

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: John Santana, 74, former roadworker, laborer, night watchman, and coffee farmer

"Well, in Kona he [father] could take his own contracts [picking coffee] and he was his own boss. If he like work hard he work hard, if he no want to work at all, whenever he like to stay home, he could stay home, not like when you work on the [sugar] plantation. You have your [plantation] foreman after you all the time, see? So, that's what caused him to come to Kona."

John Santana, Puerto Rican, was born on August 28, 1906, in Kohala, Hawaii. Beginning at age ten, John and his family moved from plantation to plantation where he and his father engaged in various types of field and mill labor.

John came to Kona in 1928 to pick coffee. In subsequent years, he also found employment as a roadworker, night watchman, school custodian, and school bus driver.

In 1945, John began leasing coffee lands in Kahaluu, Kona. He still works the land daily.

Tape No. 9-46-1-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Johnny Santana (JS)

January 22, 1981

Kahaluu, Kona, Hawaii

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Johnny Santana. Today is January 22, 1981, and we're at his home in Kahaluu, Kona, Hawaii.

Okay Mr. Santana, can you tell me first of all when you were born?

JS: I was born 1906 at Kohala Plantation, Kohala Mill.

WN: What is your birthdate?

JS: Well, I was born on August 28, 1906.

WN: In Kohala?

JS: In Kohala.

WN: What was your father doing in Kohala?

JS: Well, he was a laborer. He used to work in the cane fields, that's what people used to do at that time, mostly, work in the cane fields. All labor jobs.

WN: Do you know how much he was making?

JS: Well at that time their salary was very cheap, I think it was about \$18 or \$20 a month. And people had to work about 10 hours a day. They would start at 6 o'clock in the morning, they had a coffee break about 8 o'clock, breakfast time, then 11:30 was lunch time; they had half an hour lunch. Then at 4:30 it was quitting time. So that was about 10 hours a day that they had to work.

Well, I remember I was about 7 years or 8 years old, my father used to take me to the cane fields to work, he wanted to teach me how to work. So, of course it wasn't every day, but at least two days a week I used to go with my father to work in the cane fields. This was during school vacation and I remember my salary was about 15 cents a day. So my father used to take me to the cane field and he

took one side of the line and I took the other side of the line. Of course, I couldn't keep up with him but when I stayed back, he helped me with my side until I catch up with him. So we kept on like that see, until 4:30 in the afternoon. So, I worked for awhile with him in the cane fields that way. Then after that, well, we moved from Kohala Mill to Hawi.

WN: When you were working in the lines, what were you doing?

JS: Well, weeding, hō hana we call it, hō hana. After that we stayed there in Hawi for some time, I don't really remember, but we moved from Kohala Plantation to Hawi Plantation.

WN: Do you know why you moved?

JS: Well, my father wanted to change place. I think he didn't like too much Kohala, and so he moved to Hawi Plantation. And we went to live at one place they call Malio, there was a big Puerto Rican camp over there, they had about 12 houses over there. And they had a store over there. It was a convenient place to live, you see, everything right there.

WN: It wasn't like that at Kohala?

JS: No, it was better than Kohala. My father liked it better at Malio--Hawi Plantation--than Kohala. [At] Malio, I used to work in the cane field too, once in a while, but most time I stayed at home. My father had the cow--he bought one cow and I used to cut grass for the cow and keep a good supply of wood at home for cooking. So my father didn't have to go cut wood, I would go get wood during the afternoon when he come home from work, see. So, we stayed there [Hawi] for a while.

WN: Did you have other chores besides taking care of the cow and cutting wood?

JS: Well, that's all, although sometimes I used to go work out in the cane field too. Some other boys did, so I used to go too, see. Then from there we moved to Maui.

WN: Just a minute now, you said they had a Puerto Rican camp, yeah?

JS: Right.

WN: You folks all lived together in the same area?

JS: All in the same area, yeah, all in one same area.

WN: Did you folks do any kind of customs that only Puerto Ricans celebrate, that other camps didn't?

JS: Well, the celebrations were when come like Christmastime we all celebrate, dance and everything, see. We had good time. Yeah, we had a lot of Puerto Ricans, good enough to get along and have a good time.

WN: You folks had that kind of activities that only Puerto Ricans would participate?

JS: Well, since there was only Puerto Ricans there, only Puerto Ricans used to participate in that parties that we had for holidays.

WN: Were there Japanese or Filipinos nearby?

JS: Well, there was a Japanese camp, but it was a little far away from the camp, way up on the hill. That they had their own celebrations over there, we don't know, see. At that time, well, we didn't have any Filipinos over there in that Malio camp.

WN: What about the food like that, what kind of food you folks ate?

JS: Food, well, rice, potatoes, those kind of food, bananas. And there used to be some kind of wild beans in the field, you know, inside the cane fields. We called that---in Spanish they called that chicharo.

WN: Chicharo?

JS: Chicharo, yeah. Almost like lima beans but a little smaller, you know. Had lots of those kind of beans. We used to eat that. Taste good.

WN: Only the Puerto Ricans ate that?

JS: No, everybody ate that, Puerto Ricans, Portuguese, Hawaiians; they all like that, see.

WN: What kind house you folks lived in?

JS: The kind old style house, lumber house. (Chuckles) The houses wasn't so old but, you know, old fashioned homes.

WN: How many bedrooms did the house have?

JS: Well, some had two bedrooms, some little more, some three bedrooms, all depending on the families, how big the family was. Our house was two bedrooms. It was only me in the family, my father and my mother and me, see. So, we had two bedroom house, one bedroom for me and one for my father and mother. Then we had the parlor and we had the kitchen. We had outside toilet. We had to get our water outside, no more water pipe going inside the house. We had to go get our water outside.

WN: Outside where?

JS: Well, we had a special place outside, like in the middle of the camp had one pipe over there. People would get their water over there. They would carry the water in cans, containers.

WN: How many Puerto Rican families were there living in that camp?

JS: Oh, had about, 10 or 12 families.

WN: Besides the chores that you did, and working out in the fields sometimes, what else did you do as a boy, growing up in that camp?

JS: Well, what I do was play games with the other boys, that's all.

WN: Like what kind games did you play?

JS: Like play ball, and then other kind of games. We played marbles (chuckles), those kind of games.

WN: Did you play only with the Puerto Rican boys?

JS: Well there was only Puerto Rican boys in that camp, so I played only with Puerto Ricans. Now, when I used to go to school there were other boys, you know, Hawaiian boys, Japanese boys, Portuguese boys, and we all played together. But when we come home, why, only Puerto Rican boys were there.

WN: How far away was the school from your house?

JS: Well, Honomakau School was about 7 miles away from home, you see. Now Puuepa School was about 2-1/2 to 3 miles away from home. But when they transferred me to the fourth grade, I had to walk about 7 miles to school, that was Honomakau School.

WN: You mean after the third grade you had to go to another school?

JS: To another school, right.

WN: How come?

JS: Well, Puuepa School, the grade was only up to the third grade. From then on you have to go to the higher school, Honomakau School. I don't know, that was the custom they had before, I don't know.

WN: You used to walk then?

JS: Oh yeah, we had to walk seven miles. Going to school it wasn't so bad because part of the road was downhill. Then down the main road, that's level road, but coming home you had to walk up that hill, you see. After you leave the main road, then you got to walk up the hill, all the way up to Malio. When you get up the hill then you hit a little level stretch, but most of that was all uphill. Rough road, that time never had that kind paved road. Because all that wagons used to run through there, the Caterpillars used to run through that road back and forth. So, when it rained was kind of bad because the road became all muddy and when you reached the school, was all full of mud already. (Chuckles) You have to walk very careful because otherwise you get all dirty. Coming home too, it was kind of hard, see.

WN: Your mother, what kind of work did she do in Hawi?

JS: Well, she was a housewife. She only take care the house, the cooking, wash clothes and she used to do a little sewing too, for people; a little tailor, yeah. Other than that, well, nothing else. Sometimes we used to go down fishing, too. We used to walk down from the camp, we used to walk right down to the sea. Was quite a far way, about five miles down, I guess. We go walk and go fishing.

WN: What you folks used to catch?

JS: Well, sometimes we catch po'o-pa'a and nighttime, sometimes we catch lobsters, we catch mū.

WN: You catch what?

JS: Mū, that kind of big fish, get that teeth, more like human teeth. They call that mū.

WN: Nighttime you used to catch that?

JS: Yeah, nighttime we catch that with our hook, our bamboo. With our bamboo, sometimes we catch menpachi, those kind fishes. We used to enjoy.

WN: What you did with the fish?

JS: Well, we take them home, eat them.

WN: You folks used to do things, your whole family together?

JS: Well, like what?

WN: Outings, picnics, anything like that?

JS: Well, no, we don't used to go on picnics like that, but we used to go out [to] friends' homes when they had some kind of party, like maybe down Hawi. Some friends used to make a little party, or sometimes they used to baptize kids and make parties. Sometimes somebody get married, like that, and we go to the parties. Those kinds of things we used to go, you see.

WN: Was there any kind of party or celebrations that only Puerto Ricans did and the other groups didn't?

JS: No, celebrations I think each went, like Christmastime, nearly everybody celebrate that. Celebrations, that's the only thing, other celebrations, no more. Only what other people do, that's the same thing that we all do, see. (Chuckles) No more special celebrations for Puerto Ricans.

WN: Oh, I forgot to ask you, where is your father from?

JS: He came from Puerto Rico, he came to Hawaii in the year 1901. That's when they had immigration from Puerto Rico to Hawaii, see. But at that time, according to the information that we had from the old folks, they came to Hawaii not to work on the cane fields but they came to work on the cotton fields. That's the agreement that they made with the Puerto Ricans there in Puerto Rico, but when they reached Hawaii, was something different already. They brought them right into the cane fields, it wasn't cotton fields, never have no cotton in Hawaii in that time.

WN: Who told them that they were going to work in the cotton fields?

JS: Well, the guys that wen get them in Puerto Rico. The one that caused them to come to Hawaii, I think they told them some kind of lie, and that's how many of them came to Hawaii, see, because they thought they was going to work in the cotton fields.

WN: Oh, did your father tell you this?

JS: My father told me that and some other Puerto Ricans spoke about that too, see. They was bluffed. (Laughs)

WN: You mean cotton is easier work?

JS: Oh yeah, cotton much easier, you only go pick cotton, not like working in the cane fields, hō hana like that. Of course cotton you have to clean them [the fields] too, but when cotton season come, easy, go pick cotton. In Kona had cotton, I used to work in the cotton fields here in Kona too, for a short little while. Some Japanese had cotton. Had two cotton mills over here--cotton factory--they used to clean the cotton and and pile them up, stack them up in boxes and send them out, I don't know, to the mainland some place.

WN: And you did that part-time?

JS: Yeah, was short little while, maybe about three or four months. I think after that they break down, no more, all pau.

WN: You said had two cotton mills in Kona?

JS: Two, yeah. One here in Kahaluu and one down Holualoa. Still the house is over there, somebody living in it now. On Hualalai Road, going down.

WN: What they did with the cotton?

JS: Well, the cotton, I don't know, they send it to the mainland. After that, I don't know what they did with them. I guess they send them to the hospitals or some places, I don't know.

WN: So now, getting back to your father, was he angry?

JS: Was he what?

WN: Was he mad for not working cotton?

JS: No, well, he had no other choice. Well, he didn't feel so good because that wasn't the agreement that they made with him, but he got a little mad, sure. But there was nothing that he could do, so he had to take it, see. That's how he got involved in the coffee, I mean cane fields. (Laughs)

WN: Kohala was his first job?

JS: Kohala was the first place, Kohala. Of course, there came many Puerto Ricans but some they ship to Kauai, some to Maui, some to the Big Island. All scattered here and there. So much of those---nearly all of the old folks, well, they all died already.

WN: Okay, and then when you were about 10 years old, in 1916, you moved to Wailuku?

JS: Yeah, I moved to Maui, Wailuku [Sugar] Plantation.

WN: Why did you move?

JS: You see, my mother had a sister over there in Wailuku. And she always wanted---she always advised my father to move to Wailuku because they were close. I think that's what made my father move to Maui. So when we moved to Maui, well, my father never put me to school, he put me into that cane field to work. So, there in the cane field, since I was a young boy, they used to give me a ukupau, about nine short lines. Watercourse lines, they call them.

WN: Watercourse lines?

JS: That was in the cane fields, where they used to irrigate the cane. They had short lines, you see, so they used to give me 9 of those lines, and about 9 or 10 o'clock I was through with my ukupau. Then I used to help my father work on his ukupau, you see. Theirs was much greater, see, about maybe 20 or 25 lines. So, after he got through, then we all go home, sometimes 12 o'clock, sometimes 1 o'clock, go home.

WN: The watercourse line, what did you do?

JS: Well, weeding, hō hana, then from there they transferred me to the mill. Or rather, they put me as a flagboy.

WN: Flagboy?

JS: Flagboy, that was when-- cane season-- they started grind cane, so they put me as a flagboy. They used to run the cane through flumes, you see. Then that cane went right down to the place where they had

a chute, then they had the wagons underneath the chute, see. Then each time they fill up a wagon, they move them, then they bring another one. When all those wagons were full then the train come and take all those wagons to the mill. And he leaves some behind, see, so that they can keep on filling them. Go back and forth, see. So I used to watch the flume--we had one flagboy here, then a little ways over another flagboy--so if the flume got stuck by my place then I would put the flag down, I shake it. Then the other one, he keep on shaking then they stop throwing cane on the flume until everything is unplugged. When everything was unplugged then we would put the flag up and then they start putting cane on the flume again, see. That water used to bring the cane down through the flume, take it down the chute.

WN: So the people running the water used to see the flag and stop the water?

JS: No, the water keep on running, but the one who put the cane on the flume got to stop, otherwise would get more worse, the jam would be much greater. So had to stop putting cane on the flume until we unplug the flume. Like us, we the flagboy, we the ones who unplug, throw the cane out.

WN: You guys had to do that?

JS: We had to do that, unplug 'em, then after it was unplugged we would put the flag back up and they can put cane in and run it down, see. So I worked on that flume until the cane season was over, then they transferred me to the mill. All right, in the mill had one tool room, then they put me in the tool room to take care of the tools. Had all kinds of tools over there, had wrenches and stops and bolts and screws and washers and all kinds of things, see. So then they teach me how to do that work. After I knew how, they left me over there and then every time someone comes for something, I used to give them and put it down, what they took. I want to make sure if they take some tools they bring them back again. So I worked there for a while, maybe around one year or until the cane season came again, the time for grind cane.

Then the mill engineer transferred me to the fire room in the mill, now I go watch the steam, me and one other guy. Inside there it wasn't so bad. But it wasn't so easy, either. They had like a little chute where all the trash used to come. And over here, we had like a little flume and the trash used to run right into the fireplace. And over here, another one like that, over there, one other one, see. So there was a hole that I used to look through, and when I see there's no trash inside the fireplace, I used to pull the chain, then the trash run right into the fireplace. The fire keep on burning, you see. When I see that it was too much, then I close. And I watch the steam. I want to make sure that the steam was high all the time, I no can let it go down because otherwise the rollers couldn't go over there on the other side.

We had a Japanese water tender, I remember his name yet, it was Maenaga, he was the water tender. He was like our boss, you see. Then, when the steam came low like that, he used to take care of the oil. And make fire with the oil, build up the steam again with the oil. But as long as the steam was high, it wasn't so bad. So then sometimes the steam was so high that we had to close on top and let all the trash fall down in the room, come out on the other side and pile it up, you see. Then sometimes the place used to get so full that we had to shovel it [trash] inside the fireplace, you had a door. And watch the steam, too. When the steam came down, instead of putting oil, we used that trash, shovel it inside. That was the hard time, because we had to work hard. And I used to work one week night and one week day, one week night, one week day, you see.

WN: That was full-time?

JS: Yeah, full-time, even Sundays we had to work. Sometimes we had to go clean the boiler. The oil used to form some kind of hard stuff, so we have to break them up and throw them out. And then we had to clean that tubes, you know the boiler get plenty tubes. We run the brush inside there.

WN: How often you had to clean the boiler?

JS: Well, every Sunday. Every Sunday we used to clean.

WN: How come the steam used to go down?

JS: Well, sometimes was not much trash, I think, I don't know. But the steam come down, so when there wasn't any trash piled up, then Maenaga used to run the oil, see, build it up again.

WN: And that job was mostly--since you were kind of young yet--were boys doing that?

JS: Yeah, well, when I was about 16 or 17 years old, I was doing that kind of work. I was kind of young, but I was kind of tall, see, so maybe that's why they give me that kind of work. (Laughs)

WN: Oh.

JS: Kind of hard.

WN: How many of you did that?

JS: [JS misunderstands question] Oh, I worked there for about two years then I quit there--was kind of a little too hard--and I wen work in the carpenter shop. So in the carpenter shop there had one other Puerto Rican boy and he used to deliver the lumber, take the lumber here and there. Then I used to go with him, help him with the lumber on the truck. And sometimes I go help the blacksmith inside the shop there. So I worked there for quite a while too.

Then sometimes we used to go on that pump car. Had one pump car, we go on the rail, we used to carry across....you know where they put the rail [tracks] they got that kind of cross sticks? We used to go carry that on the pump car, me and some other boys. We go change the cross sticks.

WN: Oh, you used to change them too?

JS: Yeah, change that, some sticks they come maybe too old or what, we have to take them out. Maybe the train run all the time through there, so we have to get the thing good and solid. We used to do all that kind of work.

WN: When you were doing that kind of blacksmith [work] and the pump car [work] and all that, how much did you get paid?

JS: Well, in the mill I think I used to get about 35 cents a day.
(Laughs)

WN: For how many hours?

JS: Oh, in the mill I used to work from 6 to 6. From 6 o'clock in the afternoon to 6 o'clock in the morning. But we used to get a long break in between, during the night like that. Nighttime, maybe about a couple of hours, we no work, eh? Somebody watch the steam while we were resting. But we used to work at least 10 hours. At that time no more the kind 8 hours, (chuckles) all 10 hours.

WN: In the mill, the pay was better than in the fields?

JS: Well, I used to work better in the mill, I used to feel better in the mill. All underneath the shade, no more hot sun.

WN: What about the pay?

JS: Well, the pay was kind of little bad, more than outside in the cane fields. I used to get a little more, about 35 cents or little over, I guess.

WN: Inside the mill?

JS: Inside the mill, yeah. But we used to get bonus, too, you see. They used to give us bonus, maybe a couple dollars bonus on top of that.

WN: How you got bonus?

JS: Well, at that time if you worked over 23 days a month, they give you a little bonus on top, you see. That was at all the plantations--Kohala Plantation used to be the same thing too, you see. Malio, you work over 23 days a month, you get maybe \$3 or \$4 bonus on top, see. That's how it was. But if you work below that amount of days, you no get bonus. So they used to give that bonus to make the people work, keep on working everyday, because they

thinking about the bonus. So people no used to be lazy, they keep on working, they like earn that bonus, you see.

WN: Of all the jobs you did at Wailuku, what job you liked the best?

JS: In Wailuku, in Maui?

WN: Yes.

JS: Well, I know in the mill was a good job, but I used to work hard though. In the cane field it used to be all right, in the hot sun, and wasn't so good sometimes. If rain, you get all wet. I used to like the carpenter shop better, because I used to run around with the car. I used to be like a truck's swamper like, you see. I helped the driver with the lumber, go deliver lumber here and there. Sometimes they have to repair the flumes so we take the lumber to those places where they repair the flumes. So, it was better at the carpenter shop, but the pay was about the same.

WN: As the mill?

JS: The carpenter shop and the mill was about the same pay. So I think it was, I'm not too sure, about 35 to 50 cents, somewhere around there.

WN: And where did you live on Maui?

JS: Well, when we went from Malio--from Hawi to Maui--we went to live at a place they called Puuohala. Puuohala Camp. That's where my aunty was living, my mother's sister. Puuohala Ranch. We lived there for a while, then my aunty wen move to the mainland so my mother didn't want to stay in the camp any longer, so my father moved to a place they called Green Camp in Wailuku. That's in Iao Valley, in that camp there, Green Camp. So we lived there for quite a while. Then from there we moved to Kona.

WN: Were there Puerto Ricans in Maui?

JS: Oh, lots of Puerto Ricans there, Green Camp was almost all Puerto Ricans, and a few Portuguese. Even up in Iao Valley, had lots of Puerto Ricans too. Green Camp was nearly all Puerto Ricans, Portuguese.

WN: Do you remember when you moved from Hawi to Maui, how you felt?

JS: Well I didn't feel so good because I felt like a stranger. I was a young boy but I didn't have friends like I used to in Hawi. But as time went on, I begin to get friends and I used to get along all right and I used to like the place. Hawi no had town, but Wailuku used to have town. I used to go to the movies with the other boys, we used to get fun. Although I used to work hard. It was hard work.

WN: So, besides having a town in Wailuku, what was the differences between Wailuku and Hawi?

JS: Well, the difference was that we used to go to the movies all the time. Go to the movies when I didn't work nighttime, and here and there around town. We used to go to a place where they sell ice cream, I used to eat a lot of banana specials they call, ice cream and bananas and oh, it was good. I used to enjoy. And we had a river, Wailuku River, I used to go to the river and go swimming. So I used to like the place.

WN: Were you far away from the beach?

JS: Well, yeah, it was quite a way but sometimes we used to go down to Kahului and we used to go around there with the other boys. Spin around, I had a friend of mine that used to work down Kahului and he used to get a car, Model-T truck, and we used to ride the truck and go around. Sometimes we used to go down to Lahaina in the truck. Go Lahaina, yeah, Lahaina far, the other side of the island. So I used to enjoy that, you know.

WN: After Maui, you said that in 1921 you moved back to Hawi?

JS: To Hawi again, yeah, to Malio.

WN: Malio, back to Malio?

JS: Back to Malio and back to the cane fields again for a little while.

WN: How come you folks moved?

JS: Well, my father wanted to move to Kona because while he was in Puerto Rico, he used to like to pick coffee when he was a young boy and he wanted to try the coffee fields again. He wanted to try to pick some coffee and work in the coffee fields. So that's how he came back to Kona. Kona had a lot of Puerto Ricans, they had coffee fields and some friends of his from Malio, they had moved to Kona, see. They used to write to my father and they used to tell him to come to Kona and maybe you can do better here in Kona than what you doing over there in Maui. So that's how we moved to Kona.

WN: What kind of things did they tell him about Kona?

JS: Well they told him that he could pick coffee and it was much easier than working in the [cane] fields. They take little contracts here and there. Then he was like his own boss. In the cane field he had the foreman on him all the time see. To make him work, you see, no more chance to stand up, like that, in the cane field. In Kona he could take his own contracts and he was his own boss. If he like work hard, he work hard, if he no want to work at all, whenever he like to stay home, he could stay home. Not like when you work on the plantation. You have your foreman after you all the time. So that's what caused him to come to Kona.

WN: So from Maui, you folks moved to Kona or Hawi?

JS: From Maui we moved to Hawi.

WN: Because he wanted eventually to go to Kona?

JS: Oh, wait there....Yeah, from Maui we moved to Hawi. From Maui we moved to Hawi. Then we stayed in Hawi for a little while, and from Hawi my father stayed in Hawi but I moved to Union Mill. That's where I started working as a blacksmith helper. Then from blacksmith helper they moved me into the mill to dry sugar. I don't know how they call that....

WN: Centrifugal [operator]?

JS: Yeah. From there, after the cane season was over then they move---they tell me to, the foreman, the boss, Mr. Bishop they used to call him, he was the main boss.

END SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: How come you switched mills to Union Mill?

JS: Well, I felt that working in the cane fields I wouldn't get anywhere, I no learn nothing. So I thought of moving to Union Mill then maybe I could get somewhere, you see, I learn something different. So, it just happened that when I moved to Union Mill they put me as a blacksmith helper. It was kind of hard, I used to handle the hammer the whole day through, you see, for a while. But after, when the cane season came on, well, they moved me to the mill. Although the job wasn't easy either, it was something more that I learned, you see, something different I learned. I learned how to dry the sugar, run that little machine. Then, I worked there until the cane season were over then they put me outside [in] the field, go make lines, furrows with the big farm plow for plant cane. Then after that then when the coffee season--I mean, everytime I have the coffee in my mind, (chuckles)--cane season came on again so I transfer back to the mill again, go dry sugar again. And all the time my father was up in Malio, then my father made up his mind about going to Kona, so that's how we came back to Kona, you see, from Malio.

WN: While you were working Union Mill, you lived in Malio with your parents?

JS: When I was working at the mill I lived at Union Mill.

WN: You lived by yourself?

JS: Yeah, I lived by myself, yeah. Then, weekends like that, I go home visit my parents, you see. Then at Union Mill I had my own room and I go eat somebody else house, I go board, somebody else's house. But in the Union Mill my pay in the mill was about, I think \$1 a day.

WN: Better than Maui, then?

JS: Oh yeah, better than Maui. Anyway I was more old, too, so I think that's why they raise me up. And the boss used to like me in Union Mill, see. He used to be friendly. Sometimes he used to give me his horse, that was when no more cane. And he tell me, "Johnny, you go so-and-so place. You go check one leak over there, one pipe way on the other side somewheres, you take my horse." And he give me his horse and I go check that leak over there, take one wrench. He used to be a good man with me, friendly yeah. Then after that I moved to Kona.

WN: As a blacksmith helper, what did you do?

JS: Well, I just handled that torch.

WN: Blow torch?

JS: Yeah, blow torch, yeah. And one hammer, cut iron, that was my job.

WN: What they did with the iron?

JS: The iron was for fix those wagons, flat irons was for fix those cane wagons, see. You know, at that time they no had all those trailers that they got now for haul cane, trucks. They used to have wagons and the Caterpillars pull those wagons. About 10, 15 wagons one time. Bring them all from the cane fields, bring them to the mill you see, those wagons. So when the cane season was over then we have to repair those wagons. We have to put new irons over there, that was our job. It was kind of a hard job, cut those irons. (Laughs)

WN: How did you learn how to do all that?

JS: Well, try and try, practice. The first days was kind of hard but then after that I got used to and then was just like nothing. Then when I came to Kona it wasn't so hard for me to handle the stone hammer either, see. Because already I was used to over there in the mill. I used to handle that 18-pound hammer to broke stone in Kona.

WN: When you were working road work?

JS: Yeah, road work. You know, before no had that machines that they get now. All was manpower, you go load truck, all manpower. Load stones. Sometimes some stones were too big, we have to bust them with a hammer. Sometimes they transfer us to the quarry, then we had to bust the stones over there with a hammer. Supply the

quarry, right here in Tanaka's Quarry, that was county [owned] before. It used to be the county quarry before, that's where we used to bust the stones.

WN: When you moved from Malio to Kona, where did you folks live in Kona?

JS: From Malio to Kona, well, we came right to Kamalumu, about two miles away from here, Kamalumu.

WN: And this was with relatives or...

JS: No, we rent a house, some Portuguese house. Well, the rent was cheap. It was about \$3.00 a month, I think. Cheap rent. When I got married I only paid \$1.50 rent for one house.

WN: In 1937?

JS: Nineteen thirty-seven, \$1.50 a month, but I used to work. The house belonged to the ranch, you see, and I used to work for the ranch, for Mr. Greenwell, for Frank Greenwell and I used to pay \$1.50. And our wages was \$1.00 a day; all day for \$1.00.

WN: So what did you think about Kona, what thoughts did you have of Kona before coming?

JS: Before coming to Kona?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Well, I felt that I would see something different, not like the other side--was only cane fields. Before I come here, I think I never seen a coffee field before, so I want to see those coffee fields over there in Kona and I want to try and work over there. So I was thinking, gee, something different all the time. So when I came from Union Mill, Kohala side, to Kona, I started to pick coffee. It was coffee season when I reached here and at that time, coffee time, you pick a bag of coffee was only 50 cents.

WN: For 100-pound bag?

JS: Hundred-pound bag, 50 cents. I never pick coffee before, that's why it used to take me one whole day for pick one bag.

WN: One bag?

JS: Fifty cents. Those guys that were used to used to pick two bags, you see. Some fast pickers they pick three bags.

WN: So actually in Kona you were making less money than you were making at Union Mill?

JS: Yeah, I was making less money and we used to work much harder, too. Because when the coffee season was over we used to take contracts.

At that time never have poison for spray the grass. All was [weeding] with the hoe, you see. So we used to take contracts to hoe, clean the coffee land. And sometimes, the contracts when was finished and we figure up only [came out to] 35 cents a day, see. So, we make much less money.

WN: You mean you used to divide up?

JS: Divide, yes, then we figure up and then only 35 cents a day. Before, five guys take contract, you see, maybe 15 to 20 acres of coffee land and when the contract was over, well, only 35 cents a day.

WN: How long about, was one contract?

JS: Well, sometimes the contract last about a month, all depends on how much grass there was in the coffee land, you see. Sometimes one month, sometimes little bit less. But although the pay was little, or the amount we earned was little, the things were cheap too, you see. So, we used to get along all right. And nighttime we used to go fishing, catch fish. So we used to get along all right.

WN: Coffee picking was contract too?

JS: Yeah, just like contract, 50 cents a bag, 50 cents a bag. If you pick half a bag you only get 25 cents.

WN: So you worked for one farmer at a time?

JS: Yeah, one farmer at a time. So if this farmer run short of coffee, maybe we pick the coffee fast, so we go look someplace else where get more coffee, see. Sometimes, we change around here and there. Sometimes in Kamalumalu the coffee season pau faster than the other side, yeah?

WN: You mean ma kai side pau faster than the ma uka side?

JS: Yeah, sometimes in the high elevation, the coffee last that much longer. On the low elevation, the coffee ripens much faster, so that much faster the coffee finish, you see, pau. So we used to change, we used to go look for high elevations where there was more coffee and we would pick there. Like Captain Cook side, way up on the hill, the coffee sometimes last the whole year through because high elevation, almost the whole year through get coffee. So, certain part of the year got little bit coffee. No can pick one bag, maybe quarter bag, like that. But when the real season come, maybe you can pick one bag or half a bag like that up on the hill. Lower elevation, well, the coffee ripe plenty all one time, you can just scrape [coffee off the branches]. If you're a fast picker maybe you can pick two bags, three bags.

WN: How you folks contacted the farmer to work?

JS: Well, we go to their farms.

WN: You just go?

JS: We know where they live anyway so we go see them to ask them if they need any pickers. If they need, they tell us. Okay we come pick, then we go.

WN: And [do] they supply you with anything?

JS: No, they don't supply nothing.

WN: No more house like that?

JS: No, well, some farmers they get their own mahina men; they call that, mahina men. Workers. They get their own houses, but mahina men couldn't take care of all the coffee, you see, so they hire outside people. But the mahina men they get their own houses from the coffee farmer. Like us, we have to rent, pay our own rent. We get our own house, you see, rent house.

WN: You folks would pick until a certain time limit was up or until all the coffee is picked?

JS: Well, until all the coffee is picked. Of course, if the coffee slack over here, and we see we can make more money on the other side, we move. Because we want to make enough money to get along, you see. So we move.

WN: You can move any time?

JS: Any time you want to. We don't make contract with the farmers to stay there until the coffee is all over, until every grain is picked, so we move. When the coffee comes little, only few grains, well then the farmer himself pick the rest.

WN: The mahina men, they didn't get mad because outsiders were coming and picking coffee?

JS: No, no, no. They no get mad because maybe the farmer give them their own block to pick, you see. Then the rest, the outside people pick. So that's the way it was in those days. (Laughs)

WN: How he paid you folks, cash right...

JS: Cash, yeah, cash. No more that kind charge.

(Laughter)

WN: This was right before the depression you worked, what, 1928 the first time?

JS: Oh, the first time, yeah, before the depression. You mean, when we came to Kona?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Yeah, before the depression start. And after that, had the depression, correct.

WN: So were a lot of people coming into Kona at that time? To work?

JS: Well, no, no it wasn't---not too much people, not too much people. You see, in Kona at that time there was no water wells, like that. No wells, no water, all the water was in tanks. People knew that, you see, sometimes [when] people run short of water they have to be hauling water from the schools, like that, or sometimes they have to go down to beach and look for brackish water for wash their clothes. That's what we used to do, you see. So, people didn't care for that, coming to Kona, because of the water situation. Hardly any water. Not like now. Now people from all over the place coming to Kona. From the Mainland you can see. Now we have water wells and condominiums coming up and everything so lot of people coming here. Because we have water. And people like this side of the island. Not like the other side of the island, Hilo, people don't care too much. Maybe because it rains more on that side, more windy or what. This side better, you see. Better to live.

WN: So when you came to Kona and you saw how people lived over here in Kona, how did that compare to say, Malio side?

JS: Well, I noticed that the people lived much better here than in Malio side because over here people were like their own bosses, you see. Not like in plantations where you stay under the control of the plantation there. Over here in Kona you have the freedom of going wherever you want to, and work for whoever you want to. In the plantation you have to work only for the plantation there, you see. And here in Kona, well, you had the chance of, well, if you had a little money you had a chance to build up something. Maybe you like build a piggery, raise pigs, or maybe if you get money you can lease a piece of land and raise your own cattle like that. In the plantation you couldn't do that. In Kona you had all that privilege, all that freedom to do that.

WN: How about the standard of living, the housing like that, how did that compare?

JS: The houses, well, something like in the plantation. Maybe in the plantation some people had better houses than those here in Kona, and sometimes some in Kona had better houses than those in the plantation, you see. So, the houses were about the same, I think. Only those who had a lot of money, well, they could make nice houses. Like now there are a lot of nice houses around. Before never have this kind nice kind of houses you see in Kona. Only old shacks.

WN: When you folks were going from farmer to farmer to pick, was there a lot of competition for jobs?

JS: Well, the only thing, competition, some farmers of course they had a lot of coffee and little [few] pickers, so they used to give you a little better pay, just to draw more pickers. That's the only thing, you see. So, when you find out that a certain farmer was giving more money than this one here, well, naturally people would go over there, you see. You like that much more money. Of course, he couldn't pick all the people that went there, but you had a chance to--if you go faster--to earn a little more money. So that was the only difference.

WN: Were there times when there were too many pickers so the farmer had to turn anybody away?

JS: Well, when the coffee is slack time, they have to do that. They keep only a certain amount of pickers and the rest, they tell, "You have to go look for someplace else and pick because I haven't got much coffee to keep all of you here." Of course he'd want to keep the mahina men if he had mahina men. He would have to keep the mahina men working too, you see, keep on going. You cannot let the mahina men go without job. So that's the only thing.

WN: Could you folks take breaks out in the field, rest?

JS: Well, coffee pickers they get all the break they want to take because you working for your own, picking for your own. When you feel tired, you can just sit down and take a rest. So, the more coffee you pick, well, that much better for you. But if you feel tired, you want to rest, well, you just rest.

WN: The farmer didn't tell you folks...

JS: No, no, no, the farmers didn't bother. They know that they going to pay you for what you picked, you see. Not for how long you stayed to pick.

WN: And then off season you said you contracted, you did hō hana...

JS: Right.

WN: What else you did?

JS: After the coffee season we take contracts for clean coffee lands and even we work for some ranchers, like that. Go clean lantana, cut lantana. That was for cattle land. So the rancher want to clean all the lantana so they can plant grass. So that much more grass for their cattle. So we used to take contracts on cleaning pasture lands, cutting lantana like that. So those contracts sometimes, we used to work hard. You know, lantana scratch like anything. You know what is lantana?

WN: Yeah.

JS: We used to work hard cutting lantana, pulling lantana, you know. And sometimes we used to get 50 cents a day. When the contract was over, well, about 50 cents. That's all we used to get.

- WN: So the contract ran by time periods then? What if you no finish pulling the lantana?
- JS: No, not time period, just when you finish, you finish, that's all. If it take you about a month, or take you two months or three months, when you finish, finish. Then you get paid. Of course, you can draw in between time because you need money, yeah, so they can give you so much. Then when the contract is finished, well, they deduct whatever you have been drawing and they give you the balance, you see. So we used to do lots of that kind of work.
- WN: The ranchers, how you folks found out that there was work?
- JS: Well, we used to ask. We go here and there and ask, we always ask. So if they need someone to do a job, then they let us know, you see, then they hire us.
- WN: What did you like better, picking coffee or working on the ranch?
- JS: Well, I rather pick coffee. Coffee, I feel, is much easier than working for a ranch. On the ranch sometimes you have to dig [up] guava in the pasture land. Sometimes guava grows up and you have to keep on digging, and the boss stay over there with you, the foreman. When you work for ranchers, you see. So I rather coffee. Work in the coffee land, take contracts, you're your own boss. If you want to work hard, you work hard, if you want to work slow or whatever, you're your own boss, nobody boss you.
- WN: You also said you worked cotton, picked cotton too at this time?
- JS: Yeah, I think it was for about two months or three months I worked in the cotton fields. I picked a little cotton and cleaned, hō hana this cotton too, you see. But then after that the company broke down so, everything all pau.
- WN: Do you know why the company broke down?
- JS: Well, I don't know, maybe they no could make money, I think. So, they couldn't keep up with the cotton, you see. All down here, was all cotton fields before, from Kuakini Highway, ma uka side, was cotton. All cotton, from way down, all cotton.
- WN: About how many acres of cotton land?
- JS: Oh, about 100 acres over, I think. And down at Hualalai Road, way down, after you pass the horseshoe turn, way down.
- WN: The what?
- JS: The horseshoe turn--you know the horseshoe turn on Hualalai Road? Further down, there was a cotton field over there, too.

WN: That was Honaunau side?

JS: No, over here, Holualoa. There was a cotton field over there. There's still that house over there where they used to take the cotton and run them through the machines. The machines take out all that seed--you know the cotton get seed inside. Then the machine take out all that seed and then that thing comes all smooth. Then they stack them on the boxes, you see.

WN: And you used to pick the cotton?

JS: We used to pick cotton, yeah.

WN: And how you got paid for that?

JS: Well, the pay was about, maybe about 50 cents too, a day. We used to work by the day, you see.

WN: Oh, not by bags?

JS: No, no, no. Day work. About 50 cents a day.

WN: Do you know who owned the coffee company, I mean cotton company?

JS: Japanese, I forget even the name. Uh, I forget even the names of the Japanese.

WN: You said had two, huh?

JS: Two, yeah two.

WN: Both Japanese?

JS: Both Japanese, yeah. One was here in Kahaluu, just after you pass these Hawaiian houses over here. Right by the roadside was the cotton mill over there, cotton factory. And then the other one was Hualalai Road. The one down Hualalai Road, the building still there yet, get people living inside now.

WN: You said that you had a lot of free time--you know, while you were doing all these jobs--to go beach like that?

JS: We had a lot of time, sure. We had a lot of time, we can go here and there. When we want to work, we work, when we no like work, no work. We had all that free time, yeah. Especially when you work contract like that, well, you work hard. You tired the next day, maybe you want to rest a little bit.

WN: Was your father doing the same kind of thing?

JS: Same thing, same thing. Only thing my father, he no used to broke stone like the way I used to. But he used to do different kind of work. Coffee, he used to pick coffee. Contract, hō hana, all those kinds of jobs. But county jobs like that, no.

- WN: When you were there in Kona for the first time, 1928, 1929, [for] one year, you didn't work for the county?
- JS: No, no, no.
- WN: All coffee?
- JS: All coffee, yeah, yeah.
- WN: So then in 1929, you said you moved to Lanai?
- JS: Lanai, right.
- WN: For construction?
- JS: Right.
- WN: How come you went to Lanai and left Kona?
- JS: Well, somebody came from Lanai and said there was a job over there, and that working in the pineapple field was easy, so I start to think on that, see. So I figure I'm going to take a chance, so I went with one friend of mine to Lanai, see. And that's how I got a job over there, working. So it happened that when I reached there, they put me right on the road job, you see, construction job. Then after the road finished, they put me as a truck swamper. I go out with the driver in the pineapple fields with a trailer, then I stay right on top the truck with a whistle. With the whistle I could tell the driver if he should go more fast or more slow, slow down or what, certain amount. Maybe I whistle one time it means go a little faster. Maybe if I whistle two times, slow down.
- WN: You mean men are walking alongside the...
- JS: Yeah, the men working alongside the truck and they used to throw the pineapple boxes on top the trailer. But if you go too fast, well, they no could keep up with the truck, see. So, I gotta tell the driver to slow down. I couldn't yell though, but with a whistle he could hear, he could tell.
- WN: All day you would blow the whistle?
- JS: Yeah, yeah. Then when the trailer was full we go take 'em down the pier where the barge come and take all the pineapple to Honolulu, you see. So, the whole day like that, back and forth.
- WN: How much you got paid for that?
- JS: Well, in the construction job I think I used to get \$3 a day.
- WN: Three dollars?
- JS: Three dollars a day, yeah. Pineapple was about dollar and a quarter [\$1.25], I think.

WN: Swamper job?

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. In those days everything was cheap, you know. Labor cheap, everything cheap. So I used to enjoy.

WN: When you worked construction, you were working on the road, yeah?

JS: On the road, yeah.

WN: What did you do?

JS: Well, that's the first time I work on the road, you see, when I went over there. So, I used to go with the other ones go level up the rock. At that time they used to use number one rock, you see. That was the little bigger size rock. After the ground was level, then they lay that number one rock. Then the roller come behind and rolled that rock, see. Then on top the number one rock they used to spread the number two rock.

WN: A little smaller?

JS: Yeah, a little smaller than the number one. So, we used to grate 'em up, level 'em up, level 'em up. Then the roller come again and roll that. Of course, on top that, they oil. Then on top the oil, that's where I learned how to spray with the scoop. I take the scoop then spray, you see. Spray on top the oil. After everything was sprayed, then the roller come again and roll that. Then after that thing was rolled, then we oil again. Then we come with the number four rock. So, we spread that on top there, then make 'em all smooth. Then after the thing was all smoothed up, the roller rolled the thing, then they oil again. Then we give the last spray, something more like dust, fine stuff. Spray 'em see. So after we got through there, well, already I knew how to work with rock, how to spray and everything, you see.

WN: That's how you learned?

JS: That's how I learned so when I came to Hawaii and I worked for E.E. Black, well, already I knew.

WN: In Kona?

JS: In Kona, yeah, I knew. And they put me right on that work, spray that rock.

WN: When you sprayed the rock, how did you do that? With shovel?

JS: Well, the number one rock--the big rock--the truck come. Then the truck on the side get chains see, so we open the chain little bit, then the truck go. Then the truck, they raise the dumper up, you see. Then the truck spray that rock. Sometimes if the driver go, just right timing, well, the thing come almost level, you see. But sometimes, the rock come too much pile up, so some places maybe the driver go too slow and so all that we gotta level 'em up again.

Make 'em smooth, you see. Then after we get it all smooth, then the roller come on top. It was kind of hard work, it's not easy.

WN: When you smooth 'em, what did you use to smooth the rock up?

JS: Well, we get those big rakes, we rake that, you see. We rake 'em. Then of course get string, we follow the string. Then the rock come all even. We get the rake and maybe over here get too much [rock] so we get the scoop. Then we scoop 'em and take 'em some place else, you see, where more low. Then fill 'em up like that.

WN: You made one road in Lanai. How long was the road?

JS: Oh, that road was about....maybe about mile and a half, I think. It wasn't too long.

WN: Took you about six months to do this?

JS: Yeah, about six months. About six months we worked on that road.

WN: Today, how long does it take?

JS: Today, no more one month pau with all the machinery. Before was kind of hard, you know. Today you can use the scraper. The scraper can pull the rock and you can leave the thing almost even. Before all rake, you rake and scoop. Hard.

WN: On Lanai, where did you live?

JS: Oh, had a big camp. We had our own house inside the camp. Was me and three of us, we had our own---not our own house but our own room. There was some other guys living in the same house, you see, single men. But me and two more other boys, we had our own room. Three of us in one room. Then we used to board at one other friend's house, the same guy that went with me to Lanai, I used to go and eat in his house, you see, board in his house. Lanai had a lot of Puerto Ricans too.

WN: In Lanai?

JS: Puerto Ricans from Hilo were there.

WN: Who was your employer on Lanai?

JS: Oh, that I kind of forget now. I forget, I think on the road job it was a Hawaiian guy.

WN: But wasn't government?

JS: Plantation job.

WN: Pineapple plantation?

JS: Pineapple plantation, yeah. I think it was a Hawaiian guy running that construction job. Then as a truck swamper we had one run the truck, was one haole guy. So he was my boss.

WN: You said that you left Kona to come to Lanai, and you said coffee was good. What made you decide to leave that coffee life and try going to Lanai?

JS: You mean from Kona to Lanai?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Well, as I said, somebody came and passed the news that Lanai had a good job over there, had a construction job. And well, the people, I don't know, used to make more money over there or something, you see. So I figure, well, maybe I take a chance and go over there, work over there. I always had the mind to go places and see something different, yeah. (Laughs).

WN: So after the Lanai job was over, where did you go?

JS: After the Lanai job was over I came to Kona and I stayed a little while then I went to Maui.

WN: How did...

JS: I knew somebody in Maui, one friend of mine from Hawaii, he used to live in Kaupakulua. You been in Maui?

WN: Yeah, Kaupakulua.

JS: You know where is Kaupakulua?

WN: Yeah.

JS: I had a friend up Maui that lived in Kaupakulua and I went and I stayed with him over there. Then, in Kaupakulua I worked with some Portuguese, the Santos, they called them, I don't know if you know Santos, Portuguese. They got cane fields and pineapple fields. So, I worked for them. While I was working for them I had a job in Kula--road wen open. So, I wen ask for job over there and I got job over there. I went from Kaupakulua and they made a camp up there and I stayed up in the camp, you see. From there we go work up on the road.

WN: To get the job working on the road, you needed experience?

JS: Well, I didn't have much....of course already I knew a little bit. There was hardly nothing to do anyway. Of course had plenty to do because we had to dig rows like that and load trucks. But as far as grading the rock, well, already I knew, see. It wasn't hard, the only thing was hard was the cold up there. I could hardly take it in the morning. When you go up, you can see the ice. So we had to light fire in the morning. Cold like anything, you know, up there. The hands kind of sore. We have to make fire, cold.

WN: And the road job was the same type that you did on Lanai?

JS: Same thing. Same kind job.

WN: How about the pay?

JS: Well, the pay was about \$3 too, I think. About that.

WN: Okay, and you did that for about nine months on Maui, yeah?

JS: About that, yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 9-66-2-81
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Johnny Santana (JS)
January 31, 1981
Kahaluu, Kona, Hawaii
BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Johnny Santana. Today is January 31, 1981 and we are at his home in Kahaluu, Kona, Hawaii.

So the last time we were talking you were working in Maui, right?

JS: Right.

WN: And then you worked there for about nine months?

JS: Right.

WN: Until 1930, yeah?

JS: Right.

WN: And then in 1930 you came back to Kona yeah?

JS: Right, I came back to Kona again.

WN: How come you came back to Kona?

JS: Well, at that time the job ended over there in Maui, then I came back to Kona. At that time my mother was sick, she had cancer and that very same year she died. That was on July 30, I remember, 1930, she died. Then, from then on, I got me a job with Medeiros who was a contractor and I worked for him for about six months.

WN: You knew Medeiros from before?

JS: Well no, that was the first time I knew him, but had some friends of mine that used to work for him and they recommended me to go ask him for a job. So they helped me out, too, and I got a job with Medeiros. I started work with him for about six months because already the job was going on, see. At that time my foreman was Abe Santana. He was another Santana like me, see, but no relation. Maybe we are related but I don't know. But his name was Santana, my foreman.

WN: What did you do?

JS: Wall job, making walls and loading trucks, and at that time all was manpower. Then again in 1931, I began to work on small jobs, coffee jobs. You see, when the job ended over there I came back and started working jobs here and there; contract jobs, weeding coffee and making walls, like that. Pulling lantana, I remember I pulled a lot of lantana with Bob McQueen at Honomalino.

WN: So, how long was one contract?

JS: Well, I think I worked for Bob McQueen for about six months, then I came back again and started work on little jobs here and there.

WN: You know that time, 1931, that was depression time, yeah?

JS: It was depression time, yeah.

WN: Prices were low at that time.

JS: Yeah, depression time and the job was scarce too, you know. Hard to get job. Only once in awhile you get one job.

WN: What about the pay at that time, do you remember?

JS: Well, with McQueen our pay wasn't so good, you know. At that time they used to give small money. You make contract, you work hard and when you find out the average, you know, figure how much one day was, sometimes we only had 50 cents a day. Sometimes 35 cents a day. But when you work for somebody else like that, day work, you only get \$1 a day, 8 hours a day for just \$1. Not like now, maybe one day if you get some sort of trade you make \$30 or \$40 maybe. Perhaps some guys they get \$20 an hour or something like that, \$9 an hour. But in those days no more that kind of pay, all small pay.

WN: So you were working for Medeiros for a little while? And then, what, coffee season time you picked coffee?

JS: I worked for Medeiros, when the job pau, finished, then I came back and picked coffee and did other kinds of little jobs, you see.

WN: What was better pay, the pay from Medeiros or the pay from coffee?

JS: I had better pay with Medeiros. Coffee, you only get about 50 cents a bag for picking coffee. With Medeiros we used to get at least \$3 a day or a little over. I'm not quite sure, it was a long time ago, but I think it was about \$3 a day. And 1935 I worked for the WPA [Works Progress Administration].

WN: How you got to work for the WPA?

JS: Well, at that time they opened that job and everybody no had job so everybody wen apply, that's how I got there, see. And at that time I worked 12 hours a week. So, after my time was over, we go do little jobs outside again, or if not we go down the beach and pass some time down there. Until the next week.

WN: What was your first job with the WPA?

JS: Well, at that time, loading trucks, all manpower. And I used to grade rock on the road, you know, level rock and work like that. Drilling, sometimes buster job, sometimes walling.

WN: What is buster job?

JS: Well, that's a big heavy hammer you use to crack rock, you broke the rock, like that. Sometimes [when] you make trench, like that, you don't use the jackhammer for that, you just use the buster. You level up the ditch you see, whatever it is.

WN: That's different from jackhammer then?

JS: Different from jackhammer, yeah. Jackhammer, only for drill. The buster is just to crack the rock.

WN: Which one more easy to use?

JS: Well, the jackhammer is much easier. The jackhammer, sometimes when you hit the solid rock, you just hold the hammer there, you just let the thing run. Once in awhile you bring it up and down so no get stuck. But the buster, you gotta keep on bringing it up and down all the time. Move it from place to place, kind of heavy and it shake your body all up too, you see. (Laughs)

WN: Do they use buster today?

JS: Oh, that they use all the time. That's what I used to use in Honolulu, the buster. After we got through working in the trench then they put me up inside the building, we was making windows. Over there the concrete was about 18 inches thick, so we got to bust that wall with the buster, you see. It was kind of hard job.

WN: So you worked 12 hours a week for the WPA?

JS: Twelve hours a week for the WPA.

WN: When you not working you go and pick coffee or went down beach?

JS: Yeah, when no more job for the WPA I go pick coffee if it was coffee season. Then if not, the county from time to time used to give us a little part-time job until I got me a full-time job.

WN: At that time, how you managed with your rent, like that?

- JS: The rent was very, very cheap, not like now. I used to pay only \$1.50 rent a month.
- WN: Oh yeah?
- JS: Yeah. I worked for Frank Greenwell, and the house that I used to live was Frank Greenwell's house, too. So, I paid \$1.50 a month and Frank Greenwell used to pay me \$1.00 a day.
- WN: What you did for Frank Greenwell?
- JS: Well, pasture land, go pull guava inside here and there in the pasture. Sometimes make [stone] walls like that in the pasture land. Sometimes the wall broke so we go repair the walls.
- WN: About how many hours a week you worked for Frank?
- JS: For Frank Greenwell we used to work about 40 hours a week. Yeah, 40 hours a week but it wasn't for a long time, maybe six months.
- WN: Then in 1935 you worked for the WPA?
- JS: Yeah 1935 I went work for the WPA.
- WN: So while you was working WPA, you was working for Frank Greenwell too?
- JS: No, when I worked WPA I wasn't working for Frank Greenwell. (Pause) It was quite long [ago], hard to remember the little things in between. Too many little jobs come in between, but I know I did a lot of work. And when I got married in 1937 I still was working for the WPA. Then that's when I was working for Frank Greenwell, in 1937. I got \$1 a day for Frank Greenwell and I worked for six or seven months. Then I came back again, I started working for WPA again, see. That's when I worked here for a while. All these roads around here, I worked.
- WN: Until war time [World War II]?
- JS: I went to South Point in 1941.
- WN: What you did over there?
- JS: Well, we wen broke stone. We went to work at the quarry. We go broke stone. I worked there for about six or seven months, I guess. We used to go from here [Kona]. We stay there, and weekends we come back.
- WN: Where you stayed over there?
- JS: They had camp over there for the working men. They had a camp over there, a place to eat and everything. Then after work, on the weekends we come home, see.

WN: Your wife was living where?

JS: My wife stayed here, you see, not here but when we used to live in Kamalumu. About a mile or so from here [JS's present home].

WN: So only weekends you could see your wife then?

JS: Only weekends, yeah.

WN: For the WPA, you remember how much you got?

JS: It was kind of small pay too, WPA. I don't remember, maybe about \$2.50 a day, I guess, it was very small pay. Yeah, about \$2.50 to \$3.00 a day it was.

WN: How you got transported, how you went to South Point and back?

JS: Well, some people had their own cars, you see. So, I used to ride with them. So, I don't know, (chuckles) it was so long ago that I forget a lot of things already. (Chuckles)

WN: Okay, so in 1942 you moved to Hilo?

JS: In 1942 I went to work at the airport, Hilo Airport. At that time they were enlarging the airport, making it bigger. And they were making some holes in the ground to put some bumps or I don't know what. That was during the war, you see. Then, after that, it was that same year, I think it was. I started to work at Honolulu [for] Hawaiian Electric Company.

WN: Did your wife go with you? Your wife went with you to Honolulu?

JS: Yeah, we all went one time, we all moved over there.

WN: Where did you live in Honolulu?

JS: Well, I started to live at what you call that place now, up on a hill.... Kalihi. Kalihi-Uka, they call that. That's the first time I went Honolulu. (Laughs)

WN: What you thought about it?

JS: Well, I liked the place, something new I saw. I saw the big city there and lot of people and a lot of cars and a lot of traffic. Something new to me, so I liked it. My brother-in-law helped me get a job at Hawaiian Electric Company. He was working there, you see. So, he told me, "Well Johnny, I think you better--if you want to work for Hawaiian Electric Company I can try and help you to get a job there." So, me and him went and I got a job there.

WN: You went to Honolulu first and then you got the job, or you got the job before?

JS: I went to Honolulu first, then while I was there I applied for the job and I got it. I worked there for about two years, then that's when I came back to Kona.

WN: Did you like Honolulu?

JS: Well, yeah, I liked it over there, but the job that I was working on ended because we was putting a new boiler and making the trenches, and other little jobs. But when the job ended we had no job there. So, I sent my wife to Kona first and I stayed over there for a little while to see if I could get a new job. I couldn't find any job so I came back to Kona.

WN: If you found a job in Honolulu...

JS: I would stay, yeah. If I found a job over there I would stay because I used to like the place. You know you had places to go here and there. When I came back to Kona I felt like I came back into the bushes again, see. (Laughs) Well, that's the way I felt, see. But in Honolulu, I was like inside the town, and go here and there.

WN: You thought you could always come back and pick coffee?

JS: Oh yeah.

WN: Okay, so in 1945 you came back to Kona.

JS: Right. Then when I came back I started to work for the county I think.

WN: Road worker?

JS: Mm hm [Yes].

WN: You also said that when you came back to Kona you bought land? You leased land?

JS: Yeah, I bought this land here. I bought it from a Japanese man here, Yanagi. I bought the lease from him. At that time it was kind of cheap, he gave me the lease cheap. But he still had about 10 or 12 years left to go on the lease and I gave him \$300 for the lease.

WN: How many acres?

JS: Three and one-half acres. Small land but good enough for me and my wife to take care.

WN: Had any milling facilities, pulping facilities here on the land?

JS: Like what you mean?

WN: Like pulper or drying platform or anything like that?

JS: Yeah, at that time we used to grind our own coffee, you see, we used to dry our own coffee. When we sell it dry [parchment form] we get little bit more money, see. Like now, we sell it [in] cherry [form]. Of course, it's more easier for us. We don't have to be grinding coffee and washing coffee and go on the platform shaking the coffee back and forth to dry it, you know. Now we just pick it and sell it like that, much easier. Although we get less money then when we sell it dry, see.

WN: How come you don't grind it anymore?

JS: Well, as I said it's kind of hard job for me now. Too much hard job for go pick coffee, come back and forth. In the morning I don't have to go inside that tub and wash the coffee. When you grind coffee, in the morning you have to go inside the tub and you wash the coffee, then you throw it on top the screen to drain, then you have to go and spread it on top the platform. From then on, every little while you have to go and shake it, so that it dries all even. So when you send it cherry, well, you don't have to do all that job, you just send it cherry, that's all.

WN: When you made parchment, who did you sell to?

JS: Well, at that time I used to sell it to Onaka, Onaka had a coffee mill up Holualoa and he used to buy our coffee. Then after Onaka gave up his business then I used to sell my coffee to another coffee mill at Kealakekua, Sakamoto I think was his name.

WN: How come you bought the land? What made you decide to?

JS: Well, I figure if you stay in Kona you have to have a little place in order to get along, like a little coffee land, you see. Because most times you run out of job and if you don't have a little coffee land to help you out, it's kind of hard, see. But if you got your own land, well, you can pick your own coffee and run your own little business, or you can raise your animals, pigs or something like that, you see. But if you no more those things, it's kind of hard, you see.

WN: Did you think you could make more money as a coffee farmer than working all over the place?

JS: At that time the coffee was very cheap, and those who had big farms, they don't have to depend on the other jobs, they can get along with their own coffee fields. But those who get small land like me, well, that coffee, it's not enough to keep you going the whole year, whatever you make from the coffee land. So, you still had to work outside doing other jobs. Well, good thing that welfare came in, too. People who used to run short of jobs or need money like that, the welfare used to help out. Like in my case, too, sometimes I had to apply for welfare help, you see. And sometimes, when I do a little job and the job wasn't enough for me

to get along, welfare used to make up the difference. So that's how we used to get along.

WN: Anybody else help you out in the fields?

JS: Well, just me and my wife. Sometimes the kids help, too, but they were small and we couldn't expect much from them. But coffee season, they used to help little bit.

WN: While you had the land and working the land, did you have outside jobs too?

JS: When I had the land?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Well, as I said, sometimes when no more nothing to do on the land, I have to do other jobs.

WN: Off season?

JS: Yeah, off season, if I couldn't find anything, the welfare helped, I go apply for help.

WN: You said that you were working road work for the county?

JS: Road work for the county, right. I used to do little paving jobs, you know. And buster job, and patching holes in the road here and there, all those kind of jobs; broke stone with 18-pound hammer. I used to like the heavy hammer because when you used to pound the rock, well, it breaks fast. Some guys used to like the light hammer, but they still had to hit more times in order to bust it. I used to get my heavy 18-pound hammer the whole day through, broke stones.

WN: So you did that only when it's not coffee season?

JS: Yeah, when out of season we used to do that.

WN: What if you had one road job, say, and then the coffee season came, could you just leave the road job and...

JS: Well, I had to, because my wife couldn't pick all the coffee. I had to leave the road job and pick my coffee. I figure I make more with the coffee than what I used to make over at the county, see.

WN: So they wouldn't mind if you left?

JS: No, they wouldn't mind. Because the county didn't have a full-time job, too, you know. So sometimes part-time job, sometimes the job last a little longer. Sometimes it cut off, off and on.

WN: When you switch from job to job, like county like that, you had to apply every time?

- JS: Well, if you working for the county--and in my case I stop working because of the coffee--when the coffee was over, I had to go again and apply. You have to keep on applying. Sometimes they had room, sometimes no had room, see. Sometimes they get too much people, sometimes less. But like in my case, they knew me and they knew what I could do, so right away they pick me up, see.
- WN: Off season had jobs to do, too, in the coffee fields?
- JS: Well, like cleaning the coffee land and trimming the trees, yeah. We used to do that. On my land I used to do that quick, because small land, yeah. I cleaned, poison and trim. It didn't take me too long, maybe one month's time. Then after that we got to struggle for jobs again. (Laughs)
- WN: How many bags in one season, your land yielded?
- JS: How many bags?
- WN: About how many bags, in one season.
- JS: Well, some seasons I used to pick about 200, some seasons, less. All depend on the condition of the trees, you see. Because sometimes, like [if] this season we had a good crop. But during this crop many of the trees got ruined, see. So we have to trim it, cut it. So the next season, we get less coffee, see. But the other year we get that much more coffee because we get new branches, new shoots and the trees are much stronger. They bear more. So, one year we get good crop, the next year we get less.
- WN: And you know Onaka, the miller, he used to advance you folks groceries at all, or anything like that? I mean you folks...
- JS: Well, he had coffee business and he used to buy our coffee. He used to buy our dry--patch [parchment] coffee we call it--patch coffee and then he used to mill it, then he sell it out to the coffee roasters or what.
- WN: How often did he pay you folks?
- JS: Well, maybe about three or four times a year during the season. Maybe we send him so much coffee now, then the next month we sent him so much, you see. So that's how he used to pay us. If we send him 20 bags patch, well, he pay us [for] 20 bags patch the first month we send in. The next month if we send another 50 bags, well, that's what he paid us.
- WN: Was it on consignment? Whenever he could sell it, then he paid you folks?
- JS: Yeah.

WN: Who owned the land?

JS: What land?

WN: This land.

JS: This belongs to the Bishop Estate. So right now our lease already ended. About four years ago it ended. And we're still waiting to see if they will renew our lease again. They say they are going to renew it, but it doesn't look like they are going to renew our leases because they just keep on going year by year. I know below the road they gave them their leases already, about 45-year lease. So they told us to wait a little while, then they going to renew our leases. But that's already about four to five years and we're still waiting.

WN: Oh.

JS: Yeah, we're still waiting and looks like they don't want to give us long leases.

WN: In the meantime you still paying the lease rent and everything?

JS: Yeah, yeah, we're still paying. And they keep on telling us the next year they going to renew our lease, the next year they going to renew our lease and still they never do anything about it. So, I want to make a little improvement in the land, you see. I like fix the road and I want to fix the house. I want to fix the roof--get old roof. If take too long going start to leak already, but I cannot do that until I get a longer lease. Because if I'm going to do that before, they might tell us to get out and we're going to be the loser, you see. So, we're still waiting for the leases, then I start work on the house and the land.

WN: All the farmers on this side are like that too?

JS: All upside the road, all we're waiting for our leases, you see. Below the road they already got theirs, 45-year leases.

WN: So, about 1951 you didn't work road anymore and you switched to the Kona Inn?

JS: Right. In 1951 I quit the road--I didn't quit but the job ended you see, Honolulu Builders--then I worked Kona Inn.... No, no, no, wait there, I was working down at Kona Inn in 1951 then in 1953 I went to work for Honolulu Builders.

WN: Yeah, right. At Kona Inn, what did you do?

JS: I was a security guard. I worked nighttime as a security guard. I worked there for about two years and then I went to work for Honolulu Builders.

WN: What kind of people stayed at the Kona Inn?

JS: All tourists, you know every time they get new people coming in. Kona Inn was a hotel, you see, so I worked there nighttime.

WN: That was a full-time job?

JS: Full-time job, yeah.

WN: So that's different job from the kind of job you had before, yeah?

JS: Oh yeah, it was very easy. Nighttime all you have to do is punch clock and watch around. Spin around the hotel, keep on going the whole night like that until 6 o'clock in the morning. Very easy job, only thing it was kind of hard on the eye because sometimes you feel sleepy. But in my case I always used to go into the kitchen and drink coffee to keep me awake all the time. But when I came home during the day I could hardly sleep either because of the coffee. (Laughs)

WN: How did you like that job?

JS: Good, good job. How I got that job was because they had a strike over there. I think they wen beat the security guard. The strikers, they beat the watchman over there. So, that watchman came to see me, I didn't have job that time, I was home. He said, "Eh Johnny, you like be watchman down Kona Inn?"

I told him, "Sure, because I no more job. I like."

But I didn't know the score, you see. So, I told him okay, and then I went down and I went to apply for the job and they said okay. So, when I was working there someone told me the reason that watchman quit the job was that somebody gave him good licking because he was in the union and he wasn't supposed to work. So I took the job. The policeman used to stay over there, in the Inn with me. So sometimes when we go around, he go with me, the policeman. Because the strikers, you never can tell. Then after that everything came all right, then the policeman never have to stay over there.

WN: Oh, you mean the strike ended?

JS: The strike ended and the workers went back again, see. Then after that the watchman...there was three watchmen, in other words. The first was Eddie Wilson. Then Eddie Wilson went on strike and the brother took over, you see. But the brother was also in the union, so he was over there kind of violating the union laws. So that's how they gave him licking, the brother. So he came see me, the other one, but I didn't know the score that the strikers had give him licking, see. So I took the job. The policeman went in there to take care the place, they scared the strikers might go and do something in the hotel, you see.

WN: So you had to cross the picket line?

JS: No, no more picket line, no more.

WN: How was the pay?

JS: Well, the pay no was so good either. The pay, let's see now, I used to get about no more \$100 a month; but about \$90 or something like that, cheap pay. That's why the union had strike, you see, they wanted more pay, no enough pay. So was kind of hard in the beginning. I used to go around and I figure maybe somebody watching. (Laughs) Somebody might shoot you or hit you with stones or something like that. During the night, no can see, eh? So the policeman used to go around with me, sometimes he stay here and tell me, "You go." I go and punch the clock, then I go around, then we go back inside the dining room and stay there, talk story I go spin around, look around, then again the next hour, every hour you got to go punch clock.

WN: Oh, every hour.

JS: Every hour.

WN: Had any trouble at all during the two years you worked there?

JS: No, no, everything went smooth, no more trouble.

WN: Had plenty tourists at that time?

JS: Yeah, plenty, the hotel every time full, yeah. Plenty tourists.

WN: At that time, had other hotels?

JS: Well, yeah, had that Kona Inn and had that Hukilau Hotel, then after that had the King Kam[ehameha] Hotel. Then after that was when they wen build the Keauhou Hotel and the Kona Lagoon and the Kona Surf, after that.

WN: So, you quit after two years?

JS: I stayed two years over there.

WN: How come you left?

JS: Well, I wanted more money, and if you go work construction you get more money, you see. That's how I went to work for Honolulu Builders.

WN: Money was the only reason?

JS: Money was the reason, the money. In the hotel, well, it was just enough to get along. You know you no can save nothing, small pay. Maybe you want to buy one car, you couldn't buy, you see. So, for Honolulu Builders and the pay was a little higher, a little more.

WN: Honolulu Builders, this was in Kona you were working? You worked in Kona?

JS: In Kona, yeah. Only one time for Honolulu Builders, when the job got finished over here, I went to Waimea. I worked there for short while; at that time they were going to build a new school. You know where Waimea is?

WN: Waimea, yeah.

JS: You know the road going down Kawaihae?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Well, right upside get one school over there. Well, all that yard over there, we leveled that ground there, you see. So I used to work there for Honolulu Builders.

WN: You used to live out there or...

JS: Well, I used to stay with one friend of mine in Waimea, Hawaiian guy. I stayed there for a short while because the place too cold. In the night, cold like anything. I couldn't stand that cold, so I worked there, I think, three or four months. Then I came back home.

WN: Too cold, yeah?

JS: Cold, nighttime cold. Gotta get good blanket, I don't know how those guys can live over there. (Laughs) I don't like it there. It's something like in the Mainland, I went to San Francisco and during the summer, gee, over there the cold air. During the day, you know, cold.

WN: Summertime?

JS: Yeah, summertime supposed to be warm, but still yet I didn't like it.

WN: You said for Honolulu Builders you worked on the Kalaoa Road?

JS: Yeah, I worked from Huehue Ranch all the way down to Palani Road. From Kalaoa.

WN: That's about five miles?

JS: Oh, about that, I think. About five miles from Huehue Ranch to Palani.

WN: And you folks paved that road?

JS: Yeah, that was my job, go lay the rock on the road, level up, then pave. I did a lot of little jobs over there. Make holes--you know on the side where get drops like that, we go put the railing and

make the holes to put the concrete posts. All that kind of jobs--drill, pave, grading.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Okay, then you were at Honolulu Builders for a little while, a couple of years.

JS: Yeah.

WN: Then you became a janitor?

JS: A janitor, yeah.

WN: At where?

JS: I went to work at Punahulu School, quite a ways from here, about 10 or 11 miles, I guess. From here to Punahulu. But I only worked a day a week.

WN: One day a week?

JS: One day a week. And I worked there for a while, I don't know, one year I guess?

WN: About there [WN checks JS's personal time line]. How you got the job?

JS: Well, I went to apply for a janitor job and the only place they could put me to work was at Punahulu School. One day a week, because the janitor that was there at Punahulu, they transferred him to another job and then there was no janitor over there. Then that's how they get me over there. Then from there they transferred me to Kalaoa School, then I think at Kalaoa School I worked for about three days a week. Then at that time the chairman, there was a woman chairman, I forget even her name.

WN: Chairman of what?

JS: Chairman, like, what you call the chairman in Hilo....

WN: County chairman?

JS: Yeah, County chairman.

WN: Oh, you mean like mayor now?

JS: Yeah, yeah, right, the mayor now. Before had one different name was.

WN: Was that Helene Hale?

JS: Yeah, right, yeah, yeah, that's the one. I spoke to her if I could get a part-time job, see. I supported her during the election time so she told me to go apply for driver, bus driving. And I went and I got the job, see. So that's how--then from then on I worked full-time, you see.

WN: The pay got better?

JS: Oh yeah, I got more money from that time on, you see. Then as time went on they raised me up to \$3.50 an hour, bus driving. And I worked until around 1969, if I'm not mistaken. Then I retired.

WN: What kind bus did you drive?

JS: Well, I had two buses, one for small kids--preschool kids--and the other one for the big kids. One was a 60-passenger bus and the other one was about 20-or less, small bus, like a panel bus. So in the morning I go pick up the preschool kids and then after that I go pick up the big ones. In the afternoon before school was over, the preschool kids pau school first and I go pick them up, take them home. After that I go get the bigger ones.

WN: So, since you were working full-time, what about season time, coffee?

JS: Well, I still had to work the bus, so my wife took over, the wife and the kids, because I couldn't leave the bus, you see. I couldn't stop driving, bumbai I was going to lose my job, you see. (Chuckles) So my wife took over the coffee with the kids or maybe I find somebody to help my wife--you know, help pick. And I had to pay him, you see.

WN: By then your kids were getting older?

JS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: So you did hire help later on to help pick?

JS: Well, like school vacation, I pick see.

WN: Oh, the kids?

JS: Uh huh [Yes]. In the beginning when I started work, school vacation was when the coffee season came in, you see. They had different system here in Kona then because they wanted the children to help their parents pick the coffee. But then they changed the thing around, you see, and they make it all the same as all over the world--vacation in June, you see. June, July and August the kids stay home, vacation, but sometimes in August, the coffee season come real early. Sometimes in August I pick. Then school time, only in the afternoons like that, I get a chance to pick so I go help my wife pick maybe one or two baskets, like that. I couldn't pick much in the afternoons.

WN: Anyway, we're almost pau.

JS: I think so.

WN: You retired in 1969 from school bus driving and everything like that?

JS: Right, right, right.

WN: And you still own your land or you're still leasing?

JS: I still own my land, right.

WN: You know we went over all these jobs, yeah. How did you feel about having to change jobs so often?

JS: Like, about the jobs that I did before?

WN: Yeah, how you felt about that, would you rather have had one steady job all the way or something like that?

JS: Well, when I think about all those things that I went through, well, sometimes I think that it was kind of hard. The bad times that we had before, how we didn't have any jobs and sometimes we ran short of food and we have to go down to the beach and pass all of our time down there fishing, trying to get some pūhis, long eels, and dry them up so that we could eat it with rice or something like that because no more money to buy food in the store. So when I start to think of all those things, well, I feel compared to how we're living today, was great difference. At that time we used to work the whole week so that we could buy one bag of rice; today we work one day and we can buy one bag of rice and still we can buy something else on top to go along with the rice. Not like at that time, you see. Well, I rather have it today than before, you see. Things are more dear today, cost more, but you can get things much easier. You can buy more food, you can save more money. Today is better than before.

WN: You know when you bought your coffee land in 1945, around that time, do you think things got better after that?

JS: Well, it wasn't that good, we still had to work hard, you see. We still had to work hard and the wages was cheap too, it wasn't so good. But, as time went on, it came a little better better because I used to get a little bit more money and the wages came up a little bit. Like when I was working at the Hilo Airport, my pay came up to \$1 an hour, drilling, then from then on we went to Honolulu. In Honolulu I didn't get \$1 an hour but I had a full-time job and I used to get along all right. I still had to work hard, hard work, not like now, you can take it more easy. (Chuckles)

WN: You get pension?

JS: I get a little pension, small pension though. You see, like some guys they work for the county, I used to work part-time job. When they retired, they get big pension. And I worked much longer than many of them and I get less pension, you see. So I tried to find out how come my pension smaller than the other guys', you know they get more money than what I get, you see. Well, they said, "Oh well, in your case, we no used to deduct your taxes because your pay was small. The other guys we used to deduct their taxes, you see." So, still yet I feel it wasn't fair. Now Minoru Inaba tried to see if I could get a full pension like the other guys. So my pension is small. Some guys now they get almost \$200 a month, pension. I only get about \$100 you see.

WN: Those guys getting \$200, was that because they had steady jobs?

JS: No, no just like me, part-time, just like me, we all worked together. Part-time, and yet I worked longer than many of them because many of them quit or they retired but I still kept on working for the county until 1969.

WN: They were road workers too?

JS: Yeah, same thing. We all did the same kind job. We all worked together but they get big pension and I get small pension. When Jimmy Kealoha was the chairman, now I remember, then after that Helene Hale took over. But when Jimmy Kealoha was the chairman, I called him up and I spoke to him how come my pension is small and the other guys' pension is bigger while I worked much longer than them. That's how come he told me they no used to deduct taxes from me. My pay was small. But that's funny, something was wrong there.

WN: Their pay was small, too, the other guys'?

JS: Same, same as me. Then I went to see the legal aid attorney and he tried and after that he give up. (Chuckles)

WN: Are you still getting some income from the coffee lands?

JS: Yeah, I keep on working every year, I make a little income. Every year. Now the coffee price is better than before, you see. Before, you get only about \$8 a bag, \$6 a bag, or something like that. Now, well, they give you at least \$45 a bag for cherry coffee.

WN: So you think you want your sons and your grandsons to take over this land?

JS: You mean after I give up?

WN: Yeah.

JS: Well, that's my youngest boy. He have to take over I guess.
(Laughs) This guy here. (Laughs) Well, so far, I feel good, I feel strong and I can still work, but when I cannot work, somebody gotta take over. I hope by that time I get the lease. They might put us out before that time, never can tell. We don't have the leases yet. But if I happen to get the lease, well, they gotta take over. If not, well, we gotta go rent one house.

WN: So, of all the jobs you had, which one did you like the best?

JS: From all the jobs that I had, Kona Inn was the easiest one, see. Kona Inn was the easiest one but although it was the easiest, still yet was the cheapest. Not the cheapest, but I couldn't make headway, couldn't make any money, couldn't buy the things that I needed, so I had to look for something else even although I had to work harder. Right now I no can work like the way I used to before, but I can still pick coffee and I can make a go. Before we had to depend on welfare for help, so I don't depend too much on welfare now, pau. When you stay under the welfare, too much humbug, every time you have to go and report. You're limited, you see, you cannot go over what is required. So if you go over, you have to report. And if you no report, well, they say that's extortion already, like stealing the welfare, like that. So, too much red tape.

WN: You can just work on your coffee?

JS: Yeah. I can take care of myself. I don't need that help from the the welfare department. Before, of course we had to. We had to because otherwise, well, we would starve.

WN: Well, I guess that's it.

JS: I guess so.

WN: Do you have anything more to say?

JS: No, I have nothing more to say. I no can remember anything else.

WN: Thank you very much.

JS: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW

A SOCIAL HISTORY OF KONA

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
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