BIographical Summary: Adam Holmberg, retired railroad brakeman, Waialua sugar company

Adam Holmberg, Portuguese-Swedish, was born in Waipahu, July 23, 1911. His father was born on Kauai; his mother in Portugal. Seventeen children were born to the senior Holmberg.

Adam's father was sent to the Philippines as a steam plowman when Adam was a small child. The family returned to Hawaii when Adam was 15. He had only completed two grades of school and decided he was too big to go to the fourth grade with "little kids." So he quit school and went to work on Waipahu Plantation in the fields for about nine months. He then went to Waialua Sugar Company in 1927 where he held a variety of jobs including locomotive brakeman.

In 1940, Adam left the plantation. He married a neighbor girl. They have two children. Adam has been active in the Coast Guard Reserve Rescue Unit. The Holmbergs live in Haleiwa. Since retiring, Adam volunteers his time assisting at a neighborhood service station.
GG: You were telling me about no overtime in the plantation.

AH: Yes, ma'am, I used to be in the locomotive department. We used to work ten hours a day. But if we used to have a wreck out in the field--whatever time the wreck would be, we had to work that whole day. Our time would start at 5 o'clock or 4:30. That's it! The clock stops there and you work all night. That's for free. Next morning, at 4 o'clock, your time starts again. So in other words, if was a $1.37 a day, or a $1.40, at that time I was making $1.40. That's all you get, but you was away from home sometime for two or three days---away from home! Now, I was living right here in the plantation, so close by and I couldn't come home and see my wife or my family, because there was job to be done. And they wouldn't let you come home and eat. So, you had to work the whole night. Everything, just like slaves, without even anything to eat or drink.

GG: And nobody brought anything...

AH: Nobody brought anything until lately, finally a few years back after that, then we start you know, making a complaint so much then, finally they would bring us sandwiches. But, then, it was an understanding that if you wouldn't come, sometimes it would be finish early. Maybe we would in a while, say, go home and have a rest of two hours and report back to work. We had strict order. You report back to work at 4 o'clock or don't come at all, you lose your job. In other words, regardless how tired you were, even if you couldn't keep your eyes open, and dey didn't care whether you were gonna get killed on the job or not, as long as you would be dere, dat's what dey was concerned about. I almost lost my job because I refused to work one time, and I was on a verge of losing my job so I have to work whether I wanted to or not. Tired.

GG: This was long before unions, right?

AH: Oh, yes, ma'am. When I left da plantation, dere was no union. Yeah, I left it back in 1940. Union didn't come in till about '46. I was
already out.

GG: Right.

AH: And that's when the plantation start—I mean, da people start living like people. In other words, being human beings instead of slaves or animals. Since da union come in. But before that, it wasn't. It was really tough.

GG: When you say, now, you started work at 4 o'clock in the morning, what time did you have to get up, then?

AH: Oh, I beg your pardon. I take it all back. I used to start at.... I used to start at 5 in da morning.

GG: At 5?

AH: Yes, because we had to go take de engine and go around da camps. Dey had railroad go around da camp, pick up all da labor on what dey call dis, passenger train, labor train. Wit dese cars that they had wit seats. And take—pick em up from da camps and bring em down to da mill, where dey call it, in a roll call. The manager is dere and everybody gathers there, and that's where they issue all da orders for the workmen during dat day. Cut-cane man and loaders and everything else.

GG: Well, did different people do different jobs, then, or were you usually assigned to the same job?

AH: Well, usually, the same job, but sometime, dey would be changing field, especially if you were working out in da field weeding or irrigating or something like that. But if you were cutting cane, well, it was the continuous cut cane today and tomorrow, and load cane. You see, those days it was all loaded by hand. Dey didn't have machine. Dey cut da cane wit men by cane knives, and load'em wit da cane cutter, put a piece of plank wit crosspieces, and run like heck, and see dat, hope dat you make da top before you drop.

(Laughter)

AH: Yes, ma'm.

GG: And what happened if you did drop?

AH: Well, if you did drop, den you start all over again.

(Laughter)

AH: So dat was a pile of cane you lost.

GG: And what about—what were the lunas doing if you were losing too many?
AH: Well, you see on dat case, the lunas wouldn't care too much, because dat was your---on your own. You see, you were getting by piece work, in other words, tonnage, ah? And da more you would load, da more cars you load, da more money you make. So if you was bit slow on da job, ah, dat---less you would make.

GG: Well, did everybody have sort of assignment of their own car?

AH: Oh, yes, ma'am. The cars come in, and you pick your car. Dis is your car. You load your car, and I load mine, and everybody else have dere own car. And dey had women out in da field. Wives, maybe. Japanese people, Filipinos, uh, mostly Japanese people out in da field piling da cane, you know....send'em in piles so da men would just come grab and take off. And dey were paid wit---I think they were paid not through the plantation, I doubt it. I think they were paid by the people themselves. The workmen. Gee, I don't know how they...

GG: So they worked it kind of like contract gangs, then?

AH: Right~ Mhm. And dat's da way dey done it.

GG: And now, as the locomotive brakemen, what were you doing while they were loading the...

AH: Oh, we have plenty jobs to do. Oh, yes, because we---we never waited for them. They had so much people loading cane, dat by da time we pick a load and come down da mill and take a load of empties back dere, we would have another couple of loads waiting for us, and sometime dere was no stopping. And if dere would be a delay, that we had to wait out in da field, we'd wait for cane, and no more at certain hour, maybe, then we'd come down, pick up empty cars and keep working. And den, if we didn't get da cane out, at that time, when we were working long hours, if we didn't get da cane out by 4 o'clock or 4:30--if we had to work till midnight, we worked till midnight to get all dat cane out of dat field. Of course, da mere loaders would go home, but dey had da haul-cane boys. Wit mules. Ah, dose days were mules. So they'd bring the cane out, sometimes one car at a time from way down and, take you about ten, 15 minutes to bring one car, and form a string of cars, and den you take off again. So we used to work sometimes till 2 o'clock in da morning just hauling cane from da field. I mean dat's $1.37.

GG: But for the day...

AH: Or I would say $1.40. Dat's all. (Chuckles) All dat time dat you was working bringing out dat cane from 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock, whatever it was, up till dat---you finish dat job, dat was all free time. In other words, you were giving da plantation da money. You were paying da plantation, not da plantation paying you.
GG: And then you still had to be up and ready to go...

AH: Oh yes, ma'am!

GG: ...at 5 o'clock the next morning.

AH: Oh well, you be ready and to report to work, otherwise, go look for another job. And dey mean it. Dey tell you. It's either you show up tomorrow or don't show up at all. I was with...

GG: ...the locomotive fieldmen when---what, you were about 18?

AH: Before 18. Ah, I was just about making 18 when I join---when I be---join da locomotive crew, became a brakeman.

GG: And that was at Waialua Plantation?

AH: Waialua Plantation. Yes, ma'am.

GG: But you were at Waipahu in their garage for a while...

AH: No, no, no, no, no.

GG: ...when you started?

AH: I started at Waipahu in da fields. Wit steamplows. Out in da field. As a man, doing man's work and getting boy's pay. Working ten hours a day for 75¢. Then finally they raise me to a dollar.

GG: ...and that was in about 1926?

AH: 1926. Yes, ma'am. '26, '27.

GG: Right. And then when did you come over to Waialua?

AH: I came to Waialua in 1927, I forget what month. But in '27. Because I only stood in Waipahu about nine months. Between nine months. Between nine and ten months. Because I---we arrived, like I told you, we arrived from da Philippines, July 23, 1926. On my birthday. That's the day the ship arrived in Honolulu Harbor. That's it was about 15 years old, yes, ma'am. Den we stood in town about a week wit my aunt. My father went out, found a job in Waipahu, and I also got a job at Waipahu. I was 15 years old and I went to work for Waipahu Plantation.

GG: Now, when you moved to Waialua, what camp or what area did you live in?

AH: I moved in the Portuguese camp that they call it right by da Catholic church. The house is still dere yet. It's still standing.

GG: They had only Portuguese people in that area, or....
AH: Well, most likely, yes, ma'm. About---because they had all different camp. You know, they had Filipino camp, Japanese camp, Korean camp, Spanish camp, and Portuguese camp. And den dey have da stable camp...

GG: Did they ever mix or mingle with each other?

AH: Oh, yes. We mingled.

GG: At work and, perhaps, at recreation?

AH: Right, right. Mhm.

GG: What do you remember about sports when you were....

AH: Well, the only sports I really care for at that time was fishing. Any other sport was out.

GG: What about going to---did you ever go to watch the boxing or baseball?

AH: Yes, yes, I used to go to watch the boxing and baseball. Then I used to get tired of watching it, and before everything was over, I would be home. I never took interest. Oh, and den da holidays, we used to have only three holidays in a year. And they weren't paid holidays either. We had Christmas. And 4th of July. Of course, then, New Year. That's the only holidays we had. Like I say, without pay. There was no paid holidays in the sugar plantation at that time.

GG: But at least you didn't have to go to work those days.

AH: Yeah, didn't have to go, but then you lost that $1.37.

GG: So what did you do on those holidays?

AH: Well, that's when they used to have---remember, in those days, when they didn't have union, you used to have more recreation. The plantation would chip in and they'd make it a big 4th of July, a big day. In da baseball park, dey'd have baseball, basketball, you know, challenging. Teams, like, and dey'd have all kinds of sports like bag running, and everything that you could think of, you know. Just for the plantation people. Outsiders would come, and that's how we used to spend our 4th of July. But, usually, I try to work on 4th of July, if I could. Because we have to---somebody had to work, because to go out in da camps and pick da people up, because dose days, didn't have transportation as trucks or buses. So we'd used da locomotives to go to all different camps. And usually, I'd work on 4th of July. Wit the other crew, you know, go pick up the people.

GG: Did you get paid for that?
AH: Oh, yeah. On dat day, was so...

GG: But no overtime or double time or...(Laughs)

AH: No overtime, no. No, no, ma'm. Just your $1.37 or $1.40 a day. Dat's about all. No overtime. But, it was something to do rather than watching a game, you know. But well, we used to watch the game. We'd go out, bring the people. Tie up alongside the baseball field where we had the siding there, leave the engines there, watch the games and when everything was over, take the people back to their camps and then come home, put the locomotive back to bed, and that was it. Dat's a whole day job anyway.

GG: Well, now on the regular workdays, did you have any free time to enjoy yourself? What kind of things did you do for fun or....

AH: Well, after work, when---I was single, well, the only thing we used to do, we used to go down they call that, go down hang around da store. There we had a Jang Hing Store, Ah Chu Store, Shimamoto, and that's where all da boys, Portuguese boys and some---mostly it was from Portuguese camp, well, we used to get mix, mix bunch, and all go down and gather, you know. Den dat's when we start telling ---who could tell da biggest lies, you know.

(Laughter)

AH: And dat's what I was gathering almost every night. Because, we, well, dey used---few of dem used to drink, but was Prohibition at dat time, too. Dat's how we used to pass our time. Every night.

GG: Where did they get what they drank, then? If it was Prohibition then?

AH: Well, they drank that (Laughs) wash-tub booze. Okolehao.

GG: Yeah.

AH: Dey were bootlegging. People was bootlegging nearby. And then homebrew. I used to make homebrew even though I never drank the stuff, but I used to make it. Just for the pleasure of making it, and bottling it, and everything. And I used to make it.

GG: And your bottles exploded sometimes? (Laughs)

AH: Oh, dey never exploded wit me. I don't know why. I was pretty lucky. I never had one bottle exploded.

GG: And then you'd give it to your friends?

AH: Yeah, they'd come over and drink, and I'd watch em drink. Maybe I'd have a shot of one glass and dat's all dat dey drink. I never was a drinking man. Maybe I drink a couple and den start feeling
pretty high, but, I never made it a habit.

GG: Oh. And what did the boys do? Just kind of stand on the corner....

AH: Well, we used to go around dere, some of dem used to bring their ukulele or whatever play music and like I say, who could say the biggest lie. Just gather and maybe about, till about 9 o'clock and then everybody split. You go your way, I go mine, and was just like a crossword puzzle. (Chuckles) To all different branches we go. And the next night, the same thing again. Everybody---that's the only thing we had. Unless we would go movies. But, you see after making all dat money in da plantation, you didn't have very much for movies.

(Laughter)

AH: Especi---when I was at home. I used to get---now, of course, you give 50¢ to a kid after he work whole month---a whole month...he'll pack up his bag, and he go. Even if he's underage, he'll try anyway. But at that time, I remember, I used to work whole month, and when came payday, my father gave me 50¢. So dat was one time movie and an ice cream, and I'd be broke for the next month. (Laughs)

GG: How much did the movie cost?

AH: Well, at dat time it wasn't so cheap either. I think it was about 25¢, if I recall. First, was dime, and den when the talkies came out, you see, dose days was silent, den when da talkies came out, I think came up to about two bits. But look at it this way, if my father gave me 50¢ on payday, well, you make a dollar a day so you bring home $25. Ah, and 10¢ bonus. So that's $2.50. If you work 23 days, you get 10¢ bonus, so dat would be....23 days.... $2.30 profit, bonus, right? If you don't make 23 days, you don't get you bonus. And if you lose 23 days for couple of months, or whatever it is, you might lose your job. So you gotta put in at least 23 days. So 23 days or better. But you would stand a good chance of getting that ten percent bonus if you...(Chuckles)if you working 23 days...

GG: So it really paid you to work all those days...

AH: Oh yeah! In a way, yeah, because $2.30, what da heck, dat's pretty good. (Chuckles)

Especially starving, you know, so had no money, so we used to---ah, twenty---well, whatever days you could work, da more you work, da more bonus you would get, because dat's ten percent of each dollar.

GG: Oh. And where were you in position of the family? There were, what, 17 of you all together?
AH: No, five at that time had died. And so they were—I forget how many of us at that time, and then, my brother got married after that in Waialua, and den I was the oldest at home, and... oh, we were quite a—I forget how many.

GG: How did you get along with, ah, the younger ones? Did they all have their chores and all help out or...

AH: Oh, yeah, sure. They all had their chores, and, ah, well, like I was working so I didn't have any chores because I used to work. But the younger ones, they had their chores. And we used to get along pretty good for a big family, you know, we used to get along pretty good. When looking back at some family, the way I used to see the way they used to fight like cats and dogs, we used to do a little fighting once in a while but not as bad. Now that I look back, we get along pretty good.

GG: Now what kind of things did you have to eat? How did you manage with so many of you and so little money?

AH: Portuguese are good cooks, that's one thing you can give 'em credit.

GG: Lots of soup, ah?

AH: Lots of soup. And I never cared for soup anyway.

GG: (Laughs) Oh really?

AH: I'd rather go to bed without eat than eat soup. But then, while we were working, my mother was pretty good. We used to—pork was cheapest dose days, and she could do a lot with pork, you know. Make a good meal. Then sometimes, maybe on Sunday, we'd have roast pork, Portuguese style. My mother was Portuguese, so she'd had da Portuguese way of cooking which my wife still does. And boy, I tell you, dat's what we ate, and we really enjoyed it. Sure, it was hard living. You didn't have anything for recreation. You didn't have—but as far as food.... like I say, if you had a good cook and know how to save, you could make it. But then again...

GG: Yeah. Did you have a garden, too?

AH: Oh yes! You had to. You plant vegetables, raise da vegetables, and all dat. Dat's a big help. But like I said, we used to eat pretty good, especially on Sundays. We wasn't starving. When I got married, that's when I was really hard up, because dollar—$1.30, $1.40, ah.... oh, yeah, we started with $1.50, den I got $2.40, and den, but still I had a hard time after da balance in da store.

GG: How did you, ah, meet your wife?

AH: Well, she was born and raised in Waialua. So we lived only about....
let's see, now, let's put it this way, I lived about, less than a thousand feet away from her.

GG: But you watched her, then, from small kid time?

AH: Well, I watched her grow up, but, you see, being in Waialua, I was always looking for outside girls, so I had so---I had girlfriends down outside. I had girlfriend in town. And I had a girlfriend down Aiea. (Laughs)

GG: How did you get to town to meet 'em, though?

AH: Well, I had an old Model T car. I was single dose days, and the only car you could get was a Model T, ah? I mean, cheap. So dat's what I had. I had a Model T.

GG: You owned it by yourself?

AH: Yes, ma'am. It was my car. I paid $10 or $15 for 'em. I was single yet, dose days, so den, after dat, you see, what happened...oh, I left home. I didn't leave home. I got into an automobile accident, driving reckless. And when my father come up and he told me, when I got home, he says, "Well, you gotta pay dat bill," he says. "So, I think you should go on your own...and work your way, and feed yourself, and pay dat bill. Because if you're home it's gonna be hard." And he was---well, he was practically mad, too, because I ruined da car. (Laughs) So I got kicked outta da house. Might as well say, I'm not ashamed to say it, being reckless. And, I stood with my brother for couple of years, I think.

GG: How old were you when this happened?

AH: Well, I would say I was about...19, 20, I'm not sure. Eh, but anyway I made a go. I went outside, paid da bill. I knocked down da telephone p---electric pole. I had to pay electric company for dat. And I wreck another car. My car was a total loss. Dat was gone. Dat family car, dat was completely wreck. We forgot about dat. Den I had to pay da Army captain for his car, damages on his car. Dat was a total wreck, too. But dose days, old cars wasn't too bad on da prices. I manage. And after so many---I forget how many years, I went back home. So within dat time, I was on my own, dat's when....well, I had more than 50¢ a payday to spend, you know...

(GG laughs)

AH: ...and dat's how I could afford dese little things. So when I---den when I move back home, my father set a price to pay board. That's it. He says, "Okay." He says, "You come back home"---he wanted me back home. He says "Shucks, dat's where you belong." He says "Everything is forgiven," and all dat, and he says "Come back home. And we---you pay board." Dose days I was in da locomotives already. And I was making more than $25 a month. So
I was paying $25 for board. Dat---well, including everything, you know. Board, laundry, and everything, well, home, you know. My mother would take care everything. And that's how I had a chance to buy little things because I had extra money. And that's how I bought me a Model T and all that. Den I got a girlfriend, she moved from Aiea, and then, she moved in town. Then I start to go to town wit my Model T. And den, finally we broke up, and den I start going wit dis one German-Portuguese girl. Den I took two years and six months, I think, that finally we broke up. Den I start going with her cousin, she was Chinese-German.

(GG laughs)

AH: And dat didn't (Chuckles) last too long. And finally, den I stood without girlfriend for a while. And den, finally I made up my mind I'm gonna get married to a local girl. At least I know she's there. Dis other girl, well, dis German girl, well, both of dem. Dey would say dey were home and when I---and if I say wasn't coming dat night, when I go down dere, dey wasn't home anyway, you know what I mean?

(GG laughs)

AH: Dey'd go wit somebody else. Yeah, phooey, I got tired of dat. And people were telling me what was happening, especially to da Chinese-German girl, you know. (Chuckles) Says, "Hey, everytime you don't come down, by golly, she's got about two, three boys, you know, going to a dance. Going all over. Don't get back till maybe about 2, 3 o'clock in da morning." You know, I say---so one day I went down and I called her up. I says, "Well, I gotta work tonight. Saturday night. I gotta work in da plantation. Locomotive." "How come? You never work Saturday nights?" "Well, dis is an emergency. Da mill broke down, so we gotta stand by. We gotta ship something out." Says, "Okay. So you not taking me to da dance." I says, "How can I, if I gotta work?" "Okay." So I said baloney, so I waited. You know, I got dressed and everything, I went down. I got down dere, she was all dressed up, and here's her bull sitting in da living room. I say, "Where you going?" "Oh," she say, "I thought you said you wasn't coming?" I say "Oh, well, they changed their mind. They gonna do it next week. So, den nobody work tonight. So dat's da reason I thought I'd come down." I say, "And how about you? Where you going?" "Oh, I'm going to da dance. You say you wasn't coming down, so I wanted to go to da dance, so he's taking me." I looked at him. "Who's he?" So I said, "Oh, well, da heck with it, go ahead." So I waited, waited. I stood with da mother and father. Gee, Christ, da dance finish at twelve. Dey came home 2 o'clock in da---3 o'clock in da morning, dey got home! I said, "Wow." That was it! I says, "Okay, dis is it."

(GG laughs)
AH: I said, "Da dance is over at 12, and all da rumors I been hearing is true, because dat's why I pull this on you. I said, that's right. Forget about it. Dat's da end of it."

GG: Did your family have any reactions to you going with girls that weren't your own nationality or...?

AH: No. No.

GG: Was there animosity between the races?

AH: No.

GG: During that time?

AH: Well, dere was, but, not wit my family. I think they didn't care.

GG: And then you still haven't told me how you met your wife, yet. Now, she was here, but when,---how did you get involved with her?

AH: Well, den I started getting more---talking to her more, you know. Dose days, I never paid much attention to her, you know, because I had something else on the other side. So, finally I says, "Well, what the heck I'm gonna look for another girl." So, I knew my wife, that she was growing up. Well, I knew her at dat time. Ah, so, I start getting a little bit more talking to her and all dat, and before, shucks, before I even know it, I propose.

(Laughter)

AH: I just got up and says, "Well, heck. Might as well."

GG: And 40 years, you said you've been married?

AH: Yes, ah, it's gonna make 40 years---This is the 1st, right?--On da 20th. On da 20th of this month, be Father's Day and our wedding anniversary. All in one.

GG: Oh, for heaven's sake!

AH: 40 years.

GG: So, now, tell me---going back a little bit further---your mother was Portuguese, right?

AH: Yeah.

GG: And she was born and raised here?

AH: No, no. She came as a baby on dis side. She was an immigrant, yeah? With her parents, I think. Because both of them died.
GG: Both of her parents?
AH: Both of her parents died and she was taken care by somebody else.
GG: I see.
AH: Because her mother, I think, died first.
GG: After they got here, or on the way?
AH: Gee, I really don't know. All I know is her mother died first. And then he got married— you know her father got married, and then he died, and that left her with a stepmother, and then she got married again to another man, so she had two step—she had stepfathers and stepmother. In other words, just like saying two fathers and two mothers.
GG: And then, now, what about your father? He was born in...
AH: My father was born in Kauai.
GG: And so, then, now, his parents, when did they come?
AH: Well, his parents, I think, his father, my grandfather, came from Sweden. Single. And worked— came down here and worked at Kauai Plantation, Kilauea, someplace. And then, he got married to a local girl in Kauai. So, actually, I'm very little Portuguese. Ah, uh, Swedish, rather. Because my mother is Portuguese. My father is a... half Portuguese and half Swede. Because his mother was a Portuguese. But his father was a pure Swede; come from de old country.
GG: But your father was born on Kauai?
AH: My father was born in Kauai. And I also had an uncle. He's my father's brother, which is dead, too. Both of dem are dead. Dat's all was in da family. Only two brothers. And my father died young. My grandfather died young in Kauai. He get killed. On, line of duty. From what I gather, there was a big fire cane. Cane fire. And dey got all da men, workmen, to go up and put out dat fire. And my grandfather was working in da mill. He was a sugar boiler. Chief, or something. Taking care of that. And they all went out. Ah, from what I can gather, is that he fell in a ditch, you know, with all dat smoke and all? And he fell in a ditch, and when he fell, he was a big man, he fell in da ditch, he fell backwards. And he got stuck in dat ditch. He couldn't move. And da water was running over him and he got drowned in dere. And by da time dey found him, I think it was three days later. Because dey were looking all over for him, and dey found him, I think, from what I gather, again, wit da dog, I think. They had a dog, and dat dog used to go away from home all the time and come back in da evening. And finally dey followed da dog, and dey couldn't find him because
he was covered with trash, you know, from da cane leaves, everything in da ditch.

GG: M. That was your grandfather?

AH: My grandfather.

GG: And then your father worked the plantation there, too, in Kauai?

AH: Well, my father was about seven years old when his father died. You see? My mother lost her father young, and mother. And my father lost his father and mother young. After my grandfather died, I think my mother, grandma lived about a year, on my father---and then she died.

GG: Oh for heaven's sake.

AH: So left two children orphanage. Den dey went through St. Louis College. I think the plantation, the sugar plantation put 'em through college. St. Louis College at dat time. Dat's how it was.

GG: Okay. Tell me about your job in the garage, and changing tires. You mentioned that, the last time.

AH: Oh yeah. Den---well, when I first came to Waialua Plantation, my job was in da garage. As a supply. Taking care supplies. Taking care tires. Repairing all flats. Changing tires, repairing flats, and also servicing all the plantation trucks with gas. Gas and oil.

GG: Had they had trucks on the plantation very long then, because...

AH: Oh, yeah. They had. Old trucks. You know, dese old Chevys and old beat up trucks they had. And I used to start at 8 in da morning.

GG: Dat was pretty good hours for then.

AH: Yeah. Dat's when da trucks used to come in and I used to save the afternoons, say, about 4 til 5, only for gassing purpose. You know, dey come to da pumps, and gas up, check da oil, and everyting. And den dey'd put da---drivers would put their trucks away. And dat was my job. Like I say, I wasn't satisfied wit dat job. My main thing was to learn some kind of a trade. And I tried to get into da floor with boys, you know, to learn mechanic, and, uh, talk to da supervisor. No dice. "Yeah, one of dese days." Ah, kept on. So finally I got so disgusted, I start getting reckless in da garage, you know. I say, "Oh, what da heck." So, during, after working hours, I jump in da truck, didn't have any license, didn't know
how to drive, and go learn how to drive, and bang 'em up, and
everything. (Laughs): So finally I got fired from da garage. And
dey put me out in da field. But before dat, da boss didn't have
very much use for me, because he told me to go up and jack. You
see, dat time no instruction. I was a supply man, all da time.
All of a sudden, he says, "Oh, we need you out here. So forget
what you're doing, come out here, jack up dat car, and take out
all da tires. And put all old tires because we gonna junk da car.
We gonna take 'em down da dump or someplace. I went, "Okay." Not
knowing any better. I neyer work on anything like dat, so I grab
a hold of four jacks. I jack dis wheel up, I jack dat wheel up, I
jacking—I had da four jacks up in da air. Really nice job, you
know. All of a sudden, this doggone guy, Portuguese, Jackie
DeCoite, he comes over there, he's gonna get smart, see? And I
didn't have no wheels on 'em. I had all da wheels out, da tires.
He comes over there, give da car a push. Well, naturally,
standing on jacks, you know what's gonna happen. Bzooop! So da
car dropped. So... boss comes over. What's—look at—-you see,
when he saw me doing da mistake, he never said nothing. He
should have told me dat's not da way to do it. If you gonna learn,
you going learn da right way. He never said nothing. Everything was
alright, until da guy push da car. So when he knock da car—-truck
off—-I mean, da car off da jacks, den he come up. And he say,
"Dammit, you---you got your brains in your backside!" I told 'em,
"Yes, take a straw and suck 'em up."

(GG laughs.)

AH: I mean, he's insulting me already, you know? I made a mistake,
which he should have corrected before I made that mistake. Den da
other guy had to make it worse by pushing da car off. Okay, now
dat's embarrassing enough. Beside your own supervisor comes over
and tell you dat you had your brains in your backside, well, I got
so mad and I told 'em, I say, "Yeah, take a straw and suck 'em up."
He says, "Okay." After a couple of days, I was out. I mean he
hated me. No, not after a couple of---but from dere on he had no
use for me. So, he figure, dat's it. I would never get a job on
da floor, because I told him to get a straw, see? And, den,
finally, I got fired from da garage, and I went out on da field.
Dat's when I went out in da field and work for a dollar a day. I
was making dollar quarter at dat time. I went out working dollar
da day. And if you'd work day work, dey call dat, would be a dollar
a day. But if you had to go piece work, weeding, dey'd go by line.
1¢ a line, 2¢. And dey have a long line. And if you make 30¢ a day,
dat's all you get. Dey ain't gonna give you dat dollar. It's
contract. Now, dey forced to give you your day's pay if you make
over, you get, unless, or dat—-well, below, you might get your
regular day's pay. At dat time, no. You make 30¢ a day, you get
30¢. You make 25¢ a day, you get 25¢. Regardless, wow, if you
catch a bad place and you slow in weeding because of grassy place
dey set da price on da line maybe a cent a line, maybe two cents a
Okay, if you---if it's a good place, maybe you can make a dollar and a quarter. You might even make 200 lines a day. Or maybe, it's two cents a line. You---you might make two dollars a day. But you hit da bad spot, you might make 25¢ a day, and dat's all you can figure your day's pay for 25¢. And dey wouldn't give you a penny over. And dat's how life was in da plantation.

GG: And who set the prices on the lines?

AH: I think the supervisors, do that. You know, the old-timers. Oh, I guess they could look at the line and they tell you...

GG: And then how---from my understanding, now, lot of times the Portuguese people were the lunas.

AH: They were the lunas. And they were the slavedrivers. And they were the worst you could get on the sugar plantation. They thought they owned---they always thought that they owned the sugar plantation. And everything would be for the plantation. Nothing for the workmen. They were the meanest, and dirtiest lunas that you could find was the Portuguese people. I work for them. And when they retired, what did the plantation give 'em? Nothing. $10 a month, maybe. $15 a month for husband and wife. And yet when they were working at that time, everything was for the plantation. Nothing would be ours. They wouldn't even steal a nickel from da plantation to give you. If you made 30 lines, it'd have to be 30 lines. They wouldn't give you 31 or give you a little extra, whatever. No, no. It had to be dat way. Den when dey retired, what did dey get? $10, $15 a month. After doing all that. I work for Japanese people that were lunas in the plantation. And I consider them a 100 times better. I would say 100 times. Better than the Portuguese lunas.

GG: What about the Scotchmen? You had mentioned that they were tough, too.

AH: Well, they were Jesus.

(GG laughs)

AH: As far as in the sugar plantation, the Scotch people dose that were overseers, above all, dey were Jesus and God, put all together in one. Yes ma'am.

GG: And were there incidents where people were beaten during this time or....what if you were insubordinate or not doing what they thought you should? What happened...

AH: Well, they'd fire you. But the olden days, well, they beat you. But, you see, people were getting wiser, because as soon as they try to beat---the luna, the luna would get the beating, you know. But in da olden days, dey used to get beating. From what I understand... You get fired, because anytime a luna---one luna---whoever,
regardless of who he was...so there wouldn't be no choice. He wouldn't get away with it. Yeah, I'd get fired. And that's the reason I been getting—that's the reason I fired, because I just couldn't take anymore.

GG: No. Okay, now, it was 1936 when you got married.


GG: Now, where did you live with your wife?

AH: I lived with my parents for about two years. Two years, because we had—we had enough room. We had a big house, so I lived in one room. My wife and I. But we were all in the family. We eat together and everything. So my father wanted to give me a start because, well, you—didn't have anything at that time. Ah, so he say, 'Oh, what da heck, might as well get married and live wit us, and dat way you can—you and your wife can get a start. My wife was working as a housemaid for Mrs. Cushingham. So, dat gave us a little bit start, you know. And dat's how we live about two years. After I got married I think my father died three months later. And, we had a pretty rough start. Three months later after he died, I had to go under surgery for appendix. And dat was money tied up again. You no work, no money. From den on after dat, we start getting pretty good again. Den I moved from my mother's house, I moved to what they call the new Puuiki Camp. It's not dere anymore. Dey moving all da houses up. To Puuiki Camp. I don't know actually what year it was, how long I stood dere, but dat's—from dere I moved in town. Dat's when I got my walking papers.

(Laughter)

GG: And so, how were things then, when you lived in Puuiki? Is that when things really started getting rough?

AH: Well, dat's when my brothers came and lived with me. Oh, well, things were rough all the time. Until I got dat—when I was living down Puuiki, until I got dat balance on da plantation store. See, I owe my life to da company store, and dat's what happened. I owed my life...

GG: Well, how did that get started or develop....

AH: Well, I had my brothers with me. Two brothers. One was working. He was paying me board, and one was young, so I kept him. To help my mother out, because my father had died, and she needed help. So the only way I could help her, not by money, but by taking one of my brothers maybe and help her. Dat would be alright. But, then, my other brother come in. See what happened, he come in den he...
start paying me board, but dat wasn't enough, because he turn
around, he bought a washing machine for my wife to help out
because she was doing the laundry and everything. But, you see,
whatever he was paying for the washing machine was deducted on the
(Chuckles) food bill. So dat made it pretty tough. So, dat
accumulated a balance in da plantation store. So when dat balance
came out--it was less than a $100, I don't know, about $50, that's
about what it was--it was a small sum. But dey collect dat one
right away. So dat's when dey told me, they call me in to the
store, and they told me, "Well, you have a balance here, so now we
have to cut you down to 75¢ a day." Now, that was supposed to
feed my two brothers, my wife, my child, and myself. With 75¢. So,
I told my brothers, I said, "Well," I told my young brother,"You
better go home with mama." I called my mother, told---ah, didn't
have phones, but I went over on da bicycle, I think it was---she
was living down Haleiwa here---I went down and I told her what had
happened. I say,"Sonny have to come back because I cannot keep
em." And den I told my brother George, "Well, you better move out
and go look for someplace else to stay, because, I cannot keep you." Because he not giving me enough anyway. He says,"Okay, den you pay
for da washing machine." I say, "I cannot! Because I'm in balance
already." I say, "You took dat blooming washer with you! You bought
it, you take it wit you. You pay for it. I don't want it. I can't
affort it. How am I gonna pay a washer with 75¢ a day?" And dat's
how we lived, for 75¢ a day for about....chee, about a year. Dat's
when we were having one meal a day, my wife and I. And lucky, in
luck, I say, was lucky dat I had chickens and ducks, and da neighbors
were giving all da leftovers like vegetables, and all dat, and dat's
how da ducks was living, and every once in a while, I could squeeze
in a bag of middling, you know, something cheap. And put in, and
dat's how I was feeding, and dat's what we were living on. The money,
that was for milk was for da baby, she was one year old. So we had
to buy all dat cereal and everything else. That's where the money
would come in for her. Give her da milk and everything else, and
we would be living on chickens and ducks. (Laughs) And fish. I
used to go fishing.

GG: Yeah. Did you have a garden, then, too?

AH: No, because there was no---dat place I was living, you could never---
you couldn't make a garden, it was all rocks. Coral. And my house,
as it is, it was---da house here, house was standing on dere, and
den there was a drop, and dat was the chicken yard. And was all
coral. You couldn't make garden dere, because as soon as a little
bit rain, it would get flooded. And dere was no garden.

GG: And, by this time, now, you said you came to your mother's on a
bicycle. Did you still have a car at that time?

AH: No, I never owned a car. After I got married, I never own a car.
I didn't know what a car looked like!
GG: Couldn't afford it.

AH: Couldn't afford it. And, the only time I got a bicycle is because my father-in-law had a old broken down bicycle, and he fixed it up and gave that to me. And that's the only time I owned a bicycle. I couldn't afford to buy a bicycle. Dat was given to me by my father-in-law. And I never owned a car until I moved to town. After I moved from da plantation.

GG: And from there, then, as far as socializing, did you have friends, or family that you did things with, and how did you get together on, you know, weekends, or....

AH: Well, I tell you, as far as friends, I got 'em all over dis---all over the United States, might as well say. I'm a easy going guy and I make friends easy. Friends, I had lot of friends in da plantation. But, regardless how much friends I had, dat wouldn't ---dat didn't mean dat I was going dere and scrounge on em...

GG: No, no. I didn't mean that. But did you get together to talk story or play cards or, uh....?

AH: Oh yeah! Yeah, yeah. Usually fishing. We used to go fishing. Wit da boys togeth...

GG: And what about the women? What did they do...

AH: My wife, usually, she was a home girl. Now she goes out a little bit. She was home type. She wouldn't go no place. She was always home.

GG: Well, with the baby, too, right? Imagine....

AH: She was always home. And she used to work, and den after we---after we got married, I think, oh, when she got pregnant, I think, I stopped her from working. And when we moved she wasn't working.

GG: She was doing laundry, and housemaid's work, or....

AH: She was doing mostly, I think, was housework. Cleaning house. Not laundry. For Mrs. Cushingam. And, like I said, she was always home type. And I used to be home practically all the time, too, unless I'd go fishing.

GG: What about---did the family get together for some of the religious holidays? Or for Christmas, or what kind of things did you do for...?

AH: Oh, yeah! Yeah, yeah. For Christmas we'd go over and meet with da family. But, you see, da way, we used to do it, on Christmas, we used to visit. Then, on, New Year's, dat was our day. We'd stay home, you know, everybody stay home. But after my family moved
away. Like my mother moved in town and all. Then I would never go down, because we had no way. I didn't have any car, see. After my father died, my mother was in da plantation for a while then she moved in town. So, the rest, whatever was single went with her. And I didn't have any car. I couldn't afford any taxi, or anything. So we couldn't go in. We--I didn't see them. Cause we never went in on da holidays, just because of that. But we try to get together as much as we could, as far as that goes.

GG: How did you celebrate the holidays yourself? Or, you know, what did you do for Christmas? Anything special?

AH: No. Nothing. It was just like any other day. The only time I used to enjoy Christmas and New Year's was when I was single.

(GG laughs)

AH: Dat's when I used to really go. Especially on New Year's we used to go masquerading. Dose days we used to go masquerading on New Year's Eve. We used to have lot of fun.

GG: Yeah. What was involved in this masquerading? What did you do?

AH: Well, we put on a mask, and a funny kind of suit and make yourself as ugly as you could and go around from house to house, entertain a little bit and get drunk, and first thing you know, you don't know where the heck---you don't remember how you got home until you find out somebody had to carry you home.

(GG laughs)

AH: Dat's how we used to enjoy ourself, just by going to house to house to house, and people expecting you. Everybody expect---now, it's something that's---it's not done any more. It's dead. But New Year's and Christmas used to be a day dat people was just waiting. Da homes were just waiting for people to come. It was really entertaining!

GG: Everybody did that sort of thing out here? The different ethnic groups?

AH: Yeah! And dey all be waiting. You know, dey know. Dey know dat the masquerading was coming around, and all dat. Dey were waiting for dat. And they'd be out there, invite you in da house, with your mask on, and have a----shot, and have, maybe, a fruit cake or something to eat and drink. And you go to da next house and everybody would be expecting you. Not now. You do dat now, dey---dey shoot you!

(Laughter)
GG: Or call the police.

AH: Yeah. But dose days, if you didn't go, den they'd feel hurt, you know. Dey thought, maybe, "How come? Dis guy don't like me?"

GG: Was it pretty much within your own camp? Or did you go to the other camps?

AH: Oh, all different camps. Oh, yeah. We used to go all over. All over Waialua. We used go even da outside camp at Kawaiola, as long as we could find a way to get up there. Oh, yeah, we used to really enjoy ourself. Young days, at Christmas and New Year was something that really enjoyable. And now, it's more of a...a business deal, you know. What da heck, eh, I don't buy it. I cut down on da price, you buy 'em. It's more...

GG: So when did this other custom stop, then? Or just gradually faded away, or....?

AH: Just gradually faded away. After I got married, then I settled down wit my wife, and dat was it, and I guess, other people done da same. Da young kids didn't do dat anymore. You know, dey all stop. Dey don't know what it's---what it was all about. Or how we used to...

GG: Sounds like fun, though.

AH: Yeah, dese kids, dey would---my children....da other's people's children my age, dey don't know what we used to do. Dey don't know what life was. You know, now dey tink like is jump in da car, and get going 90 miles and hours, try to climb a tree, or something. And maybe go in a bar, you know, dat--dat's life now. It wasn't no home life. I mean, it's not like we used to, you know, it mostly take care at home. Dis kids of today, I--well.... anyhow, it's an improvement. You know life has changed and dere's a lot of improvement. So, dis idea of staying home wit da old people, dat's phooey!

(GG laughs)

AH: So, as long as now, it's all automobiles....and motorcycles, and life is moving fast. Dose days we never had no such thing. No TVs or anything. So you had to enjoy yourself at home, and try to make it da best you can wit da group. And really enjoy life da best way you could. And now, da way dey do it, like I say, jump on da car and go. And dat's....15 or 16 years old. But from--from da Philippincr, we came to Waipahu, and I was smoking. I never did get caught by my parents. Until finally, I got caught in Waialua. Just happened dat I saw my father coming, and I got so excited, I took da cigarette, I put out da fire. I thought I did, and I put 'em in my pocket.
AH: It burned a hole through, and there was smoke coming. My father say, "You on fire! What happening?" And dere was a cigarette so he caught me. And try to get me to stop smoking. And, I tried, but I already had da habit, and I couldn't stop, so, one day he ask me. He says, "Can you quit, or is it deep?" I say, "Well, it's deep," I says. "I been smoking for quite some time. And I can't quit." He say, "Well, okay, den. Your mother will buy you tobacco from now on. I don't want you to go to da store, being so young and charge it on your account." You know, you could go to da store, and buy on your bango, you know. So I says, "She will take care of dat." So she did. When I got...

GG: You could buy tobacco even when you were so young?

AH: Oh, yes! Oh, (laughs) yes, ma'm, you could!

GG: As long as you were working, you could buy anything?

AH: Right. Long as you been working, yeah, you could, so, anyway, I bought, tobacco, and my mother, then---I mean, my mother kept buying for me until I got married, and then I took care of my own. So I smoked till the--I forget what year it was, I got an ulcer. Eh, so after day check, dey found out I had an ulcer, and hoo, when I used to smoke dat nicotine, used to give me an ulcer, and I used to fold up wit pain. So finally one day, I had a pack of dose cigarettes, and I gave 'em up, in da job at Schofield, and I gave to dem guys, say, "Here. Smoke dis on me, because I quit smoking. As of today, I give up smoking. I just (Chuckles) can't take it anymore. Da pain in my..." So I did. I quit for a while. For about six or eight months, I went on a diet. For da ulcer. But as da ulcer was getting cured, and I was going on a diet. Eating certain foods, but I was eating so much of it, I was gaining weight, because everything taste so good after I quit smoking. And when I had dis house built, I went down for mortgage insurance. So dis doctor, wasn't my doctor, was da insurance doctor checked me up, ah? He says, "Well, nothing wrong wit you." I told 'em, "You sure?" He say "Yeah, everything is good. Nothing wrong wit you." He said, "But the only ting, you overweight. And I cannot put dat on your insurance paper. If I put dat da medical, being overweight by about 30 pounds," he say, "it's gonna look bad. You won't pass." So he say, "I'm gonna cut down on da weight. In da meantime, you try to cut down on your weight." So he did. He fixed me up where I got---where I passed. So I told 'em what happened. I told 'em I had an ulcer, and I used to smoke, and dis and dat, so he told me, "Well, being a doctor, I'm not supposed to. I supposed to give you good advice." But he says, "Let's forget about da good advice right now." He says, "If you take da tobacco, will help you to cut down on your weight, I'd advise you to go back smoking. Easy, you know. And see if you can lose weight." He say, "After you been smoking all dese years, it never killed you. I don't think it's gonna kill
you now." So I did. Say, "Okay." So I went back smoking, you know? I start cutting down on my weight. But after I got used to with da tobacco, I start gaining again.

(GG laughs)

AH: So I smoke, smoke, smoke, den finally, I got da heart attack on 1968. 1968, I got a bad---severe one. On da job. So dey put me intensive care for about---Queen's Hospital, Coronary Ward for about six days, and then I stood in da semi-private for about two weeks. All da time I wasn't smoking. So, I quit. I made up my mind I was gonna quit. So I did. 1968, I quit. Quit smoking. See, I got my heart attack back in November 22, 1968. Dat's when I quit smoking. And I haven't smoked since, because if I put one now, I light a cigarette now, you know what's gonna happen? It's going right back again like it was...

GG: Then you start all over again, and you don't need it. So....

AH: Yeah, I don't need it, yeah.

GG: How was the medical care? What happened if you got sick when you were working on the plantation?

AH: Oh, you had free medical. But nothing outside. It had to be all in da plantation. You couldn't get no specialist or anything at dose days. Now, wit da union...

GG: They had a hospital then, too, or...

AH: Yeah. Dey had a hospital.

GG: Did you have any problems while you were working plantation? With illness, or anything?

AH: No, no problem. 'Excuse me. No problem. Dey got everything. 'As---like I said, dey didn't have any specialist, but now dat you have union, and you pay medical on da plantation, which is cheap. And now, you can---dey can call in if dey find out something is wrong with you, you need a specialist, dey'll---plantation will call in a specialist and all dat, see? Take care of dat, where as before dey didn't. So...

GG: Yeah. And if you got sick and couldn't work, then you didn't get paid, either. In...

AH: I tink, now---well, at dat time, yeah. Before, no, you wouldn't get paid. But I think now, they have what they call sick leave. But before, no. In my time, dere was no such thing.

GG: Well, what did, say, a family do? Or did it---maybe you didn't
have that experience, so you don't know, but, if, say, you and your wife and baby, if you couldn't work for two or three weeks 'cause you had a operation of some kind...?

AH: That was it!

GG: Then you just went hungry...

AH: Then you had to go beg or go ask mama if she could help you out a little bit wit food. Or papa or somebody. Your father-in-law, or somebody.

GG: In your camp, did they have any kind of---I know, like the Japanese, I think, had the tanomoshi where you...

AH: Yeah, tanomushi, no, we could join it if we wanted wit da Japanese, you know. But if you didn't have any money, you couldn't put em in da tanomushi anyway, you know.

GG: But in Portuguese camp, did they have any kind of thing to help families, where, you know, when there was sickness or trouble, or...

AH: Not dat I know of, because I never got to dat. Although I---see, it's a good thing, when I was operated on, when I was operated on for the appendix, I was living wit my mother that time. My father was dead, but I was living wit my mother at dat time. And somehow, we managed, you know.

GG: Did your mother work outside?

AH: No. No.

GG: But some of the other brothers were working by then?

AH: Yeah, yeah. Dat's how---dat's how was helping out. Dat's why I lived in dere. And den when I got on my feet, den I repaid my mother everything that I owed her, you know.

GG: Now, when your father passed away, she could still stay on living in the plantation camp, or....

AH: Yeah, because my brother was working in da plantation. He was living wit her.

GG: But when....okay, but then why did she move to town?

AH: I think....she was moved---she moved to town because, I think, the plantation forced her to move, because, like I say, plantation policy. Dey run your life. And I think my---one of my sisters was going kind of wild, and dat what made my mother lose her house.
GG: So what the family did, then, was sort of the business of the plantation, too? Whether you wanted it to be, or not?

AH: Yeah.

GG: So, tell me about the first house you and your wife had. What was it like, and how did you furnish it, and....

AH: Well, it was a---it was a fairly new home. Three bedroom home, bungalow type, something like the one across.

GG: This is the one in Puuiki?

AH: Down in Puuiki, yeah. And, I, got the furniture through credit union. Right after I got married,---that's when credit union was formed, you know. Dey formed dis credit union. And dat's how I bought my furniture. I borrowed money through the credit union and bought my furniture. And dose days, furniture was so cheap.

GG: And where did you get your furniture from?

AH: In town.

GG: In Honolulu?

AH: Yeah. In Honolulu. Down, I think it was Oahu Furniture Company or something. I forget now.

GG: Did you have to go get it, or do...

AH: Yeah. My wife and I went in town, and picked up what we wanted.

GG: And how did you do that if you had no car at that time?

AH: ....if I'm not mistaking, I think I borrowed my brother's car. I know I got in town, but it wasn't my car, because I didn't have any.

GG: Yeah. And then what, did you have to tie the things on the top?

AH: I think it was a borrowed car. No, no! Dey delivered. Dey delivered. All I went down dere, pick out what we wanted, and dey---dey delivered it, as far as dat goes.

GG: Oh, I see. They did have trucks, and so they delivered...

AH: Oh, yeah, because I bought two beds, you know. We had two bedroom, so I bought two bed, and living room furniture, kitchen furniture. The only thing I didn't buy was a refrigerator, because I bought an icebox. You know, where you throw ice inside?

GG: Yeah.
AH: I bought that. I didn't buy a refrigerator. But I bought da stove. When I first got married, and I was liying wit my mother, I bought da stove. And as I was living wit her, we had da stove in a---room, in da hallway, and as I was living dere, I was paying for da stove. Monthly payments through the plantation store.

GG: What kind of stove was it?

AH: Electric stove.

GG: Oh, they had...

AH: Elec---yeah, electric at dat time. So it was an electric stove. So when I moved to my Puuiki home, I had da stove, so all I needed was de icebox where we had to buy ice, and then, I bought all my furniture. So...

GG: And then did an iceman deliver the ice or....

AH: Yeah, right. Everyday if you wanted, or every other day, or however you want it, see? And I used to...

GG: What'd they charge you for the ice in those days, or do you remember?

AH: Gee, I think 25 pounds was about 10¢ or 15¢, something like that. It was really cheap. Dat's how we managed it.

GG: And then, the electricity was paid for by the plantation, too, or....

AH: No, dat was plantation. D-dey had their own electricity dere. So we paid a dollar a month to the plantation for electricity.

GG: That was deducted from your pay or....

AH: Right. Didn't have any meters. No meters dose days. Dey just...

GG: And what about telephone service? Now, how long before---did you have telephone service at all while you lived at Puuiki?

AH: No. My first telephone was in town. Honolulu. Never had. Couldn't afford it!

GG: Right. Did some people have them, or....?

AH: Yeah, some people had dat could afford it.

GG: And what about---did you have indoor toilets at that time?
AH: Oh, yeah, in Puuiki we had an indoor toilet. Yes, ma'm.

GG: And what about in Portuguese camp, where you lived with your family?

AH: Dat was---you go outside.

GG: Yeah.

AH: ---kerosene lamp. Take your lamp wit you (Chuckles) as you go out.

(GG laughs)

GG: And then later on, I guess, all of you had left the plantation, then, by the time it got so that you could buy you own house?

AH: Well, dere was....everybody left da plantation except my brother. My oldest brother, he stood in da plantation. He retired from da plantation. He used to---he didn't buy a house in da plantation. Well, he bought one, but, but put it on his daughter's name. In other words, his daughter wanted a house, and he was living wit his in-laws, dey had big property dere. And, he bought a house, and set it dere, and everything, so, when, daughter needed da house, dey bought one---he bought one in da plantation, in other words, put it on his name, and dey paid him. Dey were paying for da house. Ah, well, it's their house, but it was on his name.

GG: Yeah.

AH: Den, when he needed da house, he couldn't buy one on da plantation, because he had already bought one.

GG: You could only buy one through the plantation?

AH: One. Right. So dat's why he bought. Then, he, was still in da plantation when he moved on Kawaiola Beach. He was living wit some people dere. And they build a house for him, because he was taking care da yard and all dat while still working in da sugar plantation. And he lived dere. And den he bought dis place. I mean, he's not dere, now, and he put a house dere, and he let his son live dere. Then afterwards, he got tired of cleaning yard. You know, he wanted to be on his own. Come back to his house, so he moved---his son moved away to Wahiawa, and he came back in his house. And he's living in his house...

(Wife enters. Exchanges greetings with interviewer.)

AH: ...but before dere was no houses to sell in da plantation. Well, after da union come in and all dat, and den da plantation finally, dey figure, well, dey were paying a lot of money out to work---da wages was increasing and all dat, so, dey were trying to
build homes and sell it...da plantation land, and sell it as fee simple to da employees. And that's what they still doing yet. Of course, it's much higher now, but olden days like my time, dere was no such thing as buying any land in da plantation. You just had a free house.

GG: And your first baby was born while you were living at Puuiki, or ....

AH: Yeah.

GG: Oh. And did your wife have the baby in the hospital or at home or....

AH: Waialua Hospital. Waialua Plantation Hospital. Incubator baby.

GG: Oh, both of them were premature?

AH: Dey never had a incubator so dey made one in a hurry.

GG: Oh, for heaven's sake.

AH: Gotta small baby crib and put blanket around---sheet around it, and put a lamp inside a--a bulb, and a turner, and a what do you call it? Heat. Not a heat control, but the thermometer to take the reading. Anyhow, something to give you the heat reading, and all. Dat's how it was controlled.

GG: Really primitive, huh?

(Laughter)

GG: But the baby's fine. A big, strapping boy, now.

AH: Oh...no, it's a girl. The first one is a girl. Yeah...she's got two children. Grandson, and....she's got a boy and a girl.

GG: And then, what about, now, did you use the post office at all, or for any reason, how was your mail?

AH: Well, yeah, we got mail. Post office. You had to walk to da---no mail deliver dose days.

GG: Was it far to the post office, or....

AH: Well, from Puuiki to the post office, eh....oh, I would say about quarter of a mile, I think. Not too far.

GG: So you checked everyday, or....

AH: No, no, no. Because I never expect mail dat much, anyway.
AH: I never used to write letters. Never cared to. And da only time I used to check my mail if I had something---maybe I'd order something, or else order a book or something that was free---free magazine or something, maybe I'd subscribe to it, ask for it, and then, maybe I'd go check, but outside of dat, dere was nothing coming to me.

GG: How did you get your news about what was going on, say, in the plantation, or in the---Honolulu? Did they have a newspaper, or....

AH: Well, they had newspapers, sure. Star Bulletin. But we couldn't afford it. So, we used to have radio. Listen to radio. Old radio, dose days, you know. Dat's how. Otherwise, they wouldn't be no news. There was no way of getting any news of any kind, you know, unless, by mouth. By reading, was impossible, because we couldn't afford newspapers, anyway. And dose days there was no such thing as a newspaper delivery. Uh, especially Star Bulletin. It would come to da post office, so you had to go to da post office to get your paper. Dere was Advertiser. Morning delivery. But, like I said, who could afford it?

GG: Oh. And how about your radio? How much---how'd you get your radio?

AH: Well....my brother was learning radios at dat time. He was taking school, and he was a radio man. He had the business, repairing radio. Wartime and all. So, he get an old radio, he fix it up, and dat's how we got a radio. I never bought a radio. Was always given to me.

GG: But you had one while you were at Puuiki?

AH: Oh, yeah!

GG: Because that was still before the War.

AH: Yes, I had radio. Yes, ma'm. Like I say, it was given to me. My brother gave it to me, an old junk radio somebody didn't want, and he fix 'em up, and so I never bought a radio. But now I buy 'em, but at dat time, and like I say, in da sugar plantation, you don't nothing.

GG: Well, did you get together sometimes with neighbors to talk about any news that might be going on.

AH: Oh, yeah! We used to have a---oh, the only thing we used to---I bought an ice cream freezer.

(Laughter)
AH: It was a gallon and a half. And that's the crank type, you know?

GG: Right.

AH: And we used to get together wit da neighbors. And we used to make ice cream. With cranking. Crank, and crank, and everybody take turn cranking until we get dat ice cream hard. Den we'd have an ice cream party. And we'd eat ice cream like it was going out of style, because gallon and a half! Sometimes we only had four or five people.

(Laughter)

AH: When we used to put 'em in bowls, I used to eat. We used to eat ice cream. Dat's the only thing we used to enjoy, because free eggs. You know, I had chicken. The neighbors had chicken. So we used to get free lay eggs. And milk. We used to get, either cream or cow's milk. We'd get dat, left over da neighbors would bring, or something, and then while I could afford it, I would buy da milk, and we would make ice cream. Like I say, free eggs, and all that, so we used to make a lot---ice cream...

GG: When?

AH: Almost every week.

GG: And nothing tastes---oh, my mouth is just watering, thinking about that home made ice cream!

AH: Almost every week. Sometimes, my wife and I talk about dat ice cream. People used to come the house, and "Okay, let's go make ice cream." And dey thought we were nuts. Dey say dey never ate so much ice cream in their life.

(GG laughs)

AH: We used to really enjoy it. We'd make our own. In fact, I had dat freezer, I moved in town, and I moved back---while here, when I gave dat ice cream freezer away a few years back. Dat went all over wit me.

GG: Ah. And you continued to use it?

AH: Oh, yeah! We used it. Yes, ma'm.

GG: What about, in terms of unacceptable behavior in the camps, you know were some kids wild, or stole things, or everybody sort of watched everybody, so that they were pretty good?

AH: No, dere was no---dere was no such---not like now. It was really good. I mean, you could leave your house open, go out. You don't
have to lock up. Dere's nobody stealing.

GG: And what about the camp policemen? What was their job, mainly?

AH: Well, camp police was—what was his job take—well, he would have a group taking care, cleaning camps and all dat, and he couldn't—he don't patrol. He's, uh...my father was a camp police. Down in da Waialua Plantation. He was only call—he would go out only when he was called, maybe—fight in da camp, or something like that. He was called. Or if there was a fight, and then the—or a government police, ah, city police try to come in—dose days, dey couldn't come in without permission—and den he'd go out, and den if he needed them, he'd call them. And if they were in there before he'd come then he'd run 'em out, because they had no business in da plantation. They had to get permission before they could enter private property. Dose days, was private property, see? And dat's all policemen—camp police. Was only go out when he was called. If they needed him.

GG: And what about the customs? Now, you said your father passed away while you were still living in the plantation. What kind of, um—was he buried in plantation cemetery, or...

AH: Yeah. Puuiki. Puuiki. Buried on plantation cemetery. Then they'd either give you a casket if you want, or you can buy your own. Which we did. We bought our own. It wasn't expensive, but... all try to chip in and get a casket. But plantation supplied. It's all made out of one by twelve. Oh, what the heck, you dead already, so what the heck, anything goes.

GG: Oh. And then you had—did you have church services, through the church?

AH: Right.

GG: M. And what about...any other kinds of old family customs that you might have had? Were there special Portuguese customs for anything? Or holidays, or....

AH: No.

GG: Or religious festivals, or....

AH: Oh, well, the olden days, dey used to have the church bazaar. That was mostly Portuguese Catholic people, and in Kauai, I remember they used to have Catholic days, you know, religious days, and, that's all gone now. That was old, and den I was a kid, well, dat's no more now.

GG: Oh. Did you participate when you were growing up, or....
AH: Well, yeah, well, I used to participate, help out on the bazaars, you know, take care of booth and help sell whatever it is, you know. I used to—I usually take care da milk bottle booth, you know where they throw balls, knock down da milk bottles. I used to participate.

GG: And, what about, now with your own kids growing up? 'Course I realize you left the plantation in '40, so they were pretty little at that time.

AH: Well, one was born, and one was on the way.

GG: Moving forward a little bit, when they were growing up, what kind of things did you hope they would become when they grew up, or....

AH: Well, you always hope for the best, and you keep hoping, and dat's about all. I didn't expect—I didn't expect miracles. And I didn't expect dem to be professors, or anything. I expect them to be a working man like their father, as about all. And the women house mother like dey—like their mother, and that's about all I....you know dose days, you don't, you can't plan too much. See, I was planning on having my kids go to school. My boy go to vocational school, and all that to learn trade and all, but he wasn't the type for school. Couldn't. So I figure when he graduated, dat stop—everything stopped, because, the teachers had already told me, says, "No sense. He's not the type that wanna go to school, so he wouldn't learn. You know, wouldn't be interested. So let 'em go to work."

GG: So what is he doing?

AH: He's...he was an appliance man working for contractors. Fixing refrigerator. I mean stoves, and washing machines, and then, now, he's working for Hickam Field. Ah, he was taking—dey had an appliance shop dere. Taking care of washing machines and all dat. Den, dey closed dat place down. So he's a electrician now. Still wit Hickam. Air Force.

GG: Oh. What about...(Coughs)...taking it back to the previous generation, now, was your father upset when you came back from the Philippines, and you didn't want to go back to school. You wanted to go right to work, or....

AH: Well, the only thing he says....I was going back to school. And when I went to work, he didn't even know that I was going. He didn't know I had a job. But when he found out, he wasn't upset, because I told him. And when he saw, you know, da way da small kids was in second and third grade, and all dat, he figure, well, I had a point there. Why go back to school, fifteen years old? And when I told you I went to fourth grade, I made a mistake. I went to second grade.
GG: Oh. Second is when you stopped.

AH: (Laughs) Second! Not fourth grade. My school stopped at second. And dat was Waipahu. Dat was my last school. Dat---from da Philippines, (was in Philippines from age 10-15) dat was it. And then back to Hawaii, and to work. Not to school. But, I don't know....lot of people like dat, I guess you know. You met them, and I guess you might know, like I do, dere's lot of people dat went to second grade, dey cannot write, dey cannot read, nothing. But I was fortunate. I went to second grade. I can read. And I can read a manual, repair manual, dat's how I learn mechanic. All home---all by myself. I never went to school to become a mechanic. And I retired as a mechanic. All dat without any schooling. Yes, ma'm. My own studying...my own reading, my own doing. Thas---that's how I became a mechanic...and I read my own books. I do my own everything.

GG: Did you have somebody to help you at all? Or you just sort of worked on your own to.... On reading and writing?

AH: No, all by myself. All by myself. Aw, nobody to teach me. How could I? (Chuckles) And there was no--I went to work, and then, like I say, I kept picking up by myself. Dere was nobody to teach me. I didn't ask for any teaching.

GG: What about your brothers and sisters? Did some of them have more schooling?

AH: Oh yes. Dey all had more schooling. Dey all had more schooling. I was the one that had the last (i.e. least).

GG: What about your relations with other ethnic groups? Now you said you did date for a while--other girls besides Portuguese, but how did you get to meet them? Or how did you get together with....

AH: Well, by getting---by getting old junk and riding around. Dat's about da only way you can meet em. (Chuckles)

GG: And what about, now when you worked in the plantation? You worked in, say, well, your locomotive job. Now, were there other nationalities that worked alongside with you, too, or....

AH: Oh, yeah. There was Japanese with us, Portuguese, Filipinos. All...

GG: How did you get to be a locomotive brakeman?

AH: Well, I ask for it. I was interested in that job. I was doing all field work, and everything else. So, I got the job. But....okay, let's put it this way, now. What really happened, how I got da job. I was a troublemaker in da plantation. I was da black sheep of da house. I was always in trouble on da plantation. I'm getting in
trouble, been called in the office, and get fired and hired, and all. So finally, Mr. Mitkiff, (i.e. Midkiff) the manager, he was the one. He called me in da office one time, and he told me, he say, "You know, we don't know what to do wit you."

(GG laughs)

AH: Says, "You been in all kinds of trouble, until we fire you, and your father is in the hospital from a broken leg, and this and that." He says, "I really don't know what to do with you." He said, "But, anyhow, I'm gonna---I'm gonna do something. I have a plan." He says, "You...you stay away from trouble for six months, from today up to six months, do your job without any complaints. Don't do any trouble at night around da camp. And for six months, and I'll stand on my word, any job dat you can handle, you ask for it, and it's yours. Anything that you can do." Well dat's a good deal, and I say, "Okay, I'll try anyway." You know, I don't know ---I'll try because I was hard to ---I was a real pest, a termite.

(GG laughs)

AH: So I did. I worked, and I tried my best. And when da---I marked it down on da calendar there. The day dat made da six months, I went up to Mr. Mitkiff. I went in his office, and when I ask permission to see him when I got dere. "Mr. Mitkiff," I said, "you remember back at certain certain date we talked about?" (Coughs) "Yes." "Today is the day that make the six months." He go look, he says, "Yup, dat's right." He had it down. Said, "Dat's right. No complaint so far, but anyhow let's call the camp police." Mr. Stribling. He was my boss. Anyhow, da guy never know what the heck I was doing. He was never around half of the time, anyhow.

(GG laughs)

AH: So, they called me in, and I went in there. I mean, the Stribling came, and Mitkiff asked him Mr. Mitkiff asked 'em, he says, "Well, okay, today's the day. Six months. I wanna know his record." He said, "Oh, shucks, he's been good." He says, "He's been doing the work. I never caught him loafing. He worked everyday in that six months. So far, I never heard about him doing any wrong in da camps." Because he was the one used to get all the news. He say, "Nothing is wrong. No complaints or anything, and he done a good job. He's been taking care of the..." I was--dat time I was put out working on picket fences and all that. I been doing a good job anyway. Mitkiff says, "Okay, the job is yours. What job do you want? Dat you can handle." "Say, I'd like to go brakeman." You know of all the jobs I ask for...he says, "Brakeman is yours, but first we have to find out if they need any men." I say, "Well, from what I understand, they looking for one man. Dey need one brakeman." So he says, "Okay, let me give a call." So he call up, and dey say, yeah, dey need one more. So he send me over
to da roundhouse. (Laughs) To see Mr. Guerrero. But Mr. Guerrero was my neighbor! I was single at dat time. And I had few words with him, you know. I was young and he was an old man, and his kids--his son used to throw the rotten mangos in our yard, and hit my sisters, you know, and finally I got into trouble with the kids, and finally he came in. I got trouble with him. And when I hear I had to go work for him--he was the locomotive chief---oh my goodness! When he came over dere, when I went ask him for a job, he said he'd rather get fired than give me a job, you know.

GG: Oh boy.

AH: He say, "No! You blankety-blank job, not with me." He says, "I'd rather get fired. All my years," he said, "I'd rather get fired than give you a job." Say, "Okay." No dis and dat. I say, "Well, alright." Said, "That's all I wanted to know, because I was sent here by Mr. Mitkiff and find out if you have need of a man, and the job would be mine. He wants me to get into a job, and he said, and dat's the job I was promised. Any job, see." "Oh, no! You don't get a job." Den, Mr. Buchert came. He was over all. Mr. Buchert came. He says, "Oh, you know, look at dis man, here. You see dis little troublemaker? And he's in---he wants a job in da locomotive." He says, "He's not looking for work. He's looking for money." He says, "Give em 25¢, and he'll go home, and he won't even think about work." And here I been working all my life, you know? Working, working, working all dese years.

GG: Right.

AH: And finally, he went out, and Mr. Buchert says, well, den I said what--you know, I wanted job. Mr. Buchert said, "Well, if Manuel don't want to hire you, well, dat's it. He's da boss." I said, "Well, okay, we'll find out." So I went back. I went back to Mr. Mitkiff. He was already home. Dat was in da evening. I went to Mr. Mitkiff. So I told Mr. Mitkiff what had happened. Dat the old man say he would rather get fired than give me a job, and dis and dat, and den he say, "Well, okay." He say, "You come down in da morning, tomorrow morning, you be down da roll call at 5 o'clock." (coughs) He say, "For get dis thing straightened out." So I went. Mr. Mitkiff got a hold of the old man, Manuel Guerrero, talking and says, "I am da manager."

GG: Ahaha.

AH: "And when I says dat man's got da job, as long as you need 'em, you have a vacant, dat man gets da job. If you didn't have a vacant, you couldn't fire somebody to give him da job, but you have a vacant, and I sent that man there. I'm still da manager of the plantation. You take dat job. And like you say, from what he told me, that you would rather get fired than give him a job. Well, think it over, now. If you wanna get fired, that's it. You either
give him a job, or you fired. You take your choice. Now, dat's your choice. Dat's what you wanted." Ha, he wouldn't want to get fired, with all his years, so he gave me the job. So, he gave me the job, and Mr. Mitkiff told him. "You don't get along---both of you don't get along very well. So, if there's any complaint, see me. You don't fire that boy, and there's any---there's anything that is wrong, you talk to me, and I'll talk to him. I don't want you to have anything to do with him as long as he's doing his job. I don't want you to fire him. I don't want anything. Everything comes to me first. Because that's the promise I made." And I was stay on da job, dey took care of me, and dere was nothing, you know what I mean? Everything went out smooth. There was no complaints, and finally the old man got to like me, because....oh, yeah, I'd go out of my way just to do things, you know, to help him out, and everything else. And he got to like me. But when I---only one time I went ask him for a raise. I say, "Eh, Jesus Christ, da work so small---how come I don't get a raise, or I don't get a promotion, dis and dat." So he told me, he says, "I tell you what. I give you my wages, and I'll take your wages, and you take care of my family."

(GG laughs)

AH: 'At's the Portuguese for you. Typical Portuguese in da plantation camp. He's not gonna give me a raise, but he's gonna let me take care of his family and give me his wages.

GG? How big a family did he have?

AH: (Laughs) Hoooo, dey all Hawaiian-Portuguese, and I mean, I mean, they were....

(Laughter)

GG: So Mr. Midkiff, then, seems like he was really a fair man. You had several dealings with him.

AH: Oh yeah! He was a nice man. See, I worked, I worked in da plantation with Mr. Thompson. Then he died. He passed away. Midkiff being da assistant manager, he took over. But he was a nice man. I get along real good with Mr. Midkiff. Of course, I had my troubles, but all through my fault. Whatever happened in da plantation, before, when I was young, and all dose things, that's my fault, dat's my own doing. But after I settled down, and then, things start growing, then it's---it wasn't my fault any more. It was, you know, the---my fault, yet, plus the other guys. But in my younger days, no ma'm. It was my fault. I admit. I was really a....stinker.

GG: And you mentioned, now, that there was an accident, and that's when you left the plantation. After that, I guess, the wreck that...
AH: Yeah, there was a wreck, yeah.

GG: And you had said to me that you took the blame for it. May I ask why, or....

AH: Well, I took the blame. You see, it's a hard thing to explain if you don't know the job. But (Coughs) being in the locomotive, now this---this is what ---I might draw a sketch, I might draw something. You see---you not gonna use this paper?

GG: No, no. That's for my notes.

AH: Alright, now. We have a track coming down here. Railroad track. It's down a hill. All the way down. And over here, we got a switch. Go down a hill here, again. So, this is what they call a back switch. So I was coming down with a load of cane. I was fireman at that time, but brakeman hurt his foot, so I volunteered to go out and be a brakeman. Let him take my side in da engine which would be easy for him. Fireman, you didn't have to run. So I came down as a brakeman. We were---we brought dis load down. We was---my brother was the engineer. No, I went out, and helped. I went and helped. That's right, because we needed three men coming down. Okay. So I went and helped. I came down. So the engine was here. This is my cane cars. And this the other track. So my brother had the engine here. We had to stop. So, we stopped our load. I cut off. We had a fifty something all through here. I cut off 25 cars. I gave that to my brother. I gave him signal. I left the half here. My brother took this 25 cars, he came down here. Down on the back switch, and stop. This engine here, which was Johnny Posses, his crew, had to come up here, hook on to this cars, pull 'em down here, clear this track, so the other engine could come up here, grab this other load and go down. This man here, Johnny Posses and his crew, when he came over here and hooked up to dis cars, he quit work. He had 15 minutes more to work. You see, with the crew, we quit at 5, because we were changing shift. We working 12 hours shifts. We were supposed to be on 8 hours, but we were working overtime, because long hauling, so we were working overtime. We were getting paid for overtime. Dat was in 1940. We were getting paid for overtime. Okay. Our shift would be finished at 5 o'clock, da crew would come with the pick-up truck, take over, and we would drive the pick-up truck and go home. So here he stop. He quit work. So I didn't know because I'm behind here with dese cars here. With dis load here. Waiting for my brother to come up with his engine, and hook up to dese cars. So we waited, and waited, and waited. Nothing happened. Because he quit. Afterwards, he found out dat it was too early---he was getting kind of worried that it was early---to quit work, that he might get turn in, so all of a sudden, he put in his cars, and everybody and---dis line here, the brakeman had already applied da brakes. So dis guy here, he start pulling! Johnny Posses, he start pulling his load with the brakes on. So naturally, we in the gully, now. We in the gulch.
So when he start pulling, big noise! Shaw, jaw! And vibration. So with all dat vibration, he was pulling, my line of cars start moving. So I figure I couldn't see. Was around the curb. So I figure dat my brother had come up with his engine, and took hold of this load and was trying to pull. And I had my brakes on, and he couldn't make it. Because I figured dis guy here, he had all the time in the world to grab hold of dese cars, pull em down here, stop, and I had all the clearance. But waiting, waiting, and nothing happened. But I didn't know that this man had stopped there. So I waited, waited. So finally, when dat happened, I said,"Eh, look like, he's already...." See, you don't blow whistle, so I figure, eh, dat must be Pete hooking up. So I slack on da brake. When I slack on da brake, dat load took off down dis hill! When he took off down dis hill, he'd run right across dese cars here dat were still dere, yet. He didn't clear! When it hit here, it took dese cars and throw em all down da gulch! Dat was a big wreck right there. (Coughs) So I wanted to know what happened. Den dats---my brother told me. He says,"Johnny Posses never move dese load. He just stood dere, because he said, 'Oh da heck wit it. I quit work. I give up. I quit. Quit for the day.'" If he wanted to quit, lady, he should have clear up the rail. Clear up dat track and den shut down and wait for da crew. And in case anything would happen down here, we would have a clear way. No. He stop right here in a dangerous point, left everything dere. So I didn't know, so I slack. Well, okay. I was always to blame, anyway. That man---new superintendent didn't like me anyway. So I said, "Well, what the heck! Why go cry? Why go cry? You know, and try to say it's not my fault, and go pleading, and all. Da heck, let 'em do what dey wanted. I disgusted." I was already disgusted anyway with Wallace. Den wen we came down, and, well, I got da whole ting over dat night. Work and then try to get all dat wreck fixed up. We work dat night, get da tracks all fixed up. Get da rail, da cars back on da track, everything. Almost killed the guy, too, because when I run into dose cars, it wasn't my fault. But like I say, the thing could have been avoided. Well, just because of a guy didn't want to move, and my brother knew it wasn't my fault. But he figure, what was he gonna do? He wasn't gonna plead for me. They would say because that's his brother. So I told my brother, "Don't open your mouth. You take care---you got a family, too. You take care your side. Forget about---don't say nothing." Well, we got everything. Next day, Wallace come over, and he says,"I want Adam," he told Bernard Souza. I was there. He came up and talked to us---talked to us up at the field. He said,"Okay, I want Adam 9 o'clock in my office. 9 o'clock. I want you with me! I want you. You bring him in, and I want you in there!" Because he knew already dis is my---I---he must have had a hunch dat he was gona---something was gonna happen to him. So he said,"I want you with me." So, okay. So we went down, and Bernard stood with me and dat's when he started. So he start blaming me right off the bat. So I took the blame! So I took da blame. I told him,"Well, it was my fault, you know. I thought that everything was clear." I didn't say that the man stopped his work, you know, quit early. Trying to cheat da plantation,
all dat. Da heck wit it. I just say, "Well, I thought everything was clear, and I slacked da brake", and dat's it. I took da blame on dat. Den't when he got smart wit me, and I couldn't take anymore. I start calling—cursing him, calling him everything under the sun. I wanted to smash his eyes with his glasses on and everything. I didn't use glasses at that time. So I finally got Bernard Souza who took me out of the office, and Wallace told me dat he didn't want me in da locomotive department anymore. Dat they were gonna see if had anything else for me in da plantation. Well, in the meantime, I figured, well, I might as well look for something else, because I'm not very good standing in the plantation, because I already got in trouble with him, and Wallace and I didn't see eye to eye. See, Midkiff was already—I was old at that time. So Midkiff didn't bother already whatever happen—I was married and all. I was on my own. So whatever the other guys would do, they were the supervisors, so let them handle. So anyway, (Coughs) I went and looked for a job. I ask for a recommendation, first. I told 'em, "Well, I want—I'm going out and try to see if I can get something. I want a recommendation of what I could do—what I can do, and what I used to do, and...well, of my conduct...because I worked good." I was a good worker. And they say, "Sure!" So they made me a recommendation. Good recommendation. I took it wit me. Sure, and as soon as I went down, I got a job dat same day. I went in town. I got a job. Now how da heck did I get in town? I think I borrowed a car, because I didn't have any. I think I borrowed a---my brother's car, I went in town, I got da job. Den I came back. Home. Dey say report in three days. So on third day I went back. Saw Mr. Wallace—Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor was the industrial relations. Say, "Well, I wanna know what you got lined up for me." Well, of course maybe he didn't have anything, but, you know, he had to make it big. He said, "Yeah, I had a big—nice job for you. Tractor operator." And dis and dat. "And make good money. But, den again, when I found out dat you wanted to beat up Wallace, Mr. Wallace...you cannot—we cannot have employees here on the plantation beating up their superiors! So naturally, we don't have anything for you." I told 'em, "Well, thank you very much, Mr. Taylor. I already got a job that's paying a $140 a month, which I never saw in my life for the 13 years I work in Waialua Plantation, I never saw anything like that. And I have it now. Hundred—a hundred and, uh, forty dollars to start with. So you take that wonderful job that you had for me and you shove it up your back side, and I'll give you—I'll get a board with nails, I'll nail it across your backside, and you have dat wonderful job for da rest of your life." And dat was it.

(GG laughs)

GG: Well, maybe that's a good place to end it. This time. And then, if you have no objections, maybe I'll come back one more time and talk to you about some of the significant events. You know, like the War and some of those kinds of things. So....
AH: Oh, yeah! Ma'm. Anything! Anytime! Like I say, I'm always available, and retire, so there's nothing—nothing holding me, and I'm available.

GG: Also, another thing. Do you have any old photographs, or anything like that from plantation days?

AH: Wait, why don't we see...

END OF INTERVIEW
GG: Adam Holmberg in his home, and the date is June 10, 1976. So, you left the plantation in 1940, and then, you were with the shipyard, is that right? After you left there, or....

AH: No. Ah, (Coughs) yes, but I went to work for the contractors down at Ford Island. It's down the shipyard, but it's in Ford Island. They were sort of, building up. When I left the plantation, I went there and work as night watchman there; also taking care the boiler in the morning if the fireman wouldn't come to work--the man that's supposed to light up the boilers--then I'd light the boilers, get it ready for the day shift. And take care anything like floating dry docks the floating crane, rather. If it would be leaking I'd pump the bilges out with the, gasoline pump, or otherwise, then....I had to put up a light, up on the big derrick, a pile driver--oh, I don't know how high...the thing was really high. I was young at that time so I could climb it. I had to climb by steps, carry a light---a lantern and put it up to keep the airplane, you know. It's your signal....get them air---because airplane, that's where the air base. Ford Island was an air base, too, so, there had to be safety...

GG: Now, were you there when the War broke out?

AH: No, ma'm. I was there---I work there till---I started there, I would say, about September of 1940, and I left there on the beginning of October, I think. For the shipyard. 1941. So in other words, when the War broke out, I was working for the Navy. I was working the shipyard.

GG: And were you at home or were you down there when the bombs started?

AH: On December 7? (Coughs) Well, On December 7...the beauty part of it was that my neighbors was all Japanese people. And I get along great with Japanese. So does my wife. We like Japanese people. And my neighbors were Japanese. So I had bought a saw--two saws--from Sears and Roebuck, a band saw and a table saw. So the old man wanted an ironing board for the old lady--old Japanese lady--
old Japanese lady--ironing board. And I figure, well, what the heck, I make her one, you know, since I had the tools and go practice. So she wanted one of those folded types, you know, you can fold up. So I was working on the iron board on Saturday, and I stopped, and then, Sunday I continued in the morning. And as I was working on the ironing board, this plane start flying over.

GG: Where were you living, now?

AH: I was living down at Davies Lane. That's Davies and Vineyard. Vineyard Street and Davies Lane. That's where I was living. And my neighbors, like I say, well, all Japanese, and all of a sudden, you know, boom! Boom! Bomb start exploding and all. I look up and I see—I saw all these plane, you know. I didn't notice that they were Japanese planes. I just look up, I says, "Doggone it, even on Sundays," you know...

(GG laughs)

AH: ..."Even on Sundays, you can't get rest." I mean, people, they maneuvering and bombing the heck, and where everybody sleeping. Then, uh, th-the old man came up. This old Japanese fella, I forget his name, he came out and look at me and says, "Ei, Homburoga!" I say, "What?" He say, "Japan come." I say, "Naw! That's maneuver. American plane. Maneuver today." "No, no, no, no. This Japan! Japan ka. See? Japan America fighto." So I say, "What the heck!" So I look up again, I look up, say! The Rising Sun! (Laughs) Eh, this is getting bad! So I told my wife, I said, "Chee, something is happening. Something really bad, because bombs are exploding right by my house," you know. I guess the American bombs, because the timers were off-set, and exploding. A guy lost a couple of legs, right where I was—close by where I was living. Bomb exploded, caught 'em, and blew his legs against the mango tree, and blew another guy all to pieces. Right in the small store there, and all of a sudden, the Navy, they put in an announcement. "All Navy yard employees, report to the Navy yard, immediately! Do not come by car, but come with the Oahu Railway." They were running a special train. "Do not come by car," because they didn't want too much traffic. In other words, they were still bombing. So, I hurried out. I put things away, got dressed, and I told my wife, "This is it." So I went down, caught the train, and when I got down the Navy yard, they were still bombing down there. They were still blasting. So, the only thing I could do was show my face, and they told me where to go, and instead of going there, I went in the Navy yard, and I went under the lumber pile—in the lumber yard, they got ton of piles and piles of big timbers there, and I crawled under there, thinking I was alone. But when I crawled, there w...

(Laughter)

GG: You had lots of company.
AH: Oh, I had lots of company. I think it was—yeah, I not alone. I thought I was going to be a lonesome guy, you know, lonely and alone. Oh, heck, no, I had plenty company! (Laughs) We stood there till everything quiet down. And then, we went back. There was no movement, you know, down cranes, then I went back, and then went back to my crane, and I wanted to come home, but they says, "No." We're gonna stay overnight. Oh no, I take it all back. I didn't know I had to stay overnight, so, I went there. When came dark, I walked home, because there was no transportation. It was blackout. I walked home with about eight more guys. And I don't know what—that's the most stupid thing anybody could do. Because there were guards all over the place, you know, and challenge you, and they were shooting and all kind. You don't know when you could get shot. So we walked, and I was living all the way down Vineyard. Well, finally, we start walking, and somebody picked us up with a pick-up truck with no lights, you know, and then we got a ride home. I wanted to come home more to see my family, because my kids were small. I came back.

GG: They were all okay?

AH: Yeah, they were all okay, so I stood that night. Next morning I went to work. And I reported to work, and they says, "You supposed to be going home, not coming to work." I said, "I went home last night, because...." I say, "I had to go see my family, and nobody told me I had to work overnight, so I went home." He says, "No." He says, "You go back home again." He says, "You go back home, and you will report this evening." He told me what time to report, I say, "Okay." Well, we were on 12 hour shifts. So I did. I went home, took a...

GG: How'd you get home that time?

AH: Well, we had transportation like that. Was during the day. We had transportation. And during the night, we had transportation again. It was just that—that's day that—when they were really bombing the place. After that, things went pretty—back to normal, because they had the Pearl Harbor buses running, and all that. And that's how I went to work. I didn't have a car. I didn't drive my car in. In fact, I don't think I had a car at that time, so what I done was just...ride the bus. And, stood nights, and there was nothing doing at night. You couldn't move around at night. Everything was dark. You had to walk around with a flashlight painted blue, and, in fact, you couldn't see two feet ahead of you with that flashlight. I couldn't do any work. Even if you wanted to work with the crane, you couldn't see what you were doing. So....until, I would say couple of—three nights, and then they get little bit lenient on the lights, and that's when we start producing work. But in the beginning, everybody was too scared to move anyway. Because you never know when you were gonna get shot. Any little noise, and that's it! So what we done mostly was stick around our equipment. When they needed us, they'd call us. You couldn't go walking around.
Even to go down cafeteria, we used to be afraid of going---leaving the crane to go to the cafeteria. So the only way, I said, "Baloney. I won't do that. I'll take my own lunch." Usually I eat in the cafeteria, but at that time, when it was really bad, I took my own lunch. I said, "No. No cafeteria. I don't want to walk around." And you never know when you gonna get it. It was really, really rough.

GG: And how long was the blackout?

AH: Oh, the blackout was....oh, quite a few years.

GG: Oh, that long?

AH: Oh, yeah. I would say we had blackout, I don't---really remember, but I would say for about two, three years. Of course, in the yard they had some lights where you could work, and they had it under control. As soon as anything happened, they black out, and they blow siren. But with your automobiles, (Coughs)---we went right up to almost the ending of the War where we had the small slit across your headlight, where you could hardly see. They---first had it blue, and then they gave a little bit more light, and then, a little bit more when---in the end it wasn't too bad, you know, the way the light you had. We finally got shields over the headlight, and you could make a bigger opening. Where the light wouldn't shine up. Bu---

GG: Did you go out very much at night at all, then, or just pretty much stayed at home, or at work at night when....

AH: I used to stay home. During---you mean after work?

GG: Yeah.

AH: Yeah, after work I---nothing to do. I used to stay home--no, no! Wait, I take it all back. I went to work for....Sears Roebuck, I think. Part time. Yeah, that's right. I went to work for Sears Roebuck part time. Because I had nothing else to do. Enough sleep, and....I didn't have any....nothing to do during the day. I work for Sears part time. Then I....left Sears and I went and work for Irish Cabs. At that time, used to have a guy by the name of Irish. I work for him a while, handyman, you know. And then, finally, I gave that up, and gave up the part time work, and just stood with my regular work, my regular job. Because I had enough....to do home at that time, see, I was---my hobby was automotive, you know, mechanic ....until I really took it....I started as a hobby, and then, I made it a business. In fact, I had my own repair shop. Well, in my yard, of course, but I had my own business license and everything. I used to do my own repairs. So that was enough to keep me busy.

GG: So what do you think the major effect of the War was on your family, or....
AH: Well...to me, there was no effect on the War, because I was the type that never cared to go out, so with my wife, and when I-I had car, and I---we only allowed ten gallons of gas a month. You know. So, you come to Waialua one time, visit your family, and that's it. Because then you have the other few gallons to run around. Didn't affect me too much, or my family. Like I say, we wasn't the type to go out too much, and the only hard part was for my wife that had to stand in line for meat. Something special. And by the time you'd get to the counter, and they say, "Sorry, we out." (Laughs) And that's the only hard part, but as far as eating, you know, the food...and the blackouts, that sort of got us down, because you have to---hardly any lights. We didn't have any TVs at that time, only radio, and...

GG: Probably got hot and stuffy, too.

AH: ...Hot and stuffy. You had to keep your windows all...closed. But, then, afterwards, they start coming out with these blackout lights, you know. Then, we could leave your windows open. You'd put the light on, if there was a blackout, then only would shine down a little bit. It wouldn't reflect. So you could have your windows open where---and get breeze.

GG: So...

AH: Whereas in the beginning, no such thing. You could leave your lights in the house, but you had to close all your windows, and make sure no light was leaking out. And after the blackout came---I mean, their blackout lights came, it was alright in a way where you could open your windows, but you couldn't see nothing again.

(Laughter)

AH: But we survived, and I really don't think....like I say, I don't think I, my family, my wife and my children, I don't think we felt like---I don't think we had any hardship during the blackout.

GG: What happened with the Japanese family? Or families that you lived around?

AH: Well, they were still there.

GG: Well, were any of the Japanese people around you taken away, though, or investigated, or, any of that kind of...

AH: No. They were---all were there, until I moved. See, I was there during the War. The War was still going on when I moved to a better place. Which I thought was a better place. I moved to Damien area, Damien tract area. It was a nice house, bungalow type, two bedroom house. Beautiful house for the price. Was really good. But didn't last long. The Army, and whole place over, said they had to move the houses again. So I moved from the old house down School---uh,
Vineyard Street. It was a broken down shack, all termite eaten. I moved to a better home, and then, after that, the Army and Navy took the land. Whoever owned the land, well, they lost that—they sold it, I guess. But the houses...the Army and Navy didn't want the houses, so the houses were sold, and they were looking for bids. So there's a Chinese...couple of Chinese people, I think, bought 25 houses, and they moved it to their own land. And Bishop Estate took the other 25, or whatever it was, and moved it in their own land. That was good. So my house—I was with Bishop Estate, renting. They on Bishop Estate land, they moved my house to Kalihi. Kalihi Street. Almost School. School and Kalihi. In other words, I still know the address. Was 1528 Kalihi Street.

(GG laughs)

AH: And, we used to live in that house up till 1949 when I bought this place, and I moved up here in 1949, I'm pretty sure.

GG: And how did you decide to come back to Waialua?

AH: Well, from the time I left Waialua, I been always wanting to come back, you know, even if I had to commute from here to work whenever it was...because...I was always on this side anyway, you know, like to go fishing. After the War. Go fishing. My fishing was always on these grounds here. All Halei---Waialua. I know that grounds. So I figure, I used to miss my fishing, and I used to come up practically every weekend to go fishing and all that. So why not live up here? I don't mind going to work far, but at least, I'd like my week ends so I could really enjoy fishing. So, we were looking for a place, and I had my brother looking for a place, and my brother-in-law, and...all. So every time they find a place, before I'd got the word, it was sold. So finally, I saw this place in the paper. For sale. And said, "Gee, it's been in the paper for quite some time, and no buyers, you know. Something's wrong with this place. But anyhow, let's go take a look." So my brother-in-law next door, he told me, say, "Are you looking for a place up at Haleiwa?" I say, "Yeah." I say, "I'd like to move up there." He say, "Okay." Say, "There's a place for sale. So let's go take a look at it, you and I, and if the place is suitable---big enough," I say, "you and I buy it. You take your share, I take mine." So he says, "Okay." So we did. We come up, and I took one look at the place, and say, "Oh oh! (Laughs) This is it. I'm ready to go back home!" (Laughs) My wife says, "No, our money is running low. We need a place. Let's buy it." Say, "Well, I know, but look at the work!" We had plum trees, kiawe trees growing in here, although there was an old house, you know---get two old houses. Then we had coral heads about three feet high, and about three feet in diameter. You couldn't walk at night through this yard here, without breaking your shins or your leg or maybe, you even get a skull fracture. So...anyway, so, she wanted the place, so we bought the place. My brother-in-law and I, we bought the place. Then, we start working. That was while we were living in town, we'd come up every weekend.
We couldn't live in here in the house right away. We...

GG: Couldn't do any fishing 'cause you had to work, right?

AH: Yeah. So every weekend, come up here, and we bought so---old houses after the War, Waipahu. Had in their land, housing that the government had given to them. He says, "Well, that's your land, we don't need 'em anymore. You take it." So they were selling to the plantation employees, and whoever wanted. So I bought lumber. Houses that I could use the lumber. So I repaired the house that I used to live in, was on the other side. Live in there for 13 years. We repaired and everything. I made it a home. So we moved in there. My brother-in-law took this side. Didn't even have any house at that time. He wasn't in a hurry to move, anyway. So we moved. Tha—that's when the job start. No fishing. Every weekend, work. With a jackhammer. Breaking—chopping on that, uh, coral. We couldn't do it by hand. We even had to use an air jackhammer, and work every Sunday. Broking coral, all the way, broke coral, all the way, until we got the place level. Got 'em all cleaned up. And we had coral all alongside my fence that when the people that were living here that owned this place....Mr. Lord that was living back there wanted to build a fence for all around his property, so he asked this Hawaiian guy if he would do the job, he would pay 'em. So, this guy, he did. He did. He dug all the holes, put the fence up, but he says, "Well, this is my property, and I don't want to haul the rock, so let's pile all the coral on my (AH's side) side." So when I bought the place—I forget how many loads of coral I had to haul on a half-ton pick up truck. Haul and haul, all that coral was there. He wouldn't haul it away. He figure, well, he'd put it in his property. Otherwise, if he would put 'em in—if wasn't his property, he had to haul it. See, that was the agreement with Mr. Lo. So if he figure if he don't have to haul it, put it in his property, he make more money, and less work. So he did. But I had to haul it.

(GG laughs)

AH: And we haul coral over here till we were blue in the face. After we got all that done, we rested a while, then we started with dirt. And I think I put 50---50 half-ton pick up....truck in here with dirt. Only on my side, now. I think it was about 50. And there---there wasn't no half ton. I'd load 'em up until the springs would bent the other way. Really made a load with them---all that work.

(GG laughs)

AH: And after we got all that done, then we relax. But it was over a year that we work here continuously every weekend. Or holiday, or whatever it was,—any chance we get---had, you know. Work, work, work, work, work over a year, and then we relax.

GG: But now, it's worth it?
AH: Oh, yeah. Now it's worth it. Oh, yes, ma'm, it's worth it.

GG: Yeah.

AH: It's really worth it. For that---I'm glad (Coughs) that we done it at that time, because I was young and strong. And if I had to go through all that again, never. Not at my age. Oh no.

(GG laughs)

AH: No---and not with my arthritis and everything. I wouldn't be able to. But now, like I say, I'm on the easy now. Retired, and... move when I feel like, and go down, like I say, I go down Yama's Haleiwa Garage Service, and... do something just to keep busy. Putt around.

GG: What kind of fish did you use to catch out here? And did you go off shore in your boat, or did you fish from the shore or what?

AH: Well, when I used to live in town, I didn't have a boat, so I used to go out, shore casting. With the reel. Then after I moved Waialua, and then I had---well, I had a boat, and I used to go out on my boat at night. For akulis. Catch akulis. And day time, I'd go out for, oh, moana---well, let's put it this way, anything that would bite the hook.

(Laughter)

AH: At night, you could almost tell what kind of fish you were gonna bite, that you were gonna catch. And you would be out---you see, the---two type. You'd either catch akulis or opelos. That's it.

GG: How is the fishing out here now? Is it pretty much fished out, or is still a lot out there?

AH: Well, I tell you. It's getting to be that its, cheaper to buy the fish. Not much fish out here now. Fish is getting scarce. Like they say, it's a big ocean. It is big, but where's the fish, I don't know. Since I retired, I haven't been fishing.

AH: At night, people been going out, and... they been coming in with very little fish.

GG: When you used to catch yours, did you sell part of it, or give away, or did you catch eno...

AH: All give away. All give away. We couldn't keep up---I mean, we couldn't handle all. See, when I used to go out those days, were plenty fish. Well, maybe when I'd come in, at that time, the least would be 50 pounds. I would say 50, but I used to get 'em---you know ---100, 150 pounds of fish a night by myself. I mean, that's all
night. I go out early.

AH: Now I can't even---I don't think if I'd go out now, lucky if I would come home with 15 pounds.

(GG laughs)

AH: So there were a lot of fish. I used to give 'em all away. I didn't have any license to sell.

GG: Your wife cooked them, or you cleaned them, or....

AH: No, ma'm. I catch 'em, but I don't clean 'em.

(GG laughs)

AH: So that's my job catching it. That's somebody--else's job, to clean 'em. So my wife...

GG: So your wife was....the cleaner?

AH: ...Yeah, my wife clean 'em, and she fries them. She cooks 'em.

GG: Do you still get, now? Other people catch sometimes, they give you, or....

AH: Oh, yes, we always have fish. Just the other day I had. I think I had sashimi for, what, four days, I eat. (Chuckles) And I like that. I like sashimi. Somebody gave me a big chunk. And, boy, that....I really enjoy that.

GG: That's expensive now days, too.

AH: Oh yeah. I had sashimi. Like I say, I always get fish. That's the reason why I'm spoiled. Because my nephew goes out, and if he catch fish....he always....remembers. So I scratch his back, and he scratch mine. When he need motor trouble help, he brings his motors here. I take care his motors or...anything else. And then when he catches fish, he brings it to me. And then my brother-in-law, he goes out. I also take care his motors when he have trouble, so there's fish there when he go out. And if---lot of friends....I have that always---once in a while, they think of me, so I always have fish. I don't want it too often, because I get tired of it. But this way, it's working out. I don't think we---well, let's see, we haven't bought fish for long time.

GG: 'kay. How was it that you were not in the Service? You were, what, about 30 when the war broke out...

AH: No, when the War broke out, I think I was younger. You see, what happen, too....I guess I was essential to my job.
GG: Oh. That's why, I wondered if maybe that was it. You know, since you were with the Navy yard.

AH: Oh, and then, at times, too, when they would have the age limit, you know, I'd be a little bit above the age limit, plus the yard had to keep on going. I would—maybe if you were labor, or something, but, you see, they needed skill man. And, so naturally, that's where we come in, and we were exempt from the War, because we had to do one job. It's either go to War or do the job, or somebody had to do the job in the yard. And I think that's why I was exempted, because of the War service. Because after that, after the War, well, naturally, I was....too old to be drafted or anything. So kept on...

GG: Right. What about the 1949 shipping strike? Do you remember that, or did it affect you or your family at all?

AH: (Coughs) Oh, yeah, it did affect little bit, because we had a hard time getting food, especially rice and all that. I'm a rice eater, and, well, everything was hard. It did affect us. Yes, it did. But not extreme, you know. I wouldn't go to the extreme and say, it really, really did, but it did affect us a little bit. But we managed. We always had what we wanted, because, like I said, there was always fish.

(Laughter)

AH: There was always fish. Those days I used to fishing.

GG: And what about moving up to...the period of statehood. How did you feel about Hawaii getting statehood, and has---do you feel that that's had any effect on you?

AH: Well....I was against statehood.

GG: Can you say why?

AH: Well, my opinion was---I don't know, you know, I could be wrong. But the way I felt, when we didn't have statehood, our islands was controlled. I mean, that's the way I think, now. I could be wrong, I could be right. By the Big Five. Whoever they are, I don't know, but the Big Five. And, let's put it this way, you had your business here. There was no competition, but that was alright, we were still living. But, also, you couldn't get any outsiders coming in, and ruining this island. Because they were sort of the Big Five, I guess, they were controlling. They were the watchdogs, maybe, because we never had anything that we have now. And our taxes wasn't as bad. You know, land tax, and everything. We never paid, state tax. We used to pay two percent or something like that, but no---no state tax. And then, when this, became a state....part of United States, as long as you an American citizen, you can go anywhere you want to. And when that happened, that's all we got now. All the trash that was back on
that side came on this side. And they really ruined this island. And this island is ruin—of course, they ruin not because...
I don't blame 'em all, because you don't have to jump in the fire because the next man do. Well, if they do it, because they want, but they see how it's run. That's my opinion, now. That's my opinion by myself.

GG: Well, that's what I'm looking for, too, is each guy's own opinion.

AH: Yeah. So that's the way I look at it, I think that's what ruin these islands was the... the War. Second World War. Because of money floating all over the place. Money was so easy to get as long as you had the job. Where I used to work for ten cents an hour, kids were making three dollars or whatever it is an hour—a dollar—two dollars an hour—well, money was—you had jobs and you had money. Every kid has money. As long as you 15 years old, or even younger, you had money, you could buy anything you wanted. There was no such thing as, "Mama, I need a dime. Mama, I need a dollar. Or two dollars." And that was it. And that what start to spoil the kids. So after the War, well, naturally, money is start getting scarce again. Now no more that big boom. And that's what would sort of ruin the kids, you know. Running wild, no money, you had to go work. The money wasn't free. Then we had all these... people coming from the Mainland—-I don't mean the good one. You got a good and bad, but like I say, hippies started coming out, and... all this and that's what sort of ruin this island.

GG: I guess you really felt that, down here on the North Shore, too, when the hippies came.

AH: Oh yeah. Right. In fact, they all over, but this place is bad, and... well, let's put it this way, if people who was not blind, and they were in my days, looking back, you could—see the before and the now, you know. And there's a big difference. Very big difference. So everything was controlled before, it was good. No, I don't think we had any hardships before—-well, we had... 'as when the wages was small, but then after the War, everything start picking up. Uh, we didn't have statehood at that time, you know, and everything, but everything was good, like I say, and when this became a state... that's when, I think—-for myself, anyway. My opinion. That's when this island start going downhill. We never had murders like we have now. Oh, shucks! We never—what the heck, I—I never heard of anybody killing anybody in my younger days. And how—-we had the hanging law. The execution. But what the heck, how many people did they hang, as long as I can remember. And you look back in history, what, twenty people or something—-I forget now, but I don't know what it is, but I don't think it's very high. In this island, here. Now, if there would have been a—-well, you get executed, punish—a capital punishment, I think every month they'd be hanging somebody. You know? And we never had that before. Of course, they took capital punish away—maybe the punishment, maybe that's what sort of, and get all these murders and everything now, they figure they not gonna get
killed. Then again, if they had capital punishment, that would be another thing to... to really find out whether they would still have all these murdering and everything else. 'Cause, boy, if they would---did, like I say, if they did bring that capital punishment, and the people would go wild as they are now, killing one another, and all that, a---they'd be hanging every month. You know, look at the killings.

GG: Do you remember, talking about murders from a long time ago, the Myles Fukunaga case, at all?

AH: Yes, ma'am. Oh yes, ma'am. In fact, I was, living out in the sugar plantation, right in the corner. There was Waialua Road and the road going to Mokuleia right in the corner there. And we had guards there, you know, policemen and volunteer cops stopping cars and searching at that time. And we were even giving them coffee, keeping them awake. In fact, I had to work day time, and I was too young to be a guard, but I stood up with 'em and we were having coffee in that corner there while they were searching cars, because at that time, the kidnapping, they didn't know whether the baby was dead or still living, but they were searching. And I remember that. Oh, yes, ma'am.

GG: What about after---I can't remember all the details now, but, after... wasn't it a couple of people on the train that... recognized Fukunaga, and....

AH: Yeah. Well, well, from the news story, yeah. From the news stories, they recognize him. Fukunaga on the train.

GG: But they wouldn't accept the reward, and so it was....

AH: Well, on that I really don't remember. It's been quite a while. I remember it, but I can't remember all, so I don't know just... exactly what happen. Whether they took the reward or they didn't or something.

GG: Well, I think they gave the money, and that was how---where the recreation center is now, they used to have something else there? I don't know, that's one of the stories I heard, that they...

AH: You mean, down in town?

GG: Sort of by the mill.

AH: Oh. You mean down here?

GG: Yeah.

AH: Oh, I don't know.

GG: That somebody had told me, or I read somewhere, or...
AH: That recreation center, that's Waialua Plantation put the money in there to build that place. That was plantation land. Now and then, they gave it to the County, because they didn't want to be bothered, you know, it was running expense so they gave it to the city. And that's why now it's run by the city.

GG: How did the community react to that kidnapping and murder? Or do you recall?

AH: Well....in those days news never went around so much, and, of course, people reacted kind of....well, they used to talk about it and all that, but, like I say, now days, where you have TVs, you have radio, anything happen, you really know more about it. At that time, you just hear about it, or you read about it, and....very few people would talk about it. Especially being out in the country...in the sugar plantation, well, ah, shucks, you just---day in and day out, the same thing, you don't go out, so what you know is what you either hear on the radio, or in the papers, and if you don't take paper, you don't know much. And that other (Coughs) one, too, Ma-Mack-Massie---Massie? Mass killing that, uh, rape...I remember that. Till today, they don't know whether they got the right person or not.

GG: Right. I read two books on that one. They say, they still...

AH: Whatever happened. Yeah. Yeah, they still don't know. Yes, ma'm. That was way before the War.

GG: '29? I can't remember the date.

AH: That was before the War. That's when we had Governor Judd, I think, for governor at that time. Yeah, that was way before the War. I was still in sugar plantation. And I just happened to---I had a girlfriend in town at that time---no, Aiea, was it? And I just happened to be in town that night. We all went to town, and, oh, girlfriend's father, mother, and myself, we went to town, and that night that we...

GG: Massie?

AH: No, the guy, when he was murdered, when they murdered that Hawaiian boy...and took 'em down Blowhole, yes, I was in town that night. When the Extra came out, I bought an Extra. I read it in town before I came home. About that. Like I say, I really don't know what happened. It could have been something else, something screwy. Till today, they haven't got the facts.

GG: What about the effects of the Depression? You were on the plantation, and, I guess, it hit here in '31 more than it did in '29.

AH: Well, when I was in the plantation, at that time, I was in the plantation, the Depression. Like I say, we was making ten cents an hour.
At that time, I was making $1.37 a day, so it wasn't ten cents an hour, because I was in the locomotives. So in the plantation, they had a policy and a ruling if you work 23 days or better, you have ten percent bonus. If you don't work that 23, then you don't have any bonus. So what they done on the Depression, they took our bonus away from us. Because every place was hard up. So they took that ten percent away from us. So in other words, you didn't have that ten percent—regardless how many days you work, you didn't have that. That's the only...

GG: I wonder if that made people work less days, then?

(Laughter)

AH: Well, they didn't care, because, oh, what the heck.

GG: Not giving any bonus?

AH: Yeah, not getting any bonus. But then the plantation was still strict at that time. You had to work, because, you figure, they needed the men, so, they didn't—gonna goof off twenty days or whatever it is, they pull you on the carpet. But, like I said, there was (Chuckles) no bonus. That's the only thing they took away from us.

GG: So that was—and, of course, that was still a big thing, though 'cause I deduct $2.30 out of your pay, or whatever it is...

AH: Oh, yeah! Yeah.

GG: In those days it hurt.

AH: That was a... big thing. Yeah, that was a big thing, yeah. It hurt. It hurt at that time, but we survived. We were better than some people back in the Mainland. At least we didn't have, uh—we had the plantation to look up to at least. We couldn't live like royalties, but we still had our food, and, lost out on the bonus, but we managed—we survived.

GG: What about, the Red Scare? You know, when....I guess, in the late '40s and early '50s all the Communist things that were going on over here? Do you remember that or....

AH: There wasn't much around here on those things. Yeah, you'd hear about the Reds, the Communists and all that, but it didn't take effect in Hawaii very much. We'd read something about it, and where they think somebody was a Communist, but it never was proven, so nobody would attack. We went through second World War, so...

(Laughter)
AH: ...if we survive second World War, we could survive the doggone Communists, or whatever you might call it, that coming around, which we didn't---we couldn't prove who was a Communist at that time. So if we could survive the War--second World War--well, I-I don't think anything else would bother us. Because we learned how to live when it was really tough at the second World War, when you had---you know, blackout and everything, and we survived that.

GG: I guess you could call yourselves a generation of survivors.

(Laughter)

AH: Right.

GG: Okay. I think the last thing I wanna ask you is how can you wrap up, or summarize life then and life today?

AH: Well, life today...life of before and life of today, yes. I would say...95 percent right now, better for my opinion. 95 percent. For me, and my family, because like I say, we struggled before in the old days on the plantation. Well, then, we struggle. And then, now, life of today is better. Oh, I mean, well, let's put it this way. When I was working the plantation....oh, well, olden days, I spend---well, I would say, plantation, that's my smallest pay. If you---I'd make a---when I started, when I got married to my wife, I made $1.37 a day. Okay, now. I go to the store, and I buy a bag of rice. Was very cheap, lady. Oh yes, a bag of rice. Three dollars. Very cheap. But, you know, I had to work almost three days to buy that bag of rice? Then I'd borrow somebody's car, and naturally, by borrowing the car, I had to put gas in the car. When you return it, that's more than right, you know? You can't say, "Oh no." That's right. Okay. So you put 75¢---at that time, you could buy five gallons of gas for 75¢. So you put 75¢ of gas in the car there. But that's---remember now, that's three-quarters...

GG: Tank filled?

AH: ...of your pay.

GG: Yeah.

AH: Yeah, three-quarters of your pay. You put five gal---maybe you use five gallons, maybe you didn't but you put five gallons. That's three-quarters of your pay for that one day! So in a way, you don't look at it now that way, but we used to before. That's the way we used to look at it. You go buy a pair of shoes---working shoes---well, so it's cheap. So what? So you buy a pair of shoes for three, four dollars.

GG: That's another four days' pay.
AH: Payday, that's another four days' less of your pay, you know? Then we use to figure out our pay by the days, and whatever we buy, we figure, wow! This year we--this month we gonna be four days short. On our pay. Everything, when you look at it, you could judge, because it was not by the hour, but by the day. You were getting paid by the day. Now if you take for instance, now, if I was working now--I'm retired--but, if supposing, just assuming I was still working. On my job, I would be making better than eight dollars a day, almost nine dollars--I mean an hour. Almost nine dollars an hour. Well, lady, I could go to the store, fill up my tank with gas, buy three pounds of the best steak, and come home, and have that for supper with my wife, go down the service station, have my tank filled up with gas... and maybe a few more things before I eat up that one day's pay. It wouldn't be by the fifty cents or two dollars. It would be almost about fifty dollars, over fifty dollars just for that one day.

GG: Right.

AH: See? So that's-that's the big difference. That's the very big difference, now, the way a man can go to the store, and he can buy. Because he don't have to worry, says, "Oh, shucks, I only got two dollars to spend." Lot of people tell me that nothing beat the old day. But I tell you, any time anybody mention that I just tell 'em, "You full of baloney." The ones that used to have that, what they call, salary pay--you know, salary? One hundred dollars a month or something in them old days, yes! They were sitting pretty. They could talk. But not the ones that really felt it, and those are the ones today, if you ask them, they'll tell you the same thing. Sure! You could buy a bag of cabbage, you know, head cabbage? You could buy a bag of cabbage, maybe, for fifty cents. But who the heck wants to eat cabbage everyday? I don't even like it for one day!

(Chuckling)

GG: So, okay, then, in lots of ways life is materially better because you can buy more things, and your money, and this and that, but also...

AH: Oh, recreation!

GG: ...but, also, do you think it's better in other ways?

AH: Yes. You have recreation. You have everything now. You can afford to go out. You can afford. Even being retired. Being retired, now, I don't make much, but I make enough to really enjoy. We can still go out and have dinners outside, and have dinners with the Coast Guard Auxiliary when they get together, and have dinners where we have to spend a little money. We can afford that. Even though being retired.

The life is--oh, yes, it's a beautiful life, now. Really good living. Easy living, you know, no---no problems. We don't have any
problems.

GG: Okay. A couple of other things I wanted to ask you from when we talked before. What you said about the boys were standing on the corner, and they all went home at 9 o'clock. Did they have a curfew, or camp rules? You had to be in by such and such a time, as...

AH: No, ma'am. But waking up so early next morning to go to work... (Chuckles)...you gotta get that sleep.

GG: But the camp policemen did...

AH: Naw, there was no curfew. In other words, the camp police had nothing to do with you as long as you was outside. If you was in the camp, raising hell, maybe. But if you was outside in the store out on the government property, you know, outside there, sitting on stone wall or something, they—they had nothing to do with you, but the idea is, everybody wanted their sleep for the next day of work.

GG: Okay. Also, if you had a complaint about a luna or the camp condition, or your work condition, what could you do about it in those days?

AH: Well, you just sit down and hope that somebody would listen to you because you had nobody to go to. I mean, so you go to the...high up if you had trouble with the lunas, or you'd go to the, maybe, assistant manager. I don't know who. Uh...I don't know if they would---how they would work it out. Whether they would listen to you. Whether the manager would listen to you, and go for the luna. Or the luna is the word---is law. You know what I mean?

GG: Yeah.

AH: We might say, well, what the heck, we'd rather have the luna, because he's taking care so many men, or, I don't know, I never had any complaints, because---I never did go complain about any luna. My one thing---feelings was, if I didn't like the guy, and if it bother me so much, even if---punch him in the mouth and get it over with, you know?

(GG laughs)

AH: That was the old way, (Chuckles) because, like now, you can go down, sit down, and you get your union where you can negotiate, and they can come down with you then, and find out...

GG: Or your grievance procedure...

AH: Get grievance procedure and find out who's wrong, and this and that. There was no such thing before.
GG: But what if you punched a luna, then, couldn't you get fired?

AH: Well, you could get fired, but what the heck, those days, you go any place and get a job. That job wasn't restricted, like now. Now, plantations are hard to get job. But before, all in the--way back, oh, shucks, they usually, well, wasn't very much mechanical equipment, you know, doing the work. They needed mostly labor. So, was people. So...

GG: But the reputation didn't follow you to the next plantation?

AH: No; no, no, no. It wouldn't. No.

GG: That this guy is no good, because he's a punch in the mouth?

AH: No, it wouldn't. Wouldn't. Because my father done a lot of that in his young days.

(Laughter)

AH: No, he wouldn't.

GG: And in those days when you were at the plantation did many young people leave the plantations or were they....

AH: No, at that time, very few. You see we born and raise in the plantation. That's your life. You know how you live. You---me---how the half lives. You don't know how the other half lives, you know. So, unless, you forced to go out, and then, maybe, you get a bad time on the plantation, and you don't like a guy, and don't like the supervisor, don't like the conditions, and so you figure you going out, and then, maybe you find out how it is outside, but otherwise....no, very few would leave. See, I would still be in the plantation, maybe, if I didn't have this trouble with the mill superintendent. Maybe I would still be in the plantation. I don't think I would be as lucky as I am now. So if you have to make a move, and see for yourself how other people live.

GG: And while you were there, now, is when they sort of begin to get some of the new mechanical equipment and stuff like this. Right towards the end of when you were there.

AH: Yeah. Yes, ma'm.

GG: How did people get a chance to learn how to use the equipment, or did a lot of people have to be laid off, because....

AH: No. Nobody was laid off. And they had a chance to learn. And those that wanted job and were qualified, they would teach 'em, and learn the job. And there was nobody laid off. The plantation never laid 'em---of course, if a guy would retire, you know, maybe they wouldn't,
replace 'em, you know? They had too much men at that time. And they wo...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

AH: (Tape garbled) all the way up to forty. They would never lay you off or fire you, unless---they would fire you when you do something wrong, and well, you had to be punished, then fire. Otherwise, they wouldn't lay off, not like when you work for civil service, says, "Well, so much money is appropriated from the gove---federal incre---back there. Uh, so we have to lay off certain men." Like you read almost every year...in the paper, right? In the sugar plantation, was different. In other words, they making their own money. Of course, every shop have limitations, you know, he says, "Well, okay. Your quota is, maybe, $50,000 for this year, or $100,000, and you have to almost go by that, you know, cut down expenses to the limit." But as far as laying off men or something, no.

GG: But even before the union came in, then, they didn't do that when they got new machines that would help...

AH: No, no. They found other jobs. They never laid off anybody. Never just say, "Well, we don't need you, so you kicked out." I mean, up to the time when I was in the plantation, that's 1940. After I moved out of the plantation, well, then whatever happen, I wasn't interested anyway. 'Cause I live in town after I move 1940. See, I stood nine years. Nine years away from here. In town. Yeah, came back in 1949. I think.

GG: Okay. Well, I think that's about it. Unless you have anything else you wanna add to our record?

AH: No. No, like saying now, you see, like when they done away with the locomotives, every man in the locomotive department was placed. They done away with all the locomotives. But, my brother, he was a locomotive engineer. So, he became a grader operator. And.... Johnny Posses, engineer, he became roller operator. You know, robe roller. And Mel Decoite---everybody, oh, everybody had a job. All. All the locomotive department boys, the road gang, they were taking care all the roads for the tournahaulers. You know, your cane carrier? They were taking care of the road. So they all had jobs. See maybe they didn't have any jobs, as I say, they done away with the locomotive, but they still had to have road gang. And that's when the locomotive crew came in, and they made out alright. Some of them went different jobs, but they never 1...

GG: Did you have to go less money, or---of course, this was after---tournahaulers came in, after the union, yeah? So, they stayed at the same rate of pay, even though they went to another job, or do you
know?

AH: Gee, I think---well, all depend. I think they would, ah? If you went to a lower job, maybe you would hold that pay, and then after that, drop down. And then again, too, you had what do you call 'em, after being so long, you know.

GG: Seniority, or...

AH: Yeah, seniority, and all that stuff here where you would....

GG: In grade pay, or whatever.

AH: Incentitive or something, you know, all that would come in, so you would still make out good.

GG: Any super special experience or funny story about the plantation or anything you want to tell?

AH: (Laughs) Well, no.

GG: Think we covered the whole ballpark?

AH: Yeah. We covered practically everything. Oh, I was gonna show you some pictures I had---I found here. The train wreck and all that. The newsclippings. I have that inside. And that's about all I have.

END OF INTERVIEW