

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: WILLIAM REGO, retired overseer, Waialua Sugar Company

William Rego, Portuguese, was born in Ewa Plantation on March 20, 1909. His father was born in Portugal and came to Hawaii as a young boy with his parents. William's mother was born in Pahala, Hawaii.

William had to drop out of school in the fourth grade to work when his father became ill. At the age of 11, he became a hapai ko man. His later jobs included water boy, mule driver, foreman, and overseer. While at Waialua Plantation, he invented a number of labor-saving devices. Later, he was a ILWU union member.

William is now retired and raises cattle. He is married and has a number of children.

Tape No. 1-42-1-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

William Rego (WR)

July 8, 1976

Waialua, Hawaii

BY: Norma Carr (NC)

NC: ...-view with Mr. William Rego in Waialua on July 8, 1976. Mr. Rego, will you please tell me about yourself, where your parents came from, where you were born? Things like that...

WR: My father was born in Portugal. He came here as a little boy and my mother was born in Pahala, Hawaii. I was born in Ewa plantation.

NC: Do you know what town in Portugal your dad was born in?

WR: St. Michael.

NC: Why did he come to Hawaii?

WR: Well, he came with the Portuguese immigrants to work in the plantations and they found jobs in all plantations of the islands. My father at that time was a little boy. He worked in town, Honolulu, and then we had two brothers and a sister. Then we moved to Ewa and that's when I was born.

NC: I see. And how long did you live in Ewa?

WR: Well, we were there for short period of time. I think about four years and we moved to Waialua. That's where I am now.

NC: What kind of job did your father come to do in Waialua?

WR: My father was a teamster, driving mules. He used to be driving a four-mule wagon hauling fuel, oil and plus water wagon to haul for the steam plows. In those days, they used to plow the lands by steam plows.

NC: Steam plows? Can you describe a steam plow?

WR: It's almost like a locomotive if you look at it. And it's driven by cabledrums. 'Cause was a bad terrain on the side here. And he laid off. He was scared, because he was afraid the wagon would turn over. Then they come and get me to drive the wagon and I drove it the whole day and I didn't turn it over. I did a good job.

(Laughter)

NC: About what year was that, Mr. Rego?

WR: Well, I think that was about 1937, '36.

NC: Oh, that late they had that kind of plow? Now back to when you were a child. Did you go to school in the plantation?

WR: Yeah. I went to Waialua Elementary School and I went up to the fourth grade. Then my father was laid off. He was sick. He was sick in the hospital with an operation. Then my mother told me if I could work Fridays and Saturdays. So, I decided that I loved school very much and I was a good student in school, very bright but my mother asked me to work Fridays and Saturdays. So I was ashamed to be out of school for Fridays so I decided I should continue working because my father was laid off for six months. There was no one working to support the family.

NC: Oh, at that time were you the oldest child left in the family?

WR: Yes, my two older brothers were married. They left the plantation and I was here alone. I mean, at that age, I could help support the family.

NC: And how old were you then?

WR: 11 years old.

NC: And what was your first job?

WR: My first job was loading cane, carrying cane, sugar cane on the back. We build up a bundle about fifty to seventy-five pounds weight and we carry that cane up the ladder into the cane cars.

NC: You were only 11 years old and you were carrying that weight?

WR: That's right.

NC: Were there other children also employed like that?

WR: No. Well, we had lots of young boys at our age, little older than I was, working also for the plantation because plantation needed labor in those days. And when I first started to work in the plantation, I was only making eight dollars a month. And then, finally I was moved up to a water boy and I was start earning \$19.50 a month.

NC: Was that a very good wage at that time?

WR: Yeah, those wages at that time was very good because you could buy a bag of rice for about three dollars a bag of rice. And bread is ten cents, five cents, ten cents.

NC: Who else made that kind of good wages at that time?

WR: Well, I think mostly the plantations were the only people had jobs for younger generations, younger people. The outside people wouldn't give a job to a boy that age. But when I was started that young, I felt very sorry that I had to leave school. This is God's truth; I tell you that I cried at nights, you know, because I left school. But then, I had to have more education and so I worked my way up from water boy, then I went up to driving mules, hauling cane. That's driving mules to haul the cane to the fields, empty cars, and the full ones back to the locomotive, so the locomotive would take it back to the mill. Have it ground at the mill.

NC: How long were you a mule driver?

WR: I was a mule driver for about four years.

NC: Yeah, and what kind of pay did you have for that?

WR: Well, at that time, we were getting \$36 a month. We worked ten to twelve hours a day. No overtime. \$36, just \$36 a month.

NC: That's a lot of hours, isn't it?

WR: The hours were supposed to be eight hours, but we'd go up to ten hours sometimes, eleven hours, twelve hours, depending on we have to take out the full amount of cane that we had loaded to supply the mill. So if we couldn't get it out in the eight or ten hours, we'd work twelve, up to fourteen hours sometimes.

NC: Then how long were you a foreman?

WR: Well, then, I was the haul cane foreman that left the plantation then I was promoted to take his job. At that time, I was, I guess about 16 or 17 years old. Then I worked my way up as a foreman in that kind of work until we did away with the locomotives, the mules, the portable track rails and all that. We did away with all of that and the plantation bought some trucks, big hauling trucks. Tournatwos, we call it tournatwos.

NC: About what year was that?

WR: Well, 1930, '31.

NC: 1930, '31.

WR: Somewhere around there. And we went in to the big trucks and in 1940 I was promoted to harvesting overseer.

NC: What were your duties in that job?

WR: My duties was to be in charge of the whole harvesting operation, that's

including the burning, fire breaking, and getting the cane prepared for the haulers, piling up the cane. I had three lunas working for me, on each shift. We had three shifts. One shift was 6:30 to 2:30, 2:30 to 10:30 and 10:30 to 6:30. Had three foremans working under me and sometime at night, I go out to burn the cane because during the day, the wind will be too strong. To burn is dangerous. So I used to go out at night. Spend about from an hour to two, two and half hours. Burn the cane and then come home. I had long hours, long working hours.

NC: How do the workers go about burning the cane?

WR: Well, we have a designated area, maybe about twelve acres. We usually burn about from twelve to fifteen acres a day, depending on the tonnage of cane per acre. Used to burn about twelve to thirteen acres a day. And the next day, I'll burn it again. Another ten or fifteen acres again, depending how the mill grinds the cane.

NC: About how many tons per acre?

WR: Well, we had cane sometimes to 110 to 115 tons per acre, up to 135 tons per acre. And we used to make a guess of how many tons per acre after the first fire from each field. And when I look at the field and I tell, my boss would ask me how many tons you think the field would go and I used to tell him but he used to take it in the office and give his figure. That was his figure. Actually it was my figure. Because I also caught up with him that he was taking my figure because my figure was almost correct on that tonnage. There was once when we had a new variety of 7209, the manager came and he asked my boss how many tons. My boss said about 92 to 97 and then my boss asked me how many tons, Willie. The manager told him, "I'm not asking Willie, I'm asking you. You give me your tonnage." He gave 92 to 97. Then the manager asked me. I told him 115 tons per acre. Then when the field was completed, it was 115 to 156 tons per acre. So I actually wen hitting all those fields almost on the dot. There was once an old foreman, section overseer raising cane and I asked him how many tons of cane in that field. He told me, "Oh, about one hundred tons." And I told him, "You get more. You get about 125 to 128 tons." So he wanted to bet with me six hundred dollars. And I knew if I'd a bet him it would be just like me putting a hand in his pocket and taking the money right out. So I didn't do that; I felt sorry for the old man. I told him, "No, I don't want to bet with you because you going lose with me" and the field came to 132 tons that he cut. And he only gave me his figure as a hundred.

NC: Now you do that by just looking at it?

WR: Just looking at the amount of cane, the bulk of the cane. We look at the cane after it's down on the ground. Then you can more or less figure how many tons per acre. So I worked for six managers in this plantation. My first manager was W. W. Goodale, and we have a highway here, W. W. Goodale Highway. And the next manager was J. B. Thompson. Then the third manager was John H. Midkiff. And the fourth manager

was John Anderson and the fifth manager was Harry Taylor and the sixth manager now is Bill Paty. So during my years of work in the plantation, I put myself into good use of trying to improve the plantation. So when we were-- going back now to the hauling cane by cane cars--when we were hauling, we were loading about three hundred cars a day to feed the mill and it wasn't enough because we were finishing too early, going home too early. We finish the work sometime 2 o'clock. 2:30, we'll be all through. And I asked the manager, John H. Midkiff, if he would give me two hundred fifty cars at night, we could load four hundred cars or better a day. So he gave me the two hundred fifty cars at night. And we were loading four hundred fifty cars a day and taking the cane out at four hundred fifty cars a day. He was so happy that we could get so much cane out and feed the mill. But then one day I had a toothache and my face was swollen and I had to lay off. I had to go to the doctor. We had no dentist here. Go to Wahiawa dentist and I took off. I went to Wahiawa dentist. Dentist told me to lay off that day because my face was so swollen. Then they couldn't get the cane out because I wasn't there. They left about two hundred cars in the field.

(NC laughs)

WR: So the next day I turned out to work again with a swollen face and my boss told me, "You not going home today. You go to the doctor but you come back and work; I need you." So I got around and found out from the locomotive engineer. He said, "You wasn't here yesterday. They left two hundred cars back in the field." So he didn't let me go home. I wanted to go home, take a rest, but he didn't want me to go home. So I stood there and we took all the cane out that was done for that day. And I made lots of improvements in the plantation such as the locomotives. We had lots of back switches out. We had to take the back switches out. We had to take the back switches out and cut out all those crossing that we crossed the government highway and to prevent accidents, you know, safety, on the safety side, and take out those crossings, take out those back switches and run the locomotive tracks on a different angle so that we won't use those back switches and blocking up the government roads. So they took it off. The company was so glad. They did all that and saved lots of money. They saved one locomotive plus three shifts of watchmen and lots of fuel and diesel oil, I mean crude oil that the locomotives used. They saved quite a bit on the plantation. Then we still on locomotives yet, I made an invention of a tractor to pick up the portable tractor and load it into the car and take it from the car and lay it on the ground so that we could work. And that job, we had twenty men on that type of work before the tractor came. And after the tractor was finally used properly and was doing good work, we came down to working in that gang with seven men. Doing by hand, the man used to lay three hundred pieces a day, 325 pieces a day with twenty men. When the tractors came in and started to work, the tractors laid seven hundred pieces a day in eight hours.

NC: With seven men?

WR: With seven men. And then we went to hauling by trucks. First of all, we had crane in the plantation and the manager was supposed to buy some cranes and they tried it out. He was disappointed because the crane wouldn't load the cane as fast as he would like to have it loaded. Then I asked the manager if he's going to buy this. He said no. It's not going to harvest our crop in time. We're not buying those cranes. So I asked him why. And he said that the machine work too slow. So I told him then, I could make the machine work faster and he called the master mechanic, Watson, to ask him questions whether he could speed up that machines. Mr. Watson said no. He couldn't because the r.p.m.s was made from the factory for that machine to run certain r.p.m.s. Set. Set on the machine. Just like an ordinary car. They have so many r.p.m.s. And I told him I wasn't going to touch the r.p.m.s. All I was going to do was to suggest a drum, six inches in diameter to cover the old drum and have it bolted up and that would give us three inches on each side of the drum. And they did, and the thing worked so fast that even the operators could hardly operate the crane. So I told them be patient and in the time to come you folks will get used to it, and you could do the jobs very well.

NC: Where did you get the idea for doing this thing?

WR: Well, I got the idea when I was a little young boy and I used to fly kite and I used to use that number thirty spool of thread from my mother and the kite used to go out very slow; and when I used to wind it back, it used to come back very slow in. Then I finally bought number ten thread. That's a bigger spool of thread and I used that and the kite used to go out very fast and will come also very fast. So I figure also that I could apply that technique to the machine and it worked. Worked wonderful. Then they made a grab to grab the cane. They wanted to discard the grab and they wanted to throw it away because it wasn't doing a good job. It was leaving a lot of cane back. So I told them if they take that back to the shop and make the goose neck about six inches more and that grab will be one of our good grabs and they did. And when they came back, the grab was one of best grabs that we had in the islands.

NC: What kind was it? Do you remember?

WR: It's made of pipe. It's a grab with a crane used to load the cane.

NC: Was it manufactured on the Mainland?

WR: No, was manufactured here. Our welders does all that work here. Right on the plantation. And then they brought it back and it did so good a job that the other plantations all came over and looked at it from Maui, Kauai, all over. And they came to look at it and they took the pattern back and made their own on their own plantation and some of it is still working in Waipahu plantation. Same grab is still working there. That was, I think, maybe in 1940, '41.

NC: Mr. Rego, you were probably one of the youngest people ever to become a foreman. Was that called a luna in those days?

WR: Yes, it's called a luna.

NC: And you were such a young person. What kind of a working relationship did you have with the other workers, those under you?

WR: Well, I had wonderful relationship with the men. They liked me very much, because when I first started as a young boy during that time, all the other foremans, they used to call their man by their bangos. They never call a man by his name. Always by the bango, 7209 or 6508 in that manner. And I think it wasn't proper to call a man by his number. So I decided to ask each and every one what was his name. I took the names down on a scratch pad and everytime I looked at it, reviewed it over and over again everyday and called them by their names.

NC: This was when you first started working?

WR: When I first started to work in the plantation. And my boss came and asked me why should I call the man by their names. Why shouldn't I call them by their bangos. I said they were born and baptized by their names and we should use their names. So I feel I have some respect for the men and they also have respect for me. And he got angry because I was calling them by the names. And he was even making fun from me in the back that I was calling the men by name. But the men liked me so much that they do anything I ask them to do. They were willing to cooperate with me in every way possible that I needed their support to help me in the work. They did it all for me. And I think that's one of the best things that came out of the plantation. And the next thing was the safety program. And I started to make a safety program with my men. Work safety so they wouldn't get hurt, you know, and my boss turned me into the manager. He turned me in to the manager saying that I was in favor of the men and not looking for the benefit of the plantation. So the manager came to see me. And he asked me this question. Are you in favor of the men or are you favor of the plantation? I said, "Well, Mr. Midkiff, let me tell you clearly that I'm looking for the benefit of the plantation, the work that is done by the men, trying to give them all the work I can for the benefit of the plantation. But the safety of the men, I think it comes under my jurisdiction." And I told him that by working safety, I'm also saving money for the company. Because if they do get hurt, the company have to support the family, support the persons that are injured. It will cost them quite a bit of money. I was also saving money. So then, "Well," he told, "so long as you doing that, it's okay. You do it." So I was glad the manager was on my side. But all in all, I say that my boss that was above me, the superintendent, he didn't like me because I was smarter than him on his work. The work he was doing, he learned from me. He told me to teach him when he came to that job. Teach him the work and he'll help me later on. I teach him all about the work



that he was doing, how to run the field, harvesting the field and he never help me. He was always jumping on my back.

NC: Excuse me, Mr. Rego. How do you think that he got the job with....

WR: Well, he got the job because I was very young. I was about 18 years of age at that time and I was too young. The manager told me that I was little bit too young to handle a big group of men. We had in the neighborhood from about three hundred men working in the harvesting field.

NC: How many men were you handling as a foreman?

WR: I was handling about thirty men.

NC: Big size group.

WR: Yeah. So anyway...

NC: But how did that person come to the plantation?

WR: Well, he had a break because the family had lot of land over here. Mendonca's estate. They had lots of land. They had lots of land, the family. He was married to one of Francis Silva's daughter...

NC: So they were all related...

WR: ...and they were all related to the Mendonca estate. They had lots of land...so he was given the chance of being promoted so that the plantation would have a good lease later on from the Mendonca estate.

NC: Mr. Rego, was that also a Portuguese family? Mendonca?

WR: Well, the Mendonca estate was a Portuguese family, right. Early settlers that came to Waialua and bought lot of land.

NC: So there was no ethnic prejudice?

WR: No.

NC: The circumstances, the relationship to the land.

WR: Right.

NC: Mr. Rego, did you experience any kind of prejudice against you or other cases on the plantation that you were aware of?

WR: Yes. When I was a foreman, I was earning only \$75 a month and they use to bring me which is called haole, they bring in a haole and never did this kind work in the plantation come in. Even if he comes from the Army and come and work here, they give him \$150 a month start. And we were held back with \$75 a month. So during the War, I went and

talked to the manager and I asked him why is it that the local boys couldn't get ahead, couldn't get the promotions that we deserved to have. He finally said, "Well you know the haoles live differently," he says. So I told him I don't think so because if he eat bread I eat bread myself, too, I said. And we work hard so why don't he give us a chance. So I told him then, "You have one harvesting overseer on the other section." I told him, "I'll give you one thousand dollars if I can't do a better job than that man is doing. If I cannot, I give you one thousand dollars. If I can't, you give me just five hundred dollars." And his answer was, "No question, you can do a better job than that man doing up there." Then I said, "Well, why are you holding us back then?" I say, "If you gonna hold me back like this, you might as well give me the release. I'd like to go work in Pearl Harbor because I have a call to Pearl Harbor." And he said, "No, I can't give you a release because you are the type of man that I really need on the plantation." Then when John Anderson came, John Anderson gave us the promotions we needed and then in Waialua and from then on, we had all the local boys given a chance and promoted to higher job and that's the time that they began to give the local boys the chance.

NC: So you think that the War had something to do with it? They didn't want to lose you, the man power?

WR: No, it wasn't that. Because then, John Midkiff let some foreman go into Pearl Harbor. He gave them a release but he wouldn't give me my release.

NC: Did that release mean that they could go back to their jobs after the War?

WR: It was martial law during the War, 1942. We had to have a release because of this martial law.

NC: The sugar industry, you could not leave your job, you could not walk away from Waialua Plantation?

WR: That's right. And all jobs was frozen. All jobs in Hawaii. Everything. And also the government needed the sugar, you know, needed the sugar badly, so they wanted to keep the man power going here.

NC: But he released a few?

WR: I think he kept me more so because of the improvements I made in the plantation. The ideas and all that I did on that plantation. And he knows the type of worker I was. He didn't want to let me go. He finally gave me a raise up to one hundred fifty dollars a month. From there on, we were happy because we have more money coming in to support my family.

NC: If you were to pick a manager who understood the people, the working people the best, who did the most for the working people, of the six managers that you worked under, whom would you pick?

WR: I would say Harry Taylor.

NC: Could you tell me the qualities you saw in this man?

WR: Yeah. This man here is a wonderful man. He knows about work. He came up to me one day and he asked me, "How is your laborer doing, fine?" I said, "Yeah, they're doing fine." "Are they making money?" They were on contract, piece rate contract. I told him, "Yes, they were making good money and they were very happy." And this is the word he said, "I don't care how much money they make as long as they work hard and produce for it." I told him, "Yeah, they are doing good work, very good work." And I was happy because he knew that what I know and what I use to work in the place put out work for the plantation and Christmas time, he gave me a bonus of fifty dollars bonus. And my boss heard about it, he was ribbing me everyday about it. Giving me a hint about the fifty dollar bonus. So I told him, "Well, if you not satisfied, why don't you go see the manager then and ask him to give you your fifty dollars."

NC: Was this boss above you? Was he a haole?

WR: Well, he was German; James Albright. And I was harvesting overseer at the year 1942, first promoted by John Anderson. And we did such a terrific job saving money for the company that during the War he was out in the service and when he came back for leave, he came back and he had a little party and he shook my hand and says, "I'm very glad you local boys are doing good work for the plantation. Keep it up, Willie." So I thanked him very much for it. I had good respect for him. Then we got this cranes working for the plantation and there were some method that the industrial engineer went to Kauai, Kekaha plantation to take some time starters from new methods of harvesting. They came back and tried to apply that to our plantation, but it didn't work because we were working two to four hours a day overtime to try to keep up with the work. So that method, I told the assistant manager, that method would be good for Kekaha, but it wouldn't be good for us because our mill grind two hundred sixty tons of cane in an hour. Kekaha only grinds 45 to 65 tons an hour. So they have to change the method but they didn't want to change the method so I made a sample of the work that would change the method that they brought from Kekaha plantation. The assistant manager got the civil engineers out---industrial engineers, rather, and took time studies from the work that I hand-made for them. And their figures came out that the company would save fifteen thousand dollar a year. So Harry Taylor was manager at that time. He said, "Fifteen thousand dollars a year is a savings. Let's do it." So we went in to the method that I had suggested. Then at the end of the crop, they found out that we saved thirty-seven thousand, not fifteen thousand. Thirty-seven thousand dollars. And I think that's where Mr. Harry Taylor was so happy and that year he gave me that fifty dollar bonus. It was very nice of him. But he was a nice man for the labor. He appreciated the work that was done.

NC: Mr. Rego, let's go back a little bit. Were there any children after you? Did you have younger brothers or sisters?

WR: Yes. I had my oldest sister was home at that time. And I also had a cousin living with us because her mother died in Kauai and she came to live with us, and my mother and two brothers and another younger sister. And they were all depending on what I had to earn for them to eat.

NC: Did the younger ones also have to start working on the plantation at an early age like you?

WR: No. They didn't have to because after my father got back on his feet and went back to work and I was working. I was making good salary in the plantation. We was on contract making a good salary.

NC: Did they have early experiences though on the plantations, working?

WR: Well, my brothers, they started later on and they wasn't quite young as I was. I think they were about 18 to 20 when they started to work in the plantation.

NC: Oh, that's good. But you started at 11 and you worked the full day?

WR: I worked eight hours a day.

NC: But did you have any childhood activities? Any kind of recreation?

WR: Well, on recreation, I used to play baseball. I used to play in all positions. Catch, pitch, third-base, shortstop, second-base, first-base, fielder. And the fielding, they would hit the ball to the left and I was on the center field. I could run to the left end and get that ball. I used to be a fast runner. And I loved football and I used to play for 135 pound league. Then I went into the barrel weight league and I was only 145 pounds and played in the barrel weight league. And that was lots of fun. Because it was so much fun, I was so happy, you know, even though you were playing with grown-ups, you know, big people of 280 to 350 pound people and the like. But I knew that with the speed we had running, we could run fast. They couldn't catch up with us. So we used to go at end run and they couldn't get us. And we had lots of fun, you know.

NC: Did Waialua have a team?

WR: Yes, Waialua had a team. Kahuku, Waipahu, Waianae, and we also had the plantation leagues. Also, baseball in different plantations.

NC: Were the teams mixed or was there more of one ethnic groups?

WR: Mixed, all mixed. And I'm not boasting, but I'm just telling the truth what had happened to me, that I was telling the truth now. I played baseball and I never once was struck out. They never strike me out. I got to have that ball. Any place, go all around. I had good eye, good

judgment for the ball and when I was 16 years old, we went to play Schofield with the Third Engineers and they were boys that come from colleges and high schools from the Mainland, you know, and they were good players. They were a good team. In fact, they were the champions in Schofield. So, I was 16 years old and I was pitching for our team and I pitched the whole nine innings and they beat us two to one. And the lieutenant that was in charge of the Third Engineers, he came up and shake my hand and said, "How old are you, son?" I say, "16." "16 years old and you can strike all those guys out," he said. "My golly, you have something there." So I told him, "Well, I've been practicing, you know, learning." So I loved baseball. I love sports. I used to go swimming Saturdays and Sundays. Go down swimming. I used to go pig-hunting for exercise.

NC: Where did you pig hunt?

WR: Up in the mountains. Around Waialua mountains and I love all kinds of sports. Basketball, I coached a team of basketball and we took championship.

NC: Was there any support from the plantation for these teams?

WR: Yeah, we had when I was young. We had a lot of support from the plantation. Plantation used to furnish us the equipment that we needed and also give us the transportation we needed and the trucks to go from place to place playing baseball, football. They were very kind, giving us a lot of support.

NC: Who use to go out to watch the team?

WR: Well, we had Industrial Relations men. A fellow by the name of Rudin. He use to go with us and watch the games played and...

NC: How about when you played right here?

WR: Well, right here, he used to be here in Waialua.

NC: Did the other workers come out to see you?

WR: Yeah, all the working plantations people used to come out, flocks in the...men, women, and children. All on the grandstands, looking at us playing baseball.

NC: So you had a field with grandstand?

WR: Yes, that's right. That's wonderful, you know, and was once a boy, a friend of mine, and he could throw a lot of curve ball. He bet he could strike me out.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO.

WR: ...I told him, "No, you can't." And he bet me five dollars he will. The first ball he threw me and I switch hit, since I'm a switch hitter. I switch left hand instead of right hand and I hit this ball to the farthest places that anybody hit the ball in that park, in our park at the right field side. They had a stone crusher there and I put that ball right down by the stone crusher. So I earn my five dollar.

(NC laughs)

WR: But I was good pitcher when I was in my young days that the league in town wanted to take me but somehow there was a little jealousy in the club. The guy didn't want to take me in because he didn't want me to take his position. He didn't want to give me a chance. But when the Braves played Waialua, Japanese boys team, the Braves always used to lose. They lose the game. Waialua Japanese, I beat them. Twice, pitching against them, I beat them twice. So that's the reason why they wanted me to play in town. But since they didn't want to give me a chance because I could pitch and I could hit better than that pitcher that was playing for the Braves, but he knew that I was going take his position. He didn't want to give me.

NC: You said the Waialua Japanese Team.

WR: That's in our plantation league.

NC: Oh, so within the plantation league, each camp had a team?

WR: Yeah, we had a Japanese team; we had Portuguese boys two teams; we had a team from Haleiwa mixed of Hawaiian, haoles, and we had a Filipino team.

NC: That was the league?

WR: That was good. Lots of fun.

NC: Did those teams come up that way because people were living in those different camps?

WR: You know, certain individuals would like to join this team or join that team, you know. It wasn't that you had your team from your camp. No. It was just mixed up and you play for whom you want to play for.

NC: So, like, did the Filipino camp have a Portuguese boy playing on it?

WR: That's right. It was mixed up.

NC: It was just that it would be mostly Filipinos?

WR: See, we had Portuguese boys, but we had Japanese also playing with us.

NC: On the same team?

WR: Yeah. Because once I had my second base boy, a Japanese boy--he was

playing second and I was playing third. And I told him, "Stay on your bag because there was a man on first and a man on second." I said, "We going to make a triple out because this batter coming up and the next batter is going to hit the ball to me on third base." So, I say, "you stay on the bag and we going to make a triple play here." I called all them together and we did that. So as soon as I got the ball, the guy hit the ball to me down the third. I touch him, threw second, and when he go first, he kind of stumble, and he missed the first base. And we could have had a triple out right there. Because I knew how it was going to come out, see. 'Cause the way the batter throw the balls. We had lots of fun in those young days and I wish I was young again and could go back.

(Laughter)

NC: Sounds like you did have a lot of fun. Were there other activities open to young people? Was there a theatre in the plantation?

WR: Yeah, we had movies. We had a movie theatre. Talking about the theatre, the theatre was run by the plantation. In my younger days, I used to box. I used to box amateur and so I used to box down in the theatre. And they use to let me go free because I use to perform boxing there. And we used to box against the YMCA boys from Honolulu and I haven't lost one bout. I won all my bouts. In fact, I went down Kahuku. Had a smoker down there once and there was this big Filipino that came from town. He was a professional fighter. I didn't know that he was a professional fighter. And this friends of mine told me nobody wants to box with him in Kahuku. "How about you taking him on?" I said, "That's alright. I'll take him up." But I didn't know who he was. Neither our boys didn't know either, too, and the Kahuku guys didn't want to let us know who he was. So they stack me against this Filipino fighter, this professional fighter, and when he started off, well, he started throwing lots of leather, and I figure, well, I'm not going to take all this punishment. I'm going to dish it out, too. And we started from the first round. We go for three rounds, two minute rounds. Three rounds. We started from the first round till the third round just hammering away at one another. Giving all he get and giving all I had too, and wound up in a draw. But, you know, you don't know who you go against. And furthermore, he was 158 pounds and I was 140 pounds.

NC: Do you remember his name?

WR: Mendonca.

NC: The Filipino boy was also named Mendonca? That's a coincidence there.

WR: Yeah. He told me, he introduced himself. Said, "You know who I am?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "I'm the professional fighter from Honolulu and my name is Mendonca." I said, "Well, I haven't met you."

NC: Oh, my goodness. Did the Portuguese people have any kind of entertainment? Were you living in a Portuguese camp?

WR: Yes, we were.

NC: Do you remember were there any kind of Portuguese group, singing group, dancing group?

WR: Well, we use to have these Portuguese dances, you know, dancing group and we use to participate in that. Just activities we use to have. It was just once in a while they put on the dance, you know.

NC: And they would do dances from the old country?

WR: Yeah. I'd like to learn about it some more, but it's hard to get people that come out and teach, you know. I had a lady to come down here and teach us, but then she came here three times, I think, and they got to some hassle in town and she didn't come back any more.

NC: Do you remember the names of any of the dances or the kind of instruments?

WR: The instructor Mrs. Kyros.

NC: Do you remember the music, the name of the music?

WR: No, no. I wouldn't know because, see, my parents never spoke in Portuguese. They speak in English. And was very hard for us to learn. We use to ask our mother how to speak in Portuguese, you know, and use a few words here and there.

NC: Was there much visiting by friends in those days or any visiting?

WR: Well, we use to get our families come from town. And we go back to town, visit them. You know, times like that. Transportation was very hard in those days. No cars, you know. In fact, we only had one taxi driver here. He use to drive us from here to town and Honolulu.

NC: How long did it take, how much did it cost?

WR: We leave from town at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and we get home down here in Waialua about 10 to 11 o'clock at night. That's slow driving on the roads. And the roads was very dangerous--turn, you know, sharp turn and very slow driving.

NC: How much did a taxi cost in those days?

WR: Well, I think, was two dollar a family to go to town and back. Take the whole family. I use to like to go to town because when I get to Honolulu, I used to ride wagon-hacks. Taxi hacks. They use to run taxis by horse and buggy, you know; we call 'em hacks. Yeah, we get on that and the hacks used to take us all the way down to my aunty's



place down Kapahulu and down to where Ala Moana Shopping Center is down there.

NC: So there were lots of things for people and young people and their families to do? Were there picnics and things like that?

WR: Yeah, we use to go picnics down the beach, have our picnic down there, you know, the family. Lot of fun.

NC: Did plantation families go out to restaurants and things like that...

WR: No. They wouldn't go out. They just do their own cooking at home and have their own meals at home. Of course, the only times that I use to go out at restaurants and all that and go out to the ball games in town, wrestling matches in town in Honolulu and all those high school football games and all that I use to go out and see. We use to rent taxi and go to the restaurant. Well, I use to go down to the restaurants with my boyfriends, friends of ours. We use to get together, about five or six of us, get together and we go out and have a Chinese dinner, you know, nine course Chinese dinner.

NC: (Laughs) What restaurants were in town in those days, do you remember?

WR: Well, Wo Fat, Lau Yee Chai, Red Rooster, McCully.

NC: Did you go just the boys because...

WR: Boys, yeah.

NC: ...the girls were not allowed to go?

WR: No. And then had recreational movies. We used to have silent pictures over here in those days, you know, but Hawaii Theatre in Honolulu, they had the talkie movie, so my brothers wrote me from Oakland and told me, "Say, if you have talkies there, you better go and see. It's very good." And once I went, I had a car that time, I bought a 1930 Chevy sedan and I was single and I went to town and see the talkie movie. I liked it so much that every week I was going back to see it. Then some of the girlfriends down here asked me to go along. They wanted to go along. I use to fill up the car with three boys, three girls, you know. And go to the movies and after the movies, go out for a little snack of ice cream and soda and come back home.

NC: Now were you allowed to go together, young men and young women like that because you all knew each other?

WR: Yes.

NC: Or were you courting? Was anybody courting?

WR: No, no, no. We're just friends, you know. Strictly friends. What

I mean, now, just like a boy and boyfriend. Just like a girl and girlfriend. No, we were not courting a girl or nothing. We just took 'em for the ride and bring them home, see.

NC: And if one of those boys had wanted to court one of those girls, would she have been allowed to go?

WR: I don't know. We haven't tried that. I was so young. I didn't want to get into that hassle.

(Laughter)

WR: I stood away and of course, they were chasing me around, but I kept away, because I was too young to be getting involved, you know.

NC: Well, it's interesting that you had an automobile. How did you learn to drive?

WR: Well, to tell you, I use to ride a motorcycles. I bought motorcycles when I was single and then I didn't drive a car. I only asked the person, "Which is your low gear, your second gear and your third gear?" And that's your gas pedal and your brake in here. I took the car and I went. And I went straight and I went around. I backed up, was so funny that I did all that without anybody giving me any instructions. Nobody was with me. Alone.

NC: How did you get a license?

WR: Well, I learned. I kept on going, you know. I borrowed a friend's car, kept on going, learning and learning. Then I went to Wahiawa. They were issuing license at Wahiawa Courthouse and Wahiawa was a town. And I was trying for my license with a policeman next to me. And there was a 15 mile limit and he told me, "Speed it up. Speed it up." I said, "No, the limit says 15 miles and I'm obeying the law." So he was trying to catch me to see if anybody could coax me to speed it up if I would have done it the same way. But I was smarter than that. I didn't do it. I said, "No, I won't do it." He said, "Alright, come in. You get your license."

NC: (Laughs) So what year was that you got your license?

WR: It was 1931. Same year I bought the car, 1931. No, I bought in 1930. That's right. 1930 I got my license. Same year.

NC: Did you think about courting a girl then?

WR: Oh no. Then afterwards, 1935, then I went with a friend down Waipahu and a friend know my wife. He introduced me to my wife and I began to court her and I use to go with my car. Taking her to the shows and bringing her back home.

NC: How did you get permission to court her?

WR: Well, we use to go in a group--the sister use to go along, the brother

use to go along. My friends and I use to all go together to movies and after the movies, we use to come straight home.

NC: Did you have to ask permission to court her from the family?

WR: No. The parents would let them go every Saturday to the show once a week.

NC: 'Cause the sister went, too. It was a group again?

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 1-42-2-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

William Rego (WR)

July 13, 1976

Waialua, Hawaii

BY: Norma Carr (NC)

NC: This is the second session with Mr. William Rego. We are in Waialua. Today is July 13, 1976. Mr. Rego, could we talk a little bit more about home life and things like that before we go on to talk more about the work on the plantation? When you were a child living in your folks' home, what kind of furniture was typical? Do you remember having in your home?

WR: Well, in those days, they call it rattan. Rattan weed furniture. This was popular in those days. And that's about the only furniture we had. Of course, the plantation use to furnish their labor(ers) with kitchen tables and some benches. If you want to use that, you know, they wanted to use it. But we use to buy our own furniture, you know. Make the things look little better when we had enough money to buy something good for the house.

NC: Where was this rattan furniture bought from? Where was it made?

WR: Oh, it was made in Honolulu. Material used to come from China.

NC: What stores would sell this kind of furniture?

WR: C.S. Wo Company. We bought it from there. It's a long time.

NC: They were in business a long time ago.

WR: A long time ago, yes.

NC: Was the furniture expensive?

WR: No, it wasn't. I think about fifty dollars you could buy a whole set in those days.

NC: Was there credit in those days...

WR: Yes. You could pay monthly, so much monthly. Installments.

NC: Then, this rattan, how did your mother or whoever had the job in the family, how did they keep it clean or did they polish it?

- WR: Well, no. It's a reed, reed furniture. Rattan, not lumber. Mostly bamboo with the reed weaven through, you know. When it gets too dusty, you know, it collects dust between it, between the furniture. We use to take it out in the weekends, like that, wash it down, dry it up and bring it back in the house. No vacuum cleaners in those days.
- NC: Was it typical for your mother to have the furniture taken out?
- WR: Well, we use to do it for her. We use to do all that work for her. Take it out, wash it and bring it back.
- NC: And how did your mother, or whoever had the chore, wash floors and walls and things like that?
- WR: Well, my mother used to use a mop in the house. Mop the floors. But then, we had a veranda outside. We used to wash it with water and soap. Soap and water. And we use to scrub it with half of a coconut. We cut it and we use to scrub it with half of a coconut. Scrub the floors and we had a wooden sidewalk, goes out to the front and every week we use to wash that with a scrubbing coconut.
- NC: Did you use your hands with the coconut?
- WR: That's right, go on my hands and knees and just scrub it.
- NC: Did any of the kids ever put them on like shoes and do that?
- WR: No. All barefooted. No shoes. 'Cause hard to buy shoes in those days.
- NC: Oh. I was told that some of the people tie that half coconut and then scrub with the feet.
- WR: No, we use to do it all by hand. All by hand.
- NC: Do you see anybody using the coconuts for cleaning these days?
- WR: No, not anymore. They using brushes that I think come from Japan or China. Maybe they buy those brushes. But not the coconuts. Not anymore. But the coconut does a good clean job. You see that boards have just been wiped, you know, clean.
- NC: Then when you got married in the middle '20s and then when you and your wife set up housekeeping, was the furniture...
- WR: Well, we had a rattan furniture, too, and then later on, we moved into hard wood furniture. I gave the rattan away and bought another set of hard wood.
- NC: Where was the hard wood furniture made?
- WR: Made in Honolulu.

NC: Was it made of wood from Hawaii or local?

WR: Well, I think the wood use to come....it wasn't from the monkeypod wood. It's wood that come from outside. Hard wood. Oak wood or something like that.

NC: I see. And were there more furniture stores by the time you were married, or....

WR: Yeah, there were more furniture stores in Honolulu. And you could buy it down here in the plantation store. They had a plantation store but we used to prefer to buy it outside 'cause was cheaper. In those days, we use to pay monthly, so much a month for the furniture. Like in the plantation store, they would just deduct everything from your wages.

(NC laughs)

WR: So we just buy it from there and we get along fine. Better.

NC: So in the middle '30s, even before that, your family had enough cash to have this kind of independence. You didn't have to buy everything from the plantation store.

WR: No. We use to buy from the outside and pay installments every month. And these installments were very small in those days, you know, about ten dollars a month, fifteen dollars a month, which we could afford. But today, with today's prices and today's material, you know, everything is so high, we couldn't pay those prices on installment.

NC: Did your mother assign chores to different members of the family?

WR: Well, my mother use to do all the shopping, all the cooking for the house, all the shopping at the stores. And then mostly the things she needs in the house like food and clothing or anything she needs for the house, she does the shopping. And clothes for the children, of course, my brother and sisters and clothes for myself, we use to go out to the stores, you know, and buy our clothing because we got to buy the size that fits us.

NC: And how about work in the house?

WR: Well, to help my mother, my sisters used to help my mother clean house, wash clothes, and everything, do the laundry. And my mother use to cook bread. Cook brown bread at home in the old ovens that was made by the plantation. Brick oven. And we use to like the cooking that she use to do in there, like roasting meat, pork, chicken and all that. Roast it in the oven, was very good, delicious. Also, the sweet bread, and the house bread that she used to do. Her cooking was very good.

NC: Were these ovens built by the Portuguese?

WR: Well, it was built by the Portuguese men that were on the masonry

plantation work. And the plantation used to furnish the material like the bricks, the sand, the cement and rocks, everything. Plantation use to donate that and they pay the labor to build the ovens, cooking ovens for the Portuguese people and the Spanish people. Also the Puerto Rican people, too.

NC: So those three camps had these ovens?

WR: Yes.

NC: Would you say the Japanese camp, did they have that oven?

WR: No. Japanese didn't have anything like that. It's only the Portuguese camp, the Spanish camp, and the Puerto Rican camp.

NC: Okay. Do you recall if your mother and the Spanish women and the Puerto Rican women, would they ever cook together or exchange recipes or something like that?

WR: Well, no. I think they use to cook their own. Each one use to cook their own. Of course, if someone knew about some good recipe in cooking, they would exchange. Get ideas and learn from, you know, each nationality. They learn how they cook and what they cook, you know.

NC: Do you remember eating any food that was say, Puerto Rican food?

WR: Yes. Of course, my mother cooks Spanish rice, you know. She learned from Puerto Ricans. And I use to eat a lot over at a friend's house. Puerto Rican food. That's Alfred Santiago's house. I like her cooking very much, and, you know.

NC: Now, did you have the same opportunity to learn to eat Japanese cooking?

WR: Well, yeah. I would go out to parties and Japanese parties and all that. I liked their cooking, too. I eat a lot of Japanese food, especially we go out to the restaurants sometimes. Not everytime. Sometime, I eat Japanese food and most of the times, of course, I'm eating American food. But I like all nationality foods.

NC: Do you say that you acquired those tastes as a child then, when you were still young and you learned to eat all those different foods?

WR: Well, when you go to school, you go with, you mingle among all nationalities. You know, in school, and we exchange our lunches. And I had a friend, he's my neighbor here now. I use to take my bread with jelly, butter and cheese or something like that to school. And he used to come up to me and say, "Want to change lunches?" And I say okay. So I eat his Japanese food and he eat my Portuguese food.

NC: The ovens were always in those three camps? Say when the Filipinos came, did they also acquire ovens?

WR: No. The Filipinos took over the Spanish camp and the Japanese took over the Puerto Ricans' camp. Portuguese, well, Filipinos came in and mixed up in there. They break lots of those ovens down in the yard. Almost every home had an oven. Every home had an oven. You had your own. You cook when you want. Do what you want on your own, see. But there were some people that they had no ovens, some families and they use to come over and borrow ours and cook in the oven outside. And my mother say, "Well, okay, you can go." And they use to cook their bread and everything they wanted in the ovens.

NC: When you say, "They broke it down," do you mean the plantation broke down the ovens?

WR: No, the people themselves, you know.

NC: The people themselves?

WR: Yeah, they come in there and destroy everything, you know. They don't know what it is for, you know. And the Filipinos don't know what the oven is for, or what they do with it. So they just don't want it. They want to make a garden in the yard. They break it down and they use the area to garden.

NC: Now, you used to exchange lunch at school. How about during the work day, out in the fields when you were working? What was the work day like and then did you exchange lunch sometimes?

WR: Well, on the field what we used to do, we used to get in a group. We get in a group and we exchange lunch, you know. We eat together. We pick from this guy's lunch and that guy'll pick from my lunch and so forth, you know. We pick from each other's lunch can that is all spread out on the ground and we put our lunch bags under our food and our lunch cans on top our lunch bags. And then each person will pick from where he wants to try out. That's the way we use to eat from different (Tape garbled)

NC: Who use to pack that lunch for you?

WR: No, we pack our own lunch can, but then we bring the lunch can. We have a gang of maybe about thirty to forty people, mostly used to go over thirty to forty. About 45 people in one gang. Well, the lunches are put all in a pile, in a bundle. All in the pile there. And then we work. And by lunch period, we probably be about five hundred, maybe almost one thousand feet away working. And then just before lunch, say we lunch at 11 o'clock, at 10:30, the water boy use to come out and I was one of the water boys, pick up the lunches, and we use to put them in a hard wood stick that we use to carry in our backs and we got the idea from the Chinese people when they use to have their bananas, and haul their baskets you know. So we use that same kind of hard wood stick we got from the Chinese people and we use that. We put say about ten lunch cans on one and ten on the other end and we carry it just like the Chinese use to carry their baskets. And take it to the people where they gonna have their lunch, close to their lunch period.



NC: What time had you started to work?

WR: Use to start at 6 o'clock in the morning and finish at 4:30 in the afternoon.

NC: And did you pack your lunch yourself or did your mother pack it for you?

WR: No. Oh, she packs our lunch, yeah. My mother will pack the lunch for me and make the lunches everyday for me. And I get up in the morning and I'll eat my breakfast home, maybe before I leave 'cause we don't have breakfast at the fields and as soon as we get out into the fields, we put our lunch cans down and we set to work.

NC: Mhm. How early did your mother have to get up?

WR: About 4 o'clock in the morning. We got up at 5 o'clock in the morning, get dressed.

NC: And did you walk over to the fields?

WR: Yeah, we use to work, in those days we had no transportation. We walked from our camps, our homes, down to the plantation mills where they had boarding for our transportation to and from the fields where we work. We used to ride locomotives and the locomotive had labor cars, we use to call it labor cars with all benches made in the labor cars to take the labor in the morning and bring the labor home at quitting time.

NC: Now these people have coffee breaks; you had the water boy which you were once. How often....was the water taken to the men on a regular basis or was it when they wanted to drink water?

WR: No. Regular basis. Was, say, if I go out and haul the water....fill up my cans of water, I have two cans of water, five gallons each can, that's ten gallons of water to the labor and we had drinking cups inside the can and with a little stick, you know, long little piece of redwood stick that they could scoop up their water and drink. Each person will drink maybe about two cups, two and a half cups and then as soon as I deliver that water, one passed that water. I'll dump the rest and go back and fill the cans up again and come back again. That was the whole day routine job, giving the labor water. Say about six times a day, we would go out and fill up water and bring water to the labor. And the water, some time we would get out water from sometime mile or two, or two and a half mile away because we use to get our water from the camp where the labor used to live. Outside camps, you know. And it was so far, there was no water wagons that they have today. There was no nothing that they would bring the water and they would take it from there. No, we had to go into the camps and pick the water up. And when you carry that water and that's ten gallons, that's a heavy load. And you go up on terrains high, you climbing up hills and down hills until you meet your gang and by the time I'll get there, I was just wringing wet. Soaking wet, you know, tired and I'll

just deliver the water, pass the water around to the labor and I'll go back and fill up again and go back again. That was my work every day.

NC: Then how would you dress for that work?

WR: Well, we use to dress in denim cloth, they call it Lee Riders today, Lee Riders and a blue shirt. That's all we use to wear and opala hat.

NC: Who made the straw hat?

WR: Well, Hawaiians use to make it and sell it to the stores. And we buy it from the store. We buy it about fifty cents a hat.

NC: How long did a hat like that last?

WR: About three months.

NC: How were the cane cutters dressed?

WR: About the same way. Similar way.

NC: Did they wear short sleeves to work?

WR: Long sleeves. Mostly all long sleeves because when you cutting the cane and you pulling the cane back, sometimes you get scratched with the leaves from the cane. Because they have a little edge just like a saw blade, right at the edge of the leaves. So they have to wear long sleeves. And also the loading cane. The workers always wear long sleeve. Haul the cane by hand, cut the cane by hand.

NC: The men and the women worked side by side in the fields?

WR: Well, the men used to do mostly the hard work, cutting the cane and loading the cane, all men. But then the women use to work with the younger boys, together with the younger boys, picking up the leftover cane that was left in the field, you know, picking up, we call that liliko cane. And that group use to work together, boys and girls and women together. And then we had another gang that had women alone, used to work in the planting field, plant by hand, plant the cane by hand and they cover the seed with the hoe by hand. It was women that used to do that work.

NC: Would one woman put the piece in the ground and cover it herself?

WR: Well, they use to let....the troughs was made by the tractors, used to make the lines and then people, ladies use to come and lay the seeds, pieces. Seed pieces used to be a half foot long and we lay it along-side each other in the lines. People are laying the seeds all the way in, the ladies would come in the back and cover a little soil so the thing with, uh...

NC: Was that a special part of the cane that became seed?

WR: Well, yeah. That's the top portion of each cane. That's the top portion of the cane. They used to cut it about a foot and half long and use that for the seed. They call that the seed plant. And that's the best part of the cane. Best seed of the cane because the top, that's where you get the young shoots, the young eyes coming up of the cane. And that will grow first.

NC: Did the women get paid the same wages as the men?

WR: No. The women were getting \$19.50 a month.

NC: Around what year?

WR: Oh, I would say about 1921, 1918, 1919, all those years.

NC: And the boys, the young boys....

WR: Young boys would get less. Young boys would get less. They would get just about \$15 a month, \$12 to \$15 a month. And I was making \$12 on month at that time and since I had to do a lot of manual work with the labor, with the ladies, help them cover seeds and all that, so they gave me \$19.50 a month. Same pay the ladies had.

NC: And what were the men getting around that time?

WR: Men were getting dollar a day. That's a dollar a day about \$25, maybe about thirty dollars a month.

NC: Were they on call to work every day of the week?

WR: Yeah, they were give seven days a week work, ten hours a work and half an hour for lunch period. That's all we had.

NC: Who paid for the work clothes?

WR: The labor use to buy their own clothes. We use to buy our own clothes for working, own shoes, buy our own shoes. Shoes was cheap in those days, too. About \$1.50 can buy a pair of shoes.

NC: Were those shoes different from the shoes you would wear on Sundays to go to church?

WR: Oh yeah, that's different. This is working shoes. This is working shoes, rough shoes, roughly made and they last longer, last about four month, five months.

NC: Let's see....you have to go back to the camps to get the water when you were a water boy. Was there a time when you could drink the water from the fields so that there was no need for a water boy?

WR: Yeah, later on, say about 1930, somewhere along 1930. They made some water wagons and they use to bring the water wagon out to the fields for each gang to use their own drinking water. So maybe two or three

gangs would use that drinking water, say about 250 gallons of water. And the water boys then in those days, they were given gallons by the plantation, for only two and a half gallons, galvanized gallons they made at the team shop; they fabricated this gallons, at two and a half gallons a can and each water boy used to have, carry only one of those cans, mind you, in those days and they were paid more money than I was getting and they carry just two and a half gallons. And at times they even use to ask the foreman or me if they could use my pick-up truck to go down and get water. Imagine now. And in a short distance, yet they wanna use my pick-up truck to get that water and only two and a half gallons. And getting money---they were making about \$1.23 to \$1.24 an hour and carrying only two and a half gallons of water to give twenty to 25 men in gang.

NC: Oh. Things did changed.

WR: Things have changed and it changed for the better of the men and less work. More money and less work. There was a gang, once was working before we even had union in the plantation. This gang was working and they were playing; I saw them playing, some of them were playing. And the coordinator from the office said, "Look at that gang there. They not doing any work." So I told him, I think his name was Louis, I said, "Louis, I don't think you should worry too much about it because in a few years from now they gonna unionize the plantation and you gonna see that man doing the same job and they gonna be doing less work and be paid"...

END OF SIDE TWO; TAPE #1-42-2-76

SIDE ONE; TAPE #1-48-2-76

NC: This is the second tape with Mr. William Rego. We are continuing the second session in Waialua, July 13, 1976. We were talking about changes, and you were talking Louis about the....

WR: Yeah, I was just telling Louis that not to worry about the labor because in a few years from now, they gonna unionize the labor and the labor gonna be paid; they gonna be doing less work and they gonna be paid two or three times more than what they getting now for the same job.

NC: I think your prophecy came true.

WR: It did, I know that it did. About two years after that, it came. They got unionized that labor got paid high wages. From then on the labor was very happy they was making good money. Also it benefited the non-union members such as the overseer, the foremans, the rest of the plantation. Everybody got more money, more salary.

NC: Now you, you were not allowed to join the union, were you?

WR: No, we couldn't join because we were on the management side. We were on the management side, we couldn't join the union.

NC: But you feel you appreciate the benefits that the union made for the men?

WR: Yes, I appreciate that very much. And it helped the labor so much, you know. It helped the people to better themselves. Better their life conditions. They were much happier. And also the rest of the people that were not union members also had better lives.

NC: Mr. Rego, the union must have brought a few other changes besides better pay. How about medical or hospital care? Did that make a difference?

WR: Well, in the old days, we had Dr. Wood, the old hospital. And I was the age of 16 years old. I lost two of my fingers, part of my fingers, my left hand and I got it all smashed up from the drawheads from the cane cars. At night, I was on night shift and I came down to the hospital, 10 o'clock at night. Dr. Woods saw my finger and said, "Well, we'll take care of that tomorrow." And he let it go and he just wrapped a towel on my hand. And I slept that night. They gave me sleeping pills and then the next day 8 o'clock in the morning, he started the operation. And he injected me, he gave me an injection to calm the pain and put me to sleep with was ether, and I wasn't asleep yet and he started to cut my finger with his pliers, you know. And I just felt the pain. I held that thing. I was moaning, you know. And that's the type of doctor he was. So gave me some more ether until I finally passed out and he finished the work. Then coming down to the change of the hospital to the new hospital we have up here, we had Dr. Davis and he was one doctor there and 1942 I had appendix on the side hurting me then I went down to see him. And he says, "Well, you're not a doctor." He said, "How you know about appendix?" I said, "Well, it's on my right side and it's hurting me a lot," and he checked me and said, "Oh yes, it's appendix," and he told me to wait four or five years from and maybe we could operate and I said, "No." I say, "I want it done tomorrow, not today, tomorrow." He said, "Well, if you say so." I said, "Yes, I'm saying so. I'm not the doctor but you do it tomorrow." So he did it the next day and he made a guinea pig out of me. The second day I started to walk around, the third day I started walking around. Took the appendix out and start walking around. And then the fourth day I came home and I walked home from the hospital. He wanted to hire a taxi to take me home but I said, "No, it's just about a mile," and I walked home slowly, I wanted to have exercise. And then two weeks after that, I was back on my job working out in the fields. Then the union came and union got more doctors, asked for more doctors on the plantation. We got two doctors and from then on we had more opportunities, better service with two doctors. You could go either doctor you want, anyone that you wanted to go to. Then the labor was taken care much better. They had more doctors to look after them. And then finally we had different doctors come in, you know. Dr. Davis was retired and different doctors came in.

NC: When Mrs. Rego was ready to deliver her babies, was there hospital care for her?

WR: Yes, all my children was taken care by Dr. Davis. My first child was born about 4 o'clock in the morning and I took my wife about 12 o'clock that night. The child was born 4 o'clock in the morning. Then the

rest of the children was born in the hospital. The last two children that my wife had--they were twins, one boy and one girl and I was working out in the fields and she was in the hospital having the baby at that time. Then the doctor sent the word out to the field to call me and to tell me that my wife had a baby and she had another one later on and he said he wanted to apologize to me for not taking some sort of an X-ray to find out whether she was gonna have one child or two, twins. So she got twins. I asked how was she and her condition. She said, "Oh very fine, resting comfortably and the babies are okay, everything is okay." But then when the time when she was going to come home with the two children, he made out a formula. He wrote out a formula for us to make the milk for the children. But then he made a mistake on the formula. Instead of putting eight tablespoons of karo sweetening, karo to mix with the milk, he put 18, he put 18 and I looked at it and that thing got me puzzled but we had to do what he had written on the paper there. And the children got diarrhea. And they were very sick, I had to take them to the children's hospital in town, and I kept them there for a week. And one almost passed away, the boy, he stayed there more than a week. About two weeks he stayed there because he was more in trouble of the diarrhea. And I went to see the manager. The manager told me, "Why don't you do something to the doctor." So he said, "Give him a licking or something." So I didn't wanna do such things but I went back to see him and he denied, he denied that he made that. So I brought the paper that he gave my wife and I say, "Is this your handwriting?" He said, "Oh yes." I said, "Then you wrote that, didn't you? You wrote that 18?" He said, "Yeah, that's it. I'm sorry, I'm sorry I did that." Well, I could almost lost my two children to carelessness of his work. But the doctors in town was very good, specialist in town was very good doctors and they took care and I'm glad that they still living today. They married and they have children.

NC: Oh boy, do you know anything about the care now since you've been retired?

WR: Well, now the plantation give up with the hospital and it's a group from Wahiawa. Dr. Baysa clinic group at Wahiawa. Dr. Baysa clinic group at Wahiawa taking over this Waialua Hospital now and they taking care the patients. I go there once in awhile and my wife goes there more often but when they cannot handle her down here they send her up to Wahiawa Hospital. Put her in the hospital up there and give her care up there, medicare up there. And they have more facilities up there then they do here and I think they taking good care of the patients now, very good up there.

NC: What kind of things does Mrs. Rego go in for?

WR: Well, she goes in for the oxygen and the inhaling of the machine that they have up there. And they give her intravenous shots you know, you know, with certain kinds of liquids that they give her. In a day or two after that she comes out all right.

NC: This is in treatment for...

WR: Asthma.

NC: Has she always had asthma?

WR: Yes, I didn't notice when we first got married. The only time I noticed that she had asthma attack was when after she had the twins. She began to wash clothes, do lot of washing then getting herself all wet and all that and she got colds and she began to catch her asthma. But before then from the time I was married up to the last children, I didn't see her or hear her anytime with her asthma.

NC: Could there have been....we can't tell, we're not scientists but was there around the same time that she started getting these asthma attacks, was there any big change in this area? The use of herbicide or anything else that might have affected her?

WR: Well, could be because the herbicides had a strong odor. I know because I work in the plantation and that thing can drift for miles, you know, especially in those days they were using Hiberex you know and certain types of chemical that would travel through the air, that can travel about half a mile and could damage crops, see. And also if you go alongside that herbicide and if you get any of them on your clothes and on your pants and you come home and walk along your plants, say if you have papaya trees, or rosebushes or some plants, that chemical would affect. It affects our plants right away. Because I have my rosebushes right here in the front, was all affected by that chemical that was used by the plantation.

NC: And the papaya tree, too, you say?

WR: The papaya tree. The papaya trees would just shrivel up and die.

NC: Can you grow papayas now?

WR: Yes, we can grow papayas now 'cause they not using that type of material any more. The government stopped the plantations from using certain kind of chemicals that destroy the vegetations like vegetables and all that, papaya fruits and also house plant. They not using that anymore now; they using certain types of chemicals that wouldn't harm no animals, no vegetation, no vegetables like that, gardens, papaya trees, it won't harm them. They using good chemicals now. Government put some restrictions on it now which helps out, you know. I didn't know myself, I went through the chemical and when I got home I got alongside of my papaya trees. And in a few days, they were just shriveling up. But it's not any more, I have papaya trees in my yard now and all my papayas that I need for the house. They're not using that any more.

NC: Let's see, have you ever had any other kinds of accidents, other than the accidents with the elevator?

WR: Well, working in the plantation, I was once riding a bicycle down Haleiwa in the evening, a Filipino was learning how to drive a car--

he bought a car and he just bump me right in the front of his car and threw me under the car and my bike was just a total wreck and I just got strawberries on my knees, and that's about the only accident I had at that time. And during working in the plantation, I was a foreman and we were blasting dynamite caps, blasting rocks on the railroad, widening up the railroad tracks. And I had an old Japanese man, my powder man, and we had about two hundred electric blasting caps, set on the rocks to blast and I told this Japanese man not to blast anything until I came over and see him and talk to him and tell him everything is clear. I had to clear the grounds. So there was an overseer house, and I went to tell the missus to get in the house and as soon she went to the kitchen door, she stopped at the kitchen door step, this Japanese man just pulled the dynamite charger and the whole thing blast and I was there standing and just imagine I didn't get one scratch, not one scratch. And the lady came out screaming, yelling at me, "Are you all right, are you all right?" I say, "Yes. I'm old alright." But I couldn't hardly hear her. My eardrums were just about blownoff, you know. I thought I had my ears blown off and I was standing on a big rock where I had put one stick and a half of dynamite. To be sure that that stone would have blasted and I think God must have been with me that that rock didn't take me away. And the rest of the rock, mind you, the rest of the rock was just spreading all over the place. Pieces of rock, you know, not one piece of rock hit me and scratch me.

NC: Very fortunate.

WR: Yeah, and that was Christmas, Christmas Eve now. I never used to drink, I don't drink anyway, liquor. The crush and from that woman that I sent in the house, the overseer come over and said, "Wow, Willie, since you didn't die, how about having a drink. Christmas Eve." So I took a big glass of wine and I said, "I'm gonna celebrate." So after that I had another accident. I almost got killed, crushed under the cane cars. This was working night shift, I mean day shift but we were going into the evening. We were quitting late that evening and was raining. I went down to release the brakes from the cane cars and then I slipped under the cane cars and I was hanging on the cane on the side of the car and I was dragged about 150 feet down and when I felt my feet were dangling on the slope area, then I let go and I rolled over on the other side. Otherwise if I didn't grab onto the cane, hold on the cane, I would have gone underneath the cane cutter. I would have been crushed. But I think God was with me all the time.

NC: It takes a certain amount of skills to work all these jobs like handling the cane cars and so on. How much training does anyone get like when you become an expert?

WR: Well, I worked on the job here for over 15 years, almost twenty years. So with all that experience, going through the job, then I began to educate the men to work safety, you know. I began to teach my men to work safety and not get hurt, see. And worked a safety program with them. So I feel, in order to get your job done, you keep your man in good health, you keep them away from accidents and you have good men working for you everyday. Good men doing their job, they know how to do their



job and you have nothing to worry about.

NC: Now when you started out on all those jobs, did you have somebody older than you, you know, kind of teach, help you learn the ropes?

WR: Yeah, there was a friend of mine. He was older than I was. He was teaching me what to do and how to do the work. And I learned fast because in every type of job that I work, it's only a matter of couple of hours, I knew the work already. They teach me how to do it, I picked it up right away.

NC: So then as you gained experience you got to understand a lot of these things about the job, too...

WR: Yes.

NC: ...that helped you later on when you were the luna.

WR: That's right.

NC: Then when you were the luna, you already had good rapport with the men because you worked alongside with them.

WR: I worked side by side with them and they knew that I was the one that would get the job after the other foreman left because neither one of my friends knew how to do the work. So you have to check your portable track rails, you know. If the joints were not at the proper angle, the cars would climb the joints and go up the track so I had to adjust my portable track tires to have the rails and joint come evenly. And I was the only one that could do it so nicely, you know. When we bring a load of cane down, the cars would come right down, no cars would go down the track. And the foreman before me, he didn't know how to do it. And he said, "I know, I know how to do it," and he tried to do it. And I tried to show him and he wouldn't accept it from me. He said, "I know how to do it." So I let him go and the first thing, when the cars came down, they were off the track. They got off the track because he didn't want to listen to me. The overseer knew that I knew my job so well. That's why they promoted me to that type of work.

NC: When you became overseer, how did you pick lunas or did you have to take the old lunas?

WR: Well, I picked Alfred Santiago as one of my old luna, for my luna because he was an old-timer and he was a very hard worker and I appreciate his cooperation with me and I asked him to be a foreman. He didn't want. He took the job afterwards and I helped him with all his reports and everything. After that he could do it all alone by himself. I was very glad. He was a good man. Some of the other lunas that I had, I also pick them from the groups that were working under me. That I know them all they would turn out to be good lunas, they turned out good foremans.

NC: Funny, you mentioned Mr. Santiago. I heard somebody use a nickname for him that meant that he wasn't such a good worker. Was that a joke or....

WR: Well, this fellow that call him "Goldbrick" and which that was entirely wrong. He wasn't a goldbricker. He was a hard working man. To support his family he worked very hard. In fact I'll tell you a story. When he was working under me and he was a mule driver and he was driving a wild mule that was brought from the Mainland, Missouri, and that mule used to kick a lot, you know, and when you go over and put the chain on the back, the corner chain, the mule would kick. And then I told him, "I told my boss to put this mule on the wagon for a few weeks. 'Train 'em in the wagon," I said because Mr. Santiago probably could get kicked and he could get killed, you know, by that mule. That mule is too mean and what my boss did, went and tell the manager Mr. Midkiff that I was in favor of the labor, I wasn't in favor of the plantation. I was looking more in favor of the labor. I was looking to take the safety precautions for the labor to help that man because if he got killed the plantation would have to support the family, see. So I was trying to help out and he say no, I wasn't helping the plantation. So Midkiff come over to ask me, I tell 'em "Mr. Midkiff, that mule wasn't fit to come out in the field and that man would probably get kicked or killed or something like that and the plantation was liable for support and the family. So if we can keep that man working happily and supporting his family, we take the mule away and put the mule work in the wagon for a few weeks, three to four weeks and bring the mule back, the mule will be alright. And the mule will be alright, broken in at that time." But Alfred Santiago was a hard worker, very hard workers and this guy that name him "Goldbrick," he like to name everybody names. Put nicknames on everybody that he finds around. And I didn't like that person either.

NC: He wasn't considered a clown then.

WR: No.

NC: People enjoyed his sense of humor. The one who...

WR: Well, he thought that by doing that, you see, he figure that more people would like him and he was partly a clown you know, calling people names. And he had some names, too, that they named on him, too. They named him some pretty good ones, too, and I don't want to mention it.

NC: No, no. We don't have to. I just wondered...

WR: But Santiago was a good worker.

NC: There are some big changes made in the plantation, like the old dam held just so much water and then a new dam was built which holds about five hundred million gallons of water. How did that affect--the big change in the amount of water--did that do something to the productivity?

WR: Yes, it did because certain years we have good rainfall in this plan-

tation and certain years we don't. Okay, now for instance, is we don't have a good rainfall, the amount that was the old dam before they fabricate that dam to hold more water, the water, they use to run out of water to irrigate the fields. That's the mauka fields that irrigate by the reservoir. The reservoir supplies the field. Now when they run out, the cane will just get dry and the tonnage, they would lost lots of sugar and a lot of tonnage. And the plantation will be a big loss. But now with the fiber dam that they have there, the rubber that they pump so many hundreds of gallons of water in that balloon, it's a big tube, rubber tube and it will rise up so many feet high and the water will back up that much more and since they did that, they did very well. The plantation did very good. 'Cause they could use all the water there, the amount they needed. Especially now it's doing even better because even with that amount of water, they're irrigating a few thousand acres of pineapple lands by sprinkler and by drip irrigation, they using the same water from the same dam. They not building any pumps. They have two pumps built rather, excuse me. They have two pumps, three pumps built now up there but still they using water from Wahiawa with the overhead sprinklers to irrigate the pineapple fields that are planted with sugar cane. As the same water coming from the dam.

NC: Oh, it's all pineapple land. Did the company take over?

WR: Well, the land that they took back from the pineapple, used to be pineapple fields and some are old lands left lying from when the War started, 1941. And they took it over and clear and plant cane. Now it's nice beautiful cane growing there.

NC: I see. Did it belong to another company or was it always Waialua land?

WR: No. It's either Waialua land or Bishop Estate leased to Waialua. And of course Waialua, I think, in turn were subleasing to Dole Pineapple, was cutting down on their fields on raising pineapples. And they do a lot of pineapple raising in the Philippines, you know, and some other parts of the countries outside.

NC: How about water from the homes? Where does that come from?

WR: The water for the homes--you mean drinking water? Well, that comes out from the artesian wells. They have artesian wells, they have pumps and there was one pump right here, Pump 2 that they was getting the drinking water for the camps and that water was pretty much salt water, had about eight percent grain of salt in the water. It was salty water--Then they built this Pump 17, a new pump, and that pump had just about two percent salt. And the government wanted to take over that pump, buy that pump from the plantation to serve all Haleiwa and Waialua district. Plantation didn't want. They needed that pump for the irrigation. So the government built another pump this side along the highway. And the plantation helped them with the pump there, helped them with some money. And they pumping water from that pump now to the tank. From the tank they're supplying our camp here--Haleiwa and Waialua. They going the water with the Waialua Pump 2 water and

giving them better drinking water. Now less salt because they have this good pump up here.

NC: So water is vital to this community. Between supplying drinking water for the home and irrigating water, the company has to spend a lot of money and energy on the care of the supply of water, didn't they?

WR: Yes. Before, the olden days they have steam pumps, Pump 1, Pump 2, Pump 3, Pump 4 and Pump 5. Then they took somewhere in the '40s, they took that pumps out, all the steam pumps out and they run it with electric pumps. Now they serve the water from those pumps for our drinking water. Also that with good water, rising that good water from the pump to irrigate the sugar canes. And also they have water from the mill now. The mill pump that they wash the cane when they give the cane in the mill, haul that water that they use for washing the cane, they run that water back to the hydroseparator and then pump that water up to the sugar cane fields, way up the mauka fields and using that water back again to irrigate the fields, costing the plantation quite a bit of money to run the electricity, of course. When the harvesting season on, they using their own electric from their own power plant in the plantation. But when the season is over, the off season, they not harvesting, they have to buy power from the Hawaiian Electric. Now to supply their drinking water and also supply their irrigation in the field is costing the plantation quite a bit of money.

NC: I see. And how about the dam, the size of the dam, does that idea scare people? How big is it?

WR: Well, that dam is seven miles long. It's seven miles long and water goes back seven miles. Water comes from the mountain, that Waiahole Mountains. But in the olden days, we scary (scared) because they the bank wasn't so secured, you know. And later on the company put in quite a bit of money then, about fifty thousand dollars and rebuilt the bank some more, put some concrete there and then they also spent some more money, built their fiber dam with the rubber tube they put in there.

NC: Has there ever been an accident?

WR: All in all, the reservoir is pretty safe now. They have a wide, wide spill way, overflow spillway. Anything that goes, that'll come over the spillway and it's a wide, very wide spillway that'll take all the water that comes over and what the dam can hold.

NC: As far as you know, have there been any accidents on the dams?

WR: Well, not on that. We had up in the Helemano section, we had two reservoirs, one on Helemano, one on Opaepa. And we had just about two years ago, I think, was the month of April, we had some big storm. Big storms in that week there. Big rains. And there was one day that we had about 14 inches of rain in two hours or something like that and that two reservoirs was overflowed with water and the spillways were very narrow. Couldn't take the amount of water that was coming in, I guess. And the thing overflowed and just washed the bank away and that

whole thing went down. And water came down together with the rainfall water that was coming down in the stream, it made quite a big of a damage here in the lower lands, down on the flats where people live. Homes were washed out. A family was washed down there with a quonset house. The wife and the child was washed away. The wife drowned, went to the beach and drowned. The child was saved but quite a bit of damage was done at that time there. That was more, more than the normal rainfall water that comes down the stream. When this reservoir had give way, there was a terrific force that came down.

NC: That dam was built for normal rainfall but....

WR: Yeah, but now they bin rebuilt that thing again. Now they have everything more in a better conditions to take care of such disasters if anything should come again. They have a wide spillway and solid bank. They have a good solid bank. They have rock, there are rocks on both sides, crushed rocks.

NC: Let's hope it doesn't happen again.

WR: Yeah, I hope so.

NC: But if it does, they're ready. To go back a little bit about your Portuguese background and talking about the plants that you raise here, too and so on....did your parents have any plant from their garden that you don't have now?

WR: Oh yes, my parents had some kind of plant that old Portuguese brought from the old country. Mint, they call it, mint plant. And there's some other spice plants we had there. And also plants that we call, yeah, some kind of tea plant. It's a tea plant that we use to make tea before and it's a good tea, taste good and we call it Herba Santa in Portuguese, Herba Santa. And I like that tea, it's very good. It's also, my parents told me that, it's good to clean out your kidneys. It's good if you have kidney trouble. It's good. It helps you out. And right now I don't have those plants in my yard but I know that some people do have. My neighbor has one of the plants there in her yard.

NC: Did the Portuguese also go up into the hills and cultivate the coffee along with the Puerto Ricans over here at Waialua?

WR: What was that?

NC: I was told that the Puerto Ricans used to cultivate coffee and some of the Portuguese people in the neighborhood have told me that...

WR: Oh yeah. Lot of people use to make their own coffee. They grow coffee trees in their yards and the Puerto Ricans mostly, up in the mountains, they have the gulch up there that they, we call coffee gulch. And it's nothing but coffee trees I think planted by the old Hawaiians. And then Puerto Ricans used to go up there and pick up the coffee. They use to bring gunnysacks of coffee down 'bout six, seven, or ten or 12 bags

down. Pick up the coffee up there so they could use for their year's supply. And at the same time they go up there, they plant lot of those trees up there, too; young trees, you know. They plant coffee up there to extend the coffee area. And they used to grind their own coffee, make their own coffee and I also use to drink their coffee, too, from their trees planted up there.

NC: You think it was Hawaiian coffee that was planted up there?

WR: Yeah, I think so. I think that was in the olden days that they planted that coffee because when the Puerto Ricans came here, they use to go pig hunting up there and that's the way I think they found the coffee up there. But there was another gulch that that had nothing but papaya trees. You know what I mean, fruit, see? And then there's another gulch that was nothing but banana trees. And another gulch that was nothing but bamboo. All bamboo. See, you know, you can see the trend in the olden days, I think they use to plant that so that...because they have 'nough rainfall and wetness in the mountains to raise those things up there. And when they want they go up there and get it.

NC: You think that was the Hawaiian population who did that?

WR: I guess so.

NC: So that might have been a long time ago.

WR: Yeah. Because when I was a kid and going up the mountain, I seen a lot of that up there. And it's still up there. It's still up there raising them there.

NC: When you were a kid, you really used to get around a little bit.

WR: Oh yeah. I use to go pig hunting every weekend, Saturday and Sunday like that. When I used to play baseball, use to play all positions, catch, pitch, first base, second base, third base, you name it, all, I used to play it all.

NC: I know, you really were a sportsman. Look, did you go on long walks and things like that?

WR: I use to go pig hunting for hiking and I use to go about I would say about five, six or seven miles a day. Walk. Hiking. And I used to take the Boy Scouts out there on hiking trips, too.

NC: And when you were a kid, did your hikes take you over toward Mokuleia, for example?

WR: Yeah, Mokuleia. We use to walk from Waialua to Mokuleia, the end of Kaena Point side. Walk all that distance, over the gulches. No roads. Just trails; you follow the trails where the cattle make trails or the pig trails and you follow and keep on going.

NC: What was it like over in that direction? What kind of people lived

there?

WR: Well, the people were all living down in the camps. We use to go up on the mountains for the hiking, the pig hunting and all that. Goat hunting and everything.

NC: Were there groups of peoples in any of those gulches or...

WR: No, no groups. No people living in the mountains. But right now, the land I'm leasing in the gulches, we have lots of those terraces built by the old Hawaiians with rocks and flat terraces whenever they use to raise their taro or anything else that they used to raise, their food. And I think Hawaiian, mostly was the taro. And, oh, it's just beautiful to see those little terraces and all those bottom of the gulches that they made and all the rock formation, you know. And how they use to get their water, I was just trying to figure out how they could get the water in those high, high areas unless they use to haul it with cans or something and put water in the taro patches, you know.

NC: This land that you're leasing, is it part of Waialua?

WR: Waialua. Castle and Cooke land from Waialua.

NC: So you still see the history in the land, isn't it? Evidence is still there?

WR: Still there, yes. Nice to see that rock formation all built up, you know.

NC: Have you found any heiaus or anything like that?

END OF SIDE ONE; TAPE #1-48-2-76  
SIDE TWO.

WR: I was clearing this land with the tractor and I saw this dark spot of soil and when I jumped down from the tractor and when I looked at it I saw it was one of the old Hawaiian cooking...where they kalua the pig, you know. They call it the imu. And I picked the soil up and squeezed it from my fingers and I notice it was just like charcoal, you know. Black charcoal and just imagine now for how many hundreds of years the thing is there. And people use to do their cooking over there, I guess. So you could see, in these olden days I guess they all in the gulches. Hawaiians used to live in the gulches, raise their food, and, of course, maybe get some of those wild pigs that come, you know; they catch it and use it for their meat and poi and fish. So I think that's the way they use to live in those olden days because the evidence is there.

NC: How close to the ocean is your leased land?

WR: Oh, it's about, I would say three miles, four miles. About four miles from the ocean.

NC: So they weren't too far from the ocean?

WR: No, I wasn't too far.

NC: It's nice to think of those things, isn't it? Kinda imagine how it used to be. Mr. Rego, what community activities do you have now that you're interested in or active in?

WR: Well, I'm in the senior citizen group and I'm the chairman of that group from the Hui Ilimā O Hale Wai group that's from Waialua. And we meet every Monday, once a week, every Monday. We have a meeting, get together, we dance, we sing, we play games, we make paper works, and you know, pasting some picture books for the kids at the hospitals. And we go out for trips every two months, once in every two months we have a bus scheduled for us to take us out. We go out to all parks in town, we go out to the Princess Kaiulani's home, Queen Emma's home. We go lots of places, lots of parks, we go out to HIC for programs, dancing programs and bicentennial programs. We go over there. And sometimes we're invited by another club like Aiea club invite us to go there for lunch and we have singing contest with them. Song and dance with them. And we also invite some other groups down with us. And right now, we invited a group--the group from California, San Francisco. The Senior Citizen group that are coming here on September 13 and we are gonna host them down here and, you know, we gonna have luncheon for them. Give them a luncheon and also we gonna take them around sight-seeing things that are going on in Waialua here, in our district. There was a woman, come from San Francisco, and join our club here while she was on vacation and she liked our club so much because she was learning the hula. She liked to learn the hula and our group was dancing the hula and they taught her how to dance the hula and so far when she went back home, she wrote to us. And was a nice letter she wrote to us, thanking us for all the good we did for her and we gave her a good welcome voyage you know, we bought her some carnation leis and bought some gifts for her to take home and about three months ago she sent a letter saying that she had a stroke. We felt so downhearted for her. We feel sorry for her. And she wrote how she missed Hawaii, she miss our group. So we trying to do the best we can for the group that comes from San Francisco. Treat them nicely.

NC: I hope that spreads; I haven't heard about any group doing something like this. It's very nice and very interesting, too.

WR: Yeah. So we like to treat them very nicely, gonna treat them very good. Then perhaps someday we may go there with our group someday too. Senior citizen group that went to Las Vegas. They asked me to go along and begged me to go along but I've been Las Vegas about three times and I sort of getting tired of seeing Las Vegas so I didn't want to go. So they went. Then they planning now to have another trip, senior citizen group to go to Canada. And if they go, I'm gonna find out what parts of Canada they going--if they going to any state of the U.S., any part where I haven't been yet, I'd like to go.

NC: That sounds really good. How about your church groups?

WR: Well, I'm in the Holy Name Society from the Catholic Parish here and I



seem to be the head man for this group in this Parish ever since I was a young boy. Ever since I was a young boy 16 years old, I joined the group and I'm still there yet. And the priest that come in, you know, taking turns, they all like me, especially this one likes me the most. I help him lots in his church work and also as a correspondence secretary from the group that we had here, the club and I'm also chairman of the six districts of the Oahu council which consists of Wahiawa, Waialua and Kahuku, three parishes. So tonight I'm going to a meeting in town for this group to represent this group. Every second Tuesday of the month, we have a group meeting in town and all the districts get together and bring out our problems there and what work we would do and how we should go about it.

NC: Does this group also do anything for the Catholic schools in the area?

WR: Yes. We help the Catholic schools. We do a lot of work for the Catholic schools such as repairing the toilets, the classrooms, desk, paintings of the classrooms. We do lots of work for the schools. Also, at times we donate some money for the scholarships for students at our parish and other schools, too.

NC: Do all the church groups, the parishes in this area, number of members, the population, is it the same as it was ten years ago?

WR: Yes, somewhat the same 'cause we have about, I think it's about five thousand; four to five thousand Catholics in this Waialua district. Usually Masses, we have three Masses on Sundays and usually it's pretty well filled up.

NC: And the Catholic schools in this area, are they....

WR: Yeah. We have about three hundred students in the Catholic school in our parish. We have up to the eighth grade.

NC: Did your children go to public school?

WR: My oldest son went to the elementary school, you know, public school because there was no private school at that time. Then when my second son was born, he went to the Catholic school and my oldest daughter went to the Catholic schools and I had two other children; the younger ones are twins, went to the Catholic school and one daughter that I adopted went to the Catholic school. But my children, when they graduated from the eighth grade here in the Catholic school, they went to the high school and she told me, "Daddy, what I learned in the Catholic school in the eighth grade, I'm learning in the twelfth grade over here." It's that much advancement they get, you know. That's why I like the private schools like the Catholic school because the children learn so much more than the others. Public school, you know.

NC: Do you think more is expected from them?

WR: Well, they put more work into them and I might say...

NC: The teachers?

WR: Yeah, the teachers are more strict with them. They put more into their heads. They learn more, you know, than they do in public schools. In public schools they do too much, what you call that, P. E. work; you know what I mean. They go out and have fun, games and lots of school work, learning taken away from them you know. Like this school, they have their lunch period and a little P. E. period, you know, and they go back to school again.

NC: Do you know if your children were offered more courses in the Catholic schools? They have opportunities to learn different things than they would have in the public schools?

WR: Yes, they do.

NC: Was there a problem for not sending them to a Catholic high school?

WR: Well, I sent my daughters to the Catholic high schools in town and they were commuting, you know, back and forth and also one of sons, the second oldest son. But they were complaining of that long traveling on the roads, you know, riding that cars...

NC: Yeah.

WR: ...back and forth. And they were complaining every day of headaches and they couldn't stand it, you know. Then they wanted to go Waialua High School so I let them go. My oldest son, I had him in the vocational school in town then he decided to join the Army. He went on the Army. He didn't complete the vocational school.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 1-49-3-76

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

William Rego (WR)

July 20, 1976

Waialua, Hawaii

BY: Norma Carr (NC)

NC: This is the third interview with Mr. William Rego at Waialua. Today is July 20, 1976. Mr. Rego, we've talked about the improvements which you helped to make at the plantation. I think we talked about the loading crane; how you got it to speed up, and about the grabber, the invention of the gooseneck, the portable rails, I think...

WR: The portable tractor. It was the portable tractor that I built.

NC: Did we talk about that one already?

WR: We probably did. I'm not sure.

NC: Was that the one, lifting the....

WR: Yeah, lifting the rails.

NC: I think we talked about that already. I think we talked about those three. Were there any other improvements that you helped to make?

WR: Well, I think the last time I told you about the locomotives, the railroads that we cut off, you know. So we took out those back switches and what-not. We cut all the watchman that we had.

NC: That's right. It was certainly an improvement on how many men had to be used. Okay. When you made all these improvements, did you get a bonus from the company?

WR: No. I didn't get a penny.

NC: Was there ever a time when you might expect to get something?

WR: Well, Mr. Midkiff was manager, he said that whatever would make some good improvement in the plantation and make some good inventions would receive at least one-fourth of the amount that they would save. But he didn't live up to his promise. In other words, he didn't give a penny.

NC: Yeah. Did this happen only to you? Or did it happen to other workers who also made improvements?

WR: Well, yeah. There was a friend of mine, made some improvements on the plowing of the field, you know, some plows and what-not. He made some improvement. But he didn't get anything, either.

NC: Did the plantation use these improvements to help other plantations?

WR: Yeah, like the portable track lifter. They were so glad that they had that tractor and that the improvement made to the plantation, then they asked lots of plantations to come over and see how the things was working. And they all like it so much. They wanted to take it back to their plantations, but then Waialua at that time was trying to sell the patent and which they didn't even patent that thing. And they wanted to get some commission for the idea. So a lot of the plantation, they didn't go for it; I think they were probably asking too much.

NC: Do you know of anyone who ever got a private patent on his invention?

WR: No.

NC: Did the plantation take out patent on any of these changes or machines?

WR: No. Maybe with this portable track lifter. Maybe they did, but they didn't consult me. They didn't say anything to me that they took a patent on it.

NC: Alright. Each time that an improvement was made and the number of men needed to work was cut down, what happened to the men?

WR: The men that were taking out from that pack of work? Well, most of these were transferred to other departments. And they all had jobs, they didn't put them out. They didn't lay them off. They gave 'em same pay, you know. Same pay that they were making on the same job. When they move 'em over in the same job, they were give 'em the same salary.

NC: Oh, that's good. Was that before the union or after the union? Did the union make a difference?

WR: Well, this was during the union time. The union was already here when I invented the tractor. The union was here already. But they always asking the plantation when they move the labor to some other job. Always keep 'em on the same grading.

NC: Do you think that people were afraid to offer improvements or did the plantation encourage people to offer improvements?

WR: Well, they ask for anybody who has some kind of ideas, some inventions, improvements and things like that. But on my part, they knew I had a lot to give, see, lot of improvements to give to the company. They use to come after me. It was a Scotch man by the name of John Ross. He use to come almost everyday and ask me, "Willie, you have any ideas, any inventions? You have, you give it to me and I'll give it to the boss." I say, "No." I wouldn't give anything to them because they got it from you, they go in and say that's theirs, their inventions,

their improvements or something like that. You wouldn't get the credit, see? I knew how it used to happen before. My boss was the same way, too.

NC: So then, did you go directly to the manager?

WR: Well, we go to the coordinator in the office. He is called coordinator and he in turn will take it over to the office manager. Sometimes I give it to the assistant manager because he comes out on the harvesting field everyday. The manager doesn't, see. Once in a while, he comes out. So we give it to the assistant manager and he takes the improvements that we suggest to do and he takes it over and consults the manager.

NC: You worked under the six managers?

WR: Yes, I worked with them.

NC: Were any of them aloof; they stay away; for example, a foreman couldn't get to talk or sit down if you needed to. Or were some there more than others?

WR: Well, let's put it this way. The first manager was W. W. Goodale and he used to ride, those days they had no cars, he use to ride a horse and he use to come out to the fields. And he never associated with the laborers. Just talk to the foremen, you know. And he was sort of a proud man, you know. So then, Thompson came. Thompson use to associate with the labor and talk to them, you know. And ask them what they doing and they know what they doing and so forth like that. And Midkiff use to come out a little more out to the fields. He use to come almost everyday. Come around. Look all the things, how the work is going on and he stop occasionally, talk to you and ask questions. Then Anderson was the same way, come out everyday. Taylors use to come out everyday, too, and so is Bill Paty now. He goes out everyday. In fact, I think, Bill Paty goes out almost the whole day. Out in the fields.

NC: Okay. Now I'd like to ask you a little bit more about religious observances. When you were a child, your parents did not speak Portuguese at home, did they?

WR: No.

NC: They spoke English?

WR: They spoke English.

NC: But what holy days, I think we did talk about this. There were a few holy days that they did observe.

WR: Well, the holy days was mostly like Good Friday. That day no Portuguese use to work. They use to lay off because they were afraid to work on that Good Friday, you know.

NC: Yeah. Why were they afraid?

WR: Well, they afraid of some accident or something should happen, you know. And I was working and I use to lay off, too, myself. And then when I got to a foreman job, then they used to ask me for work because I was a foreman. And I use to go out work myself. That Good Friday.

NC: Was your mother alive...

WR: Yes. My mother and father was alive.

NC: Did they have anything to say about you working on Good Friday?

WR: Well, they use to ask me to lay off, but I told them, you know, I had to work because I was on salary pay, eh. I had to turn out to work. But then the funny (thing) that happen was my youngest brother was working under me and he wanted to work one Good Friday. I told him, "Don't work, you lay off, don't you work. You stay home and rest up. Don't work." Oh, he was hard headed, he wanted to go to work. And when he went to work, he almost break his leg, you know. The cane cars just caught his leg between the cane car and a stone, a big rock. And I asked the boys to cut loose the cane cars; you know we have a pin, where you pull the pin up. But the car was stretched so stiff that they couldn't take it off. So I asked a bigger man that I was to take it out, pull it out. I figure they were stronger than me and they just simply couldn't do it. Then I told them, "Let me try it," and I told to myself, "Oh God, please give me the strength." And I jerked that pin one time and the pin came right out. And then I, you know, saved my brother's leg. Otherwise he would have probably had a broken leg, eh.

NC: Did your parents ever talk to you about in the old days, the old days for them. Portuguese festivals that they use to participate in on the plantation?

WR: Well, we always had a garden, you know, and some of our own vegetables planted in the garden.

NC: Oh no. Excuse me. I meant a festival.

WR: Oh, festivals!

NC: Observances of religious days. I'm just trying to see where these things got lost. When they were stopped.

WR: No. I don't recall we had any.

NC: So maybe even when they were younger, there were no festivals of specifically Portuguese festivals or religious days observed?

WR: No, I don't think they had any.

NC: So I guess, they just had to leave a lot of things in the old country.

WR: That's true.

NC: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Rego. Well, let's go on to a few other things now. I'd like you to think about the Depression days. The Depression hit Hawaii in 1931. Can you think of things happening in the plantation before the Depression years? Were there any strikes?

WR: The only strike that we had here in the plantation was when the Japanese people went on strike. That's the only people that went on strike in the plantation. And they removed them and that strike was when Goodale was manager of the plantation. And they move all that people out of the plantation and they were living down here in Kamaloa in the big tent. Under the big tent they had down here, they cooked their own meals under the big tent and they bathe over there, too, and the camps were all cleaned up, you know. I use to as a boy go out to the camp and the camps were all cleaned up. All the Japanese were on strike. And later on, I don't know what took place, they came back, worked back on the plantation again. And from that time on there were no strikes until the union came in.

NC: When the Japanese went on strike, did they win the strike? Did they win?

WR: No. They didn't win the strike. They had to give up and come back to work.

(CUT AS WR GOES TO ANSWER DOOR.)

NC: As we were saying, did you see any difference after the Japanese came back to live and work on the plantation? After that strike?

WR: Yeah, I saw a lot of difference in the camps. They never planted any fruit trees, but when they came back, they planted avocados, mangos, oranges, tangerines, lemons, limes. They planted all kinds of fruit trees when they came back and they made the camps look nice, you know, with all those fruit trees growing in the yards. So when they came back, they planted lots of fruit trees.

NC: You think there was a reason for that?

WR: Well, the reason for that is I think they figured on they were hired here to work on the plantation and they figured on going back to Japan and never thought of planting any fruit trees. But then after the strike, they figured this was probably going to be their home. They were going to stay here for the rest of their lives, so they might as well plant some fruit and all that.

NC: During the Depression, did they cut down on your income?

WR: No. They didn't cut down anything on the wages we earned. They didn't hire anybody that came in, you know. Because they didn't want to pay 'em all. They had enough labor in the plantation. But then during the Depression, it was pitiful to see acres and acres of pineapple, like they have pineapples planted up in the mountains, you know. The

Chinese men, the Chinese people had pineapple planted up there and it was such a nice fruit. Big pineapples. Very big pineapples planted. And they didn't pick anything of that. They just left it. Rot. All that fruit was a waste. We use to go up and pick fruit ourselves for bring home. Pineapple to eat. And the plantation tried to grind some of that pineapple to make sugar. They made sugar out of the pineapple but it takes too long to boil the sugar, the syrup, you know. And so it takes longer, much longer than the cane sugar. Make the sugar out of the cane. Takes much longer, so they figure it's no sense of picking the fruit up.

NC: How about all the other things that the plantation supplied like housing? Did they start charging for any of these services or things that they use to do?

WR: No. We had free homes, free water and electricity, I think was only three dollars a month we use to pay, regardless of how much we use.

NC: What happened to the molasses that they were producing in those days?

WR: The molasses from the sugar cane? Well, they were selling the molasses to the...they send the molasses to the Mainland and they use that for cattle fattening and it's very good molasses. I use to buy it for my ranch also. But the funniest part is that we work for the company and we wanted them to sell us the molasses less than what they're selling it to the Mainland. But they wouldn't change the price. The price was always the same. They sell it to the Mainland, they have to pay the freight and all that and they sell it for the same price they sell it here. In other words, they were cheating us. We were paying more than the Mainland people. We pick the molasses right here from the mill with our tanks. And I ask them more than once, you know, why shouldn't they cut the price down because we were picking here. They didn't have to pay any hauling charges. But to send it from here to the Mainland, they have to pay for it. So in other words, if they paying \$46 a ton of molasses, it's costing them maybe about ten, fifteen dollars to haul that molasses to the Mainland. So they only get thirty dollars a ton, roughly.

NC: Did they ever dump molasses in the ocean?

WR: Yes, they use to sometime. They dump molasses in the ocean when they couldn't sell it. When they couldn't sell it, they were overstocked with molasses. The tank was, you know.

NC: And they still did not reduce the price for you?

WR: They still wouldn't reduce the price.

NC: Who was the manager then? Was that the manager's decision?

WR: Well, we had during that time was Thompson and Midkiff during those years.



NC: Did the plantation ever plant vegetable crops?

WR: Well, they tried to plant watermelons. They planted Irish potatoes and they call this other type of potato, Hawaiian Rose, the red skin potato. That's Irish potato. And they found out that they grew very well in the plantation. And the watermelons, oh, there were delicious and very sweet. Very sweet watermelon. They tried to plant cantaloupe. They planted cantaloupe but we had a lot of fruit fly problems with the cantaloupe.

NC: Were these things planted to help the people on these plantation or for commercial...

WR: No, they were selling that. They were selling that to the markets in town and all over the place. Selling to the people, too. But in the olden days, they had cattle, you know. The plantation had cattle up in the range and they use to sell the meat to the plantation employees and we use to buy the meat about ten cents a pound. Once a week, we use to get meat from the plantation.

NC: Are they all out of the cattle business now?

WR: Yeah. They have to go off cattle business because the government put pressure on the company to have them only sell sugar. This is only sugar. Cattle would have to be somebody else. And they gave up on raising cattle.

NC: Now, you raise cattle, don't you?

WR: Yes, I'm raising cattle.

NC: And do you slaughter any for your own meat?

WR: Yeah. We slaughter one, maybe once in every three months and put one whole cow in the freezer. I have a big freezer here that'll hold about seven hundred pounds.

NC: Wow! Who does the butchering?

WR: Well, I send it to the slaughter house so that we'll have the government inspector inspect my own beef, so I'm safe with my family eating my own beef, you know. To be sure that it's completely safe. So I have the inspector, we pay him a dollar and pay about twenty dollars to have the slaughtering of the cow. And also if I ask them to cut and wrap for me, I got to pay about one hundred fifty dollars to cut and wrap the whole beef.

NC: Where is the slaughter house?

WR: It's in Ewa. That's Kahua Slaughter House.

NC: Yeah. So then you have to bring it back?

WR: Yeah, when it's ready they call me. After they freeze it already cut and wrapped and it's ready to deliver, they ask me to go down and pick it up and I go down with my pick-up truck. I'll bring the boxes all home and have it all stored in the freezer.

NC: How long have you been doing this?

WR: Well, ever since I've been raising cattle.

NC: Since you retired or before?

WR: Well, I've been raising cattle since (Tape garbled). And then 1941, during the war year, wartime, I stopped raising cattle for nine years. 1950, I started to raise cattle again. And I start increasing the land, you know, having more land. Right now I have about 1,050 acres. And we have a little over 350 heads of cattle.

NC: Do they all get slaughtered and end up as beef?

WR: No. We have a mother herd that we are breeding so we can increase our herd. So we have about eighty to ninety in mother cows in breeding. Sometimes we have a lot of calves, we call it weaned calves. About three hundred to four hundred pounds weight, when they're about eight months old, then we wean them from the mothers. Sometimes I sell the whole lot, fifty one time to Kahua Ranch.

NC: And they become beef cattle?

WR: Yeah, and they use it for feeders. Feeders. They call that feeders. They raise it for another three or four months more and then they send him to the feed lot to pen feed them.

NC: When did you start raising cattle? To provide your own meat, was that a result of the Depression?

WR: No. I just took up the idea of doing some part time project, you know. I use to do part time farming and during the War, 1943 to 1944, we started to raise vegetable. I was raising tomatoes and we had eight acres of tomato planted. Eight acres of tomatoes. We were selling all our tomatoes to the armed services at Pearl Harbor. And Pearl Harbor was taking all of our tomato there. And we made good money. The price was good at that time. So we also hired labor. We hired some Japanese women to weed the tomato patch and to spray the tomato with spraying chemical and we pay their wages. Also we buy a lot of fertilizer.

NC: Was that a family project?

WR: No. I was in partnership with two other men that were working with me and we raised the tomato and was selling out for commercial.

NC: So beside working on the plantation, you also had the opportunity to work for yourself?

WR: Yeah.

NC: As machines replaced the people on the plantations, this plantation did not fire people?

WR: No. They did not fire any people. Neither did they lay off anybody. When we went into machinery, most of the labor work was placed in different sections, different jobs, you know, and then of course later on when they went into machinery, a lot of the labor, some of them, I might say, moved out to some other plantation where they didn't have machinery.

NC: Who decided who worked the machinery?

WR: Well, certain persons had little knowledge about operating the machine and they gave them a try, you know, a trial out and they taught them how to operate the cranes and machinery.

NC: Did they get an increase in pay for learning to use the machinery?

WR: Well, not while they're learning but when they're operating the thing and when they start to operate they give them a higher rate.

NC: Was that before or after the union?

WR: This was before the union.

NC: When the machines start coming in, nobody was fired. But did people leave because they didn't like machines?

WR: No, they leave by their own accord, you know. They left by their own accord. They didn't fire anybody out, they didn't put anybody out of the plantation.

NC: For what kind of reasons did the people leave?

WR: Well, they were so used to working, you know, in the type of work like loading cane, cutting cane and those type of work. They were making good money. But they liked that type of work, you know, or they moved out to some other plantation. Maui or the Big Island where they were still loading cane by hand and doing the same type of work. They liked the work.

NC: I know that you took safety precautions with your men when you were the luna and then when you were the overseer. Did the plantation have a policy on safety?

WR: Yes.

NC: Especially when new machinery was coming on?

WR: Afterward there, we started a safety program in the plantation. And we went all out to avoid accidents, prevent accidents and all that and

look all through the machinery and revamp the machinery in any way that we could prevent accidents on the machinery. I might say now that we have one crane operator and he had an accident with a cable wrapping around his head and the spring cable ropeman took him and wrapped his head against the angle iron from the crane. Today he's just like a vegetable. I feel sorry for him. But there's a safety gadget that was put in there and I don't know whether he had the pin off or not 'cause I wasn't working now when he had that accident. Retired now. But I heard about it. But when I was working, they didn't have accidents like that. There were accidents before they put in that safety gadget on that cabledrum there. But sometimes they go careless, too. Nobody's around, they don't think of safety, putting it back on there to take care, you know. Something might have happened there, I don't know.

NC: Things are apt to happen when there's so much activity. Now other changes occurred, some of which came even before the union. You know the plantation used to provide perquisites, things for your workers. And the workers use to buy at the company store and things like that. Under that system, how much freedom did people have to make their own economic choices, for example?

WR: Well, most people use to buy from the plantation store because they use to charge their groceries and at the end of the month, the company would take out from their wages whatever they bought and then give 'em back the rest of the money that they earned. But the wages was so low that it was very hard even for people to save money because the groceries cost so much higher and then the take home pay was very, very little that they could use for anything else. In fact, some families, some very large families and they wouldn't bring any money home at all. Their working wages would pay just their food. The food bill and their clothing and what-not. They had no money coming back on their wages. Just empty.

NC: Could those families move away?

WR: Some did. Some would move away. Some liked to stay here.

NC: What happened if a family moved away and the family owed a big sum at the store?

WR: Well, if they know, the way I use to figure it out with them is if they knew where the person went, they would probably garnishee that person wherever he is working. But there were some people that left the plantation here. And they own the plantation store a couple of thousand dollars, I would say, and they came back. Some of them came back and they change their names and they worked for the plantation.

(NC laughs)

WR: But, you know, they didn't do anything after that. They didn't make them pay back what they own. They left it alone. But it was so hard

in those days, I might say that it's not only the poor people that were hard-up and hard to pay their bills. Lots of the higher class people making higher wages. Lot of them left the plantation. They left because they were in the hole owing the company the grocery bill. They left the plantation because they were too far in debt.

NC: Did they get jobs outside that would pay better?

WR: Yes, it worked out in some other jobs like government work and all that and they get higher paid. They were higher paid than the plantation. The plantation was all a lower salary.

NC: What you said about people were hired, they didn't have to show any proof of identity?

WR: No. In those days, no. In other words, I might say this, in those days, say a person, say the assistant manager would fire one person. Say, "You fired today." The next morning, he come out to work, the assistant manager would come out at the stand and say, "Where's so and so. I don't see him here today." They say, "Well, you fired him yesterday." "Oh, he supposed to come to work. That's forgotten."

(Laughter)

NC: Another thing about identity, remember you talked about the bangos.

WR: Oh yeah.

NC: So people could come out, give another name and since they had only known him by number before....

WR: Well, they had their names, correct names in the office. In the books, but they also had their bangos. And they use to call them by their bangos.

NC: So just trying to find out how a man could come back with another name and maybe only the workers would know and they wouldn't tell, huh?

WR: They would just change their names and I know them when they left here and when they come back. They have different names.

NC: But you wouldn't tell.

WR: No, I wouldn't say much. I wouldn't say much. That's their own business, their own private life, so I don't interfere with their private life.

NC: When the eight hour day came into effect, was about 1936 and you were a foreman.

WR: Yes, I was a foreman at that time.

NC: Did it mean an eight hour day for you also?

WR: Yes. We all had eight hours a day.

NC: Did you get paid overtime?

WR: Not the foreman's overtime but the labor would get overtime.

NC: Did it ever happen that the laborer earned more than the foreman?

WR: Yes. I agree with you right there. In fact, I was an overseer and I had a tractor driver working on piece contract. Every month he was making more money than I was. He was making better than one thousand dollars a month. And I even wasn't making one thousand dollars at that time. Then, I began to say something about it. I said, "I'm doing all the hard work you know, planning and preparing all this work for this labor everyday and I work long hours and I....the only way we got an increase and a little more than the labor was when the union came. The union had a strike in 1946 and they asked for more wages and they got to increase our wages also. But they were making more money than I was making. Also the foreman, they were making more money than the foreman that I had under me. I had three foreman. The labor was making more money than the foreman.

NC: Because the foreman didn't get part of the contract?

WR: No, they not in the contract. They are salaried persons, they are salaried.

NC: Did a man ever refuse to be promoted to luna because of that?

WR: Well, some of them, they refused. Some of them accepted the job because the foreman in other words, when you come to the off season, there's no contract for the labor. No off season. The mill shut down, they repair it. They get their day pay, grade pay. They get their grade pay. Then the foreman will get their same pay all the way through, you know. They make more than the labor.

NC: When the plantation started providing clubhouses or community center, about what year was that they built a community center?

WR: Well, when they built the main office, they built a clubhouse and... I can't remember what year was that.

NC: Was it in the '30s?

WR: Somewhere in the '30s, I guess. And they use it, the plantation employees whenever they had an occasion, whenever they had parties such as weddings or something like that, they were entitled to use the Annex Building for the plantations own parties.

NC: Did that increase social activities?

WR: Yes, yes, it was getting better and better.

NC: Then when the War started, did a lot of young people leave?

WR: Only those that were entering the Army or drafted in the Army. Some of them volunteered to go in the Army. But then we were prepared for the War; you know what I mean. I mean we were taking some civil defense training. We were taking training...before the War, yeah. They had some feeling that they were going to have a war. So we were training; we were on the alert at all times. And we were training. We had some training and they said that if war would break out, we were supposed to guard all the important places like the mill, the Standard Oil Company yard, the banks and post office. And all those things we're supposed to guard. Guard those places and I know when the War broke out, I was put in my pasture, moving some cattle and my brother told me that, "The war started this morning. Didn't you hear that? They bombing Schofield and Pearl Harbor." I said, "Well what we doing here?" We're supposed to go home. Supposed to be on guard duty.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

NC: This is the second side of the interview with Mr. Rego on July 20, 1976.

WR: We went on training and that day when the War started, they took us around to guard the power plants, mill, banks, the store, the office and the post office. And I was sent to guard the power plant that is just above my home up here. And they didn't have no shotguns. They said they were going to lend us shotguns. The Army didn't give no guns and they gave us a pick handle, you know, and I say, "I'm not going out there with a pick handle and have somebody just maul me down." I said. I went back home and got my 30-30 rifle. And I went on duty. We were on duty because of sabotage. We were watching for any sabotage. And we were glad there was no sabotage. Mostly the Japanese people knew that the war was coming, the war was going to happen and they knew the war was going to come. Here, they knew. And that day, the attack here December 7, there was a school teacher here, mind you, he went down to one of my classmates, had a store and I went to see my classmate there and he was telling my classmate, 'as a school teacher now, "Chee, if Japan had taken over this island," he said, "it would have been better. Be better off." And he's a school teacher, mind you. I just wanted to club his head. He was a friend of mine but I wanted to club him over the head for talking that way because as a citizen, mind you, he wasn't an alien. He's a citizen.

NC: He was a Japanese American?

WR: Japanese American, right and talking that way. He got me so angry, I tell you. But then it was good that they didn't land here. And I was working on defense work for the Army. We went down Haleiwa where one of the planes got all shot up because the pilot had took off and went after the Japan planes, you know. And he came back with the plane all shot up and I seen the bullet holes through the propeller. All those bullet holes when we were working there on the bunkers. We were building bunkers to

cover the planes so they wouldn't look from the airs, you know. We built bunkers over there for them. And this guy didn't get shot. He came back but his plane was all shot up.

NC: Mr. Rego, did any of the Japanese American people on the plantation get interned?

WR: Yeah, there was several of them. I think five or six. And one of them, he owned a store; we use to purchase food from his store, too, and he told me he bought several trucks for the Japan army with the American money that he makes here in the store, send 'em to Japan. He bought trucks for the Army. And he says he did that cause he want the Japanese army to fight with America. And he told me so that if Japan going to fight with America, Japan going beat America. He told me so. That's why he was interned. They took him to the concentration camp.

NC: Was he an older person?

WR: Yeah, he was an alien.

NC: Did he become a citizen after the War?

WR: No. He didn't become a citizen. He was an alien all the way through and then we had some other Japanese that went to Japan and so many trips they made to Japan. Older people. They also was interned. And then one was brought back. Mr. Midkiff said that he was a good man for the plantation and he don't think that that man would cause any trouble. So he was left out but the rest was sent to the concentration camp.

NC: About how many--would you or anybody know--about how many of the younger men went with the 442?

WR: Well, we had a majority here. In fact, first boy that was killed was from the plantation here before, got killed in the 442. And they put a flag down at the Haleiwa Park with his name there. He was the first one that get killed. I know his brothers and I know him, too, when he left.

NC: When the War was over, did some of those men come back and work back on the plantation?

WR: Yeah; we had some, I would say about five or six came back to the plantation. Some of them didn't come back because they were lieutenants and majors and what-not in the Army. So they made their careers in the Army. One is retired now in the Army. He is living here now but he has a home in Florida but he is living here now for vacations, I suppose.

NC: Any of them go into local politics? Any of the Waialua boys of the 442?

WR: No. Didn't go into politics.

NC: Aside from your being in the civil defense, were there any other effects on you and the family during the War? Were the children going to school



the whole time?

WR: Yeah, the children were going to school. There was no troubles with the children, no trouble with the people, you know, in the camps.

NC: Were the children ever called up to do any work, like as volunteers on the plantation?

WR: Well, we had grown up people mostly going on volunteers. Volunteer work on the plantation and all that. For the hospital and, you know, doing volunteer work.

NC: So the plantation didn't suffer for lack of labor?

WR: No, they didn't. We had enough labor. Work went as normal as before.

NC: Did the martial law keep you from doing anything that you wanted to do?

WR: Well, the martial law was really strict because you couldn't go out at night and then when you had to have a permit to go out at night and then they blacked out our lights and we had just a small little dot. Clearance and headlights from your car to go out and you could only go out till 8 o'clock. After 8 o'clock, you couldn't go out. And you had to have your lights on (out). And the thing that I was afraid of was I was burning cane at night. We had to try and get our fires as soon as possible before 8 o'clock. But you know, when the wind is not in your favor, is blowing in the wrong way, you have to slow down your burning and it took us sometimes up till 9:30 when the fires were still going on, you know. The Army use to come with two truckloads of soldiers and they would come out to the harvesting field with their guns, you know, and looking who setting the fire. Use to tell my men don't run, you know, because they'll shoot you down. Just stand quiet and they'll come up to you and talk quietly and find out what we doing.

NC: They were afraid that it might be a signal fire?

WR: That's right. They were afraid that it might be sabotage. They were notified but since they saw the fire on beyond the time limit, they come to investigate.

NC: And during the day, is it more difficult to burn sugar than at night?

WR: Well, then we started to burn cane in the morning. Try to avoid burning at night. But there were places that we couldn't help. We had to burn at night, about 6 o'clock and by 8 o'clock, it's all out.

NC: During the last part of the War, were your children at school?

WR: I had my oldest son go to the Korean War. He was in the war in Korea. He came back and now he's married, of course. He's a cook in the Army. But the Koreans there that were civilians, he was working alone and

they all gang up on him and they threw hot water on his stomach, you know, and he got all scalded in his stomach. He was in the hospital for two months.

NC: Korean civilians? How about the community during the war? How would you judge that the community Waialua-Haleiwa area reacted to the war?

WR: Well, the only thing I could see was you had to be more cautious with yourself, be more on the alert. You don't know what some other people might do to you, you know. You have to be prepared, careful. Not like today, you know. Now you're free, you don't care to take care yourself. But those days, you have to be careful, watch yourself, where you go, what you do and whom you contact, you know.

NC: How about what you said in those days. That's what you meant. What you talk about?

WR: Right.

NC: From what I've learned, I think people behaved very well, but was there any hysteria, the kind when people go accusing other people of things that maybe aren't so?

WR: We had one Japanese man in this plantation. He still working for the plantation. When he went to school, to UH, him and his wife, they joined this German club, you know, the German insignia...

NC: You mean the Nazi?

WR: Nazi. They join the club because they took their pictures at the school, a picture like this size. They took the picture in school with this German insignia.

NC: You mean at the University of Hawaii?

WR: University of Hawaii. So this guy, he's a very high person here and --I don't want to mention names...

NC: Okay.

WR: ...but during the war, he was making parties, giving parties to the young lieutenants from the Army. Inviting them so that he would get some information of the United States planes, how fast they can go, travel and he knew quite a bit about it. He argued with me one day on the weeding fields, you know. We were weeding his field. He argued with me and I almost beat him up because he got me so mad, telling me about the United States planes. How he knew so much and I got around to find out, he was giving parties to this—.So the Army caught out with him, you know. They stopped this army people going to his parties. But then I saw his picture, I saw it with my eyes. He moved his house to another house. The plantation truck drivers moved all his furniture and one of the truck drivers was my buddy and he came over and gave me the picture and I saw the picture. So I wanted to keep the picture

for evidence now. And this other Portuguese guy was so friendly with him and he was living next to him. So he tell him, "Oh, give me the picture. Give me the picture. I want to show it to him." He gave him the picture and we didn't get the picture back any more.

NC: Of course not.

WR: ...but when my youngest son wanted to work in the plantation, he didn't want give him a job. So I went back and told him, "Why don't you want to give my son a job? I've worked around fifty something years in this plantation and you don't want to give him a job?" "Oh, he said, "We full of labor." I said, "Well, I'll get you straightened up." I'll say, "I'll go in and see the manager about you when you was in school. I know what club you join and what you were doing." I said, "I'll go in and see the manager about you." "Don't do that. Don't do that, Willie ." he said. "Tell your son come in tomorrow and I'll give him a job."

NC: Mr. Rego, you're fantastic.

WR: You know, I tell you, terrible what people can do, I tell you. American citizens, now.

NC: Yeah. That's really terrible.

WR: So now he's buddy-buddy with me. He's a friend of mine now. I don't bother him any more about it. Just forget about it.

NC: Your son got the job?

WR: Yeah. He got the job. He worked in the plantation. He still working here.

NC: When did you first become aware that somebody was trying to unionize the workers at Waialua?

WR: Well, I'm glad you asked that question because, see, there was some union bosses from town, Honolulu, came down to Waialua and spoke to a lot of the Portuguese boys and the Japanese boys. Younger boys. They didn't talk to me because I was a foreman. They went around the camp and asked them if they wanted to join the union. So the manager, Midkiff, got wind about it. Somebody tipped him off that these people were trying to organize a union in the plantation. So Mr. Midkiff made a party at his home and he invited all the young boys, but he didn't invite the Portuguese boys. He invited only the Japanese boys. He invited them all to his home and he told them not to join the union. They would be better off not to join the union. And he was trying to boast on what he did on promotions for the local boys. But he made a mistake. He told them that, you see, we have two local boys, William Rego and Julian Peru. They are on harvesting field and they doing wonderful job. They local boys, see, and we giving them promotions.

But it wasn't Midkiff that did that. It was John Anderson gave us the promotion but he was trying to take the credit and he was telling these boys not to join the union. But then at that time, the boys were afraid to join the union, see. But then the following year they came and organized the labor. Came down and organized the labor. Then they got organized and they were accepted in the plantation. And that's the way they form the union here and the union did a lot of very good for the labor and also for the local foremans and the overseers and all. Everybody got better wages.

NC: So everybody benefited?

WR: Had everybody benefit from it.

NC: Now, since you couldn't join the union, was that ever used to try influence you, to influence the workers not to join? You know what I mean?

WR: Well, no. We couldn't...we weren't supposed to talk to any of the laborers not to join. We wasn't supposed to discourage them. Neither telling them not to join. It's up to them.

NC: Was this decided higher up or did you--you were overseer when the union came--was this your decision or was this higher up?

WR: No. This was the company's decision. Not to say anything to the laborers. Leave them alone if they wanted to join, let them join. If they don't want to join, that's up to them. But don't discourage them. Leave them alone. So we didn't do anything.

NC: Did you have any opinion about the ILWU? Would you have preferred another union or was it alright?

WR: Well, first the AFL Union wanted to come here. That's the one was trying to organize the Portuguese boys and the Japanese at that time, but then Mr. Midkiff discouraged them for having the union coming in. And that union would have been the first union here at that time.

NC: So it didn't matter to you which union it was?

WR: No.

NC: In 1946, there was a six months strike.

WR: Yes.

NC: How did that affect you?

WR: Well, it didn't affect us because we were on salary employs. We were gathering our salary every month. And we were doing patrol duty, you know. Going around with the pick up truck, patrolling the whole plantation to see if any cane fires, anything that is unusual, you know.

- NC: Yeah. After that strike people got more pay but fewer benefits from the plantation. When you were foreman, you were still getting the same benefits, the free things from the plantation which you got as a laborer. And so after that strike and the laborer didn't get those benefits, did they cut them off from you also?
- WR: No. We wasn't cut off anything.
- NC: So it was only the laborer who lost free house, free water?
- WR: Well, that labor stayed in their homes. Plantation didn't take them out.
- NC: They had to pay rent then?
- WR: No, they wasn't paying rent at that time. They wasn't paying rent at that time. They had their free home, free water and as I say, electric was around three dollars a month or something like that. But they had free water, free doctor.
- NC: After the union came?
- WR: But....they had everything free. The same while they were working.
- NC: After the union came? They had all those things?
- WR: Yeah, they had that. But then few years after that, they went into the medical plan because they were getting higher and higher wages.
- NC: Yeah, I see. So they lost the privileges gradually. They didn't lose them all at once. Is that what you mean?
- WR: No, but they had to pay for medical, pay for water, and pay for electricity. And the water, if they were living on a plantation home and they would only pay a dollar half a month on water. And we living outside, we pay our full water bill. Six or seven dollars a month. Whatever the rates was at that time.
- NC: Did you get a specific vacation time?
- WR: You mean...
- NC: When you were a luna and overseer?
- WR: Yes. Yeah, we have vacation, two weeks, then we had three weeks, then came up to one month.
- NC: When the Waialua Agriculture Company divided into two companies in 1948, did that change anything in the plantation?
- WR: No. Didn't change anything. I think mostly that was done to show the union that they not making all the profits, you know. So much profit

go to Halemano Company, so much will go to Castle and Cooke, so much for the sugar.

NC: Oh, smart.

WR: So in that sense, now, the labor would figure they not making much money on the sugar. And the money they were getting from Dole, they were giving that one go to Castle and Company, not this sugar company. We would get only what we make from the sugar.

NC: But this is still a Castle and Cooke Company?

WR: Yes, it is now. But they change all that back again. Went to Castle and Cooke instead of Halemano Company.

NC: Did any worker, any overseer, any luna, any overseer ever buy stock in the company?

WR: Some do, yeah. Some buy stocks.

NC: So they own a piece of the company?

WR: Yeah, some do. Some have.

NC: Do any of them take active interest like going to a board of director meeting or stock holders meeting?

WR: No. They wouldn't go in. Just the people with big amounts, you know. Like the managers or the assistant managers like that. They would go into town for a board meeting. But not the local people here. They would just tell them what their situation is, what their earning, you know, their percent and everything.

NC: Do you remember the fiftieth anniversary celebration in 1948?

WR: In Waialua? Yeah.

NC: Did you participate in that?

WR: Well, they had a big party, yeah. They slaughtered some cattle and had a big party for the labor and all. Was good. Nice time. People had nice time. Was a good party.

NC: Who planned the party?

WR: Well, the plantation planned. The management plan the party and then they had some of the people from the plantation to do the cooking.

NC: Who provided entertainment for that?

WR: Well, they had some clubs, you know, they had some clubs who volunteered to come out and play music and what-not, you know, for the entertainment.

NC: Were there enough distinctions in the camp, did any of the ethnic groups from the camp do different things? Do you remember any of that?

WR: Well, they had groups playing music, you know. They play their own groups, they play their own music for their parties and dances and what-not. Filipinos had their own, of course. The Japanese didn't have any because all they had was their bon dance and all that, you know. Some of their activities. Then we had whenever there was weddings people were invited altogether, you know, mingle all together. All different nationalities would be invited and have a good time at the parties. It was good. We all get together at the parties.

NC: When the plantation sold off its stores, how did the people feel about that?

WR: Well, they keep on buying from the same people who bought the stores and I wouldn't say that was too much. Wasn't as much as the plantation when they were running. But then, some other supermarkets were coming out, too, in Haleiwa and the people use to go and shop down there, too, see. And not just one place.

NC: Did they have more cash, too?

WR: Yes, that's right. They had more to go around and spend and buy what they want.

NC: When the plantations were being organized into the unions, there were certain people who were heroes to the workers; for example, Mr. Hall and Mr. Bridges. Was there any reaction amongst the....I think we know how the management felt...

WR: Yeah.

NC: ...but you were between top management and labor. You were closer to the laborers. Was there any reaction, like you and the other overseer and the lunas, do you remember any of that?

WR: Well, we once had a party. Midkiff gave a party down there at the beach, Puuiki Beach, down there. And invited all this Jack Hall and all this union top executives from town and gave them a party and all that. And then Midkiff was saying that he was glad the plantation had joined in the union. And then Jack Hall came up to make his speech and he said, "Well, you invited us over here; we come and eat your food and we thank you for it," he says. "But that's not going to stop us. For we're recruiting some more of your labors and we want them all in the union, one hundred percent."

NC: How about when Mr. Bridges was arrested and charged with perjury, there was a protest strike on the part of the workers here. How did management react to that or what were your feelings about Mr. Bridges then?

WR: Well, he was up in the Mainland then, but all they did here was maybe

take a day off, you know, just a day off for Bridges Day. Something like that. Say that was for Bridges. Protest for Bridges Day. But I'm pretty sure Bridges was guilty of his Communist doings, eh.

NC: Oh, so you thought he was a Communist? Did you think that maybe Mr. Hall was a Communist also?

WR: Yeah, I guess so because....I'm not.

NC: Did the workers feel, did they ever express....I ask you because I think you did talk with your workers a lot. I think that you had friendships. Did they ever express feelings about the leadership of the union being Communist?

WR: No, they didn't. As a matter of fact, they didn't at all. Just before I retired someone had said a few things, you know, but before that, no. They use to respect them, you know. Had good respect for them because the thing was that they went on strike for their own good and they got the money, you know, what they wanted. Wages and what-nots. So they had real good respect for them.

NC: Had respect for their leadership, yes. Do you hear any comment about the union leadership now? Whoever the union leaders are now?

WR: No...

NC: Do the people talk about their leaders? Do they look upon them as heroes?

WR: No. Sometimes a certain person would get elected and they don't like him, well, they say something against him. But still, they go along, you know.

NC: Okay. What happened in 1952 to make the Filipinos strike at Waialua?

WR: 1952. That was a strike for more wages, too. And '52 or '53 I think was, yeah?

NC: Oh, it may have been '53? Okay.

WR: Yeah, I think it was '52 or '53 that strike was.

NC: Yeah, and it was mostly Filipinos? Was there a reason for that?

WR: Well...no. The reason was that in the harvesting we had three piece contracting rates. Three different groups had their own contracts. See, the fire break men had their own contract. The ground crew and the loading had one contract. The hauling had a separate contract. Now they wanted it all one-piece contract. All work together for the same contract and you put the money all in and they have it divided.

NC: Who wanted that? The company or the workers?

WR: The workers.

NC: Uh huh.



WR: Then my boss, my boss, he didn't want that three piece contract. My superintendent, he didn't want that three piece contract. I mean he wanted that three piece contract. He didn't want the one piece. The labor wanted the one piece. So at that time, Mr. Anderson ask me, "Well, what do you think, Willie? You think of the three piece or one piece?" "Well, Mr. Anderson, I'm going to tell you right now. I know most of you here not going to agree with me, but they want one piece contract. It makes no difference to the company as far as money is concerned. Give them the one piece contract and they'll be satisfied. They'll go back to work. But if you don't give 'em the one piece contract, they going to strike. And we going to be in a hell of a situation here." So they went on strike. They didn't give them that. Cause my boss was against the one piece contract. He wanted the three piece contract. And three piece contract didn't amount to anything because the fire break men could just as well group up with the....but he was more in favor of the fire break men, cause he say they were good men and they know how to burn the cane, you know, and all that thing. They know how to do their job well, you know. He wanted to keep them separate so they will be earning more money and they used to earn more money than the rest of the group. And that's where the dissatisfaction came in. The other group was making less money than this group. Well, I don't blame them. If that thing was all in together, thrown all in a group together, all that money together, one piece, then they would divide the money. Everybody share-share.

NC: That's right.

WR: They would have been happier. Everybody would have been more happier. And that's what I told Mr. Anderson at that time.

NC: What nationality or ethnic groups were the **break** men mostly?

WR: All Filipinos. No Japanese, all Filipinos.

NC: But the ones who went on strike were mostly Filipinos?

WR: No, the other people went on strike, too.

NC: They did?

WR: Yeah, they all went on strike. The hauling was mostly all mixed with Filipinos and Japanese and Portuguese boys. On the hauling. The loaders were Japanese, Portuguese and I think they had a Hawaiian in there at that time. In that group. But they all agreed to have one piece and they all were happy to have it...

NC: Sure.

WR: ...they wanted that. And I ask my manager, you know, give them that and we avoid this strike. And now after the strike, they couldn't get the labor to come back to work. They wouldn't come back to work and then they had to go see the Catholic priest over here to talk to the labor, you know, and talk to them and have them come back to work. Which they

did. When they come back to work, they agreed to come back to work and they got some other arrangements. And the plantation gave a party. They killed one cow or two cow, I think, and they made a party for the union, that the union celebrating, come back to work. But the thing that got me angry was, they invited only the top management, you know... and us from us overseer and foreman that we are dealing with the labor, we working with them, side by side together, all day. They didn't invite us. The workers came back and told me, "You foremans and overseers are a bunch of suckers," they said. "You guys are working, doing all the dirty work and here the company don't invite you guys to associate with the men." Then I told the manager, that I told him. I said, "See how the labors figure that you folks are wrong? I don't care about the food." I told him, "I can buy my own food. I don't care about meat either." So I told 'em, "You folks should have invite them so they associate together. Because they working together. The labor and the foremans are working together like brothers, you know. Working together. They should associate together. You folks made a mistake not inviting the labor---foremans, rather."

NC: Now, while all these things were happening, things were happening politically, too. When you were old enough to vote, what influenced your decision when you went to vote?

WR: Yeah, those days when I started to vote, the plantation was all Republicans and they wanted you to vote for Republican. If they knew you voting for a Democrat, they would find some way to dismiss you. I know that because you have to sign a card that you're Republican and vote Republican. That was in the beginning. Towards the end, they didn't care for who you vote as long as you vote for a good man. Because they had Democrats and Republicans that would help the company, you know. The sugar industry. Both sides. So now it makes no difference. They find a good Democrat that will help the sugar industry, help the labor in the plantation and all over, you know. That's helping the labor, the working people. Well, they vote for them.

NC: In 1954, when the Democrats won a big majority, they kind of took over the territorial legislature, was there any kind of shock reaction over here?

WR: Well, they had all the labor all pulling together.

NC: Which side?

WR: Now the union officials would come tell the labor, they hold a stop-work meeting and they'll tell the labor, "We want you to vote for this person, we want you to vote for that person. Everybody vote cause these people are going to help out, see? Help us. Whatever we ask them to do for us, they going to help us and they going to help the workers."

NC: So it went from the manager telling the workers how to vote to the union leaders telling the workers how to vote?

WR: Right, right.

NC: Now which is more democratic, yeah? (Laughs) Did the strike of 1956 when Waialua had a big shutdown, yeah, that was when Senator Eastland was conducting hearings in Hawaii? Do you remember that?

WR: Yeah, I remember that. It was funny, too, you know. I was picked to go and say something, you know, for how we was treated and what-not and the plantation and all that. So they told me I was going Tuesday down to the meeting. And somehow they switch. They told me I wasn't going, that somebody else was going to take my place. So I don't know what they said there at the meeting and what they talked about. But that was privately, you know. Nobody would know what you say.

NC: You were going to talk with the Senator?

WR: With a group, they had come down to....

NC: The people conducting the investigation. Were you told what the questions might be? What they wanted to know? Were you told?

WR: No. They didn't say anything. They figured on I worked all my time in the plantation, see. I knew too much, see. So they figure better not send me, eh.

NC: Do you remember what things you were ready to tell them?

WR: Well, any questions they would have asked me, you know. Honestly, I would have told them everything, you know.

NC: Right.

WR: Because they come there for question you, you not going to lie to them. You got to be honest, fair, right. What is wrong is wrong, what is right is right. So you can tell them the truth, whatever happened.

NC: So you didn't have anything in particular that you had been saving up to tell them?

WR: They just would ask me the question and I would have just tell them what I know.

NC: I see.

WR: But I knew plenty at that time. I had plenty to say because we wasn't treated right at that time, before that.

NC: Senator Eastland didn't want Hawaii to become one of the states, did you know that?

WR: Yeah, I know.

NC: Did the local newspapers print a lot about that?

WR: Well, the thing is mostly becuse mix nationality, you know. Not like you get in the Mainland, eh. Mostly is too much mixture in here and he didn't like it. He didn't like it because he figure, they not pure Americans. Good Americans, what you call it. But I think they found out differently because I think there's no place like here in Hawaii where people....you go back their home, maybe you don't know your next neighbor, but over here, different. You almost know everybody in the whole town. And people get together, regardless, in any kind of games, they get together; different nationalities work together, party together, have fun togehter.

END OF INTERVIEW

**WAIALUA & HALEIWA**

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PORTUGUESE**

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII, MANOA**

**May 1977**