BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: YUBON MAEHIRA, 56, owner of trucking business and taro farmer

Yubon Maehira was born in Kukuihae on May 4, 1922, the youngest of four children. His parents were Japanese immigrants who raised cane for the plantation. Yubon went to Kukuihae School (1st to 8th) and Honokaa School (9th to 12th), graduating in 1940.

After high school Yubon worked as a grocery clerk in Honokaa for one year before becoming a truck driver for a Honokaa transportation company. He has lived all his life in Kukuihae except for two years in the service (1945 to 1946). After the service, Yubon started his own transportation company which he still runs today.

In 1951 Yubon married. The Maehiras have four children; they live in Kukuihae.

Financial need motivated Yubon to start raising taro in Waipio in 1969. One of his sons, Galen, is trying to raise prawns in Waipio.

Yubon is a practicing Buddhist. When he is not busy working, he likes to fish.
Tape No. 4-52-1-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mr. Yubon Maehira (YM)

June 26, 1978

Kukuihaele, Big Island

BY: Vivien Lee (VL) and Yukie Yoshinaga (YY)

VL: This is an interview with Mr. Yubon Maehira. Today is June 26, 1978. We're at his house in Kukuihaele.

Okay, for the record, can you tell us where and when you were born?

YM: In Kukuihaele. May 4, 1922.

VL: And what your parents did as you were growing up. What they did for a living.

YM: Oh, they were just farming. Raising their cane for the [Kukuihaele] plantation.

VL: Did they ever have any involvement with taro?

YM: No.

VL: So they were raising cane full time?

YM: Just, yeah, cane land farmers.

VL: So, you went to school in Kukuihaele too, yeah?

YM: Kukuihaele.

VL: What did you do after you graduated from high school?

YM: I was working at the store as a clerk. For about two years. Worked for transportation in Honokaa.

VL: What was your job with the transportation company?

YM: Driving. It was prior to the service in the Army in 1944. Got this [present] job in 1946, I think.

VL: When you were in the Army, did you get to travel?
YM: I went down to the South Pacific.

VL: Oh. How was that?

YM: Terrible. (Laughs)

VL: How come?

YM: Well, right in the war years, it's nothing like today.

VL: Did you ever think that after the service, maybe you wouldn't come back to Kukuihaele?

YM: Well, was young then, so I didn't think anything about that.

VL: So then, after you came back in 1946, you came back to Kukuihaele?

YM: Kukuihaele, yeah.

VL: And then what did you do?

YM: Well, I started my own trucking. Because usually, after you get discharged, you get two or three months leave, eh, from the Army. So I was just, in the mean time, I thought about going into transportation there. So I started my own.

VL: What did you do for that two or three months?

YM: Nothing. Just take it easy, eh. Because we actually got paid from Army then. I think, I'm not sure if they're doing that at present or what. But in these war years, used to get that, they call that Mustering Out pay or something. So you get paid for about three months.

VL: What made you decide to go into trucking?

YM: Well, since I working for Nagao Transportation [in Honokaa] before I get into the Army. So I came back and went right back into transportation.

VL: At the time that you started your own trucking company, were there any others in Honokaa or Kukuihaele?

YM: Well, there was Nagao in Honokaa. So I started my own in Kukuihaele.

VL: Did you need financing?

YM: Well, not that much, no. Because I guess what they do is get to the bank and got a loan.

VL: Were your parents still alive then?
YM: Just my mother.

VL: Where did you get your truck from?

YM: Oh, just from Hilo. I just bought it from the....

VL: What kind was this?

YM: Just about ton and a half. Diamond T. But those days, a truck was cheaper. I guess about four to five grand [$4,000 to $5,000]. Whereas today, gee, you just get one there, 20 grand you know [$20,000].

VL: How long did it take you before you could pay off that $4,000 for the truck?

YM: Well, about four, five years.

VL: How did you build up clients?

YM: When I just started, I knew this taro and how it going spread. The incoming was from Hilo to the stores, well, more to the stores. I went up to see the stores and ask them if [I] could haul the freight for them.

VL: How had they been getting their freight before you came?

YM: Well, KK Super [Honokaa] was having their own pick up. They hauling their own. But Kukuihaele ones, same thing. You know this Kaneshiro store, they used to have their own trucks, small truck. But I guess it doesn't pay to go in [to Hilo] with the small truck. Back and forth to Hilo, especially if Hilo is about 50 to 60 miles. And those days, those roads was really bad. It's not like today. Take us about hour and 15 minutes today. Whereas, in 1946, take us about three hours, three hour and a half. You know, those winding roads going to Hilo. Today, just by-pass Honomu. And in 1946, take us about hour 15 minutes from Hilo to Honomu. You know that Higaki Bakery there? That was our first stop, rest point. Because take us about three hours. You know, you just can't ride continuously, from Hilo to Kukuihaele. So we used to get a rest point in Honomu, Higaki Bakery. The next one was in Laupahoehoe. And that's another hour from Honomu to....

YY: Did you make deliveries to these rest points?

YM: No, no. My delivery was from Honokaa to Kukuihaele. So one of the advantage I had was the taro, the outgoing freight. Because all the other truckers, they depend [only] on their incoming.

VL: "Incoming," you mean from Hilo.
YM: Hilo out to Honokaa or Hilo to Kona or Ka'u. But that's the best advantage I had was, that time. But today is different I think. Up Waimea, few of the farmers have their outgoing freight too, vegetable too.

VL: When you started in 1946, how had the taro farmers been getting their taro before, to Hilo?

YM: Well, I guess they had a truck. Well, that was, the trucker used to be Mr. Fujii. Prior to that, well, they used to haul that to the railroad. At Paauilo Station. Then, after the [1946] tidal wave, they discontinued then they used to come pick their own [taro].

VL: Who used to come?

YM: Oh, [Leslie] Chang and all those poi factories. Because they never used to ship [taro] to Honolulu. All was in Hilo. Honolulu was in... that one, I have the record someplace. Honolulu was about 1960, no, I start shipping to Honolulu.

VL: So in 1946, when you started, your trucking changed many things then.

YM: In what ways you mean "change?"

VL: The old ways that people had been shipping.

YM: Well, the shipping, well, they used to hauling their own through pickups or....the only thing I did was just to get a bigger truck and consolidate all the taro and then take it up [to Hilo]. Just like this now, they all bring it to my place. [The farmers all bring their taro to his house.] [I] just load it and take it up.

VL: Were they happy to have you take over that function?

YM: Oh yeah, I think was....because, like I said, they had a small pick up. It doesn't pay to go in with a small load. The pay load wasn't there. You must have a bigger truck, too. Timewise same.

VL: Back when you first started, were you the only one driving?

YM: Yeah, I was the only one. Self-employed.

VL: And back then, how did you get the goods to take to Hilo? How would they get them to you?

YM: Well, actually, what the farmers do is this. You know where the [Waipio] lookout is today? They used to unload it on that side of the road there. And I used to go up and pick it up, and take it to Hilo.
YY: At that time, they were unloading mules?

YM: Yeah, mules. The first time they start hauling with truck was 1958 or 1959. That was the first year. I'm not sure, but I think that was the year that they first took the truck down to [Waipio Valley], I think that was Puueo Poi. You know Leslie Chang? He's the one thought of taking the truck down and haul that taro from Waipio. But the road was really bad then. It's not like today.

VL: So when they would drop the taro at the lookout area, did you have to load it yourself?

YM: Just load it myself. No equipment. I was young then, so it was all right.

VL: The first few years, how many bags would that be each time?

YM: Well, I used to go at usually capacity, no. About 80, 90 bags.

VL: And how many times a week would you do that?

YM: Three times a week. Schedule. Because I used to schedule that with my incoming freight. Take the taro in [to Hilo], outgoing taro. And then coming in with my groceries and...so instead of going every day and get half load, this way I can get a pay load every trip. And I still doing that today, too. Still schedule myself three times a week. And in between, if there's too much load, I go in. Make a special trip.

VL: So back when you first started, does that mean you were only working three days a week?

YM: Oh no.

VL: What would you do the other days?

YM: Usually deliver. Because like I said, during those years, take us about three hours to go in and three hours to come back. So I used to deliver [goods to the stores] the following day. And then get prepared for the trip for next day. Load the trucks.

VL: Load them with?

YM: Physical. No equipment eh. Today, we have high lifts so it's just no problem. So it take me about hour and a half to load it up.

VL: The 90 bags?

YM: Uh huh.

VL: Was there any identification on the bags?
YM: Oh, just tags.

VL: And what would they say?

YM: It's "for Puueo Poi." Get written. Tag is written for Puueo Poi, or Hilo Poi. And then, when we used to haul to Honolulu, then it's same system. To Honolulu Poi, and Kalihi Poi.

VL: And then, who would pay you for taking the taro?

YM: Well, usually, it's the poi factory. Because if I deal with the farmers, too many farmers to deal with. Whereas, if I deal with the poi factory, for Hilo, it's just two, Hilo Poi and Puueo Poi, so. And what they do is they deduct that from the farmers.

VL: They do?

YM: They do. Well....

VL: Can you explain how they do that?

YM: Say, during those years, I think the bag of taro used to cost about $3 to $4 a [100-pound] bag. And we used to charge about $4 per ton [to transport to Hilo], so it's about 25 cents or 20 cents a bag. Yeah, 20 cents. So what they do is they deduct that from their....amount from the $4 or $3, whatever it is.

VL: So, in essence, the farmers pay for the trucking too.

YM: Yeah, they pay for the trucking.

VL: Would you ever have a case where someone was late in bringing it up to the lookout [from Waipio Valley], and they wanted you to wait?

YM: Oh no. Because during those years, we get no problem of theft or anything. You can leave the taro there whole week, the taro would be still there. Altogether different from today. Today, you cannot leave anything there. I guess people there was real honest. Really, you can leave it up a week or so, no problem with theft or anything.

YY: So when the mule train came up you didn't have to be there.

YM: No. Because usually I do is just go in the afternoons. Say, 3 o'clock, they all be up there. So whatever comes late, well they just leave it there and then just bring it on my next trip.

VL: Who would determine how much you should get per ton? For hauling. Who determines the price?

YM: Oh that, we used to do our own. Because we didn't have any PUC
[Public Utilities Commission] regulation or anything that's... we go accordingly to among the truckers.

VL: The truckers get together?

YM: Well, not actually get together. We just talk among ourselves and the distance, we just figure that out. So we say just say $4 per ton from Hilo to Honokaa or Kukuihaele. Because the rate from Hilo to Honokaa and Kukuihaele was the same, because it was within that area. We didn't charge any extra from Honokaa to [Kukuihaele].... but again, if we had to do any hauling from Kukuihaele to Honokaa, then get some extra charges. But if direct to Hilo to [Kukuihaele] ....we don't. Same rate.

VL: So in 1946, how many truckers were there?

YM: Honokaa used to have, I think, two truckers.

VL: That was Nagao...

YM: Nagao and Mikawa.

VL: So when you started, did you take any of their business?

YM: Not in Honokaa. Oh, except only one store, KK Super. The store that I was working for before.

VL: Oh, they switched to you?

YM: Yeah. But I could get along because of this outgoing freight in taro going out. So I didn't have to depend on my incoming freight from Hilo. As long as I had my outgoing freight, I had my payload, so....

VL: Did the other two truckers go into Hilo just as often as you did?

YM: No, they used to go daily, I think. Because they had bigger community to serve.

VL: And they had nothing [to] out freight?

YM: They have few. But wasn't steady as mine.

VL: I wonder why they didn't think of coming in to pack the taro.

YM: I really don't know why. Because they used to haul their own anyway, poi factory, eh. That's one of the reason why.

VL: But you had no trouble convincing them [the poi factories] that it would be better if you did it?
YM: Well, I knew this—especially Chang guys. He was farmer Waipio, eh. Family from Waipio so....

VL: Okay. When you started hauling for Honolulu Poi, where would you deliver the taro to?

YM: Beginning, I used to deliver that to Hilo. That goes out three times a week. And then later on, I used to ship it Kawaihae. I used to have the schedule for twice a week. But the difference is that in Hilo, get one day later to Honolulu. Get faster service in Kawaihae, so the taros get in fresher. So today we ship it all through Kawaihae. Because the rate is not too much, no difference at all. But it's just a service, eh. Get that faster.

YY: Then, when you take it to Kawaihae, do you have any freight to bring back?

YM: Oh yes, I do. I have that freight for the plantation too.

YY: Stuff that comes to Kawaihae dock?

YM: Yeah. And then they have that plant there, the Union Oil Company. So I have the oil there for Honokaa Sugar Company, for the mill and the garage. So I have both ways. It's worked out fine for me.

VL: Have you ever hired other drivers?

YM: I just have one.

VL: When did you hire him?

YM: Actually, he's been working for me from 1955. He's a part-timer.

VL: You still do driving yourself?

YM: Yeah, I drive myself. So he, the driver takes care all the Kawaihae. And I take care Hilo.

VL: What would you say is the most enjoyable part of your work, if any?

YM: No, I don't think so.

(Laughter)

YM: Too much work and not enough income. No, but actually, like I say, is independent. I don't know. Maybe get a bigger outfit, maybe you have a pressure from the union or something like that. I just got one driver so no more. That's the beauty about small trucker. You don't have any problem from labor. Labor leaders or unions or what.

VL: If you had wanted to expand, would there have been enough business?
YM: Well, if I went to Honokaa, I could. But again, you know us truckers, especially with that trucker, I used to work for him in Honokaa, Nagao. So we had just good relation. So I didn't want to just cut into his area. So I was satisfied with myself and the other driver.

VL: How about the least enjoyable part of the work?

YM: Getting up too early in the morning. Especially during the early years. Today it's not too bad. When I first began, gee, I used to go, leave about 4 o'clock in the morning. Because like I said, take us three hours eh. I want to get in before the wholesalers open. So what I do is get out early and unload and pick up my freight from the wholesalers just before eight. They used to open at eight, the wholesalers in Hilo. But today, I usually leave just before six. Because the road is so good. Take me about hour 15 minutes.

VL: Have you ever had any accidents on the road?

YM: Well, so far no accidents. So far so good, I hope.

VL: When did these PUC regulations come in?

YM: Gee, that was in 1962, I think.

VL: And how did that affect your business?

YM: As far as the rates, it didn't affect the rates. Because this going to be statewide eh. It's not individual. As far as I'm concerned, well, didn't affect me too much. But affect the farmers eh, because you got PUC regulations, they give us the rates so....for a while the farmers felt the strain because the price went up so all at once. But as years went by, I guess they....it goes to consumers too, I guess.

VL: Can you talk about the trends in the amount of production that's come out of Waipio Valley over the years, since 1946?

YM: Well actually, from 1946 to 1957, I had the record but somehow I misplaced it someplace. I have the record here from 1957. Let's see, in 1957, actually, I did majority of the hauling. Maybe 90, 95 percent of the taro that came out of the valley.

VL: And the rest was going....

YM: The rest was, I don't think they had the poi shop then in Kukuihale [Ono Ono Poi].

VL: No.

YM: They didn't have, see. But they had one in Honokaa.
YY: Was that the Olepau?

YM: Yeah, Olepau's. So, like I said, I was hauling just about 95 percent of the taro from Waipio Valley. So I have a record here [See table, next page], in 1957 was 18,774 bags came out from the valley. Then, notice, 1958 was about the same there, not too much difference. But in 1959, you see a drop of about half, 7,324 bags went up. And the reason why is that they had a big flood in 1958, which affected in 1959, a year later. Because they had the flood in 1958, won't affect the mature taro, but affect the younger taro. So that's where you see the shortage in 1959. It's always been the trend. You have a flood in this year, that's going to affect next year's crop.

VL: Now, did that really hurt your business too?

YM: It does, because like I say, it's just what happened. From about 18,000 to 7,324 bags in 1959.

VL: What can you do about that?

YM: Just can't do anything. Just haul what they have and....but actually, I had some other incoming freight from Hilo so.

YY: You couldn't increase....

YM: You can't increase because there's no taro. Would be affected by the flood. Taro is something different from other products. It takes a year to two years to have it matured. You just can't go over there and pick and ship it out, because have to wait until it's matured.

VL: From 1946 to 1957, was it an upward trend in production?

YM: Yeah, the trend was going up, it's little by little. Then, from 1957 to about, I'd say up to 1971, 1972, just about evenly. Only when they have the flood, then it's affect the production. Then about 1974, you can see the downgrade because of this soft rot.

VL: So that really affects your business.

YM: To me, no, it's not that much I felt. Because, like I say, I have some other freight to haul. I don't depend on taro only. But really affect the farmers, no. Especially the full time farmers.

VL: When did you get this high lift?

YM: Oh, the high lift was in 1956. So that's really helped me a lot. In other words, taking the place of about six or seven men, with one high lift.

VL: Had you been hiring six or seven men?
Number of Bags Taro Hauled by Yubon Maehira from Waipio  
1957-1977*

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<th>For Kalihi Poi (80# bags)</th>
<th>For Honolulu Poi</th>
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</tr>
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<td>none</td>
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* From records kept by Yubon Maehira.
YM: No. Not that, but I mean, at times get about five or six men come helping me. Once in a while. So take us maybe about half an hour or so. But with this high lift there, I can make it 15, 20 minutes with the same. Like I say, takes the place of about five to six men.

VL: So you occasionally had been hiring people to help you?

YM: You mean before I got this high lift? No. I been doing all myself. But they always come out, and they see me there, they try help me out. Because they're friends of mine.

VL: Is this farmers?

YM: Just local boys. Students or....

VL: So then, when you got the high lift, would you still go to the lookout? To pick up.

YM: I had the high lift up there. Lookout.

VL: So when did you start changing your pickup place from the lookout to your house?

YM: That was in 1963.

YY: So between 1959, when the first truck went down, and 1963, then most of the farmers had bought trucks?

YM: Yeah, they start. Actually, took them about two years after, no, before the other farmers caught up with that person. Was William Kanekoa, he was the first farmer with the truck.

VL: Over here.

YM: And actually, when he went into the truck, they thought he was crazy to go down with the truck. And the condition of the road, eh. But lot of farmers, they saw him doing that so they start buying new trucks and they start hauling with their pick-up.

VL: So how did they feel about the change of pick up point? How did the farmers feel about bringing the taro to your place?

YM: Like I said, during that 1946, when I started, till about 10, 15 years, I think I didn't lose not one bag [from the Waipio lookout]. But again, later on, we notice few bags missing. From about 1960's.

VL: Oh, from the lookout point?

YM: Lookout point.

VL: Is that the reason why you changed?
YM: Yeah, that's one of the reason why. And then for me was more convenient too....if they could bring it down to my place. Because I don't have to go up special, all the way up to that area and whereas here, they can just bring it anytime they want. You see, they have both ways too. Convenient for them and convenient for me. Because when they used to drop it at the lookout point, they had to be there before three that afternoon. Whereas if they bring it down here, they can bring it 5 o'clock. Just put it in a skip and then I can just ship it out. Real convenient for the farmers because after they get through working, they maybe work until 4 o'clock. So they just drive up. Whereas, at the lookout point, they had to come up, make a special trip and then go back again. So it works out both ways for the farmers and myself.

VL: Do you have any other machinery besides the high lift?

YM: For loading? No. Just the high lift. That's all I need.

VL: So now days, is it still a full time job?

YM: No, it's not. Because like I said, I used to spend about two days a week down the valley, raising taro.

VL: Oh, I mean hauling, trucking.

YM: No trucking is, like I said, I schedule myself three times a week to Hilo. And then, whenever there's extra freight, well I make a special trip. Don't have my own, another driver taking care of Kawaihae twice a week. That's when the barge leaves. And you do, whenever it's necessary, he goes down make a special trip.

VL: Why did you decide to raise taro in 1969?

YM: Well, I think was financial. Had my children going to college. So I thought maybe an extra income would help a lot, which really did.

VL: What did you know about taro farming before you started?

YM: Nothing. Only thing I knew about taro was loading the taro on my truck. I really didn't know how to plant. Then I went down see my plans and inquire. I really didn't know anything about taro. In fact, I never did pull a taro or plant a taro before I go down. That was 1946 to 1969. I never did go down and pull a taro or plant a taro.

VL: Was it difficult learning?

YM: No. The only thing, as far as raising taro, is the work involved. What I mean by that is working in the mud and what not. That's the only difficulty there is. After you have it planted, it's not too much of a job. You have to go down once a week at least to regulate
your water. I think that's the main thing about taro raising, regulating the water.

VL: Did you find that people were helpful to you in giving you advice?
YM: Oh yes. Because, see, I didn't know anything about taro raising.

VL: How about your first batch of huli, where did you get that?
YM: Oh, that was from friends. Farmers down Waipio Valley. I got some from Nelson Chun, William Kanekoa. Those are the two farmers that really helped me out. Because they are the big farmers.

YY: How did you get your land?
YM: That's a lease land, so.
YY: You had no trouble getting?
YM: No, that was idle land anyway.

VL: Altogether, how many acres?
YM: About eight acres too. Eight acres but you notice there's lot of swamp there. So actually, production was about five acres.

VL: Do you want to talk a little bit about the rot problem?
YM: Well, I'm not an expert so....

YM: 1976, yeah.

VL: Altogether, what percentage would you say you lost?
YM: In 1976, I was thinking we had a production of just 30 to 35 percent. Whereas we would be harvesting 15 bags a week all year round. I have a schedule to harvest 15 bags all year round, per weekend. And I lost production to just about 30 to 35 percent.

VL: But now, you've been having a lot of success.
YM: Yeah, I think because lot of information from Dr. de la Pena from Kauai. Then doing my experiment. I won't say it's perfect but then my production's about 90. Just about 90 percent now. So I hope it gets better.

VL: Your feeling was that the root system has to be strong?
YM: Yeah. My theory is that you have a good root system, then you have good production.
VL: What was it that your soil was deficient in?

YM: Actually what I did was I took soil samples and sent it to University of Hawaii, have it tested. Go accordingly with that. Spread some calcium and fertilizer.

VL: Would you like to expand your acreage?

YM: No, I don't think so. What I have now is sufficient. Because I don't have the time to spend more time with my trucking now.

VL: How long will you continue your trucking business?

YM: Well, maybe another five years I hope.

VL: You have plans for after that?

YM: I was thinking is, I might go down the valley put full time. Because gee, I like farming. Getting tired of trucking already, driving up and down.

VL: When you used to drive up and down, did you ever think about anything special?

YM: What you mean by "special?"

VL: Well, what did you think about, I should say.

YM: Driving down the valley?

VL: No, driving Hilo and back.

YM: Oh, driving Hilo. Well, I don't think so. I don't think anything special.

YY: When did they make the new highway, so that you no longer had to go almost make all those turns?

YM: I think they started in nineteen...Oh, let's see, maybe they completed in about 1958 or 1959, I think was in.

YY: How did it feel the first time you drove on it?

YM: Oh, it was, like I said, took us about three, three hour and a half to Hilo, depending on the load. Whereas, today, just take about one hour 15 minutes, so I think that will explain how I feel.

YY: Much safer, too.

YM: Yeah, much safer.
VL: Do you have any opinions on what the future of taro is in Waipio?

YM: Like I say, the young ones is not going into taro farming. They rather get into hotel work or construction. You don't want to get into that mud, water and mud. Then the older ones is getting older and older so they not producing as much as what they used to. So I think, to me I feel it's downgrade, eh. And then, with this soft rot going on now, I think it's discouraging lot of these farmers too. Because today, I think we have about 30, I guess about 35 full time and part-time farmers. To my da kine. Because counting up all these part-time farmers. When that 35, I think gee, lot of them getting discouraged from going down into the....

VL: Well, many of them are encouraged by your success in solving your soft rot problem.

YM: Actually I had five or six of these farmers asking me what I'm doing. So I just giving them the information that I had from Dr. de la Pena. I just can't give them this formula I had from de la Pena. I told them if you want that way, just come to my place and look the taro. Being a farmer, they supposed to know how to grow the taro. And....

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

YM: Like I told these farmers too, I'm not an expert.

[Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.]

VL: You said that you tell the farmers you're not an expert.

YM: Oh, yeah. I just told them I'm not an expert. And the reason why I said that is, you know when it gets matured, I don't want them to come back to me and say gee, I told them a lie or something like that.

VL: How much does it cost you for this formula fertilizer?

YM: This half acre lot there, the patch there, I think cost me just about $200 dollars. But I gained. You spend $200 and you get the production what I have, it's really hardly anything. Because you get about 200 bags there. And today's market is about $12 to $15 [a bag]. Some of them getting more I think. So I think it's worth it, doing good.

VL: You mentioned about young people minding the mud and the water. You don't mind the mud?
YM: Well, I don't because like I say, I like farming. Then, it all
depend the area in Waipio, too. I think, if you go the lower area,
it's kind of deep, eh. Get up to about your knees or something.
But get to a certain areas, it's just about six or seven inches
high. So you get boots on, it doesn't....and again, I have a
equipment too. Japan tractor. So that make lot of difference.

VL: How about your son Galen, do you think he will pick up the taro?

YM: Yeah, he's interested. I gave him a patch there, the big one
there. That's the one that's growing real nicely now. I told him
he had to buy this fertilizer, to invest some money and then see.
I think he's really interested. Plus, that's just really growing
nicely.

VL: So he doesn't mind the mud.

YM: No. I guess he can see the income, it's....really it's good income.
As a part-time work.

VL: How about for full time work?

YM: Well, if you a full time, it's pretty good too. Providing you can
lick this problem of soft rot. I think it's really a good income,
as far as part now, taro raising. But again, if you start getting
this problem of soft rot, gee. When you get about 30 to 35 percent
production, that's really discouraging.

VL: What made you go back and try again?

YM: The reason why is I had some taro down there. Like I said, I get
the 13 patches there. And get about three or four of them was
completed. Then I had the seed there, so I just went right on, try
different method. In the mean time, I got some information from
Dr. de la Pena, the extension agent in Kauai. So I just tried and
kept on trying. Getting better and better, so.

VL: Do you have anything else you want to add to that?

YM: Well, as far as taro, I don't think so. Because like I say, I'm
just new in taro yet.

VL: How about as far as trucking?

YM: Trucking, you have any question, I can answer. Because I'm in
trucking, it's been my life in trucking, so....

VL: Has it been a good life trucking?

YM: Well, to me it's been good. Like I said, I have my four children,
put 'em all through college. Although lot of work, eh. Early in
the morning. But one advantage, like I say, is because of my freight going both ways. Incoming and outgoing. So I think it's really good to me, as far as trucking concerned.

END OF INTERVIEW