BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Helen Barnes, 72, retired Dole Company (Hawaiian Pine Company) trimmer and packer

Helen (Manu) Barnes was born on Molokai in 1907, the fourth of 15 children. Both of her parents were Hawaiian although her father came from Tahiti as a child. She thinks she also has a bit of Chinese blood. Helen speaks Hawaiian fluently.

At age three, Helen was sent from Molokai to Sacred Hearts Convent. She boarded there and at Sacred Hearts Academy until she graduated from twelfth grade in 1927. In 1928 she started working at Hawaiian Pine Company as an intermittent trimmer. During the summer season, she worked on the night shift, and off-season she worked the day shift. In her spare time, she played music at Schofield Barracks, danced in a taxi dance hall, and worked in a coffee shop. This continued until World War II.

In 1933 Helen met a soldier named Stanley Dankowski. They were married and had a child in 1935. Another child came the next year. In 1945 and 1946 she had her third and fourth children. Helen got a full time job as a special messenger for the Army in 1942. She quit the cannery except during the peak season when she would work at night after her regular job.

In 1945 the Dankowskis moved to Chicago, so Helen quit her messenger job. Helen stayed for five years and then returned to Hawaii with her children. She and Mr. Dankowski divorced. In 1951 Helen once again worked at Hawaiian Pine Company on an intermittent basis, this time as a packer. When not packing, she waitressed at cafes in Kakaako.

Helen married Charles Barnes in 1960. He passed away 11 years later. Helen continued to work at the cannery and at various cafes and bars until her retirement in 1973. Since then she has taken on several jobs as a companion/aide for elderly women.

Her hobbies include singing and playing the piano.
VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Helen Barnes. Today is March 1, 1979.

Could you state for the record when and where you were born?

HB: Oh, I was born in Molokai in 1907.

And I was sent to boarding school, Sacred Hearts Convent, when I was three years old.

VL: Do you know why your parents sent you?

HB: Well they wanted us to learn how to speak English, you see.

VL: Why did they want you to learn English?

HB: Because, you know, modern, I guess. My father insisted that we go to school and learn English and we couldn't speak Hawaiian in school. Couldn't do that, had to learn to speak English so all year we go through. When we go home, they talk to us in Hawaiian, we answer back in English, you see. He was happy because we learned English. He wants us to learn because progress, I guess, going towards....That's still my opinion but then I'm sorry I didn't continue with my mother tongue.

VL: Did your other brothers and sisters also attend school?

HB: No, just four of us.

VL: The older ones?

HB: The older one, myself, and the two after me. We're the only four.

VL: How did they choose you 4 out of the 16 [children]?
HB: Because we're the oldest.

VL: Oh, oh.

HB: My older sister and I'm second and the other third and fourth.

VL: What was your father doing on Molokai?

HB: He was like a, what you call it, he worked for the Board of Health, like inspector. He had good job. In them days, the job was good.

VL: How about your mother, did she work?

HB: No, she was a regular housewife.

VL: So there must have been enough money to send you folks to private school?

HB: Yeah and we all do our own chores at home, see. We had 16 in the family, so you can imagine. All girls first, so it was easier for Mamma because all girls, yeah.

VL: Did you help to pay for any of your schooling?

HB: No, because our tuition was not so big, I don't think so.

VL: So the money that you made being a maid for Mr. Lucas, what did you do with that money? [The Lucases were a German couple that hired HB while she was in school to take care of their children.]

HB: Well, I put it in my bank, our bank, rather for all us, four sisters, was all in one, see, so we used that for school. My other sisters they went work too.

VL: Then did your parents have an idea of what they wanted you to be when you grew up?

HB: Well, they wanted me to be a musician and to be a teacher but my mind (Laughs)...I didn't have ideas of being a teacher.

VL: What did you want?

HB: I wanted to be an entertainer. (Laughs) See, I wanted to be an entertainer because I enjoyed that. I enjoy music and I like to go out and meet different people. Like when you entertain, you meet all kinds of people. So we all did, the four of us.

VL: You became entertainers?

HB: Yeah. Only my two other sisters after me, they didn't keep up music like I did and my older sister.
VL: Would you have liked to go on to even more school after you graduated?

HB: Well, I figure that's enough. Why go because my mind was not to be a schoolteacher, not to be a doctor, not to be a nurse, you see. All those things.

VL: You graduated in 1928, right?

HB: Nineteen twenty-seven.

VL: Can you say what was the most important thing that you learned at school?

HB: Well, sewing, no cooking--they didn't teach us cooking--music, course for the Lord, too. Majority of that was mostly for the Lord. I guess they want us to be a nun, or what....

VL: Did any of your sisters become nuns?

HB: No.

VL: So after you graduated, you started to work at Hawaiian Pine, yeah?

HB: Not right off the bat.

VL: What did you do right...

HB: I went home [to Molokai] and then from home I came--I didn't want to stay in Molokai--so I came here and I stayed with my uncle. I had my two cousins, the twins, they were working in the cannery so they told me why don't I go with them. I said, "It's hard." They say, "No, it's a lot of fun." That's when I went.

VL: Did you need to work?

HB: No, it's just to get out, meet people and they told me it was good fun working in the cannery, see, so I went [1928].

VL: How did you get the job?

HB: Fine.

VL: No, how did you get it?

HB: It was easy in them days.

VL: What did you have to do?

HB: Just go and say you want to apply for a job. They take your name down and you're hired. But in them days the cannery was very small; it's was not big like this. [Dole now operates 41 tables]
during the peak season.] I think they had only 12 tables, if I'm not mistaken. The job was okay.

VL: But didn't a lot of people apply?

HB: Yeah, but not like before because was small, you know so they need trimmers but some of them don't want to be trimmers. I took trimming because it's easier. You don't see the pineapple going back and forth like packing. It's going and you looking and then you doing with your hand to discard this one [slice] and put the good one in. Hard, see, that's why I didn't like that [packing]. I tried that so I took trimming.

VL: You tried it [packing] in the beginning?

HB: Yeah, because they needed packers also but I didn't want to be a packer. I wanted to be a trimmer because all my gang were all trimmers.

VL: Was the fact that you had cousins already working down there, did that help you get the job?

HB: Yeah, uh huh because they were there already before me.

VL: If you didn't know them, do you think you would have still got the job?

HB: No, if they didn't ask me, why don't I go with them. Otherwise, I would stay home and clean house and take care the old folks, eh. So I figure was very good because I used to go play music once a week or twice a week. I used to go out for some dances or some parties. We didn't make much money but at least we had $5.00 a night at that time.

VL: Entertaining?

HB: Uh huh.

VL: Yeah and what was the pineapple paying you?

HB: Eleven cents but it was all right with us because money was.... everything was cheap in those days.

VL: What did your parents think about your working at the pine?

HB: Nothing, nothing. Like in Molokai, they had pineapple fields because each of my parents up in Molokai, each of them had 40 acres of land, you see, so they rent the land to Dole.

VL: Did they have these 40 acres because they were Hawaiian?

HB: Yeah, it's in the lots. It's the homestead and that's too much, so they rent part of the land out to the pineapple, to Dole and what they get little bit, well something comes in because the rent
over there---it didn't seem like we had rent because they [parents] only paid $1.00 a year, you see, and then we didn't have electric lights at that time. Candles, not candles but I mean *kukui* light.

VL: Did your parents grow any pine themselves?
HB: No.
VL: No. Only rented the land out?
HB: Yeah, they just grown vegetables, raise chickens, cattle, pigs because they didn't have the facilities to till the land.
VL: So going back to when you first started at cannery, did they give you any kind of test?
HB: No. No test.
VL: How about a physical?
HB: No. I don't think so because I didn't have any physical.
VL: So the first day that you went, what happened?
HB: Nothing, I did my job okay. I thought I would be sick, because the pineapple but I wasn't. Some of them do get sick but I wasn't. I liked the pineapple smell.
VL: The first day, what jobs did you do?
HB: Pack, I mean trimmer.
VL: Trim?
HB: Yeah, that's for us. In them days supposed to use two gloves, see, but in them days we didn't use two gloves. We had one and one [just on the left hand], then they show us how because the pineapple comes down, the core is all out, so they tell us pick it up. The forelady teach us pick it up and then trim around, take all [what is] left of the skin and if something rotten, you cut it out. See that it's all clean then put it in the tray to go down.
VL: So you were wearing a glove on your left hand?
HB: Yeah, the left hand. Only one...
VL: Only one on the left hand?
HB: Yeah, only one. We had that for quite a while, maybe two years and then we had to use gloves because some of them get all pineapple, you know, the acid eat their hands, see.
VL: Did that happen to you?

Hb: No. I very careful because they told don't squeeze the pineapple. When you squeeze the pineapple, the juice is coming down. But I always make sure I take my time. Takes time.

VL: Can you explain all about trimming, from the time it's coming down [from the Ginaca machine]?

Hb: Well, you see, like we have six on one side [of the trimming table] and six on one [the other] side so when the pineapple comes down, in our days we didn't have to worry because it comes down slow, you see, so we pick up one and then trim, trim, then turn it around and trim the other side and see if there's any rotten part. If it's clean, then you put it in [back on the moving belt], then pick it [another one] up.

VL: How do you know which one to pick up?

Hb: Anyone because it's going down slowly, you know. The machine in them days wasn't fast, not like nowadays. They work hard. It just comes down, so you have to pick up [nowadays]. Maybe they have seven on one side, seven on this side. The first one comes out, it's mine if I'm out in the front, see. The next one, next one, next one, picks up. Not like before. If nobody pick up, it gets jammed up then the last girl has to work harder.

VL: Did that happen in your day?

Hb: No, not in my days; only in 1948, 1947, or 1950 when I came back in. The girls don't pick it up and the pineapple comes down and they slam it back then everybody gets wet because whoever's at the bottom, she gets double and then she slams it up and then the girls up get mad. It's nobody's fault but their own because they don't pick up their own pineapple, you see. Some of them are slow, you can't help it. But I tried to help my neighbor who's next to me or who's across because I'm regular. We know more or less than like the other ones that just come in. It's hard for them. The pineapples are big too.

VL: How about when you first started?

Hb: Oh, when you first started was all right because slow, (Laughs), you know.

VL: Is there anything dividing your side of the table from the other side?

Hb: Yeah, there is because, you see, it's the table where we work. This side we have our own table, then the two chains, you see. One for the pineapple come out [untrimmed, from the Ginaca] and one is for to send it [the trimmed pine] down and then the other side [of the chain] has a table same like I have. [See diagram section in Introduction.]
VL: And there's also two chains on their side?
HB: No, no.
VL: So both sides of the table take pine off the same chain.
HB: Uh huh. Yeah.
VL: What does the chain look like?
HB: Regular chain but it has a little prongs up so to separate the pineapple, you know, so when it go down, it not have to be close to each other. They're about this far, see, about a foot because some pineapples are that big, you know. [See diagram section in Introduction.]
VL: So the pines are between two prongs?
HB: It's about a foot, yeah, and the pines in there, see, and then the next one you put in but if they're small, then you can put two [pines between the prongs]. Some small like that.
VL: Now when you go to work, how do you know where to sit?
HB: We have our tables so we know. We ask the forelady, "You want us to come back?" You all come back to your own table. If they going to shift to different table, you go back the next day to the other table, not to your regular table until the forelady....
VL: It's up to the forelady where you sit?
HB: Uh huh. [Yes.]
VL: This is back when you first started?
HB: Yeah. We have our own regular table, see, so in the morning if we all shift to different table and in the morning when we see our forelady, we say, "We can come back?" If she says no, stay on that table where you were, okay. But if your forelady wants you come back, you can come back.
VL: If she doesn't like you , you go to another table?
HB: No, it's not the idea, it's because the head forelady. If you good [i.e., fast], they put you on the slow table then you have to work extra hard, you understand?
VL: No, I don't understand.
HB: Like if I'm on table 2, they put me on the table 12 because the people are slow [on table 12]. They put the good ones over on that table [2] because table 1, 2, 3 and 4, that's for tourists, see, and the good hands were all on that table. So they take some [workers] away and they work on the table that is slow, pile up
the pineapples, you know, so we don't want to go back and work extra hard. But if the head forelady say it, you go back and if I don't go back [to the table of slow workers] and I go back to my regular table, she going to take me away. That's why our other forelady from the [regular] table said, "You don't come back, you stay on that [slow] table."

VL: You said table 1, 2, 3, and 4 are for tourists?

HB: Yeah, when the tourists come in. Not very much in those days but they always come to visit pineapple.

VL: But they cannot see the other tables?

HB: Yeah, they can see, they can see. I mean that's the regular table first because the girls are good workers, you know. They're old-timers and then pineapple is not, what you call, the table is not stacked up with the pineapples on the side. See, each one of them pick up their own and they're fast in doing. So it has to keep clear.

VL: So most of those people are old-timers?

HB: Yeah, they're old-timers, you see.

VL: How about the other eight or so tables?

HB: Well, they not so. They had to have some old ones and some new ones, you see, but the good hands are over there so the table don't block when the tourists come. I like to be on that table but when we are shoved around, well we have to go.

VL: Okay.

HB: So we don't grumble, we go. We work hard, okay. We see our forelady next morning. She says, "No you stay on the other table."

VL: How about if you want to be with your friend?

HB: You can't help it if you have to be separated but when lunch time comes, we all go together, see. Half an hour lunch.

VL: Would it matter if you came real early to work, then you could sit at a table that you wanted to?

HB: No. We never go down to the table until it's quarter to the time. We stay up in the restroom and wait until it's time. There's a bell that rings and that's the time we all go down together.

VL: Okay, let's see. When you first started, they classified you as a seasonal or a, or what?
Hb: No, we never had no seasonal, just we regular at that time, regulars, but now...

VL: What did "regular" mean at that time?

Hb: Because we work every day, regulars, and then when summertime we didn't have so many at that time. We had small, but when we enlarged the cannery, then it was different.

VL: So in the beginning it just meant that you could come every day there was work to do?

Hb: Yeah, when there's work. We know that for the next day then we come to work.

VL: You already know the day before?

Hb: Yeah. They let us know, see, because in them days I don't think they had very much trucks to bring the pineapple in. They come on the train in them days, you know, so it was all right.

VL: How about getting a knife, how did you go about doing that?

Hb: No, well, each one of us had our own knives.

VL: They gave that to you the first day?

Hb: "And now this is your knife," and if we lose it, we gotta pay, you know.

VL: How much?

Hb: It depends. At that time, I forget (Laughs) but I make sure I don't lose nothing of mine because we each have our locker. We pay for the key for the locker, you know. We each have our own lockers.

VL: You pay for the key?

Hb: Oh yeah because if we lose it, we gotta pay and when we return the key, they return our money easy.

VL: Do you remember how much that was?

Hb: No. (Laughs)

VL: Did you have your own locker?

Hb: Yeah. I always wanted my own locker, because when we bring our clothes and we take a bath over there, at least we have our own.

VL: So the first day they give you the knife...
HB: And the gloves.

VL: ...and again you pay a deposit like for that?

HB: I think we paid for it and then we lose it or, somebody steals it, I guess we have to pay. It's been so far, but at least we had our own knives. They furnish us with gloves, knife and apron and cap.

VL: Do you remember if you had to pay for any of that?

HB: No, the caps and aprons, we didn't pay but I think the knife....

VL: You think you paid for?

HB: Yeah, I think so.

VL: So they give you all that on the first day?

HB: Yeah, because it change every day, you see. We change gloves, apron and hat. Every day we have new.

VL: Who would wash it?

HB: Laundry, I think, because we throw it down in the chute as soon as we get through. We have our own bag for put our knives as soon as we get through working. Before the time, we run to the water and wash our knives and then....

VL: Where's the water?

HB: Right next to the table. We have a drinking faucet over there so we use the drinking faucet and then they have a little sink there for the people who work---like the boys who work on trays. They wash their hands.

VL: And they give you little bags...

HB: Yeah, it's regular knife bags to put inside. We take that home, see.

VL: You take it home?

HB: No, in our locker, see, because the knife is kind of round and it has a point so that point is to take the eyes out from the pineapple. That's why we have to be very careful we don't hurt anybody. That's why as soon as we leave our tables, they all say, "Be careful with your knives" because some of them run, you know. Running, rushing to go home but I don't, I take my time because I'm going to take a shower.

VL: So then the only thing you would leave in the locker is your knife?
HB: Yeah, my knife and my badge, our number. I think we have some other things of ours, we leave in. We take our own key home, see. I shared my locker with my sister when she was with me.

VL: You said you took a bath there. This is after work?

HB: Yeah, a shower. Yeah, a shower.

VL: How many showers did they have?

HB: I think was about one dozen.

VL: Did a lot of ladies do that?

HB: Oh, yeah because they don't go straight home (Laughs). See, all of us take a shower then we roam around the town. In them day nobody bother us.

VL: Did the shower have hot water?

HB: Hot water and cold water, oh yes. Dole furnish everything good.

VL: Did you have to pay any extra for that?

HB: No, no. Our meals, yeah, we pay.

VL: So then when you needed your knife sharpened, what would happen?

HB: Well, we have a knife boy at the table, in between. He has this table, maybe he has table 1 and 2 so he's in between that so he sharpens them both.

VL: Does he have a machine to sharpen it or...

HB: Yeah, you know the kind of stone and the stick or what.

VL: Oh.

HB: Yeah, and then you sharpen like this.

VL: A long stick like.

HB: Yeah, yeah. They sharpen our knives.

VL: How would you tell them when you needed it?

HB: We don't tell them because as soon as we start working, he sharpens some other knives and then he takes that and he gives it to one, two, three [trimmers]. Then he sharpens those and then give to the next side, see. If we have six on one table, he has a box with all the knives in there. It's already sharpened, you know, so within half an hour then he gives us a new knife.
VL: Like exchange?
HB: Yeah, a new knife, yeah.
VL: Until he's finished sharpening yours?
HB: No, give us a new knife and then in the meantime he sharpens those for the next side, you see. Then he's finished then that he sharpens for the other side so that's continuous, you know. Each table in between has a boy.
VL: So you wouldn't get your same knife back?
HB: No. But they all the same, you see. They're nice and thick, but sharp.
VL: So how many times a day would you get a new knife?
HB: Well, that's---we work sometimes until eight hours, see, that's every half an hour, one side gets knives and then the next. Sometimes I would say two or three times or four times a day, we get sharp knife because we need it, you know. Sometimes the pineapple the skin is not all off, and then sometimes this part is rotten, so you only need to touch [with the knife], it's enough.
VL: And what?
HB: Cuts, yeah, sharp. There was....
VL: What happens to the pineapple that you trimmed off, the rubbish?
HB: The skin?
VL: Yeah.
HB: Well, we have compartments, see. Over here---the red is for the rubbish. It's painted on the board so the red part [compartment] is for the rubbish and the yellow part is for the good. The rubbish goes into one because they have two belts. [See photo section for picture of compartments.]
VL: So this red compartment...
HB: Is for the rubbish. See, we have the skins, eh? So we trim that off and it goes in there and then the good part...
VL: Is it a bucket or something?
HB: No. It's no bucket. It's on the table and we have a whole table to ourselves, each one of us have---the whole table is straight but we have our own compartments, see, right where we're sitting. Over here is for the rubbish, over here is....The table is not divided to anybody but I guess when it goes down, it has a chute, you see. This one goes out to the rubbish...
VL: Do you push it through a hole or something?

HB: Yeah, it's about like that, see.

VL: About half a foot tall?

HB: No, no, about like that.

VL: Oh, a few inches.

HB: Yeah, because it's like a groove dug in the table, it's easier, see, because if they make it high, then the pineapple would roll in. (Laughs) You see, so it's just [big] enough [to push the skin through]. But there's a groove in the table. As long as the pineapple don't go down, okay. So one side is for the rubbish and one side.... The red is for the rubbish and the yellow is for the good part. That goes for like juice or all that.

VL: And then when you're pau trimming it, put it back on the chain?

HB: Yeah, back on the chain that's going to the slicer. From the chain it goes to the slicer and water is running continuously. From the slicer it goes to the packer.

Oh, you never did work in the cannery? (Laughs)

VL: No. (Laughs) What's the most important thing about trimming? Did they tell you anything?

HB: No, there's nothing. Only we have to get it clean and make sure that all skin is off and then the eyes are taken out because some of them, there's little black stuff we see on the pineapple. Pineapple all has that little, fancy.... That has to come out. Sometimes it's left on, can see it. That, we have to clean it all off. That's the main part because as it goes down, it's dirty. That's why we have to turn it over again, two or three times, before we put it in the...

VL: Are you turning it in your hand or is it on your thumb?

HB: It's on your thumb. You use thumb but you have to turn it but some of them squeeze and that's why the juice [drips]. But if you just let it...see the toilet paper roll, that's what we used to...the first time they teach us on the toilet paper roll. You just spin it, see.

VL: Oh. They gave you the toilet paper roll to practice?

HB: Yeah, the roll, the roll, see. No, not to practice, just to show us how. But if you squeeze it, the juice will come out and it's true. When you squeeze the pineapple, the juice would run but if you just let it on your hand and just swing it around, it's okay. But some people, their hands, they suffer like hell. But it's an art, I guess.
VL: So they trained you the first day?

HB: They show us, you know. The foreladies show us how. They say, "Don't squeeze it." You squeeze it, you get all dirty, but if you just let it [rest] in your hand.... Some are clumsy, some people clumsy so they.... So we practice when we go home, we practice, practice so you can be good, eh. Some you see them throw it up and then catch it.

VL: The pineapple they throw in the air?

HB: Yeah. Yes, they big rascals, you see. So we tried it too but we have to be pretty good to do that because those are old-timers.

VL: They do that just for fun?

HB: Just for fun so make us to learn this pine so we try, try. Sometimes we do, sometime we don't. You know, we don't get it right but like them, they akamai, smart.

VL: Did they give you any kind of incentives to do faster?

HB: No.

VL: Pay you more or something?

HB: No. Then about two, three years, I get a raise. Come to 13 cents. (Laughs) From 13 cents come to 15 cents. From 15 cents, 17 cents. Everytime two cents. When they got raise was the wartime.

VL: World War II?

HB: Yeah. That's when they got raised. Not much, but it's better than 11 cents.

VL: Yeah. Did the slow people get paid the same thing as the fast people?

HB: I guess so. We don't ask, you see. I guess so because seemed like everybody was satisfied so I think we all got the same pay. Of course, foreladies get different and we had relievers. Relievers is the ones to relieve if we want to go to be excused. The reliever takes my place while I'm gone and when I come back, then she goes to relieve somebody else. That's what we call relievers.

VL: Did this work ever get boring to you?

HB: No. Well, sometimes get tired, so you put your hand down and work. In them days, you could do that but after...
VL: You'd rest it [your hand] on the table?

HB: On the table, yeah. To rest your hand. But when I came back from the Mainland [1950], I went back to the cannery [1951] and you couldn't do it. You had to leave it [up, raised off the table].

VL: What part of you would get tired holding it?

HB: Here.

VL: Your wrist?

HB: Yeah, but then after when you get used to, it's nothing, nothing.

VL: Could you do the work without thinking about it? Could you think about something else?

HB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I could be talking and work. Put it down and get another one, you talk.

VL: What would you talk about with the other people?

HB: Anything. We joke, or we sing because in them days, we didn't have music, like they have nowadays. Nowadays they have music, radio, or phonographic but it is broadcast in the cannery and then we do our own singing. (Laughs)

VL: What kind of songs?

HB: Any kind (Laughs) you like. In them days was "Shine on Harvest Moon", all those, "Bye Bye Blackbird". We sing Hawaiian songs and....

VL: Would that be like a whole table full of people singing?

HB: Yeah, we all did, 12 of us. That's to keep awake. Nowadays they get music come on but in my days we never had music so we had to make our own music.

VL: Sometimes you would be tired?

HB: No. At least I sleep, you know, I feel good but in my young days, I hardly slept. After I pay---get through working, I either go taxi dance and when I get through, we sit down and talk, sit down in the restaurant. In them days, restaurants don't close all. They open all through the night. So we sit there and shoot the breeze, rush home, get clothes, go to the cannery, take a bath and then start to work.

VL: I'll ask you a little bit more about that in a minute. Okay, let's see. Did you have any sort of special tricks of trimming?
HB: No, but some of them had their own tricks, you know.

VL: Like what?

HB: I don't know but I didn't have no special tricks. At least I know how to turn the pineapple and don't get wet and I never do get wet on my stomach. Some of them have about this much dry [a few inches].

VL: And the rest of their apron is wet?

HB: And then they're all wet. I don't see how they get all wet. Because they squeeze their pineapple.

They tell me, "Curly, how come you don't get wet?"

I said, "Because I don't put...." You know, when I'm sitting on my chair, I sit up and I work like this [holding pine away from body], not here. Some of them, they work [with the pine] right near to them but I work away, see, and all the juice would go down. I guess maybe that was my trick.

VL: They called you "Curly"?

HB: Yeah. I had long curls at that time. I had long hair.

VL: Did you have to wear any net?

HB: We wore caps.

VL: What kind of caps?

HB: Regular, it's made out of, not cheesecloth, but voile and it's got elastic, see, so we gotta put our hair all inside.

VL: Did the company have any other rules about clothing, dress?

HB: No, we dressed any old way but majority of them all wore pants.

VL: How about on your feet?

HB: Oh, yeah, we had to wear, you know.... But in my days, we wore, you know the Chinese cluck-clucks? That's the kind we used to wear because water, you know...

VL: The geta? You wore the tall...

HB: Yeah, the cluck-clucks, the Chinese kind. And some of them had wooden shoes, the kind Dutch wooden shoes but I didn't know where they got them. That's the old-timers they had but we couldn't find any so we use cluck-clucks or clack-clacks. Everybody's walking down to work with---you hear clack, clack, clack. Some used to use the Japanese wooden shoes, some of them because they had to stand. Had water at the time, you know. See, we didn't
have the nice standing board like we have lately. Before we had board but it has latticework and kind of....That's why we don't wear shoes but lately, I guess nowadays some of them wear slippers.

VL: So before when you first started there, where did you put your feet when you were sitting?

HB: We had board but the boards is made something like latticework, you know.

VL: It was not wet then?

HB: But when you get down from the board, you have to go in the water, see, that's why we always wore wooden shoes, wooden clack-clacks, but some others we see them with Dutch shoes, but we....

I said, "Where you buy that because we would like to have."

They said, "We have that long time."

So we all use clack-clacks.

VL: How about your seat? What kind of seat was it?

HB: Regular seat. It's made out of board but it's kind of made like this but kind of little bit round because for two and one, you know...

VL: Two people to sit?

HB: See, the last girl that's by her own self. The second one and the next [third] one has a seat together, see. The one right near the end, she by the water, see, so that's by herself. And the rest is two, four, and the one up has by herself. So that's six. Two, four, six, yeah. But no more cushion so if you tired sitting down, you stand up but we have little platforms there. Some of them are small. Sometimes like us, we are tall, the table is too low because we have some girls that's small, see. Especially, the Japanese, they all small so the tables gotta be low but when we tall, that's why we sit down most of the time but we don't like to sit down all the time.

VL: How come?

HB: Well, everybody say if you sit down, you going get big okole. (Laughs) When we stand up, it's kind of low and gets sore your back, so we sit down for little while and then we stand up again.

VL: When you were first working, you pretty much stayed on the same table with the same people?

HB: Yeah, we had our own gang, you see. When we go, we always chose our own gang. Like when I first started, my two cousins and then
some other of our girlfriends, you know, so we all tried to go on the same table unless they take us away to another table. So we gotta stay at the other table until, you know.

Then we ask the forelady, "Is okay we can come back?"

Then she tell, "Okay."

Then we come back. Then the head forelady don't take us away anymore.

VL: Did you know the names of the other ladies on different tables?

HB: (laughs) It's been so long ago.

VL: I mean but at that time were you friendly with...

HB: Oh, yeah, yeah, uh huh, well we all together on the same row of the lockers, so when we went to apply for our lockers, we all apply on the same row. So when we go to work over there [before the whistle], we sit down, shoot the breeze, talk, talk, talk. When it's time to go, then we all leave the same time and we don't want to be separated because the tables are divided to go to lunch so we have to be separated, you see.

VL: How are they divided?

HB: Well, half, like maybe we had 12 tables in my time so six goes at 11:30 [a.m.]. The other six goes at 12 o'clock, see. In them days, we had cafeteria but the cafeteria was not as big as it is now. We used to go out in the back at Iwilei to go outside and eat lunch.

VL: Your home lunch?

HB: Store lunch. (laughs) We go buy because had Japanese, you know. They have stew rice and Japanese kind. We had saimin and [meat] with the stick. In the back. We used to go through.

VL: That wasn't part of the company?

HB: No, it wasn't part of the company but we go out and eat. We don't eat in the cafeteria. We go out and eat because in them days, everything was cheap, 10 cents. (laughs) Stew rice, 10 cents, see.

VL: Did you like that better than cafeteria food?

HB: Because cafeteria was small and we figure out the cafeteria is mostly for the big shots because we had plenty foreladies and foremen so we figure out that's for them so it's better we go out and eat and only half an hour but we rush out to eat and then rush back.
VL: What do you do with your knife when you go to lunch?

HB: We have this secret place under our table, see. Each one have their own because has your number. We get our number on top.

VL: On top of what?

HB: Top of our knife. We mark it, you know, our own like with lipstick or....

VL: You mean, every day you would put a different mark on it?

HB: Yeah, yeah, because every day we have to change knives, see. But like when we going out, well, we put our mark, our numbers.

VL: And hide it under the table?

HB: No, right there. You know, the table here and then the knife is sticking out and then we have a little groove up of the knife then the knife stays in there and doesn't go down.

VL: Oh.

HB: That's a little groove up.

VL: Uh huh, on the knife.

HB: Because sometimes when you put the knife down, it might slide down, you see, so that thing holds, keeps it up. So nobody takes your knife. We trust everybody. In them days we trust everybody.

VL: When you went to lunch, would they clean off the tables or anything?

HB: The tables are all clean already before we leave. We have to keep our tables clean and then the boys come with the water, with the hose and water it down so flies don't come in. All pineapple flies. At least it looks clean, see, and when we come back, it's partly dry. They use the steam to dry. So it's clean. In one way they kept it clean. Sometime we work until 3 o'clock [p.m.], 4 o'clock [p.m.] Season, we work from 7:00 [a.m.] until 7:00 [p.m.]. There was only two shifts at that time but now they get three shifts, four sometimes. I remember they had four. Too many, yeah, so some come in at 6 o'clock [a.m.] with the regular gang, then they go home maybe about 1 o'clock [p.m.] then another gang comes in at 11:00 [a.m.], then they go home at maybe 5:00 [p.m.], then another gang comes in at 3:00 [p.m.] and go home 11:00 [p.m.] at night, you see.

VL: So they're overlapping?

HB: Yeah, see, that's for the new hands, because they cannot work too long. The poor kids, yeah.
VL: That would be summers?

HB: Yeah, summers, so they give them chance. They want them to work. That's why they have them come in first shift, second shift, third shift, fourth shift. It gives them time, you know.

VL: So when it was off season, what were your hours?

HB: From 7:00 [a.m.] in the morning.

VL: Until?

HB: Until closing time. Sometime we get through 3 o'clock [p.m.], sometimes 4:00 [p.m.], sometimes 5:00 [p.m.]. Depends, you know. When we see the train still coming in, "Ah, we're going to work late," until 7 o'clock in the evening.

VL: And you were always paid the same amount an hour?

HB: Yeah. We never got any raise. That's why it seemed like every two years, we got raise.

VL: What if you didn't want to work that long?

HB: Oh yeah, well, then you ask but you have to ask ahead of time that you want to get off.

Then they ask you, "Why?"

But I don't ask to get off. I want to work because in the evening I'm going to have time off.

VL: How about your rest breaks? Did you have any?

HB: Only 15 minutes.

VL: This is in the beginning?

HB: Yeah, we always had 15 minutes rest break.

VL: Once a day?

HB: No, in the morning and in the afternoon.

VL: Where everybody would leave at the same time?

HB: No, no, certain ones. Maybe two of them at your table for 15 minutes. So not everyone leave at one time. (Laughs) They would have to close that table down. They don't close nothing down.

VL: And what if you had to go to the bathroom?

HB: That's why we have our reliever. The reliever is the one that relieves us if we want to go to the bathroom, see. As soon as I
come back, I go back to my [table] and then maybe somebody else wants to go, then she goes and relieves that girl, you see.

VL: Were there some people who would go to the bathroom and stay a long time?

HB: Well then they get corrected, you know.

The forelady says, "How come you stayed so long?"

But some of them they say they had their ma i wahine. That means they had their period. They have to go way up to the restroom, to the locker room.

VL: And that's okay?

HB: Yeah, that's okay. That's why we're always asked how come we take so long. So they tell in Hawaiian, ma i wahine, see. They got their period, see. They understand. But some of them don't. They only go for (Laughs) long walks, shoot the breeze with the girls but we don't say anything.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: Can you repeat the part about your forelady?

HB: Oh, I get along fine with my foreladies.

VL: Did some people not get along with the forelady?

HB: Yeah, some of them didn't get along because the forelady goes after them but I told them, "Take the correction, it's for our own good." But some are different. My way, I'm easy going. They can scold me (Laughs). Okay, Okay.

VL: In one ear, out the other?

HB: Yeah, I'm that type. Might as well be, you know. How you going to learn? Correction, yeah. So it doesn't bother me and I get along fine. Even with my workers, I get along fine. That's to be, you know. Some of them, they don't get along with each other. I can't see that.

I guess it's the way how you're brought up, too, to mingle with everybody.

VL: How about all the noise in the cannery?

HB: Don't bother me.

VL: Did anything about the cannery work bother you?
HB: No, nothing bother me. (Laughs) But in our days, the cans used to run right in front of us [i.e. above our heads]. We can hear them clink, clink, clink. Then in the new cannery, it's different. It's much further away and you don't see them too much. It's higher, you know.

VL: But when you first started, they were above, right above you?

HB: Yeah, was lower in the old cannery, see, was lower but we could hear it. We could see it. In the new cannery it's up higher.

VL: Where were the cans going?

HB: Going to each table. Each table has their own, see. It's running through and all that coming down, clink, clink, clink, going down to one table.

VL: To the packers?

HB: Yeah, the next one. Yeah, to the packers.

VL: That time they didn't have tray boys already?

HB: They had. They had tray boys because the tray boys have to take away the trays [of filled cans].

VL: Oh, they take it away.

HB: Yeah, and then put another one, see [a tray of empty cans].

VL: So then these cans are not going straight to the table?

HB: Oh, yeah, they are going in every one, about 32 tables or 35 and this one...

VL: This was later then?

HB: Yeah, but in our time not too much. Only 12 tables and then you can see all the cans going to one table.

VL: Then the tray boy has to take it [the empty can] and put it on the tray?

HB: No, it [the cans] all comes down and then it's [the tray] filled [by the truck boy], see, because they have a truck boy who comes with the trays. It's all stacked up already so when you [the tray boy] see the stack and then when one tray is filled, then you take from there and put it on for the girl.

VL: Are these the empty ones?

HB: Yeah, no, the filled ones are taken away and put on the side and then they give the empty ones for the girls to fill up. But we have truck boys that come and take the filled ones away and bring
empties. But it's [the trays] filled up on another side, say, for each table had their own.

VL: I still don't know where these cans that are going above you, where they're going?

HB: Yeah. They're going to fill up the trays.

VL: Okay.

HB: Yeah and they have one boy with a truck, see, he's stacking them up, the empties, to bring over to the table.

VL: Oh, okay.

HB: When he brings the empties, he takes the filled ones over to the, to the.... It's the machine that has the big cap but I think they cook it at the same time because there's steam heat.

VL: That's the double seamer?

HB: Yeah, I think so. Because it's away from us. We don't see that too much.

VL: Did you ever have any accidents with the sharp knife?

HB: Never. Not very much people got hurt in those days because we were careful. We had, what you call, dispensary but hardly any of us went to dispensary. Of course some get because they're sick, you know. They get dizzy and all that but not from hurt.

VL: Do you know of any of your friends or people that you knew in the early days that had complaints? You didn't have, but anybody else?

HB: No, no.

VL: Did the company in those early days, did they give you any kind of benefits besides....

HB: Not that I remember. I don't think so. The only benefits is that when we get together when the cannery [summer season] is over but we make our own, you know. No, never had no benefits, not that I remember.

VL: How about something like did they sell you pineapple cheaper?

HB: Five cents. One big pineapple, five cents. We used to buy the core, you know the core. Before, they used to throw it away. They didn't use it for the cows. Then we used to buy the core to take home for the kids, neighbor's kids, because they love that. Every day we come home with a package (Laughs). But I don't take everytime. One time, maybe once a week. Not every day because I don't go home. I fool around town. (Laughs)
"Oh, I don't think so."

"Try, try."

We have to be game, yeah, so we go all walk up. In the evening when we get through working, we look around, look around. Hardly nobody but the men there so when the boss comes in, she asks, "What you folks want?"

"We want taxi dancing if we can join."

She said, "You don't have to join, you just sign your name and then dance." Then they tell, "You dance one dance, 10 cents a dance. The man has a ticket."

You know the kind ticket (Laughs). He gives you and just dance. I'm saying, "How long we dance?"

They say, "Only one chorus." Yeah, that's only one chorus of a song and that's all so that's 10 cents, see.

VL: Not even a whole song?

HB: No. (Laughs) Just a chorus so that's 10 cents. Maybe five minutes, not even five minutes, some songs go so the next dance... see, she [the boss] marks us down.

VL: She's [i.e., the boss is] watching everybody, then.

HB: But some, I don't think that she marked everything because sometimes I have less [marked] and I have [extra] tickets over, so maybe every five dance, I go up and check.

VL: How many marks she's given you?

HB: Yeah, I still got plenty tickets and then I can sell mine to those who don't have enough. So I keep the 10 cents after I sell my ticket.

VL: Then you make 10 cents instead of 5 cents?

HB: Yeah. The only ones that I give is with the ticket. That's why I always find out first, "Oh, I get plenty tickets left.

"You have? I don't have enough." So I sell my tickets, see, so they give me the 10 cents. That's the way which I do.

VL: So you tried doing this for extra money then?

HB: Yeah, it's for fun mostly. It wasn't for the money but it's mostly for fun. But how we do it if we have over amount of tickets then we can sell to somebody else because they would always check, you know. Sometimes she don't check you so you still get maybe two tickets ahead. There's quite a lot on the floor, you know, the girls.
VL: Were there any sports teams that the company sponsored in the early days?

HB: No.

VL: Okay. How did you feel at the end of the day?

HB: Fine. (Laughs)

VL: Did you feel like you accomplished something?

HB: I think. We all go and take a shower and get ready now. We didn't seem to be tired. I don't know. Even now, I don't feel tired. That's why everybody says, "At your age, you should be tired." I say no. Well, I lived a good life and I had a happy life. I guess that counts mostly. No worries. Don't let nothing bother me. That's the easy way to live and our folks always taught, "No worry about tomorrow, only today."

We ask, "Why?"

"You don't know if you going live tomorrow." And that is true. Way back when we used to---in the evening we say our prayers, we get together and talk, "No worry tomorrow; moemoe. Okay. You wake up, all right. No wake up, okay." Because I always put my soul or body to the Lord. That's one thing with the folks, eh, always put your body in the Lord's hands. Even now, I don't worry for tomorrow. (Laughs) Some of them, they worry.

I say, "Why you worry, let tomorrow be by itself. Only today you worry."

VL: After you finished working, took a shower, what did you and your friends do?

HB: Stop in the bar. (Laughs) Stop in the bar, then we go from store to store, looking at the stores, see what's nice to buy. Anything, you know, but in them days we didn't have too much money but anyhow we went and go and then go...then we stop in the restaurant and we eat, say about 8 o'clock [p.m.]. But when there was taxi dance, I go straight to dance. About three of us, we go dance.

VL: How come you started going to taxi dance?

HB: Well, I figure out you can make extra money. Ten cents a dance but the 10 cents is not for me. Five cents for me and five cents for the company.

VL: How did you get that job?

HB: Just listening to our friends talking about, "Hey, how about going taxi dance."
VL: Did you have to wear nice, special clothes?

HB: We never did wore evening gowns when we went dancing. Plain--we make our own clothes--plain, but still we danced.

VL: Did you take these clothes with you in the morning to the cannery?

HB: (Laughs) Yeah. We take it to the cannery so in the evening we going, see, we all make arrangements. Tonight we going taxi dance because Wednesday night was payday night for the Filipinos from the fields. So Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, those four make good. Monday and Tuesday, we hardly go to dance. Sundays, we don't go, but when on the 15th of every month, that's the Navy gets paid and the end of the month, it's the Army gets paid. Though the Navy gets paid too on that day. But the Army only gets $21.00 a month in them days. But still they spend their money taxi [dance]. Yeah. So we all know when...

VL: So you know when to go down?

HB: Yeah, but every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, we go to the dance when we get through working from the cannery because that's the day the fields get paid. They get paid every week. The fields get paid on Wednesday. We get paid on the Thursday. The packers get paid on the Friday. So not so bad, see, we all go.

VL: Okay, so every week those four days you would go to taxi dance? The same taxi dance hall every time?

HB: The same taxi dance hall, yeah. I don't go to all different. I only go to one because they know us, and the other one we have to be new ones but the one we used to go is right on King Street. Now, it's a Chaminade, no not Chaminade, but a college. King and Bethel. That's a school there now.

VL: What was the name of it?

HB: Roseland. Yeah, taxi dance upstairs. Downstairs was furniture, if I'm not mistaken, and right on the side, it was Palace of Sweets. Yeah, ice cream parlor. So when we kind of tired, well, we run downstairs and have some ice cream. But then nowadays--but I think there's only one taxi dance hall now. You go in, you cannot come out. In our days, we go in, we can come out. In and out, see, but we don't go any place. We only go downstairs to eat ice cream or have something cool because they didn't sell beer over there but if they sold beer, well.... But anyhow, my girlfriend always carried one flask.

(Laughter)

HB: Carried one flask so we take it in the bathroom so the checker don't catch. Take it in the bathroom (Laughs).
VL: What was that, whiskey?

HB: Yeah, see, so she puts it in the toilet bowl (Laughs) but it's got the cover on it. When we go to be excused--hot, yeah--we all go one time, all have a little shot and back again. So the girls all sit one side. The men walking around so when it's time for the next dance. My girlfriend played the piano in that dance hall, see.

VL: Oh, it was all piano music?

HB: Yeah, regular Filipino orchestra. We had an orchestra. Regular, see. So I asked my girlfriend go play for them, you know.

She say, "Why don't you?"

I say, "No, I want to dance, I don't want to play music."

VL: Did that give you more income than the cannery work?

HB: No, it's not the income that I was getting.

VL: But can you compare the amount? Do you remember which was more?

HB: Well, at least in them days, maybe I get about $10.00 a night. Depends, you know.

VL: That's more than you would get at the cannery.

HB: Yeah, I know. It depends, you know. If you have dance, every dance, you know. Depends. Some girls only sit there. They don't have dance at all.

VL: What would you do with all this money?

HB: Spend it. Spend. I never keep. (Laughs) I spend what I make that kind, you know. We go to eat. I be treat this one. Maybe next week, the other one treat, you know. We stay there all night.

VL: Till when?

HB: Till 5 o'clock in the morning and we go home. (Laughs)

VL: Then sometimes you would go to your friend's restaurant?

HB: Yeah, that's near the Army-Navy Y [i.e., Armed Forces YMCA].

VL: So from the taxi dance you would go to the restaurant?

HB: Yes and sit there all night.

VL: Did you say that you helped her [your friend] waitress sometimes?
HB: At times when she's very, very busy. At times, you know, because over there the servicemen have to wait for their buses at the Army-Navy Y and across was a motorcoach and Black Cat and my girlfriend's restaurant was---it's not a regular restaurant, it's a coffee shop but we only have about 16 or 18 stools and then maybe only two, three tables. Sometimes it's crowded in the morning, you see, because they're all getting come back and they all going home so they want coffee, they want eggs and all that so I'm over there, see, so I help her.

VL: In the mornings?

HB: Yeah.

VL: Didn't you have to go to the cannery?

HB: Yeah, I leave at 5 o'clock [a.m.]. I leave there at 5 o'clock [a.m.] but all the servicemen are there waiting for their bus, see, so all eating and drinking. They had beer there, too.

VL: That means sometimes you wouldn't sleep at night?

HB: Yeah, I wouldn't sleep at night. My other two girlfriends were with me so we all go to work together.

VL: To the cannery?

HB: Take a shower down there, see.

VL: Wouldn't you be tired?

HB: No, that's what I said the beauty part of it was we were never tired. Always on the go, go, go. Then when I go home, my grand-uncle tell, "Baby, Hele ana o kou ihea?" [Where did you go?] Where I moemoe.

"Girlfriend." No ask any more questions.

"Then you okay? Oh okay." Yeah, they were not strict.

[Granduncle would ask] where I went after I pau hana hana.

So I said, "I go with my girlfriend."

VL: He wasn't mad?

HB: No. I tell I go sometimes hulahula. He asked me "You go auntie?"

"No, I go taxi dance."

"Oh."

"Ten cents make."
"Okay."

VL: Did you pay anything to your uncle for your rent?

HB: Oh, yeah, I paid. I paid rent. Fifty dollars [$50.00] a month. I hardly eat home. That's only for to sleep. But I hardly sleep home. Only go home, get clothes and then eat little bit because I tell him I'm always busy.

VL: Did this same girlfriend who had the little flask at the taxi dance, did she work at the cannery too?

HB: Oh, yeah.

VL: Did she take her flask to the cannery?

HB: (Laughs) She had one big bag, you know. She always carry. Everytime I see her with the big bag, I say, "Omole inside?"

She says, "Yeah." And her clothes, she say her "lolii."

I say, "Oh, okay."

VL: You spoke Hawaiian?

HB: Yeah, she's Hawaiian-Indian. But when we went together, we always went as sisters. Only she was husky and I was skinny and we had long hair, curls.

VL: Well, where would she keep her flask? In the locker room?

HB: In the locker. Each one of us have one. The matron don't go and... As long nobody open their mouth, you see. But we don't drink there. We have that there for when we go home, you see. For the evening. We start off with that.

VL: Uh huh. Did you know anybody at the cannery who might have drunk while they were working?

HB: Oh, yeah, but nobody...we don't say anything. In our days we not the type, like I don't know like nowadays, I don't know how these people, they squeal every little thing, you know. But like us, no. What we see, it's all right. As long as they don't fight.

VL: Was that common for, for...

HB: For us to let it go?

VL: No, for people to drink?

HB: No, it wasn't. It's just, I guess for happiness. That's what we call it, happiness.

VL: I mean on the job?
HB: No, we never did see anybody drinking on the job.

VL: Oh.

HB: After, when we get through working, taking a shower, and we already beginning to drink, see.

VL: Oh, oh, oh, but not while working?

HB: No, because they might hurt themselves, you know, if they have a few too much. No, we don't drink on the job but she always brings it for when we start, before we leave.

VL: I see. Okay. Then I think this was also the time you would sometimes go entertain at Schofield [Barracks]?

HB: Yes. See, when I know I have to go to Schofield then I don't go to work.

VL: To cannery?

HB: Yeah. They know if I don't come around, I'm entertaining.

VL: Oh. They already knew that.

HB: Yeah because I tell them. I said, "If you don't see me at work, you know I'm out entertaining." And when the sailors was here, the fleet was here, I used to entertain during the day, see, and I don't go work.

And then I went to the [outer] islands, to Maui, to Lahaina when the fleet was over there because they couldn't land here on account of that Massie case so I didn't work [at the cannery] for three weeks, I think. The fleet was over there so I went with my grandaunt and uncle to entertain over there so I let them know. I let my forelady know, not the office.

VL: Uh huh. And when you come back, you could just go back anytime?

HB: I just go back, yeah, yeah.

VL: But you said you didn't save any money, huh?

HB: No, I spend all my money.

VL: About that time was Depression too, yeah, 1930, 1931?

HB: Yeah, but we didn't feel the Depression. We didn't feel the Depression.

VL: Did the cannery cut back on hours or anything?

HB: No, no. The Depression was mostly in the Mainland. It didn't seem over here. We didn't seem like we had it because if was real Depression, everybody would be standing in line but nobody stood
in line here. The only time we stood in line was during the wartime for liquor and for food, like poi and all that because everything was during the war. When the war first started, we had to stand in line.

VL: About 1931 Hawaiian Pine started making the gems or chunks. Do you remember that affecting you?

HB: No.

VL: I think the next year after that, 1932, Mr. Dole was replaced as manager. Somebody else took his place.

HB: I don't know about that because we don't know anything has happened.

VL: Do you ever remember seeing Mr. Dole around?

HB: Yeah, he was an elderly man. He seemed to be okay but that's all we do. We don't pay attention to them, you see. Only we know was to work in the cannery.

VL: Yes. Then around then is that when you met your [first] husband, Mr. Dankowski?

HB: No, I met him in 1933.

VL: And how did you meet him?

HB: Taxi dancing. (Laughs)

VL: Oh, he was Navy?

HB: Army. [His monthly pay was] twenty one dollars [$21.00] but he made extra money by painting cars, not remodeling, but fixing somebody's car, strip it all, and then put it back together. That's why I wished I did continue to learn but the reason why I didn't because I always have to have my hands in oil and grease and then entertainers, if their fingers are....

VL: Uh huh. In 1933 did you folks start going together?

HB: Yeah, we stayed together.

VL: Did you live together?

HB: Yeah.

VL: And did that affect your different jobs in any way?

HB: Well, I do. When I want to go, I want to go. You see, he don't hold me back, you see. So, he works on people's cars, fix cars and paint cars. He was a good mechanic, you know.
VL: Did you folks live near the cannery?

HB: No, I lived Punchbowl.

VL: You folks lived near Punchbowl? How would you get to the cannery?

HB: I walked. In them days, it's shorter to walk. You know why, because---well, him he had to go back early, he had to go back to the Army, yeah.

VL: Every day?

HB: He goes early and then I leave about 5 o'clock [a.m.] or 5:30 [a.m.] because we [the cannery] start at 6 o'clock and I walk from Punchbowl. In them days, had hardly any houses and you can walk, cut short all through. Like nowadays, you have to go all around, you cannot cut short. In them days, you can cut short through. From Punchbowl I go right through School Street and from School Street you cut down on Beretania, cut short. Hardly no more houses that time. Go through the parks and go through people's yard but no dogs or anything.

VL: Uh huh. And your first baby was born 1935, yeah.

HB: Nineteen thirty-five, yeah. That's when we got married.

VL: Oh you got married then?

HB: Yeah. To give the baby name. (Laughs)

VL: I see. I guess you hadn't been using any kind of birth control?

HB: Uh uh. [No.]

VL: Did the company have rules about being pregnant?

HB: No. I worked until it was time.

VL: You were....

HB: Not too big. Not too big because I wore, I strapped myself down (with a corset, so I would not be conspicuous).

VL: Oh. Did they know that you were pregnant?

HB: Yeah, they know. They knew but they don't stop you as long as you're healthy enough to work.

VL: So how many months did you work till?

HB: Right through. And then that day that I know I was going to give birth--because you can tell--I went swimming. I didn't work that day. I went out to go swimming because I figure swimming is good exercise. I come home about 4 or 5 o'clock [p.m.] and that's when I gave birth at home, not in the hospital.
VL: You had help?

HB: My folks. My folks. I didn't go hospital for three of my babies; only the last one.

VL: It never bothered you to work while you were pregnant?

HB: No, it didn't bother me. That's why I was surprised. I thought I'd be sick because you get that kind sick, throw up. I never.

VL: Uh huh. So how soon after you had the baby, did you go back to work?

HB: One month. I didn't want to go too soon because that's cement, concrete and you might catch cold. Because when my cousin gave birth and she got up right away. She went to work and she died two or three days after. The doctor said because she caught cold, you know. So when I saw that, I said, "I'd better stay home." And the old folks they very strict too. We don't do nothing, you know. They don't want us to do nothing.

VL: Who took care of your baby while you went to work?

HB: My sister.

VL: How come she was at home?

HB: Well, she works for the Army as a patcher, you know. She didn't have very much work to do. She worked in the laundry but that's sewing. So when I go to work she stays home, see, because she said she didn't need it. She just wanted to get out of the house, you see. Because she was sickly, not a healthy girl. She had very bad asthma, see.

VL: Every day then?

HB: Yeah, she took care of my baby. But when she's very, very sick, well, my auntie take care. She was staying with us, the folks, but she was not healthy.

VL: Did you want to go back to work or would you have preferred to stay at home?

HB: I rather go back to work. Even after I got through retiring from the cannery, I stayed home two months. I gotta go work so I went to look for this kind of job, [that I have now]. Take care of old people is better but I don't want to live in. I just want to go to work and then go home.

VL: And you had another baby the next year, yeah? Did you work all the way up to your time again?

HB: Yes, uh huh. I worked because I figure out why stay home. If I'm working, it's not strenuous. The job not strenuous. If you're tired, you can sit down.
VL: Did they make the work easier for you because they knew you were pregnant?

HB: They don't have to make it easy because it's easy, the job because we used to already, you know, easy. When they tell me for take a rest, I say no. We go 15 minutes, enough.

VL: That one month, say, that you're not working you had no income, yeah?

HB: I didn't mind. (Laughs)

VL: How did you manage?

HB: I managed because even if I didn't save, we had enough money to, you know.

VL: Who's "we"?

HB: Well I had saved for us, for home, the old folks, because I paid $50.00 a month. That's cheap, the rent, for us.

VL: Now, were you living at home but you were married?

HB: Yeah, living at home.

VL: When you go back to work, did you lose any...

HB: Benefits?

VL: Yeah.

HB: We didn't have no benefits over there at that time, you know. Like now, they get benefits. We didn't have anything. That's why now they are trying like Souza and Matthews [two other interviewees]. They're trying to get together in order to form a club for the kupunas. Kupunas is for the old folks, those who retire, see. So they're trying. They said they had that for two years and nobody made an effort. But like us, we're old-timers, we don't know because only now, they tell us.

VL: This is through the union?

HB: Yeah. So I said, "Oh."

VL: Were you paid the same when you go back?

HB: Yeah, uh huh. We don't get raise. Only, we only get raise one time like it seems to me it was every two years we got raise. During the wartime that's when they had the full raise because it's better than what we were making.

VL: Then how about housework?
HB: Uh uh. [None.]

VL: All taken care of?

HB: Yeah. We couldn't move our furniture anyhow. We only have to move it out and clean behind everything but we never changed the furniture because my grandma blind, see, so we had to keep it just so-so, so when she get off of her bed, she count, you know. Like, I'm counting, I'm going to the bathroom then she counts, to the basin then she counts, come back to the chair, to her bedroom. Now, she gets ready in there and it's time for her to eat, she counts to go to the kitchen. That's why we couldn't move the furniture so we didn't have too much.

And we didn't have no bed because the old folks like to sleep on the floor so we sleep on the floor too, us. We don't care to have a bed so everything was more plain, yeah. Sleep on the floor because sleeping on the floor gives your body good, solid back.

VL: Were you still going to taxi dance after your children were born?

HB: No, I slowed down because I had kids to take care of, you know. (Laughs) If I get a chance, yeah, if I just tell I going out dancing, okay.

VL: How about the coffee shop?

HB: Oh, no. Then afterwards during the wartime, it's slack, pau, and then she sold out.

VL: How about the change to the eight-hour day—1938, I think, they made a regular eight-hour day?

HB: Yeah, they had eight hours, see, but when come full season, then they have double, you see, but when you slow then get eight hours. Maybe sometimes six hours. Maybe sometimes five hours.

VL: But full season would be longer?

HB: Yeah, 12. Until they made three shifts. Before was only two shifts, yeah, so when they start to make three shifts, it's better. I always worked in the last shift.

VL: Nighttime?

HB: No, regulars always work from 6 o'clock [a.m.] to 6 o'clock [p.m.], you see. I don't like to work in the morning, so early in the morning. I rather work from 6:00 in the evening until 6:00 in the morning but they had the summer ones come in between, you see.

VL: When did you start doing that?

HB: I think after the war or before the war. After the war because we had so many kids graduating and they need the job.
VL: But when you had your children...

HB: Oh, only two shifts.

VL: ...you would work day?

HB: No, night shift. When full season, I work night shift. I rather work at night. [Then] I'm home with the kids [during the day].

VL: And then on off season, would you go back to the day?

HB: Day, yeah.

VL: I see.

END OF INTERVIEW
VL: This is an interview with Mrs. Helen Barnes. Today is April 12, 1979. We're at the Makua Alii Senior Citizens Center.

Last time I talked to you, you were saying that you used to entertain [i.e., play music] with some other cannery people. How did you first get together with them?

HB: Well, you see, we all get together when we going to work, and we go early. Then, while we sitting for the time to go to work, well, I play the piano and we entertain. So when we do go out, we don't go out to every places. Only certain people go. And then, we pick our gang.

VL: This is the piano in the locker room?

HB: Uh huh [yes].

VL: So before work you would be playing?

HB: Yes, because we go early. I leave home at 3:30 in the morning, because to catch the bus. Want to catch the first bus, and the first bus is always at 4:30. Then we get down there so we don't get crowded. But before, I used to walk. But then, when I came back from the Mainland [1950] I took the bus all the time or my husband take me to work.

VL: This entertaining, though, this started much earlier, before the war?

HB: Oh yes.

VL: Was it in when you first started the cannery in 1927?

HB: No, no. It was just about as we were going on.

VL: So these people that played with you, were they your friends or...
HB: Just pick up from... I play the piano, and then if they want to come and sing they all gather around.

VL: So how many of you were in this entertainment group?

HB: Oh, there were so many you can't believe. So many, because everybody of us were all young at that time. There was so many.

VL: Who would you play for when you went out to entertain?

HB: In my days--not with the cannery--in my days, I had my own orchestra.

VL: Oh, this was before cannery?

HB: No, I worked in the cannery but I didn't have the cannery gang with me [when I entertained]. We had our own. My boys from Punchbowl.

VL: How many were in that group?

HB: The bass, two sax and one banjo.

VL: And you played piano.

HB: Five.

VL: So that entertainment group, your own, did that continue?

HB: Yes. Every Friday and every Saturday play music. And then, we play for private parties.

VL: So even after you started working at the cannery did you continue your own group?

HB: Yes. But if I working [cannery] at night, then I don't play music. Because I don't want to miss out, you know.

VL: On cannery?

HB: Yeah, because we only got $5 a night [entertaining], them days, you know. Now, give good money.

VL: So why did you start playing music with the cannery people?

HB: After, when the cannery is over [for the season], then we get together because we're going to have a party.

VL: Cannery party?

HB: Then, that's how we can get our own gang.

VL: So it's not like you had a troupe [of cannery workers] to go out [and play]?
HB: We don't go out, no. Now is different. With all the retirees [at Makua Alii Center], we get together [and go out to entertain sometimes].

VL: So in those days it was informal?

HB: Anybody, yeah. Anybody. But in my younger days, well, I had orchestra, see.

VL: The cannery people [who played music], were they all ladies who...

HB: Men too. Because men used to work among us. You know, sharpen knives, take the trays away.

VL: Can you tell me about the kind of parties that the cannery had?

HB: Well, we always went to chop suey dinner. If not chop suey dinner, we go to picnics. Night shift, and then the day shift.

VL: Was this organized by the cannery?

HB: No, just the foreladies kept going around. "You want to go?" "You want to go?" "Well, try come." It's not by the cannery. So that's how we make our own parties.

VL: How often did you do this a year?

HB: Only once a year. That's only when the night shift pau [i.e., when the summer season is over]. Because the night shift is going to day shift. Then the day shift gang go back to school and [non-students] who not going to work right through [also finish working at that time]. And then, when the day shift finish [i.e., when there is no more pine until next season], same thing. When we get through with the day shift, then we make another party.

VL: So maybe two a year?

HB: Uh huh, yeah. One for the night and one for the day.

VL: Would these parties ever be at the cannery?

HB: No. Chop suey house. Any chop suey house or picnic. Go the country for picnic. To the beach.

VL: Would the company provide buses or anything?

HB: No.

VL: All on your own?

HB: On our own. Because we all finished over at the cannery. The cannery has nothing.
VL: So the music, then, was just sort of....

HB: Yeah, all pick up kind.

VL: Not paid for or anything?


VL: What kind of music was it?

HB: Jazz and Hawaiian songs. Because in them days, was all jazz, boogie. (Laughs) All old songs.

VL: Aside from roaming around town after working, did you ever do other things with people from the cannery?

HB: No, we just walk around town and then go window shopping, and go to the restaurant, sit down and eat. Then go to a show.

VL: If the cannery had no work for three weeks, or something like that, or a long time.

HB: Oh, well, then we just stay home.

VL: You folks would not see each other?

HB: No. Until it's time to go [back to work]. They [the company] give us a call all the time.

VL: I'm talking about before the war, would you say that your best friends were cannery workers?

HB: Uh huh [yes]. Cannery workers, that's right.

VL: And they weren't your friends before you started working at the cannery?

HB: No. But I was there first, and there were some elderly ones. But some of them quit, and then the new ones come in, see.

VL: And you make friends?

HB: Yes, make friends. Especially when we work on a same table, so that was how we got together. And then, if we separated---we hold seat for each other, but if the forelady say, "No, you cannot sit, you better go, because the head forelady going take you away." But our forelady always had seat for us. But if our head forelady takes us away to another table, we stay there until two, three days, and then we can come back.

VL: When you went to that other new table, would you make new friends?

HB: I make friends. Got to. Got to, to mingle with them. Especially
with those new hands. Poor things, I used to feel sorry for them. So, the only way to get along is to make friends.

VL: Would there be times, before the war, when you were working where there would be no cannery for several months?

HB: Yeah. There'd be no cannery. Then I go to my girl friend's.

VL: To what?

HB: When she still had the restaurant. But after that [after the war], when she sold the restaurant, then I went to Kakaako [to work at Kakaako Cafe or Maggie's Inn].

VL: After you came back from the Mainland?

HB: After I came back from the Mainland, when the cannery don't work, I go to Kakaako's. I work in the evening. And then, taxi dance was slacking. During the wartime was slacking. To my opinion, the reason why it was slacking, because before, I used to go at 7 o'clock to dance. Dance one hour and then go up and down for a little refreshment [see interview #1 for more detail]. But after that, if you go in you cannot come out, so everybody quit.

VL: They changed the rule for the ladies?

HB: Yeah. Because some don't come back. They go, they take their customers and don't come back at all. I go, I go downstairs, I tell the bookkeeper, "I going down have a refreshment. I come right back." But when you go to another place, and then they change the rules, you get disgusted because you cannot go down and have refreshment.

VL: So later, during the war, it was more like a place to meet the soldier and then leave and not come back?

HB: Yeah, some of them do that. But no, I stay until the end. Then, when they ask for date, I say, "Oh, my brother's coming." You make all answer because they were two entrance. So we always go to the back entrance.

But the next day they tell, "Oh, we waited for you."

"I'm sorry, my brother came for pick us up." I have to tell some white lie.

VL: Weren't you married at that time, too?

HB: Yeah.

VL: Going back a little bit to the home life. You had your first child in 1935, and then 1945 you quit the cannery. Those 10 years, who else was...
HB: Because I had my last girl in 1946. In 1945, I had my first girl. I had my first boy 1935, my second boy 1936. And then, I was still working. Then, in 1945, I had my first girl. That's why, I told my husband, "Oh, mistake."

VL: (Laughs) So anyway, those 10 years between your first son and the time you quit the cannery, who was living with you in your household?

HB: Just my husband and the kids.

VL: No grandmother, or aunties?

HB: They were all in the Mainland. No, my family never did bother me.

VL: But at one time you were living with your uncle up Punchbowl?

HB: Oh, I was still single then.

VL: Did the children help you with household chores?

HB: Only the boys, because you know, they were 10 years old already. And they help me with their sisters. But didn't have much to do, because they can't do much. The number two boy, he was "number one." He was ace, he do everything. He wash dishes, everything. But the number one boy, hopeless.

VL: How about cooking?

HB: Well, my husband, he did all the cooking because I was doing two jobs.

VL: Cannery and taxi dance?

HB: Yeah, taxi. If not taxi dance, I go in the bar, work in the bar. After the wartime.

VL: So your husband cooked?

HB: Yeah. He's good cook, he's farmer, you know. He good cook.

VL: How about shopping?

HB: He does the shopping.

VL: Was he still with the Army?

HB: No, he bought himself out.

VL: What year?

HB: 1936, I think, or 1937; about one of those year.
VL: And what did he do after that, just mechanic?

HB: Yeah, he was a mechanic for Alexander Brothers. He's a good mechanic.

VL: So his hours were all daytime, then?

HB: Yeah, from 8 to 4 [o'clock].

VL: And after 4?

HB: Then he goes home. I'm home, if I'm not working during the daytime, I'm home.

VL: How about the money; who would handle the money in the family?

HB: He does. He gives me his pay but he goes and pay all the bills.

VL: But he gave you his paycheck?

HB: He gives me his paycheck but I give it back to him for him to go pay the bills. And what's left, he give me back. And I give him $20 for him spending. And my pay, he tell me put it in the bank. That's one thing I can say, that he was good in that way. He wouldn't let me spend my money. Sometimes I spend my money but he scolds me. Because he makes extra side money by painting cars and fixing cars.

VL: So all your paycheck from cannery would go into savings?

HB: Yeah.

VL: Did you have a bank?

HB: I have a bank. At that time, not now; since he passed away, well, I have not much. Because everything now days is high. Before, in those days, not. Everything was so cheap.

VL: We're talking about your first husband?

HB: Yeah. Everything was cheap in them days.

VL: So you folks must have had a pretty good savings amount.

HB: Yeah. Pretty good. Of course, what he made, he take care of the family and everything. And what's left over, well, he give it to me. But that, I don't put it in the bank because we leave it for in case of emergency. I don't have to run to the bank often.

VL: Did you have a little place in your house to put this?

HB: No. Just put it there on the bureau. We have a little box there. Kids don't touch. They're trained not to.
VL: So for all their schooling and clothes, everything, no problem financially?

HB: Yeah, no problem.

VL: How about expenses; what kind of expenses did you folks have?

HB: Not much. Not even doctor's, we didn't have so much doctor's bills. Because I had my babies at home. Why go to the hospital for it because it's just as easy at home. As long as you take care of yourself. I had midwife, so was easy. Of course, we didn't have washing machine in them days. All wash by hand.

VL: Did you do that?

HB: The first beginning, when I first gave birth, my husband let me rest for about a month or so. You know, so I don't catch cold.

VL: Who did the laundry?

HB: He does. He does anything. That's why, hard to find a good man. Because everything, he does the washing--the only thing (is he doesn't like to wash dishes).

VL: Did he do it by hand, because you didn't have a washing machine?

HB: Yes, we didn't have washing machine.

VL: How about after you started working again; who would do the wash?

HB: Me. Because I'm strong enough. And I rather do it myself. Like him, he can do it too, but I'd rather do it. The girls, I teach the girls to do their own. The number one boy, we have to do it for him. The number two boy, he do his own. He tell, "No, Ma, you work hard. I do." The two girls do their own. I teach them how to iron. Even to sew, they sew their own clothes. Send them to sewing school when they were young.

VL: How about supporting your parents or his parents; did you ever send money to relatives?

HB: No. Once we leave our folks, we belong to each other. Not to our parents. Never. Because that's what the Bible says, "Once you leave your home, you belong to each other." So we don't bother with our folks. They don't bother me. His folks don't bother him. We write to them and everything. I know kids now days, they do that, I guess. I know the Samoans, they support their mother. But we didn't do that in our days.

VL: When you were not going to the taxi dance so much--this is after your two boys were born--you didn't go as much, right?

HB: Yeah, I didn't go as much. Off and on.
VL: Did that hurt financially?

HB: No. It didn't hurt, because what I made in the taxi dance hall, well, I put 'em in the bank. But depends. At night, sometimes you make good, sometimes you don't. Because taxi dance was six nights. And Sundays, they don't have any dance.

VL: But I thought you spent it all. When you were single, eh?

HB: I spend my cannery money when I was single. As soon as we leave the cannery, straight to eat.

VL: Was that hard, to change your spending habits after you got married?

HB: No. Because when I got married, he always tells me, "Put it away." He said he makes enough for us to spend.

VL: Did he have any feelings about your working; like, did he not want you to work?

HB: No. He didn't want me to work, but I told 'em, "I cannot stay home. I worked all my life from small." And if I stay home, I think I would feel sick. See the same environment day in, day out. But like when you go out to work, you feel happy. You free. Then you come home, you go....

VL: Was that a problem with him?

HB: No. That's why, he never says anything. He don't even scold me, "Why don't you quit this job." He never tells me. As long I'm happy. Not all husbands that way.

VL: In the last interview, you mentioned that you went with friends to visit CPC [California Packing Corporation], to see if someplace else was better. Do you remember that?

HB: Yes, but I didn't like it.

VL: When did you do that?

HB: When I first started working cannery, you see, they all want to try CPC and Libby. But no, I rather have Hawaiian Pine because much cleaner.

VL: You actually visited CPC and Libby?

HB: Uh huh [yes].

VL: How did you do that?

HB: When they [CPC and Libby] working daytime, and I'm not working. You know, sometimes they work and I'm not working. Well, we go and visit.
VL: Visit or go and work there?
HB: No, I didn't work there. I just wanted to see how's everything going on. No, I rather work Hawaiian Pine.
VL: You would visit like a tourist would visit?
HB: Yeah.
VL: What did you see at Libby's?
HB: Everything just the same but not like how we have, how we do our way. They have different way. And the tables are not like ours. Until in modern, then they got their modern. But I rather stay in the cannery Hawaiian Pine because it was new. And it was enlarged. Libby is still the same. CPC was still the same, didn't any improvement. I guess later years, after the war, got improvement.
VL: If CPC had been better...
HB: No, I don't think so I would go. Because they all had the same price. They didn't have any more than we had.
VL: But say, if somehow conditions were better there...
HB: Maybe.
VL: ...what would you have looked for? What kind of better conditions would you hope to find elsewhere?
HB: You see, like when I first went to the [Hawaiian Pine] cannery, everything was water. But at least we have boards to stand on. Water on the floor?
HB: Yeah. But they have boards, so you can stand on it. That's why, we wore wooden shoes, slippers. So we don't get our shoes wet. If I get our feet wet, but that's little bit pineapple juice and water. But we always wash our feet before we go upstairs to the locker. But CPC and Libby was different. Hawaiian Pine was more modern.
VL: So if CPC and Libby's had had less water on the floor, or something like that, that would have been better?
HB: No. I don't think I would change my mind to go to there. We just wanted to see if was better than Hawaiian Pine. You know, get nosey.
VL: What would have made it better? What would make you switch?
HB: I don't think so anything would make me switch. (Laughs) Because it wasn't so modernized. First time, when I first went cannery, it
was only 12 tables. But when it got enlarged and it was modernized. But I would rather stay in the Hawaiian Pine because it's easier; near the road, you can go in.

VL: 1927 to 1945, did you ever think about becoming a reliever or forelady?

HB: Never. They ask, everybody ask me, "Go."

"No."

The foreladies, "Go be forelady."

"No."

"Why?"

"Too much headache." Too much headache.

VL: Did you ever try it?

HB: I know so. (Laughs)

VL: What kind of headaches?

HB: You responsible for anything that the girls do on the table. So why should I get all shook up. It's best I stay and enjoy myself like a common worker.

VL: You would have gotten paid more.

HB: I don't care. I like my fun. Just like among my gang. Like the forelady got to go to the table, then go to another table. Sometimes they have four tables. And each table has a reliever. No, I'd rather be worker and enjoy myself with my gang.

VL: But did members of your gang become relievers and foreladies?

HB: Just about a few. Yeah, my Portuguese girl friend--the one used to always work with me. She always work opposite of me so she can see my face. Then she say, oh, she don't want to be forelady. She quit.

I said, "Why you quit?"

She said, "Too much headache."

"That's why I didn't want," I told her. Had some other ones, too.

VL: Could you have become reliever, then you could stay on the same table?

HB: No, they move you. I could have, but I didn't want to.
VL: Who was asking you?

HB: The head forelady. But I wouldn't go. I rather work, because you have your gang with you. Then, if I work another table, then I would have to work with a different forelady. Because they change you around. And then, different gang. Still, I would have to make. But your first gang that you first started to work with, that's the one.

VL: How many people in that gang, about?

HB: Well... because had 1, 2, 3. Three tables, see, that's all our gang on that tables.

VL: So it was 12 on a table, so 3 times 12? That's a pretty big gang.

HB: Yeah. So when one table is supposed to have a rest, five minutes, go up. "Psst." One, two three.

VL: Oh, so three [tables] would all go?

HB: Then the next gang, three. That's how we worked.

VL: So that's about 36 ladies, then?

HB: Yeah. And then, we all go to lunch one time. About 24 tables go to lunch one time. And only half an hour. If we are nearer the cafeteria, we'll go to lunch. But if not, we'll stay. If we're on the first tables, like 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, to 24, we'll stay because only half an hour to eat. [Otherwise] we have to go all the way [to the cafeteria]. So we bring our own lunch.

VL: And where would you eat it?

HB: Sitting at the table.

VL: Right at the trimming table?

HB: Yeah. Bring our lunch. Sandwich, apple, or something.

VL: Is this all before the war?

HB: Yeah.

VL: They would let you bring your lunch down?

HB: Uh huh [yes]. They were more not so strict as they were lately, strict. And they work harder, too.

VL: Seems like this gang was really quite important to you?

(HB laughs)
HB: That's why, when I retired some was still young yet. Then they retire two years after. I said, "Well, when I hit my 65 I got to retire." Some retire at 62. But I didn't retire at 62; I retired 65. Because I still like working. Then I said, "Oh, why don't they make it till 70? I would be still working [at the cannery] if they made it to 70." Yeah, instead of doing this kind job [taking care of elderly woman at night]. I'm satisfied with this job. So long as I'm working. That's why, [someone is] trying to get [me to work] for four hours in the morning, from 10 to 2 [o'clock], but I have to think of my health first. As soon as I get through with this [night job], then I [would] work from 10 to 2, four hours. Take care of an elderly lady when the daughter goes.

VL: A different elderly lady?

HB: Yeah, another one. But I had to think, too, I told her, "Well, I'll think it over." Just for four hours. I watch her until lunch time, then I cook for her what she wants to eat. After lunch, put her to bed, and then 2 o'clock, the daughter come home. Then I can go. But I didn't take it yet. She asking me.

VL: Going back to the idea of becoming a reliever or forelady, could you have gotten more privileges as a forelady?

HB: No, I don't think so. They didn't seem like they had more privilege.

VL: They had a foreladies' locker room.

HB: Some foreladies didn't go into the locker room. They stayed with the [non-foreladies]; why move?

VL: Then, World War II started 1941. You mentioned having to stand in line for poi and liquor.

HB: Oh. Well, let me see. [Before the war] I was still working cannery nighttime [during the summer season] and daytime [during the off season]. But if I'm not working in the cannery, I work for my girl friend at the little coffee shop.

VL: Wait now, you were working cannery what shift?

HB: If I working [cannery] daytime, well, I go and work for her at night. But if I work [cannery] nighttime, then I don't work for her during the day.

VL: Why would you be switching like that? Didn't they just put you on one shift?

HB: No, because nighttime, it's better to---they want me to clean up, scrub the floors and all kind.

VL: Not trimming, then?
HB: Oh no, I'm talking about the restaurant.

VL: I mean why at the cannery would you be switching from day to night shift?

HB: [Answer refers to work pre-World War II] When the night shift comes on, then I go to night. During the summer, when they have the full season, I go on night [shift]. When the season is over, I go back to day [shift].

VL: So when the season is over would be the time that you would be working at your restaurant at night?

HB: When the season is over, I get through working nighttime [shift], I go day time. Then, when I work daytime [shift], I go and work in the restaurant [at night].

And then [after the war started], they needed some workers for the Army and for the Navy. So I applied for the Army; a special messenger. So I worked for the Army from 7:30 till 4:30, daytime [1942-1945]. Then I go home, dress, and if taxi dance is good, I'll go taxi dance. If not, then I'll work in the restaurant.

VL: When you worked for the Army as messenger were you working cannery at all?

HB: Yes.

VL: At night?

HB: If they had a night shift [during the summer season]. If they had night shift. But if they [only] had day shift, then I don't work at the cannery because I'm working for the Army. Good pay, you know.

VL: So the war years, did you work at the cannery very much?

HB: No. Only if they had night shift, then I would go.

VL: About how often was that, or when would this happen?

HB: About three months night shift [i.e., the summer season].

VL: The rest of the year would be working at the Army?

HB: Yeah, at the Army.

VL: How much did the Army pay you?

HB: Oh, depends. Say, like I was special messenger; I was getting about $500 or $600.

VL: What does a special messenger do?
HB: Only take the secret papers, deliver from office to office.

VL: How did you get that job?

HB: I asked for it, because I don't want to stay in the office. I asked and they said, "Well, if you want to be a special messenger." But I had to be bonded; you know what I mean?

VL: What is that?

HB: Just like as if they say they're going to trust me. See, you get bonded. I took my test and everything, then I passed.

VL: A written test?

HB: Written test. And then, I passed. I had to go down to the marshal, at that time. They give us our forms, papers and everything, and then you start to work. So I start from 7:30 [a.m.] until 4:30 [p.m.], but I deliver special papers. Secret kind. Go from office to office; from desk to desk, all lieutenants, majors and.... to deliver.

VL: Where was this that you...

HB: At [Ft.] Shafter. Good, I like that job. Because you meet all different people, you go from office to office.

VL: Would they just let you quit in the summertime, when you...

HB: No.

VL: You worked all through summer?

HB: I worked until I went to the Mainland, until 1945.

VL: But before you went to the Mainland...

HB: I was still working. And they were going to transfer me over there [to the Mainland] so I told 'em, "Well, I don't even know what it is over there, so I think I better quit."

VL: On the Mainland, they were going to transfer you?

HB: Yes, transfer me. And I don't know the Mainland, I don't know where they would put me, so I told 'em, "No, I quit."

VL: What about this standing in line for food and liquor?

HB: Oh, was during the wartime. We were standing in line for food. Not too much for food, for poi. Poi was hard to get. And for liquor.

VL: Where would the lines be?
HB: Where the liquor stores are.

VL: How about for the poi?

HB: Well, it's not too bad at the... certain, like we had Piggly Wiggly [market]. And used to sell poi; that was near the Queen's Hospital.

VL: Was that a store?

HB: Yeah, big store. Just like the markets now we got them. And that's where we all stand in line. Everybody see the big line. But I had my sisters come in; she stand, too. Stand in line. And my kids stand in line.

VL: How much were you---was it rationed?

HB: No. Only because we couldn't get it down at the market. No, it wasn't rationed. Each one can buy so we give each kid a dollar so one poi. Of course, bag was big like that; not like now. Only once a week we stand in line. But for liquor, we stand in line once a week. Because you have a card, and they stamp the date. And if they see you have your share, but have my two sisters to give me and my brother. I give them money and then they go stand in line.

VL: And then they would give it to you?

HB: They didn't drink it; only me. I was the only one that drink.

VL: How much could you get at one time?

HB: Well, I would buy one quart of whiskey. And in them days, was not so expensive; $3-something. And then, I would tell one sister of mine to get case of beer. Then one sister get wine, gallon wine. And my brother---oh, my brother could get from the service. Just beer, but not liquor. So he brings home two cases of beer, then I tell my sister, "Don't buy beer, you buy rum." See, that way, when the servicemen come out, they don't have any liquor. So when they stay over night what you call that? Transit--then we'll sell them. We make side money. (Laughs)

VL: Is this out of your home or through the...

HB: I was living in apartment with my girl friend, see. And my sisters live right next door to me, so when the soldiers and the sailors come around, they would just stay in the hotel. There's a hotel. So we live right next to the hotel, so we sell it to them. Quarter one shot. Terrible, yeah?

VL: Well, I guess everybody had to....

HB: Yeah, we had to do something, you know. But to make them
happy, too. They were happy because at least they're getting their drinks.

VL: Where was this apartment?

HB: Right behind Queen's Hospital. It had that [Mabel] Smyth [Building], and that office there. And there's a lane, and right next, that used to be hotel. And we lived in the lane.

VL: It was a hotel just for soldiers?

HB: No, it was for transit. Yeah, transit. For service people, transit. No local people, just for transit.

VL: Would you go to the hotel to sell?

HB: No, because they [the servicemen] sitting on the porch, veranda--long veranda--and downstairs get another veranda. So when they see us, we drinking outside on the porch. And they come, "Come, come on enjoy." You see all the men and all the girls, my two sisters, myself, and the others.

VL: Can I ask you where your husband was at that time you folks were still....was he living there, too, or you weren't living with him?

HB: He was working. He was in the service during that time.

VL: Oh, he joined again?

HB: Yeah, had to. Had to.

VL: When the war started?

HB: Yeah.

VL: Where did he have to go?

HB: He worked down Shafter, in the motor pool. I was glad he worked down there because we can see each other. Because I go all the way down to the motor pool; take my papers, go all the way down.

VL: Oh, your secret papers.

HB: Yeah.

VL: Did he live there?

HB: No. He go home. But he had to join again because the war.

VL: You said you were living with a girl friend, so I thought he wasn't living there.

HB: No, he was living with me, but I mean we sitting there and we
drinking. He love his drinks, too. But he don't bother. Everybody enjoy; him, he don't say a word. That's why, I love him so much because when he takes me to a party and he tells, "Well, honey, it's time for go home."

"Oh gee, Daddy, I'm just enjoying myself."

He say, "Well, I'm going home."

"Okay, you go."

He calls me when he gets home. "Okay, I'll come pick you up tomorrow." He comes and pick me up the next day. I stay over my girl friend's. And he doesn't say anything as we going home like, "Why didn't you come home?" That's the beautiful part of it, that we don't argue about those things. That's why, it's hard. Everybody say they always love my husband because he's so easy going.

VL: Did all your cannery friends know him?

HB: Uh huh [yes]. Oh yeah, they call him "Santa Claus."

VL: Why?

HB: Because he gives anything. If they want something, he go buy. If they want to buy beer, he going buy.

VL: From the PX?

HB: Yes. I don't stop him. More the merrier for me, see them enjoying themselves.

VL: Couldn't he have gotten you some liquor through wartime?

HB: Oh yes. But I make use of my card. But in the base is cheaper.

VL: Did he make more money at the motor pool than in his own business?

HB: Yeah, he make more money. I made more money than him. Well, I was doing all kind jobs, that's why.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

VL: How about the war affecting your job at the cannery, when you were working there during the summers at night?

HB: It didn't bother. It was all right.

VL: Did you folks have air raid drills at the cannery?
HB: Yeah, before, we had. But not too much, because even at home, too, we had little bit air raid. We didn't bother about that.

VL: When you had the drill in the cannery, what did you have to do?

HB: Only one time, to my....only one time.

VL: What happened that one time?

HB: Nothing. They just like us know in case of emergency, where to go, how to go, not to take your knives or anything. You drop everything and go.

VL: Where would you go?

HB: Well, they tell us to go and hide. How can we hide? Because even they can bomb anyplace.

VL: There was no special place to go?

HB: We had no hole to run in. We had to run all outside before we can get to the hole.

VL: How about gas masks, did you have to...

HB: We carried. I used to hate to carry that.

VL: Everywhere you went?

HB: Everywhere we went, we had to. Even in the theatre we had to take it.

VL: How about when you were trimming in the cannery?

HB: Well, we have it upstairs. We don't carry it down. But we didn't carry it too long. I think from 1941, maybe half of 1942. Because that mean more or less, Japanese was more taken care of.

VL: How about the Japanese workers at the cannery; did you notice any....

HB: No, they were all right. I had lots of Japanese friends, but I wouldn't turn them down because on account of the war. They were still my friends. I say, "I won't dislike you because your ancestors come over here and make trouble. You my friend, you my friend." And they were happy because I'm telling them. I said, "Yes, I wouldn't turn you down. Because it wasn't you."

VL: Did you notice any problems that the Japanese had with the Filipino cannery workers?

HB: No, never had no trouble. Everything was seems to be okay. Even for us workers, the women, they were all right. Because it's not
their fault. The ones from overseas, the one came over here. They would have to take away quite a lot of them from here, some of them from the cannery, too. Because they old-timers, eh. Some of them had.

VL: Oh, you mean to the [internment] camps?

HB: Yeah. That's why, it hurts in one way, to see them go. They got to go, they have to go. Pitiful, but what can we do?

VL: So they took some of the older cannery workers?

HB: Yeah, because they old-timers. They figure out, old-timers, they all would go for Japan. But they were sadly mistaken. That's one thing, the U. S. was wrong in one way.

VL: Did that cause a shortage of workers at the cannery?

HB: No. We was still going full blast.

VL: Did they have to bring in new people?

HB: Yeah. Like those who come in during the summertime, then they begin to stay, to be steady. That's the only kind of short handed.

VL: Last time, you mentioned something about getting a bigger raise at the cannery during wartime.

HB: Well, it's not exactly big raise. But at least we got a little better than what we had. From 11 cents, come up to 13 cents, 17 cents; go, go, go. Until during the wartime, that's when we got, I think about 25 cents.

VL: An hour.

HB: And then, little more the next following....that's how we got little better pay, because on account of the war. I figure, you know, every year 2 cents, 2 cents. But at least we were better off than the waitresses. The waitresses still get $2. Now, they get $2.96.

VL: The waitresses at...

HB: Here. I see, and I told 'em, "Don't tell me. Gee boy, when I was waitress, my first, I only had $40 a month to be a waitress. And you folks only make two." They was making only $2.65, and then now, they getting $2.95.

VL: Minimum wage.

HB: Son of a gun.

VL: Why did you folks move to Chicago in 1945?
HB: Oh, we all had—service people had to go.

VL: Was it because your husband...

HB: Yeah. He was in the service. We all had to go. And I didn't want to go in one way, but I said, "Well, I might as well go." Because he's going, I got to go.

VL: They transferred him to Chicago?

HB: All everyone. Majority of all. So we all went, and I stayed there say about five years. Then I came back and I went back again three more years.

VL: You stayed there from 1945 for five years?

HB: Yeah, till 1950. Came back on New Year's Eve. New Year's Eve over there, New Year's Eve over here.

VL: When you went over there, you folks lived on the base?

HB: Oh yes.

VL: What was the name, do you remember?

HB: I don't know the name of it. And then, when I came back then I went with my [second] husband to Oregon, to his family.

VL: When you came back which time?

HB: I stayed over there [in Chicago] till 1950, and I came home. And in either 1964 or 1965, then I went with him [Mr. Barnes] to visit his mom in Clement Falls, Oregon. Stayed there for three years and came home.

VL: This is your second husband?

HB: Barnes. I went with him to visit his mom. His mom was sick.

VL: Okay. Did you work in Chicago, those five years?

HB: Uh uh [no].

VL: What did you do?

HB: Just stay home. Because I don't know the place. And if I knew the place, be different. Maybe I work, because the Army wanted to transfer me. But I told 'em, "No." Because I don't know the place.

VL: How did you like it those five years?

HB: Don't like it at all. Cold. And then, when summertime it's so darn hot.
VL: What was the worst part about it?

HB: The snow. I can't go outside. I have to put cloth on my face and my toes freeze. I put two, three stockings on, same thing. Our blood is thin, you know, that's why. Ho, they can have it. Boy, when I came back, I just got off the plane, I knelt on the ground and I kissed the ground. I was so happy to be home. When the captain on the plane said, "Look Hawaii, sunshine. We left when it's snowing and we come over to Hawaii, and it's sunshine." Oh boy, I was so happy.

VL: You brought your four children with you from Chicago?

HB: Yeah.

VL: But Mr. Dankowski stayed in Chicago. Did you folks---were you divorced right away, or...

HB: No. See, I went with my first husband. And then, I came back, then I married my second husband.

VL: After you came back here in about nineteen-fifty....when did you...


VL: But you started going with him earlier?

HB: Yeah. In 1950, when I came back. Because I knew him before I went [to Chicago]. Before I got married [to Mr. Dankowski]. I knew him, he used to be my partner for dance, taxi dance. I knew him, see. I guess he heard that I was back and just came up to taxi dance. That's why, I met him.

VL: And I think one time you mentioned that for a while---when you first came back in 1950, you didn't go back to pineapple straight off.

HB: No, I stayed home rest for a while. Because I was kind of little bit sick. I lost lot of weight over there.

VL: What made you decide to go back to the cannery?

HB: Well, I figure out well, that's the only best place I can see all my gang. And they were still working. They were so surprised. "Oh, Curly, Curly, you back?"

"Yeah."

"When you came back?" They was all excited, eh.

VL: Was it easy to get the job again?

HB: Oh yeah. Because I'm old-timer, see.
VL: So you just tell them that and they hired you?

HB: I just went to see the guy who hires, the person. But I know the guy, see. And I said, "Oh, I have returned."

"When?"

"New Year's Eve."

"How come you only come now?"

I said, "I had to stay home and rest for little while because I was kind of little bit sick."

So he said, "Oh, okay."

Yeah, I was so skinny. I lost so much weight.

VL: They made you a packer this time, though.

HB: Yeah. Because they didn't need no trimmers at that time. So they said, "Go to pack, try."

VL: So you weren't quite with your same gang, then, because they were trimmers.

HB: No. But I go on the table where I can see them.

VL: Was it hard to learn packing?

HB: Yeah. Packing is much harder than trimming, because the pineapple is going [by you] and you looking at that, and you see that thing going, and you get dizzy. Like trimming, no. The trimming, pineapples over there, the chain is going. And you have your table up to this wide [i.e., you look at the table, not at the moving chain]. But packer, you have the chain right there and you can see it going. You looking and that thing is going, and then makes your eyes dizzy. I get dizzy all the time. I get little bit upset. So they put me down at the end until I get used to.

VL: The end is better because...

HB: No. That's only pick up, and then what's no good--you see some that's no good--you put it on one side. And the rest put for juice. That's the one that they don't use. The ones that's pretty good, then we use that for tidbits. Little tips like that, tidbits.

VL: Being at the end of the table made you less dizzy?

HB: Yeah. It doesn't make me dizzy because I'm only looking at the table. But if you have something in your hand and that thing [belt with pine slices on it] is going by, naturally it's going to
get you dizzy. I don't know if it would get you dizzy, but it gets me dizzy. Looking at this [pieces you are packing], and then that thing is going. And you think you going this way and that thing.... you see the difference. But in trimming, no. The pineapples over there [on a chain] and here's your table [in a different line of vision]. And then you trimming, then you don't see it.

VL: So being at the end of the line, what is your job?

HB: To pick up all that's good and put it in the can. They use that for tidbits. The rest, let it go down for juice.

VL: Where does it go?

HB: They have a chute. You see, it goes right over and that little...

VL: You don't have to push it over?

HB: No. But I'll push it so it don't....you know, wide. When comes here, just all flops out from the chain. And then, the girls put what they don't want [on the belt], it all comes down.

VL: Since you were at the end of the line, don't you have to work fast?

HB: No, you don't have to work fast. I have one girl way at the end, because that's about, I think, 12 girls packing. So the last girl takes most of it; and what she don't take all, then I pick it up and put it in. And the rest goes down to juice.

VL: Did you always stay over there?

HB: No. I don't want that job. I want to learn how to [do other jobs], but only if I---so they put me in the beginning when the pineapple comes out from the washer. It goes through the slicer and washer, and then comes out. And I have to strip the ends. It's worse.

VL: All you did was strip the ends?

HB: Yeah, but it's worse.

VL: Why is it worse?

HB: Because you looking and you trying to strip fast and this [the pine you are stripping] is going....then they put me right next to the stripper. "No, that one, I don't want that." She's a first packer. Second packer, third packer (I don't want to be). Fourth packer, or the fifth packer, then it's okay.

VL: Was that still fancy?

HB: Yeah, it's not so bad because the majority of the pine's all pick up. Then you don't see it going. But otherwise, oh, I get sick.
VL: When you had troubles like that and you get sick, you would just tell the forelady?

HB: Yeah. She see if you... you know. And I tell, "Oh, I got to go dispensary. I'm upset, I'm dizzy."

VL: Were they understanding about that?

HB: Oh yes, because some people cannot take it. Some girls cannot even take trimming. The hands begin to swell. Because they squeeze the pineapple. You can't help it because they beginners. Pineapple is long, and if some girls get small hands like yours and they squeeze, the next day, their hands all swollen. They go to dispensary and then they go home.

VL: So the forelady didn't mind moving you and changing you, experimenting.

HB: Yeah. As long that I can go place where I don't get dizzy. Then finally, I got used to and it's okay. Then I start from the beginning.

VL: Then you would be stripper?

HB: Yeah, I be stripper. Then I tried number two girl [i.e., first packer]. But I don't strip, I like to pack. Because number two girl is the number one, A-packer. She takes the best part of the pineapple; she and the number three. Number four and number five takes the B. And number six and seven takes C.

VL: But this is all fancy?

HB: Yeah, the first two. First two, they have the best. Take the best, and what's left over, we take. The first two [packers] takes the A's, the third and fourth takes the B's. Five and six takes the C's, and the rest, all, you put in [i.e., it goes down to juice].

VL: Seven through 12 is...

HB: About, sometimes. [Apparently, the third and fourth packers could also pack fancy if some fancy slices passed by the first two packers.]

VL: You call it A's, B's, and C's; you don't call it fancy and choice?

HB: Yeah, that's fancy, but we used to saying A's, B's, C. Number one is the fancy.

VL: The A's is fancy.

HB: Yeah.

VL: And the B's is what? The third and fourth girl.
HB: I don't remember different name. I always did the way how I—is A's, B's and C's. But I know the A's are the fancy.

VL: After C's, would you just say it's tidbits?

HB: No tidbit go way down.

VL: So how long did it take you to get used to packing?

HB: Shee, about a week or so.

VL: Oh, that's not very long.

HB: Yeah, not very long. But it takes time, though, you know. Your head get all dizzy.

VL: But after a week, you didn't get dizzy?

HB: No. That's first time, see.

VL: When you're packing, you have to use your judgment, to judge the quality.

HB: Well, you see, after the stripper takes it—see, this is the end of the pineapple, this is the top of the pineapple. So she [the first packer] always takes the top. And the other ones take the next.

VL: When the stripper takes the both sides off...

HB: She takes the bottom off and the top.

VL: How many slices is she taking off?

HB: Maybe some slices because is nicked, so she have to take that off. Then the rest [is okay]. See, she [the first packer] takes the first ones first. And if she sees it's good, then she put it in [the can]. If it not, well, she lets it down and three and four [the third and fourth packers] take that.

VL: Did you like having to use judgment in packing? Like trimming, you don't use too much judgment.

HB: I rather trimming, because you can talk and laugh and everything. But this [packing], you have to look at it. Though trimming, you have to look, but it's only just take the peel off what's left on and take the rotten off. And then, the eyes.

VL: Did you find that with packing you couldn't talk that much?

HB: You can talk but not so much like as in trimming. And trimming, we have more fun because we facing each other. Packing, you don't face each other. The boys are opposite of you. Because the boys
take the tray that you fill up the cans in. They take the filled cans and then, they put the empty can. But the trimmer is better.

VL: Could you have asked them, "I want to be a trimmer instead of a packer?"

HB: I go to trimming when they short of hand. Because the majority of them [summer hires] all want to go trimming when they first come in. They don't want to go packing. So the old-timers have to go packing. So if there's nobody there, then I go to trimming.

VL: But you couldn't go there on a permanent basis?

HB: No. But after, when season over, then I go back [to trimming]. But when season, then I go packing. Majority of them all went trimming. That's why, they didn't need no trimmers. They needed packers. So I went packer.

VL: When you went back [in 1951], it was after about six years away from the cannery. Did you notice any major changes?

HB: No. All seems to be the same. Only they had different foreladies. Even different matrons. And then, we didn't have men anymore to be a foreman, like we used to have. We had forelady for two tables--or sometimes, one forelady has one table. Each table has forelady. And then, we have foreman for two tables. Then, no more. They did away with that. Every other table had knife boy, but when I went back, they only had knife boy for four tables.

VL: I think you mentioned last time that after the war, on the trimming side, sometimes the pineapple would accumulate at the end [of the table].

HB: It's because it's new hands. See, they cannot pick up, and fast. See, we all have to take chance [i.e., rotate]. But before, I'll stay at the bottom. No matter how much is stacks [i.e., is accumulated], well, I'll stay at the bottom and clean it up. But then, they said, "No, give everyone chance." They work hard at the bottom, you know.

VL: That's the first one; the bottom is the first one?

HB: No, the bottom is the last trimmer. The first trimmer, they pick up the cleanest ones. But they made a rule--the first pineapple comes out, that's for the first [worker]. You see, before, they used to take the cleanest ones and leave the dirtiest ones for the last ones. But for my part, I didn't care. But some of them slow, they cannot help. So if I'm working by a girl who is slow, I help her. She puts hers out, and then I'll help her. And even if the one across, I'll help her. When I see she's backed up, then I help her trim.

VL: So before the war, you could pick up any one you want?
HB: Yeah, that's what they used to do, but I don't do that. Because each one have their own. You see, we have six on the table, so six comes out and six come out on the other side. But I always pick the first one. And if it goes down, two, three, and then three is left on the belt, then the last one knows that somebody else didn't pick up the pine. You see? She'd slam it back. And they get mad because they get all wet. But that's nobody's fault; but just the ones who don't pick it up.

So they watch--the last one watch. I watch, too. I pick mine up, I watch who don't pick up. Then we know who don't pick up. Then we tell the forelady and the forelady come. The forelady say, "You got to pick up." No matter how, you know. The reliever come and help. Or I help if they need me; I always help, because I know how hard it is. Because in my days was pretty hard, but not so hard. We didn't work so hard like how they work now. Pineapple come out like that. Our days, just sliding out, slowly pick up. Not like now. Pick up, you don't pick up, too fast.

VL: Was it fast when you first went back in 1951?

HB: Yeah, was fast. Was fast.

VL: In 1951, were they more strict about the rule that you got to pick up your own?

HB: Oh yes. Uh huh. Was before I left, was like that.

VL: Oh, even before.

HB: Yeah. To pick up their own. Because if they just let it go, then down on the bottom get all jam up. But if a new hand is down at the bottom, then--like if I'm on another table and one table is all jam up, then the forelady will take me away from that table and come and put me on this table, to clear up. And I said, "Oh boy, I should be a slow trimmer." But that's all right, you know.

VL: When you first came back, 1950, and then you started working in 1951, were you the only support of your children and yourself?

HB: No, no. My husband.

VL: Your second husband-to-be was...

HB: Yeah, he was with me. We lived together. So I didn't have no trouble.

VL: You were saying you can't remember whether you joined the ILWU or not.

HB: Yeah, I can't remember. But I know we had stop-work [meeting] and we were in the cafeteria discussing about dues, to pay dues. But I'm not---I know we didn't work for two or three days. That's all
I remember, because I never did see. It's only, of course, on account of the union; that's why we had something like that.

VL: I may have asked you this before, but do you remember Dee Dupont? She was a supervisor. And there was a walkout because of her. She was apparently trying to change things.

HB: Oh, I don't know. When was that?

VL: 1957.

HB: I don't remember that. But I remember that we were all gathered together, we had to. Oh, we had before; we didn't start cannery then. You know, [usually, we] start to work at 7 o'clock. [But instead] we started to work at 9 o'clock so we had all go in the cafeteria and have talks. But I wasn't interested because to me, my mind wasn't on that. Fighting for this, fighting for that.

VL: What did you think about the union?


VL: Why didn't you like it?

HB: No, I don't like. Because to me, union give you here, tell you what to do. And behind that, they doing just the opposite. They crooked. That's what I feel. They trying to do good for somebody else, but it's for the own self. That's my opinion. Even like now, the government, same thing. Now, they see the unions fighting about that, those who are non-union, then they got to pay. That's not right. That's why I don't like to join union.

VL: Yeah, there was that 1957 walkout; there was another one in 1958. And then, I guess you were gone in Oregon; there was a big one in 1965 and 1968.

HB: Maybe I was gone already. 1968, I think I remember 1968.

VL: That was 61 days long. It was a long one.

HB: I don't remember that one. Was it full season time?

VL: In 1968, I don't think so. But it was the whole industry, all the canneries.

HB: Close down?

VL: Yeah.

HB: The three canneries?

VL: Uh huh [yes].
HB: Oh yeah, then....when the three canneries, yeah.
VL: April, or....
HB: If was the three canneries, then I know. But not only Hawaiian Pine, see.
VL: You remember that?
HB: Yeah. But that, I didn't pay attention because I didn't care for. Because the union just hoggish, you know what I mean.
VL: But you stayed home and you didn't work?
HB: Oh yeah. I stayed home.
VL: Did you join any of the union activities, like sports teams or anything?
HB: Never.
VL: You just never had much to do with the union?
HB: No.
VL: When did you start working at the Kakaako Cafe, and Maggie's Inn?
HB: Oh, that was during the wartime.
VL: Did this continue after you came back from Chicago?
HB: Uh huh [yes]. Off and on, off and on.
VL: When would you do it, and....
HB: At six in the evening. [After I came back from Chicago] I didn't go back to taxi dance but I went work in the bar. Because in the bar, you make plenty money.
VL: What bar was that?
HB: Kakaako. And Joe Gutierrez'. It's not there anymore. It used to be on Nuuanu--where that theatre is now. There's one theatre there--on Nuuanu and Beretania. Well, it used to be, not at the corner but further over, and that used to be the bar. And then, from there I went down to Nuuanu, to The Pubs. I was bartendress.
VL: Did you do this because you needed the money?
HB: No, because it's fun. Because I know lots of merchant marines. You know, they come on the ship; I know lot of them. And that's why, I pick out...
VL: How did you know them?

HB: In the bar. When I go to the bars, I meet them. So I asked the boss, "How about giving me a job?"

So he said, "Okay." He gave me job, that first one. When he retired---he was sickly so his son took over. So I didn't like to stay with the son so I went down to The Pubs, to a friend of mine, the Lius. So I worked for them until 1967. I worked for them until 1967. And then I didn't work no more in the bar.

VL: All this time, though, you always worked cannery. Did you ever consider quitting cannery and going just working at the bar?

HB: No. After, when I came back when I worked in the bar, then I knew that the bar make more money than the cannery. But in the cannery I had more fun. I was young, see, so I enjoy it. But when I got older, I was always in the bar.

VL: But even when you were older, you still stuck with the cannery.

HB: Yeah. (Laughs) That's because when my gang's around, I want to be around. So now, I very seldom see them, although I correspond with them.

VL: Did you ever want to be a regular worker at the cannery?

HB: I was regular worker.

VL: I mean salaried, year round.

HB: No. You mean like be in the office and all that?

VL: Yeah, or...

HB: No.

VL: ...matrons, cafeteria.

HB: No, no. I don't care for that kind job. I like to be among the gang. I enjoy it. So when I worked in the bar, I enjoyed, because I see all different kind guys. Talk story, enjoy myself, have a little shot with them. Happiness.

VL: Looking back on your years at the cannery, what would you say was the best part of all those years that you worked there?

HB: Well, I would say the first years, until 1945. First years, all those years. Coming back was pretty---not like it used to be. Everything change and all.

VL: What was the different change?
HB: You know, we get different foreladies. The old ones are all gone, and the matrons are all gone. And no foremans.

VL: Why did that...

HB: I don't know why they did away with the foremen.

VL: I mean, why did that make it not as good?

HB: Well, [before] we didn't have it so bad. Wasn't so fast and everything was easy going. Like afterward, oh boy. It started before I went away, that it was beginning to get tough. But when I came back, I see that the foremans were all gone; and foreladies had two, three tables--before we had one on each table. And everything was rush, rush, rush. And then, that's when they had four shifts; they changed to four shifts. Six in the morning [is the first shift], and next gang comes in at 10 o'clock--that's the school kids--and they go home, I think, about 5. The next one comes in at 5 and they go home 11, like that. We come in at 6 [p.m.] and we stayed till 6 [a.m.] the next day. We old-timers, that's why we all year around. But I mean for the schoolchildren, give them chance. They don't want them to work too long because they get tired. It's pitiful to see them, you know, struggling.

VL: Besides money, what would you say you gained from the job?

HB: Happiness and friendship. Love one another, you happy. That's the best part of my life. I enjoy everything, working, meeting people.

VL: Would you encourage other women to work there?

HB: In the cannery?

VL: Uh huh [yes].

HB: Yes. I told them many of them to come and work in the cannery.

VL: How about young women of today?

HB: Well, I don't know. I don't see the...because I never did work. Well, if I see some school kids around, I go tell, "Why don't you go work cannery." But I going tell them, "It's hard, you know. It is hard."

VL: Would you recommend them making a lifetime out of it, like you did?

HB: Well, I enjoyed it, and some people don't enjoy. They only work and they get disgusted, they quit. Lot of them quit. Some of them can't take it. I thought I couldn't take it, but I could take it. Is only the packing [that bothered her], that's all. But finally got over it.

VL: What do you think of Dole Company as an employer?
HB: Good. Very good.

VL: Any complaints?

HB: I don't have no complaints. Everything was okay with me.

VL: What do you think will happen in the future, with the pineapple industry here?

HB: I don't know. It might phase out. Supposed to phase out, long time. In 1973, before I retired they told was going to phase out. They had taken some machines out already and sent it over to Taiwan and to the Philippines. But now they say they have different machines in. I told Mrs. Souza [another interviewee], "Someday, I'll go and visit." When the cannery is full blast, I go and visit. There's a chance now. See what kind machines they have.

VL: Now that you're retired, you said you don't see them [cannery workers] too much anymore?

HB: No, I don't see them too much. Only those that come to the [Makua Alii Senior Citizens] Club.

That's why, I entice them to come to the club. Because before I retired, I had joined the club already. So I told them, "Eh, I going retire. When you retire or before you retire, cannery don't work, come to the club." So that's how they been coming to the club.

VL: Looking back again, if you had a choice to do it all over again, would you have preferred being full time at the cannery and a housewife or what you were, part-time and a housewife?

HB: Not full time. As a year round worker, like I had been and housewife. Not season worker.

VL: Would you have preferred to be just a single working woman, just working, without being housewife-mother?

HB: No, I don't think so. Because got to clean house anyhow. You know what I mean?

VL: But I mean, say, children.

HB: Well, if I didn't have children, well, that's different. But I have children. But if I didn't have, well, would be different.

VL: You think that would have been better?

HB: Yeah, but---if God didn't give me any children would have been better, but He gave me. And I'm thankful He gave me children.

VL: Do you have anything you want to add to this?
HB: No. That's all.

VL: Either about your life or about pineapple, or anything?

HB: No. That's all I have to say about the pineapple. I hate to retire at that time, but I said, "Well, got to go, got to go." I said, "I don't see why they stop us from working, as long as we strong enough." But now, they can work until they 70 years old.

VL: Oh.

HB: Uh huh. That's what he said.

VL: But it's too late, now, for you.

HB: Yeah, it's too late for me. But it's all right. I got one more year to go, and then I can work as much as I want and they won't take anything away from me.

VL: Oh, Social Security?

HB: I still get my Social Security, but they'll take a dollar for every $2. I make, oh, over $9,000 a year.

END OF INTERVIEW
WOMEN WORKERS in Hawaii's Pineapple Industry

Volume I

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