

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Matias Miguel, 88, pastor emeritus

"I was receiving forty dollars from the plantation at that time. . . . And then, the missionary give me another forty dollars to work with him. I work in the plantation and then I work with him (at the same time). So, when I got enough money to go abroad to the Mainland, he said, 'No, not necessary to go.' He said, 'You stay with us.'"

Matias Miguel, Ilocano, was born on February 24, 1896, in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. The fourth of eight children from a farming family, Matias' first job was with a surveying team on the Bangui-Claveria Trail. After attending a Bible training school in the Philippines, he received a license to preach. His plan was to preach, come to Hawaii, earn some money, and continue on to the Mainland to preach there.

He arrived in Hawaii on January 8, 1921. His first stop was Puunene, Maui. Soon after, he moved to Lahaina, Maui and worked as a cane cutter. He then moved into the surveying department and became a gang luna.

While in Lahaina, he began preaching and was encouraged to become a pastor in the islands. Matias then spent time in Waialua, Oahu and Makaweli, Kauai, where he preached in the plantation camps and clerked at stores.

Since moving to Kalihi in 1952, Matias worked at Tripler Army Hospital and on Wake Island.

Today, he lives in Kalihi with his wife, the former Lorraine Velasco. They have four children. Matias is Pastor Emeritus of Wahiawa Christian Church and is Pastor of his Kalihi Senior Citizens' group.

Tape No. 11-20-1-84

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Matias Miguel (MM)

January 9, 1984

Kalihi, Oahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Pastor Matias Miguel. Today is January 9, 1984, and we're at his home on Ahuula Street in Kalihi.

Okay, Pastor, can you please tell me when you were born and where you were born?

MM: I was born in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, Philippines. February 24, 1896.

WN: What was your father doing in San Nicolas?

MM: My father is a farmer. We are farmers. But in those days, when we were young, we have eight in the family--children. Four boys and four girls. My father died, that's why we are scattered, all of us. On account of one of my brothers came to Hawaii [1916-1918], younger than me. My older brother next to me, he joined the Philippine army. I joined the surveying department. In those days, we survey that Bangui-Claveria Trail.

WN: How long was the trail? How many miles?

MM: Oh, about (pause) [150] kilometers [or more]. From Bangui to Claveria. In that time, I stay in that construction. After we surveyed the trail, and then I watched [as] the foreman to that trail. In those days, when I joined the surveying department, about forty centavos, a day. But how many years I stay over there? About six years in that construction. Because the civil engineer, he trust me to give that instruction, he give me [raise]. I was receiving sixty-five pesos a month. See, come up.

And my brother is ahead of me. He was graduated of the trade school. In those days, the teacher receiving only twenty-five pesos a month. But I receiving sixty-five pesos already. So, my brother quit teaching and apply for that construction to make a bridge. Instead of he receiving twenty-five pesos as a schoolteacher, when come

to that Bangui-Claveria Trail, they give him forty pesos. So, he like to stay with me in there. Forty pesos. I am receiving (chuckles) sixty-five pesos. He's receiving forty pesos. So, he does not want to stay longer. "Please, Brother," he said to me, "I like to continue my studies. I have to go to Manila. (Please help me.)" So, he went to Manila. Instead of going to school, he joined the army. It's called "Philippine Scouts." And then, not long he stay there. He wrote to me that he become a sergeant already to that Philippine Scouts. My brother that came to Hawaii, younger than me, he came to Hawaii, I think, about World War I.

WN: About 1917 (1916)?

MM: Yeah. He came to Hawaii. But he did not stay Hawaii long. During the war, after the war, he receiving plenty money on the plantation. Because he was a contractor in the cane field. And then, he come back to the Philippines quick. So, when I learned that my brother come back, I take a vacation to meet him in our town, San Nicolas, and ask him why he get plenty money to come back. Well, he told me that after the war, 1918, he receiving plenty money from the plantation.

WN: What plantation was this?

MM: Pahala in Hawaii. He stay in Pahala. And in Hawaii, he get that much money that. . . . Well, I said to myself that if I am better than him. "I like to go to Hawaii," I said. By that time, my [older] brother, he is a sergeant already in the Philippine Scouts. I went to my brother when the doctor already (examined me). Already, the doctor tell me, "You can go to Hawaii." So, I went to Manila to [say] good-bye to my brother. He said he does not believe that I come to Hawaii. But I told him already that I am ready to go. So, I was twenty-four years old at that time already when I come to Hawaii. I arrive. In those days, there is no plane to ride. You ride the boat to come to Hawaii. But it takes one month to ride that boat. I arrive here in Honolulu January 8, 1921. Of course, when I was in the Philippines at that time, I ride the small boat to go to Hong Kong.

WN: From Manila to Hong Kong?

MM: Small boat. That boat, you know the big, large (logs)? They take from the Philippines and go to Hong Kong? We ride that boat. But (when) I arrive in Hong Kong, I was sick. That's the first time I ride that small boat. I was sick. So, I stay in the hospital in Hong Kong. I don't want to continue already because I was so sick. But they put me in the hospital in Hong Kong and, I think (more than) one week. (At first, they put me in a section where the patients were near death. A nurse later moved me away from these patients and put me in a bed near his table. I began to feel better after that.) That's why, it was December when we (left for) Hawaii. But I arrived Honolulu January 8, 1921.

WN: You mean, you got well at the hospital? You felt better?

MM: Yeah, yeah. I got well, all right.

WN: What did your brother tell you about Hawaii?

MM: He said it's very good to go to Hawaii. But my intention (was) to come to Hawaii to continue my study (until) I got that money to go to the Mainland. That's why. But in the Philippines, I study [at] the Bible training school. They give me a license to preach. In those days, they do not need to go to the seminary to be a preacher. But study (at) the Bible training school, that's enough to give you a license to preach. So, when I arrived here in Hawaii, of course, my first job (was) cutting cane. And the engineer from the Philippines, my boss when I was in the Bangui-Claveria Trail, he give me a recommendation (saying) that I know how to run the transit and level to the place. So, I did not stay long cutting cane. But I show them my recommendation that I was in the surveying department. So, they take me right away.

WN: How long did you cut cane?

MM: Not very long. About five months, I think. [MM later says three months.]

WN: How you felt about cutting cane? How did you feel?

MM: Well, my hand, all blister (chuckles) already to cut the cane, eh? Yeah, in those days. But because one missionary I meet in Lahaina. . . . I got enough money already to go to the Mainland. But he told me, "Not necessary to go to the Mainland. I want you to stay with me and work with me here." So, I (asked to) quit the plantation. Because, in those days, you know how much one day in those days? One dollar, one day. But not long time I stay cutting cane. When I was in the plantation, not stay long there in the surveying department, they make me as a foreman to the laborers. (Chuckles)

WN: What did you do in the surveying department? What kind of work did they do?

MM: The surveying department? We survey the tunnel.

WN: This is in Lahaina?

MM: In Lahaina. The tunnel, that's the one that [carries] the irrigation [water] to go to the field. But I did not stay longer over there [surveying department]. And they give me all the Puerto Ricans. They talk Spanish, eh? (I know a little bit Spanish language). So, I take them as their foreman. But in those days, I meet that missionary. "You better quit," he said, "and work with me." So, I was receiving forty dollars from the plantation at that time. (I asked the plantation for permission to quit. But the plantation still paid me for preaching around the camps.)

WN: Forty dollars per month?

MM: Per month. And then, the missionary give me another forty dollars to work with him. I work in the plantation and then I work with him (at the same time). So, when I got enough money to go abroad to the Mainland, he said, "No, not necessary to go." He said, "You stay with us." So, that's the time the superintendent of the mission here in Hawaii, the name Dr. (William H.) Fry.

WN: F-R-Y?

MM: Yeah, F-R-Y. Dr. Fry, the name. He call me. "Brother Miguel, I think you go back to the Philippines to pick your helper in your work," he said. I came 1921, eh? Nineteen twenty-six, I went to the Philippines and get married. That's why my wife come. And then, we come back to Lahaina. So, my first daughter--I show you the picture--born in Lahaina.

In those days, they need ministers that study in the seminary already. Too many Filipinos came. I get one in the Philippines, when I went and get married. One of my friends, he is also a minister in the Philippines, he ask me if possible, he can come to Hawaii also. So, I told him to apply for the Board of Missions here. I was a Methodist. And they need Congregational Church. I told him to apply in that Congregational Church. So, he apply right away. After the convention in the Philippines, and I got married, he wrote to the Congregational Church here. So, after three months, he come already. He's very happy to get that. He was a minister also, and then they get him. That time, you know, we came from the Disciple of Christ in the Philippines, yeah? I was a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church (from 1925); he, minister of the Congregational Church. So, we did not stay longer. I did not stay all the time (in) the Methodist. He also did not stay in the Congregational Church. My wife was sick at that time. Take back to the Philippines. But I come back right away.

WN: In 1926?

MM: Not 1926. When I take her to the Philippines already. Nineteen twenty-six when we get married.

WN: You got married in 1926?

MM: Yeah.

WN: Then, you came back to Lahaina?

MM: Yeah.

WN: And then, you went back to Philippines?

MM: Yeah. Nineteen thirty. I take her in 1930. And then I come back

right away. The place where I was preaching, somebody take already.

WN: Oh, in Lahaina?

MM: Yeah. Somebody take already. So, I don't have any church to work at that time. That's why, after one year, my wife, she like come back Hawaii. Because she's already (well), that time. And then, I take her back. That's why, when she come back, we stay in Waialua.

WN: You moved to Waialua?

MM: Yeah. I work in Waialua in the plantation store.

WN: In 1931, yeah?

MM: Yeah.

WN: How come you moved to Waialua?

MM: Because my wife come back from the Philippines, little while we stay here in Honolulu. Because she get baby already again. That's why my son, my junior, born there in Waialua. After that, I don't know why I don't like to stay there. Somehow, some Filipino, they get jealous of me in Waialua. One Filipino. So, I quit in there. And then, we went to Kauai.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, can we go back little bit? You know you said your brother made lot of money working. Did other people make lot of money, too, and came back to Philippines? Do you know of any?

MM: I don't know. Only my brother, I know, that come back. I was single yet at that time. When he come back, he get married. That's why, I never come to Hawaii that time. I was in the surveying department. I mean, the Bangui-Claveria Trail.

WN: How did you get interested in the Bible training school?

MM: How? Well, the first missionary, I heard him preaching. The first missionary that came to our place, the name Dr. Hanna. H-A-N-N-A, When I heard him preaching, he said that if you learn this book--the Bible--you can beat any lawyer in this world. So, I take that book and learn, read and read. And then, the missionary that came to the Philippines, that's why I'm interested to learn that Bible.

WN: Were your parents interested in learning, too?

MM: Most of them Catholics. So, when I learned that, I try to convert them, but they don't quit the Catholicism. That's why, I am only the one. And my brother that came to Hawaii 1917 [1916], I convert him to be a member of my belief. I convert him. Also, my younger

brother. I have (three) brothers, eh? Four [boys] and four girls in our family. But the brothers, they don't agree with me. The (two) brothers that younger than me, the two brothers. They are younger than me, but I convert them.

WN: I see. You said your father was a farmer, yeah? Everybody in San Nicolas, were most of the people living there farmers?

MM: Yeah.

WN: What did they farm?

MM: Well, rice, corn, vegetables, that's all. All my sisters take care of the rice fields. Us boys quit working in the farmland. As I told you, I joined the surveying department. My brother came to Hawaii. The two youngest brothers and the [one] older than me, they still go to school.

WN: Did you go to school, too?

MM: Well, in those days, fourth grade only. But in those days, if you are fourth grade, you can be a teacher already.

WN: Oh?

MM: Yeah. You can be a teacher already, fourth grade. (Chuckles)

WN: You went up to fourth grade?

MM: Yeah.

WN: So, did you want to be a teacher?

MM: Well, no. I don't want to be a teacher. Because if you be a teacher, twelve pesos. The teacher, twelve pesos.

WN: Oh, that's right. Your brother was teacher, yeah?

MM: Yeah. And my brother, because trade (school) graduate, that's why I told you twenty-five pesos he get. And the principal of my town, when I was in the surveying department, the principal is taking sixty-five pesos. The principal in our town. But I receiving sixty-five pesos when I was in the surveying department.

WN: How come they paid you so good? How come you got good pay?

MM: (Chuckles) Because the engineer that helped me. See, civil engineer, you know. He's afraid to get that rope to survey that Patapat--we call that Patapat. That Bangui-Claveria Trail, oh boy, he does not want to. That's why he teach me how to take transit and level. I put the rope on my (waist). And then, I . . .

WN: You put the rope around your waist . . .

MM: Yeah.

WN: . . . and you went down the cliff?

MM: That's why, they give me quick raise up, the pay.

WN: How you got the job in the first place?

MM: (Chuckles) I told you already that when I am in the surveying department, only forty cents.

WN: No, but how you got the job?

MM: That engineer gave me. Because I help him. The work that he has to do, he tell me for do it. That's why I got that job. That's why, my salary come up quick.

WN: You wanted to go Mainland, yeah, to study? Where on the Mainland did you want to study?

MM: Well, anyplace, to continue. I like to go anyplace where I can get the seminary to study as a minister. But the missionary already tell me, "Not necessary to go."

WN: So, did you like Hawaii? You wanted to stay in Hawaii?

MM: Well, I like to. That's why, when the superintendent of the mission give me three months' vacation to go find somebody (to) help in my work, that's why I went [back to the Philippines]. I was receiving forty dollars from the plantation (and) forty dollars from the mission. Nobody can get that kind salary in those days. (Chuckles) That's why, they give me three months' vacation, with my salary, and then go back.

WN: When you came Hawaii for the first time, how did you feel about leaving your parents in the Philippines?

MM: Well, when I come to Hawaii the first time, when I received money already, I send (to) them. And my youngest brother, I help him to the Philippine University to go. The youngest brother. That's why, I was a minister and I support him to continue his studies. He was graduated from the Philippine University, my youngest brother. With my help. That's why, I convert them. (Chuckles)

WN: Did your father help too, your brother?

MM: My father, no. We were real (young) yet when my father died. Only my mother stay. I help my mother. I send money to her (and) my brother.

WN: Did your father and mother own the land that they . . .

MM: Yeah. We own the land, but when we scattered already, go here and there, my sisters take care. They get somebody to work in their field.

WN: When you came Hawaii for the first time, did you go Lahaina first? That was your first stop?

MM: Yeah.

WN: Lahaina?

MM: No, no, no. Puunene, first.

WN: Oh, Puunene, Maui?

MM: Yeah. That's why I start to work cutting cane there. And then, not very long, I think three months. Three months cutting cane over there. After three months, I moved to Lahaina.

WN: How come you moved to Lahaina?

MM: Well, I meet my friend. They call me to go. That's why I moved there. That's the time I get that recommendation that engineer gave me. That's why they let me right away to join that surveying department.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: After in Lahaina, you went back to Philippines, 1926, to get married. How did you meet your wife?

MM: My youngest sister, they are friend, good friend. Of course, when I arrived in the Philippines to find somebody to help my work, there is a convention. All the churches in the northern part of Luzon. That time, that convention, I went to the place where the convention is to meet some deaconess. But they don't like to come to Hawaii in those days, those girls over there. Deaconess. One of the deaconess that I meet in that convention, her destination in Claveria. That's why, I know the place because I survey that Claveria Trail, eh? I like to follow her. I borrow a horse in Bangui to ride because you cannot go with car yet. That trail finish already, but only horse can go, eh? In those days. I borrow one horse in Bangui to ride to go to Claveria to meet that girl. When I meet that girl in the convention--she was there--and then she told me that she get somebody already. So, I discouraged. So, I come back right away.

When I returned that horse, my sister. . . . At that time, she is also

in Bangui. When I return that horse, she come to me. "We will eat together in that house," she said. So, we went. Because nobody place to eat, eh? So, I went to the place. Too many student, too many girls, that time.

WN: How come had so many girls over there?

MM: Well, the town fiesta. We call that "fiesta." Too many girls. That's why, my sister come also over there. Have long table, you know. The father of my [future] wife, he was very good. He got plenty fishing net every time. He get plenty fish that time. We eat. And then, there were, you know, boy, girl, boy, and girl, like that.

WN: Sitting down? Boy, girl, boy, girl?

MM: Yeah. And then, (chuckles) somebody said that we [should] marry each other. Her father, he was telling that. That if I get all children like this, then get married. He told me. Because that one girl. . . . Girl, boy, and girl, eh? "Will you please?" I said. "Not the one that beside me." I said, "I want this, you know, when we . . ."

WN: The one across from you?

MM: Yeah, across the table. "I wish (chuckles) [the girl] that is across my table," I said. They were laughing. My wife, she was across my table. Then (laughs) I was handsome. Young boy, eh? (Laughs) She bow her head like this. Maybe she never met handsome like me, I think.

(Laughter)

MM: That's why, after we ate, introduce each other. And then, my sister, "She's the one that I want you to get married, Brother." My sister, the youngest. Because they are good friend. That's why. "Oh, is that right?" So, I (chuckles) was very happy already. And I never go back to our town. I stay in their house one week over there. I met the brother. I met the father and mother. And then, get the sister. I ask them first. I told them that I am a minister already, so maybe they like me to marry her. But they have a church in there, near the place. When they go to the church on Sunday, I go with them. And I know the minister of the church. I know when the convention stay. So, he told me to preach in that church. And then, I got up because I try to sing a song. I asked them. So, we sing a song, joint. That's why, I know that she can sing. And good. That's why I stick in their house until the father and mother, the brother, sister, they agree that we get married. I married her. The wife of that engineer [MM's former boss], she help me to get married. And Dr. Pickett, the minister . . .

WN: Pickett?

- MM: Pickett, yeah. Doctor of the hospital and he is a minister, also. He's a doctor. So, Dr. Pickett performed the marriage ceremony. Nineteen twenty-six.
- WN: How long did you know her [before] you got married?
- MM: Only that time when we meet. With my sister. That's all. I did not see her when she was. . . .
- WN: What did you call your religion? Was it Methodist?
- MM: No, Disciple of Christ. But I was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
- WN: In Lahaina?
- MM: In Lahaina. But they are the same. Only the difference--immersion baptism, the Disciple. Immersion, when we baptize. Immersion at the river. But the Methodist, sprinkling. But I am a Disciple, so when I make the baptism, I immerse. Just like that.
- WN: I see. So the fact that you graduated from that Bible training school, that qualified you to be minister at Lahaina?
- MM: Yeah. That's all.
- WN: I see. Okay. So, when you were in Waialua, 1931, you said you worked . . .
- MM: Come back.
- WN: After Philippines, yeah? You said you got a job at the plantation store. How did you get that job?
- MM: Well, I got that job because they need a Filipino. They need a Filipino to. . . . First time, they give me to deliver. With the truck, go deliver.
- WN: You took orders, too?
- MM: Yeah. I took order, then deliver.
- WN: You did this for only the Filipinos?
- MM: No, not only. Japanese, everybody. Customer in our. . . . That's plantation store. Anybody. Haole, Chinese, everybody.
- WN: Were you a clerk, too?
- MM: Yeah.
- WN: In the store?

MM: Yeah. But mostly delivery. I take order, then I deliver, that's all.

WN: You drive truck?

MM: Ride the truck. You know, bag of rice? The two bag of rice, I can grab the two bag, I carry. (Laughs)

WN: Hundred pound?

MM: Hundred pound, yeah. I was strong that time when I was working there. I told you, somebody, I cannot stay with that Filipino. That's why I quit over there. That's why I move to Kauai. When I was in Kauai, I was working in the store, also. At the same time, I preach in the church.

WN: They had church over there, too?

MM: Yeah.

WN: What kind church?

MM: Methodist church.

WN: The people that were in the church, were they all Filipino?

MM: Yeah. Some Japanese, some Chinese, all that. But mostly Filipino, the member.

WN: You preach in English or in Filipino?

MM: I preach English, some; Filipino, mostly. Because they are mostly Filipino in there.

WN: How come you moved Kauai?

MM: I don't like to stay where that guy in Waialua.

WN: Yeah, but how come you chose Kauai to go?

MM: Well, someplace, I said. But when I reach Kauai, I can work right away also, the store. They need me. They need Filipino in the store. I stay over there. My son and my daughter born in Kauai. The lease of the Alexander & Baldwin in Kauai expired--the lease over there. And that's why, we moved. You know how much money we receive when the lease expired? That Alexander and Baldwin expired the lease? One year pay, they give us. One year pay. That's why, I like to go home to the Philippines already at that time, eh? The manager of that store in Makaweli--it was Makaweli that time--the manager of that store moved to Schofield. So, the manager, one haole manager, he like take me with him to Schofield. But unfortunately, no house to stay. That's why we come back to Waialua.

WN: Oh, because you can get house, eh?

MM: Yeah, to get the house.

WN: That Alexander & Baldwin lease, that was for the whole plantation?
The lease expired?

MM: Yeah.

WN: So all the plantation workers got one year's pay?

MM: Yeah. In Makaweli. All the plantation in Makaweli. Expired, the lease.
That's why, they give us one year pay.

WN: The field workers, too? Cane cutters, too?

MM: Well, I don't know. The field workers, I don't know. I know only
(chuckles) the store. The one that work in the store, they give you
one year pay. That's why I got plenty money over there. I like
go back the Philippines. But the war [World War II] came. Nineteen
forty-one, eh? That's why, we go back to Waialua. I do not have
house to follow my manager in the store.

WN: In Schofield?

MM: In Schofield. That's why.

WN: And you couldn't go back Philippines because had war?

MM: Yeah. I cannot go. The war is coming. That's why I stay in Waialua
again. (Laughs)

WN: But you had plenty money, then?

MM: Yeah.

(Laughter)

MM: One year pay, eh? That's why I like go back already.

WN: So, if didn't have the war, you would have gone back Philippines . . .

MM: Oh, yeah. But the war, no.

WN: So, you went back Waialua and you worked in the store again during
the war?

MM: Yeah.

WN: What was it like during the war? I mean, like, had to ration?

MM: Yeah. During the war, you know, there is not much rice in those

days when they strike. The strike come. But us working in the store, I get.

The boy that I take him from the Philippines when I get married--also, we went back to Lahaina, that time--one boy, my cousin, I take him to Hawaii. I see the manager of the store in Lahaina. I recommend him to work in that store. So, they take him right away. One young boy, I take him to the Lahainaluna School in Maui. But he said that time, "I like to work." So, I recommend him to the boss, the manager of that store. He take him right away. So, he stay there until the world war. He stay, my cousin. Two years ago, he died already.

WN: After the war, did you go back Philippines?

MM: After the war? I went back, but I come back right away. My children, my wife, that boy and girl. Because the first child we have get married already over here. So, they are in Wahiawa now. They get married already. And then, when the Korean War--what that?

WN: Korean War?

MM: Yeah. We went to the Philippines with my two children--my son, my daughter, we went back. But they don't like to stay with me. They give me a church to take care in Philippines, but they don't like to stay with me--my children. They like to come back to Hawaii. They come, I think, only three months. The school that we have over there, they [had] free tuition and everything because I am a minister. But they don't like to stay with me, so they come back. About three months, they come back already with my wife. So, I was three more days to make one year, I stay that church, they give me. No good to stay alone. And then, my children, my wife, is there. So, I resigned the place, and then come back to Hawaii.

WN: Oh, come back to Hawaii? So when you came back to Hawaii where did you go?

MM: Well, they are [U.S.] citizens. My wife citizen also. I don't like to take citizenship that time because I like to stay in the Philippines. That's why, when I come back, no place to work. I apply the Tripler Hospital. I apply for work. They like only citizen to work over there. Well, I told them, when I apply, "I am not citizen, but my children all citizen. How can we feed them?" (Chuckles) So, they take me at Tripler Hospital. I am only the one working that not citizen. But the sergeant that in charge my work over there, "I think better you take your citizen." Better, like me, I can do what the work over there, eh?

WN: What kind work?

MM: Ward attendant. I can do it. So, "Please, go take your citizenship," he said. I like the work I have. I understand all what they say. And then, I take my citizenship. I get my citizenship paper already.

My pay come up because I am citizen already. And you know what I was thinking? If you retire, they said, they take five years your salary to compute your retirement pay. And then, because Tripler Hospital not high pay, I was thinking to go apply overseas to get higher pay. So, they approve me to go overseas. So, I went to (apply). What that place? That place where all the plane coming to Philippines? What that?

WN: Hickam?

MM: Not Hickam. Oh, no, no, no.

WN: Barber's Point?

MM: No, different island. Small island.

WN: Oh, you mean Pacific island? Guam? Saipan?

MM: Nearer than Guam. Ah, what that? Small island. Only two square mile.

WN: Maybe later you can remember.

MM: Only two square mile big that island. All the plane stay over there. What that? I forget. [Wake Island.]

WN: Afterwards you can remember. That's okay. And then?

MM: I stay two years, I think. Free kaukau, everything all free. But my pay, no come to me. That's why I like. They go to the bank over here. Hawaii bank.

WN: You lived by yourself or your whole family went?

MM: No, no, only myself. My wife stay here working as a nurse. My wife only send me sometimes ten dollar, send me to spend.

WN: Where was your wife living?

MM: Oh, my wife. . . . Over here already, fifty. . . . When I went to. . . . Here in Honolulu . . .

WN: Nineteen fifty-two you moved here, Kalihi?

MM: Nineteen fifty-two? Yeah, we stay here. Wait, I ask my wife. I go ask my wife.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so you asked your wife and it was Wake Island?

MM: Yeah. And my wife stay here.

WN: In Kalihi?

MM: Yeah.

WN: How did you get this house?

MM: How I get this house? You know, when I was working in Waialua in the store, I buy a share, the Bangued Consolidated Company in the Philippines. I bought a share of that. Only the worth eighty dollars at that time. But after that, oh, come multiply, multiply the price of that Consolidated Bangued.

WN: Bangued Consolidated Company?

MM: Thousands of thousands. How many thousands. That eighty dollars become, I think, \$11,000. That's why, I sell that share. That's why, I got the money to buy. I bought this.

WN: Property?

MM: Property. But not this house. The old house. That's why, after that, we demolish that old house and then we make that house.

WN: So, when you moved here, what was Kalihi like?

MM: Oh, no more. . . . Only that house they have over here. This new already. All this new.

WN: These houses are new over here?

MM: Yeah.

WN: Hawaiian. You know, the Hawaiian people, eh? All this small and made that all over here.

WN: Hawaiians lived over here?

MM: Yeah. The next-door, Hawaiian stay. But I was damn fool. That Hawaiian [offered to] sell me cheap, that time, this lot. But, (chuckles) I don't know. I never got enough money to pay. But cheap, that time.

WN: Did you look around at other properties before you bought this one?

MM: Oh, no. Only I don't have the. . . . When I was in Waialua, the manager of that store bought land over there at that time. That plantation store. Bought plenty land in there.

WN: Where?

MM: In Waialua. They give me a share to pay. But I never continue to pay. I sell to somebody. Cheap, that time. Only thirty cents a

square yard. Yeah. Cheap, that time. But I did not buy. I did not look. My children stay Waialua. My son-in-law in Waialua, too.

WN: Did your children go school in Kalihi?

MM: No. No.

WN: They were grown up by then, yeah?

MM: My children? They grown up already. My children, I send them to college. My youngest daughter I send to Indiana teacher's college. My son, I send him to South Dakota. He study ministry, my son. That's why, they graduate first at Mid-Pacific [Institute] before they go to the Mainland. So, my son take ministry in South Dakota. That's why, become minister. He is a minister, but the Mid-Pacific take him. Because when he graduate college, he was cum laude. That's why they take him to Mid-Pacific. Now, he's there.

WN: What does your son do at Mid-Pacific?

MM: He's a teacher. Dean, before. He was a dean at that Mid-Pacific. Still over there. He like to take his doctorate degree.

WN: So, how many sons and daughters do you have?

MM: Two sons, but [one] died during the war in Waialua, my junior. Two sons and two daughter, that's all.

WN: And what are your two daughters doing now?

MM: Well, my first daughter retired also. During the war, she was a secretary to the general in Schofield that time. And then, get married. Because when we were in Waialua, that Santiago Bunda marry her. When we went back to the Philippines to stay, already there for good, my daughter stay here. But when the Korean war coming, my children, they like to come back. "Please," they said. They come back.

WN: When you lived here in Kalihi, what work did you do? I know you worked at Tripler. Where else did you work?

MM: When we move over here? As I tell you, I take overseas to get more pay. That five years, they compute your retirement, eh? That's why I went over there. More than two years, I think, I stay. At Wake Island. (Chuckles) And my children, all, they get married. My youngest daughter, when she get married, I take one vacation from Wake Island, and then I come back for attend the marriage. My youngest daughter. Then, go back again to Wake Island. But I was sixty-five already at that time. But the boss in Wake Island, my boss, "You can work until you seventy." They don't want me to take retirement yet.

I said, "No, I don't want to (chuckles) work any more." So, I come

KALIHI: Place of Transition

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