BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Anonymous, housewife

This anonymous woman, a Visayan, was born on January 9, 1906, in Sibonga, Cebu, one of nine children.

She married her husband in 1920 and they lived in Negros for three years until they immigrated to Hawaii on December 8, 1923. He worked on Makaweli Plantation until the strike.

The couple took part in the 1924 strike and her husband was arrested for rioting but found not guilty and released. He soon found work at Waimea Sugar Company where he continued to work until retirement.

The couple raised eight children. Her husband is deceased. She is a Catholic and lives in Waimea.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: GREGARIO OROC, retired plantation worker

(Gregario Oroc was present at the interview with Mrs. Anonymous and joined in with his comments also.)

Gregario Oroc, Visayan, was born on May 8, 1904, in Ginatilan, Cebu, one of three children of Telesporo and Maxima Jatico Oroc.

He married his wife Candida in the Philippines and they both immigrated to Hawaii on July 9, 1924. He first worked on Makaweli Plantation, then years later moved to Waimea, then Kekaha Sugar Company where he worked until retirement in 1969. Oroc was not involved in the 1924 strike.

He is a Catholic and belonged to the Hinabangay, a mutual aid society. He currently resides in Kekaha.
EG: This is an interview with Mrs. Anonymous. The other people present are Mrs. Felicia Samio and Chad Taniguchi, and we're all together here and talking about her experience.

Now, where were you born?

X: I was born in Cebu. I was born in the town of Sibonga, Cebu. That's the town. I was born on the ninth of January, 1906.

EG: What was your situation of life when you were still there with your parents in Cebu?

X: I myself was from Cebu and my husband was from Negros, another island. I stayed with my parents until the time that I got married, and then I went to Negros with my husband. I lived there with my husband for three years. And then after three years he said he would like to come here to Hawaii. That's why I went with him. That was in December of 1923. I think it was December 8.

EG: Did you have any children while you were still there in Negros?

X: Well, I did. I had one child, but I lost it. It was a miscarriage. My first child that lived was born here in Hawaii.

EG: How did it come about that you heard that there was work to be had here in Hawaii?

X: There were agents who went around the countryside, and they said anybody who wanted to work could come here to Hawaii to work.

EG: Was there any kind of a paper that you signed?

X: Yes, there was a contract that if you came here to Hawaii you agreed to work for three years on a plantation. And after three years if you wanted to go back to the Philippines, you could go home free. It was free to come here and it was free to go back home again after three years.
EG: What does this mean about working for three years on a plantation? Suppose you just work a short time, like on one plantation and then go to another one? Does that still count for your three years?

X: No. No, your contract is then broken and it doesn't count for three years. Only if you worked on one plantation for three years could you go home free, back to the Philippines. If you keep changing around, then the continuity is broken and you can't go home after three years. At least not free. Otherwise, if you wanted to go home, of course you had to pay your own way.

EG: What was your vehicle? How did you come from the Philippines?

X: We came by ship. We left from Cebu on board a ship, and went to Manila. In Manila, we had to check with Immigration, and we were there in Manila for about three weeks. Then after that, the big ship the President Lincoln arrived. That's what we rode in going from Manila to Hawaii.

EG: Where were you on board that ship?

X: We were down along the bottom. All the sakadas, sugar workers, were placed in the bottom of the ship.

EG: Was there any problem with the food that was served on board the ship, or anything else?

X: Well, for me, the food was all right. But there are always people who have to be careful about food or don't like just any kind of food. They didn't like it.

When we arrived in Honolulu, we were about one week there in Honolulu. And then we became sakadas here in Makaweli. It was up to the people themselves to choose where they wanted to work. And if they said they wanted to come here to Kauai, that's where they came.

EG: Why did you choose Kauai, then?

X: Well, there was a sugar worker who had been working here in Hawaii, and then went back to the Philippines where he got married. Then my husband asked him, "Over there in Hawaii, where would be a good plantation to work?"

The man answered, "It would be better to go to Makaweli. That's a very good plantation to work in."

So we had a friend even before we came here. And that's how we knew what would be a good plantation to choose.

EG: Did you have any relatives or friends who were riding on board the ship with you?
X: No relatives, but we had some friends that we didn't know before, but we just met there at Immigration.

EG: What was the work of your husband while he was still there in Negros, in the Philippines?

X: Well, his family had a small piece of land. And that's what he was doing; he was working on that piece of land.

EG: What were they doing on that piece of land?

X: Well, they were planting corn and tobacco and things like that.

We were at Makaweli, Camp 8, and that was 1924. It was December of 1923.

EG: When you started your work here, did you ever hear the name of Pablo Manlapit?

X: Yes, we heard his name. He was the one who was the leader of strike. Because they wanted to ask for a higher salary. Because the salary before was only $1 a day.

EG: Well, how about for one month? How much was it?

X: Well, if you could work for 23 days you were given 10 cents more each day. But if you couldn't do the minimum of 23, then there was nothing extra added. It was just $1 for every day that you worked.

That's it. The salary was very low. And so we heard the name of Manlapit, that he was the head of a group of people that wanted to strike so that they could have higher salaries. They were asking for $2 at that time. That was what they were asking during the time of the strike.

You know, at that time, we were just new arrivals. We weren't that long here in Hawaii. And we were approached by some people who said that out by the road they were going to have some kind of meeting to talk about getting a higher salary. They talked about the strike and about getting a higher salary. But there were other people who were not so much in favor of a strike. For instance, myself, I had a small child and I wasn't so much in favor. The reason why we came to Hawaii in the first place was because we were looking for money. Now if we go out on strike and I have this small child, we won't have any money and would be in worse shape than before. But there were other people who said, "No, but we'll ask for even a higher salary."

The next day, a big truck came to the plantation and they said, "Whoever wants to strike just ride on the truck, we'll go to the strike camp."
EG: Where did the truck come from?

X: The truck came from Makaweli Plantation. People who wanted to
strike, they could just ride on the truck and they would be taken
to Hanapepe. Those who wanted to strike just rode to Hanapepe.
Those who didn't want to just stayed back and remained at the camp.

EG: How many people rode on the truck?

X: Oh, a lot. Plenty.

EG: Were they all Visayans?

X: Yes. Ilocanos didn't want to strike, before. The Japanese didn't
join in the strike but they helped out a lot.

EG: When you first arrived in Hawaii did you send money back to the
Philippines, to your relatives, to help them out?

X: In the beginning I didn't send any money back, because the salary
was so low and we had such a hard time ourselves. I couldn't send
anything back. But after awhile, after the strike and everything,
when the salaries finally went up a little bit, I was able also to
send a small amount to help my parents.

But don't think that after the strike the salaries went up.
Because in some ways the strike was unsuccessful, and the salary
didn't go up at all. This was quite awhile after that, that I was
able to send some help for my parents.

The beginning of the whole trouble was that there were some Ilo-
canos who didn't join in the strike. So the Ilocanos didn't join
in the strike, and they had an awful lot to say about the Visayans
who did join in the strike. For instance, they would say the
reason why the Visayans were joining in the strike was because they
were lazy. So as a matter of fact, if the strike were successful
and the $2 were given, that would not only be given to the Visayans,
it would be given to everybody.

Then it happened that one day there was two Ilocanos. And I'm not
sure exactly what the day was but they were coming from Camp 4.
They were going to Hanapepe, and they just kept going back and
forth, in front of the camp. In a way, it was some kind of---like
heating up the strikers. It was causing them to be quite agitated.
And so the head of the Visayans was becoming quite hot, because
these two guys kept going back and forth. So they went out and
they grabbed a hold of them. They caught them.

EG: What was it that happened? Was it that the two Ilocanos who were
going back and forth, that they were saying words that were very
hurting or that bothered the strikers? Was that it?
X: They had a lot of things to say, as far as the strikers were concerned. All that stuff about the Visayans being very lazy people, and that's why they liked to go on strike. Things like that. And so the answer that the Visayans were giving back is, "You know, if the strike is successful and we get $2 a day, it will also benefit you," because the Ilocanos were also working on the plantation.

So they caught the two Ilocanos and they put them inside of the quarters where they were staying. And that's where they were kept and where they slept.

EG: When the two Ilocanos were down there in the bottom of the school, what happened to them? Were they fed?

X: Yeah, of course they were.

EG: There was no slapping around or pushing, anything like that?

X: Well, I don't really know. I was upstairs and they were downstairs. All I know is that I heard that they were punched. And even the bicycles that they were riding on, some of the women got really upset by some of the things they were saying. They also threw the bicycles.

EG: Manang, what we have heard from other people was that the Ilocanos were just passing by the camp, and the strikers grabbed a hold of them because the Visayans were disappointed that the Ilocanos were not joining in the strike. And they thought if they captured these two and sort of held them hostage, they might be able to push the other Ilocanos into joining into the strike. What do you think of that?

X: You know, maybe, I doubt very much that the two Ilocanos were just going to the store. I mean, you go by once or maybe you forget something and you go twice. But you don't just keep going back and forth if your purpose is only to go to the store. The understanding of the Visayans was different. Not that they were just passing by or that they were going to the store. But they clearly understood that it was some kind of taunting of the Visayans. Because even before those two came by, of course there was a lot of things said by the Ilocanos, about the Visayans.

EG: Then what eventually happened to these two Ilocanos?

X: That evening, there were people who tried to rescue the two Ilocanos, but they weren't able to get a hold of them. Now, the next morning the police and the Sheriff Crowell--the sheriff in that place--came. And they were ready when they arrived, because they had brought guns with them. So they came inside the camp and they had their guns with them. And they really wanted to do something to the strikers. But they were unable to because there were an awful lot of women and children around. So they backed down to a place farther away.
So the leader of the strikers, by the name of Insut, he's the one who spoke to the strikers. Insut was the leader of the strike and the one who took care of things there at the strike camp. So Insut told them, "Okay, let's fight back." And those who had guns got their guns. And those who had a piece of wood or a stone, or a bolo, they all went to get what they had. So they went out; the police and the sheriff went out, and they were at a place a little bit farther away. And so the strikers followed them, and that's where it all started.

EG: Who started it?

X: It was the police who started the whole thing. The police were looking for a fight from the very first, when they arrived at the camp. So when the shooting started the Sheriff Crowell, he was wounded. Of course, nothing seriously happened to him. He didn't die or anything, but that's where the shooting started. They just kept shooting and shooting and of course, a lot of strikers died. And everybody then started running. And it was lucky that there was a stand of bananas there, a banana grove. And so they ran in there to hide.

EG: Where were you at that time?

X: Oh, I was there at the hall, because I had my small child with me.

EG: What did you feel when you heard all the shooting going on?

X: We were all women and children inside of the hall. And we could hear the shooting going on outside. And after a short time, Mr. Rice arrived. So the police arrived and they went around; they picked up all the people who had been killed. And also those who were wounded. And they took them. And those who didn't die, they took away to the jail.

EG: How was it that only four police died but there were 17 strikers who died?

X: Simply because the police, even though there weren't that many, they all had guns. And the strikers, even though they were many, had very few guns. And what could they do? The police were up there on a small hill and they had the advantage. They were just picking off the strikers.

EG: How about yourself; did you see them shooting one another?

X: No, we couldn't see it because we couldn't get close to them. We heard the firing of the shots.

EG: How about your husband; what happened to him?

X: Well, he was one of those who didn't have any kind of arms to help himself. And of course, when the firing and everything else
started he ran, just like everybody else did. So as he ran, they came to a corral there that had pigs in it. So he just dove into the pigpen. And just at that time a bullet came and it went right through his hat. And that's how he was saved. So the only thing that was hit was his hat. It's a good thing that he had a hat on, and it was only the hat that was hit. He wanted to get out of that place, and so he went right over the corral or the fence. And of course he just kept hiding as the shooting continued. And then when the police finally came, they just rounded up everybody who was in the area. And he was also included in the roundup. Everybody was taken away. Those who were killed were just taken out and buried. And those who were wounded and everybody else in the area, they were loaded into trucks, and they were taken off to prison.

EG: And where were you women?
X: We were all upstairs.

EG: How about yourself, did you know whether your husband was alive or dead?
X: While the shooting was going on, I didn't. I didn't know whether he was alive or dead. But once the shooting kind of stopped, and then the police came and rounded up everybody, we all went outside. And I saw him, that he was all right. That's when he told me the story about how he had run away and then when they shot, how the bullet went through his hat.

EG: When the police came to rescue the two Ilocanos who were there, how many policemen were there?
X: I'm not really sure, but maybe it was around 10.

EG: You, yourself, could you see like outside, how many policemen there were?
X: Yeah, I could see outside.

[EG: She got mixed up between the two. The second time when the police came and all the dead bodies were around after the battle, that was 10. So I rephrased the question and said, "Yeah, but when they first came to rescue the two Ilocanos who had been captured by the Visayans, how many policemen do you think there were?"]

X: Six.

EG: But they had guns?
X: Of course they did, they were police.

EG: When they came to save the two Ilocanos, did you see them, at that particular time?
X: Yes, I did. I saw them, I saw Sheriff Crowell, and I saw the others. And I could see that they were really angry at the strikers, and that I think they would have liked to have done something. But because of the number of women and children around, they couldn't. That's why they backed up and worked their way out. They worked their way out from the strike camp, and of course they set themselves up on top of the hill where they could shoot the strikers as they came out.

EG: This Insut that you're talking about, who is he? Is that not Baring; isn't he the strike leader?

X: That's true. Isidoro Baring is also one of the strike leaders. But that's different from Insut.

EG: Fausto Ceralde, have you ever heard that name before?

X: No. Grande is one that I know.

EG: How about this guy Mendoza?

X: Ah yeah, Mendoza. Well, you know, he was there but I don't think he was a strike leader. He was just one of the people participating.

EG: How about somebody who had the nickname of "Badong?" Did you ever hear that?

X: No.

[EG: She doesn't know very many of the list of the leaders as they're being read off. So I began asking her about this one Insut. What does she know about Insut?]

Was he one of the workers there from Makaweli?

X: Well, I don't know. I didn't know him in the plantation. I just came to know him right there in the strike camp. But he was the one who was kind of taking care of things.

EG: Was there any other leaders that you can think of, who were there?

X: No, that's all the ones that I remember. There was Grande and Insut. And also Baring. Isidoro Baring.

EG: Well, now the shooting has finished and there's a lot of people who have died, and what is the next thing that happened?

X: Everybody else was taken off the jail. Everybody that they could round up....

END OF SIDE ONE
SIDE TWO

X: Then everybody was taken off to the jail. And they were there for quite a while. And people were brought in for questioning. And even the wives of the strikers were being brought in.

EG: And also your husband was included.

X: Yes he was. And when the wives were called in I was also called in. We were very lucky because what happened is the investigators were going and talking to the husbands, and then separately they talk to the wives. And if their stories did not match up then they kept them in jail. Because they thought he must be lying. In my own case it was very lucky, because my own story and the one of my husband matched up very perfectly. We gave the same kind of a story. And so they thought he was innocent. So if the story told by the husband was different from the one told by the wife, then they wouldn't allow them to leave the prison. So in the case of my husband, his story and mine were the same, and so he was allowed to leave. If your stories were different, then you were guilty. If your stories were the same, then you were not guilty. Because my husband was not guilty he was allowed to come out. Those who were guilty were sent back to the Philippines.

EG: Were you actually giving some kind of testimony before the whole court?

X: No, it was just the investigator was asking me these questions. And it was about my husband that I was speaking.

EG: Did you visit your husband while he was still in jail?

X: Yes, I did. The wives generally did visit their husbands while they were there inside.

EG: What was your situation like, while your husband was there inside the jail?

X: Oh, I tell you, we really had a very difficult time. All of us who had husbands who were inside the jail. Because we had a hard time surviving. For instance, once a week we would be given one small can of coffee. That's all.

EG: Where did that coffee come from?

X: It was from the people who didn't strike. They gave donations.

EG: Were they Visayans also?

X: Yeah, some were Visayans, and also the Japanese. They were helping the strikers because after all, if the strike were successful they would also benefit from it. We were lucky in our own case, because we had a little bit of money saved, and also a little bit of food.
saved up. So when times were hard we fell back on that. And my child—it was only the two of us because the child was there but it didn't eat very much. But others were in a lot worse shape, because they had more children and they had to feed large families.

EG: I was wondering like when it came to cooking rice inside of the strike camp, would you cook one big pot of rice for everybody, or were people just kind of taking care of themselves or their own families?

X: Yeah, that's the way it was. It was each one had to take care of his own needs.

EG: If that were the case, would it sometimes happen that there would be families there who would have extra food or large amounts of food, or at least enough, and then right alongside, other families that had very little and could barely survive?

X: Yeah, but if that were the case, then our custom was to share things with one another. And when the donations were handed out—the collections—then it would be given according to how much people needed. It would have been good if they were handing out food everyday to take care of people's needs; but because there wasn't that much food, what they did is that it was only once a week that food was given. I tell you, it was difficult, our strike at that time. Strike is not easy.

EG: For instance, on just one ordinary day, what would you be doing there inside of the strike camp from morning to night, because after all there was no work that was being carried on?

X: You know, sometimes we would go out and do things we had to do. Like for instance, wash clothes. But a lot of the times we'd just be kind of stooping down, sitting on the flats of your feet and just kind of talking with one another. Because we had nothing else to do.

EG: You know, when you were saying before about the investigator was asking you questions separately from your husband, who was that investigator? Is that an investigator who's a lawyer for the strikers, or is that the prosecuting attorney or investigator?

X: For the strikers what we had was just the translator, because there was a number of the strikers who couldn't speak English. And so the name of the translator was Antonio. He would be the one who would be the go-between. He was a translator, but for the prosecution.

EG: What kind of questions would he ask?

X: Well, they were just asking how the idea of the strike came up, and what was the various ways that we solved problems. What was our way of acting during the strike. Whatever he asked me, that's what
I explained to him. After all, I had nothing to hide. They asked me where I was when my husband was caught, and of course, we were all inside of the hall. And where my husband had been. Well, of course they found him there in the pigpen where he had jumped when they were shooting.

EG: When your husband got out of the jail, what did you do then?

X: As soon as he came out of the jail the first thing we did was to look for work of course.

EG: Where were you able to get work?

X: We went to Waimea, and that's where we were looking for work. First thing we did is we applied for work here at the plantation in Waimea. And when he applied he was accepted.

EG: There was no problem that he was a striker before?

X: They knew that he had been a striker, but after all, the strike was all over.

So that was it. We stayed out there in Waimea and he kept continually working there until the time came for his pension. And eventually, until he died.

EG: How many children did you say you had?

X: Eight.

EG: They're not here anymore in Kauai?

X: Only one of them is in Kauai. Others are in the Mainland, and then the youngest one is in the Navy. He'll be there until he can retire.

EG: You know, as you turn around and look at the strike now, after 50 years, how do you look at it now? What is your opinion?

X: Well, you know, a strike is a very difficult thing. Even now, when I hear that there are people who are going out on strike, I say to myself, "Wow, boy, that's really hard. That's really difficult." But I still feel that what we did was not bad. It was a good thing. Because all we were asking for is for a higher salary. The only problem is that it was not successful.

[EG: This is just an explanation of our process, that a transcript will be given to her when all this is transcribed. And she can get perhaps someone, a neighbor who was with us at that time, to read it to her and then she can just check to be sure that it's complete and that we haven't made any mistakes. I'm explaining to her about checking over the transcript and also talking about the importance of doing this oral history. And I mentioned that it's too bad a}
lot of the young people and people who will come in the future will never know what they went through.]

X: You know, today, the salary of the sugar workers is fairly high. They're not doing too badly. But they don't know what we ourselves have gone through right in the very beginning. And how their situation right now has been built upon ours.

It was a good thing for me at the time of the strike that I only had one child. Because I think if I had had all the children that I eventually had, it would have been unbearable. I myself, I think maybe I would not like to have gone out on the strike. I would not like to have joined in it. But there were people also at that time who were saying, "If you don't join in the strike, you will be killed."

EG: Who was saying these things about you'll be killed if you don't join in the strike?

X: The people in general who were around. Like for example, the people who were there in the camp. So if we didn't go out on strike, they said, and we continued to work, then the strikers themselves would go out and get us and kill us. So we were afraid, and that's why we went along with it also. So that they wouldn't kill us. I don't know if what they were saying was really true, because other people who continued working without going on strike, nobody touched them. Maybe it was just fear that they were using to get people to join in the strike.

EG: Was there any kind of an argument, like all the strikers are Visayans and if you were Visayan also, then you just kind of had to go along with the strike, because that's what the Visayans were doing?

X: Yeah, I also feel that that's true too. Because everybody who went out on strike, they were all Visayans so there was that thing about staying with your own.

EG: Who was it that was saying that they would kill people who didn't join in the strike?

X: That's all that I was hearing from different people. That's all.

EG: Manang, when you were there inside of the strike camp and talking with each other, what was your feeling? That you would probably win the strike, or that it was impossible, that you'd never be able to win?

X: Of course, our feelings were that we wanted to win. But after the incident in Hanapepe where people got killed, of course there was no more hope. Once that thing happened, then any thoughts or feelings we had for winning, they were gone. But I tell you, when we first moved into the strike camp, our hopes were very high that
we'd be able to win, and that our salaries would be increased. And our leaders were also saying the same thing; if we stick together and work together, that we'd be able to win this strike. We will win.

EG: Was there some kind of a difference of opinion between you and your husband? Because according to what you said earlier, you in a way didn't want to go out on the strike because you had the child and all. But your husband was in favor.

X: My husband said to me, "You know, I think we'd better go out on the strike because we won't be able to work anyway, because they're threatening us that if we don't they'll kill us. Strikers are saying at their meetings that they're having, that they're going to kill anybody who doesn't join in the strike. So maybe we'd better just kind of go along with them."

So in the beginning I didn't want to join myself, but he was in favor because of what the strikers were saying at their meetings.

EG: Was there anybody who got really kind of angry at your husband when the incident happened in Hanapepe, that he just ran away?

X: Nobody really saw him running away because as soon as the shooting started it was everybody for himself. And everybody else was running also. So everybody was running in different directions. And some went off into the banana patch, and others into the water.

So in the beginning I didn't want to join myself, but he was in favor because of what the strikers were saying at their meetings.

EG: Was there anybody who got really kind of angry at your husband when the incident happened in Hanapepe, that he just ran away?

X: Nobody really saw him running away because as soon as the shooting started it was everybody for himself. And everybody else was running also. So everybody was running in different directions. And some went off into the banana patch, and others into the water.

Strikes were really hard in those times, and maybe it got a lot easier after awhile. But since that time, I was never in another strike again.

EG: What was your feelings about, like some of the people who would be over you? Like the lunas or managers, or owners of the plantation. I mean, how did you look at them at that time? Was there some kind of resentment or something like that?

X: I think maybe even some of the lunas would have liked to have joined in the strike, but they were not allowed to.

EG: How about the Ilocanos?

X: Well, no problem with the Ilocanos now. It was just that time, at the time of the strike, when the Ilocanos didn't join. Of course, we didn't like that very much. They could have helped a lot. But once the strike was broken and the whole thing was over, it was over. There was no bad feeling towards the Ilocanos.

EG: You yourself, were you ever present when Manlapit gave talks, or did you ever see him personally?

X: No, I have never seen him. Even after the incident in Hanapepe.
EG: Did you ever hear anybody giving advice to people who were in the strike camp, that the strike would be won through non-violent ways? Like not through arms but through peaceful understanding.

X: That was really the understanding, that the strike would be won and would be pursued by the strikers not through a troublesome kind of way, but it would be done through a peaceful way. They really didn't want to use arms. It was just that time when the Ilocanos were going back and forth and everything that they were saying, that people's heads became hot and they were looking for arms. But ordinarily, the way that they wanted to solve problems was through a peaceful way.

EG: Please be patient with us because sometimes it takes us a little while to get all of these questions together, because you're the only person who's had the experience, and so we need your help very much.

According to some people, the night before the incident in Hanapepe Sheriff Crowell went there to the strike camp to try and get the two Ilocanos--get them out of there. But he was unable to get them out of there. That's why he went back and left; but the next day, he came back again and he got the two Ilocanos.

X: As soon as he arrived and he was going to get the two Ilocanos, the two Ilocanos got up and they ran and we never saw them again. That was early in the morning. Yeah, that's right. They were there the night before. And I'm not sure who their companions were but I think maybe the boss there at Makaweli accompanied them; the sheriff.

EG: What were people thinking and talking about between the time that he came at night, and the next morning when he came back to get the strikers out, when these police came to get the strikers out?

X: They were really angry. They were thinking, "Oh, this is going to be really a war." Because they were angry about them trying to get those Ilocanos out of there. And they were angry at the Ilocanos because Ilocanos didn't want to join in the strike.

EG: Were the Visayans thinking that if they held on to those two Ilocanos that the Ilocanos as a group would go along with the strike?

X: Yeah, that's right. They were trying to get the Ilocanos included in the strike. But most of the Ilocanos there wanted nothing to do with it. You know, if the Ilocanos had joined in, the strike would have been over in a very short time. But because they didn't join, then the strike was not successful.

EG: Manang, I just wanted to ask you one small request. You know, sometimes when we listen to the tape we realize that we have forgotten to ask something, or sometimes your answer is very good
but we don't completely understand it, and we'd like to ask some more about it. Is it all right with you if we come back again?

X: (Laughs) Sure. You should feel free to come back and talk some more.

[EG: Note: This tape has been difficult to translate because the tape is not totally clear. The translation is basically correct, but there may be some mistakes because the tape is not clear.]

END OF INTERVIEW
EG: This is Mrs. Anonymous. Her brothers and sisters in her family are nine, but she herself has had eight children.

X: So it's all big family.

EG: She was born January 9, 1906. She arrived in December of 1923. Did you go to school before, when you were in the Philippines?

X: Yeah, I went to the Catholic school.

EG: [What she means by "Catholic school," is a lot of the parishes used to run catechism classes or something like that, at the rectories. And they were held in the local language, in Visayan.]

X: I only went for a short time. When I was still in the Philippines, the only work that I did was to work at home, around the house. I worked for a short time on the plantations here in Hawaii, but because I had children it wasn't for too long. Maybe it was only around nine months that I worked. The men received $1 a day. I received 75 cents, when I was doing that work. It was in 1925 when I was working on the plantation.

EG: What do you do to amuse yourself, or to enjoy yourself?

X: I watch television.

EG: Do you belong to any kind of organization, or even the Senior Citizens?
X: No, I don't like to enter any of those.

EG: Why did you come here to Hawaii in the first place?

X: Well, we were still in Negros, my husband and I. My husband heard an awful lot about how good it was to be working here in Hawaii. And that the wages were paid in gold. So my husband said to me, "Let's go to Hawaii because they're paying off the wages in gold. That's better than what we're getting here."

EG: What were your own personal feelings about going to Hawaii?

X: After I was here for quite a while, then I saw that it's okay here in Hawaii. It's good.

EG: But when you were still there in the Philippines, what did you think?

X: At that time, when he was talking about coming to Hawaii, I didn't like to go. But because he was my husband, I had to follow him.

EG: We've heard in some of the interviews that there were husbands who left their wives behind in the Philippines, and came here by themselves. And then tried to build up a little bit of money in order to go back. Did you ever consider that possibility?

X: No, we didn't consider that at all, but I know that there were those who separated and the wife would go back to her family until the husband could come back again. I myself would have liked to have remained in the Philippines, but because my husband wanted to bring me along, I went. I also didn't mind coming because I wanted to see that gold that they were giving out for the salaries of the workers here.

EG: What do you mean by gold money?

X: Before, when the Filipinos came home after working here in Hawaii, they brought with them gold coins. And they said that's the way that the salaries were given here in Hawaii. That's the way it was before. They don't do that anymore.

EG: Is that true? Did they give out gold money before?

X: It must be because they brought gold coins back with them.

EG: According to the story you told us before, you met someone back there in Negros, in the Philippines, who said that in Hawaii, the best place to go to was Makaweli; it was a good plantation. Did that turn out to be true?

X: As far as I'm concerned, Makaweli turned out to be a very good plantation, even if I compare it with what I know about the other plantations.
EG: You have been on two plantations, Waimea and Makaweli; how do you compare the two of them? Which one would be better?

X: Well, we were there in Makaweli only for nine months, until the strike. And we've been a very long time here in Waimea. So it just seems like Waimea would be best for us. And so it's hard to compare them.

EG: It must have been very difficult to live all your lives in the Philippines, to arrive here in Hawaii not knowing too much about the place or even language or work, or anything else. Who helped you in order to be able to adjust?

X: When we arrived there was a truck from the plantation waiting for us. We were taken there to Camp 8, and everything was kind of laid out for us, so it wasn't too difficult to adjust because everybody told you what to do. Another thing was that there were a lot of people who went before us and knew their way around. So they were always willing to help us. There were a lot of Visayans there also. While there were Ilocanos and Japanese and others, there was still a lot of Visayans that were willing to help.

EG: The structure in the Philippines is that the young people go to the older people to ask them advice about how to do things. Was that true also, here, when you arrived? Would you go to older people in the camp?

X: Yeah, we did do that. But one thing that helped us a lot was we had a close friend from the ship who was returning back here--had already been here before. That was the one who spoke back in Negros, and told us that if we were coming, the best plantation to go to was Makaweli. He had worked in Makaweli before, went back to the Philippines to visit, and he was the one who told us about the place. He was on board ship with us coming back and of course, he went back to Makaweli, and so did we.

EG: Were there others on board ship who were also assigned to Makaweli?

X: Yeah, that's right. There were three other families so we were all together. They were all Visayan.

EG: How far back did the Visayans go, who were there at Makaweli? When did they first arrive?

X: I think around 1910.

GO: Long time, 1910 to 1924. They had already been there for 14 years when we arrived, so there were already a little bit older people. The first sakadas came in 1908, not 1910.

EG: Are any of these first arrivals still alive?

GO: Yeah, there are still a few.
EG: What was your first thought when you came here; that you would just work here for a short time, make some money and go back to the Philippines? Or that you would settle down permanently here?

X: My intention really was to fulfill the contract and to stay for three years, and then go back. But it didn't go through because of the strike and the things that happened after it. Our contract was broken because after the strike we went to another plantation. So we had to begin from the beginning all over again, to build up to three years, in order to have the privilege of going back. Then I started having children, one after another. And as they were getting bigger, of course, they had no interest in going back to the Philippines because they were used to this place.

EG: So you haven't gone back to the Philippines since you arrived?

X: No, not yet. It's a long time, isn't it?

EG: Was there a church there in Makaweli, when you arrived there?

X: No, there wasn't any church there. There's one in Camp 4.

GO: It was a Catholic church. The same as we have here.

EG: When you arrived here were there any fiesta days or celebrations for Filipinos? Like Rizal Day? [When I mention Rizal Day, Mrs. "X" and Mr. Oroc light up and get all excited because apparently, the Rizal Day was a very big day].

GO: All the camps celebrated Rizal Day. That's December 30. That was the only really big feast day that we celebrated.

EG: How about Independence Day in the Philippines?

GO: No, we never celebrated that.

EG: What would you do when you celebrated Rizal Day here?

GO: First of all, there was no work. And we would have parades.

X: It's just like the fiesta days that they have in the Philippines. You'd have a procession, you'd have cockfighting, you'd have special foods.

[EG: Like the fiesta day complex in the Philippines it started the day before, especially the night before, when there might be a dance, and there was food being prepared. Half of the celebration was in the night before, and very little sleep, of course.]

GO: Then they hung out the flag and they'd sing songs. They hung out the Filipino flag. Any kind play. I race bicycle. Some kind of game where you ride on a bicycle with a long spear and try and stick it through a ring that's hanging from a string.
EG: Was cockfighting legal in that time?

GO: It didn't make any difference. If you're Filipino, you still had cockfights. You had to hide 'em a little bit, but you still had. But if you got caught you went to jail. You know what gamblers Filipinos are. Up until now, cockfighting is not allowed by law, but we still have a lot of cockfighting.

EG: Who was behind the Rizal Day? Who organized it and was in charge?

X: It was the president of the club there in the camp who was in charge.

GO: There was some kind of a Filipino organization that was set up especially to carry the Rizal Day. And once that was taken care then it disappeared.

[EG: This is roughly parallel to the fiesta days in the Philippines, where a committee will be set up for a specific function. They do it, and when it's over, they're dissolved.]

GO: I took up a collection for the food so that everybody could eat together. So the chairman delegated a lot of authority; like for the food, for the games, for the parade, for the different activities.

EG: What kind of an organization was this? Was it specifically for Visayans?

X: No, everybody was included in it. It was a Filipino—whether they were Ilocano or Tagalog or Visayan, whatever.

GO: Dr. Jose Rizal was the national hero for all the Filipinos.

EG: Who picked the official for this organization that ran the Rizal Day?

GO: All the members of the organization chose their own officers every year, to run the day. They changed the organization every year because once the day was over, then the organization ceased to exist, and they chose another one.

People were assigned food to be cooked or people gave donations for food. It was pretty highly organized. So a while before the Rizal Day, people would come together and they would meet and plan out the day and delegate responsibilities.

EG: When you had these big meetings, if you had all kinds of Filipinos there, what language would you use? Because there would be Ilocanos, Visayans, Tagalogs, and other people.

GO: It depended on the president. The president spoke what language he knew best and then there was someone to interpret for the other
groups. There was always somebody who could interpret. It's just like you're doing right now. You understand Visayan and English, and so you're talking to Chad and to the two of us. We did the same things at the meetings in planning the Rizal Day. Now, it would be a little bit different because Tagalog has become the national language in the Philippines. But in those days, there weren't so many people who knew Tagalog.

EG: Maybe most of the members were Ilocanos and Visayans; there must've not been too many Tagalogs before?

GO: No, it was the Tagalogs who were the first people who came here to Hawaii. And so they were the ones who explained to the Visayans, and later the Ilocanos. First of all, it was the Tagalogs who came. After that, the Visayans. And the last group to come were the Ilocanos.

EG: When you arrived in 1923, from where were the majority of people?

GO: They were mostly Visayans. The Visayans were the majority before. Right now, there are very few Visayans here anymore.

EG: What changed the whole thing was they were bringing over Visayans to work on the sugar plantations. But in 1924, when Ligot was the Labor Commissioner, he started bringing in Ilocanos because the Visayans were all going out on strike. And that's when the tide turned, and there were more Ilocanos than Visayans here. After that there were no more Visayans who became sakadas.

EG: What was your feeling about the Ilocanos, since as you say, they were brought in to break the strike? They're your fellow Filipinos, and yet they become strike breakers.

GO: Oh, we were really very angry. We'd like to have killed them. We really had hard feelings about the Ilocanos. Because Ligot was the Commissioner at that time, and because the Visayans were really troublesome, and because he himself was an Ilocano, then he started bringing in Ilocanos. And things changed after that. And the Visayans, after the strike was over, they were going back to the plantations to look for work because they had to survive also. But there were so many Ilocanos coming in, naturally, there was hard feelings between the two groups. Not only the Visayans but the Tagalogs were included in that feeling also.

There were 60 Visayans who came from Camp 8 who went out on strike. Sixty families. And only five or six Ilocano families that were left there, who didn't go out on strike. Right after the strike was over they brought in about 200 Ilocanos who replaced the Visayans. It's hard to understand Ilocanos because they speak a different language also. [GO mocks the language of the Ilocanos.] Anywhere you go today to look at the plantations and you see Filipino workers out there, you can be sure they're Ilocano.
EG: What's the difference between Visayans and Ilocanos anyway?

GO: The Ilocanos have a reputation of being hard-working people, being very strict and humorless, and people who save their money. The opposite is the stereotype of the Visayans. They're fun-loving, they don't take life too seriously, and they enjoy life. They're good entertainers. They don't save money.

And that's why Ligot could not go back to the Philippines; because he would be killed. Because he sold out the workers. And they knew that back in the Philippines, and they would have gotten him had he come back home again. Ligot was bought by the company, against the Filipino workers. Ligot died here in Hawaii and could not go back to the Philippines, because of what he did. There were people waiting for him, in case he came back to the Philippines.

EG: Did every plantation have an organization, in order to celebrate Rizal Day?

GO: Yes, it did. Every December, there was a different president of the organization.

EG: And as soon as the celebration of Rizal Day was over, then there was no more organization until the time was approaching again for the following year's Rizal Day celebration?

GO: That's right.

EG: Were there any other organizations; for instance, just for the Visayan?

GO: No, there were not.

EG: Was there any politicking involved in this picking of the president for this organization? Because after all, you had different kinds of groups; you had Visayans and Ilocanos and...

GO: The way it would happen is the president of this year would say, "I'm the president now, but I would like that next year you would pick someone from another group." For instance, if he were an Ilocano, he would say, "Maybe you should choose a Tagalog or a Visayan for next year."

[EG: So it wasn't as if people just walked into the meeting cold, but they had talked it over among themselves, about who would make a good president, and also, if my experience from the Philippines means anything, who had the luxury of being able to be a president. In other words, it takes a little bit of time and a little bit of money to be in that kind of a position. And also, it takes somebody who's got the respect of all the people, to be able to delegate all the different works and things. So pretty much, when people come into a meeting, they've got an idea of who is going to be elected.]
EG: You didn't have any problem with people taking off with the money, something like that?

GO: No, that never happened. There was nothing like that that happened with the Rizal Day celebrations. There were groups of swindlers, however. Like for instance, around the time of the war there were benefits being given because a lot of Filipinos go into the military, particularly the Navy. There are pensions and wartime compensations and things like that. And so both in the Philippines and here in Hawaii there were groups that went around and asked for contributions from Filipinos so that they could make more money. So that they could get their contributions from the War Department, or something like that. That had nothing to do with the Rizal Day celebrations, but there were groups of swindlers around. It was around 1930, 1935, that you had groups like that.

When the Philippines came independent, there were groups that went around and said if you gave some kind of small contribution because you yourself were a Filipino, they were going to return all Filipinos just to visit the Philippines. And it was at a very low cost. Something like our modern Balikbayan program. But it was a swindle. And they gave contributions, but when it came time to go to the Philippines, of course, they had no way of going.

EG: When we were talking before about the strike, you said that there were meetings for the workers outside the plantation, in the camp? Where were the meetings being held?

X: There, right inside of the camp. They were calling especially the new arrivals, because the old people who had been working on the plantation already, they were in favor of the strike. All of us who were new, we just went along with the older people who had more experience, to listen to the meeting. And the big offer was that the salary would be doubled.

EG: Who called the meeting?

X: It was the officials who were there.

EG: And who gave the talks at those meetings?

X: Well, the people who were carrying the meeting; who were in charge of the meeting.

EG: So you attended the meetings?

X: Well, my husband went to the meeting. But those of us women, we
didn't attend. Women could probably go if they wanted to but I had children at home, and so I didn't go.

EG: Do you think the camp police also attended the meeting?
X: No, they didn't attend. They weren't even around.

EG: What was the result of the meeting?
X: Well, those who wanted to go on strike, they were really set on following through with it. But those who didn't, just went back home.

EG: How did they know who wanted to strike and who didn't; how could they tell that?
X: Well, they just said that in the morning there would be a big truck that would come. And those who wanted to go on strike, they just put the things that they'll be needing at the strike camp on the truck and go transfer to the new strike camp.

EG: As far as you were concerned, what was the meaning of the strike?
X: The whole meaning of the strike was to get a higher salary. We went along because they said if we did, then our salary was only $1 at that time; we would be receiving double that amount, $2.

EG: When did the strike really begin?
X: The end of July, 1924.

GO: No, August, 1924. And the war there at Hanapepe began in September. The whole strike lasted only about two months; one month of August, and then in September was when the incident happened in Hanapepe.

X: It was already in September that they were saying the workers who wanted to go back to work on the plantations could go back. But those who didn't get out of jail, then they were deported back to the Philippines.

GO: After the strike was over, the workers were taken back into their own plantations. As long as they were willing to still work for $1. They lost the strike, and so it was still $1.

Manlapit was really quite a person. When he'd get up and he began to talk, he wasn't afraid of anybody. And he wasn't afraid of going to jail either. He was really a very courageous man. Even the government, he wasn't afraid of going against the government. And if it hadn't been for that crazy Ilocano [Ligot], he might have been successful.

EG: Who were the leaders here in the strike camp that you were in?
X: Grande and Insut. And another one, Doro Baring.

GO: No one knows the last name of Grande.

X: We just called him Insut, but that's like a nickname. What was his real name?

GO: There's nobody who was baptized with the name Insut. Ildefonso maybe is what his name is. And then it was shortened as a nickname, to Insut. Everybody called him Insut.

EG: When you arrived at the strike camp, it seems like there would be a need of some organization; like where you would sleep, or where you cook, or...who would be in charge of something like that?

X: This man Insut that I was telling you about.

EG: Were there any kind of meetings while you were there at the strike camp, about what happens if you win, or what the tactics will be?

GO: Yes, there must have been.

X: No. As far as we know, it must have been maybe the leaders who got together and decided those things. But we never had any meetings.

EG: How about your husband? Did he ever attend any meetings there, inside the strike camp?

GO: No, not as far as I know.

EG: What did you think, when you first arrived at the strike camp? That you would be there for a long time, or that it would be over in a short time?

X: We really didn't know. We just knew that if we won the strike, that they would give us the $2 a day, then it would be over in short time. But otherwise, we would be there for a long time.

EG: When you arrived there at the strike camp, Manang, did you bring along a little bit of money that you had saved up, or something like that? Because who knows what would happen in a place like that.

X: Yeah, I saved up a small amount of money, and I also had a small amount of rice that I took with me to the strike camp. All that they gave in the strike camp was a small can full of rice for one family. And that wasn't enough for us. And as far as something to go with the rice, sometimes there were people who gave fish. But there were other times when we had nothing to go along with the rice, and so we had to buy something for ourselves. So I had to use my own money sometimes, to buy food. If I hadn't brought along money, I tell you, we really would have had a hard time there in the strike camp.
EG: How about, they were taking up a collection, and maybe they weren't getting very much in the collection if that's all that they were giving out to you.

GO: No, that's not true. They were really receiving a lot but I think they were putting it away for themselves. There were a lot of people who really gave donations because they were sympathetic with the strike.

X: Maybe they didn't give everything to the strikers; they only gave a small part of it. How can it be that so many people were giving and they were giving out so little at the strike camp? There were all kinds of things. There was even money that people were giving for the strikers. It was the leaders themselves, or the minor leaders who were going around making collections for the strike camp.

GO: You know, the way that they had strikes before, they were not very well organized, and that's one of the reasons. It's not like now where all the different races come together, as long as they're workers and they go out on strike. This was just the Visayans. The Japanese and the Chinese and the Hawaiians, and everybody continued to work. It was only the Visayans and a few Tagalogs who went out on strike. So it was poorly organized and that's why it wasn't successful.

EG: How did it come about that they chose people to go around and to make the collection of support for the strikers? Who chose them?

GO: It was the leaders themselves. They never called a meeting or asked for volunteers or anything like that. It was up to them, and they said they would be the ones to take care of the collection. So they and their closest friends were the ones.

EG: Did anybody ever confront them and say to them, "Hey, this thing that you're doing is not too good. We're hungry and you guys are having a big collection, how can that be?"

GO: No. No one ever did confront them. We just did exactly what they told us to do. There was no way of checking on things. There was no system of accountability, and so the collectors went out and somebody gave them, for instance, 25 cents. They might put 15 cents in their pocket and turn in 10 cents, or nobody knew how much was given and how much was turned over to the strike camp. All the people had was the impression that there was a lot more given than was shared with the people at the strike camp.

X: There were some women who were there in the strike camp who were washing diapers and they asked Doro [Isidoro Baring] for some money to buy soap, and he wouldn't give it to them. He said to them there was no money available. I was asking myself, "Where was the money that they had gotten from the collection?" They kept going
around making collections so how was it that there was no money available, even to buy soap for diapers?

GO: There's one of the officials who, a short time after the strike, built a big house in Koloa. At the time of the war he went back to the Philippines.

EG: Baring?

GO: Isidoro Baring. Ultimately, he died here in America. Meling is the wife of Baring, who also died. At the time of the strike, they were living in Waimea.

EG: Manang, is it not true that, according to the story you were telling us before, that at the time, just before the Hanapepe incident there were two Ilocanos who were riding on the highway?

X: Going from early in the morning, they were going back and forth on the highway. They were going back and forth on the road, and the people who were in charge of the strike were becoming more and more angry seeing them go by. And that's why they seized them.

EG: You yourself, did you see the two Ilocanos?

X: Yes, I did, because I was always going by that place where they were keeping them. When they caught them, of course, they brought them inside the camp and kept them there.

EG: Was it because of something that they said that the Visayans became angry?

X: No, it's just the fact that they were going back and forth. They actually didn't say anything. And because of the way that they were looking at the strike camp. Then they would go back and forth. There were other Ilocanos who were saying the reason why the Visayans were out on strike is because they're lazy. It was these kinds of words also which made the strikers very angry.

GO: There were two Ilocanos, and because they just kept going back and forth, and because of the way they were looking at the strike camp, and even though themselves didn't say anything--it was other Ilocanos who said things--all those are what led up to the seizure of the two.

EG: As you were saying, the two Ilocanos were kept downstairs of the strike camp at night. And then there were police who arrived at night?

GO: No, no, it wasn't the police who arrived. It was people who were commanded by the boss of the plantation to come and get the two Ilocanos. They came at night, but the strikers would not turn over the Ilocanos to them. It was the next morning when the police arrived.
EG: But the night before, how many were sent by the plantation, to try and get the two Ilocanos.

X: Maybe it was around five that they sent to get the two Ilocanos.

EG: Were they plantation police?

X: Maybe. Maybe that's what they were; plantation police. Then in the morning, Crowell and the police came. Crowell, the sheriff of Waimea.

EG: Were the strikers ready for them when they came?

X: No, of course they weren't prepared for them, because they didn't know they were coming. It was around 7 o'clock in the morning when they arrived. It was Insut who was the leader of the strikers, who when the sheriff and the police came, was challenging the other strikers, "Okay, now this is it. This is the fight we've been waiting for."

But the police, they didn't want to start anything right there in the hall because there were so many children. So they went backwards, they reversed themselves. When they turned around and went backwards, then they were followed by the strikers. And then Insut said, "Okay, this is it." And so, some of them had a few guns, some had a piece of wood, some had a rock. Whatever they had they picked up and they chased after the sheriff and the men with the two Ilocanos.

And it was easy for the police because they were over on the hill, just waiting for them to come out. So as soon as they came out they started shooting and of course, a lot of Filipinos died. A lot of them were hiding because there were a lot of banana trees around. My husband was also able to escape. With the arrival of Mr. Rice, then the war was over.

EG: What time did Mr. Rice arrive?

X: Maybe it was 9 o'clock. And by that time, everything was all over with. The police that came with Mr. Rice, they began rounding up everybody. They rounded up everybody and carried them on the truck.

EG: Do I understand correctly what you're saying? When the police arrived in the morning, they were quite courageous and quite angry. The strikers were also quite angry when they came to get the Ilocanos?

X: Yeah, that's right. The strikers also were looking for a fight, so they were also angry.

EG: You yourself, did you see the police in the morning?

X: Yes, I did. Sure, you could see them right from the door where I was standing.
EG: Did you hear their voices?

X: No, it's hard to hear their voices because they were a little distance from me. But I could see them very clearly.

EG: What do you think, Manang; do you think that when the police first arrived that they were intent on killing some of the strikers or...

X: Oh sure. It could only have been that. Why were they so heavily armed, when they were just coming into a strike camp?

GO: They didn't want to start any kind of a fighting inside of the camp because of the number of women and children who were around. So they consciously lured the strikers outside and had the police already arranged on the hillside, so as to be able to pick them off as they came out.

EG: When the police actually arrived in the morning, were you outside or inside?

X: I was inside.

EG: Were there women and children outside also?

X: Yeah, there were women and children both inside and outside, when the police arrived. At the arrival of the police, they had everyone go inside. They had them all go inside, and they had the men come outside.

EG: According to what you were saying, one of the leaders--at least Insut--was really intent on fighting back. Were there other leaders who had an opposite opinion, that it wouldn't be good to take on the police?

X: No, there was no one who was against the police and Sheriff Crowell. Insut was actually forcing the men to go against the police.

EG: How was he forcing them?

X: He was pushing them, and he himself had a weapon. By his actions and by his words. So they just grabbed whatever they could. Some had guns, but others just had a piece of wood or a rock. Pity for strikers, they were like sheep.

EG: Could you just repeat for me once more; how did it actually start, the shooting? Who really started it? Was it the police or the strikers?

X: It was the police who started it. As the strikers came out of the camp the police started firing. But there are other people who were saying it started with Crowell getting a wound on his head. Nobody knows who did that because some of the strikers even had slingshots. And the police just kept shooting and the men kept
falling. And lot of them died. And they would have all died.

EG: Excuse me for asking this question, but how do you know that it was the police who started it, since you were back in the house?

X: Well, that's what everybody was saying among the strikers, "It was the police who started it."

GO: And you could hear the shooting all at once. And the strikers only had a weapon or two, if any, and almost no bullets. And so, that much shooting, it would have to come from the police. Pieces of wood don't shoot bullets.

The sound of the pistol and the sound of rifles is different. You can tell from a distance, whether it's a cheap revolver that's shooting, or a rifle.

EG: If you were going to make an estimate, how many men would you say were following after the police?

X: Many. All the men went outside when the police started going off with the Ilocanos. There were no more men inside the camp at that time.

EG: Would it be a hundred?

X: Oh yeah.

END OF SIDE TWO

SIDE ONE

X: Oh yeah, there were plenty of strikers from all the different camps. And when the men starting chasing the sheriff and the Ilocanos and the police, then all the men were called outside the camp, and all of them naturally followed. Now people began to run. When the shooting started, people went into banana patches and things like that.

GO: Strikers were from Camp 4, Hanapepe, Koloa, Makaweli, Camp 8, Camp 7, and all the Visayans.

EG: I myself, I'm a little bit surprised. How is it that Manlapit was a Tagalog, when all the strikers were Visayan?

GO: That really was the intention of Manlapit, that all Filipinos would join together because they were one people. But it didn't work out that way. And in fact, Ligot was an Ilocano but against what Manlapit was trying to do. He was the enemy of Manlapit. It was Ligot who was able to forbid or hold back the Ilocanos.
After the strike was over and the investigation, then, we went to Waimea. My husband was able to discover some work outside for about seven months. Then after that he applied here at the plantation in Waimea. And he was accepted, and that's how we came to move here.

Why did you apply here?

Well, it's a good plantation. And we also had acquaintances here. There were people from the same town in the Philippines who were already here.

Do you know Mrs. Ceballos?

Oh sure, we know her very well. She used to be here before.

Her husband died in the strike. She was a companion of ours.

Were they your friends even before the strike took place? Like maybe way back in the Philippines, or when you first arrived here?

No, it was only after the strike that we became friends.

Do you know Mrs. Delanoza?

Mrs. Delanoza is also my companion as a sugar worker. She was my companion even coming here to Hawaii. On the ship itself, we met. Now, it was her husband who was the one who told us, way back in the Philippines, that there was a good plantation to go in Kauai. He was also our companion on the ship coming back here. We went to the same plantation as they were on.

Are you still friends until now?

Yeah, we're still friends. But now she's in Honolulu, is no longer here. She's sick and in the hospital. It's about two years that she's not here now. I was able to visit her there in Honolulu.

What about Mrs. Ceballos?

Oh, she's here living now.

According to what you were saying before, you also took part in the strike but you weren't so enthusiastic about it. But did you have any companions, for instance, who were very enthusiastic and were trying to convince you that you should join the strike?

Maybe there were some people, but not acquaintances of ours, who were terribly enthusiastic about going out on strike. Probably the reason was because of the salary, the possibility of doubling your salary everyday. The people who were in favor of the strike almost had nothing to lose, because they would say, "If we win, we get double the salary we have now; if we lose, then we just receive the same salary."
My child was only three months old at that time, and of course, I wasn't very enthusiastic about it. Because while we were out on strike, I was thinking to myself, how are we going to support ourselves, especially with a small child? According to my husband, "They are saying if we don't go out on strike, we'll be killed." If we continue to work while others go out on strike. And that's why my husband was afraid, and that's why we went along with it.

Maybe it was just the leaders who were really enthusiastic about the whole thing, and the ordinary people went along with it.

EG: You were saying that you were not included in any more strikes after that first one. Yet there were other strikes, like in 1946; how come you never were included again in another strike?

X: It's because after that time, the unions were the ones that carried on the strike, like the one in 1946, the ILWU. And my husband was a luna. And a luna could not join the union, so we were not included in the strikes.

EG: You were friends with Mrs. Ceballos and Mrs. Delanoza. We haven't been able to visit them. Part of the reason being because they themselves are quite sick. Did you often talk with them about the strike?

X: Of course. We were close friends and we talked about it.

EG: You know, we're not even sure about the questions that we're asking you. Do you think that there are other important features about this strike that we haven't asked you about? Do you think there are other things we should know, that you haven't told us?

X: No, I think you've asked just about everything and more than everything.

EG: You know, we're also very surprised. Even in the Philippines, at the present time, if somebody goes out on strike there's a lot of logistics that have to be taken care of. Like, people have to think ahead of time about food, about shelter, about what it is that they're demanding, how they're going to go about it, etc..., etc. This strike seems to have very few of these characteristics.

GO: That's true. There was almost no organization connected with this strike. It was the first experience. It came from some kind of a deep felt feeling that we'd like to see the salary increased or even doubled everyday. And Manlapit himself had such a good voice and was so convincing, and picked out different people who he said would be the head of different groups. That's all that there was to it. There was a lot of people who didn't understand it and there were even plenty of people who didn't attend meetings.

EG: Maybe there were other demands that they had, besides raising the salary?
GO: No. It was just the fact of wanting to double the salary, that everybody was interested in. Oh yeah, it could be also that it was eight hours instead of 10 hours.

EG: What you're implying is that Manlapit came here, and he put people in charge in the different plantations, like in Waimea or in Hanapepe, or wherever?

GO: It's like that, maybe. Manlapit didn't come here very often, and so he must have set up some kind of a primitive organization. Sometimes, the first time that people heard about the strike, the leaders would say something like, "Tomorrow begins the strike." Why would they be in such a hurry, one day isn't much time to prepare people or to even think about, or to discuss it. But everything was done in that fashion. This is true not only here in Kauai but even in the other islands. Everything was done very quickly, without an awful lot of organization.

People were carried along by the bullshit. For some people, they were heroes; and for other people, they were crazy people. They're probably a little bit crazy because it cost the deaths of innocent people. They didn't take the time to look for the right way of doing things.

EG: What is your name?

GO: I am Gregario Oroc.

EG: When did you arrive here in Hawaii?

GO: The same year as Mrs. "X", but I wasn't included in the strike.

EG: Were you in Camp 4?

GO: No, I was in Camp 8. We were in the same camp.

EG: How is it that she and her husband went out on strike and you didn't?

GO: I was also scheduled to be included in the strike, but when I woke up, the last trip of the truck to carry and goods and take people to the strike camp had left. So last trip, there wasn't anymore for Hanapepe.

You know, at the time when the strike started, I had a wife and a child. And my wife was saying to me, "Why don't you just continue working. Don't go out on strike. You can join the strike any time. If you don't join it this month, you could join it next month. You could always go out." So the next day, I went back to work again.

I wasn't the only Visayan who didn't go out on strike. We were
three Visayans who didn't go out. Leoncio Sedillo and Pastor Romana and Juaning Torres. And there were Ilocanos also, six of them.

EG: They were saying this thing about, if you weren't included in the strike they would kill you.

GO: Oh, that was just bullshit.

EG: Weren't you afraid?

GO: (Laughs) What should I be afraid of? If they kill me then they'll be killed themselves by the government. What was there to be afraid of? It's my wife who was really courageous. My wife's mother and her brothers were also included in the strike.

EG: The proportion of men to women was about six to one, at the time; 1924, 1925, the time of the strike. So there were a lot of Filipino men who couldn't get married.

GO: That's true.

EG: Well, then what did they do?

GO: There was also a lot of wife stealing that went on. And also, sometimes the men went back to the Philippines and other Filipinos married the women. Or, sometimes they died and men married the widows. Sometimes, if the husband went back to the Philippines, then somebody borrowed the wife while he was gone. This was very dangerous. Most of the men who came here, I don't think planned to stay for a long period of time. They planned to make a lot of money and go back and get married, and settle down. And so almost everybody who came here were unmarried men. But it just didn't turn out that way, that they were able to accumulate a lot of money, go back and get married. A few did, but not very many.

And there were others who actually were married and left their wives back in the Philippines and came here to Hawaii, figuring that they'd make big money in about three years and then go back and establish their families. That also didn't happen for many.

At the time, it was also very difficult—not like now—for inter-racial marriages; that a Filipino would marry a haole, or something like that. One problem was language. Language was a big problem in the very beginning. But another problem was it just wasn't accepted, and groups stuck pretty much to themselves. For example, most Visayans would call a young woman, "inday." Inday is a term of affection for any young girl. But if you called the Japanese woman inday, or a haole inday, then they wouldn't understand it. And some of them might even get angry at you.

Money was also a problem in getting married, because $1 a day was enough for a worker to get by for himself, but to think about
raising a family and sending money back home to your family on $1 a
day was unthinkable for many.

EG: Were there actually unmarried women from the Philippines who would
come here to Hawaii so that the men would have the opportunity to
get married?

GO: No. that was very rare. Unless they came with their families, or
something. But the thought of an unattached Filipina coming here
from the Philippines is almost unthinkable. It's only now that you
have things like that happening. The customs were different,
before and now.

Before, there wasn't actually any of the agents who would say that
they would only accept unmarried men. They would also accept
married couples. But the difficulties in doing that, and many of
the women who were brought up in a rural area in the Philippines
were not so intent—even if they were married—on coming to a place
unknown to them.

[EG: Incidentally, up until the present time, this hasn't changed too
much. At the present time, in the Philippines, you have an awful
lot of married men or unmarried men—both—shipping out labor to
other places. For example, to the Middle East or to Iran. So
there are many Filipino laborers also. And Filipinos are known for
working on board ships. Many of them are married, and they come
home like once or twice a year, something like that.]

GO: It was actually open to married or single, either one. But as it
turned out, there were a number of Filipinos who came who were
already married also.

EG: As the two of you look back now, on having come here to Hawaii, how
do you look at it?

GO: It's a hard question to answer because things were difficult in the
Philippines when we left. But when we arrived here in Hawaii,
things were also very difficult. So it was the same. But then,
you also have to say, "Well, it's the place that you became accustomed
to that you like the best." So in that sense, it's good that we
came here. We've been here already for a long time. We know
Hawaii better than we know the Philippines.

X: Maybe it's all the same.

GO: I was 20 years, living in the Philippines, from the time I was born
until the time I came here. Now I've been here in Hawaii for over
50 years, without going back to the Philippines. So it's the fate
of the person. The 20 years were good there in the Philippines,
and the over 50 years here have also been good. It's good when
you're with your parents, that you can take care of them and repay
them in some way for all that they have given you. But there comes
a time in your life when you have to go out on your own and take care of yourself.

[EG: This is a little bit of the history of Gregorio. He was born in 1904. May 8, 1904. Born in Ginatilan, Cebu.]

GO: There were only three in the family and the other two have died since. They were called by God.

EG: Did they died as children?

GO: No, they were born, they grew up to be big, they got married, they had children, and then they died.

EG: How many children do you have?

GO: Two.

EG: Where are they now?

GO: My daughter is in Pearl City. She's a madre at Our Lady of Good Counsel.

EG: What kind of a [religious] sister is she?

GO: She's a Franciscan.

EG: That's a good thing, huh?

GO: It's the same as everything else.

EG: When you came from the Philippines you were assigned to Makaweli?

GO: I stayed at Makaweli, but the Baldwin Company that owned Makaweli before was bought by C. Brewer in 1940. That's when I moved here. I'm here in AmFac now, AmFac company. I retired here from AmFac. I arrived in Kauai the ninth of July, 1924. I was really very new here when the strike started. Maybe one month.

[EG: The name of his mother is Maxima. Jatico is the last name of his mother. Telesporo is the name of his father. He also went to school in the Philippines, but it was that same kind of Catholic education, by the priest in the rectory of the Spanish priest.]

How long?

GO: Up until I could read and write.

EG: What language was your schooling in?

GO: It was Visayan. We also had to study some Spanish.

[EG: This is one way of telling if it was a government school or a
church school. Church schools were in the local language, in Visayan; the government schools were in English.]

EG: What religion are you?

GO: Why, of course I'm Catholic. Even my parents were, and I, from the time I was a child. My wife Candida also is Catholic. She died in 1970.

[EG: His first work experience, he had something to do with irrigation. Then, after that he moved to Waimea.]

GO: I worked inside the sugar room. Me, I one operator. I retired from work as an operator. In 1969.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

[EG: We were just talking about his retirement now.]

GO: It's nice to be retired. You can get up any time you want and do whatever you like. No more of this making lunches and not eating at home. No more having to work on the machines and oil them up, and keep them running. Life becomes very enjoyable on retirement. Now, you get money without sweat rolling out for it. Before, you had to sweat and they paid you for the sweat. Now, the money comes without the sweat. You can also do other kinds of work now. You can go fishing...

X: And work in the garden, things like that.

GO: And also make money, as long as you don't let the government know it. There's no more somebody standing over you and shouting at you, "God damn you, why do this job? Why you make wrong? I tell you make this straight, but how come you make it crooked?" He get sore, you head, yet. He scolding, eh. The supervisors always, "God damn this," and "God damn that."

END OF INTERVIEW
The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai

Volume I

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