went from the mill out to the fields?

AS: No, the cane cars used to go from the mill to the fields.

NC: Yeah. What I'm trying to say did they run on track?

AS: Oh yeah. Yeah.

NC: Okay. And what kind of track was it?

AS: That's portable tracks they call 'em. You know, the small tracks. They weigh about two fifty. The ones that turns. The crooks, they call. They go about three sixty for the one piece. And 260 for the straight rails, see.

NC: What does 260 mean?


NC: The weight of the rail.

AS: Yeah, they call 'em portable tracks.

NC: Was it a monorail? Was it one rail or was there two tracks?

AS: Double. Double. They get them tires holding the rails, eh. And then they link 'em up with shoes and then...in the fields, eh.

NC: So, the links were called shoes?

AS: Shoes, yeah. The shoes. They fit right in the stuff like that. And then they get one gang for doing that purpose only. Laying the rails and picking 'em up. Laying the rails and picking it...till you finish the field, see.

NC: Oh. So, each time that a field was going to be harvested, they laid the track?
AS: Mhm. That's right.

NC: About how many men would work in that kind of team?

AS: On the rail department, I think they had about, if I'm not mistaken, about 12 men, I think, with the foreman. Because some would be taking out and some would be laying, see.

NC: Was laying the track a job that required skill?

AS: Well, not as (much as) the strength.

NC: It required strength?

AS: Yeah. Because if you no more the strength, you couldn't lift 'em up and you couldn't grab 'em and lay 'em, see. You know, this young generation could never do that today. It's impossible.

(NC laughs)

AS: And they had all men. You know, grown up men. Married mens. Not young boys.

NC: The labor car...that would go out first? What order did they have the cars go out?

AS: Well, they go down the mill there and then the engines would take off to certain places with the labor, see. And then they distribute them. And then in the afternoon, the train goes there and picks them up.

NC: Okay. They distributed the labor.

AS: Yeah.

NC: Now, how many cars would that locomotive pull at one time?

AS: Oh, chee, chee, labor cars 'as only a small amount. But when you come to the cane cars, at the limit, I think, was about 65 she pull into the mill. All depends, see. If she's got a grade, well then you have to get another locomotive to give 'em a hand. And bring her out to the open where she could take the load by herself, see. And then they switch off. The other engine comes in and wait again. And she got to feed cars to the field. She goes to the side track, pick up the cars and feed to the fields so the field.....would take 'em in to the harvesting field. You know, lay 'em out for the man to load 'em again. See, they used to get ladders to load the cane. Hapai ko they used to call them, see. They had cut cane men, about a hundred and fifty. And the loading gang, they had about hundred and fifty too, see. They waiting. They get men and women. The women pile the cane for them and they load 'em on the cane cars, see.

NC: So, they had three people in the field. They had one to cut the cane,
the woman to put it together, and one to carry it to the cars.

AS: Well, see, 'as different division. The loading part is different gang. And the cutters is different. See, 'as fifty men to one gang. Cutting. So was three foremans. And on the loading side, 'as only one foreman take care that. The hundred fifty men. Because they got to turn in all their bangos--you know, 'as the ones they put the time down--and in the evening before they go home, they distribute them the bangos back again.

NC: What did the bangos say on it?

AS: Oh, the numbers. Mine was 9601, I think, was my bango, see. But then after a while, they change 'em to six double oh seven, see. (6007)

NC: (Laughs) Double oh seven? You and James Bond.

AS: (Chuckles) Six double oh seven, see. 'As was a Portuguese bango. They treated me like Portuguese.

NC: Oh, how could you tell?

AS: I don't know. But the first one I had was Puerto Rican bango. 9501, see. I don't know, they switch the thing and then...

NC: One of those numbers meant Puerto Rican and the other bango, one of those numbers meant Portuguese?

AS: Right. If you get six, is Portuguese. And then nine is Puerto Rican. And seven, they were Filipinos, see. I don't know the Japanese, under what number they came in, see. 13, I think. I don't know.

NC: Oh my. Was anybody superstitious about number 13 those days?

AS: No. I don't know. I'm not sure about that, see. But I know the Filipinos was seven. The Puerto Ricans were nine. And the Portuguese was six. The beginning of the numbers.

NC: The other children in your family (brothers and sisters), did they start to work on the plantation also?

AS: My brother Johnny work for the plantation. He work truck helper, tractor driver. He works for the plantation. We were only two brothers.

NC: Yeah. Did your mother work also?


NC: And what was the salary Mr. Matias got for his first job at the...

AS: $36 a month.
NC: Did all the men get that kind of pay?

AS: Yeah. Well, you see, like the plantation, they were giving free house, free water, free electricity, free kerosene. If you get kerosene stove, they give you free kerosene. And if you got a wood stove, they give you free wood. You see, but up to the time that the union took over, then everybody had to pay, see. Then, we came to more remodeled houses like this. This new buildings that the plantation started to make for the labor, eh. So, then, we had to pay house, pay electricity, pay water.

NC: Yeah. How far did $36 go in those days?

AS: Well, them days was cheap. One bag of flour was 75¢.

NC: How many pounds in the bag?

AS: 75 pounds.

NC: Oh my! It was a penny a pound.

AS: And then the rice, hundred pounds, was three dollars and a half a bag. But not today. Today is thirty dollars. See, how many times more for one bag of rice. And a bag of flour, I don't know how much run. Maybe $16, $17. That I couldn't say it, because I never did buy flour, see.

NC: Speaking of flour, did your mother bake bread?

AS: Yeah, that's right. In Waialua, yes. While we were living here, she used to bake her own bread. Then the company, Waialua, used to make ovens for the people to cook. Then, maybe, they supply one oven to so many houses. And some houses had their own oven. They make their own, see. They keep their own oven in their own yard. But that good oven, so you could do anything with 'em. You know, bread, roast meat, you do anything.

NC: Who built the ovens?

AS: Plantation. But they had some individual people, they used to build their own, see. They build 'em with bricks, eh.

NC: Yeah. Do you know if that was a particular ethnic group that introduced that kind of oven?

AS: Well, they did it more, because them days, lot of people had kerosene stoves and there were nothing to, you know. They had little ovens, but they figure the ovens would have been better. Made from bricks. They had better results out of that, see.

NC: Was there anything that you could use on top of the stove to bake?

AS: Well, they had little....the stoves that they had had oven, you see.
Some people, they used to bake 'em right in that stoves, but then the plantation came out and they build the ovens for them, see. One oven take care so many houses. But then, you had to discuss what day you going cook bread, so you all come in. And the next lady come in. Maybe, the next day, she cooks bread. The whole thing could not cook bread in one time. They had to take chances with that oven, see. That's why some of them had this wood stoves where they used to cook their own bread.

NC: Okay. Then, did the plantation ever get to the point where they gave everybody their own oven outside?

AS: No. No. There were so many houses to one oven. And then, after a while, some guys, they build their own, see. They build their own ovens, just to make sure that they could use it whenever they wanted.

NC: And what happened to those ovens? We haven't seen any.

AS: All destroyed. Only one house, today--I don't know if it still yet--this Vierra. She's the only one that has a oven in the yard. I don't know if still there yet.

NC: Where does she live?

AS: She lives down here by Mill Six.

NC: Oh, Mrs. Vierra. She's Portuguese or Puerto Rican?

AS: Portuguese. She's the only one, I think, that she's got an oven in her yard still yet.

NC: How did children behave in those days?

AS: Oh, terrific! You can't compare them today. Uh uh. Impossible.

NC: (Laughs) You mean you were never naughty?

AS: No.

(NC laughs)

AS: You couldn't go out of the way. You have to walk the string. When your parents call you, "Yes, Dad." "Yes, Mom." No such thing as "What?" No more that stuff. Uh uh. Today you couldn't. No can. Today is hard.

NC: Did you have any greeting? For example, when you got up in the morning, was there any particular way you were supposed to greet your mother and your father?

AS: Well, always ask the blessing.
NC: Yes. Do you remember how you used to ask?

AS: (Laughs) Well, if I going say it, I going say in Spanish, see.

NC: Right. That's what I mean. I can write it out for them.

AS: Yeah. "Hecheme la bendicion, Mama." And "Hecheme la bendicion,"—even if it's a stepfather, you have to tell that, see. And when you go to sleep, "Good night," you know. They understand that word, you see. "Good night." And they used to tell you "Good night" see.

NC: How did you used to say it?

AS: In Spanish?

NC: Si.

AS: "Pase buenas noches," see and I used to go to bed, see. But now, no. They no respect you. They pass by you and just like they pass by nobody.

NC: Did you try to teach your children to...

AS: Oh yeah. As far as my children, I get no say. Because if they get up in the morning and they pass me, I make them go back. They want to know why. I tell 'em go back. Then, if pass again, go back till finally, they discuss themselves in their room, "Why Daddy telling us to come back?" So, one told 'em, "Eh. I know what. You got to tell 'em good morning." See, but then, we was more on English side, see. So, when they come, "Good morning, Daddy." "Good morning."

NC: In English, they didn't ask you for the blessing?

AS: They never did in Spanish. They never knew. I was taught through my mother and father, but, like us, we talk to them all English, see. All English.

NC: So, when you went to English, you lost the custom?

AS: Yeah. That was it. (Laughs)

NC: I know that happens. The same thing with the blessing happened in my family.

AS: Yeah.

NC: My children think it's beautiful. Now they say, "Why didn't you teach us?" I just didn't think of it in English. Now, did you have a chance to play with the children in the camp?

AS: Well, them days, we no more---no such thing as chance to play. You got to work, period. And then when you come home, you tired. There's something to be done in the yard, you know, that you couldn't be
playing and running around. Till 'as grow up, then, that was different. I never did smoke until I got married. No such thing as smoke cigarettes. My mother never bought me one pack of cigarettes.

NC: Why did you start when you were married?

AS: Because that was in our custom, is that 'as a respect that you cannot smoke until you get married.

NC: But did you want to smoke?

AS: Well, I wanted, but I couldn't. I could not.

NC: If you didn't have the habit before, why did you choose to start?

AS: Well, because I thought I was married already so I could do what I wanted, see.

NC: Uh huh. (Chuckles)

AS: There was no such thing as my mother would say, oh, this, or my stepfather would say that I could not.

NC: Okay. Then, after you were married, they wouldn't say anything about whether you should smoke or not. But, did your parents offer some kind of advice? Or did they talk to you? Did they give you guidelines about marriage?

AS: Well, as far as my mother, she told me why I wanted to get married so young, see. So, I never think of it. But I'm not sorry, you see. I got married and up till today, I raise my children. July 18, I made fifty years married with my wife. And I get no say about her, because she's a good cook. She's Portuguese, but she cooks all-Spanish foods. No such thing as, you know, on the other way. But for anything in Spanish, she's terrific.

NC: Spanish and Puerto Rican?

AS: Puerto Rican food, yeah.

NC: I just wondered, you know, if there was advice that parents would give a young couple. The young people who are about to get married.

AS: Oh, yeah. My mother always told me, she say, "You make sure that you doing the right thing. Because after you married, you no sense you change your mind. Might as well hang on with what you got." So I told her, "Yes." So far, thanks to God, I'm still married.

NC: How old were you when you got married?

AS: About 18. My wife was about 16. I thought I wouldn't make it a go, but I did. I did. I thanks to God for giving me the opportunity to reach here where I am today.
NC: Was it very difficult because you were so young? How much money were you earning when you got married?

AS: When I got married, only $36.

NC: You were earning a man's salary?

AS: Man's salary, already, see, when I got married. Then, I wasn't getting twelve dollars and a half. I was getting a man's salary then. $36 a month.

NC: And did you get a house for yourself?

AS: No. I was staying with my mother.

NC: Now, you said that in your mother and father's earlier years, that the man did the shopping. Now, when you got married, was that still the same?

AS: Well, as far as that, yes. My wife don't care to go shopping. I always go out and do my shop—you know, make the order for the house and everything what they need. And everything she need something, she let me know and I go get it, see. But not that I would stop her from doing it. She was welcome to go out shopping if she wants to.

NC: How much shopping did you do at a time?

AS: One time. For the month.

NC: Where did you shop?

AS: Well, I had a Chinese store down here that I used to go shopping all the time, see. Then, the Chinese store broke away. Then I went to one Japanese store.

NC: Who owned the Chinese store? Do you remember?

AS: Was Ah Leong.

NC: Was there a plantation store?

AS: No. Private store. You know, business stores.

NC: But did the plantation also have a plantation store?

AS: They had a store.

NC: Yeah, but you didn't buy....

AS: (Laughs) Well, that time, see, the plantation they only give you so much allowance. And you couldn't go beyond that, see. If you go beyond that, they stop you. And then you know what you get in your envelope. Two dollars. You see. That's all. They take the rest
of the money. But they only give you two dollars. From your pay. But them days, you know, was all free. Everything free. No such thing as you have to pay house, water, electricity. All free.

NC: So, then, did Mr. Ah Leong give you more credit than the plantation would give you?

AS: Not exactly. You see, the plantation, they deduct that money. But the most you would go up to about $65 a month, you see. But then, you would be in debt for a while. Until you go continue cutting down until you get there, see.

NC: And then after Mr. Ah Leong shut the store, then, you went to a Japanese store? Who was the owner?

AS: No, we went to plantation.

NC: Plantation and the Japanese store? You shopped at both places?

AS: Yeah. Then the Plantation sold out. But, I still continued with the Japanese fellow. Hiroshi (Fujioka) Yeah. His store was burn by somebody and then he move to the store where his father was running. So, he still working on his father's old store.

NC: Was that in Waialua or Haleiwa?

AS: Waialua. He takes care all Waialua people. He's nice guy. I get no say about him. He treats the people nice. He gives you credit, you know, like the olden days. In town they had a store they call Big Ah Leong. 'As where the Puerto Ricans used to go by their foods. All in Big Ah Leongs in town. That used to be King Street someplace. And they used to go there and buy all their foods. Now, Big Ah Leong used to give each guy when they go pay him, maybe a shirt and a pants. To the Puerto Ricans when they go pay him of the food. Because he used to give them credit. So, he had all the Puerto Ricans buying from him, see, in town. So, everytime they go pay him off, he either give 'em a pair of pants and a shirt for work. So 'as why they all used to go there and buy, because they know they were getting something on return, you see.

NC: Speaking of clothes, did you have to buy your own work clothes?

AS: Yeah. As far as that, yes.

NC: If you wanted Sunday clothes, could you go to a store and buy the clothes?

AS: Well, yeah, but was little too expensive, eh. But, of course, them days, people in the plantation, they no used to go with suits or suit pants or.....you know. They go normal way of dressing, you know. Maybe a clean pants and a clean shirt. They used to go to church. As long as you go neat, you didn't have to go with a suit and a necktie, see. Now, today, is little more....identify you know, that
you got to go. But still, yet, you see guys with aloha shirt and a pair of pants, they go anyplace. They go with slippers, now, you know see.

NC: Yeah, I know. Did you ever have to buy a suit?
AS: I don't know what is buy a suit.
NC: No kidding. (Laughs)
AS: I got married (Laughs) with a pants. Suit pants, though. And a coat. It was issued to me. So 'as the way I got married. In Waialua Church.
NC: What do you mean issued to you?
AS: Somebody gave it to me. But, it was a new pants and a new coat that was given to me for get married, see.
NC: Mr. Santiago, how was Mrs. Santiago dressed for your wedding?
AS: Just a common dress.
NC: Okay. And was there a chance to have a party or anything like that?
AS: No. No such thing. My mother just had some chicken, you know, stew. And we ate. The godfather and the godmother and my mother and my stepfather and me and my wife. And then the ring was ten dollar ring.
NC: A lot of money in those days.
(Laughter)
NC: Okay. How about the furniture then when you were living in your mother's house. What kind of furniture would the...
AS: Well, them days, the plantation supply the furniture, see. The beds were wood. Wooden beds. And then the chairs were benches. That's plantation used to supply it, see.
NC: Now, when you got married, did the plantation give you like a double bed, or....
AS: Yeah. They give us a double bed, see. And they gave us one bench. Then my mother had their own bed, too, see.
NC: Yeah. What kind of mattress did the wooden bed have?
AS: Well, the mattress them days, you no buy mattress. You just go cut grass and fill 'em up, see. Dry the grass, first and then you fill it up. And then my mother used to sew the ends of it and then goes back on the bed again.
NC: Oh. When you were younger, did you have the same kind of mattress?

AS: Yeah. When I was a boy with my father, yes. Same. No such thing as iron bed or something. Wooden bed. And then we used to go out and cut the grass and dry it. Fill it up. 'As was in Kalihi then. I was a young boy. And then when you come from school, you couldn't go play. You had to go haul water from the river and fill up this vinegar barrels, you know, big ones. 'As was for cooking water. And we used to use that Kalihi water river from the river, now. And then, when you finish with that, by the time you finish, it's dark. Then, the next day you got to go cut wood for cook. Guava wood. You know, dry guava. Go and get it and pile it up in the house for my mother to cook.

NC: You said guava wood. Did your mother ever use the guavas?

AS: No. They never did. They only just the wood to cook. That's all.

NC: Did your father and your stepfather ever talk about guava in Puerto Rico?

AS: No, they never did. Only thing is they wanted is the job done. No such thing as go to play and something. No, no. Now days, you get everything, the kids, you know. They get play football, baseball, but them days, no. So such thing as play.

NC: Did you use any other fruits? Fruit, you know, in the house. Did you eat fruit, a lot of fruit in those days?

AS: No, them days, the only thing you used to eat is mangos. 'As all. Most used to go around and get it. Mangos.

NC: Did they ever talk about how mangos were used in Puerto Rico?

AS: No, they never did.

NC: And they never made any mango dishes that you...

AS: No, no. Nothing.

NC: Okay. Mr. Santiago, let's talk about the work day. About what time did people in your house have to get up?

AS: Well, my mother used to get up 3 o'clock in the morning. No alarm clock now. Just a pocket watch. She used to get up 3 o'clock in the morning.

NC: Why did she get up that early?

AS: To do the cooking.

NC: What kind of cooking did she do that time?
AS: Well, she used to regardless, maybe rice and whatever you supposed to take to eat with the rice. And then, she called you maybe about 4 o'clock in the morning and make your ready to get out and go to work. Them days, we used to start 6 o'clock in the morning. Work and get out 4:30 in the evening. That was ten hours and a half work. And they give you half an hour lunch.

NC: So your mother used to cook breakfast and lunch. What did you eat for breakfast?

AS: Well, breakfast, before I leave the house, 'as when you take a cup of coffee and maybe some bread with, you know, butter, or something and then we go to....I wasn't a heavy eater in the morning.

NC: Where did the coffee come from?

AS: Well, most time coffee used to come that....(Laughs) some of us, we used to go pick it up, see.

NC: Where?

AS: Up in the mountains. And then we used to fix 'em home. You know, dry 'em and then my mother used to roast them. And then she used to grind 'em with a grinder and then she makes powder out of it. See, not like now. More on the powder side. And then she used to get this strainer, see. She make the hot water and put the coffee inside. So many spoons. And she got another tea kettle where she pour it and run the water through that bag and then makes coffee. And then she puts it away in the stove, see.

NC: So the coffee strainer was made of cloth?

AS: Right.

NC: And where in the mountains? Where exactly?

AS: Way up in the hills.

NC: Where exactly? I want to go see it.

AS: Oooo! That's a rough place to go.

NC: Where can you find it?

AS: Way up in the mountain. Oooo! Was way up.

NC: In which side? Waialua?

AS: Waialua. We used to go up. Way up. Go pick it up. Put 'em in bags and my stepfather had a horse and then, we used to load 'em on a horse, bring 'em down. Then, after a while, of course, the coffee started to come from Kona and all that, see. They used to raise up in Kona. 'As from where the first coffee came, started to come into
Hawaii from Kona.

NC: Those coffee trees are still there? In the mountains?

AS: Oh, yeah. They still there.

NC: Do you go get coffee from there now?

AS: No, not now. Not now.

NC: Why not?

AS: Because, why, you buy it in the store now. Them days was better off to pick it and make it than go out in the store and buy it.

NC: What did she used to pound it into?

AS: No pounding. Just grind.

NC: To make it a powder? Oh.

AS: She had the grinder, eh, where they grind the coffee.

NC: Was that grinder home made, or did you buy it in the store?

AS: No, you buy it from the store, see. And then, you just put so much at a time. It's got a pocket like, eh. And then, you grind it. You cut 'em down to how thin you want 'em. The more you tied it, the thinner she gets, see, when you grinding. See, my mother used to roast their own. She used to roast their own coffee.

NC: Did you ever see the big pestle and mortar?

AS: No.

NC: She used to roast the coffee and grind it? Okay. How did she get the beans out of the berries?

AS: Oh, they used to put 'em in water. And then they run 'em through some kind of...you know they get some kind of sticks. Maybe, about so far that they seed could drop through, see. And then, they run 'em through there that the skin comes out. And then, they put 'em in some kind of trays and they dry it.

NC: How long did it take to dry? Do you remember?

AS: Well, it takes quite a while. And then, they put 'em in sacks and they pound 'em to get the skin off, see.

NC: What did the pounder look like?

AS: Well, it's a stick. They hit the bag to get the peels off, see. But now, it's all different, eh. And then, after they get the peels
off, then, they roast 'em. They dried up and roast 'em. They use little sugar, though, to roast that, see.

NC: They would add a little sugar in the roasting process?

AS: Yeah, yeah. In the coffee.

NC: Did your mother have a special kind of pan to roast it in?

AS: Yeah, one pot. It's cast iron pot. They used to use just for that.

NC: She saved it just for that?

AS: Yeah. To roast the coffee. But them days, they used to use most the olden days, cast iron pots. They used to use most cast iron pots. Not the way they use now aluminum, see. Now, this aluminum pots came out and stainless steel and all that stuff. But most was cast iron before. Frying pans, everything.

NC: Do you have any of those pots left?

AS: No, I don't have now. No more.

NC: I only asked because then I would have asked if you did any special cooking in them.

AS: No.

NC: When your wife does Puerto Rican cooking now, what kind of pots does she use?

AS: Well, it's aluminum.

NC: So, back to the work day, then. You would have a light breakfast. You would take your lunch and you would go to the labor car?

AS: Mhm. Well, we used to walk to the--that when we used to be a brakeman here, I used to walk to the round house, they call it, where the locomotors are waiting, see. And from there, we got to go with the locomotor, pick up the labor. We got to be there, see. Two brakemens, one fireman, and the engineer, see.

NC: Oh, so the car went around to pick up the workers?

AS: They used to come up here. And then, from here they go back again, see. Then, from there they go to the fields.

NC: Well, were those different camps?

AS: Well, they had different camps, so different places the engines go pick up the labor.

NC: Okay. I guess what I mean was did the laborer go to one place where
he got picked up?

AS: Well, they had stations where the train go so far and then from there he starts coming. So you got to be there before the train leaves, because, otherwise, you stay back. You out.

NC: Then you would have to walk over to the field where you were supposed to work?

AS: Walk. Well, if you could walk. Because it's far, eh.

NC: How far?

AS: Oh, all depend where they harvesting, see. Where they cutting cane. All depend. If it's near, not too bad, but if it's far, how you going to get there? You just got to stay home, that's all. Wait for the next day to go to work.

NC: And would you lose that day's pay?

AS: Oh, yes. You not going to get paid if you stay home.

NC: Okay, when you were working in the field, before you were a brakeman and before you were on the locomotor, how were you dressed?

AS: Well, we used to dress with regular working clothes. You know. You know sailor moko pants is what they call. As the kind they call Levi's now. They get the name. But we used to call 'em that, see.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

NC: Now suppose you got thirsty while you were working. How did you get water?

AS: As far as the field, you got to carry your own. You had to carry your own water. And then, they had men that go out with the cans for pick up water in the nearest place that they could get 'em. Five gallon cans, eh. And they had their own cups made. Then, they distribute the water to the men. Up to a certain time, and then 'at's all.

NC: Now, suppose you need to go to the bathroom?

AS: (Laughs) You pick your place where you want to go.

NC: How did you know it was lunch time?

AS: Well, they blow the whistle. Or either the foreman would tell you when to eat and when to go back work.

NC: Did you have your lunch right there with you or had you left it someplace?
AS: Well, the guy that distribute your water, he brings the lunch cans 
and put it as close as he can to the gang. So when comes lunch time, 
you just walk there and pick up your lunch can.

NC: Did you always get your own lunch?

AS: Oh yes.

NC: Did you have your name on it or something?

AS: No, we knew our own bags, eh. Which is ours. Everybody knew what 
they supposed to pick up, see.

NC: Did you ever exchange food?

AS: Well, we used to sometime get together and exchange.

NC: Do you eat everything or are you a fussy eater or do you eat only 
Puerto Rican food?


NC: Mr. Santiago, when we've been talking and I've learned a little bit 
about you, I know that you're a good musician. How did you learn 
your music?

AS: Well, I learn that with friends of mine when I was younger, I used to 
follow them. And kept learning, learning until I got where I am today. 
So, today, we have seven in a group. We are called Santiago's 
Troubadors. Get my son plays the tenor. My nephew Alfredo plays the 
guitar. Raymond Santiago, he plays the congo drums. My grandson 
Ernest plays the small drums. My nephew Junior Cruz plays the 
marimba, and I play the guiro and my son play the maracas.

NC: I understand you play Puerto Rican music.

AS: Yeah, that's right. All...

NC: How did you learn the Puerto Rican music?

AS: Well, my son, he used to play drums before. He used to be with some 
Puerto Rican music players. But, then, after a while, he started to 
fool around with the tenor and then, he picked up the tenor, and then 
he started to organize. Then, he came in to all Santiago, see.

NC: Then, was it those old friends of yours who played Puerto Rican music 
and you learned from them?

AS: Yeah. This Domingo Mendez, he was the guiro player and another 
Puerto Rican fellow they used to call Bill Shine from Aiea--he used to 
play the guitar. Main, Portuguese boy, he used to play the accordion. 
Them days, they no had tenors like now. Most go on the accordion 
side and guitars, eh. But, he died already, the Portuguese boy. Used
to be a good accordion player. And then, Fiol, he used to be a accordion player, too. Fiol was about the best in Hawaii. Accordion player.

NC: Mr. Santiago, do you remember the names of some of the old songs that you used to play?

AS: Well, I know the two only, that I can think of now is they used to play this "Mama yo Quiero". 'As some kind Portuguese, but they used to play 'em, you know, Puerto Rican.

NC: Yeah. Puerto Rican style.

AS: And they used to play "Mani."

NC: (Laughs) That's Cuban.

AS: Yeah, well, they used to play that in Puerto Rican.

NC: Oh, it was very popular.

AS: Yeah. And they used to play this....what the name of that song? "Josefina" Puerto Rican song.

NC: Did you play any danza?

AS: "La Cucaracha." We used to play that, too, see. And Valse and they used to play all that. They were good on that.

NC: Do you remember any danza?

AS: Well, they used to play 'em. But what they play, I couldn't say that that's valse or danza, but I understand more or less what they playing, see.

NC: Did all the musicians learn by ear?

AS: All ear. 'As God's truth. All ear. No such thing as paper and stuff to read before they start playing. All ear.

NC: Did any of the oldtimers take an interest in teaching the younger kids, or did the young kids...

AS: Well, you have to learn by your own way. Them, they no teach you. Just got to learn, that's all.

NC: By being around them.

AS: By being around with the musicians. Where they play, they go. And maybe a guy said, "I want to play." But if you couldn't play, you couldn't go play it right there and then, because they playing to parties like that. It's hard. You see, you got to go where they are
practicing and then, if you like learn, well, then you can learn, see.

NC: Where did you get your instrument, the guichero?

AS: Oh, that came from Mexico. Well, one I made my own. It took me one year to make 'em.

NC: How did you make it?


NC: Well, what did you pick out first?

AS: I pick 'em when was dry.

NC: It's a gourd?

AS: Yeah.

NC: And where did you pick it?

AS: Well, up here in the hills. I found 'em, you know, growing and I picked it up. I watch 'em till he come dry and then I brought 'em home. And then I open 'em. I mark with soda water cover, the holes for you put your fingers. Then I cut it slow and try get the meat as much as can. And put 'em someplace where the ants work 'em over, see. Then after get real dry, then get everything out. Then, you file it. I mark with a pencil, eh, the marks, the lines. Then I follow with the file.

NC: And what did you used to scratch it with?

AS: Well, you get this stainless steel wires, eh. You make your stick and you run 'em inside and then, you put about six the most, eh. Six bars, so that you can get the noise.

NC: You have a little wooden handle with the six...

AS: The irons go inside that.

NC: Alright. How did the other people get their instruments?

AS: Well, the guitar, it was made. And accordions, some came from Germany, like that. A good accordion come from Germany. They were good accordions.

NC: Was there a music store to buy these things?

AS: Well, that I don't know how they get 'em, see. But, I know, maybe, some music stores, they had it. And they go there and buy.

NC: So, Waialua didn't have a music store?
AS: No. They didn't have nothing. All was in Honolulu, the music stores. No such thing as over here in Kawaii. No more music store.

NC: And the plantation store, did it ever sell any instruments?

AS: No, no, no. Not exactly that they sell instruments to people.

NC: Did they ever sell, like, a ukulele?

AS: Well, certain stores here, yeah. They sell the ukuleles.

NC: But not the plantation store?

AS: No.

NC: Did the Puerto Ricans have parties?

AS: Yeah, they had. They had these guys come out and play for them. But most, these people, they used to play most for fun. Go out and they drink and eat and they have their fun. But today, they charge you.

NC: The fun was in playing music.

AS: Right. They wanted fun is play the music.

NC: Did your children learn the music... well...

AS: By watching others play.

NC: Okay. Same way you did. But now your group plays for money now.

AS: Yeah, few dollars. (laughs) Few dollars that they go 'and charge.

NC: Well, I think that's good. (laughs)

AS: Because they got to buy strings and upkeep the instruments, eh.

NC: Where, now, are you asked to play?

AS: Oh, we play most weddings, birthdays. You know, guys that they like parties for wedding, like that. They come and see my boy and he let the boys know and then they practice. One day before they go out and play.

NC: Is this mostly around here or is it all over the island?

AS: All over the islands, they go?

NC: Where was the last place they played, for example?

AS: The last one they played down Waimanalo. And then, they played down here in Haleiwa for one party. For one Filipino guy. They like
the Puerto Rican music now. Filipinos. So they hired us to go play for them.

NC: Mr. Santiago, did you live in a Puerto Rican camp?

AS: Yes. We live in a Puerto Rican camp. They had Puerto Rican camp. They had Japanese camp. They had Spanish camp. They had Portuguese camp. And Filipino camp. They had about five, six camps, anyway. But they had some small camps here and there out of the community here. Most out in the small camps they had to keep man for irrigate, you know, close to the fields where they work and they come home again.

NC: How many Puerto Rican families were there in the camp?

AS: Oh, they had quite a bit. Plenty.

NC: Fifty families?

AS: They had about fifty. Fifty to sixty families in Waialua.

NC: Did they have big families, each one?

AS: Well, all depend how much they had in the family. Some had three. Some had four. All depend. But they had pretty good. They had about fifty to sixty families in Waialua.

NC: Were there any families with ten or more children?

AS: Ten or more, I don't know about that. Ten or more, I couldn't say. But as far as eight or six or seven, yes, they had.

NC: Now, did they speak Spanish, or....

AS: Well, them days, yes. All Spanish. All Puerto Rican they speak. No such thing as English. All Puerto Rican.

NC: Was there much mingling with the Spanish camp? Getting together with the Spanish?

AS: Well, they used to get together all themselves. You know, Puerto Ricans, they get together and they have parties and all. But no such thing as English.

NC: How about mixing with the people from the Spanish camp or the Portuguese camp?

AS: They never mix too much with the Spanish and the Portuguese lad. Puerto Ricans used to be under they do their own parties. They take care their own. They speak their own language. They never did go out in...

NC: But Spanish spoke the same language. About how many Spanish families...
AS: They had their own camps. They had about....I'd say about eighty to ninety families.

NC: All Spanish?


NC: About what year do you think there were about eighty or ninety Spanish?

AS: Back of 1919 or 1920, like that. 'As when the majority of the Puerto Rican, Spanish, Portuguese were in Waialua.

NC: Those must have been the Puerto Ricans who came 1900, 1901.

AS: That's right. That's right. 1900s.

NC: In 1921, there was another big group brought over from Puerto Rico. Do you know if any of them came to this plantation?

AS: Well, the only ones that I know was when we went to the Mainland and they had immigration from the Mainland here to Hawaii agian. Not from Puerto Rico. They had from the Mainland.

NC: What year was this?

AS: I was 12 years old. No, was 11 years old when I went to the Mainland for visit my sister, and we stood there one year. So, when the immigration came here....so that only 11, 12. I was about 12 years old when we left there for Hawaii.

NC: So that was 1920, that....

AS: Yeah, somewhere....I was 11 when I went. See, if I was born 1908, from there you can figure out.

NC: So, it was 1919 when you went with....

AS: Yes. Somewhere around there. When my father died, we went, see. My sister took us there. So, I was 11 years old. And then, from there, we came back, see.

NC: How did you travel in those days?

AS: Well, my sister sent us---get us. And we stood there one year.

NC: Did you go on a ship?

AS: Yeah. On a ship. No such thing as planes them days. And then I went there. We stood there one year with my sister. And then I told my mother we came back to Hawaii. And then we came back and stood with America.
NC: How long did it take to get there by ship in those days?

AS: Was seven days, I think was. Little more than that, I think.

NC: What was the size of the ship? Do you remember?

AS: I think it was a Matsonia, if I not mistaken.

NC: It was a Matsonia? Do you remember anything about going over? Do you remember anything about the trip itself? Or the trip coming back?

AS: Well, my mother went to the Mainland. But, then, she wanted to leave me with my brother for me to go school here. He wanted to send me to St. Louis College, but I told him I wanted to go see my mother off, and I run away with her again. I took off with her to the Mainland. And then, from there, we came back again, see. Came back from there, but I never continue school no more.

NC: So, when you came back, then, later your mother married Mr. Matias.

AS: That's right. Yes. But, see, my stepfather sent some money to my mother to come over to Hawaii again, see. So she only had enough money to bring two. So me and my sister had to stay back in the Mainland, see. But the immigration allowed her to come in with a partner like, see. But she wasn't married to that guy, see. But my stepfather figure he had enough money, but then they guys wanted to come but my mother said no, she had enough money to make the two only. So, we stowed away, me and my sister, when we went see her in the boat. We stowed away with my mother, see. And when we got to Honolulu, they were counting how many people came in the immigration. But we used to stick our heads out and they count two too much. So (Laughs) well, I was figuring that if they catch up with us, they would send us back to the Mainland. But no. Then the guys, they got tired counting. They said, "Oh, turn 'em loose." So, when I got out on the pier, on the walk, I took off. I got away from my mother and I caught the streetcar. And I went to my sister's house. I figured I was safe there. That nobody could take me back to the Mainland, see. So then, my mother came with my sister and stood there for a while till we found, you know, my stepfather came and pick us up. Then, he brought us to Waialua, see. And then, 'as when I started over here. But I never go school, never since.

NC: Did stowing away make you afraid to go to school?

AS: No, not that exactly, but I wanted to come...

NC: (Laughs) Did you think you would get caught?

AS: I wanted to come home with my mother, see. I wanted my mother. See, 'as the main thing, see. So I figured no enough money, so I stowed away. Me and my sister, see. My mother never eat in the boat. Her food, she used to give us to eat. And that's about seven days, eh, in
the water that we have to stay. Now the boats are little faster.

NC: Where did you hide?

AS: In the bathroom.

(Laughter)

NC: Didn't anybody else get to use the bathroom?

AS: Well, couldn't help it. She no used to eat to give us the food. She suffered seven days without eating.

NC: My goodness.

AS: She used to drink only coffee and, you know, the rest of the food, we used to eat 'em. She never did eat it. She used to feed us. Me and my sister.

NC: To go back to what we were talking about--you think that the different camps, even though they had the same language like the Spanish camp and the Puerto Rican camp...

AS: Well, see...that's right.

NC: They didn't mix much?

AS: No, most the Spanish camp, they used to speak their own Spanish language. And the Puerto Ricans, they speak their own Puerto Rican language. Portuguese was the same, see. And the Filipinos, same. Us children, we could not run around too much in the camps because the other boys would like fight and so we had to do something to stay away from there, see.

NC: Now, when it came to working in the fields, the groups...were the groups all one ethnic group or did the gangs have different people?

AS: Well, they had different jobs. The different positions you do, see, like my brother-in-law Alfonso, he used to work in the steam plow. But that he's in a different position where he drives that steam plow, see. And then, the cut cane was most Puerto Ricans. And then, the Filipinos had their own gang. And Puerto Ricans were their own gang. This guy, Antone Decoit, used to take care the Puerto Ricans. And then, 'as how he learned how to talk Puerto Rican, this Portuguese foreman. Because he had all Puerto Ricans working with him. Cutting cane. And then, when they finish cut cane, they used to go make lines, like that, to plant cane. All Puerto Ricans, see. He had his own Puerto Rican gang. He never like nobody else but Puerto Ricans, this old man Decoit.

NC: Why did he like the Puerto Ricans?

AS: I don't know. He used to like them, because he said they were good
workers. I don't know.

NC: After you got married and your children were born, did your children used to play with other children?

AS: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

NC: Did it change...

AS: But they never get into mischiefs, because I used to talk to them all the time. 'As one thing, you know, I used to advise my children always in the table when we eating, 'Be good. Try not touch nothing from anybody. Don't steal, because I don't like that. And don't lie.' 'As one thing I don't like. When they lie to me. Might as well you tell the truth, you better off than lie. Because I cannot go to sleep without getting the right answer. So, if they are give me the wrong the answer, I feel not satisfied. I'm going till I'm going get it. So after I get the right answer, then I can sleep, because I know 'as true what he said. So, they never did lie to me. That's true. And you can question every one of them and they'll tell you the same thing. They could not lie. Uh uh.

NC: And what school did your children go to?

AS: Waialua school. Waialua High. And they bin all graduated Waialua High, too.

NC: Did you ever meet the teachers?

AS: Well, as far as meeting the teachers, these teachers today and before, they different. The teachers from before, they make you study. 'As how you learn. See, I only went to the fourth grade and my grandson graduate twelfth grade and he don't know what I know. And I only went till fourth grade. But twelfth grade, they too much playing. They don't care to study, see. And then, the teachers, they afraid to punish the children, because the parents go over there and grumble with them and that's wrong. You know. Me, I went up to the school and "Try straighten up my children right in school." I tell them. Step daughter that I had going to school here, the teacher wrote me a letter. And then she said that she didn't have time to make her lessons and all. So, I went there and I straight her up. I told her. I call in the office and I told 'em. "That was true was what stated in the letter?" She said, "No, 'as lies." And I seen her chewing gum, so I didn't say nothing. When I took her back to the class, I made her swallow the gum. Because when you go to school, you supposed to listen to the teacher because the teacher is your mother, see, up to the time that you leave school. After you leave school, well, she's out. But 'at's your mother when you to school. In our days, we no go from room to room. We go one room and that's all, period. When you go to the fourth grade, it's fourth grade, that's all. You don't go to fifth grade or sixth grade and go learn something else, no. Fourth grade give you everything. Gives you spelling, arithmetic, geography. Everything goes in one room, see.
And then, in the old days—they don't do it now—if they had the small recess and the big recess. Small recess is to play and the big recess, well, you go eat lunch. So, the olden days, the teachers, if they know that you not smart enough on your certain kind of lessons, so they hold you back on a small recess. And make you study on that work that you slow learner. If it's spelling, make you study. Or reading, they make you read. The page that you going to read, they make you read that. Or geography study. They all go that way. Now, no. You go from room to room. By the time you reach the last room, you don't know what you learned in the first one, see. 'As the problem today. That the children get hard time to learn. If they had one particular room to study everything like the olden days, yes. They would learn. Not like now. It's hard to learn. 'As why you find some smart and some they are not, because the teacher don't care. If you make it, you make it. And if you don't, that's it.

NC: You think in the old days, the teachers cared more?

AS: More. The olden days, the children used to learn more than they learn today. Because was only one room, see. 'As all the teacher got to teach is that room. Fourth grade and that's it.

NC: So, she got to know the children better?

AS: Yeah. See, that room, the teachers gets to know 'em better. And you got to be dress neat. Come in neat. And from there, only eighth grade....the elementary school was only till eight. So, if you wanted to go higher grade, you know, eight, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve, then you have to go Punahou. It's up to you to pick the school. McKinley, St. Louis, Kamehameha, of course is private. You got to be Hawaiian to go there. But as far as McKinley, Punahou and St. Louis, then, other people could go in. Other children.

NC: When you were growing up, did any of the kids go to Punahou? From here?

AS: No, no. The only one that went to Punahou—not my own children. My son-in-law.

NC: No. I don't mean your children. I mean children from Waialua.

AS: Well, that I couldn't say. After a while, yes, they started to go to St. Louis. 'As the most college that the Waialua boys pick.

NC: But St. Louis, that was a...

AS: 'As a Catholic school.

NC: And so you think the Catholic children picked that school?

AS: Oh, yeah. You got to be smart to get in there. They give you a test before you can get in.
NC: Where did the Japanese....

AS: McKinley. 'As was the Japanese school.

NC: Did they have a private school that they could go to?

AS: Well, no, not exactly. But afterwards, they started to pick, you know, all nationalities mix 'em up.

NC: Now, in Waialua, did your children have teachers of different nationalities, or did they have all one kind?

AS: Waialua, yes, they had all kind of nationalities. All different. Hawaiians. Chinese. I don't know about Portuguese, but haoles, they had. But, as far as Portuguese, I never heard that they had teachers. I don't know. Today, they maybe have 'em, but the olden days, no. They didn't have. Most haole. I still remember the principal from.. ..that was in Ewa School that I used to go. Mr. Simpson. He was our principal. And my teacher was Miss Shields. That was a real strict teacher, that. Oh, yeah! You got to get there on the ball and study before you can go. Sometime she used to hold us back 2 o'clock. Never let us go home. Make us half an hour stay back and study.

NC: Where were they from?

AS: They were from the Mainland. Them teachers all used to come from the Mainland. And then, like, from Punahou, St. Louis, McKinley, if you graduated, then you want to go to University, that's a college, that, see. Then, you go higher.

NC: Did you know any people your age who went to college?

AS: Well, the only that I know was Rego's niece. You know, Willy Rego's niece. Yes, she went. And when she entered Waialua School, she was honor roll from the beginning. Catholic school, she was honor roll from the beginning. Waialua, honor roll from the beginning. University, honor roll from the beginning. She's a teacher now. I don't know what school she goes to teach now.

NC: She's a counselor at Leilehua. Yeah, that's Shirley.

AS: She was honor roll. Shirley, yeah, Shirley. She's honor roll from the school that she started. Catholic school, St. Michael. Waialua High, honor roll. University, honor roll, that girl.

NC: Now, how about people your age? Did you know anybody from the plantation, like when you were 18, was there somebody 18 or 19 who went to the University?

AS: No, not exactly that age, but Waialua, I went till the eight grade, yes. The manager Mr.....forget his name, already.

NC: Goodale?
AS: No, new manager that.....Anderson. He made me go to school. Waialua. He told me that he'd pay for the school. So I went three years and I went as far as eight grade, so, then, I told him that I didn't want to go no more school. That what I knew was plenty enough for my job as a foreman, see. The figuring, writing and the reading was plenty enough, because I didn't have no intentions to be a field boss or higher position. I figured a foreman would be plenty enough for me, see.

NC: Is a field boss higher than a foreman?

AS: Oh, yes. It's higher.

NC: How does the ranking go, then?

AS: Well, they get more pay. They get higher rank. You more responsible on that--your responsibility on that field is all on you, you see. A foreman only get the gang to be responsible for, you see. But when come to the field boss, he's responsible for everything that's in that field. Cranes, foreman. If you get three shifts, he's responsible for that three shifts. For everything that's in that field, he's responsible. He's a field boss, you see. And from the field boss, goes to the superintendent. Field superintendent, he run the two gangs, the two fields, you know. Like, we have Waialua and Kawaiola. See, them days, they had one field boss here. Rego was for Waialua. And Charlie Paila, Kawaiola. He was the field boss for Kawaiola side. So the superintendent was Jimmy. Albright. He was superintendent. He had the say. So, the field boss could not say, "I'm going do this." No. He got to tell the superintendent. When the superintendent come, "Well, we got to burn so many acres cane and I want, maybe, twenty acres burn." So the field boss say, "Okay. Where you want the fire break to be made?" "Over there." Then he go to Kawaiola. So, every morning he come check Waialua then, he go Kawaiola. Then he comes Waialua and then he goes Kawaiola. And that was the end of the day for him. Then we meet, whoever foremans are working, then we meet in the office there with him. And make our time sheets and everything.

NC: So, it's foreman, and then, field boss, and then...

AS: Superintendent.

NC: And who's over the superintendent?

AS: 'As the manager.

NC: The manager?

AS: Yeah. Mr. Paty.

NC: Yeah. What is an overseer? Is that the same?

AS: Overseer is a water luna, like, you know. They take care the
irrigation of the fields. 'At's the overseer.

NC: Oh. Would there be a harvesting overseer, too?

AS: No, not exactly. The harvesting, 'as a different department, see. They call 'em overseers is for the irrigation, see. They get higher guys and then lower guys. Something like the harvesting. They get foremans go out with the men, you know, irrigate, pick them up. And then they get the overseer that takes care that section, you know. Like Mokuleia, Halemano, Kemoo. They used to have, but now they only have, I think, one that takes care the whole thing. And then, the smaller foremans underneath them, see.

NC: Okay. Was there one kind of boss for harvesting? And one kind of boss for planting?

AS: That's right. You right.

NC: And one kind of boss for irrigation?

AS: Right.

NC: Just to get it straight for the record, the harvesting---what was the name of the planting boss? I mean, like what was his title. I don't mean the name of the man, but is he called the planting boss or is he called the field boss? When a man is in charge of the field, is he in charge from the time of the planting until the harvesting?

AS: Well, as far as the planting, I think, the bosses I knew was Frank Souza, see. He was in charge of the planting field. But then, they get one foreman that takes care the planting. With the tractor. They load the seed and they go out planting, see. But anything that they want, they going to see Frank Souza. And then, Frank Souza comes out and tells to the planting foreman. But today, they don't have that much. They get one guy that takes care the whole works, see. So, they have this---the planting foreman that takes care everything, now. He orders his own seed, everything. To plant. Not like before. They change. As they retire, they don't put nobody in his position. They just keep on promoting the guy up. Then, he takes care everything, see.

NC: So, now an overseer takes care of everything?

AS: Most everything.

NC: From planting to harvesting?

AS: Right.

NC: Is there still a separation for the irrigation?

AS: Not exactly. They have new systems now, yeah, that they call
automatic. They set the watch and the things takes the flumes off and keeps on irrigating by themself. Not such thing as man irrigate. They call it automatic, eh. But they still have men yet irrigating, too. Not like before. Before used to be all men irrigate, see. But the system they get now, it's different. They get all these flumes. The water runs in and then, they get--they set their watches. And certain time the watch kicks, see, and then, further down, they get another watch. When they thing is filled up, certain time to certain time, then, this watch kicks off. The other watch opens the shoot and it keeps on going, the water. Just keeps on going till she comes off everything, see.

NC: In the old days of irrigation or watering the fields, did they always have, since you've been working here, did they always have irrigation ditches?

AS: The ditches, yeah. All, they call that level ditches.

NC: Was any watering done by hand?

AS: Not by hand. But the water runs in, you got to hoe--you know, you irrigate. You control your water through the ditch. What do you call it? They have a small little ditch that the water runs in, see. And then, you got to control your water. When this lines is filled up, then you open it, then, the next one takes over. Until you reach the end. Then, you get a change. Water cross, they call that A water cross. See, from the ditch to the water cross, the water comes here. Like now, they get flumes. Them days, was all water cross. You know, where you put your cane leaves like that all then the water goes in both lines.

NC: So, anyway, in the old days, the fields got watered one way, and now the fields get watered another way. Did it take more men to do it in the old days?

AS: Well, yes.

NC: Every job did I suppose.

AS: Yeah. Every job took more men than today. Today is less.

NC: When you first started to work in 1923, do you have any idea how many people might have been employed by the plantation?

AS: Oh, I think, over a thousand. But they don't have that today.

NC: No, they don't need that many today.

AS: No, no. Because the cutting cane only had a hundred and fifty man. And the loaders had a hundred and fifty. Where that men went? They all out. It's not that the plantation threw them out. Was job elimination, see. Gradually, you know, they improve themself how to get things done, so. The men kept on going. Even the Puerto Ricans.
Where they went? Most, they went to Oakland. All to the Mainland, see.

NC: So, from this plantation, a lot of them moved to Oakland?

AS: Right. Puerto Ricans. Most went to the Mainland. All men...

NC: Did they go to look for...

AS: Heywood, Oakland. They all back there now. Most.

NC: Did they leave if there were still job for them here, because this plantation never laid anybody off...

AS: No.

NC: If there were still jobs for them here, why do you think they left?

AS: Well, I don't know. They just gradually thought the Mainland was better, see. And they took off. And where you find them now is... you might find a few in town or in Waipahu. That's the most that you can find the Puerto Ricans today, see. Or Waianae. But the rest, Waialua, they went out. No more Puerto Ricans, see, already left. Most is half breeds. You know. Half Puerto Rican, half Portuguese. And few. Very few. Majority all out. The pure Puerto Ricans, no more.

NC: About how many left in this area? Do you know?

AS: Pure Puerto Rican, no more. In Waialua you might find few, but it's out of Waialua. You know, in the Haleiwa towns, like that, yeah. You might find a few that are still pure Puerto Ricans. Very few.

NC: Were they ever connected with the plantation? The ones that you...

AS: Well, at certain plantations. I don't know who were. But, I think, majority, now, the Puerto Ricans in Kauai. You find them now, too, in Kauai, yes. You find plenty over in the Big Island. Yes, you might find. But lot of them, they under their own, too. You know, farming, like that. They not working for nobody. They work for their own.

NC: Have you had the chance to go visit Kauai or the other islands?

AS: I went Kauai once, 1939. That's the first visit I ever went. Ever since, never.

NC: Why did you go?

AS: I went for a trip to see what was Kauai. Because my mother and father, they used to live there before, in Kauai. From Kauai, they came to Ewa. And from Ewa, Honolulu. Then, I went to Hilo to visit to find
out my mother side family. The Ferreiras. I bump into them. They was kind of scared. They thought I was lying because my name Santiago, see. So, they was leery, see. But no, I found in my uncle's house where he was staying in Pauwilo, I found one picture from my mother and us. So I showed them. Then they believed me that I was related to them. But they are cousins only, see, to me. Because my mother was the only one left from the Ferreiras. And then, she passed away. There's nothing. They may be from the Ferreira's, you know, children from their side. But not actually Ferreira, see. My mother was the only one left.

NC: How old was your mother when she died?

AS: 83. And my stepfather Matias, 92.

NC: When did he die?

AS: Oh, was couple of years back now.

NC: Oh, so it was in the 1970s, huh?

AS: Something, yeah. Well, they are buried now in Mililani, see. I got two graves for them there through my brother-in-law. He helped me out. They are buried together. Matias and....he died first and then my mother. So, we buried them together. I was satisfy, anyway, to find a place to bury them, see.

NC: Let's talk a little bit about foods. Now, how did Mrs. Santiago learn to cook Puerto Rican?

AS: Well, she learned, because her stepfather was Puerto Rican. Vidal Rodriguez. And married her mother. So he brought her up. So she learned from the Puerto Ricans that she used to see in the Puerto Rican camp. She'd watch them, how they cook and ask them questions. And they had one Puerto Rican lady used to make pasteles, you know. Elena. 'As Johnny Vega's mother-in-law. Old man Vega, he died, I think, already.

NC: He died about two years ago since.

AS: Yeah, well, his mother-in-law, she used to make good pasteles. So, 'as where my wife learn. From her. And she used to tell my wife if she can put yuca, the yuca, inside of the masa, is good. So my wife used to watch her. So now, my wife makes 'em, see. She makes 'em good, too. But, now, it's kind of rough for her because she's sick. So, when the Puerto Ricans had the opening of the Puerto Rican Civic Hall, they wanted a little donation. So, I killed one pig and we made four hundred and fifty pasteles and we donated them to the Puerto Rican Club. (Laughs) We donated 'em to them. And all the money that made went to the club.

NC: Where did you get all the bananas to...
AS: I got 'em from the plants. People gave it to me and then I kill my own pig. 1 o'clock in the morning, I was still cutting meat. I give up! I didn't want no more of that stuff.

(Laughter)

NC: Have you made any since then?

AS: Whole boxes I took in town and then....well, the people eat then was kind of scared because Portuguese make pateles is kind of, you know. No was Puerto Rican. (Chuckles) So my brother took charge of selling 'em, see. Pedro Santiago, eh. He took charge in the hall that they got now, Ayala's, downstairs. So, my brother open one and he cut it. And when she make pateles, 'as meat she put, you know. 'As was 24 cans of olives we put in that meat. And the whole pig and then, culantrillo. She put all the stuff, eh, inside. You know, parsley, Chinese parsley. And onion, all. She makes her own stuff. So, we made that amount, and then my brother open one and he gave for the taste. He said the thing never last two hours. Everybody bought it. Some guys bought 12, some ten, because they knew that the thing was made good. And they wanted to know who made 'em. He told 'em that "My sister-in-law, she's Portuguese." No, they wouldn't believe it. And, you know, the Puerto Rican Club thanked her for couple of Sundays; you look here and the name in the radio thanking her for the pateles.

NC: Oh, what radio program was that?

AS: Oh, was way back. Hooo, I was young then. We was living here, though.

NC: Was it in Spanish, the program or English?

AS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They broadcast her name in Puerto Rican. Thanking Amelia Santiago.

NC: I mean, did the man talk in Spanish?

AS: Yeah. To' en castellano. All Puerto Rican.

NC: Was that a weekly program?

AS: Well, yeah, they used to have weekly programs before, you know; the Puerto Ricans. And you know that announcer that announce now? I forget his...

NC: Jimmy Cravalho?

AS: Yeah.

NC: Yeah, he's Portuguese. He always plays Puerto Rican music.

AS: Yeah.
NC: Was that Silva Riviera also?

AS: Well, Silva---Rodriguez, eh?

NC: Yeah, Rodriguez,

AS: Well, me and Mon Rodriguez was school boys in Ewa. Was playmates in Ewa, and this guy Frank Morales, he used to go to school with me, too. And this Rodriguez. We used to go to school and I used to know Silva's mother and father. I think his father used to play guiro before in Ewa. Silva. And he got a good guiro player, his brother, Soto. Oh, good singer. He's very good singer. And Mon he's a good singer, too, Rodriguez. Oh, yeah. He's good. He was a foreman for Ewa. Plantation. But he retired already, I think.

NC: I think he's living on the Mainland. That's Ramon?

AS: Yeah, Ramon.

NC: Yeah, he's living on the Mainland now.

AS: He had nice family, too. Oh, he had nice children. He raise up a nice family, that man.

NC: Did you ever have Puerto Ricans around here who used to say that they were not Puerto Rican?

AS: (Laughs) Well, you may find 'em back in the Mainland. But not here. Over here, as far as I know, the Puerto Ricans, they say there are Puerto Ricans. I'm half, but I still say I'm Puerto Rican.

NC: Yeah, I know. I notice that and I....

AS: I carry that name Santiago. My father was Santiago and I ain't changing that name for nothing under the sun, no. 'As what the American Legion wanted me to change that name from Santiago to Ferreira.

NC: Why?

AS: Because they wanted me to join, see. But they never send me a letter stating that I could not join. They send me a letter that I could join.

NC: Oh, this is a Portuguese club?

AS: No, American Legion. Boy, I felt like a ten cents piece when I went there. Stand in the line and they interview me and everything. They only thing that they say that they could not take was Chinese or Japanese.

NC: The American Legion?

AS: Yes! They turn me down.
NC: Isn't that a group of veterans?

AS: They supposed to be, I don't know. So, I went there with my money. One Hawaiian guy took me to join. So, when I went there, they interview us. The only thing they say could not join the American Legion was Japanese and Chinese. Orientals, see.

NC: What year was that, Mr. Santiago?

AS: Oh, way back. That time I used to work a brakeman was. And was in harvesting.

NC: In the 1930s?

AS: Somewheres around there. And then this guy....Furtado, he's something in that American Legion. I don't know if he's still living.

NC: He was in the legislature at one time?

AS: I think so.

NC: He died.

AS: He was in that American Legion, too, see. And this guy Amaral, 'as the guy bucked me off, see, because Santiago. Amaral. He buck me off. And then he said that I went in the line to pay my dues--I had the money, see--he turn the pages in the book and he say, "Eh, your name is not here." So I say, "Why you fellows send me this letter?" "Well, you go on the si...." Then Furtado came down. He was a nice man.

NC: Yeah, I remember.

AS: He spoke nice to me. He say, "Santiago, come. I want to see you." So he took me upstairs. He started to talk to me. And he told me, "You know why they don't want....put you in the American Legion? Because your name is Santiago. But if you change your name to Ferreira," he said, "you can join." I said, "No way." I said, "My name is Santiago and I die with that name." I said, "Forget it." I was little mad, too. I felt shame. You know, no stand me in one line and then turn me out. So, then, when I went downstairs to sit in the car, wait for the Hawaiian guy till they finish the--you know they had little stuff to drink and stuff to eat, I sat down. So, the Hawaiian guy came and call me. I say, "No. Forget it. They might run out of food and they going blame me that, you know." I said, "No, forget it." So, he came down, Amaral. And told me, "Eh, you better come up." "No," I said, "Forget it." I said, "If you run out of food, Amaral, you going blame me." I said, "Forget it. You eat and drink what you get upstairs. I'm not in the club, so forget it."

NC: That sounds like it was more of an ethnic club. You know a group....

AS: I don't know. I was crazy for that club, you know. And, you know, I
put lot of guys in. Rego....couple of guys more I recommend them to that club, you know. And yet, they turn me down because I was Santiago.

NC: They must have wanted people with a Portuguese name.

AS: (Laughs) And, you know, the worst part is Obilio is Puerto Rican. And he was inside that club. Because the name, the second name was funny name, you know. So, they no could catch 'em. And then Ernest Souza, he was Chinese. His mother Hawaiian Chinese. He was Oriental, eh. Because his name was Souza, they take him, see. They never investigate what was his parents, eh. But they took 'em, because Souza. But, actually his mother was Chinese Hawaiian, see. And Obilio, I seen one of the sons in there and he was Puerto Rican. But just the second name was little bit different. But my name Santiago, they knew already, 'as Puerto Rican, so, out. That's alright. I never lose nothing. Then, I turn around. I bin Puerto Rican Civic association. So, I been there ever since in the Puerto Rican Civic association.

NC: Was that when it first started that you joined?

AS: First started. I'm an old member. In the beginning, they never had even that property there yet...

END OF INTERVIEW
Tape No. 1-60-2-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Alfredo Santiago (AS)

August 3, 1976

Waialua, Hawaii

BY: Norma Carr (NC)

NC: This is the second interview with Mr. Alfred Santiago in Waialua. Today is August 3rd, 1976. Mr. Santiago, let's speak a little more about your childhood. For example, were you born in the hospital?

AS: No. Home. They used to have midwives before. They didn't have their doctors who used to come to the house. Most used to go midwives. No doctors. Now, yeah, they have 'em, see. In the olden days when they born, the children, their eyes were closed. After one week, the eyes open. Now, they born with the eyes open, eh. They don't born with the eyes closed now. (AS means children are smarter now.)

(Laughter)

NC: Who helped deliver the baby?

AS: Well, the midwife, see. Just both of them. That's all. Nobody else could enter that room but the wife and her.

NC: So the midwife was there with your mother and that was it?

AS: Yeah.

NC: Was the midwife Puerto Rican?

AS: Yes. But I don't know her name, see.

NC: Your brother and your sisters, were they born in the hospital?

AS: All midwives.

NC: So you were born in Honolulu.

AS: Yeah.

NC: And how about your brother and your two sisters? Where were they born?

AS: They all born in Honolulu.
NC: Do you know if you lived in the same neighborhood? All four of you?

AS: Yeah. Well, we used to live by Nuuanu. And then from Nuuanu, one live down Pauoa. Gradually, I don't know, because they was living with my parents. Not me, see. Because I was born 1908, see. So I don't know what was going on beyond that.

NC: When you moved to Waialua camp, you lived in a Puerto Rican camp.

AS: That's right.

NC: Do you remember if babies were born in the hospital by that time?

AS: Well, they still had a midwife. You know, they used to call her Doña Bruna.

NC: Was she Puerto Rican?

AS: She was Puerto Rican.

NC: And she lived right in the same camp?

AS: Yeah, she used to live down here in this Portuguese camp. Had one house. She used to live there. But she was the only midwife that we knew of that used to go to the houses like that.

NC: Did the other camps have a midwife also?

AS: Not that I remember, but for the Puerto Ricans, she was the only one, see. Because one of my children or two were born with her, see. She was a midwife for my wife. She was still living yet.

NC: So your own first two children were delivered by a midwife?

AS: It could be two. It could be three. That, I couldn't guess it, because I know the last two, yes. Was through Dr. Davison. He was the doctor for the two. But I don't know Albert or which one. My wife must know who was born with...

NC: Okay. We can check with Mrs. Santiago. Did the doctor come to the house or were the last two born in the hos...

AS: No, you have to go to the hospital.

NC: By then you were going to the hospital?

AS: Yeah. Well, they use to make house calls them days, but not today.

NC: They use to make house calls but they didn't deliver the baby?

AS: Well, that I couldn't say it. See, my wife is the only one that
could explain that question.

NC: Okay. Do you remember any of the Puerto Ricans being sick?

AS: Well, as far as sick, not that I know of Puerto Ricans being sick.

NC: Did you ever hear any Puerto Ricans say that another Puerto Rican was nervous?

AS: No, I never heard such thing as that.

NC: Did you ever hear the word "ataque"?

AS: No.

NC: _Tuvo un ataque._ (He had an attack.)

AS: No.

NC: Okay. Did any of the Puerto Ricans ever talk about going back to Puerto Rico?

AS: Well, as far as that, I don't know. They never mentioned, see, that they were going back to Puerto Rico. All I know, they came from Puerto Rico, but going back, that, I couldn't say.

NC: In your own family, you don't remember hearing anybody talking?

AS: No. To go to Puerto Rico, no. The only one is that I actually went on last year or before last was my sister and brother. But they half-brothers to me. That went to Puerto Rico.

NC: For a visit or to stay?

AS: No, they went to visit Puerto Rico. They wanted to see the place.

NC: Did one of your uncles go back to stay?

AS: No. Not one of them.

NC: Did any of your cousins go back and stay?

AS: No. Not one.

NC: So the relatives you have there were always there?

AS: Well, they're from my brother's side, you know. But one was here with us for a while when he was in the Army. But not that he stood here. He went back to his San Ponce or what. That's what they claim. 'As where he is now.

NC: Did the Puerto Rican camp have more music than the other camps you think?
Well, them days was fun when you hear music in Puerto Rican. But not like today. Today, they get more orchestras than Puerto Ricans are in Hawaii. They're very few. But them days, when you hear music, the pack house, because it was once in a while when you hear that, see.

NC: Did the other groups have a...like did the Japanese camp...

AS: Well, the Japanese had. They use to play, not exactly when they came to (Tape unclear) They use to play just only guitar with a couple of strings. That was in the old Japanese way, see.

When they get married, well, they use to go around with a Model T, you know. Go throwing papers around. And that person going lights this lamps. Like lighting on top with candles. Then you know that they'd be a Japanese wedding. They played a drum, and they run around Haleiwa. You know, 'as about six miles, right around the block. Then you know that they would be a wedding. Then we'd be going around to find out what could get there.

(Laughter)

AS: They use to invite us, too, you know. And they knew us. And then we go in. As long as you done and keep quiet, you could have all the food you wanted. That's one thing with the Japanese. When they had parties, they treat everybody nice. They don't discriminate nobody, you know. Just sit down, eat, drink all you want.

NC: And their music was old fashioned Japanese style?

AS: Old fashions, yeah.

NC: So then, do you remember the other camps? Did the Portuguese also make music?

AS: Well, not exactly. I don't remember that. But I heard that they use to have. But the Portuguese, they don't hold their partners, eh. They just dance, but they don't hold their partners. They just sing and play. Most, they use to use a mandolin or something like that, you know. But they don't hold their partners. They just hold their hands and then go around, see.

NC: Then, the Puerto Rican dancing was when you hold the partner?

AS: Yeah. That, 'as true.

NC: About how often was there a Puerto Rican party?

AS: Well, not too often. Most use to be on Christmas and New Year's. That's when you could see that they have a little music come around, play from house to house, you know. Then they have little drinks. And especially tamales, you know. And dried rice and stuffs like that that Puerto Ricans used to cook. Most Spanish cooking, see. Not English food style. All Spanish food.
NC: When it came to dancing, to the parties, some of my friends have told me that in Kohala, there was a party every Saturday night.

AS: Well, they use to have 'em in certain islands. Yeah. Maybe, yes. That, I ain't going say.

NC: But Waialua Plantation...

AS: No. Most, Christmas, New Year's.

NC: Okay. I just want to make the distinction. Now, when it came to the parties, were there rules about the girls dancing?

AS: Well, you got to ask the girl, you see. And then, if the girl refuse, she cannot dance no more. She had to go home. Either go home or sit still. Because that guy would be watching her. If she stand up, would be troubles. Because she refused him already. So once you refuse a man, he ask you to dance and you refuse him, that means you cannot dance no more for the rest of the night. Because it'll be troubles there.

NC: (laughs) What kind of trouble?

AS: Would be a fight, anyway. The partner that would pick her up had to fight with that guy. Because he had to protect the girl, he. So he had to fight that guy. And that's when you see the troubles would come.

NC: How serious would these...

AS: Oho! Would get serious, too.

(Laughter)

NC: You say serious, but you're laughing!

AS: Sure! You know, the part is that the man would feel bashful, you know, in front the crowd that you refuse the guy and you don't want to dance with him. And then you turn around, you go dance with the other guy. Well, what's wrong? You couldn't dance with that guy. And then, dance with the other guy, see. That's where the part that you hurt them, see. Hurt their feelings.

NC: Now, if a girl went to a party with her boyfriend, and another man came, could he (second man) still dance with that girl?

AS: Well, I'm going tell you something. Them olden days, no such thing as the girl with a boy. Either they go with their parents there to that party they are invited. But no such thing that a guy come and pick up this girl and take 'em to a party like today.

NC: No dating?
AS: No way. No such thing as date or car, see. You take like Waialua, if you like little bit. (Tape unclear) They didn't have roads for automobiles to come here, now. From Pearl City, this old man Souza, Justin Souza, he passed away. He use to go with three horses. He ride one, and two was to bring the passengers from Pearl City to Waialua. They had only a trail to go down to Pearl City. No roads. See, gradually, they made the roads. Just like the olden days, when my father was living. In Honolulu, used to get only hacks. That's just like a little buggy, you know, with a horse. And they charge you 25¢ to go anyplace, to go markets and they bring you back in the house again, see. No automobiles them days. Very few. Most hacks and horse, you know. The guys that guide the horses there. Call them up, they come pick you up, see. But how, I don't know, they use to get in touch with 'em. That, I couldn't say how. But most, they had only hack and horse. No automobiles come pick you up. Then Model (T) came out.

NC: So the girl went to the dance with her parents.

AS: Oh yeah! She couldn't go out by herself. (Chuckles) Cannot.

NC: Was it always the parents? If the parents didn't want to go, like, could three sisters, two sisters...

AS: No way. There were no permission for not one to leave the house unless the parents would go. Still yet, if she would be engaged, still yet, no way. She got to be married before she can go with her husband to a dance or something.

NC: Was this only the Puerto Ricans?

AS: Well, as far as I knew, yes. (Chuckles) I couldn't say, nothing else. They were pretty strict, you know, on the children before. And the children wouldn't disobey either. They wouldn't argue or answer, because that would be it.

NC: So that if a man wanted to dance with a young lady, did he ask her first, or did he ask the parents?

AS: Well, he'd ask the girl, because, you see, ask 'em permission to dance with her. And if she say she don't know how to dance, she don't want to dance, that's it. Then she wouldn't dance no more for the rest of the night.

NC: Now, all the Puerto Rican girls I know love to dance.

AS: I know. In this today, yes. They don't ask permission. They go by themselves to the dances.

NC: (Laughs) So in those days, if a girl said no to a man, what reason could she have for saying...

AS: It's just like you turning him down that he...
NC: But why would she turn him...

AS: Maybe she no like his looks or something, see. See, if my mother would go with my father to a dance and my sisters go, then if a guy wants to dance with my mother, he got to ask permission to my father, see. "Can I have permission from you to dance with your wife?" If my father say yes, okay. If he say no, it's no. The guy couldn't just, you know, play stubborn and say that he wanted to dance with her. But still, my mother could dance with my father. He had nothing to do. Because the girls, yeah, could not refuse. Or if that woman is by herself and she refuse, then she could not dance no more, too.

NC: Could a widow go by herself?

AS: Well, sure, she could. 'As up to her, see, to go to any party or where she wanted to go.

NC: Now, these were usually in the home of somebody?

AS: Yeah, most. There was no hall, such things as hall. There were all in houses. You know, maybe, you want to make a party and a dance, then you invite your friends and they come. Most use to come without invitations. They use to come in and eat, drink whatever they wanted.

NC: So they were always welcome?

AS: They were always welcome. As far as that, yes.

NC: And then, if there was another party and you heard about it, if...

AS: Well, they go from this party to the other party, see.

NC: Oh! You're talking about the Christmas time.

AS: Yeah. They go from party to party, you know. Maybe this house, they get music and they play in the other house. Would gather. Maybe the other one is better, "Let's go to the other one," see. And they go from party to party. They stay till early in the morning. 4 o'clock, 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 8 o'clock, still going. They never give up.

NC: So, did the groups come around singing?

AS: Oh yeah. They use to sing before they come in the house. Well, that was serenading, eh. And they come in the house. Then the people give them something to eat, drink, you know. And donate something. And then they go to the next houses. And they go to the next house. They keep going that way, see. In the morning.

NC: Did the Puerto Ricans have a word to describe that? A word for that?
AS: Ooh, I can't remember how they use to explain that, you know. I couldn't say. As far as that, I don't know.

NC: Okay. Well, the word is "parranda."

AS: Yeah, the parranda. That's right.

NC: In the parranda, do you remember any of the songs that they sang?

AS: Well, not exactly, because I was a small boy, eh. And I no use to mingle too much with them, see. Cause you got to respect the old people. Certain time already, you parent not work, you got to stay home. You cannot run around in the night. Got to be home.

NC: So if they came to your house to sing...

AS: Oh, that's alright.

NC: ...then you could mingle?

AS: Then, you could sit there and listen them play and sing and dance.

NC: And then if they didn't?

AS: If they didn't, you got to stay home. That's all.

NC: Then you stayed home and you didn't...

AS: That's right. You could not go out. That's it.

NC: If they didn't come to your house, then what kind of Christmas celebration did you have at your house?

AS: Well, my mother use to make regular Spanish food and stuffs, like patellias and stuff like that. Dry rice. Then we all eat, see. We have our food to eat.

NC: When you say "dry rice," do you mean white rice?

AS: No, it's made with a gandules, eh, you know. They pickle 'em. They fix that dry rice and then they issue 'em out. They could have made 'em either with kidney beans, you know. Or either with gandules or havas or whatever it was. There is always some way that they make 'em, see.

NC: Okay. What was the havas?

AS: Havas is them beans, vines that grow on the fences. Like they get that long leaf. Maybe it's three or four in the bean.

NC: That's the lima?

AS: Lima beans. That's right.
NC: Mr. Santiago, we talked about some of the foods that were served at the parties. What liquor was served at the parties?

AS: Most that I usually remember was okolehau. You know, people use to make that their own, see. They use to load these stuff. And then they make their own okolehau and they'd serve 'em out, see. Was white stuff. Just like whiskey but strong, though. Lot of power in it.

NC: What did they make it of?

AS: Well, they made it out of corn, barley. And hops. And they put yeast inside, eh. And then the thing ferments up. And then when the thing go down, then they know that it's time to distill 'em. But they use to use distillers. Some guys use to make 'em with this five gallon kerosene cans with a cup or pipe to blow that thing, get 'em out. And then, maybe, from the five gallons, they get one gallon and a half. And then they mix it up so cut down the power of the thing, see. Because the thing was about hundred proof. You know, the first one that comes out. But then, they go maybe another half a gallon from that. And then, they mix that up and cut 'em down to, maybe 85 or little less power on that oats. They use to call 'em oats. They still making it. I don't know how they making it, see. But then, after a while, they made copper distiller. Then with the copper distillers is better stuff. They never did use the can. They use to use square flume. And then they run that copper pipe through that flume with cold water so that the steam turns to....then she starts dripping.

NC: Condenses it.

AS: Stop to the gallon, see.

NC: Did the Puerto Ricans ever make liquor?

AS: Oh yeah. (Laughs) They had. That was the famous stuff to make. (Laughs) Most every house use to make that, see.

NC: What did they use to make?

AS: Well, the same thing. Barley, corn, and stuff like that. Them days, everything was cheap, eh.

NC: They didn't make rum?

AS: Well, they use to make. They put the stuffs inside, you know. They use to buy some kind of leaves or something for make that rum, see. Anisado. It's a thing like a star. And they put so many in a can and then they blow it. And the taste from the anisado comes out clear. No more okolehau. Just anisado use to come out.

NC: Yeah. But they never made rum from sugar?

AS: Well, that, I couldn't say it if they use to make. But not, I remember they making rum from sugar. They use to blow 'em with corn and this brown sugar and stuff like that, see.

NC: Okay. Did you ever hear the word "alambique"?
AS: No, not that I know of.

NC: Okay. Now, at these parties, was there more liquor than food or would you...

AS: More food than liquor.

NC: You've said a little bit about fights would start. How frequent were the fights? I mean was there a fight at every party?

AS: No. Not exactly. Puerto Ricans never did fight for nothing, you know. They use to enjoy themselves. They wanted fun. But when they come to a point that I told you about. A woman turning a guy down or maybe a guy come there and he starts trouble, then they try get him out of the troubles. Then if he gets out of the way, then you going see troubles, see.

NC: Did you ever see anybody get cut?

AS: Yes. I seen once. But these two fellows, they had a grouch before and they couldn't see each other. And then, finally, they met. And they were cut. One guy had his guts taken out. And the other fellow had his back cut from the same knife that this guy cut him. He took 'em away and he cut him on the back. But I never like go close because I couldn't see it.

NC: Is that the only fight you remember?

AS: Yeah. 'As the only fight. As I long as I lived in Waialua, that's the only two guys that I seen fight in parties. Oh yeah. And then another fellow, too. This guy Frank Morales. He was Corso, eh. You know, big. And this guy Ramon. He use to work for the plantation. But he was just pulling a joke. You know, they pull out a flashlight. And then this guy hit him with a brick in the face. Then, people stop 'em and told Morales to go home because, you know, would be more troubles.

NC: When you use the word "Corso," do you mean...

AS: Corsos is some kind of people from Puerto Rico. They tall, you know. They mean. They don't fool around.

(Laughter)

AS: Because they get Corsos Mayorquin. As far as I know, that's two words that I knew. But the rest, I don't know. See, what nationality.

NC: Well, Mayorquin means they came from the island of Majorca. And Corso, they were Corsicans. They came from Corsica.

AS: They tall people.

NC: Yes. They were. I heard that when the Hawaii Sugar Planters'
Association sent recruiters to Puerto Rico, the recruiters looked for only white people to bring. Do you remember any black Puerto Ricans?

AS: Yeah, they had in Ewa. Yeah, they were there.

NC: Did they come in 1900?

AS: They were nice people. Nice to get along with. Very friendly. In fact, I met some in Ewa. And then when we came to Waialua, I met the same people. They were here up Kawaiola working.

NC: Do you remember the name? Their family name?

AS: I couldn't say it.

NC: Well, do you know if those people came in the first---like, your father came in the first migration, 1900 to 1901. Do you remember if the black...

AS: Maybe their parents came, see.

NC: They came later?

AS: Yeah, but them children were born in Hawaii.

NC: They were born here?

AS: Ewa, where, I don't know. But they came, I think, from Puerto Rico, with their parents.

NC: Did they live in the Puerto Rican camp?

AS: Yeah, well in Ewa was a big camp. Ewa, yeah. Oh! Was big camp. The Puerto Ricans over there was really big in Ewa. Majority was Puerto Ricans. And then they had the Portuguese below us. But really, in Ewa, they had plenty Puerto Ricans.

NC: You also said that when you came back from the Mainland, you thought that they were bringing workers from the Mainland to the plantation?

AS: Yeah. They brought. Immigration. They brought.

NC: Were they bringing Puerto Ricans from...

AS: Oh yeah. All were Puerto Ricans.

NC: Do you have any idea if those Puerto Ricans from the California Mainland, were they people who had been here before?

AS: That, I couldn't say, yeah. But they were distribute. Some were to go to Ewa. Some to Waialua. Some went to the Big Island. All depend. Maui.
NC: Oh, excuse me. I meant were they people who had worked in Hawaii before?

AS: That, I couldn't say it. I don't know.

NC: I wondered about that, you know. Because I know that they recruited in Puerto Rico again in 1920. Now, when you were a child and while your father was still alive, you had to do a lot of work as well as after. But while your father was alive, what kind of discipline did you have at home? Were you allowed to go places?

AS: No. Not even to the movies. You had to do your work. And by the time you finish your job, it's ready to go, you know. Take a bath, study, and then have your supper. And before you go to bed, you got to say your prayers in Puerto Rican. Kneel down by the bed and pray or else you could not go to bed.

NC: Did you have the responsibility of saying your prayers by yourself?

AS: My sister use to be there and see that we never make a mistake. That we say it right. And then if we say it little wrong, she correct us. And she make us go over again till we say it right. Then we go to bed.

NC: This was one of your older sisters from your father's first marriage?

AS: From my father's first wife. She the one use to teach us how to pray in Puerto Rican, see.

NC: Which one was that?

AS: America, her name. 'As her real name, anyway, America. She's still living, though.

NC: Then, aside from that, your older sisters from your father's first marriage, were they allowed to go out?

AS: (Laughs) No! My father would never let them go out. One was engaged and still she couldn't go out until she got married. That was Anela, see. She's in vacation now in the Mainland in Hayward. 'As where she is now.

NC: Saw her children there?

AS: Yeah, the children send get her.

NC: They live in Hayward?

AS: Yeah.

NC: Lot of Puerto Ricans there.
AS: Yeah.

NC: Did your mother and Mr. Matias have any children?

AS: One boy.

NC: Is he living?

AS: Donito Matias. He's still living. He's in town someplace. Anyway, he's being taken care by the welfare. The welfare pay his house rent and takes care of him. Because he's crippled from one leg, see.

NC: How did he get crippled?

AS: Well, he hit one steamroller. He was driving a jeep or something and he bump into it.

NC: Was that on the plantation?

AS: Well, he did. He work for the plantation for a while then he quit. Plantation had given him a job. But then he quit. And he kept going, kept going. Till he ended up with that accident. So the welfare taking care him now.

NC: Did you or your brother participate in any sports?

AS: No. Them days, in school, no such thing as sports. Only my brother Johnny. 'As the only one that fought in the amateurs in Honolulu. But that was 1936. '35, back like that. Four years, he hold the title as middleweight. And then he went welterweight one year. 'As when he went to the finals in the Olympics. And he lost to this guy, Johnny O'Malley, see. But he only had 12 fights. When he went there and fight a guy that maybe had about hundred and something fights. And then he fought Jimmy Clark. Colored guy. The guy had two hundred and something fights and my brother only had 12 fights. 'As the first time he went. And he lost by decision, see, with this guy Jimmy Clark. And this colored guy, he fought Joe Louis in his amateurs days. So, you got to expect from Honolulu, a guy that go there only with 12 fights to meet that kind of guys. That's tough. Rough.

NC: (Chuckles) Was boxing a sport that was popular with all the groups or just with the Puerto Ricans?

AS: No. My brother was fighting for Waialua. And you know, Waipahu had a club. Aica had a club. And CYO (Catholic Youth Organization). And all them. Every place had a club from boxing. And then they meet, see. Also Kauai, Hilo. All from other islands come in on the finals. And then the winners, 'as the ones go to the Mainland.

NC: Then how about when your children were growing up? Did your children have a chance to participate in sports?
AS: My boy Albert, yes. He went to the Nationals. And he went to the Golden Glove. Three trips, he had to the...he use to fight lightweight, I think. But 'as the only guy from the bunch that ever try make an attempt to go fight. David, never. And Freddie, yes, he tried. But he made his career in the Marines. He was all-Marine champion. But junior welterweight, that fellow, yeah. He fought a lot. The Marines use to like him.

NC: Is Freddie still in the Marines?

AS: No. He made his career. He went 22 years in the Marine and he retired.

NC: And where is he now?

AS: He is in Pearl Valley in Sacramento side where the Indian Reservation is. He's married to one Indian girl.

NC: Does he work there?

AS: No, he didn't work for Waialua. Never did.

NC: No, does he work there in Sacramento?

AS: I don't know. He's got a job over there working for this refrigerator company, you know. They call up and then he got to go and fix, see. Now I don't know. When he came now for my wedding anniversary--fifty years married--he said they had laid him off, see. So I don't know. He said he another job coming so he wanted to go back right away. And they interviewed him.

NC: Does he have children?

AS: Six.

NC: Six children?

AS: Yeah.

NC: So they are part Indian.

AS: They are.

NC: And now you have grandchildren who...

AS: Yeah. (Chuckles) He get five girls and one boy.

NC: And how about your other children? Start with the oldest one. Is David your oldest one?

AS: No. Margaret. Margaret got four.

NC: Did Margaret marry a Puerto Rican?
AS: No. She married a Japanese.

NC: So you have grandchildren who are part Japanese.

AS: Yeah. They all mix. League of Nation.

NC: (Laughs) Now did Margaret meet her husband on the plantation?

AS: No, he works for Hicks. He's a carpenter.

NC: Then who's your next child? After Margaret?

AS: Albert. He works for the University (of Hawaii). Up Poamono Farm. And David works for the University, Poamono Farm.

NC: Okay. Albert is married?

AS: Yes, he's married.

NC: Has children?

AS: Two girls and two boys.

NC: Did he marry a Puerto Rican?

AS: No, Portuguese girl.

NC: And then David is married?

AS: Yes. She's Puerto Rican-Filipino. The parents from Kauai.

NC: And they have children?

AS: Yes, they get three girls and two boys.

NC: Who's the next child? Your child?

AS: Dora.

NC: Where does Dora live?


NC: They have 14 children?

AS: She get 14 children. She was married twice. The first husband, five. That's Frankie, Joseph, Frederick, and Carol. And one died. Then she married to one haole.

NC: Was her first husband from the plantation?

AS: No, that man never did work plantation.
NC: What nationality was he?
AS: Portuguese.
NC: And then is Sylvia your baby?
AS: Well, she's step-daughter.
NC: Oh, you raised her?
AS: Yeah. She's married to one Peruvian boy. In the Mainland. He works for United (Airlines). And Louisa, well, she was the baby. She's married to one haole boy. And he works for Pan Am(Airlines).
NC: Was he from here?
AS: He use to go Punahou School, but actually, the mother came from Trinidad. Some British island or what back there, see. The mother was an Indian. But he served the Army, too. Him and his brother. Two of them.
NC: Now how many children live on the Mainland?
AS: Well, my step-daughter. And my daughter. Two of them.
NC: Dora and Freddie?
AS: Freddie. Three.
NC: Three children. Do they want to come back to Hawaii?
AS: (Chuckles) Not exactly. No.
NC: Why not?
AS: They get their own homes there, now. They don't want to come back to Hawaii. They don't want. I wanted to get Sylvia to come stay here and live here, and leave her with this house, but she no want. She say she get her own house up there, so. Can't force nobody.
NC: No. Mr. Santiago, we were talking a little bit about medical care. Do you remember the plantation doctors? Like when you first came to the plantation, who was the doctor?
AS: Dr. Wood. He would not give you excuse or nothing. (Laughs) If he operate ten guys, nine die and one live. (Laughs) Not like the doctors today, see. Today is more professionals, yeah. They know more. They study more. But them days, no.
(Laughter)
NC: When you were a young worker, did you ever need any care from the doctor?
AS: No, them days, you get hurt, no such thing as go to the hospital. You was more afraid of the doctor than anything else.

(Laughter)

NC: What kind of help did they give you if you did go? Suppose you went with stomach trouble?

AS: Well, they take care you. They had rooms, you know. And same as like this hopitals they got today. You know, in one room they had two beds. And keep going that way, see. And they had rooms for women when they give birth and stuff like that if they going to give birth in the hospital. No such thing as discrimination. It's almost the same. But only thing, the doctors from before and the doctors from today, they're different, see. Because in town, my father had this guy, Dr. Lee. And his wife was a midwife. When they cut you down, they don't sleep you. They just strap you to the chair and just take 'em out like that. (Laughs) They took mines like that. They just snap 'em off through your mouth. You just bleed through your mouth. The only medicine he gives you is eat ice cream all you can. But no such thing as they sleep you and take your tonsils out. They just cut 'em off like that.

NC: So that happened to you?

AS: Yeah. They get some kind of iron that they rig up. And they screw it and keeps your mouth open. You can't close it. And then they cut it off. No such thing as sleeping or injec...

NC: You remember that happening to you?

AS: Oh, that, yeah. Cause I know they strap me to that chair. And I yelled, but I couldn't do nothing, because I was strapped to the chair, see.

NC: How old were you?

AS: Well, when they cut my tonsils, my father was still living, though. So, I was about eight or seven. Somewhere around there. Eight, nine.

NC: Yes, so you do remember. What about if a person needed a dentist?

AS: Well, in Waialua, they didn't have dentist then. You had to go to Honolulu. 'As why I was sent to Honolulu by Dr. Wood. I don't know what made him get a liking to me that he sent me there. Because most people go over there for pull out their tooth, he pull 'em. And there's no such thing as injection. He just put his knee on your stomach and he yanks 'em right out. (Laughs)

NC: So Dr. Wood had to act as dentist as well as doc...

AS: Oh yeah. I seen him pull teeths out from people. And boy, I was
scared. (Laughs) And he don't sleep you. He just grabs you and boom! Out it comes.

NC: Does Waialua Plantation have a dentist now?

AS: Well, actually, yes. They pay for the dentist. See, the guys that are working for the plantation, the children get free dentist. You know, the plantations pay now. You have two children or three and they go to the dentist. The dentist, it's fixed up with the company that up to certain age, I think, it's that they are going to school. 18 or 17. Before they graduate (from high school), they get free dentist.

NC: Is that something that came in the last twenty years, that...

AS: Well, yeah. And then if anything happens to you in the work--maybe you get your teeth busted or comes off and you get hurt--they'd fix your teeth, too. They pay for that. But if the grown-up goes there, man or woman, then you pay your own. But the only thing that the plantation covers is the children. Free dental.

NC: And any accident?

AS: Yes.

NC: Okay. The plantation has certainly changed a lot since you came here as a boy.

AS: Yeah, well, see, 'as one thing I going to bring this out. (Laughs) I don't know if you going to like it. But when come to plantations, from when I was a young boy and my father's time, you know, we went on and came on. As far as pollution, I don't know who brought that because they been burning cane for years and years and years, and I never see nobody get sick from that burning cane. There's always job for the people. And the plantations, they trying their best to get the job for the people and give them jobs. But when the people start complaining about burning cane, then what? See. That's the problem. It's rough for the plantations. I'm 68 years old and I never get sick from smelling smoke. And that's all I been doing. Spending my time with the company, you know. I worked my way up, and burned cane and everything. I never got sick from smoke. Nothing.

NC: When you first came, they were already burning cane?

AS: Oh yeah, from before I was born, they use to burn cane.

NC: The plantation has changed in many ways--not in burning cane--but it use to have more workers?

AS: Well, they use to, yes. But they trying their best now to stop burning cane. But the money that they involve to get the things
to work, that's hard, you know. Like they get this Toft cutter. That's rough. Because the Toft cutter maybe makes two loads a day. Maybe three. Maybe nothing, because she breaks down all the time, that machine. It's alright in Australia, because Australia get all level land. But when you come to these plantations here, the lands are not level. They get little bit now, yeah. But the way they got now these tournahaulers and the cranes, they get better results from the cane getting out of the fields than what they get with the Toft cutter. They getting too much trouble with the Toft cutter.

NC: When did they bring that cutter in?

AS: Well, they started this year.

NC: So did that take the place of working men?

AS: Well, they trying. They not sure. Because it takes 13 or 14 minutes to load the buggy. And then the buggy got to go unload that cane in the hauler. And then the hauler goes to the mill. But now, you take the other way around. It take the crane maybe five, six minutes to load the hauler, and the hauler goes. So, you know, you get your cane faster to the mill than with the other way.

NC: So I wonder why they decided to try it?

AS: Well, because people are complaining this pollution, pollutions, pollutions. I don't know what they mean by that, see. But nobody ever get sick from smelling smoke. (Laughs)

NC: Did the doctor ever try to tell the people....to eat any particular foods?

AS: Not our days. You eat what you think is the best for you. Well, we no use to use too much these meats before, you know. The most, chickens, you know. They stew 'em and stuff like that. And most Puerto Rican food, you know. Dry rice and stuffs like that.

NC: Did the people use to go fishing more for their own food?

AS: Well, before, yeah, you could find fish, but you no can find 'em today.

NC: No?

AS: No, it's pretty rough.

NC: Why...

AS: Most, they go out deep-sea diving, you know. These guys go with these tanks. Before you could go out with a torch or go out fishing on a Saturday, you can get your fish. But not today.
NC: Why do you think, maybe, there was a change in the fish?

AS: Well, lot of these people go night diving, see. They take flashlights, and they catch the fish sleeping. (Laughs) The fish get no chance to run away.

NC: (Laughing) I think you're telling me a joke.

(Laughter)

AS: No, no, that's true. They go night diving. They do. With flashlights. You know, fish sleeps night time, you know. You can see them sleeping under the water.

NC: But I thought you meant that there's less fish now than in the old days.

AS: Well, yes, it's less. Way less.

NC: But what could have caused less fish?

AS: That, I couldn't say what caused that. But I know, now, they do a lot of night diving, you know. And before, we use to go out torching, like that. We use to bring fish home. Oh, lot of fish. But you couldn't do it today, because you don't get it. Even lobsters, you couldn't find 'em.

NC: And you use to find lobsters around here?

AS: Oh, lots of them, before. They use to be on the rocks, you know. When you go out walk. Maybe about knee-high. But not today.

NC: So you think that they just fished everything out of the ocean or maybe...

AS: (Laughs) Not exactly that they fished everything out. I don't know what's the cause of all that fish not as high as before.

NC: Did the plantation ever dump things into the ocean?

AS: No, no. Most is the people. I heard that through grapevine--I not mentioning--but they use Clorox, some guys. You know in these holes to get the fish, eh. Because you hit 'em with Clorox, the fish all turn, eh. They get no chance swim. They pick 'em up. See, that's where danger, see. But they get game wardens going around and checking. But they never get a chance to catch 'em because some of them, they little too smart. They know how to get away with it, see. The nets all got to be certain kind size net to catch fish. You no can use the small-eye net to catch fish, see.

NC: Were you here when the plantation dumped molasses in the ocean?

AS: No, not that I remember. Never did. I never hear plantation
dump molasses in the ocean.

NC: Were you ever aware of pineapple not being harvested?

AS: Well, I think was around 1936 or something when they had that big Depression that really was wasted, the pineapple.

END OF SIDE ONE; TAPE #1-60-2-76. END OF INTERVIEW.
WAIALUA & HALEIWA

The People
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Volume II

KOREANS
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ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA

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