

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: George G. Gamayo

George Gelacio Gamayo was born December 23, 1919 in Badoc, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. His mother died when he was just over a year old. His father, a farmer, died in 1933. The youngest of six children, Gamayo was raised by an older sister.

In 1946, Gamayo immigrated to Hawai'i as a member of the last large wave of immigrants recruited by Hawai'i's sugar industry. His first job was as a stevedore at Kukuihaele Landing. That same year, he began working for Pā'auhau Sugar Company, first as a *hō hana* man, and subsequently as a cane cutter, Caterpillar push rake operator, and haul-cane truck driver.

In 1973, after Pā'auhau Sugar Company merged with Honoka'a Sugar Company, Gamayo moved to Haina and worked for the newly consolidated company. He retired in 1983, when the company was known as Davies Hāmākua Sugar Company.

He lives in Honoka'a with his wife, Norma, and daughter. He also has four children from a previous marriage.

Tape No. 26-10-1-96

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George G. Gamayo (GG)

Honoka'a, Hawai'i

September 30, 1996

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with George G. Gamayo for the Hāmākua, Ka'ū families oral history project on September 30, 1996 at his home in Honoka'a, Hawai'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, well, let's start, then. Mr. Gamayo, why don't you first tell me when you were born and where you were born.

GG: Start now?

WN: Yeah, start now.

GG: Oh.

WN: (Chuckles) Your birthday.

GG: Yeah, my birthday is on December 23, 1919. And then I come [to Hawai'i] from the Philippines April 27, 1946.

WN: First, before we go into that, tell me where you were born, where's your hometown?

GG: Oh, I born Badoc, Ilocos Norte, Philippines.

WN: And what was your father—what kind of work was your father doing?

GG: Oh, farmer. Rice farming.

WN: Rice?

GG: Mm hmm [yes].

WN: Did he farm anything else?

GG: Rice and corn, like that. After the rice harvest they plant corn or garlic and onion.

- WN: Was it only for home use or he sold it to other people?
- GG: Most time only for home use. Rice, corn and garlic, onion, like that.
- WN: And you had brothers and sisters?
- GG: Yeah, I get three brothers and three sister.
- WN: And what number were you?
- GG: Oh, among the six, I'm the baby, I'm the last baby. And then 1946, April 27, I come this side in Hawai'i. And I arrived the boat from Salamague, Ilocos Sur. And then. . . .
- WN: How come you came? How come you decided to come to Hawai'i?
- GG: I decided to come to Hawai'i because how we live in the Philippines just like more hard living than over here in Hawai'i. So we decide to come Hawai'i and work and then save money if we can save for the family.
- WN: How did you hear about Hawai'i?
- GG: From before, I feel better than PI [Philippine Islands] because we get everyday job, eh.
- WN: You told me your brother—is it brother-in-law?
- GG: Yeah. I come to Hawai'i because my brother-in-law tell me to come Hawai'i, see. That's why I *stay* over here now.
- WN: So your brother-in-law came before . . .
- GG: Yeah. My brother-in-law come this side in 1928.
- WN: He's from Badoc, too?
- GG: Badoc, yeah, same town with me.
- WN: He came 1928 to where in Hawai'i?
- GG: Pā'auhau.
- WN: Pā'auhau?
- GG: Yeah, he work Pā'auhau [Sugar Company] plantation.
- WN: So he said, "Oh, why don't you come over to Hawai'i, too?" He told you that?
- GG: Yeah.
- WN: So when you came, where did you folks first come when you came to Hawai'i? Where did

you land?

GG: Oh, we land Kahului, Maui. And then we rest little while, about two, three hours in Kahului Harbor and then we come this side. And early in the morning the next day we land Hilo Harbor. And then we stop little while again Hilo Harbor and then we come this side, come to Pā'auhau. And stay here. And then I rest about four days or five days and then I start working for Pā'auhau [Sugar Company] plantation. If I'm not mistaken I start to work May [4], 1946. I come this side April 27; I start working May 4, 1946.

WN: So you [arrived in Hawai'i] on April 27, 1946 . . .

GG: Yeah.

WN: . . . and you started work May 4, 1946?

GG: Yeah.

WN: Oh. (Laughs)

GG: No (chuckles) more rest. I like work that time, so. And they tell me to rest at least fifteen days, or more than fifteen days. But I like work now because we just come from PI, we need money. And if we can save money, we send to our family in the Philippines. That's the reason why I like work quick. That's why we start work from May 4.

WN: Did your father want you to come Hawai'i to work to send money back?

GG: Oh, I was fourteen years old when my father pass away.

WN: Oh.

GG: My mother *wen* pass away I was one years old. That time my mother *wen* pass away.

WN: So who took care of you?

GG: My brother.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

GG: My oldest brother.

WN: So then you came April 27, 1946.

GG: Yeah.

WN: And then you started work Pā'auhau [Sugar Company] plantation May 4th?

GG: May 4th until 1973. And then I went back to PI to get married with my [second] wife [Norma Gamayo], 1973.

- WN: What was your first job when you first started plantation?
- GG: Oh, my first job is *hō hana* the grass.
- WN: *Hō hana?*
- GG: Yeah, *hō hana*.
- WN: You like that job?
- GG: Yeah, I like that job because when you just get into the new job you no can apply [for] different other job what you like, if you no stay little bit too long to the job. So I work about one year, I think, to that job, *hō hana*. And then get open job that, cut the . . .
- WN: Cut cane?
- GG: Yeah, cut cane. Because we get more pay for that job, cut cane.
- WN: You had gloves to wear, to cut cane?
- GG: Yeah, we gotta get because if not, all blister by (GG rubs hands). . . .
- WN: And what about the knife, they give you or you have to buy?
- GG: They give, but the knife that they give you for use, not too—not enough sharp so we gotta buy the temper[ed] kind knife Hilo side. That one more better for cut. You no need sharp, sharp, sharp, sharp all the time.
- WN: You gotta sharpen 'em?
- GG: Yeah, you sharpen 'em about two, three time, I think, one day.
- WN: Oh yeah?
- GG: That one with[out] the temper[ing]. The one they give not too sharp, that one. You gotta sharp, sharp, sharp every time.
- WN: Oh, the temper[ed] one you don't have to sharpen as much?
- GG: Yeah, not too much because temper[ed knife] more hard to *da kine* [dull], eh.
- WN: I'm wondering, too, the cane cut job, that was mostly Filipino?
- GG: Yeah, some other nation[ality] they no like because hard, eh. Mostly Filipino for that kind job, cut cane like that.
- WN: And over here, Pā'auhau plantation, did they burn cane or you had to strip the *pulapula*?
- GG: No, they—depends on the weather. If good weather like this, they can burn the *'ōpala*. But if

not, they go rake 'em with the lift because no can burn. And then after cut cane, I get job opening. You know the small machine, they call cultivator that one.

WN: Cultivator?

GG: Yeah, small . . .

WN: Just like Caterpillar?

GG: Yeah, yeah, small tractor.

WN: You call that, what, push rake?

GG: No, not push rake. They call that cultivator because the push rake, he push the cane like that and then get some left on the ground, eh, so that's the one we go rake 'em with the cultivator, the small tractor.

WN: Oh, so this is after the push rake?

GG: Yeah, after the push rake.

WN: So maybe you raking up the '*ōpala*? Is that what you doing?

GG: Yeah, you rake all the '*ōpala*, dirt and all. Because that one is for the rubbish, eh. And after that job again, get cane truck driver open job and then I go apply again, 1958, I think. We *stay* strike that time, 1958. And they talk about, "Why you go apply job when you *stay* strike?" they tell us, you know. But, ah, I had nothing to do so more better go apply job. And when *pau* strike, then we go on the job if they like you. That's the reason why I *bin* go *da kine* apply for the job. They never like me [to go] because my boss like me in that job, you know, the cultivator one. He no like I going harvesting job. But my other boss tell to my supervisor, "Let him try. If he no can, if he cannot do the job, put back to his job." But I *bin* go. My uncle train me for [drive] that haul-cane truck.

WN: Oh, your uncle?

GG: Yeah, my uncle. I go with him for train me. The next day I drive alone already. (Chuckles) They surprised because I was this small guy, and almost all the truck driver big body like that, husky like that. So they surprised because, "You no scared do that job?" they tell me.

But, "Ah, nothing. I go try, but if I no can, if they no like me, I go back to my [old] job," I tell them, so. One day and one night he teach me. The next day I know how to drive already for the haul-cane truck. Harvesting truck.

WN: Before that, you had your license? You could drive car before?

GG: Yeah, I get but you have to go take license [exam] again for type six. So I *bin* go take test again for the type six. Drive car only [type] four. The heavy equipment is [type] six.

WN: So you had any accidents?

GG: (Chuckles) Yeah, I get. (Chuckles) I get but so far not like the other truck driver that when they *huli* [i.e., overturn the haul-cane truck] one time, they quit. But (WN laughs) me, thanks to God, six time I *bin*—my truck *huli*.

WN: Six times?

GG: Yeah, six time.

WN: Oh.

GG: (Chuckles) Six time. One time crane [operator] he *stay* load me [i.e., load GG's haul-cane truck with cane], *stay* by side by the—I no can put inside the center of the road, my trailer behind. So he *bin* just load me. I tell him I go to the next crane, way down, but he never like. Because I can feel the trailer *stay huli* already that time. That's why I *bin* jump down [from the cab] and . . .

WN: You was on *pali*?

GG: Yeah, this side *pali* and this side the road, so the trailer behind never go on top the road. So he *bin* just load me so as soon as he pop the horn for I go, I *bin* put all the brakes, open my door this side, I jump down, I go *stay* watching. Everybody watching my truck *huli* that time. And when my supervisor come up, he find out that the guy [crane operator made] mistake. That's his fault because if no more other crane way down below, we can go turn around, you know, and go on top the road and then he load us. But no. Lucky he [supervisor] never fire him out. Because why he load me if the trailer not on the road? He *bin* go scold the guy. (WN chuckles.) One Portuguese guy.

WN: So that kind, you have to make report and all that kind?

GG: Yeah, you gotta make report. Because if you *huli* and you fall, you can get fired, you know, from the job. Or suspend you.

WN: But that one was not your fault, eh.

GG: No, no, no. That's the crane driver fault because I tell him to go turn around or I go down to the next crane down below, but he never like. He *bin* just load me.

WN: So what happened to him?

GG: They *bin* scold him.

WN: Oh, that's all?

GG: Yeah, that's all. (WN laughs.) And then we get meeting about that. Every truck driver, if you no like the crane driver, you no go with him. So from that time that guy *bin* come good. Because that guy [crane operator], if he no like you, put side way load, you know. And that one quick *huli*.

WN: You gotta load 'em even.

GG: Yeah, even. Put 'em on the center of that trailer behind. But that guy, if he no like you after he load you he look his watch, you know. He time you up. Because after he let you go he (chuckles) watch his—look his time, what time you go down and how many minutes you come back. And if you fast come back, quick you come back, oh, he give you more big load.

WN: (Chuckles) And you got paid by the hour or you got paid by how much load you bring?

GG: Oh, no already get paid by the hour.

WN: By the hour.

GG: Yeah. Cane truck driver I *bin* get six seventy-five [\$6.75], I think, one hour. Cane truck driver.

WN: And you drove from the fields down—take the cane to the mill?

GG: Yeah, to the mill.

WN: And this is---when you first started was Pā'auhau [Sugar Company] mill?

GG: Yeah, Pā'auhau mill.

WN: So when you first started working where did you live?

GG: I *wen* live Pā'auhau camp.

WN: Was it Filipino camp, or. . . .

GG: Oh, all mix up.

WN: Mix up?

GG: All other kind nation[alities].

WN: And you told me too, when you came '46 had strike that time, sugar strike?

GG: Yeah, we get the strike. We just come from PI, I *bin* start work number 4 of May, and then the coming [September] yeah, we get strike already for six months. [The 1946 sugar strike, which began September 1, lasted seventy-nine days.]

WN: So you folks were union [members] already by then?

GG: Yeah. From the boat we *bin* sign for get into the union [i.e., International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union].

WN: Oh yeah?

GG: When we come this side.

- WN: Oh, you signed [up] on the boat?
- GG: Yeah, on the boat. They let us sign. If you like, you in for the union.
- WN: You knew what union was all about at that time? Did you know what you were signing at that time?
- GG: Yeah, they explain what and what for the union like that. They tell us for—union is protect your job. That's your job protection, they said. Because if you no more union, if they no like you to the job they can just take you out any time, they tell. So, oh, we gotta sign, then. Everybody tell us, so all the '46 guys [i.e., Filipinos arriving in 1946 to work on Hawai'i's sugar plantations], that boat *bin da kine*, sign for the union. Join to the union.
- WN: So when you first started you went on strike already.
- GG: Yeah, we get this start, I mean . . .
- WN: So you didn't work for six months [seventy-nine days]?
- GG: No, we never work. That's why they surprised about the forty-six *sakáda*. Nobody give up. Even just, they just come [from] the Philippines. But some of the old-timer, the one get big family, they go work other kind job, outside job like Waimea farm, you can go work but they go take one-third, I think, from your pay. The union [took] one-third [of your pay].
- WN: But you didn't work [outside job]?
- GG: No, I never work.
- WN: So what did you do? How did you get food and everything during the strike?
- GG: Before the strike we prepare for our food for—especially rice. Because (chuckles) Filipino they eat rice like that and they go fishing, like that.
- WN: Had soup kitchen, too?
- GG: Yeah, get. Somebody go cook and then everybody go eat for lunch and dinner, like that.
- WN: So you folks went fishing?
- GG: Yeah, some go fishing for everybody, you know. Some go hunting, like that. Some go work for Parker Ranch. They need people to go help them and they get paid for the strike. So I *bin* go work for Parker Ranch, like that. Everybody go.
- WN: Oh, you worked, too?
- GG: Yeah, get somebody go fishing, somebody go hunting, that day, you know, the same day, somebody go work to the Parker Ranch.
- WN: You got paid for work Parker Ranch?

- GG: Yeah, they pay us one cow, like that.
- WN: What kind work you did Parker Ranch?
- GG: Fix the fence around the pasture.
- WN: So soon as you came, right after you came Hawai‘i, you went on strike already.
- GG: Yeah. (WN chuckles.) When they strike.
- WN: But you could still live in your house, yeah? They didn’t tell you get out of your house.
- GG: No, no, no. They no can do that because we get union.
- WN: So what did the plantation give you besides house for free?
- GG: I no remember, but even they give house we gotta pay for rent, like that.
- WN: Oh, you had to pay?
- GG: Yeah, we gotta pay every month. [GG is referring to the period after unionization.]
- WN: You mean early days when you first came?
- GG: Yeah, no more free.
- WN: Do you remember how much you paid?
- GG: Cheap, I think, that time. Maybe around ten dollar or fifteen dollar a month. Because when I left—when I built this house, I left Haina plantation house, I pay forty-one dollar, 1981. That’s why at that time, cheap. Cheap for the house rent.
- WN: When you lived Pā‘auhau, first house, was it more like bachelor kind quarters you lived? You had your own house when you first came?
- GG: Yeah, we get our own house. One house is sometime two people stay inside one house. Like my brother-in-law, only me, and his brother. Only three people in one house. My brother-in-law and his brother and myself. Three people in one house, three bedroom. Three-bedroom house.
- WN: And what did Pā‘auhau have? Did they have stores and everything?
- GG: Yeah, Pā‘auhau get one store over there, Filipino[-owned] store, to buy any kind canned food, rice. And then when *pau* the strike that year, 1946, we go back work.
- WN: When the strike *pau* you went—still work *hō hana* or you worked another job?
- GG: No, I work for that, I told you, eh, the cultivator one. I stay on that one. But get cane truck driver, opening cane truck driver, so I *bin* apply. No, I was talking about the 1958 strike.

That's when I *bin* apply the truck driver. Yeah, [1946] I *bin* go back to *hō hana*. Because first is start work, *hō hana*, eh, my job. So I *bin* go back to that *hō hana*.

WN: So you had *hō hana*, and then had strike, and then you went back *hō hana*.

GG: Yeah.

WN: And then you went cut cane afterward.

GG: Cut cane, yeah, after the strike. After the *hō hana* and then. . . .

WN: So when you were living Pā'auhau, and you weren't working, what did you do for relaxation or good fun in the camp?

GG: Oh, sometime we go fishing, like that. We go fishing or we go, (pause) yeah, we go fishing. Some of the one in the camp they go for find job, like when they day off, like that.

WN: Had things like—had chicken fight, things like that?

GG: Yeah, chicken fight. Some of them go but not me. I never did try for *da kine* chicken fight because I think about PI, eh, we get hard time over there. And [to] go with that kind business is no good.

WN: So when you were sending money home, you sent it to your sister?

GG: Yeah, my sister or my brother, like that.

WN: I was wondering, did you ever think, when you first came to Hawai'i from PI, did you ever think, oh, I'm gonna go back, I'm only gonna stay Hawai'i little while and go back?

GG: No. I never think for go back because I was thinking about old days hardly any job like Hawai'i [has], so since I was single, ah, more better I stay over here. And then 19—when I go get married to my [second] wife, that's the first time I go [back].

WN: Nineteen seventy-three?

GG: Yeah, '73. From 1946 I never did go because, ah, more better stay Hawai'i. More better because you get everyday job, yeah, that time.

WN: Did you miss Philippines?

GG: Right now? This time?

WN: Not now but when you first came.

GG: No. (WN laughs.) But some of the guys go with us [to Hawai'i], when we *bin* go Salamaque Harbor and we pass our town, oh they cry, you know. Some of our friend cry when we pass our place. They like go back. Never like come over this side. But no can help. They gotta go, they *stay* on the boat already.

- WN: But not you, you didn't cry?
- GG: No, not me, not me. Because I *bin* like come Hawai'i for find job and get better living, eh. That's why I come this side.
- WN: You told me, too that while you worked sugar company, Pā'auhau Sugar [Company], you had some part-time work?
- GG: Yeah, I get part-time job. When I work swing shift like that [for the sugar company], I go work vegetable farm, Sakata Farm, Waimea. I work about two, three hours and then come home because when I go in the morning, I start seven o'clock, eight, nine, ten—three hours I work. Three hours or 3½ hours and then go home because I go work [sugar plantation] again three o'clock, eh, so give time for make my lunch.
- WN: So where you worked first? You worked sugar first or you worked Waimea farms first in the day?
- GG: When I work swing shift [for the sugar company], like that, three to eleven [o'clock P.M.], yeah, the next day I go because three to eleven just like you *wen* go to the movie. When you young time you no need sleep that shift. (WN chuckles.) So . . .
- WN: Three to eleven, so from eleven o'clock you go home?
- GG: Yeah, eleven in the night. And then wake up again early in the morning for make your lunch.
- WN: And then you go up to Waimea?
- GG: Yeah, go up to Waimea work to the farm. More worse when I get title from the Waipi'o Valley. I go Waimea the next day, then the next day I go to the farm, the taro farm, Waipi'o.
- WN: You had three jobs, then?
- GG: Yeah, three job. When only for the swing shift, though. I no go with the graveyard [eleven o'clock P.M. to seven o'clock A.M.] one because hard, eh, if you no sleep from the graveyard shift, hard. Especially my job. If no 'nough you sleep for that kind job, harvesting job, hard. You gotta get 'nough rest for that kind job, so only for the swing shift, I go for my part-time job.
- WN: How long you had swing shift?
- GG: What you mean?
- WN: How many years you had swing shift?
- GG: Oh, swing shift? No, we start one to three, you know. Daytime and then swing shift and then you go to that hard job, yeah, graveyard. Eleven to seven o'clock in the morning.
- WN: Oh, I see, like you rotate.

GG: Yeah, rotate, rotate.

WN: Oh, how long before you have to switch to the next shift, one week or two weeks?

GG: No, like this week, today's Monday, you work daytime for the whole week, five days. Then after two days off you go again the next Monday night for the swing shift. Start three to eleven, for one week again, five days. And then to that Monday, go to the graveyard shift, you start eleven to seven o'clock in the morning.

WN: Oh, so every week you change.

GG: Yeah, every week, every week.

WN: So only when you had—the week you had swing shift you did Waimea farms . . .

GG: Yeah, and the [Waipi'o] taro farm.

WN: So what happens when you working daytime or graveyard, what, you don't go do taro?

GG: No, I go in afternoon *pau hana* time, like that, if I get time. I get four job. I get macadamia nut farm job, too, part time. I get hard time that time. But when my wife come this side [i.e., immigrated from the Philippines], not too bad because she work Haina nut factory [i.e., Hawaiian Macadamia Plantation]. Then afternoon and *pau hana*, her *pau hana* we go up nut field, like that.

WN: Oh, what you did in the nut field?

GG: We go pick.

WN: Pick the nuts from the ground?

GG: Mm hmm [yes]. And weekend we go pick the nut.

WN: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: So how did you get the taro field?

GG: No, that's lease kind, Bishop [Museum] land, that one. So we gotta lease 'em. Lease.

WN: And did you sell your taro?

GG: Yeah, we sell the taro, get somebody go buy and they go sell 'em to factory. So we go sell to the agent, like that. Then the agent go sell to the poi factory.

- WN: And how you learned how do taro?
- GG: That one more hard job because more long to harvest. About fifteen to sixteen months and then you can harvest the taro.
- WN: Oh, from the time you plant?
- GG: Yeah.
- WN: Fifteen, sixteen months?
- GG: Yeah. More long to get the money from the taro than the [macadamia] nut. Because the nut one, if you pick today, put in the bag, the next day they go come pick up. After three days they go come pick up and put 'em to the factory. Every Monday you get paid. But the taro you gotta wait for fifteen to sixteen months and then you harvest.
- WN: Oh, so the mac nut you were picking for somebody else?
- GG: Yeah, we pick for somebody else.
- WN: They pay you by the bag, or. . . .
- GG: By the pound. Fifteen cents a pound. With the shell, though. Fifteen cents a pound.
- WN: And where were the mac nut trees?
- GG: Up Kapulena. Yeah, Kapulena mountain, that side.
- WN: Had other people doing this plenty kind jobs like you, or only you?
- GG: Yeah, some people like me work for the plantation, they get part-time job, too, like mac nut, like that. I go work to the [Waimea] farm. But not everybody, though. Not everybody. Some people, said, "Oh, I get job already, no need go to the farm." Some people tell like that. Most Filipino go to *da kine* part-time job.
- WN: Okay, so from Pā'auhau, from '73 you went to Philippines and you got married.
- GG: Yeah.
- WN: And then you came back, and about that time [1972] Pā'auhau [Sugar Company] merged with Honoka'a Sugar [Company]. Do you remember anything different? Did they have to change mills?
- GG: Yeah, they changed. All go to Honoka'a mill.
- WN: Haina?
- GG: Yeah, Haina, the cane from Pā'auhau.

- WN: So Haina mill was built by then? Was it a brand-new mill?
- GG: Yeah, brand-new mill that time. Brand new. [The sugar mill in Haina was built in 1976.]
- WN: Had different manager or anything?
- GG: No, that [Honoka'a Sugar Company] manager he's there until he takes retire. Mr. [Richard M.] Frazier, I think, the name of that manager that time.
- WN: Did people lose—when they had the merger, did anybody from the mill lose their job, or anything like that?
- GG: No. You mean to say if they lay off like that?
- WN: Yeah, like if you work, say, Pā'auhau mill, and say, they going close this mill, “We gonna merge and you have to go Haina now.” Everybody go?
- GG: No, they gotta give you job. They gotta give you job. If you no can get the same job when you *stay* Pā'auhau mill, they gotta give you different one. But inside the mill too, factory. They give you job.
- WN: Same pay?
- GG: Yeah, same pay.
- WN: So nobody got laid off?
- GG: No, because some of them get retire, eh, so they exchange the one come from Pā'auhau, like that.
- WN: What about seniority, though. What if the Pā'auhau mill worker had more seniority than the Haina mill worker, or something?
- GG: They can bump 'em.
- WN: They can bump 'em?
- GG: Yeah, because same station already, yeah. They can bump 'em to get into the job if you get more seniority than the one *stay* inside there, you can bump.
- WN: And then what happens to the one who gets bumped?
- GG: They go---they find job. He go different job [on the plantation].
- WN: I see. Did people get mad at each other for bumping somebody? “How come you bump me,” or (chuckles). . . .
- GG: They no can do nothing because they less seniority, and get the union too for talk to the people like that. You cannot do nothing if you less seniority and more seniority the one go

bump you, no can do nothing. That's why they rather go to the different job.

WN: Nobody got mad at each other?

GG: No, no. They no get mad. Well, if they no like the job they can apply the opening, open job. Get different job, eh, open job, like that. If they like, they go apply.

WN: Some people quit plantation and go someplace else?

GG: Yeah, plenty.

WN: You mean with the merger?

GG: Yeah. They go different island, like that. Or find different job outside. Quit to the plantation, like that. But only some.

WN: And you still drove cane truck?

GG: Yeah, cane truck. And when I almost retire, maybe 19—I retire 1982, no.

WN: [Nineteen] eighty-two, eighty-three?

GG: Yeah, three years before I retire, get open job, only daytime job. That same truck driver but the dumper kind one. We haul the mud from the down-side mill, we go dump 'em down inside the field.

WN: All the dirt and the rocks.

GG: No, only dirt. The rock is a different kind job, that one. Rock is only rock.

WN: This is Haina?

GG: Yeah. Then I work no more one month, I think, I work for daytime only. Then they go back to second shift again. Same thing to the haul-cane truck one.

WN: So you went back to haul cane?

GG: No, I never go back to haul cane. I *bin* like but since I almost retire I go stay to this job. They put back day shift, swing shift, and graveyard. This job better than the haul cane harvesting job. So I *bin* stay over here until I retire. I retire from that job.

WN: So how old were you when you retired?

GG: Sixty-two.

WN: Sixty-two.

GG: Yeah, sixty-two.

- WN: Nineteen eighty-two, yeah you said.
- GG: Nineteen eighty-two, yeah. Nineteen eighty-two, I supposed to stop working, you know. After my birthday, December, but since they repaired the mill, they *bin* hold me for work. I *stay* retire, collecting social security already, but I still working yet to the plantation because they *bin* hold me for help for repair the mill, like that. I supposed to stop work December, after 23 of December, 1982, I work until April. January, February, March, April. Four months.
- WN: Oh, '83 then, 1983.
- GG: Yeah, '83. But I *stay da kine* already.
- WN: Pension?
- GG: Yeah, I stay collecting social security and then still working yet.
- WN: And what, same job?
- GG: No. We stay in the mill, repair the mill, like that. Change *da kine* paint, like that. Plumbing. Sometimes I go helper with the electrician. Helper.
- WN: Because before that, 1978 had another merger, eh?
- GG: Nineteen sev . . .
- WN: Yeah, they merged with Hāmākua, I think. In '78.
- GG: [Nineteen] seventy-eight?
- WN: Yeah. They called 'em Davies Hāmākua Sugar Company. [In 1978, Honoka'a Sugar Company merged with Laupāhoehoe Sugar Company to form Davies Hāmākua Sugar Company and operated two mills in Haina and 'O'ōkala.]
- GG: 'O'ōkala and Pāpa'aloa all come this side, you know. Honoka'a. Haina mill.
- WN: All come Haina, yeah?
- GG: Yeah, all come Haina.
- WN: So anybody lose jobs at that time?
- GG: No, because they go stay on their job, eh, that time. If you haul-cane truck driver, you stay in your job, haul-cane truck. If you *stay hō hana* or poison, like that, you stay in that *da kine*. Only thing, all [Davies] Hāmākua [Sugar Company], eh. All the cane come this side, Haina mill.
- WN: Did you every get worried that maybe sugar might close down?
- GG: No, we never think that. (Chuckles) That, yeah, we never think that one, if the sugar go, it

stop. Especially when we retire we never know what's going on because we no work already. But we heard from the working people like my boy. He work plantation, eh, before. So "Oh, maybe they might close the plantation," they tell me before. And I surprise because we no work. If nobody tell us, we don't know all *da kine*, all those things, what's going on.

WN: So, how do you feel about sugar closing?

GG: Like now, we feel bad because some people, since the plantation close, some of the working people no more job yet. Just like this morning I talk to my friend, my neighbor when we live Haina, "Ey, how you? How your pension?" And from that time I *stay* retire only now I see him, that boy. And I see him in front of that service station this morning.

"Eh, where you work now?"

"Nothing, I stay home."

"Bullshit," I tell him.

"No, I get farm out Pa'auilo side," he tell me. Because after they close they give people five acre, I think. For they lease 'em for plant any kind, papaya or vegetables, like that. That's what he do now, he said. But "Ah, maybe that one no 'nough for my family. I gotta apply (chuckles) different job. But not now," he tell me.

Some of them no more job yet. Most all the plantation one, come from the plantation, they work hotel.

WN: What about your son, Darren. What is he doing?

GG: Oh, he work Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, security guard. He work graveyard [shift] because he work about six month, I think, or more. And I tell him, "Why no go apply different daytime one," I tell him.

"But no more open yet," he said. But he like the security [guard job], though. That's what he tell me. Easy job.

WN: He has other jobs, too?

GG: Yeah, he get. He get taro farm now.

WN: Oh, same as yours?

GG: Yeah, same. Was new one, yeah. He get the taro job, farm job. Just like part-time [job], too. Because he get his steady job, eh, now. Taro farm is only for part-time [job] for him.

WN: He has a business, too, eh?

GG: Yeah. Like now, the poi is expensive, you know. And expensive, too the taro that's why he *bin* like that part-time job, taro job. Thirty-seven dollar a bag.

- WN: Good now.
- GG: Yeah, eighty-pound [bag]. Not bad, though. Good.
- WN: That's taro or poi?
- GG: No, the taro. Put in the bag eighty pound, he *bin* just pull this week. He get eight bag, thirty-seven [dollars] one bag, almost three hundred [dollars].
- WN: Who buys the taro?
- GG: Get agent. They go send 'em to Honolulu. Honolulu Poi [Co., Ltd.] shop.
- WN: Honolulu Poi, yeah.
- GG: Yeah. But they usually buy 'em from him thirty-seven dollar one bag. Not bad, though. Good money.
- WN: How do you feel about now, over here no more sugar at all?
- GG: I just said that not too good. Because you see only grass and tree inside the cane field. Go to that Waipi'o Valley, all tree and *da kine* you look two side of the road. Grass and trees, not so good, though.
- WN: In the future, what would you like to see up here? What kind jobs? What you think would be good for Hāmākua?
- GG: I don't know. I heard that they go plant trees for *da kine*, for the land over here.
- WN: Oh, you mean forest trees [for paper and lumber]?
- GG: Yeah. That's what I heard.
- WN: You like that?
- GG: I no can say I no like, but most I like the sugar, though, to plant if never close down, shut down. I think more better plant sugar than the tree. So I don't know.
- WN: Yeah, when you think about it, if no more sugar maybe you never come Hawai'i.
- GG: I think so. I think so, yeah. Stay back PI and plant rice, I think so, if no more sugar that time.
- WN: You know, had the last harvest, yeah, you know the parade, had the parade, yeah [i.e., final harvest parade on September 30, 1994]? You told me that you were in the parade.
- GG: Yeah, I *stay* in the parade, yeah. I *stay* in the parade. We get float for our club like that. But I *stay* in the parade with that truck. We *bin* decorate that truck and put the sign by the side, Saranay Club. We get club, eh. Every float get *da kine* name like that. So we *bin* put by the

side of the truck *da kine* our club name, Saranay Club.

WN: How did you feel during the parade?

GG: Was good. Sometime no good. I think. . . . Yeah, was good the parade, but not too good, eh, if you think about past about when we stay, we get the sugar business yet.

WN: Before I turn off the tape recorder, do you want to say any last things?

GG: (Chuckles) That's all that I can say. I tell you all about my experience already.

WN: Well, hopefully your children and grandchildren, great-grandchildren can read about your experiences in sugar.

GG: What you mean?

WN: Well, your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, they not gonna know sugar because no more sugar, yeah. So they gonna read about Grandpa and his experiences in sugar.

GG: Oh, oh, I see.

WN: That's why we doing this project because for the history.

GG: So what you going ask me, then?

WN: No, no, no, *pau* already.

GG: All *pau*.

WN: All your experiences is gonna be part of the history of the area. So thank you very much.

GG: Yeah, that's all I can say, so thank you for come and ask me question about my experience doing the job to the plantation and till the end. Thank you.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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