BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Sue Shizuyo Kajioka, 74, retired Dole Company (Hawaiian Pine Company) trimming forelady

Sue Shizuyo (Takahashi) Kajioka, Japanese, was born on June 20, 1905, in Olowalu, Lahaina, Maui to Chūjiro and Sawayo Takahashi, emigrants from Miyagi-ken, Japan. Sue, one of five children, lost her mother in 1910 and was raised by her father on Olowalu Sugar Plantation where he worked as a carpenter. While still a girl she did hoe-hana in the sugar cane fields during her summer vacation. She attended Japanese-language school until the third grade. She attended English-language schools on Maui, completing the eighth grade in 1918.

Two years later Sue began working as a trimmer for the Baldwin Packers in Lahaina. She soon quit, however, to marry and start a family. After approximately four years, her husband passed away, leaving a three-year old daughter in Sue's care. She then married Hachiro Kajioka and moved to Honolulu in 1926. For the next 10 years, she worked as a part-time housemaid, laundress, and cook to supplement the income Mr. Kajioka received as a Hawaiian Pine Company truck driver.

Sue began working as a trimmer for the Hawaiian Pine Company in 1937. She became a reliever in 1941 and was promoted to forelady two years later. She ended a 33-year career with her retirement in 1970.

Sue is a grandmother and an active member of the Makua Alii Senior Citizen's Club.
MK: Interview with Mrs. Sue Kajioka, on March 14, at her home in Waimalu.

Mrs. Kajioka, for the record, can you first tell me when you were born?

SK: June 20, 1905.

MK: Can you tell me where you were born?

SK: Olowalu, Lahaina, Maui.

MK: Mrs. Kajioka, you were one of five children, and I was wondering if you can tell me what sort of work your parents did when you were small?

SK: My father was a carpenter at the Olowalu Plantation, at that time.

MK: How about your mother?

SK: My mother died when I was about five or six years old.

MK: After your mother died in 1910, your father supported the family alone?

SK: Uh huh [yes], my father supported five of our children.

MK: Did you or your sisters or your brother contribute to the household income?

SK: My brother, after he graduate school, then he went to work at the plantation sugar mill and he helped my father. And my older sister helped at home. She didn't go to school very much, but she went I think about third or fourth grade, and then she dropped out and helped my father at home.

MK: Did she drop out because your mother had passed away?
SK: Yeah. Well, after she went to school that much, then she dropped out. Then, she helped my father at home because we were all small yet.

MK: You mentioned that your brother worked. Without the money that he was bringing in, would it have been hard for your family?

SK: Of course, we weren't rich at all. We were very poor, but still, we had our own three meals. But still, we weren't rich at all.

MK: You were telling me that when you were fifth or sixth grade, in 1915-1916, you worked for the sugar company.

SK: In the field.

MK: Can you tell me about your work in the field?

SK: We used to hoe-hana. That means weeding in the cane field when the cane was small. Then, some days, we do the planting. Planting of sugar cane. For about two summers, I think, I worked in the sugar plantations.

MK: How did you get that job?

SK: Well, the plantation will ask many of the children around the camp if they want to work during the summer months. Unless they have something else to do, but we thought nothing else to do so we worked in the cane field during the summer months.

MK: Were you doing the same kind of work that the adults did?

SK: It's the same job but we weren't mixed together with the adults. The school children are in one group, so we never mixed with the elders.

MK: How about your pay?

SK: I think it was about $15 a month, I'm quite sure about that. If you worked more than 15 days in a month, then you used to have bonus.

MK: Did you get a bonus?

SK: No, I never did get a bonus because I don't like that job. But there isn't any other work to do, so I used to... and we were small so we couldn't work other jobs.

MK: Why didn't you like the job?

SK: I don't like to work in the field. (Laughs) Because in the sugar cane field, it's very itching because they have that fine hairy thing on the leaf. I don't like that. But I have to work for
books and all. Doing nothing at home won't help my parents. So I used to work. Two summers I worked.

MK: What did you think about this first working experience?

SK: It was hard. I don't know. I wouldn't say it was good at all. Working in the hot sun. Well, we had something like contract, like, so if you finish so many rows of lines in a day, then you can quit. So we come home. They call it ukupau, in those days, in the plantation language. Something like a contract. You finish so many lines then you through for the day. So that's how we all used to do. The one that finish early, they help each other, and then we all come home together.

MK: So in one day that you worked, how many hours would you be in the field?

SK: We start work in the morning about 5:30, those days. Then they take us in the field. Usually, they work till 4:30. But if we get that day, the contract, then we come home earlier. Maybe 1 or 2 o'clock. That's how we used to do.

MK: Did you like that system, of contract?

SK: Coming home? Yeah, we rather have that because we can come home earlier. We all group together and come home. We help each other. The one who get finished earlier, then they helped the others, then we'd come home together.

MK: At that time, did school children help each other in the fields?

SK: Yeah, we all grouped together and we all used to help each other.

MK: So how were your relations with your co-workers, then; your schoolmates?

SK: In those days, our camp, town wasn't very big, so we know each other. With Japanese and all mixed, and yet we were like sisters and brothers in those days. Even at school, we used to share lunches, too. Our school, at the start, when I was up to about third grade, I used to go to Olowalu Small (Elementary) School. We didn't have cafeteria at that school, so we used to take our own lunch. So we share.

MK: When you were in the fields you shared your lunches, too?

SK: Yeah, we all used to share.

MK: Was it long lunch break or short lunch break?

SK: No, it's only half an hour.

MK: Did you have any rest breaks?
MK: What if you wanted to rest, or if you wanted to go use the bathroom?
SK: That, you have.
MK: At that time, you had a luna, too?
SK: Yes.
MK: How was the luna?
SK: Our luna used to be an old Puerto Rican man and he was very nice to us. He used to be the luna for new Filipino imported workers, so he was kind of strict. But to the school children, well, he wasn't that bad.
MK: Did he teach you how to hoe-hana and how to plant?
SK: Right. They teach you and how to plant. Even the pulapula. We learned from him how to do the work.
MK: You just said pulapula; what is pulapula?
SK: That's the plant, the sugar seedling. They call that pulapula. They plant that. They teach you how to plant that in the line, how to lay the cane, the plant.
MK: Was anything about the work real hard for you to do or real easy to do?
SK: It's easy. I wouldn't say it's hard, but I just didn't like going out in the sun. Because my plan was, from small, I used to like housework and things like that. I didn't like to work too much in the sun and things like that.
MK: When you were small, what did you want to be, when you grew up?
SK: Schoolteacher.
MK: What did your father think about that idea?
SK: He didn't like that idea because he said, "Girls don't have to have too much education because they're going to get married," and all of that. Things like that. Not only that; financially, we weren't rich enough. Because Maui, to become a teacher, to go to a higher school, you have to come to Honolulu. We didn't have any relatives in Honolulu. My father didn't believe in sending girls out to Honolulu by themselves. He was very old-fashioned, and bringing up four girls by himself, he didn't like that.

So I have to drop out of school. My plans was to become a schoolteacher. I wanted to work through and then go to school, but my
father wouldn't allow me that. He wouldn't let me come out to Honolulu.

MK: So you followed your father's wishes?

SK: Right, right.

MK: You mentioned that your father didn't think that girls needed as much education as boys.

SK: No, not at that time, no.

MK: So did your brother have more encouragement to continue school than the sisters in your family?

SK: My brother believe in depending on what they want to be. But financially, we couldn't afford. So that's the reason why I didn't go much school.

MK: So you finished school in the eighth grade, in 1918. Then, what did you do after that?

SK: I stayed home, and then, doing nothing. Because my sister got married, too, so I have to take over the house. So I didn't do anything.

MK: You told me that soon after that [ca. 1920] you went to work for the Baldwin Packers in Maui.

SK: I worked one summer Baldwin's, then I got married. Then I didn't do any work at all.

MK: Can we go back to the Baldwin Packers time; I'm going to ask you some questions. Why did you decide to go to work that time?

SK: Financially, I needed some money, too, so I worked.

MK: What kinds of work could you, at that time, look for on Maui?

SK: Well, it's either housework or, you know. I didn't care to work in stores at that time, so either housework or work in the cannery. That's about the only thing because I don't want to work in the field. So I thought I'll work in the cannery.

MK: How come you didn't go housework?

SK: They didn't have very much housework to do at that time. Because most of these people, the town was small, they had either manager's place or bookkeeper's place. That's about all, and they all have maids, so I didn't have any chance to go in that kind. So that's the only job I could get, so I took cannery work.

MK: How did you hear about the job; how did you know there was a job?
SK: Well, they always have it in paper, and things like that. When summer comes, when pineapple start coming out, they always looking for people to work. So I said, "This is time for me to work," so I went to work.

MK: You decided on your own?

SK: Right.

MK: How did you get the job at Baldwin Packers?

SK: Baldwin was very easy. I just went there and applied for it. They wanted girls, so I got the job.

MK: How did you apply?

SK: Just go to the cannery's office--employment office--and apply for it.

MK: Do you fill in papers or...

SK: At that time, they filled in. Only just the signature.

MK: Did they ask you for your name, your address...

SK: Right, right. They did ask that.

MK: ...your age?

SK: Uh huh. But at that time, age didn't mean anything. They didn't have labor law, or something like that. Anybody that can work, used to have work at that time.

MK: Was there any physical examination?

SK: No. Not that time.

MK: How much time was there between the time you applied and when you got on the job?

SK: The following week I had job. Because they wanted girls very badly, at that time. When summer comes they need girls.

MK: Did you consider it easy to get the job?

SK: For getting the job, it was easy. In the cannery.

MK: You became a trimmer. Why did you become a trimmer?

SK: Because they always have about 5 cents more than the packers, than the other departments. For girls, I mean, you know. (I don't know why trimmers got more pay....but the job is harder than packing....that's what I think.)
MK: Were all the trimmers girls?

SK: Yes. Trimmers are girls, and packers are all girls. The tray boys are boys, and warehouse, they have girls and boys.

MK: When you look back on that first summer that you worked at Baldwin, can you describe how your table was?

SK: It was only... how did it work now? Pine comes out, and then we pick it up. We used to pick it up any old way at Baldwin's. When I went. At that time, the skin was so much on the fruit, too. So we hold the pineapple and lay it on the table, and then cut the skin off any old [way]. They didn't have any way you have to trim or anything like that. So they used to more like shaving on the table. At that time.

MK: How would you hold your pine at Baldwin?

SK: Well, you hold it with the thumb into the [hole]. Then you hold it and you go this way. Then you turn your hands.

MK: So you put your thumb through the hole, you lean part of the pine on to the table, you twirl it around and shave it...

SK: Skin off, and the eyes and all. That's how they used to do.

MK: How did you know which pine to pick up?

SK: We used to pick up any one. (Laughs) At Baldwin's.

MK: About how many girls were working as trimmers?

SK: How many was it? Not very much. And it was only one side [of the table]. Baldwin's was one side. Just about....was it about eight? About eight [girls]. About eight, I think.

MK: You were wearing gloves?

SK: We all wear gloves.

MK: And using what type of knife?

SK: Now what....it's a....what would I say? It's not the wide knife. It's about that wide.

MK: About inch wide?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. About that long.

MK: Six inches long?

SK: About that.
MK: Were they stainless steel?
SK: No, it wasn't stainless, at that time.
MK: Were they very sharp?
SK: They are sharp, yes.
MK: Was it easy to trim?
SK: I wouldn't say it's very easy. (Laughs) Because you couldn't squeeze the fruit too hard. You bruise the fruit. So that's the reason why it's hard.
MK: You said you could pick up any old pine. Did you have to check if it was pink pine or it was sour?
SK: At that time, no. They didn't have such thing as pink pine [i.e., pineapple that turns pink after being cooked; it has a distinctive orchid-like fragrance] or anything like that. Never heard of that. Even later on, even at Dole, that's very way back the pink fruit came out. Olden days, they didn't have that--such thing as pink fruit.
MK: So when the pine came out, every pine that came out was trimmed?
SK: Uh huh. Most of them.
MK: Which ones would you discard? You said, "most of them." Which ones would you not trim?
SK: You mean not to trim one of the fruit? In olden days, there were hardly any without skin on. They were, every one had little or more skin on.
MK: And you were saying that in those days, they had a lot of skin. And how about the size; was it different from now days?
SK: No. The size isn't different. They were about the same size.
MK: In those days, all the women did the same way? They trimmed the same way?
SK: Uh huh [yes].
MK: Were there any techniques that you learned or figured out by yourself to make the job easy for you?
SK: Maybe some of them, but to me, I wasn't very good in that anyway.
MK: How did you learn how to trim?
SK: They generally have somebody [i.e., a forelady] to teach you how to
do it. What not to do, things like that. Not to hold the fruit too hard because you bruise the fruit. Things like that. But other than that, it wasn't very hard at Baldwin's. [Baldwin's cannery operations began in 1912.] And Maui, I think that was the first cannery came up. Maybe they had way up Haiku [Haiku Fruit and Packing Company built a cannery in 1903.], but I don't know. I never did work in that cannery.

MK: Did you have a training period or, how did they train you?
SK: Right on the table.

MK: For how long?
SK: They teach you only for couple of hours. Then, you go your own.

MK: Was it hard or easy for you to learn?
SK: Very hard.

MK: What happened?
SK: Well, we try, it's hard. Very hard to do it. You don't have the technique to work easy way. So it's kind of hard. I wouldn't say it's easy at all.

MK: What exactly was hard? Was the cutting hard, or was the turning hard?
SK: It's the starting of the cutting the skin is very hard. Because the knife is sharp, but the skin is hard. You couldn't cut it too deep, too. That's the reason why it's hard.

MK: Were you assigned to a particular table?
SK: Yes. In the morning they'll tell you which table to go.

MK: Did you have a choice?
SK: You were about the same.

MK: When you trimmed, if you had different size pine coming down, did you have to change the way you were trimming?
SK: Sometimes, when it's light then you just carry it up and trim it. But otherwise, it's almost about the same way of trimming.

MK: When you get tired trimming, your hand gets tired of holding the pine, what do you do?
SK: Well, you just have to continue doing it, till the rest period or lunch period, like that.
MK: Did your hand ever get tired?

SK: Oh, they do, they do.

MK: Last time, you were telling me that you have to be careful when you use the knife. Back then, at the Baldwin Packers, did you used to be real careful with the knife and your gloves?

SK: Well, you have to be careful because otherwise, you cut your finger and things like that. Because it's sharp.

MK: You were saying that you sometimes cut off the tips of your gloves.

SK: Yes, you do.

MK: Did that happen to you?

SK: Oh, yes.

MK: Did you have any other kind of problems; rash or...

SK: I did have a rash, though. I did have rash.

MK: How long did that sort of thing last; rashes, cuts?

SK: Oh, depends on how you heal, too. Some people, they last long.

MK: How about you?

SK: My rashes don't last too long, so....

MK: At Baldwin, how much checking was there? How often, or how would someone like a forelady check how you're doing?

SK: They weren't very strict on the way you trimmed at Baldwin's, at that time. I don't know about later on; maybe they were stricter later on, but when I worked that summer, they weren't very strict on the way you trimmed, or anything like that.

MK: Why do you say that, that they weren't too strict?

SK: Because you can trim, as long as you don't cut the skin off too thick. So, I would say they weren't that strict like now. Like now, most of the canneries, they very strict the way you trim, the way you shave.

Because they don't want you to cut too much. Because if you cut too much, then the balance of the fruit won't be grade A [fancy grade]. The fruit should be solid after they cut it. No cuts or dents, or anything like that, to be in grade A.

MK: It has to be smooth?
SK: Right through.

MK: All around the cylinder?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. So it has to be. That goes for A grade. And then, any dent or any edges sliced, that goes to B [choice grade]. That's the reason why they getting more strict and strict on the way you trim.

MK: How about at Baldwin Packers; did they have A's and B's?

SK: Oh yes. From long before then.

MK: But it didn't matter too much if you shaved a little bit more?

SK: As long as you didn't shave too much, from olden days, they didn't bother you too much, at that time. But like now, they very strict. In all the canneries.

MK: So if you trimmed the way you used to trim at Baldwin, could your fruit go by as A's, if you had trimmed the same way?

SK: I don't think so. Not now. Because now, even Dole now, the fruit comes out very clean, than before. Yet, you still have to get small little spots out and things like that. Still, when you working, you bound to cut little bit more than what it should be done. So that's the hard part now.

MK: Back then, when you worked at the Baldwin Packers, how was the speed of the machine, compared to when you first worked at Dole in 1937?

SK: Oh, the Baldwin's was much slower.

MK: How did you know it was much slower?

SK: Because the way the fruit comes out. When I first went to Dole, you have no time to even look around. At that time [1937], it wasn't that fast. But now it's faster.

MK: So when you were working at Baldwin you could trim and you could look around and...

SK: Yeah. You had time on that after you get used to doing it. Things like that. But not now. Of course, in the cannery, even Dole, you have time. Those experienced girls, they have time to talk to each other. But their eyes are on the fruit, you stay on the job.

MK: Earlier we talked a little bit about the knife, but I was just wondering, the knives that they have at Dole now, you can gouge. There's a little thing where you can gouge out the eyes if there are little eyes.
SK: I don't know now what they are using. They using the same one or the pincher.

MK: I don't know what it's called, but when you were working at Baldwin's was there a special thing to take off little eyes?

SK: No, we used to use the tip of the knife.

MK: So the knives at Baldwin was different from the knives at Dole?

SK: At that time. So even Dole, when I first went in we used to use the tip of the knife for any little eye like that; you use the tip of the knife to get the little gouges out. But later on, they were turned in to pinchers. Right by the handle they had a pincher that you turn it around and pinch the eyes like that. But now, I don't know what they have now.

MK: That was what I was referring to, the pincher-like thing. So 1920, Baldwin didn't have the pincher, and the Dole of 1937 didn't have pincher?

SK: At the start, didn't have to. Uh huh.

MK: Which was easier; to take off the eyes with the pincher or with the tip of the knife?

SK: I think with the pincher you won't damage the fruit too much. Because the tip of the knife, sometimes it goes far in and you cut unnecessary part. But with the pincher, you just pinch it off. It's an ordinary pincher; it's placed on by the handle. So I think the pincher does a better job than....

MK: Was it easier for you to take off the eyes?

SK: From the start was kind of hard because you have to get used to with the use of the pincher.

MK: I know this is sort of jumping ahead, but do you kind of remember when the pincher knives came in?

SK: I think it was way back, after the war [World War II].

MK: Since we're talking about knives, I was just wondering, at the Baldwin Packers, how often did you change your knives?

SK: I think it was once before lunch and once after lunch, I think. That's how they used to change, I'm quite sure about that in olden days.

MK: They would collect the knives and sharpen it, and give you a replacement knife?

SK: Yeah. They always replace the knife, then they collect and sharpen
that knife. That's how they used to do.

MK: When you look back on the time you worked at Baldwin, how did you feel in the beginning, about your trimming job? The first couple weeks, how did you feel?

SK: I thought, "Oh, working is awfully hard." I didn't like to work. Anyway, I didn't like those work.

MK: Why didn't you like it?

SK: I really don't know. I didn't like those jobs like doing that kind of job. I used to like cooking from young. So things like that, I didn't mind doing it, but to work--even housework, I didn't care too much to do those things. Going out in the field, I didn't like those jobs.

MK: You didn't like your Baldwin Packers trimming job?

SK: No, I didn't care too much on that job, too.

MK: When you were working at Baldwin Packers, what hours did you work?

SK: We used to work, I think, about 7 o'clock [a.m.]. We used to start 7, I think it was around 7. Six-thirty or 7, something like that. And then, we get through about 3:30 [p.m.], I think.

MK: Did you have rest breaks, lunch breaks?

SK: Yes, we have lunch, we have rest period.

MK: You had a set rest period?

SK: Yes.

MK: How long was it?

SK: Only about 5 or 10 minutes; that's all they have.

MK: How did you go take the rest break?

SK: We just tell the forelady that we going, and then you get the rest break.

MK: Did the whole table go off?

SK: No.

MK: You'd go by yourself. How about your lunch?

SK: Lunch, everybody goes. Everybody.

MK: How long would you take, and where would you eat?
SK: They have lockers where everybody can have lunch. So either you go to cafeteria, or take your own lunch in. They have a place to eat. I generally used to take my lunch.

MK: About half an hour lunch?

SK: Half an hour lunch.

MK: How does the Baldwin Packers cafeteria and locker facilities compare with the Dole ones?

SK: In those olden days, there wouldn't be any comparison from Dole.

MK: Can you describe the Baldwin facilities?

SK: It was only a place that you can put your things in; that's all they had. It was very plain at that time. Later on, I think they built and had better lockers and things like that. But not in my days.

MK: So you mean that at Baldwin, there were no benches or something where you folks could all sit around in the locker room?

SK: They had that.

MK: What was so different between the Dole lockers and the Baldwin lockers?

SK: At that time, that was way back so like Dole, you have all the lockers placed in and you have individual. So during the summer months they shared two to three in a locker. The building is big and sanitation and air and all that is there, you see, Dole. But Baldwin wasn't that. After they built bigger cafeteria and things like that, then they had better ones. But I didn't work at that time. My sister worked but not me.

MK: When you first worked in the cannery, were there certain things that really bothered you; like smells or the noises?

SK: Oh, the noise and the smell of the pineapple was terrible.

MK: How did you manage?

SK: You get used to with it. But the noise, it's very irritating but you get used to with it. So naturally, you talk louder than usual. That's a habit, like. I'm quite sure that's how everybody felt at the starting; it's the noise and the smell of the fruit. Even you come home, the smell will never go out. It's a smell right through your body. So even the bus drivers used to notice. "Oh, you cannery girls." You change your clothes and come home, and yet they can tell the difference already.

MK: When you worked at Baldwin, did they provide you with apron, cap?
SK: Yes, they had that.

MK: Who washed the aprons and caps?

SK: You have to wash yourself.

MK: Did they check? What would happen if yours weren't so clean?

SK: In the morning, they'll tell you. They'll check you. If it's dirty, they tell you to go buy a new one or have a clean one. All the canneries are like that. Even Dole.

MK: At that time, did you have to wear shoes to work at Baldwin?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Were there any other rules and regulations?

SK: Not that I remember, at Baldwin's. Not that I remember about that.

MK: Were there any rules about your behavior, what you can do, what you cannot do in the cannery?

SK: It was safety regulations were there. That's about all I can remember with Baldwin's.

MK: Earlier you mentioned that because of the noise you have to talk louder. Could you talk at the table, and what kind of stuff did you talk about?

SK: Well, we talk outside things and friends, what you see, and things like that. Daily routine stories and things like that. But you had to talk louder than usual. Otherwise, you can't hear anything because the can and all that noise.

MK: You were saying there were about eight girls that worked as trimmers with you on the table?

SK: Uh huh, about eight, I think. But Dole is about six, wasn't it? Even in the picture. [Mrs. Kajioka points at a photo of trimmers working at a table.] About six, I think.

MK: Of about what period are you talking about Dole?

SK: Dole, the amount is about the same, from before and now.

MK: But at Baldwin, you had about eight girls?

SK: I think about eight.

MK: And how were your relations? You talked, and....

SK: I didn't talk very much. I'm a person that don't talk too much.
MK: When you're trimming, do you help each other?

SK: Uh uh [no].

MK: What if a girl, she's slow and it's piling up; what do you do?

SK: I wasn't very good in those work so I didn't have very much time to help anybody. But those who are fast on things like that, they used to help. They help each other.

MK: Did you ever have a pile up?

SK: Oh, yes.

MK: What happened?

SK: Well, they helped me. Sometimes the forelady used to help, too. But not Dole. Dole, the foreladies don't work. Uh uh [no]. (Even before the union, 1946, and after the union came in.)

MK: So at Baldwin, the foreladies would come to your side and trim?

SK: Yeah, they used to. They used to help sometimes. The girls do help. Even Dole does that; but Dole, the reliever sometimes help. But the forelady doesn't help at all.

MK: At Baldwin, did you have a reliever?

SK: I don't remember. I don't think I had any, at that time.

MK: When you went on your rest breaks to maybe use the bathroom, the forelady....[relieved you]?

SK: No.

MK: No one took your place?

SK: Uh uh [no]. Nobody.

MK: So when you went to the bathroom...

SK: I don't know how they used to do that, the regulation. But Dole, they do regulate. When each one start going out, then the forelady or the reliever regulates the divider [a gate-like device that directs the pineapple from the Ginaca to the right and left sides of the trimming table] so it comes out one less. Only one at a time, one table, so they make it one less. They used the divider. But I don't remember at Baldwin's.

MK: When you were working at Baldwin, besides having the forelady come and help you when you piled up, what else did she do?

SK: They have to check, and things like the machine troubles, and
things like that. They have to write down all those reports.

MK: What kind of reports did they have to make?
SK: We write down how many pink pine, like that.
MK: Oh, I'm talking about Baldwin time?
SK: Baldwin, I don't know what they do.
MK: Did they have to make reports, Baldwin time?
SK: I'm quite sure they all have to do that. I don't remember too much about Baldwin. What they used to do.

MK: What do you remember about your foreladies, the ones that you had?
SK: You mean Baldwin's? I don't remember anything about that. It's only one summer, so....
MK: You don't remember if they were treating you very well, or...
SK: I think they all nice. That's the main thing.
MK: When you look back, do you remember about what sort of things the foreladies would talk to you about?
SK: Uh uh, no.

MK: At Dole, from before and even now, the workers would get together and they would do things. Sometimes the company would help sponsor, and sometimes they would do it on their own. How about at Baldwin?
SK: No, I didn't see any of those things.
MK: No company sponsored outside activities?
SK: I don't know of any of those things.
MK: At that time when you worked this summer, what was the pay?
SK: I don't remember what was the pay at Baldwin's. I really don't remember that.
MK: What did you think about the pay?
SK: Well, in those days, I don't think we thought much of it. Because the things that you buy at the store is so cheap, too, you see. So I don't think anybody thought about it.
MK: What were you doing with your money at that time; the money that you earned?
SK: I used to give it to my father.

MK: All of it?

SK: Well, part of it.

MK: What would you do with the leftover, then?

SK: Didn't have very much to spend, those days. In the olden days. In our childhood, young age, they didn't have very much. Even the candies was different from now. In the olden days, they didn't have all sorts of varieties of candies at that time. So there's no choice. There's no choice because there isn't any in the stores to buy. Like now, they have so many different types of candies and things like that. But in our young days, even this box chocolate was very hard to get, those days. In the stores all what they have is that coconut ball they have now, the red one. The coconut candy, the square one. And the marble candy. It was so big. They don't have the big ones. They have the giant now, but the ones that we had was about that big.

MK: About three-quarter inch in diameter?

SK: About that....

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: So Mrs. Kajioka, you spent the money that you kept on things like that.

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: At that time, do you remember if the boys were getting the same pay as the girls?

SK: I really don't know if they had same pay or not. I really don't know anything about that.

MK: Do you remember if the Baldwin Packers had any contract work?

SK: I really don't know.

MK: Were you generally paid by the hour?

SK: Uh huh.

MK: After you worked pine you went to other jobs, but why did you decide to quit pine? Why didn't you stay on?
SK: I didn't care too much of that kind of work.

MK: When you quit pine what kind of jobs did you look for?

SK: Soon after that I got married so I didn't work at all.

MK: Now days, when people get married they still work, but how come you didn't consider working at that time, even if you were married?

SK: My husband, he was a contractor so I didn't work.

MK: Soon after that, about a year later you got your daughter, and your husband passed away. Then you got married again. From the time you got married [second time] to 1937--that would be from 1926 to about 1937--you worked housemaid, laundry and cook. Can you tell me why you went into this type of job, and why did you work?

SK: My husband is only a truck driver, so in order to help. I didn't want to stay home. So I used to go housework so I can go back and forth. Take care of my own home, and then by the day we used to go clean house. We get paid by the day. So I used to go house cleaning. And then, I do sometimes laundry work. Go over there and do the laundry, and come home and do my own work. Just to help because I didn't want to just stay idle at home.

MK: Can you tell me where you did this housework and laundry?

SK: All around Manoa, because I was living in Manoa at that time. So I used to go from homes. Haole homes do laundry, housework. Do sometimes dinner work. Cook.

MK: How did you get these jobs?

SK: My friends let me know that they want maid, so I just go and apply and do the work.

MK: How did your friends know that?

SK: They are those working steady in one place, and they hear that they looking for maid to do the laundry once a week or things like that. So all my friends, and things like that. My sister used to be a cateress too, so....

MK: So you used to hear about the jobs from....

SK: Uh huh, and then we go and apply for it. They give us the address and apply.

MK: What do you do when you apply, though?

SK: Just ask them if they want anybody to do their laundry once a week. Then they say they need; well, then we take the job. We go in the morning and do the laundry, and fold it up and then come home.
MK: You said that you were paid by the day. That was the same for housework and laundry?

SK: Housework, that time, how much did we used to get? About two-fifty [$2.50], I think, to do the housework.

MK: That was for one day of housework?

SK: Well, depend how fast you can do the housework. Vacuum and dust, mop and all that, and then come home.

MK: So it was like ukupau?

SK: Yeah. It depends on how fast you can do and do a nice job. If you do a nice job, then the lady will hire you all the time and ask you to come back. Even the laundry is the same thing; it all depends how you do it.

MK: You go to their house and do the laundry?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. Go there, they have the laundry all ready for you. You go there and do. Because you have to fold it up and come home. If there's any ironing to do, then you have to sort of think what you should wash first. Then hang it out, and by the time, you doing the other washing you can press the others and then fold it up, and then come home. You have to do all the arranging by yourself.

MK: How much were you being paid for laundry?

SK: I think it was about the same. About two, two-fifty, to three dollars.

MK: What if there was a whole lot of laundry? Do you do it by piecework?

SK: No, it's not piecework. At that time was by the day.

MK: So if you had a small amount or large amount, it didn't matter?

SK: No. Most places. That's when they decide, when you go and apply for it, that's when they tell you how much they willing to pay. So if you like it, then you take it. Otherwise, you just refuse.

MK: These jobs as housework and laundry woman, those were part-time?

SK: They call it part-time.

MK: It depended whether or not the woman liked you or not, and then you would go back if she called you?

SK: Uh huh. They tell you come back the following week, things like that. Then you go back the same place.
MK: How about your cook work?

SK: My cook—sometimes, I used to go only for the party, like that. When they have party, I go a little bit early. They do the heavy cooking already and we serve and clear up the place, and come home. That, we used to get more like contract. We ask the price. That kind of job, that's only when they have parties like that. We demand the pay. If they like it, then they take it. Otherwise, they ask somebody else.

MK: You've been saying "we" all along; did you do it with somebody?

SK: Sometimes. Sometimes I used to go with my sister—when they have a bigger ones.

MK: You mean cooking assignments?

SK: Yeah. It's sort on a serving part. They do the most hard part of the cooking, and then we go and help them with the vegetables and all that. Serve and clean up the place and come back.

MK: When you did the housework and the laundry, you were working alone?

SK: Alone. Those are all by yourself.

MK: When you were doing housework and laundry, would the Mrs. of the house be home and watching?

SK: No.

MK: You would be there unsupervised?

SK: Yeah. Most of them, when they have their maids they're not home. Majority of them, they're not home.

MK: At the cannery, you have a supervisor watching how you're doing the work; and housework, laundry, you don't have that?

SK: No.

MK: Which one do you like better, or do you...

SK: Well, it all depends. I don't know how the pay [for housework and laundry] is now, but I mean, sometimes you have to spend your own car fare, bus fare, and thing like that to go there. Because you have to get your own expense.

MK: Which job did you like better, though; compare your Baldwin time and the time you did housework and laundry?

SK: Well, [housework and laundry] it's more individual, independent. You work housework, and things like that, it's kind of hard work, too. Because you have to rush and manage what to wash and things
like that. Of course, they have washing machine, but, you know. The pay isn't that good. You have to search around for so many houses in a week to get more money. But like cannery, well, of course you go every day. You have a steady pay on that, you see. But cannery, it's good in one way, because you have steady pay and things like that. You can [also] stay home when you want.

MK: How about housework; could you stay home when you wanted to?

SK: No, when you have the set date you have to be there, rain or shine. That's the hard part.

MK: You mentioned that you would have to look for so many houses. How many houses did you do in one week?

SK: Sometimes I used to get two, three, like that. Some ladies, they go nearly every day, but I didn't go too much on that. Then I got steady, all day cooking job. Before I went to the cannery.

When my children were big already, well, I thought I better quit because still when you work for private home as a cook, then they have parties most of the time in the holidays. Then I won't be home. Like New Year's, and Christmas, Thanksgiving. You won't be able to go home because you have to wait till late, because they generally have parties themselves. So that's the reason why I changed to cannery at that time.

MK: That's when you stopped being housemaid, laundry and cook?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. I figured that my children are older and then, they want me home for the holidays, too. So I figure, well, if I work cannery, the holidays we don't work. I have more time to do the cooking for them for the holidays. So that's the reason why I left. But I prefer working for private homes. I like that kind of job more than cannery. But spend more time for my children, well, I figure cannery is the best place.

MK: What do you like about working in the private home?

SK: It's the work that I like. Because I like cooking. I like do cooking work, and sewing, and things like that. I like those jobs. So that's the reason why I like that.

MK: Did you have to have any special training to be a cook in that private home?

SK: No, I didn't.

MK: So how did you know how to prepare certain things for them?

SK: We learned ourselves.

MK: You taught yourself?
SK: I learned myself. Of course, I read books and things like that. For new recipes like that. But as a whole, my liking is more on the cooking and housework, like sewing and things like that. Even now, it's my hobby, see.

MK: So you told me you quit cooking and then you went to the cannery.

SK: Uh huh. That's back in 1937; that's the first time I started Dole.

MK: That was in summer, and you started working as a trimmer. Why did you decide to continue working?

SK: It's no sense of staying home and....that's the reason why I work.

MK: Why did you choose Dole? When you came out to Honolulu you have Libby's, you have CPC [California Packing Corporation]; why Dole?

SK: My husband is a Dole man from young. He worked only pineapple, as a truck driver from way back in 1920. So I figure, well, it's better to work in one company than work in two companies.

MK: Why is it better to work in one company?

SK: So we have transportation same way. That's the reason why.

MK: How did you get your job with Dole?

SK: Because of my husband working there; he's a regular employee. So that's the reason why I get.

MK: So he told you about the job opening?

SK: No. We all know when they start picking girls for cannery, the months that they always advertise in paper and things like that. So that's how. I thought, "Oh, I better start working in the cannery instead of working for private homes, because I'll be having more time."

It wasn't much pay, but even when I was working for private home, at that time--it was before the war anyway--I used to get about $13 a week. That was about the best pay at that time. Some of them used to get less, but I used to get $12, $13 a week working in private homes. I liked it, but it didn't give me very much time for home. That's the reason why I quit.

MK: You were telling me that when you went to Dole, you think you got the job because your husband was there.

SK: I guess so, because most of the employees' families had the job first.

MK: How do they [the Dole personnel staff] know that your husband worked there?
SK: Oh, that employee man that works there, he knows everybody that works there.

MK: He knows Mr. Kajioka?

SK: Oh, yes.

MK: But how does he know that you're his wife?

SK: Oh, they hear.

MK: So when you went to apply, they knew that you were Mr. Hachiro Kajioka's wife?

SK: Uh huh. Because you have to get the application, too. Fill in the application.

MK: What did you have to fill in, in your application?

SK: You have to fill in where you live, your address; your age, you have to get your social security [number] and things like that before you get the job.

MK: That was in 1937?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: You think you would have gotten the job if your husband wasn't working there?

SK: Maybe. Because during the summer months, they generally take workers. They rather have ladies than school kids, because they more ambitious to work than the school kids. They don't play around so much. So that's the reason why they take ladies more than school kids.

MK: Did your husband help you get the job in any way?

SK: No, he didn't.

MK: Is it very common for a woman and her husband to be both working for Dole?

SK: It's very common.

MK: When you say "common," what do you mean? Say, out of 10 women, how many of them would have husbands working for Dole?

SK: Quite a lot. Those who worked in the cannery.

MK: Can you pick out a number; say maybe, 2 out of 10, or...

SK: I know Mrs. Fujishige, Mr. Hayase, the wife is working there, and
Yamachika, the wife was working there. Quite a lot of them.

MK: When you first got the job, when you applied, were there any examinations that you had to take?

SK: Yes. When you go there, and then you have to go to the dispensary and have your physical test, like.

MK: What kind of physical?

SK: They just test your eyes and your body, and then [blood] pressure. They do check.

MK: Because you had experience before at Baldwin, did that count any in getting the job?

SK: I didn't mention that when I [applied at Dole]---I didn't mention.

MK: How come?

SK: I didn't want to because I didn't have that much experience in Baldwin. I know I didn't have very much experience on that.

MK: You became a trimmer; why did you become a trimmer?

SK: Because the pay is better.

MK: Did you ask to be a trimmer?

SK: I asked to be a trimmer.

MK: You said, the pay was better; how much better than...

SK: Five cents more than the packers, at that time. Even now, I think it's 5 cents more.

MK: Can you describe what a trimmer does at Dole? What you did at Dole in 1937.

SK: In 1937, when I first went in there, we used to shave [i.e., trim with unidirectional strokes]. They didn't want us to put the pine on the table, so we have to hold it up.

MK: So you put your thumb through the pine and you hold it up?

SK: Up, and then you used to shave, like, before. Now you don't shave. But at that time was shaving motion.

MK: So you put your thumb through the pine, you hold the pine up, facing up? So you see the cylinder lengthwise [i.e., the cylinder is parallel to the table]. And you use a shaving motion? And you trim it?
MK: How many times would you twirl it?

SK: Two times. Two times, you supposed to finish it.

MK: That was in 1937?

SK: No, 1937, you used to make at least about three times, I think; because it's on a shaving motion. Then, in the following year, they didn't want that. So they went to up and down stroke. They call it "up and down stroke." That's how they went.

MK: So in 1938, they used up and down strokes instead of the shaving motion?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Do you know why they changed it?

SK: I really don't know. They said you trim more by shaving. But up and down motion, they said you don't trim thick and unnecessary parts you don't do it. That's what they claim, but I really don't know.

MK: From your experience, was there any difference in the difficulty or in the speed that you could do it in, then?

SK: I think it's about the same, to me. But I think there is a difference to it, because the way we used to go to the training class and all that and see that. Of course, if you take your time and learning in a class, it's a completely different, you see. But that's what they claimed. By experimenting and things like that, it's a difference. Maybe.

MK: Back in 1937, how many girls were on the table trimming?

SK: About the same like now (a total of 10 or 12, with 5 or 6 trimmers on each side of the table), because the table length is same.

MK: Which pines did you pick up?

SK: [There were trimmers on both sides--lengths--of the table.]

(If there were five girls on each side of the table, the girl at the top--the beginning of the table--picked up the fifth fruit; the next girl--the second girl--picked up the fourth fruit; the third girl picked up the third fruit; and so on. The last person, she picked up the first fruit.)

MK: What things do you look for on the fruit?

SK: It's the skin, the eye and the sour spot.
MK: How can you tell a sour spot is there?

SK: Discolored.

MK: At that time, in 1937, did you have to check for sour pine or pink pine?

SK: Oh yes. At that time, we didn't hardly used to see seed pine [pineapple with seeds]. In those early part, we didn't have very much seed pine--or pink fruit. They didn't have those [two] things, at that time.

MK: When you got a sour pine, what did you do with it?

SK: We throw it away.

MK: Did you put it up in the flume?

SK: Uh uh [no]. You put it where the skin is. The chute [where the skin is discarded].

MK: Right now, can I ask you to describe what you actually do? Tell me, after you trim, what do you do with all the things that's left over from the trimming, all the rubbish?

SK: We shove it down the gutter [i.e., chute].

MK: There were two?

SK: Yeah. One side is for the skin and sour pine. One side is for the shavings and eyes. So when you trim, you always put your hand towards where the skin should go, so it'll drop right there. And then, when you finish with the outside skin, then you bring it back, your hand motion, to where your shavings should drop. So afterwards, you don't have to select the skin and things. You just push it into the chute.

MK: So in 1937, you took the pine off a belt, conveyer belt?

SK: Yeah, it's the same thing.

MK: When you finished trimming, you discard your rubbish in the respective chutes. Then, where do you place the pine that's trimmed?

SK: Into the chain.

MK: Did all the girls at the table have the same job as trimmers?

SK: Same.

MK: How about the girl at the top [i.e., the beginning of the table]; you were telling me that the girl at the top would discard sometimes? You said on the flume they would put stuff and shovel it...
SK: Sometimes, the odds and ends comes out. Generally, the top girl takes all the thing out on the side. When she have time, she does that. The odds and ends, the short little ones, you clean it and put it on the chute, on the top. When there's plenty already then they put it down into the chain because that's going to be either broken [B's] and things like that. So you bunch it up and put it in the chain and it goes to the packing side.

MK: Were there any positions on the trimming table that people liked more than another position?

SK: Oh, they liked to be around the middle. That's the best part.

MK: Why?

SK: Because at the end sometimes, there's extra pine comes out. You have to clean the skin, rubbish and leaves comes out from the Ginaca so naturally, you have to clean over there. Middle, you don't have those things. The top, you have to take the odds and ends out; that's another extra job for you. So middle is the best place, where you don't have extra work.

MK: How did you get your positions? How was it determined that you would be a certain position?

SK: It's in the morning, where you sit. Take your choice when you come down to the table.

MK: So did you go down early for a good position?

SK: Lots of them do that.

MK: How about during the day? Do you change positions?

SK: We shift every half an hour, so everybody has the chance, and lots of them like to be on the top when the lunch hour [starts] and after work.

MK: Why?

SK: Because you have the first fruit to pick. You finish earlier and you can get out early. The last one waits till the pine reaches you, so that last one get all the rubbish to clean, and the last one to pick the fruit. So you going to be last on the table. After you finish all what you do, if the last fruit is there, you finish and you put it in the chain and you put your knife on the top, and then you go home. So that's the reason why.

MK: Did you plan like that, too?

SK: Majority of them do.

MK: But not everybody can end up in that [top] position. So what
happens? Did workers take turns?

SK: No, no. It's in the morning, where you sit. Then your place there. So those who come early and choose where they want—-some of them, if somebody is on the top already, well, they take the middle one or any part like that. They just don't like to be at the end. So because you put your glove there [to save a position], nobody will move your glove from there. That's the reason why they go down there little bit earlier.

MK: But how can you tell your glove from somebody's glove?

SK: Well, there isn't any mark, but still, if there is a glove there, nobody will touch that. They'd be a fight or anything like that if you move somebody's--the person will come and say, "Who moved my glove?"

MK: Were there instances of that? Did that happen?

SK: Oh yes, they do have. When I first went cannery, the working condition was there but still girls used to fight on the table.

MK: How would they fight, and what would they fight about?

SK: Because of the fruit. They say, "Oh, you shoved the fruit," so...in that time, they weren't strict, but still girls, sometimes, the girl at the bottom, extra fruit comes down [to her]. Then they shove it up. They shove it up and there's another fruit coming out from the Ginaca already. So it bangs into it and splashes. So that's how the fight comes out.

Then, later on, the regulation came that if there's any fruit, never to shove the fruit back. Because the fight comes up, you see. So you leave the extra fruit on the chute. So the forelady have to be on the lookout, and see who didn't pick the fruit. It's her duty to settle that. So she have to open her eyes and see who didn't pick.

MK: So back in 1937, if the fruit was coming down and a girl missed, what else could the girl at the end do besides shoving it back?

SK: Either they just take it and do the extra job of fruit, or things like that. That's all. But that's how the fight used to be. You'd be surprised how they used to fight. Just with their dirty gloves and fighting each other, and pulling their hair and what not.

MK: By fighting, you mean actually physically fighting?

SK: Yeah, they used to do that.

MK: So what happened when a fight broke out?
SK: The forelady naturally calls the superintendent or somebody. A man, or something. Then they get called in the office. They find out who did that, and this and that. For the first time they give them chance, and the second time they lay them off, and things like that. Yeah, they used to have fight.

MK: You sort of described the trimming job; you told me that and what happens. You put it [pineapple] on the chain and it goes through. I was wondering about the speed of the fruit at that time; how was it coming out?

SK: When we first went, was I think about 95. I'm quite sure. Ninety-five a minute, I think. Was about that. Then, it came faster, came to 103, or something like that a minute.

MK: So 1937, 95 pines were coming out per minute? What did you think about that speed in 1937?

SK: Was fast enough already. (Laughs)

MK: Could you manage? Did you manage?

SK: No. About two, three weeks, I think, couldn't upkeep with it.

MK: So what happened during those two, three weeks.

SK: Lots of times, they help me and things like that. Then, you started to get the art of working. Then you get faster and upkeep with your fruit.

MK: How did you make your work go faster? How did you speed yourself up?

SK: I don't know, but it's just the experience of your hand motion and things like that, I'm quite sure. It's your technique of working; you get used to with it.

MK: How did you learn to do all that?

SK: At start, they teach us how to do it. Because when you first go to the table—when you are hired—they put you way on the top, not counting the regular girls. You don't move from the top. The forelady try to teach you to pick the first one, if you are on the opposite side. Then you pick it up and try to do.

The reason why when you new is slow is because you take more time in checking your fruit if it's clean or not. But as you get used to with it, then you go over only by glancing, and then you don't check so much like when you learning. That's the reason why you can upkeep with it. But when you get used to with it, then even dusting of the rubbish on the fruit, you have to go very lightly, otherwise you bruise the fruit or roughen the surface with the knife. So you have to go very gently.
As you get used to, by glancing you can just spot them and get rid of it. But when you first learn, you never can. You go around so many times to check on it, that's why you cannot upkeep with it. You have to check if the rubbish is on the fruit or not. Because you don't wash the fruit. After you put it on the chain, then the machine washes, sprays the fruit. If there's any rubbish, well it'll wash it. Then it goes to the slicer, and then goes to the packer.

MK: When you were trimming back in 1937, were you wearing two gloves?

SK: Yes.

MK: At that time, were the pines all about the same size?

SK: Well, if it comes to the first year crop, it's about the same size. If you go the machine that's on the second crop fruit, then the size is smaller. That's 2-tall.

MK: Did you prefer doing one size more than the other one?

SK: I prefer doing the smaller ones because it's easier for you. The fruit is lighter, and things like that.

MK: How about in terms of trimming; was there less trim to take off of the smaller pine?

SK: No. At the start it was almost about the same.

MK: So the only difference was the weight of the fruit?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: At Dole, if your hand got tired what could you do?

SK: Nothing.

MK: At Dole, did you ever injure yourself, or almost injure yourself...

SK: No, I never did. Only had rash for first couple of weeks. That's all.

MK: At Dole, how much checking up was there? Checking of your fruit, the ones that you trimmed?

SK: What we trim, not individually [checked]. Not individually.

MK: How about the table's trimming?

SK: You mean the shavings and all that?

MK: Yeah.
SK: They [the boys in the "tunnel" where the shavings eventually go] used to check once in the morning and once in the afternoon. They bring it up and see if the trimming, the shavings are done right, and the skins are cut right. They bring it up and then show. About twice a day.

MK: Who would they show it to?

SK: They bring it up to the forelady or the reliever. The forelady and the reliever will show it to the girls and say that somebody is cutting the skin too thick, and somebody is shaving too much, like that. But they wouldn't know who did it, but it's all blamed on the table.

MK: So what would happen to that table if that happened?

SK: They just---nothing happens.

MK: At that time, how were the knives assigned to you?

SK: In the morning, the foreladies or the reliever puts up the knife for everybody. If your knife isn't sharp, well you complain to the forelady or the reliever and they give you another knife.

MK: You were telling me that if your knife was sharp and you wanted to keep it until after the lunch hour you marked it? [The interviewer had been informed that the women sometimes marked their knives with lipsticks.]

SK: No. We generally don't mark our knives.

MK: At that time, in 1937, was that the period you were referring to when you said they didn't have stainless steel knives?

SK: No, they didn't have stainless steel.

MK: So you were saying that they get rusty fast?

SK: Oh yes, they do. But not on the table. They don't get rusty on the table because they're sharpened and then wash it all the time. But you can tell any knife, if you leave it too long, then it rusts, you see. Because they're not stainless.

MK: Were there any hard things about trimming the pines at Dole? Any difficulties that you encountered?

SK: Well....I don't know about any other canneries, but we used to have sometimes CPC cannery workers come to Dole and work at times, when they are slack. The regulars used to come and work. They said Dole is hard because the regulation and the way to trim and all that is different. So they used to say Dole is harder.

MK: But what did they mean by the regulations being harder?
SK: The way you trim and all that is different from CPC. So I heard, but. The girls that come from there used to say that. Like them, I think they can choose their fruit or anything like that [i.e., pick up the pineapples randomly], I'm quite sure. So they used to say that Dole is hard, that they don't like it, and all that. Then they say the foreladies are too strict and all that. I really don't know about it, because I don't go to other canneries.

MK: When you were working at Dole in that 1937 summer, how were the hours? What hours were you working?

SK: During the peak season, we used to work from ... we used to be one shift. (Pause) No, two shifts. During the peak season, we used to work eight-hour shift. And if you come regular [or an intermittent], you work ... peak season, we used to work from 6:30 to 6:30, something like that. The regulars used to work longer.

MK: 1937 summer you were a seasonal?

SK: Yeah.

MK: So you worked...

SK: Eight hours.

MK: Dole, at that time, how were the rest breaks set up?

SK: Same.

MK: As today you mean?

SK: Uh huh. It's same.

MK: They had 10-minute breaks?

SK: No, it's about seven minutes, I think.

MK: Back in 1937?

SK: Uh huh. Even now, it's about that.

MK: How many breaks did you have?

SK: Only once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Half an hour lunch.

MK: When you went to Dole, did you eat in the cafeteria?

SK: No, I hardly eat in the cafeteria.

MK: You take your home lunch. Were there any rules and regulations at Dole besides the apron, the cap?
SK: You mean in what way?

MK: For your behavior, or for the way you had to be dressed?

SK: Yes. No barebacks, you have to be covered shoes. From way back they had that. No shorts. No hair out. So even in the picture [Mrs. Kajioka points to a photograph of cannery workers], you will see that the girls all have their hair all in. No bobby pins.

MK: How about rules and regulations about your behavior? Last time, you mentioned fighting. That was not approved of in the cannery. How about other things?

SK: I don't think it was approved at all, but still there used to be rugged [girls]---and in those days, they used to have fights and things. But now, you don't see that. They argue and things, but they don't have that. You have a fight, well you get fired.

MK: Why do you think they stopped? You said now days they don't have that kind of fights?

SK: I guess because everybody is civilized, I'm quite sure. Because they always tell you, if there is extra fruit, well you don't have to shove it up. You just put it up.

MK: So it was that ruling that said from now on, if you have extra fruit, you put it on the top [above the chutes] and...

SK: Yeah, you just put it on the top.

MK: ...stopped some of the fights from starting?

SK: Yeah. And if there's too much extra fruit there, everybody has to share in and work on it.

END OF INTERVIEW
Tape No. 6-35-2-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sue Kajioka (SK)

March 29, 1979

Waimalu, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Sue Kajioka, at her home in Waimalu, on March 29, 1979.

Mrs. Kajioka, the last time I talked with you, we were talking about the summer of 1937, when you were a trimmer at Dole. I want to continue about the same time period and ask you, were there any uncomfortable things about the cannery while you were working there?

SK: I wouldn't say uncomfortable or anything like that. Only it's hard, and things like that. I liked it because they're very sanitation and particular about the rules, I think. I like it because they're very strict.

MK: You were saying that it was hard; why do you say it was hard?

SK: It's hard work. The work is hard; it isn't easy at all. In any department, it wasn't easy at all because the regulations are strict, and things like that. But for work, I think it should be like that. Especially, handling food, you know. So, I don't think it's---of course, the work itself was hard. (Laughs)

MK: You were saying that the regulations were strict.

SK: Yeah, it is strict.

MK: What were some of the regulations that you were thinking about?

SK: Well, things that you cannot take--foodstuff, you cannot. Only thing they allowed, those who take medicines or anything like that. Those things are allowed in their pocket. In their apron pocket but not in their shirt pocket. Things like that. But no other things were allowed to go down to the table, so no food or no candies, or no such thing was carried down to the table.

MK: What other regulations were there?
SK: Well, the regulations you cannot go barefooted. You cannot go around the machinery with loose clothes. They were very strict on that.

MK: When you were working there in 1937 as a trimmer, how were your co-workers?

SK: I think they were kind of rough people. But they were nice. I mean, they were nice. When I first went there, I had a Filipino forelady with me. I was on her table. She was kind of very strict forelady. But I think that's her job anyway. After I took the job, then I know what it is to be a forelady. It was her duty anyway. But she was very strict forelady.

MK: You just said that the people there were kind of rough...

SK: They tough. They were pretty rough.

MK: Can you sort of explain in what way they were rough?

SK: I mean in their personality and things like that, they were kind of tough. Because I'm not used to in people like that.

MK: How did you know they were tough people? What did they do?

SK: The way their language is. The language in cannery is terrible.

MK: How terrible?

SK: The language is just awful in there. I think even now it is. So even I used to think, at that time, when I first went, that's not a place for any young girls to work because the language there is just...you know.

MK: Was it the language being "pidgin" or was it...

SK: It is "pidgin," and yet, the language is...I wouldn't say that but it's awful.

MK: Because of the subjects they talked about?

SK: Well, even to themselves. Because I wasn't used to---I'm so used to in private homes and things like that. You know, talking to haoles. Now, of course, I use more "pidgin" than what I used to, but in those days, I used to speak just like how the Americans speak.

They [cannery workers] used to think, "Oh, this lady is something different." It isn't that, but I wasn't used to in those slang words, and things like that. Of course, now, I am used to with it. That's why I felt cannery was a rough place.

MK: What kind of things did the co-workers talk about?
SK: Oh, they talk about themselves sometimes. What they know about. Gossiping, too, at the same time. While they working. Because the experienced ones, well, they have that much time; they can talk and work at the same time. But we newcomers, we can't do that. (Laughs) Our mind is always on the work. Otherwise, you cannot upkeep with it. You won't be able to even scratch yourself or look around.

MK: If you scratch yourself or look around, you would miss a fruit?

SK: You will be slow in that part. You see? So you have to go, just keep your mind on it. Otherwise, you couldn't upkeep with it. But after you get used to, you can talk with your friends and laugh, and gossip, and you can upkeep with your fruit. Of course, maybe there are some mistakes and things like that--cutting the fruit thick and all that--but you know, you can upkeep with it. But when you new, you so honest that you want to do the exact work what they tell you to do. So naturally, you going to be slow in that. But after you get used to with it, then you think nothing about it.

MK: You were mentioning a Filipino forelady who was strict in the beginning. In what ways was she strict?

SK: I mean she doesn't smile, or when she talk to you she's very business-like. Like she mean her work. She was that kind of woman.

MK: Were there other foreladies like her, too?

SK: I didn't go too much around so I don't know very much. But afterwards, well, I went to other tables and they weren't that bad.

MK: They were different from her?

SK: No, no.

MK: You were also saying that you had to keep your mind on the job when you were a beginner because you didn't want to make mistakes. Was the forelady always watching? How did she check?

SK: No, she goes around. She have to go down to the packing side and see if the rubbish went down, or thing like that. The packers will put their trimmers' undone ones on the table, and she have to go and check. She goes around, round and round. She have to make her reports on the card. So she's not only one place.

MK: You just mentioned reports on a card; she was...

SK: Yeah, she have to report how many sours, and how many fruits were spoiled, or anything like that. To report it on a card; otherwise, it won't cooperate [i.e., correspond] with the Ginaca [figures]. Because the Ginaca has [figures on] so many fruits come out. They
have how many fruits came down, and the trimmers have to have at least how many damaged, and things like that, too. They have to check down those things.

MK: They have to account for every fruit that comes down?

SK: No, not every one. It's just the soiled ones, the whole fruit damaged. Like the whole fruit is sour or rotten, like that, you throw it away. They have to count that because otherwise—they don't count the others, but they count regular thrown away ones.

MK: In the beginning, you wouldn't talk at the table; but later on, you would talk. Then, when you're not on the tables, when you're on your rest break or lunch time, what did you do?

SK: Well, we just go to the restroom and sit down, and sometimes we talk about other things or outside things. And then come down.

MK: Did you talk about your home life a lot?

SK: No, I never did talk very much about my home life with people down there.

MK: How come?

SK: Well, there's nothing to say about my home life. (Laughs)

MK: During that first summer, did you go on, say, picnics with your co-workers, or go to dances or something?

SK: No, I don't dance so I don't go to dances. But I used to go to picnics. Then, we go out dinner like that. Yes, I used to do.

MK: Mr. Kajioka, who was working at Dole, he went, too?

SK: Sometimes, in certain dinners, he would. Sometimes, certain picnics, if they ask for the families can come, then they bring their husbands along.

MK: Did you like those picnics and get-togethers?

SK: I enjoyed it. We used to have fun.

MK: What kind of things did you folks do?

SK: Well, we play games. Some play card. We go down to the beach and walk around the beach.

MK: You were telling me that when you first worked in the cannery, because of your contact with the haole people you used to work for, your language was kind of different from the other cannery people. Did that make it hard for you to get together with the cannery people?
SK: For the start. But I'm a local-born myself, so it was all right. But I didn't like it at first.

MK: Do you sort of remember what kind of pay you were receiving at that time?

SK: When I first went there, I'm quite sure we had about 14 cents an hour, I think. I'm quite sure it was around that.

MK: How much more than packers were getting?

SK: When we get 14 cents, we were at least about 5 cents more than them, we were. So I think about 5 cents. They were saying about 5 cents difference from the packers. I think we were having about 14 cents an hour when I first started.

MK: What did you think about that pay difference between packers and trimmers?

SK: Well, to me, I think the packers are easier job. The way I see. It seems to me it was kind of easier job than we do, because theirs are all sliced already. They can sit down and work if they want to. But the trimmers are very hard. After you get used to, then you can sit down off and on and work. But from the start, you cannot sit down and work. Otherwise, you can never upkeep with your fruit.

MK: So you thought trimming was harder, and so you folks had more pay?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: You told me that after the 1937 summer was over, you quit. What did you feel about quitting?

SK: We were laid off because we were summer workers.

MK: What did you feel about that; being laid off?

SK: I didn't think anything about it. Because they don't need any workers already, for the fruit, because pineapple is by season. So I didn't think anything about it.

MK: Did you want to stay on, maybe, as an intermittent, that summer?

SK: Yeah, I wanted to, if they kept me, because I was getting used to already.

MK: Was there anything you could have done to stay on, that year?

SK: I don't know about that. I don't think so because unless you have something that somebody can put you in, or not something like that; but I don't think they would do that. I don't think so.
MK: The next summer, 1938, you came back to work at Dole again. Why did you come back again?

SK: Well, to keep working, that's all. You can't just stay home. So used to helping and working for the families.

MK: During the time before the 1938 summer, and after the 1937 summer, you told me you stayed home. How come you didn't do anything during that time?

SK: In the summer, after I got laid off?

MK: Yeah.

SK: I used to work off and on. Whenever, laundry, day work, house cleaning, like that, when I have call. I didn't stay home at all. I mean, I used to work. Part-time work. Pick up work. If they ask for laundry, come and do the laundry or house work. Or catering, like that, for haoles when they have parties. I used to go.

MK: When you came back the 1938 summer, how come you just didn't continue the off and on work that you were doing the rest of the year?

SK: If you work cannery, then you have steady pay. You see, like house work, sometimes you have and sometimes you don't. It's not steady. That's the reason why.

MK: When you returned that summer, did you notice any differences from the 1937 summer? Any changes at all?

SK: No, no changes at all. Only you get used to, so you don't feel as though you're out of place.

MK: Were a lot of the people that you knew from the summer before back there, too?

SK: Yeah. There were lots of them.

MK: Was it comfortable, having the people that you knew back there?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. You make friends with the regulars already, the intermittents, regulars that work there. So, I had lots of friends in there; Japanese old ladies who were working there. So got to know them and....

MK: Do you remember what hours you were working, when you came back,
1938 summertime?

SK: Well, I always worked morning shift, so I used to work...sometimes, in the peak season, was about 6:30, 7:00 [a.m.] we start. Then, sometimes we work till 5:30, 4:30 [p.m.]; sometimes 6:30 [a.m.] to 6:30 [p.m.].

MK: Back in 1938, do you remember if you had overtime pay, if you worked long time?

SK: Yes.

MK: You had overtime pay?

SK: Right.

MK: How about back in 1937, the first summer you worked?

SK: Well, we were new so we didn't have very much overtime. Didn't have very much. But when the second year, we experienced already, so we had overtime. After eight hours we had time and a half.

MK: So the experienced workers would be asked to go overtime more often?

SK: More so. The second year shift advanced, so they stay back.

MK: Can you tell me how you made intermittent, that year?

SK: They ask around, who wants to become intermittent. So I said I would like to. So I stayed on.

MK: Why did you want to become intermittent?

SK: I figure, well, might as well work everyday, while the pineapple is going on. Because pineapple isn't all year round. Wintertime, we don't have work. But I figured, I can do home work [i.e., laundry, cook work] at the same time.

MK: Did you like that; being able to work pine when they had pine, and then, doing other work when they didn't have pine?

SK: I thought it was good.

MK: When you became intermittent, did the pay change?

SK: No, the pay didn't change. I really don't know if the regulars were getting more or not. But the pay didn't change.

MK: In 1941, you became a reliever. Can you tell me how you became a reliever?

SK: They were asking for anybody that wants to go to reliever class to apply for it. So I did.
MK: Was there a lot of competition to get into the reliever class?

SK: Yes, I think so because those who applied for it and then they go to the class, they take so many groups. By groups, and then they train them. Some didn't pass, so I think....

MK: What did you have to do in the reliever training class?

SK: Well, they tell you the regular regulations--what the reliever should do, and what the forelady's job is, and you have little more pay than the workers. So I figured, well, if I'm going to work, well, I better get a little higher pay than getting regular pay. So I went to the class and I passed, so I became a reliever.

MK: Did you have to do reading and writing in that class?

SK: Yeah, right. You have to do the card work. Take the names of the girls, in the morning when they come. At the table, you have to write their names on the card. Then, you have to write the reports, too. That's the reliever's work. Unless, the reliever is on the break, then the forelady writes down.

MK: You were saying that you would have to write the report. What kind of reports did you have to write?

SK: Well, we have to write the reports of how many sour pine was there, and things like that on the card. How many girls was there, and how many went out. Outside of the break period. How many times they went to the dispensary, and all that. We have to write all those reports down.

MK: You would have to write the reports every day?

SK: Right.

MK: You mentioned that when you went to reliever training class, some people passed and some people didn't pass.

SK: I think so because they didn't get the job.

MK: How did they grade you?

SK: I really don't know how they grade it.

MK: You would just be told after the class that, "Oh, you passed. You're a reliever"?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. When you become a reliever, then you know. They'll tell you that you've become a reliever so go and get your brown cap. Because the regular workers is all white cap. The relievers are brown-rimmed, and the foreladies are blue. See, that's the difference. You can tell the forelady and the reliever, and the regular workers.
MK: How did you feel when you became a reliever?

SK: Well, I thought it was much easier because all what you do is just watch. When somebody goes out, to relieve them sometimes. So I thought it was better. You getting better pay, and then it's just writing reports. Was much easier than working on the fruit.

MK: As a reliever, one of your duties is to take the place of a woman who goes out.

SK: Yeah, you have to do that off and on.

MK: How often would you have to do that in one day?

SK: We really don't have to actually relieve them. We can regulate the regulator and make it run less when somebody goes off. But still, if the reliever thinks that she would like to go in and relieve them, she can do that. So it doesn't matter which way it is. So the reliever really doesn't have to work too hard. Of course, off and on, she goes and help the ones that are stacked with their fruits they couldn't upkeep. You can go in and help off and on. But which, you not supposed to do that all the time. Because that means that you are not checking on the fruits that going down.

Your job is to see that the fruit goes down clean and see that the girls are doing the right work. If you are helping them, relieving them, that means that you are not doing your work [said with emphasis]. You see? You supposed to go round and round and see if they are doing the work right, and the work is done right.

MK: What did the forelady do, then? How was she different from you as the reliever?

SK: She goes most of the time, round and round and watching them. She has two tables to watch. The reliever have only one table. So, if she's watching that side, then the reliever have to be more on her own table. Otherwise .... she goes round and round, too, but she doesn't trim.

MK: What happened if you noticed that things were not going well on your table? What did you do?

SK: Well, we have to see who does the wrong. See, that's your job. Because sometimes, of course, we tell the girls and somebody isn't trimming right. The shavings are too thick or the skin is cut too thick. We tell to the whole table, which isn't fair for the ones.... of course, we tell them off and on, but still, it's your job and the forelady's job to see who isn't doing the right work.

MK: And if you found out that a certain person wasn't doing it right....

SK: It's up to you to go up to her, approach to her, and tell her, "You're trimming was too thick," or, "You shouldn't do that," or things like that.
MK: When you did that, did you ever have any problems with the women you were supervising?

SK: Well, yes, we do. Some of them didn't like the idea, of course. But still, it's up to you to take it. It's your job.

MK: What kind of things did you have to take from them? What would happen? In those cases where a girl didn't like what you told them to do.

SK: Well, just ignore them.

MK: And at that time, there were no written evaluation of the workers.

SK: No, no.

MK: So if you had a problem with the worker, did you go tell the forelady?

SK: Yeah, it's up to you to tell the forelady, "Shee, if you correct her, or things like that, she wouldn't like it." It's up to the forelady to tell her.

MK: As a reliever, you had a supervisor too, yeah; you had the forelady. How were your relations with your forelady?

SK: Well, you have to sort of cooperate with them. With any of them that you go to. Because you're not steady on one table. Sometimes you are steady on couple of days or so. Maybe a whole week, sometimes. But sometimes you have different foreladies.

MK: Did you like some tables more than other tables?

SK: Well, yes. Some tables, I don't know, it's the Ginaca or things like that. The pine doesn't come out too clean. It's the machine that does the work. Some, it's all right. Some, even the girls don't like certain tables; the Ginaca is much faster, or something like that. We find the difference in the machinery, too.

MK: How about in the people?

SK: Well, the people, as a whole, you have to get used to. Some are good, some are bad. You just have to take while you working, that's all. That's how I felt when I was working. So I didn't care what they talk about me, or anything like that. I said, "Well, as long as I do my work." I'm doing not for myself, because I'm hired by the company, so I figured. . . . I couldn't go too strict on them either because I was once a worker myself. So I know how hard it is. But I mean, if they don't take it, well, it's them, you see.

MK: When you became a reliever, did you start going to the relievers' and foreladies' locker room area instead of the workers' locker room area?
SK: No. When you are reliever, you are same with the girls.

MK: When does it become different?

SK: Only when you come forelady.

MK: Then you go to the [foreladies'] locker room?

SK: Uh huh [yes]. Some foreladies are outside. They in the regular room.

MK: Were there any special rules or regulations for a reliever? Were you ever told that, "A reliever can do this but she cannot do this"?

SK: You mean with difference from the worker?

MK: Yeah.

SK: No. It's the same regulations.

MK: You continued as reliever up till 1943. In 1943, you became a forelady. How did you become a forelady?

SK: Some quit, and things like that. Lots of the old-timers foreladies went to this Army work, so they had opening. Quite a lot of opening. They were asking for foreladies promotion so I took the job.

MK: Did you have to go through another training session?

SK: No, no training at all.

MK: So how soon did you become a forelady, after they told you that you were going to become forelady?

SK: Right away. The following day.

MK: How did you know what to do as a forelady?

SK: Well, we know what the foreladies do because we learn at the reliever's class too. Daily, we work with the foreladies and we know what we are supposed to do.

MK: Do you have any idea why they said it was okay for you to become a forelady?

SK: I think they took anybody that will apply for it.

MK: Take anybody?

SK: I mean any relievers. Not the white caps, cannot come right away to be a forelady, no. It has to be a reliever to become a fore-
lady. Because the job is almost the same, the forelady and the reliever; it's almost the same. So it has to be a reliever. When there is opening and you apply for it, and if the supervisors think it's okay to give to that person, they would say, "Okay." It's up to the supervisors to say, "Oh, she's okay to be a forelady."

MK: Since you did become a forelady, can you sort of figure out maybe what characteristics cause the supervisors to say, "Okay, let's let Mrs. Kajioka become a forelady"? What did they see in you?

SK: I don't know what they thought of me, but I wasn't a person that talked too much anyway. Even now, I'm not a good speaker. I'm like that. So, I'm sort of on the quiet side.

MK: Was that good for a forelady, to be on the quiet side?

SK: I don't think so. I think it's more, to be a forelady or anybody, I think they're more on a cheerful side is better to be a....but I'm not on that side. (Laughs)

MK: But you were chosen.

SK: Well, they gave me the job so I took it.

MK: What do you think is important, though, to be a good forelady?

SK: Well, it's awfully hard. Because....before I retire [1970], about four years before, I think, we used to have these summer workers come in. Every summer we have summer workers come in. I find that the girls are not like what they used to be. When I first worked in the cannery, the girls were different before the war [World War II]. After the war, the children are, to me, I find that they are very spoiled. Even when they come to work, it's the same thing.

So I had a case with one girl, she used to be very independent girl. She comes late to the table, she goes to the break she comes back late; and then, I told her, I corrected her. She was laid off before the seasonal was over. Then, after she got laid off, she came down to the table and told me, "It's because of you that I'm laid off."

So I said, "Why? What did I do?"

"Oh, you always pick on me, that's why." She told me like that.

So I said, "I didn't pick on you. It's you that comes back to the table late. Even rest break, you come back late. You not on time, you don't do whenever we tell you what not to do. So that's the reason. You did your own trouble."

She said, "No, it's because of you." She told me like that.

So I thought to myself, "Oh, nowdays the girls are terrible."
MK: So that was almost before you retired. The people that you were getting during the summers were a little different from...

SK: Yeah. From the ones that when I first started to work. The girls now, when they work. You find that some of the girls, the parents think they went to work, they come to the work in the morning--the parents bring them. Some of them--and they work little while, and then they just go home without saying anything. Their break or things like that, they go to the locker, then they don't come back. Then, we find, and wait and wait. We have to go to the dispensary and find out if the girl is there, and we sent word to the locker and ask the matron to find certain girl, if she's up the locker. "No, she's not there." Later on, we find out that she's gone home without saying a word. We used to have lots of things like that.

MK: That's like in the 1960's?

SK: After the war anyway.

MK: Why do you think the people changed?

SK: Me, I think, as a whole, I think the parents started to work. Most of them, after the war like that. The parents go to work, give so much allowance to the children, nobody home to see what they do. So that's the reason why the children are changed. That's what I think.

MK: You never had cases like this before the wartime, or during the war?

SK: Uh uh [no]. I don't think most of the families didn't have those things. Because that's why, as I said before, that the children's fault is partly the parents' fault. That's the reason why I didn't want to leave my children alone. Because I didn't want them to feel that they are forgotten.

They come home---I seen those things happen, too. The children come home, nobody. They so small, and then the parents are working, and they're all by themselves. They have to play by themselves while the others, they have their parents with them when they come home from school and things like that. All what they have is money. They don't have that warm feeling when they come home from school when they small. That's the feeling that I have, that the children are changed now.

MK: When you were raising your children--let's see, your last child was born 1928. By the time you were working in the cannery, they were already intermediate school age?

SK: My girl was intermediate, but my boy was in elementary, yeah.

MK: Your concern for your children, was that one of the reasons why you thought cannery was good for you?
SK: Yeah, because wintertime, part of the year that I don't work—I only do some day work or things like that; part-time work—so I'm always home with them. And especially the holidays. That's the reason why.

MK: Going back to the time you became a forelady, what were your feelings about being forelady back in 1943?

SK: Well, I had the feeling that, oh, I wonder if some people will agree with it or not, and things like that. Being a newcomer there and taking the job. So I thought, oh. I had that feeling but still I thought I have to be brave and take it. So I took it.

MK: Were there any comments about you becoming forelady that caused you to be kind of worried about that?

SK: Yeah, I had that feeling that they were. But not actually openly, but I had that feeling.

MK: Why did some people feel that way towards you?

SK: Yeah, I had the feeling that I'm new. Being a new, and then taking the job, things like that. But I thought, "Well, if I'm going to work, I better go for a better pay." That's the reason why.

MK: At that time, were things [i.e., promotions] done by seniority, by the length of time you put in?

SK: No. When the union break up, then it came to be seniority.

MK: Then how come you were so worried if it wasn't always done by seniority anyway?

SK: Yeah, but still, you always hear gossip and things like that. "Oh, she's new and then she's a forelady already," and this and that. You hear people talking about it. So I feel that, "If you think you better than I am, well, why don't you take it." You see, I feel that way, too.

MK: When you were a forelady, can you briefly describe the things you have to do? You already told me a little bit when we talked about the reliever time, but can you tell me a little bit more about what you have to do?

SK: The forelady's job is more like checking around, that's all.

MK: How does she check; she watches the girls?

SK: Yeah, you go around and round, checking the girls, how they are working, if the reliever is always on the alert and watching and checking the fruit is done right or not.
She have to be on the alert and see that the—sometimes, season time we have young girls come in, they feel sick and they so new and they couldn't say it out that they sick. You have to watch that, too. We have lots of girls faint on the table so you have to be watching on that. Whenever you see the person isn't feeling well, or things like that, you have to be right there to see that first aid is taken care.

MK: You're talking mostly about the season time, when you have new people; how was working season time and non-season time different for a forelady?

SK: For a forelady, non-season is easier because they [workers] know what they are supposed to do. So all what you do is checking round and round, and checking if there's no trouble on the machine or anything. If anything's dropped in the machine, or anything like that. That's all you do so it's really a easy job. Comparing to the workers.

MK: Does the forelady wear gloves and actually handle the fruit, too?

SK: Sometimes. When she's going around and see the dirty pine going down, she have to grab the pine out and ask somebody to clean it or check it. So she have to wear gloves, too.

MK: When you were a forelady you had a supervisor, too. You had a section head and your head forelady. How were your relations with them? What did you have to do?

SK: Well, if anything doesn't go wrong, well, they don't bother you. They just go around and see if the tables and the whole cannery is going smoothly.

MK: Did you have to submit your reports--the ones that you mentioned--to the section heads?

SK: Sometimes we have to. If they [workers] don't do—when you correct them and they don't do it, they have hard feelings against you and don't do it, well, we have to [report it]. But we try not to.

MK: Did you ever have to do that?

SK: Well, no. Sometimes, the section heads and things like that are checking themselves, too, individually. So when they find somebody's not doing the right thing, then they'll come down and see the forelady and tell, "Oh, that person isn't doing the right thing."

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Then she'll tell you, "That person isn't doing the right thing." More or less, the girl suspects that the section head is talking about her. Then the forelady have to go quietly and go approach to her and tell her what the section head said. Then, sometimes they have hard feelings against it. Sometimes they take it or they just smile it off, but sometimes you have hard person. They can't take anything to be said about them. You have all kinds of girls, that's why, it's awfully hard to handle girls. Ladies, too. All, individually, is different.

Did you enjoy that type of job, where you have to deal with the people, interact with them?

You learn to get along with the people, you have to learn how to talk with them, you had to know how to handle your workers so that they would do the work they were supposed to do.

Well, I'm kind of used to in those things. I didn't think it was hard for me. To get along with people, I didn't have too much hard time with it, because I figured, well, if they don't like it, well, that's it. That's how I felt. So I didn't have very much trouble in that.

At that time, did the foreladies have two tables yet?

Yeah, sometimes we have two tables. Sometimes we have only one.

In about what year did it change so that foreladies only watch one table?

Generally, they do have two tables.

Oh, even up until the time you retired?

Yeah, uh huh. Most of the time we have two tables to take care.

When would you have only one?

Sometimes, after season slack, then you have one table to take care, because there is more regular foreladies and not much tables running. So that's when you have only one table.

When you were the forelady and there was something wrong with the table, something wrong with the pines that were trimmed at your table, would it go on your record or something? How would it affect you?

I don't know how those parts go. I don't know about the reports on the company's side, the section heads and all that. I don't know
MK: Since we're talking about the 1940's right now, I was wondering if I could have you answer some questions about working in the cannery during wartime. Was it any different from before the war?

SK: No. The working was same. Only that we have to practice air raids, we had to carry our gas mask to work, and we have to carry the gas mask down to the table and hang it on the seat. Things like that. That's about the difference we had.

MK: They had blackouts at that time. Did it affect the cannery working hours?

SK: No. We didn't actually have any trouble in that because we didn't really attack here. But we used to go off and on, as a blackout practice, air raid practice. We did that. So we all have to go to where we supposed to go, and carry our gas mask and all that.

MK: Were you ever scared?

SK: Yes, in one way. Of course, you have to know what to do when the air raid siren comes on. You have to stop your machinery. It's the forelady's job to see that, and see that the girls don't get panic. We all lined up and go to the---what step to go and where to go, and all that. We practiced all that during the wartime. Not to say scared, but, you know. Didn't feel good at all, but still.

MK: During 1942-1943, there were labor shortages. Hard to get workers, so they hired housewives part-time. Did you notice any other things because of the labor shortage?

SK: Well, the labor shortage is, most of the aliens cannot work in the public [i.e., government]. During daytime, they can. But most of them, these workers, citizens, most of them other nationalities, they went to the defense work. That's the reason why we had shortage. So they have to get housewives and all of them to come out and work. Ask them to come out and work.

MK: Did pineapple workers go to defense jobs?

SK: Oh yes, lots of them. Lots of them went to defense work because they're better paying. Defense work, they make good money.

MK: How come you didn't go?

SK: I was alien at that time, because my husband was not naturalized yet.

MK: But you weren't an alien.
SK: No, but if you married before 1920 or 1930-something, you lose your citizenship. Yes.

MK: You lost your citizenship because you married your husband who was a Japanese alien?

SK: Right. So after the war, the Filipinos and the Koreans, they got their citizenship earlier. They could. But the Japanese were the last one to get their okay from the government, that they can be naturalized. So my husband went to night school and took his citizenship over here. So naturally, I went to claim for my citizenship again, because my husband is a citizen. That's how I got my citizenship back. We all lost our citizenship if you marry an alien.

MK: Did it make a difference, if you were a man marrying a Japanese woman who was an alien; would you lose it, too?

SK: No. Only ladies, because your name is changed. But now, it doesn't matter. You don't lose your citizenship.

MK: Were there any problems in the cannery because you were an alien during the wartime?

SK: Well, I went as a citizen. Even I lost my citizenship, but in the public I went as a citizen. I claim myself a citizen. I didn't claim myself as alien.

MK: So people at the cannery thought you were a citizen?

SK: Right.

MK: Were there any anti-Japanese things in the cannery happening?

SK: The Japanese weren't treated too well, though.

MK: Why do you say they weren't treated too well?

SK: I mean individually. The company itself doesn't mean anything to each individual, but I mean as a whole, in the public, the Japanese weren't treated very nice. From Filipinos, Koreans...they looked down on the Japanese, at that time. Even in the cannery, it was like that.

MK: How did you know they were looking down on you?

SK: Because they wouldn't say it to us because they claim we are citizens. But to the aliens, to the elderlys, they used to be sarcastic. Yes, they were.

MK: What kind of things would they say to the elderly Japanese in the cannery?
SK: Well, sometimes, that's how the fights and things used to come up. They used to call them, "Oh, the Japs," and all that. Yeah, they were very much—even the Chinese wasn't feeling against the Japanese too well.

MK: Was your husband able to keep his job at Dole?

SK: Yes, the company was very nice. Of course, he didn't have to go Army post. He couldn't because he's an alien. But he went to the pineapple field and inside job, like that. He had a special pass to go out to the field.

MK: During the war, I read somewhere that Dole--Hawaiian Pine--had a candy factory. Did you ever work at the candy factory?

SK: No, I didn't work. We did have a candy factory. It didn't succeed, though. We went on a tour, we foreladies and all us, we went to tour and see. They ask us we if we want to be transferred in the candy factory. I didn't like it so I didn't take it.

MK: Did you ever go to the field?

SK: No, I didn't.

MK: You worked in the cannery all the way through the war?

SK: Right.

MK: I also saw pictures where there were some men dressed in Army kind of uniforms, working in the warehouse side of the cannery. Do you remember seeing any military people in the cannery?

SK: I don't think they ever worked there. During the wartime, I don't know very much about the warehouse department. But they used to be Army people come in and out all the time. I don't think they ever worked there, though. I don't think so.

MK: Why were there Army people going in and out?

SK: I think they were using part of the Dole warehouse, I'm quite sure.

MK: So you would see them around?

SK: Yeah, see them around. But I never did see any workers around.

MK: During the war, since the men working in the cannery went off to serve in the Army, were any women shifted to the men's jobs during the war?

SK: No.

MK: I'm going to move on 1946, when the union [ILWU] came in. When the union first came in, what did you know about the union?
SK: We didn't know much about union at that time. There were people coming around and asking everybody to join the union. Well, the way we understood was that if individually we approach to the company and ask anything, we couldn't get it. But being a union, formed as a union, then they can approach and ask for what they want, demand for it, and things. So we figured, well, maybe it's good. It's going to be seniority. So we thought it was good. But in the long run, I thought union was good in one way and not too good in the other.

MK: Can you explain why you say that?

SK: Because to me, as an individual, I think that sometimes they don't think how the things are. Demanding too much only on wages. Because each time we have contract and strikes, and things like that, if the wages go up, the price go up. Even the outside, the food come up. So I figure, well, it's more like fighting, higher wages, higher price. Higher wages, higher price.

So instead of that, if the union ask more about working conditions than wages, and retirement, would be much better than what they are demanding all the time. But I don't know which is better; if the union better or without it.

But in one way, I'm quite sure, just because of the union, the company cannot lay off who they don't like and keep who they like. Because it goes by the seniority. Well, if you're not good in working, well it's your fault. But otherwise, you know. That's how I think about the union. Even now, that's how I feel.

MK: You were mentioning that you wish that the union would not emphasize wages so much but working conditions and retirement, maybe. When the union came in, did working conditions change for you in any way?

SK: A little. Not too much. The working conditions, of course the work is same thing. You do the same job and so same regulations. But they wouldn't pick on you so much as what they used to do. They sort of half-way overlook. It's a little lighter than what it used to be as a whole. The work regulations, the things are same. But since then, the wages came up. Naturally, the union formed and wages came up.

MK: So you mean the union didn't cause the company to change any rules or regulations, but...

SK: Not too much. In the cannery, not too much.

MK: ...the management didn't enforce the rules and regulations as much as before?

SK: Uh huh [yes].
MK: When the union came in did the retirement benefits change?

SK: ....I wasn't too long there before the union came in, so, I don't think they had very much retirement plan. Yeah, I don't think so.

MK: You mean before the union?

SK: Uh huh. I don't remember about that. But when the union came in, then we had retirement and things like that. Of course, it wasn't that good but still we had retirement.

MK: I'm going to move on a little bit and ask you, when did you become a union member?

SK: When they first started. I don't know what year they started.

MK: 1946? Before the 1947 strike?

SK: Yeah.

MK: During the 1947 strike, what did you do?

SK: We didn't go to work. We picket.

MK: How did you feel about that, picketing?

SK: I didn't feel too good about it, but in order to fight for our wages and retirement, I thought we have to follow the rest and couldn't be a scab.

MK: In your case, where you have both the husband and the wife working for the company, both of you went on strike?

SK: Right.

MK: The 1947 strike didn't last too long, but were you folks ever worried about the strike lasting long, and what would you folks do?

SK: Oh yes.

MK: You don't know what you would have done if the strike had continued?

SK: Oh, no.

MK: I'm going to go on to about 1957. In 1957, there was a Dee Dupont walkout. What do you remember about that?

SK: The walkout?

MK: There was a Mrs. Dee Dupont who was a supervisor and...

SK: Yes.
MK: Can you tell me what you remember about that?

SK: I didn't care too much about her. I don't think I was in that walkout.

MK: Did you continue working during the walkout?

SK: Yeah, I think I worked that time. I didn't care too much about her.

MK: Why did you work? I don't understand when you say, "I didn't care too much about her."

SK: I didn't understand her too much, and I thought she was going little bit too far than what she's asking to the company.

MK: What was she asking?

SK: I don't remember too good about that. I remember that we had that trouble. She was demanding of a...what did she demand about? I didn't take too much interest in that so I don't really remember much about that.

MK: You continued working during the walkout, then?

SK: I think I did.

MK: Do you remember why you stayed on?

SK: I just followed with some of them, that's all.

MK: When the workers who did walk out came back, did they call you "scabs," or did they....

SK: Not about her case, though. Most of the calling of the scab was more on when we had the longest strike. That was the worse one.

MK: That was the 1968 strike.

SK: I think so. That was long.

MK: It lasted 61 days.

SK: Right, right.

MK: What did you do during that strike?

SK: Well, we'd rotate and went on a picket.

MK: You and your husband?

SK: Yeah.
MK: What did you think during that strike? It was a long one, so how did you two manage?

SK: Well, we just have to squeeze and manage. That's all, because I didn't like the idea too much but still, it was follow everybody, that's all.

MK: Did you live on your savings during that time, or get union help?

SK: We had slightly union help, but not too much. We had more donations and things like that. But we have to use most of our savings.

MK: How much of your savings did you have to use?

SK: Our monthly savings on our needs, but whenever you strike, I don't think you gain.

MK: Why do you say that?

SK: Because what you lost, you cannot regain it. Of course, after the strike then you get better pay and things, but you cannot regain your loss. The days that you lost.

MK: Oh, the wages that you lost while you were on strike.

SK: Even now, I think of that when people go on strike. I don't think they ever gain that.

MK: Is that how you felt while the strike was going on?

SK: Right.

MK: But you didn't go back to work during the strike?

SK: No, no, no. I wouldn't, but still, that's how I feel. Because of course, after you win and agreements is settled, then you get better pay and all that, and better retirement, what you asked for. But still, what you have lost will never come back.

MK: Two years later, 1970, you retired. Right now, I want to ask you to look back from 1945--the end of the war--to 1970, and tell me what were the major changes in your work at the cannery. Were there changes in the trimming procedure?

SK: The trimming procedure is not changed at all. But I think, even the girls will say, but the pressure is much harder now, as I hear. They have to take care more tables and less girls on the table, so when I hear what they are doing now, the pressure is much, much harder. The work is harder because you have larger area than what we used to do.

MK: So they have to watch more tables now, and less girls. How does that affect the speed of the pine?
SK: The speed is about the same; no changes in that.

MK: With less girls on the tables, does that mean that a girl working now would have to do more pines and faster?

SK: Right, right.

MK: Were there any changes in the machinery, from 1945 to 1970?

SK: No, I don't think the machine has changed and better than now.

MK: Are the pines any cleaner now, in 1970, than in 1945?

SK: Yes, I say the fruits are much cleaner. They don't have to trim so much as what they used to. That's the reason why the company makes less girls.

MK: Were there any changes in the knives?

SK: No, no changes.

MK: Were there any changes in working conditions?

SK: I don't think so. I don't think there's any changes in that.

MK: Besides the ones that you mentioned that came in after the union, no other changes?

SK: I don't think there's any changes in that.

MK: Were there any changes in the types of pine that was coming down?

SK: No, I don't think so.

MK: How about in the production of—have you noticed the change from producing one type of canned product to another type of product?

SK: I think they have the same fruit now. Same like spears [spear cuts were discontinued before 1960] and chunks, and crushed, and sliced. I think that's about all.

MK: From 1945 to 1970, were there any changes in working relations with people?

SK: I don't know. The way I hear from the girls that working now, they said they not happy like they used to be.

MK: Why is that?

SK: I really don't know why. I think they all to themselves. Because we used to be friendly and have lots of fun after the season. But they don't have that anymore, I hear. So said everybody isn't friendly and they not happy at work. So if you not happy at work, it's burden when you work.
MK: Were you happy at work?

SK: Well, after I got used to and being steady forelady, I was for the work, I was happy enough.

MK: When you look back on your work life in pine, what do you remember about it? What are your feelings about it?

SK: Now, I feel as though you don't have all to yourself, you the only boss, you do whatever you want, you go wherever you want.

My children are big, I'm individual, so I don't regret retiring. Because when you working, well, you always have in mind that you are working for somebody and you have to do a job. And still, you have to please the top, and yet, you have to please the bottom. Like our position being a forelady, well, you have somebody below you.

If you are a worker, you have nobody below you. But if you stay above anybody, then you have that much responsibility. So that thing is burden on you and it's always on you. But like now, we are free to do whatever we want. So I never regret being retired.

MK: You mentioned the word "burden." Did you consider it a burden to be a forelady?

SK: To me, I think it's a burden because you have to think that it's not only do whatever you want or anything like that. You have to bear in mind that you are working for the company, you have to please the company, you have to think about the company have to make money and pay for the workers--you have to think that way, too. You not just going to work and, "Oh, as long as the eight hours is there, that's all." But no, you have to think of them, too. That's how I felt.

MK: Were you ever told by the company that that's the way you should feel?

SK: No, never did. But to myself, I always felt that way. So I think well, we have to do halfway, at least, to do what we can for them. After all, they have to pay us. If they don't make money then they couldn't pay us. That's how I felt. So that's always in you so you have to be worried all the time. Yet, you have to please the girls; otherwise, they wouldn't like you.

MK: When you look back on your life and pine, do you think pine is a good place for somebody to work long time?

SK: To me, for anybody, like family ladies--for a lady--I think that's very nice place to work. Because after all, you get half of the year free to yourself, you can do what you didn't do at home. But if you work other places, you have to work all year around. Because that's what I used to do before. Even if you work store,
all what you have is the vacation months. But cannery, part of the year you don't work. So I think it's good for ladies.

Especially for summer children. That's the fastest to make money for their school. But it's a rough place for any girls to work there.

MK: Did you encourage your children to work there?

SK: I wouldn't encourage you. I would encourage them to go to the cannery, but in different departments like warehouse or storage. Because they handle without the machine. But in the cannery, you have to work with the machine so the work is much harder.

MK: You wouldn't want your children to work there. Did your children ever work in the cannery?

SK: They work in the cannery but they work other departments. Not in the cannery preparation department. My daughter work as a checker in storage, and then she worked in the office-storage department. My son didn't work in the field because couldn't.

MK: So he worked someplace else in the cannery?

SK: No, he didn't work. He worked there one summer, I think. As a tray boy, but no, he didn't work. He was a very weak boy when he was young so he didn't work very much.

MK: Is your daughter still working at the cannery?

SK: No, she's not.

MK: Would you recommend that a person like your daughter work at the cannery for a long time like you did?

SK: Well, I think it's a nice place to work, if they have in the office or things like that. It's a nice place to work.

MK: How about in the cannery, in the preparation department?

SK: Oh, I think not for young girls, though. After they graduate high school or university, I think there's better job than that. That's only for family ladies, to work cannery. That's how I feel.

MK: Since you were married and you were working and brought home some money, when you were bringing home money and your husband was bringing home money, too, could you folks have survived without your money and just live on Mr. Kajioka's money?

SK: Yes, I guess so. I guess so we could.

MK: What things did you folks use your money for?
SK: We use more freely than instead of one person. Yet, on top of that you got to save. Because cannery isn't a very high salary place, you see. Cannery is about the cheapest thing, comparing from the other places. You don't make too much money there. The wages now is high, yes, but still, even the truck drivers--the big truck drivers--the outside, they make better money than Dole. But you see, the outside, you have to do all kinds of work. If the truck drivers, all kinds of different work. But at Dole, you do only one work, just pineapple. That much easier, you see.

MK: When you used to bring home the money, who used to handle the pay?

SK: We both handle it. Even now. I handle my own and he handle his.

MK: Is that how you folks used to do it?

SK: Uh huh [yes].

MK: If you folks wanted to buy a car or...

SK: Well, we both....

MK: You both decide?

SK: Uh huh. That, yes.

MK: As a family, since you were working and Mr. Kajioka was also working, who would take charge of the children? If they did something wrong, who would be the one to....

SK: I'm more on it.

MK: Since you were working, did Mr. Kajioka have to help out with the home stuff?

SK: Well, no. He never used to do too much about home helping. Of course, I do all that.

MK: Since you lived so many years as a working wife, working mother, what do you think about doing that?

SK: I don't think it's---I always think that both, two of us should cooperate and work if you can. But if you cannot, well, that's different. If you can, I believe in that. I think it's easier and I think ladies staying home and doing nothing, I think they gossip too much.

(MK laughs)

SK: Really. Because I seen that in my neighbors. They always gossiping. They have too much time to themselves. Me, I think it's best, if you can work, to work. Help each other and work. At the same
time, take care of your children, too. Not to work and leave your children alone. That, I don't believe in that.

MK: I think I'll end the interview. Thank you very much.

SK: Oh no. Not much of a help.

MK: No, this is very good. Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW
WOMEN WORKERS in Hawaii's Pineapple Industry

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Ethnic Studies Program
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