BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: FELOMINA AGBAYANI, housewife

Felomina Agbayani, Ilocano, was born in Bacrra Barrio, Ilocos Norte on August 25, 1900. She immigrated with her first husband to Camp 4 in Makaweli, Kauai in 1923. She worked briefly on the plantation, picking up short cane.

During the 1924 strike, Felomina contributed rice and money to the strikers. She and other Ilocanos were influenced by Philippine Labor Commissioner Cayetano Ligot not to strike.

A cousin of hers, Alipio, who lived in the same camp was captured and held by Hanapepe strikers. The Hanapepe incident was touched off by conflict between Sheriff Crowell and strikers over Alipio's capture.

Felomina currently lives in Wailua Homestead with her husband Florecendo.
Tape No. 5-33-1-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Felomina and Florecendo Agbayani

December 6, 1978

Wailua Homestead, Kauai

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

Assisting with Translation and Interpretation: Bert Aqui (BA) on hand at the interview. Teresita Tabios, Ilocano translator from Honolulu assisted also. Her translation is in brackets [].

GG: This is an interview with the Agbayanis in their home in Wailua Homestead.

Felomina: I am 78 now, and he is 82. But I cannot remember the date. (Mrs. Agbayani, birthdate: August 25, 1900, Bacrra Barrio, 15 Ilocos Norte. Mr. Agbayani, birthdate: February 13, 1895, Bangui Barrio Pancian, Claveria Cagayan.)

GG: How did you decide to come to Hawaii?

Felomina: The problem is the place he came from, they said they are not going to accept anybody [they are not taking applications] from that place there. If he goes to Ilocos Norte, then that's the time [there his application is granted] and we came to Hawaii.

GG: Did you come with your first husband?

[Mrs. Agbayani came with her first husband and lived in Makaweli Camp for two years.]

Felomina: No. We [Mr. Agbayani and I] were not married in the Philippines, but we saw each other in Hawaii.

GG: And did you go straight to Makaweli first?

Felomina: Yes.

GG: You stayed Makaweli for a long time, then? [With first husband.]

Felomina: Yes. I came in 1923 [June 24], but we [Florecendo and me] were not married at that time yet. I was married to somebody
else before I got him. [Aglipay is another religion.] So I was married under the Aglipay religion, at that time. But I was not divorced; then we just separated. Then I got married to this man here. [Florecendo Agbayani]

GG: Did you work for the plantation yourself, or you just housewife, in 1923?

Felomina: I was working in the plantation for four months. 1925. Then I moved to this place here, Kealia. Polo is Kapaa.

GG: What kind of work did you do at Makaweli?

Felomina: I was working in the plantation with the---when the cane is cut by the other men, I pick up the short cut cane (left by the machine) and put it in the flume with the water. Carry in the lower part.

GG: Anybody from your camp was Visayan and went on strike, during the 1924 strike?

Felomina: No Ilocanos during the strike in the camp where I came from. Only the Visayan people.

GG: How many Visayans and Ilocanos were living in the camp you were living in?

Felomina: Camp 4 is where I stayed. More Visayan families than the Ilocanos in the place where I was living; Camp 4. The reason why the Ilocanos didn't move to join the strike, because of Ligot. Ligot was the one with the plantation, Hawaii Sugar Planters Association man that take care of the...

GG: Yeah, I know who he is. Did you actually hear Ligot come and talk, or how did you know?

Felomina: Yeah, Ligot came and talked to us not to join the strike.

GG: Did he say why not to join in?

Felomina: Ligot told us that the Visayans will go out and the intention
of the money that is going to be approved then, the Ilocanos will go in the strike.

GG: And did you hear Manlapit ever come and talk at the plantation?

Felomina: When Manlapit came and made the speeches regarding the strike, mostly Visayans--but some Ilocanos--went in there too. To hear what the intention of Manlapit's idea.

GG: Did he talk in Tagalog or in English, Manlapit, when he gave his speech?

Felomina: Yeah, Tagalog and English.

GG: And could you understand?

Felomina: Only Tagalog, I understand.

GG: But you speak Ilocano, right?

Felomina: Yes.

GG: How did you learn to understand Tagalog?

Felomina: Philippine Islands.

GG: I see. And did Ligot come often, or did he send notices that they posted in the camp, or...

Felomina: Yes.

GG: And the notices, were they in Ilocano?

Felomina: Ilocano.

GG: What kind of things did the notices say?

Felomina: I don't know Ligot, what kind him thing say.

GG: What did you, as Ilocanos, think of the Visayans going on strike?

[So the strike broke out. Manlapit was with the Visayans and Ligot was with the Ilocanos. At the event of the planning for a strike, there was a Visayan man named Badong whom the people called "Boss," and smart, because he can speak Ilocano and Tagalog. He said that the Visayans go for a strike first, and if they don't have any more supply, then the Ilocanos can support them.]

GG: Badong, he was like the man in charge at Makaweli?

Felomina: Yeah. This Visayan man told the camp people that the Visayans will go out first, and then what will happen in two weeks
time, when the strikers are running out of supplies, then be sure that you people give us help.

The remaining people in the camp is the one that Badong was trying to tell to help them when they run out of supplies or something. I don't know what place they talking about, "Badong, Badong." But Villanueva is the friend, but both of them passed away already.

GG: Did collectors from the Hanapepe strike camp go to get food or money from the Ilocanos to help out in the strike camp?

[At the event of the strike, the Visayans went to get their supplies from Ilocanos, from Hanapepe to the other camps. The Ilocanos gave the Visayans money, food such as fish, meat, vegetables and rice.]

GG: Did you donate or help out?

Felomina: Yeah. Money and rice. We donated.

GG: Where were you when had the trouble at Hanapepe? Do you remember about that?

Felomina: The reason that the starting point of that shooting was that man from our camp, number 9, by the name Alipio was in the strike. And they said the police wanted to take him away from the Hanapepe camp, in the striker camp.

GG: Do you know how he got in the strike camp?

Felomina: Alipio from our camp, he has a lot of friends from that camp. And he used to visit them. Then, gradually, the strikers convinced him to come in the strike camp. That's why he went to the strike camp in that Hanapepe.

GG: We heard from some other people, that they may have been riding bicycle back and forth in Hanapepe town, or going to the store. And that the strikers like kidnapped them, or grabbed them and took them inside the camp.

Felomina: Oh, he was the one bicycling and then the strikers kidnapped him and put him in that place there. That's why the police had to come in. Because the camp people, the remaining Ilocanos didn't like the idea that Alipio was kidnapped and put in that place. So the police went in there. Eight police officers. Out of that, six been shot. Four died, two have been shot but alive and went to the hospital. And the other two didn't get hurt.

[Almost two months had passed since the strike began, and there was no result yet, at that time. Alipio, an Ilocano and a cousin of Mrs. Agbayani, went once in a week, riding in his bicycle to the place where the Visayans were striking. Alipio usually go during the day, before he
went to work in the mill at night shift, and talk with them, since he knows some of those people who were in strike. When Alipio went for the fourth time to the strikers' camp, the Visayans caught him and brought him inside the camp. They said Alipio was spying them since it was time already for Alipio to work and the plantation could not see him. He called for policemen at Waimea and sent them to the strikers' camp to get Alipio Ramel.

According to Alipio, the policemen asked the strikers to release Alipio, but the strikers didn't like because they believed that Alipio was a spy from the sugar plantation. One of the policemen pulled Alipio between Badong and one man from the strikers' camp. And because of that, there were shootings between the Visayans and the policemen. Out of the eight policemen, two didn't get hurt, four were shot to death on the scene and two were brought to the hospital but died shortly after.

GG: Did you ever talk to Alipio after finally he got set free? Did he come back to stay in your camp?

Felomina: He went back in the camp.

GG: Did he ever talk to you about what had happened to him in the strike camp?

Felomina: The plantation had told these police officers to go to the camp and take Alipio out of the strikers' camp.

GG: Was there another man with Alipio, or only one?

Felomina: That's the only one. The police officer picked up Alipio out of that secluded place. Then, that's the beginning of the shooting.

GG: Did you know any of the other people that stayed in the strike camp? Any of the Visayans, you knew any of them?

Felomina: Yes.

GG: Did you ever go to Hanapepe, like go to the store and see people at the strike camp?

Felomina: No. We were told not to pass over there because it's dangerous.

GG: When they had all the shooting, how did the people in your camp feel about everything that happened?

Felomina: About Manlapit and Ligot, I think that the two men are making the situation...both sides are agreeing with one point or another. When the strike was going on for two months—the strikers started about April. April, May and June. About the ending part of May, the shooting happened.
GG: September 9 is when the shooting took place.

Felomina: Ligot and Manlapit came three times over on the Hanapepe side. I thought it was May, so I don't know the truth about when the shooting started.

GG: Why do you think that they kidnapped Alipio? Or why did they take him?

Felomina: The impression is that when Alipio was coming to the Hanapepe strike camp he had been visiting off and on. So the other side thinks that he is spying the strike. So that's why he was kidnapped.

GG: After the shooting took place, what did the people in your camp say, or do you remember talking to each other about it? Were you scared? What was the reaction to the shooting?

Felomina: The impression of the people in there, they think that Manlapit and Ligot are just making the people trouble themselves. I remember that Manlapit and Ligot came three times in that place of meeting.

GG: Did many people attend the meeting?

Felomina: Yes. All the people in the camp attended the meeting. Camp 2, 9---4, 1, 8. All came....

GG: Did they [Manlapit and Ligot] ever come the same time, or they came different?

Felomina: They came together, but the meeting is not held with the---Visayan meeting is by Manlapit and Ilocano is by Ligot. Different time.

GG: Where did they have the meetings?

Felomina: Both in Makaweli.

GG: But I mean, in one particular camp on the road, or---because I thought Manlapit couldn't go inside the plantation.

Felomina: When Manlapit goes in to meet in the camp then he put the box on [the ground to stand on]. I saw that box there because I went there. Ligot hold the meeting in plantation camp.

GG: Like at the community hall, or...

Felomina: Ligot on that community hall. Ligot is in the plantation hall and Manlapit is by the side of the government road.

GG: Did you belong to a church at this period? You went to any church? I just wondered if you knew Reverend Runes or Reverend
Cortezan, if they ever came to the camps at all.

BA: I think Cortezan wasn't here yet, at that time.

GG: I see. Lihue side still, maybe.

BA: Because Josephina Cortezan used to be with me all the time, in the camp. We go in the camp and we explain---what I mean, give education to the.... So I think Runes wasn't here too, just then, at that time. I don't know. I'm not so sure.

But we used to go around because we were on the Board of Health---used to pick me up, Miss Labarine. We go out in the camp and we talk to people and give medication. I tell you, if I'll tell you all these kinds of stories. We used to go out and these Filipino children has plenty impetigo. You know how rough we do; we just put in the tub and we get the brush. All the sores, just bleed it. And after that we just use that lotion that leave that---you know, after the drying, we put that lotion. Boy, the kids just cry like hell.

GG: Do you remember anything else about the strike time that you would like to tell me, that maybe I didn't ask the right question?

Felomina: Yeah, that's about all that I know about. I know about when the committee donor goes into the camp and I give the rice and the money.

GG: After now, 54 years later, do you think the Visayans gained anything by that strike? Looking back now, do you think the strike was maybe like a good thing or a bad thing, or that it helped? Did it help the Filipinos?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

Felomina: The word "strike" is not good. But after the strike, the outcome of the no good strike is something good.

GG: Did any of the people who had been on strike, when it was all over, come back to the camp where you lived?

Felomina: I don't remember any that came back after the strike.

[After the strike, most of the people didn't go back to the camps. Fifty-four years had passed, and now, according to Mrs. Agbayani, the strike that happened during that time is not good to remember because it just only bring to memory the people who died and the money they were asking was not granted.]
GG: Okay, I think maybe we can stop there.
END OF INTERVIEW
The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai

Volume I

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