

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: MAURO PLATEROS, retired pest control man

Mauro Plateros, Visayan, was born December 31, 1900 in the Visayan Islands. He completed his primary education in the Philippines. He came to Hawaii in 1923 to labor on the plantation at Makaweli, Kauai.

He joined the 1924 strike, living in the Hanapepe strike camp. He was arrested after the September 9 incident and spent two months in jail at Nawiliwili.

He held a variety of jobs over the years including work in the pineapple industry during the Depression. He also worked as a Kahala yardman, did material work in Haleiwa, and worked for Pearl Harbor from 1942 to 1969. He is a retired pest control man and currently resides in Kalihi.

Tape No. 5-20-1-78
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mauro Plateros (MP)

October 12, 1978

Honolulu, Hawaii

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: This is an interview with Mr. Plateros in his home in Kalihi.
The date is October 12. The interviewer is Gael Gouveia.

Okay, now we can start and just talk story a little bit. Could you
tell me for the record, one more time, when you were born.

MP: I was born in the Philippines, December 31, 1900.

GG: And whereabouts did you live in the Philippines?

MP: In the Visayan Islands.

GG: Could you tell me the province or the place?

MP: In the province of Bohol.

GG: And what did your family do there?

MP: My father was this church helper. Some kind of singers in the....

GG: That was his job?

MP: Yeah. He answers the priest when he...

GG: Serves the Mass, and things like that?

MP: Yeah.

GG: That was the Catholic Church?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then, did you have a farm?

MP: Yeah, we have a little farm over there. We raised our own food.
We raised our corn and rice, and we have some---we get banana

patch. Any kind of---like we have in the garden, full of casaba, squash, papayas, (sweet potatoes, beans, etc.,).

GG: And this was food for your family to eat or did they sell the food too?

MP: Yeah, it was for eat only in the family.

GG: And then you went to school in the Philippine Islands, you said?

MP: I went to school until eighth grade.

GG: Did you learn English in school too?

MP: I did, little.

GG: When you finished school did you go work for a while in the Philippines?

MP: No. After school it was....I got married.

GG: Oh, right away, then. How old were you when you got married?

MP: I was 23 years old. It was 1923 too, when I came down.

GG: So then you came to Hawaii the same year you got married, then?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Did you get married to come to Hawaii, or did you get married and then you decided to come to Hawaii?

MP: I got married in the Philippines by the priest....you know, the bishop or priest in the Philippines. [Priests came] from foreign countries, came to the Philippines and they will make them married, all those people who like to get married. Even if they live together without marriage they will give them marriage. I did that too myself. Then when we went to Cebu, with my wife, and then in the thinking, to come Hawaii. Right by the Immigration we applied for Hawaii.

GG: How did you hear about Hawaii? How did you know about coming to Hawaii?

MP: We just know that there are lots of work here, that's why. Because in Philippines we cannot---could hardly find work over there.

GG: Who told you about Hawaii? Other people who had come back, or they had recruiting man, or who told you? How did you know?

MP: One man from in our town too, come from Hawaii. He came home and he said it's good over there. He tell, "As long you have good body, you don't get sick and you keep on working, then find money."

GG: So you went to Cebu and applied. Did you have any trouble when you applied or you got taken right away?

MP: Yeah, taken right away but we have to be married again.

GG: They didn't recognize your...

MP: Yeah, because in my personal tax it says over there, "Student." But they [Immigration] don't like students, the time, to come down here. So to get rid of that [paper]. We have to remarry again by lawyers, or something like that.

GG: Then, did they give you new tax papers?

MP: Yeah, the document, marriage people say, no student any more. That's just like our....

GG: The pass to come?

MP: Yeah, the pass to come.

GG: Okay. So then, do you remember the name of the boat or ship that you came on?

MP: Yeah, Cleveland, President Cleveland.

GG: How long did it take you to get to Hawaii from Cebu?

MP: From Cebu we ride to Manila, about one day or night. We left in Cebu about 9 o'clock in the night and then reach over there in the quiet morning in Manila. And then, in about three days we were notified that we have---the boat will be coming for Hawaii, President Cleveland. So we went.

GG: So how did you get to Manila from Cebu, then? On the boat, too?

MP: On the boat, Cebu boat.

GG: And then from Manila you get on the President Cleveland?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then how long did it take to get to Hawaii?

MP: Take us nine days.

GG: Were you sick, or your wife sick?

MP: My wife was sick in the boat. She was very sick, though. She was in the hospital in the boat. And she scared too in the boat, and then she wants me to be with her in the room but I was not allowed. So I have to sneak in too and sleep in the upper bed. And then when somebody come in they cannot see me too good. He just look

down. I don't think so, but maybe he did see me but. Hard to sleep in the upper bed.

GG: What did you bring with you from the Philippines? You brought clothes?

MP: We have---in the Immigration we were given mat and some kind of blanket, pillows; each of us, every one get. That's all we get. And our clothes.

GG: You brought your own clothes, or the Immigration gave you some clothes too?

MP: Yeah, our own clothes. They got only the mat and blankets.

GG: Was that a sleeping mat?

MP: Yeah.

GG: So you remember what kind it was?

MP: It was a buri mat. It's just like lau hala but it's white, that one is. Come from the buri plants, just like these....what kind of tree over there, buri; call buri. Pound, pound.

GG: And then what kind of blankets did they give you?

MP: Oh, it was---I think it was....brown, thick blanket.

GG: Sort of like an army blanket?

MP: Yeah, just like army blanket.

GG: And the what about the food on the ship? Did they serve you good food?

MP: Oh yeah, they serve us good food. But only thing is most people are sick, seasick. And they don't eat.

GG: But they fed you three times a day?

MP: Yeah, we did.

GG: And did you go like to a dining room to eat, or where did you eat on the boat?

MP: Every group has one guy to guide. Maybe one guy has 10 under him, and he has to get the food, enough for the 10 guys. But they our friend. And then we had our own table. But we have to get the food. We had to line up for the food and then.... enough for the 10.

GG: And was this in a big room, or right on deck, or where did you eat?

MP: Inside there are tables too inside.

GG: And they had Filipino food, or American kind food?

MP: Yeah, they have just like Filipino food.

GG: And so then when you got to Honolulu you arrived at the Immigration Station?

MP: Yeah. We stayed about three days in the Immigration.

GG: And what happened while you were there?

MP: Oh, we were treated all right over there. And then when they ship us out, wherever you are shipped out to, to Kauai, or some on Maui, some are on Big Island. Not the same day. We were waiting for the order for the boat, when the boat is leaving to Kauai, then we were ready to go.

GG: Do you know how you were assigned to Kauai? Did you have town-mate or relative or how did you get Kauai?

MP: Yeah, we have some friend in Kauai. And then we asked for Kauai. And then I thought they would not give it to us but they did.

GG: And then when you were in the Immigration Station, were you and your wife able to stay together like in one room?

MP: Oh yeah.

GG: And did you have one room just for you folks, or several married couples shared a big room?

MP: I think was like that, big room. Stayed in the big room, but yeah, you get enough room.

GG: And so then you got on the boat and you went to Kauai. And where did you arrive?

MP: We arrived in Camp 4, Makaweli.

GG: Did they take you in like a plantation truck from the boat to...

MP: Yeah. We were met by a plantation truck in the port. And then we ride on. We reach to the one each store, in Camp 4, and we were given food, enough (to eat) for I think one week (and two pots and a frying pan).

GG: So you went to the plantation store. How many of you went on this truck to go?

MP: Oh, it was four [trucks]. Some were delivered to some other plantation. Like some went to Puhi, Lihue, and then us to Makaweli.

GG: And how many of you did they drop off in Makaweli that day?

MP: Us, we got one truck from Makaweli.

GG: One whole truck?

MP: Yeah, one whole truck. Small truck only. Just enough for us.

GG: So about how many of you were there? Maybe six, or more?

MP: I think was about....yeah, about seven guys with us.

GG: Seven guys and your wife was the only wife? Or they all had wife?

MP: Yeah, my wife and me and the others wife and husband too. Five, six. And there was single, yeah. There was, I think, about eight guys in the truck.

GG: Did you know any of the other ones? You ever met them before, or you met them on the boat?

MP: Yeah. The other one was our friend too. We came together. When we reach to Camp 4, we live together too, over there. And we were with our friend over there.

GG: The ones that you knew on Kauai?

MP: Yeah.

GG: They were Camp 4, too?

MP: Yeah.

GG: These friends, you knew them before in Philippines, or you met them on the boat?

MP: We know them in Philippines. We come together as a...

GG: A group?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then how did you get assigned to the housing? Somebody at the plantation store told you where to go to stay?

MP: Our friend was taking us out and just like inviting us to live. And some other guys said, "You can live with us. I got big room too, in the house." So I live in my friend's home. But I don't know them, only we know when we reach there.

GG: And what was the house like, where you stayed?

MP: It was all right.

GG: Was it one of the big long houses, or small?

MP: It was quite....it was big house, about two bedroom and a kitchen. In the kitchen we have that kind too, the dining room in the kitchen. And it's enough for us to---because only two of them was living, we live too with them.

GG: So you had two bedrooms and two couples, right?

MP: Yeah.

GG: I see. The four of you were living in one house. And then, how did you get assigned what job you were going to do?

MP: Oh, the policemen in Camp 4 pick us up early in the morning, that we are working in that place. So we just go and...

GG: So you went to work then with your friends, too?

MP: Yeah.

GG: What was your job then?

MP: That was in the plantation, was cutting grass.

GG: Is that what they call kalai?

MP: Kalai, yeah.

GG: That was your first job?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Now, when you got there was like end of November or December already, right?

MP: [Nods--affirmative.] Then I join the contract job, that is growing cane. And then I stayed over there about....I don't know. I remember now, I don't know how long I stayed in that but we left that contract when we went to strike. That was ready for gather. But you cannot wait until we went to....

GG: What were people saying in the camp about the strike, or how did you hear about the strike?

MP: They said, "You got to go because if you don't, bumbai the strikers will control you, will fight you." So us, we were new and we don't know about strike, so we just, just follow what the people do.

GG: And what kinds of things did they tell you about why they were going on strike?

MP: Oh, because the strike was asking for \$2 a day, with eight hours work.

GG: And after work would people talk about this a lot? You know, at night when you were having dinner....

MP: Oh yes. When the leader was running around talking about the strike, that's why we talk about, when we gather together eating sometimes.

GG: Was he actually a plantation man, or was he somebody who came from outside to talk about the strike?

MP: Yeah, he was outside man, and I think he come from Honolulu.

GG: Was that Manlapit?

MP: Manlapit, Pablo Manlapit.

GG: Could he come into the camp to talk to you folks, or who did he talk to?

MP: He just....like he comes to in our place, right in the store. He does not go inside the camp. And where the stores is. One store in Camp 4, he stays over there and people comes hear him talk.

GG: And how did you hear that he would be coming?

MP: Because he was there. And then people, when they heard they just come.

GG: They would come down to the store to listen. Did you go to listen to him?

MP: I went one time and they were talking about strike and then... But I didn't pay attention so much. But when the strike came I went out with them.

GG: And do you remember when you folks actually went on strike; a whole lot of you left one time, same day?

MP: Yeah, I remember that. I remember the Camp 4 guys went out. Some trucks came in there and we were riding trucks, load our things to go out.

GG: That was the plantation trucks?

MP: No, I don't think so. I don't know because the plantation won't provide because they are against us. So I think that was from the leaders of the strike. I don't know where they got it.

GG: But they provided trucks?

MP: Yeah.

GG: What kinds of things did you pack in the truck to take with you?

MP: Well, just our clothing. Our pots.

GG: You had gotten those things from the plantation store over time when you were here, or...

MP: No.

GG: Because you didn't bring pots with you from the Philippines, yeah?

MP: No. But we get from...we bought from there. Just maybe two or three pots.

GG: So how many trucks took you folks out?

MP: Only one truck so far as I remember.

GG: But the truck made several trips or you all squeezed in one time?

MP: I think one time only I went because only near. I don't know, maybe he come back or what but I was in the first trip.

GG: And how many of you went in the first trip?

MP: Oh, it was full.

GG: Was it a big truck?

MP: Yeah, kind of. About half-ton truck.

GG: And so then, where did they take you?

MP: To the school in Hanapepe. Japanese schoolhouse.

GG: Do you remember what happened when you got to the Japanese School? Then what did you do?

MP: We try to look for our place to live, where to live, to sleep. Because upstairs were all filled up already and we have to be downstairs.

GG: That was like under the hall?

MP: Under.

GG: How high off the ground was it, do you remember?

MP: It was just enough to you can go inside.

GG: You could stand up?

MP: Yeah. But I don't know, tall people.

GG: How tall are you, about 5 feet 5 [inches]?

MP: 5' 2".

GG: But you could walk underneath it, then?

MP: I could. But some others maybe he get hard time.

GG: And was it a big space under the house?

MP: Quite big space. All empty under the house.

GG: And how did people kind of divide up?

MP: We just put bed over there. That's our room, the bed is our room.

GG: And then how was the cooking done in the strike camp?

MP: Oh, we cook our own. Everybody cook themselves.

GG: And where were---did you have like stove or fire set up?

MP: Oh yeah, we can set fire outside. We just make your own, maybe put out three stones for your pot to set on, and then put their....

GG: But everybody did their own? It wasn't like some people cooked and then everybody ate?

MP: No, no. Everybody cooked their own.

GG: But did some people share their food or cooking together?

MP: Oh yeah. They share when it's not cooked yet. Like rice, they share everybody. But when---that's by the collectors. They get maybe four bags over there, they share to everybody how many they can give to....

GG: Did they cook the rice all together and then you get your share?

MP: No, no.

GG: Or they give you like a cup of raw rice and they tell you, "Okay, that's your share."

MP: Yeah, that's how.

GG: And then you cook your own rice?

MP: Yeah, we cook our own.

GG: Did you take any food with you to the strike camp, or how did you get your food?

MP: Oh well, if we had money we buy. And there are stores in Hanapepe. Buy some fish, some salted fish, something like that. Just buy that. And some go to beach and you come home with....

GG: Did you go fishing at the beach any time?

MP: We went, yeah.

GG: And what did you do during the daytime, in the camp?

MP: Just nothing, just go around.

GG: In the camp or in the town?

MP: Sometimes in the town. We go to beach. Just doing anything what we can do. Just to kill it. [The time.]

GG: And what did the ladies do?

MP: Ladies stay in the camp. Sometimes they go, we get together.

GG: And were there many children in the camp?

MP: Some they get about four children. I had one.

GG: Was baby that time?

MP: One baby, yeah. He was born 1924, too.

GG: So he was born before you went on strike?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Do you remember how old he was when you went on strike?

MP: Well, he was maybe one month yet, or two months, or I don't know. Because....wait....maybe he was, maybe six or seven months already.

GG: And do you remember when his birthday, what time of year?

MP: Yeah, he was February 18, 1924.

GG: So then if he was like six months old, that might have been like summer time then, that you went to the strike camp?

MP: I think so, though. I cannot remember very good.

GG: With that small a baby, your wife stayed upstairs with the baby or she stayed downstairs?

MP: She's downstairs.

GG: Any problems with bugs or mosquitos?

MP: Oh yeah, mosquitos was. Really.

GG: What did you do?

MP: But we had....

GG: Netting?

MP: Yeah, mosquito net.

GG: Now maybe we can move up to....you want to tell me how the trouble started or what you know?

MP: Now when staying over there for a while....there were two Ilocano people biking and passing by our place. And some of our guys said, "What they doing, why they do that? That's kind of an insult, I think. We like catch them." Oh, they put a rope the other side and when they pass by they pull out the rope.

GG: They had like one guy on each side of the road and then they pulled the rope tight?

MP: Yeah. And then they stop already. And they held them [the Ilocanos] as a prisoner for the strikers. Then I see them, some people--I don't know why they--just like they get mad for nothing because they didn't do nothing.

GG: The Ilocanos, you mean, didn't do anything?

MP: They didn't do nothing. Only they pass by. But some people could easily be hurt, sometimes when they see. We try to make them, ask them to join the strike so we can win. They don't seem to be joining us. And then, that's why when....somebody knows I think, in the plantation, because about midnight the sheriff from Waimea-- Sheriff Crowell, I think--came down to the strike camp and asked for the two men.

GG: The two Ilocanos. Where were they when he came?

MP: They were downstairs.

GG: And were they tied up?

MP: No, they were not tied up but I could not exactly see them. I remember that because....but they were only guarded over there. I think they scared to go away too, because if you go away they get hurt. And then they stayed over there, sitting down under the house.

GG: Were they anywhere near where you were staying?

MP: Yeah. It's just near us but I....the schoolhouse is big. Is big, eh, about all this around here. And then we stay under the house.

GG: And the Ilocanos, though, were under the house too, but further back from where you folks slept?

MP: Yeah. And then, the sheriff said wanted to talk with the two Ilocanos. When they come out they refuse to talk. They didn't talk so the sheriff brought them to the outside from the camp, about 100 yards from the camp.

GG: To try and talk to them?

MP: Yeah, to try to talk with them.

GG: Was there a fence around the Japanese School property?

MP: Yeah, there was a fence in front. Like this [picket kind], all this Japanese School. Get fence around here like this.

GG: All the way around, then.

MP: Yeah. And over here is barbed wire, he got, that the banana field I think was. And then behind got so many houses over there.

GG: But the fence, what kind of fence was it?

MP: Is wooden kind fence. Wood.

GG: Like the sticks, the pickets?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then what kind of a gate did it have?

MP: They got same kind. Gate is wooden gate, too.

GG: So then Sheriff Crowell took the two Ilocanos outside the gate into the road?

MP: Yeah. Out of sight, to the, away from the strike camp.

GG: Did he take 'em to like the river side, or the other...

MP: Yeah, by the town side.

GG: Towards Hanapepe town side?

MP: Yeah.

GG: So towards the bridge where the river is?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Did any of the Visayan, the strikers, go out while he was talking to them?

MP: They follow them. Then they still--the two Ilocanos no talk.

GG: The Visayans told the Ilocanos not to talk?

MP: No. The Ilocanos, they didn't tell anything to the sheriff.

GG: And did you follow out to see what was happening, too?

MP: Yeah, we follow too. And then, because he could not do anything, the sheriff said, "Okay, take him back. And I'm coming back." The sheriff told us. Then he went. He went home.

GG: So you folks took the Ilocanos back underneath?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then what did you folks do?

MP: And then, at that night, because he [the sheriff] was telling us he would come back, we were--and that our leaders, too, said, "Split into four. One part there, and one part there, and one part is there."

GG: So at the four corners.

MP: Yeah.

GG: Is this like at the four corners of the strike camp, or you folks went outside the camp?

MP: We went outside. You know, by the road going to Camp 2 in Makaweli? Right there, one group over there stayed. But that's where some of the special police staying. So we were there too.

GG: You were in the group that went down to that road?

MP: Yeah. But we were not with them but we were there. Just like we were hiding.

GG: So about how many men were in each of these four groups?

MP: Us, only about....almost 200 us, but that's divided by four, about maybe 50 in each. Maybe some 35 or 40.

GG: So did you guys....like were you preparing because you knew there was going to be trouble?

MP: Yeah, we just prepare if somebody attack us.

GG: How did you prepare? What did you do?

MP: Some people, they got pistol but no more bullet.

GG: How did they get the pistols?

MP: I don't know how they get but they had that kind. Some use bolo, and some they get stick. And then....we were just assigned our groups, we had to hear whistle. If whistle over there, we had to go that side.

GG: What kind of whistle? How would you know it was the right whistle that was signal?

MP: Yeah, it's human whistle.

GG: You know how to do it? Can you make the whistle.

MP: Yeah. [MP whistles] But some people can whistle good, eh. And they got this guy, he used to like this. [MP whistles with fingers in mouth] And it's really sound very loud. And that's what we intend to do. And everybody has a white band over there. [Around the arm]

GG: What is that made out of?

MP: That we don't fight each other.

GG: Right. But I mean is that---like from what kind of cloth?

MP: It's a white cloth. Just white cloth.

GG: Where did you get it? Was it like rice bag?

MP: Something like that. Any kind of white. Even papers, so long white. Some people using papers.

GG: And that means you're on the same side, you don't fight each other.

MP: Yeah.

GG: Then did any of the groups like march or walk through the town that night?

MP: No, we just watch our place. I don't know what others do but our group, I was in the town side, by the river side, by the bridge. We just stay there.

GG: And do you remember what you talked about while you were staying there? Because it was dark, right?

MP: Me, I was talking, "If anything happen, I would just run away."

(GG laughs)

MP: What we going do? We got nothing.

GG: Were you folks scared at all, or were you mad?

MP: No, well, I was just thinking because this kind of, we have no right to do this. This is our fault. And the guys that I talked with said, "Oh, if anything happen, I'll run away." But he was killed. The one I talked with, when I was talking that night, he was killed in that [the day of the shooting] day.

GG: So how long did you folks stay there, sort of by the river?

MP: Oh, we stayed there until morning. We didn't sleep. Then it was daylight already, we go home. Back to the strike camp. Then, not long enough [after], the sheriff came. About maybe 8:30 or 9:00 [a.m.]. Then our boss in the camp, he is called Grande, he shouted. He said, "Let us give up, give the two guys to the sheriff so there will be no trouble."

Then, when sheriff came in he said, "I like the two Ilocanos."

GG: He came inside the gate?

MP: Yeah, he came in.

GG: He was talking to Grande.

MP: Yeah.

GG: Anybody else too?

MP: There was too the Lorenzo Alcorcon, he's the second boss of Grande. But he's the main guy. And then, when Grande said, "Let us give away the two guys so no trouble," Lorenzo said, "No, we have to fight."

So when the two guys come out the sheriff just braced them back together [took one under each arm], and "Let's go out." They went out. And all the fence was full of rifle, with special police from Makaweli camp.

GG: The special police were on the outside?

MP: Outside of the fence.

GG: But right by the fence with the rifles?

MP: Yeah, with the rifles.

GG: Where were you when this was happening?

MP: I was inside the house, under the house. But it's really clear, eh, to see them. So when I see them surrounding the place, I went and I talked to one of the policemen. I said, "What you going do? Go kill all these people here, the strikers?"

"No. We just like to see you are like them, in peace."

"Oh, okay."

Then I return...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MP: [Sheriff Crowell] Grab them out of the gate.

GG: Is he going with his back to the strike camp, or is he backing up with them?

MP: No, he just....yeah, in front, he's going out of the strike camp. Going out to the Makaweli side. Then, we followed until about the road to Camp 2.

GG: You folks are sort of walking behind?

MP: Yeah. We just follow. Some people said, "Well, go ahead, shoot. Shoot." But no fight.

GG: Who said that?

MP: The strikers, he said, "Go ahead, shoot."

GG: They're saying that to the special police?

MP: Yeah, because they follow us. We had knife so they...."Go ahead shoot; I going kill you too."

GG: Was it kind of loud, angry...

MP: Yeah, it was a really menacing sound. Bad to hear. And then we went out, then we follow, follow. But I was backing up to myself because I don't like to follow over there. And then they keep on following, following. And right there, there was strikers too from---was running down. The policemen too was chasing them, giving them chance to go back to the camp.

GG: These were strikers that were outside already?

MP: Yeah. Some run away, I think, to the outside and the special police had driven them inside. But these people too was coming out. That's why when they...

GG: So you had like two groups of strikers going...

MP: Yeah, that's the time that the trouble start, when he collect over there. Because one from there and one from here.

GG: Okay, there were two groups, like here and here. Now where were special police? These are the strikers and these are the strikers.

MP: The special police right here, and from here too?

X	X	X	X
Police	Strikers	Sheriff Crowell and Special Police	Strikers

GG: So they had special police in between the two groups of strikers, and then other special police on the other side of the strikers there?

MP: Yeah. And then that's how they start the shooting. When they hear the shooting, then I try to go out, go inside the fence. Barbed wire, though.

GG: This is by the banana patch?

MP: And then I run away. But before, when I try to get away from the fence to go inside, I saw my friend was shot--maybe in the knee--then he said, "Help me."

"I cannot help you because bumbai they shoot too, myself. I have to run away." So I went. When I reach over there to the other side of the fence--same, barbed wire too in the other side--but there was a house already over there. I go inside. I want to go outside from the fence too.

Soon as I come out, a policeman--city [regular] policeman--was there, and, "What you doing?"

"I running away,"

"Go ahead."

GG: Oh, he let you go then?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Did you see Sheriff Crowell get hurt or you started running as soon as you saw that there was shooting, so you didn't see other than your friend who got shot you didn't see any of the other people get shot?

MP: I see but already they were already in the house. In the houses, in the Hanapepe housing people, people that used to be---sometimes their friends want to get help to them but they were already hurt. Some I think was shot right here. [Near heart]

GG: Who shot?

MP: That, we don't know. The policemen, of course, because we don't have da kine.

GG: Nobody had bullets in the strike camp?

MP: I don't think so. So as soon as we get da kine, we had about 16 injured. Some were not died yet, but all together, the dead people was 16 people. And there were four policemen killed. And the one cared too was killed too, because they like to save da kine too, eh. But the one who killed the policemen right there but he was dead.

GG: The Filipino who shot the policeman was killed right there?

MP: Not shot, knife.

GG: So he knifed the policeman and then the policeman shot him. Now you got to the other side of the banana patch, ran into one of the government police and he let you go. Then what did you do?

MP: Then I was hiding in the house. There were plenty too, people, who was hiding over there. But me, I was just sitting down there. I see people over there hiding. Some under the chair. I was sitting down over there, and then bumbai some rumors outside said, "Come out, it's clear already."

So I went back to the camp. When I went back, there was plenty soldiers already. Then I was hold back over there.

GG: About how long did you stay in that house before you went back to the strike camp?

MP: Oh, about three hours or four hours.

GG: What were you thinking while you were in that house?

MP: What you mean, in the house where I was hiding?

GG: Yeah.

MP: I was thinking of running away but was already too late to run away. Because I cannot run away alone because my wife was in the camp. So I decided to go back in the camp, see what happened to them.

GG: And the how many policemen were around the camp then?

MP: There were plenty soldiers.

GG: Were those special police?

MP: I think that's not special police already. That's soldiers. Da kine Army, I think.

GG: And so you just walked right back to the camp?

MP: Yeah. We just, when you coming, "Come on, come on."

GG: And so then what happened?

MP: And then we just sit down over there [in the Japanese School yard] until they took us to Lihue jail.

GG: Did they put handcuffs on you?

MP: No.

GG: They just had a lot of you sitting down waiting for the truck to come and take you?

MP: Just sitting down, and you cannot move. If you move maybe they will shoot you, I don't know.

GG: And what was happening with the ladies? Did you see your wife?

MP: Yeah. Because right in the camp already.

GG: And what about....were the dead strikers still---had they taken them away yet?

MP: Taken away already, all the dead. And some, the injured went to the hospital and died over there.

GG: And what about the wives of those strikers? Were the women crying or were they scared, or what was happening?

MP: I don't know what they do to them but still was in the strike camp.

GG: So then you men that they rounded up were just sitting down waiting. How long did you have to wait before they took you off to the jail?

MP: I think about three hours. We went to jail.

GG: How many of you went in the truck to jail?

MP: Oh plenty, we had fill up.

GG: Was a big truck?

MP: Yeah, big truck.

GG: And when they got you to Nawiliwili, that's where the jail was right?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Then what happened over there?

MP: One small place, eh. About 10 guys. Like this, only the jail is small. One room. We stayed, about 10 guys, we could hardly sleep. All too hot inside because too much people, eh.

GG: Did you have to stand up or could you all sit down or lay down?

MP: We sit down. We cannot---if we lay down, if we head to head, our feet would not stretch all the way out. But if we sit too, we have to make like this [feet tangled up], because it was too small, the room.

GG: And what about bathroom facilities?

MP: They get one outside. They got this kind just shower. The toilet is box, he got box over there. And every morning you have to take it out and dump in the river.

GG: That was your job to take it out?

MP: Yeah, they told us to....once, I took one box. And then I said, "Oh, why should we work? We are not calaboose yet." We had no trial yet.

And then, "Keep quiet."

So we just...."Next time, I won't do that." So I didn't do that again.

GG: So how did you folks eat, or would they let you out to go use the restroom, is that it?

MP: Right inside there they got cook and then we got table over there outside. We ate inside.

GG: How many of you were there in the jail, then, all together?

MP: About 176, over, I think. I think 176.

GG: And what about, did they let you folks exercise? How many days were you in this small jail like that?

MP: Oh yeah, every day we have to stay there. We are just always guarded by policemen over there. When we like to....suppose we like to take a shit over there, we yell. We had to yell and they don't care. "Come on!"

Oh boy, it was really lousy, though. Said, "You like shit, shit in the bucket over there."

They give us bucket over there for piss inside the room. And if we shit over there and then who smell, only us to smell over there. So we don't do that. We keep on yelling, yelling, but they don't open da kine, they don't let us go for the toilet.

GG: How did the men in the jail react with each other? I mean, you guys got mad, because you were so close together, at each other?

MP: No, we just nothing because we are always guarded. Plenty soldiers around us.

GG: How did you pass the time?

MP: Well, every day we were given a lawyer, us, by government. The first time, they ask us if we can afford to pay lawyers. And we don't have money. So they give us lawyer.

GG: Do you remember who it was?

MP: Was one haole, old haole, but I forget the name. And then he used me as a interpreter for strikers. So he ask me if anyone is not afraid to talk in the court, so you might be....if he's all right, then you'll be all right, all. But he is no good, then everybody is no good. So we tried to choose man that can talk nice, and that you can get out. So I choose, choose.

This one, I say, "I can't talk." When they talk, after....because every day only two guys or three people can be investigated in the court.

GG: This was actually now, you're talking about the trial or you're talking about before the trial?

MP: Yeah, that was the trial.

GG: Okay, so they only do like two or three cases a day?

MP: Sometimes three guys or four strikers can be investigated.

GG: So they actually take the cases one at a time, then.

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then do you remember what the charges were against you, or who told you what the charges were?

MP: Yeah, I don't know. He said, this....because riot.

GG: And did the men understand what they were being charged with? The strikers, they knew why they were in jail, or what they were being accused of?

MP: We know because we were in that spot of during that first action we had, the two Ilocanos being....so maybe we could be find us on that because we were not right, we had no right to do that. But not everybody's doing that but because of the group, you are already counted as doing it, everything.

GG: But you helped the lawyer and the strikers, as far as interpreting so they could understand?

MP: Yeah. So after about 10 people, strikers, or 12 people....I think 12 was already spoken to the court, the lawyer had come to me and said, "Their reason is not so good. It would make all of you go to jail."

Because everybody---they are trying to make witness to each other. The other one said, "I saw you, I was hiding over there with you."

"I no see you there."

See? The testimony is out of the line. So he said, "They are all wrong. We cannot depend on that. Why don't you try to make."

"Okay." Because I know already all the questions, what they got because I went all time, we go over there.

GG: Because when they come back, then they tell you what all the questions were?

MP: Yeah. So when I went over there, first question me about the chasing of the workers in Makaweli. "Yes, that's true."

"Did you do that?"

"No, no. I did not do but it's some of my strikers did that. I saw that myself."

"When is this?"

"The time we were hiking to Waimea. From Hanapepe to Waimea, we hike to get that collectors [out of the] jail in Waimea. But when we reach in Waimea, that collector came out already. So it's a lucky thing."

Because if he was inside there, we were intending trouble because [we were going to tell] the judge, "We come out to get that man out. ["You let him out--] Yes or no?"

GG: That was before the trouble in Hanapepe, that you folks marched?

MP: Just before, yeah, just before.

GG: Because they had put a couple of the strikers who were collecting in jail; is that it?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Do you know why they put them in jail?

MP: For trespassing. He was collecting some kind of---rice, anything that they can give for the strikers. And then they were arrested.

GG: Okay now, going back to the trials about the riot.

MP: Now, when I went to speak in that morning, "Start from the beginning," he said. And then when all the....what you call that, the one that give you the...

GG: The one that's listening? The jury?

MP: Jury. The jury was looking at me and they didn't say anything about me. Only one of the jury, only the Camp 4 policeman said, "He was one."

So kept on. And then they asked me, "What did you do?"

"I was in the camp. When they go away from the camp, I followed them for a while but I went inside the fence in the banana patch and run away."

He said, "Before you run away, where did you pass?"

"In the gate."

"Who was in the gate?"

"Oh, I don't know."

"You could not remember who was in the gate when you pass?"

Then I remember, I told the one that died. "This guy, he was in da kine." But you cannot ask because he died.

Then, "Where is he now?"

"I think he died."

And then, when we have come lunch time, we went back to our camp. After lunch, he call me back over there. About after 2 o'clock, maybe 1, 2 o'clock, come back over there. He call me again, back again all that questions.

"Did you kill anybody in the strike camp?"

"No."

"Somebody said you have knife with you."

"No."

And then he said, "Well, what did you do in the fight?"

"I run away. So I have no hurt, nothing. Only because I was away from the fight. I was there but I run away."

And then when I pau talk again, he come home.

GG: Back to the jail, you mean?

MP: Back to the jail. And about 8 o'clock, you come back. Eight o'clock in the night, come back to the jail, out to the courthouse. And they call me again and ask for the same story. And then right at that time, about 11 o'clock, from my name to the last [on the list], he come out and we line up over there. "You are free to go home." And that night we came home.

GG: How did you get home?

MP: We ride from---I ride in one of the jury men's car, I think was. I think was one of the jury [men] that [took me when] I am leaving.

GG: So you were one of the ones then that was set free because in essence you really hadn't taken part, the court decided?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Okay. Then what happened to others?

MP: [Some] went to jail. And then [some] they were sent back to the Philippines after that. I don't know what happened now. But some of them had come back here, though.

GG: Since then?

MP: Yeah, since then. I don't know, maybe they change their name or what. Because I saw one of my friend. I go, "How you come back?"

He tell, "Why, no can come back?"

"No, no can come back. You are trouble maker in Hawaii."

He said, "No, I come back."

Maybe he change his name or I don't know.

GG: I was going to ask you, do you know anybody else who's still living, that was in the camp with you? Like you, that is still around. Is there anybody else that you know that we might talk to?

MP: My wife.

GG: Oh, she's around too?

MP: Yeah, she was around.

GG: Where is she staying? This is your first wife you're talking about?

MP: Yeah, first wife. She stay in Ohu Street.

GG: What is her name now? She married again?

MP: Yeah. Isabelle Ganade. G-A-N-A-D-E.

GG: And you know what her husband's name is now?

MP: Baltazar.

GG: Anybody else that you know, that's still around?

MP: I know one guy, is Teodoro....I don't know exactly the second name. He's in Wahiawa. I don't know exactly his....his name is Teodoro but the second name, Malabe. Maybe Mabale, or.... because I can ask him. I can call him bumbai. I tell you when.

GG: Oh, okay. You still have my phone number, right? I gave it to you. So you can call me and tell me if it's okay for me to talk to him too.

So then when you went back to the strike camp, after you were let out of jail....your wife was still there?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And then what did you folks do? Did you continue to stay in the strike camp?

MP: We went to Lihue Plantation after that.

GG: Then how many of you were let to go free, do you remember?

MP: Sixteen.

GG: Only 16?

MP: Because the 60 went to jail.

GG: So about 60 of them went to jail, you say, from them?

MP: Yeah. We were all about 76 guys in jail. Because the 100 guys was given freedom because of Ligot; they was taken by Ligot, but they will be back to plantation. They come back to plantation.

GG: And then 60 went to jail, and 16 of you were let free. Do you happen to recall at all; we have the names of the 76 that were put, I guess, arrested. We have those names. But we were trying to find the name of the ones that were let free. Do you remember that they were written down anywhere? Or do you remember the names?

- MP: I can remember the name, I think, if you give me the names.
- GG: Yeah, well that's the problem, though. Oh, I know, I could bring the list of the 76 names, and you could look through them. I have that at my office.
- MP: I can remember them. Because from my name to the last, was all 16 guys.
- GG: And those were the ones that were let free?
- MP: Yeah.
- GG: And they were like in alphabetical order?
- MP: Uh huh, the 16. I don't know how they arrange that but it was from my name, it was like that. From my name to the last was 16.
- GG: And then, the 100 that you say....there were like 176 of you taken to the jails. And then, what, Ligot came like the next day?
- MP: The next day, I think some plantation guys come in telling them to come back to plantation. So they said they come back, so...
- GG: How come you didn't say you'd go back, right then?
- MP: Nobody....I don't know why, in our group, nobody asked us.
- GG: You were working, though, Makaweli Plantation that time. Did somebody come from Makaweli, though, and ask who wanted to go back to work.
- MP: No.
- GG: So in the strike camp most of the men that were there were from Makaweli Plantation, right?
- MP:mostly, mostly.
- GG: Where else were they from? What other plantations?
- MP: Some are from Kapaa.
- GG: What about Kilauea? Did you have any?
- MP: No Kilauea. I don't know if Kilauea, because Kapaa and Kilauea is just near, eh. But I don't know exactly that place over there. They have that other group, they have the Kapaa strikers too. But there was, in Koloa, Koloa people too was in Hanapepe. Those single guys was in the tent, living in the tent by the beach side, in Hanapepe.
- GG: Not in the Japanese School but then by the beach side, they stayed.

MP: So that's all I can say.

GG: Well, that's a lot. And maybe we can stop for today, and I'll listen to the tape and get it all transcribed and then I may have some more questions. And next time, I'll bring back the list of the 76 people so that you can see if you know if any of them are still alive.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 5-50-2-79
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Mauro Plateros (MP)
January 10, 1979
Kalihi, Oahu
BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: I'd just like to say this is the second interview with Mr. Plateros in his home in Kalihi. The date is January 10, 1979.

A couple of the things that I want to ask you refer to what you said before [in the first interview]. You went to school in the Philippines, right?

MP: I went until only eighth grade.

GG: Do you remember how old you were when you finished eighth grade there?

MP: I think I was 21 years old.

GG: I see. Was that a common thing; to finish school when you were that old there? Or did you start late? How does school work in the Philippines.

MP: Oh, just like here too. But when we start school, if your financial is quite low you have to find a way. And you get the way again, you go back school, and then....see.

GG: So were there lots of other young men who were like same age as you?

MP: Yeah.

GG: So it was nothing unusual, then, to finish school when you were that old?

MP: Yeah, is nothing unusual. So, the time when I was in the age of....I think I was 17. Not 17 years old. I was trying to make money. I was peddling with my brother, help my brother peddling in the other island. In the Philippines.

GG: What were you peddling?

MP: I was selling goods. That was clothes (cloth materials)....some jewelry.

GG: How did you get the things that you peddled?

MP: We buy from the Chinese people, Chinese stores in Cebu. Then, wholesalers sells us. We go to Cebu City to buy, then goes out of the city to sell. Go up to the mountain by foot, carrying that kind heavy things. We bundle about that much bundle. Then we carry that in our shoulders, (go out of the city or) go up the mountain.

GG: Wow. About a three foot bundle, then, yeah?

MP: Yeah. It cost you about 200 pesos for it. Because that was whole-sale. We carry measuring stick because they are all just like materials [fabrics], some. With the order made, already sold, eh. That's what different. But we mostly carry out the materials only, going up. All that kind. Like material for pants, for shirts, just like dresses. Before, was sometimes we selling for 10 cents for (30 inches long), only just like one yard. Ten cents a yard.

GG: Cheap, those days. But you went to the outlying areas because they didn't have stores or ways to buy?

MP: Yeah. Even, if there are stores over there but our way is....we let them charge. Because in the stores, they cannot charge. Some peoples can charge but some not. We charge them. But we only look for people who had income to anything like copra and hemp.

GG: So you were pretty sure of getting paid, then?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Did you have any problems with people not paying you?

MP: Oh yeah, some. Some, they run away.

GG: Oh boy. So how long did you do that for?

MP: Only about two years. And then I go back to school again. And then I got from fifth grade to seventh grade. Over there, from seventh grade, you graduate the intermediate schools. From seventh grade, you go in the first [year of] high school. Eighth grade. I just went eighth grade.

GG: Also, you had talked about a buri plant. Is that like the mulberry or paper bark tree, or do you know?

MP: What kind?

GG: Buri, I think. I can't remember exactly, but you talked about a buri tree or a buri plant. What kind of plant is that?

MP: This kind palm tree. Sometimes he grow big, like this. And it's just like coconut, but it's bigger than coconut. And the palm, the leaf is almost like coconut, too, but their leaves can be used as a weaving mat. You know, that kind buri mat.

GG: Okay. That's what I wondered, the buri mats. But I wondered what kind of tree. So sort of like the coconut. Does it have a nut, too? Or they just use the leaves for weaving.

MP: I don't know, exactly.

GG: Now, coming back to Hawaii, and during the strike time, you lived in Camp 4; is that right?

MP: Yeah. I was living in Camp 4. But I never come back, after the strike.

GG: When you went out on the strike, from Camp 4, do you remember how many other people went out on strike same time as you did?

MP: Yeah, mostly all the Visayan people went out. Not the Ilocano people.

GG: And they all went out the same time, from Camp 4?

MP: Same time, from Camp 4.

GG: And was it like 20 men, or 100, or do you remember?

MP: No. I think so about 20 men.

GG: I think you said, in Hanapepe--even when you lived in the strike camp--there were stores nearby where you could buy food.

MP: Yeah.

GG: If you had money, do you remember what the names of any of those stores were?

MP: Oh no, I cannot remember, I think, stores.

GG: Were there very many, or just....

MP: There were quite plenty stores around.

GG: When the two Ilocanos were caught by the strikers, did you see them actually be caught? The Ilocanos that they took, the two Ilocano men that they captured, did you see them get captured?

MP: Yeah, I saw them.

GG: Do you know how many men brought them inside?

MP: Oh, so many men....was surrounding them. "How come they do that?" I just talk to myself. Then, they held that person under the house. But we were living under the house.

GG: How far were they kept from where you actually might have been sleeping?

MP: The road over there, we live just about that house over there. Because there was a big space for, I think, playing. That school yard space. Big one, just like that. The school is above that place and then the road is that one. That space, and we stayed over there.

GG: Okay, like the school building. And was there a side building, too? Or just only the school building?

MP: The school building, and there are houses over there. Over here, there are houses this side. Only the school building over here. There is no more---this side here, get building too--opposite side of the road.

GG: Okay, the school building is here. Was there a building here, that was part of the Japanese School property, too? [Facing the school from the road, Plateros said there was no building to the left.]

MP: No, no. But there was houses over here.

GG: I see, on that side. So just the school building? And upstairs was like classrooms, and people were living up there. And you folks, you were downstairs. If this was the building here, and this is downstairs, where did you stay in this building, downstairs? Were you over here, in the corner? This is the front yard here.

MP: Just about the front yard. Just about the middle part, though. In front [of the building].

GG: And where were the two Ilocano prisoners kept?

MP: That's more behind us.

GG: But could you see them, when you were downstairs?

MP: I can see them, yeah.

GG: Did you ever talk to them?

MP: No, I didn't talk to them, but I saw them. Because they are Ilocano, I cannot talk Ilocano too.

GG: Who guarded them? Did you ever have to help guard them?

MP: No. Some of that strikers too, guarded them.

GG: Where were you when the Ilocanos first got caught?

MP: I was down there. I was living here, and the Ilocano was about 20 feet from me [downstairs].

GG: And how many people? Did they grab them, or how did they bring 'em inside?

MP: They just walk inside. I think somebody was trying to....I think he had some punching, I think. But it was not so bad. It was light punching. Because he had no reason to punch them, because he didn't try to fight them.

GG: Just before they got caught, had the Ilocanos been bothering the strikers or calling them names, or do you know why they brought 'em inside?

MP: They just passing by, passing by every time. The strike camp. This is the yard here, we are squatting here, and this the road [in front of the camp]. They always pass by there. And they look that kind, we don't like them because they never join, eh. That's why, some people think they are insulting us. So that's why---I think, that's what the....the second guider of the strikers, called Lorenzo, he said, "You got to capture that men. The two men." Then he got men, they did that.

GG: So you kind of just watched them do that?

MP: I did. I just watched them.

GG: Then, I guess it was the first time--nighttime--Sheriff Crowell came inside to try and get the Ilocanos out. Were you there, at that time? Now, this is not the day of the shooting, but I guess the night before.

MP: Yeah, he was there. He went there and asked for the two Ilocanos. He said, "I'd like to talk with your two Ilocanos. I'd like to bring them to my jail."

But they said, "No." You, you ask them.

GG: Lorenzo said, "No," or who?

MP: Yeah. He said, "You ask them if they want to." [Go with you to the jail] So that Ilocanos no talk. They don't talk.

So, [Crowell said,] "They won't talk here, so I'll take them out from here." He went about 100 yards from the camp, to the other side on the road. But we followed too, over there. That's why, still he [the Ilocanos] no talk. They no talk.

GG: How many of you followed over there, that time?

- MP: Oh, mostly all the men. Because they like to see the excitement. And then he [Crowell] decide to return. He said, "Oh, it's all right. I'll come back. It's all right." Because he won't talk. "But I'll come back," he said.
- GG: Did he say it in a mean voice, or do you remember?
- MP: No, no. Just he said, "I'll come back." But he leave the two Ilocanos.
- GG: How close were you, when this was happening? Could you hear everything that Crowell was saying to the men?
- MP: Yeah. I was so close. Just about like this, and I was with them, too.
- GG: Maybe three, four feet away, then.
- MP: Yeah. And then, they walked inside and walked back to the camp. And then, from that time, Lorenzo Alcorcon divided us into four parts. And they watched other side, watch this side, watch four.... one part here, one part here, one part here, one part here.
- GG: On the school grounds, or outside of the school?
- MP: Outside. [Four areas, opposite ends of the Hanapepe area.]
- GG: Did Lorenzo say, "Oh, I think we're going to have trouble?"
- MP: Yeah. Because Sheriff Crowell had promise he going come back.
- GG: Did you have any idea when he'd come back?
- MP: We don't know. But when we were watching, I was by the way to Makaweli side, on the road.
- GG: That was on the banana patch side?
- MP: Yeah. Over. And we see, there were special police coming in. But it was until the road going to Camp 5 or Camp 2, I forgot. Anyway, from Hanapepe, there was a road going to Camp 5, Makaweli. I think so. Camp 5 or Camp 2, I don't know. I forget. And then, they stop over there.
- I went over there and talk to one of the soldiers. "What you going do over here?"
- "Oh, we just come here watch you."
- And then I went home. I told my wife, "Soldiers around there. That place over there." We get only one son. Only one son.
- GG: Was baby that time, too, yeah?

MP: Yeah, baby. It was the first baby we had. We decided to run away but we have no place to run; it was night, eh. Anything happen, we just stay. No can run, just go away.

GG: So you stayed over there for a while, but then you went home. Did you go back to your post, or what happened after that?

MP: Yeah, because if you don't stay to that, [your post] the leader will go out to hurt you too, if you just try [to leave]. That's why, I just try to be....kind of quiet.

GG: Stay calm?

MP: Yeah. And then, until 2 o'clock [a.m.], we come back home and drink coffee.

GG: The whole group of you came back? All four groups came back?

MP: No, no. Little by little, the whole group come back. And then drink coffee. Until the special police come to the camp. They were leaning on the fence of the school.

GG: This was morning time already, now? The sun already up?

MP: Yeah. It was early in the morning yet. So we just stay over there under house. But we could see them, though. And then, I think we just....we could not escape because where do we go? We go out or we just stay here.

GG: Where was the leader, at this time?

MP: Was in the group, too. Right by the school yard. And then, our leader, the good leader that one. The other leader, he's not---that Lorenzo Alcorcon is not; he's only acting as a leader. But the other one, the other leader is quite good. That Lorenzo is very cruel, I think. He's very--temper--very hot.

GG: Do you remember the name of the other leader?

MP: Lucio Basquez. And then, he said---when Sheriff almost comes in, he said, "Let us give up the two prisoners, so that no more no troubles."

That's what time that Lorenzo tells, "You can't do that."

Then, when Sheriff Crowell came in, "Where is two Ilocanos?"

"Here."

"Let's go." Because there were plenty da kine, sheriff's police. When he went out, all the soldiers--even us, eh, backing to that side.

- GG: Did any of the other special police come inside with Sheriff Crowell, or only Sheriff Crowell came into the yard?
- MP: Only Sheriff Crowell.
- GG: And he grabbed the two sort of under his arms and started backing out?
- MP: Yeah.
- GG: And then the special police were aiming their--was it rifles, or small guns?
- MP: Rifles. Rifles.
- GG: At you folks, while Sheriff Crowell was...
- MP: We followed them, we followed them. We followed them, yelling, "Shoot. Go ahead, shoot."
- GG: You folks were yelling that to the police?
- MP: Yeah. But I was behind. I was ready to run. (Laughs) When I go out away this side--because they were going this road here, like this. This the road, they were backing up here. The soldiers were backing up this side, like this. But us, they follow. The strikers following them. "Go ahead, shoot, shoot." They never shoot 'em, but.
- GG: So you stayed on the side closest to the school, so that you could get away if you had to?
- MP: Yeah. And then, I went this side--this is fence here. When I went inside here, that Lorenzo was here. "Where you going?"
- "Oh, I'm going to catch up that side."
- GG: Oh, so you went around the school building, the other way? Once you got outside, you went around the back of the school building?
- MP: Yeah. This is the school building here, suppose. And a fence here, and this is the gate to this side.
- GG: And the banana patch is over on this side. [To the left. If you are facing the mountain, across the road from the Japanese School.]
- MP: Yeah, that side. I went to the banana patch over there.
- GG: But you came out the front and then came down this way to get by the banana patch?
- MP: Yeah, I went out. So, when I went there, I met this Lorenzo. He say, "Where you going?"

"Oh, I going to meet over there." But I was looking to run away. But when I went over there, they came already almost to the road of the Camp 2--yeah, Camp 2, I think--and then the shooting started.

GG: Is that by a pump place, or not that far?

MP: I think that's what the one, though. Pump.

GG: And so, but what was Lorenzo doing where you were, then?

MP: I think so he was want to running too, but I don't know already because I was running myself. When shoot already, I went to the other side. And went to the Japanese house. I go to over there, I went to inside the Japanese house. Then, I stay in, because there were plenty people, too, over there. I don't know who was there too, because oh, I was so scared too.

GG: The Japanese man let you folks come in his house?

MP: Yeah. And then, that somebody yelling, "It's clear." So I went home. When I went home, there were so many real soldiers now, from Lihue. Then we circle over there.

GG: So how, or where---I think before, you had said you saw somebody fall, who got shot and killed. Was that in the banana patch?

MP: No, it was near the house where I was hiding. The house was....I forgot the name. That's the Chinese house. Used to be, sometimes they drink liquor. They used to go down there. And then, he was using his bolo--big knife, eh--to....I don't know. Maybe he was just like using his bolo as cane to walk to the house. He was calling me but I didn't go because he had bolo out, bumbai he stop me, eh? Then, somebody, I told 'em, "Go help him, because I think he's hurt. So somebody went over there and get the knife, throw 'em down. Then put him....on his shoulder. Put him in the house, under the house.

GG: Did he live, or did he die?

MP: He died. He was my neighbor.

GG: From Camp 4?

MP: Camp 4.

GG: Do you remember the name?

MP: I don't know his real name, but only the nickname, "OK."

GG: Did you have your bolo knife, when you were following with them?

MP: No, no. I don't have.

GG: You didn't have any weapon at all? No rocks, or sticks, or nothing?

MP: No, I don't have any.

GG: Did a lot of the other men have some kind of weapon, or not too many of the Filipinos had weapons?

MP: There was somebody having pistol, but there was no bullet. And some had....you call that fishing....the one....

GG: What's the Filipino name for it?

MP: You call that "pana." That's the one we---so that this kind soft iron like that, low. And then they make it go.

GG: Sort of a spear?

MP: Spear, just like. That's spear. Yeah. Spearing fish, just like. They use that kind, too. But they never use, I think. Because nobody hurt on that. They all run away. I think somebody had---they said somebody killed with knife. But I never see. Somebody told me.

GG: That was four policemen died, but I'm not sure how they got killed; whether it was with knife or whatever.

MP: You said they were killed by knife; I heard that but I never see.

GG: The house that you hid in, was that behind the banana patch and towards the beach side?

MP: Yeah, towards the beach side. Because the banana patch has fence going. And you have to go through the fence, then get that house.

GG: And was the banana patch, were the bananas really thick and close together so you could hide?

MP: Not so much yet because just like new planted. Small yet, banana.

GG: Were they taller than you, the banana trees?

MP: Some are taller [about five feet] but not so much.

GG: So wasn't really that good a place to hide, then?

MP: Not so good to hide because it's---the bananas are small yet. Just newly planted, I think. Anyway, it was a banana patch.

GG: Better than no cover at all. Then, when you came out of hiding, when you thought it was all clear, and you went back to the camp, do you remember at all what time it may have been by then? Was it afternoon already, or not?

MP: Yeah, afternoon. I think afternoon already, because we were only ready to go to jail. We were only waiting for the truck.

GG: But you saw your wife sometime in between, when you came from the house?

MP: Oh, I was not able to see my wife, though. Because they won't let you go away already, from the line. I was sitting down over there. "You sit down there." The soldiers are around, always with the....rifle.

GG: And your wife didn't come out? She was hiding at the tailor shop?

MP: No, my wife was under the camp, by the place we were living. By the strike camp.

GG: So could she see you, or could you see her?

MP: She could see me. Yeah, she could see me.

GG: Oh. But you couldn't talk to each other?

MP: Yeah. I cannot go there and she cannot come to me because....

GG: Then they loaded you on---was it like the plantation truck, to take you to the jail?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And you went to Lihue or to Nawiliwili?

MP: Nawiliwili, I think. Yeah, Nawiliwili.

GG: Then, what happened when you got to the jail?

MP: When we got to the jail it was too crowded over there. The first night, we could hardly sleep because oh, it was too hot. Even it was December and cold time, but...

GG: September.

MP: September? Yeah. Oh, that's right. We could not sleep because of too crowded inside one jailhouse. It was small and we are ten guys over there. And we sleep head-to-head. Our feet is on the wall. Yeah, our knees feel sore. Our knees. We go, "No, we cannot do this. More better head on the wall." Our feet can go over over, eh?

GG: All tangle up with each other.

MP: Yeah. Can go straight, eh. Then, we did that. We sleep.

GG: Did you have to lay down right on the floor or...

MP: Floor, on the floor.

GG: ...any kind mat, or just on the floor?

MP: On the floor. No more mat, nothing.

GG: How long did that go on?

MP: That time, they making another building to, I think, to bide us good. So it takes only two, three days, I think, to make that building. And then, we were given good now--about three days, I think.

GG: Did you go to the new building when it was finished, or did you stay in the old building?

MP: I was staying in the old building.

GG: Do you know how they decided who went to the new building?

MP: No. I don't know who was in that new building. But strikers.

GG: Where did you eat, or how did you eat when you were in jail?

MP: They cook for us. There was a cook for us. And then, it was a really poor....

GG: What kind of things did you have?

MP: Oh, we had---sometimes they cook meat for us but only the fat they give us. (Laughs)

GG: Did you eat in the same room where you slept? Or, you had like a cafeteria?

MP: Yeah. Just like that. And outside is like you can just pick. You can sit down anyplace where you like.

GG: Did they have a yard that had like a fence, so you could go out and exercise?

MP: Yeah, yeah. We get.

GG: And did they make you exercise?

MP: They did.

GG: What kind of exercise?

MP: Just like....like this.

GG: Jumping jacks. So what did you do during the daytime, when you were in jail?

MP: There was a judge---I mean, a lawyer coming to us to investigate.

Everyday, investigating us. And then, and he come to me and ask, "Choose a man that can talk in the court, that you would be playing out all good."

I try ask them, "I can talk?"

Then, after one week, he said, "You know, all these people you told me, he can put you in jail, all. Because they are talking just like they are lying themselves. Trying to escape."

"When I was in the camp, it was in that day when the shooting start, I run away and hide in that place. When I hide, I see this man. And that man said, he said, 'I never see you.'"

That's why, his testimony is poor. You know, he's sneaky his own self. Because the other one, he said he don't respond his testimony. So why don't you talk to them?"

But me, about two weeks already, in that there....investigation. In the court, sometimes two, three guys talk to the court. And then, "I try talk tomorrow." When I talk, I know already the questions; all the questions. Because I was there when the beginning of the investigation. So I told all what I know.

"What happened when you were at your camp and you went to Waimea jail?" He said, "You were chasing people at Camp 4."

"That's right, but not all people was chasing. Only two, three guys was doing that." Then, I told them, "That guys, they all dead. They were killed, the one who chased."

After that, come to lunch time, too. Then we go home lunch. Then, come back about 2 o'clock. He call me again. Question me again. So on, so. Then, I said, "Everything I tell is true." And then, but they always...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

GG: ...try to see if you would confuse your story? Is that it?

MP: I think so, yeah.

GG: But you stuck to your story, and so....

MP: Yeah, I did. After that, the night comes so we went home to supper.

GG: You went back to the jail?

MP: No. After we come back to jail, back to our home and eat supper. After supper, we come back again. About 8 o'clock at night.

GG: For more investigation?

MP: Yeah. Then the same questions, they ask me. About 11 o'clock, they pronounce our sentence, just like. From my name to the last, we were set free. And that night, we came home. To our camp. To....

GG: The Japanese School?

MP: Yeah.

GG: So how long were you actually in jail?

MP: I think September, October, November, December.

GG: So that's four months. Did they take you one at a time, to investigate you; or would they take several of you at once?

MP: Yeah, only several they take one time. One man nighttime. Sometimes two, three guys one day.

GG: But they ask you questions individually; they didn't ask like three of you at one time?

MP: No, individual.

GG: Did you interpret for anybody else, too; or you just were investigated yourself, and that was it?

MP: No. Only me, myself. I didn't interpret for somebody.

GG: You didn't interpret for other people, then?

MP: No. Because there was a Filipino interpreter, too.

GG: Did they ask you the questions in English, and did you answer in English; or did the interpreter talk for...

MP: In English.

GG: And did they ask you the same questions lunch time, after lunch, or whatever, and then back again?

MP: Almost the same, yeah. All same questions.

GG: And did they do that more than one day? They took you back and took you back, to ask and ask again?

MP: Yes. Just about three times. In the morning, in the afternoon, and then at night. And then, we were....

GG: How many days they did it? Like three times in one day. Did they do that another day, too?

MP: No, no. Just one day. Then we ended, and then we go home.

GG: And when they ask you those questions, was it in a courtroom?

MP: Courtroom.

GG: So they had like the judge sitting up in front, and the lawyers and the interpreters?

MP: Yeah.

GG: What kind lawyer was it for you folks?

MP: Haole lawyers. I forget the name. "Judge." Something like "judge" something.

GG: Lyle Dickie, was that....

MP: I forget the name.

GG: And did you have to do any work while you were in jail? Did they make you folks work?

MP: No. (Laughs) Only that kind, we had to work, we had to fight on that....all they had in jail, the shitting place, they all in box [toilet]. And every morning, you had to carry out and throw in--that days, running water--throw over there. Have to throw that in that running water. And you have to put in....and sometimes dripping, too.

That's why, first time, I was the first man to do that. Because in jail, we were really guarded, over there. We cannot go out. Plenty people yelling, "Please let me go out. I like piss, I like piss." Boy, they just put us one big can over there inside the jail. Oh, very terrible, though.

I said, "Any kind you want to put inside there."

But one time, somebody like kukae. He said, "Hey guard, I like kukae."

He said, "Kukae over there."

Oh boy. But there are plenty too, some other people living in that room. You kukae, who smell? Us smell here. He said, "But don't do that because you don't smell, us smell here."

But he said, "Oh boy, I get sore stomach." He was crying, all that. He was crying, but they no open da kine. The guard no open.

That's why, the guard to us, we told that alcalde over there, "What's the matter with the guard? You cannot open for us? You cannot give us chance to go to the toilet?"

"Oh well, I'm not the guard." He said.

After da kine, too, was good already. We had all the....that was happened, when we had no lawyers yet. After that, when we had lawyers, we had already good, better conditions.

GG: Was it open? Did you have flies or mosquitos around there, too?

MP: Oh yeah. Anything, everything. Even the carrying of the box, eh. Everybody don't like, eh. Some people, he carry the box and he's vomiting right there. Then he throw the box right there. But you cannot go against them [the guards] because you are prisoners. You have to watch that kind, too. And then they put 'em back inside there. I said, "That's the last time I do. I'll never do that kind because I'm not jail yet. I have no....I am not one yet. I'm waiting for my trial."

"No, no, you have to come back." But we got plenty, eh. And then, come to the last time, my time already [to carry the box again], I never go. They don't give me coffee and---in the morning, they give the coffee and the cracker. That's all. I don't know.

GG: That was like punishment because of what you said?

MP: No. Because I don't like to carry anymore. So....because that's all right. But somebody give me some cracker.

GG: What about taking a bath? Did they have?

MP: They have plenty water over there. You got just like pond. Big one. And you can just jump down there and go.

GG: While you were in jail, did you talk to your companions that were in jail with you?

MP: Yeah, I was trying to get everybody to talk. Because I was the interpreter over there, I have to talk to them.

GG: You were the interpreter in the jail but not in the courthouse?

MP: No, not court. Just to the lawyer.

GG: And what were they saying in jail, among each other? Were they still scared that they'd never get out of there, or did they talk about the shooting at all?

MP: No, they were only thinking of going back home, or how we could be free from there. Why we are jailed. And blaning the leader of the strike, why we in the jail?

GG: So they were mad at the leaders, then, because of what happened?

MP: But you cannot blame them, too, because our leaders are that kind, fool to having that kind trouble. If none of that, I think there would be no trouble.

GG: I know before the trouble in Hanapepe, they had arrested some people and put them in Waimea courthouse. And then, they had a march from Hanapepe to Waimea. Did you march?

MP: I did.

GG: Do you remember what it was about?

MP: I went over there but I was riding car down there, because is terrible too---they give me work to do. Just ask them, to the judge in Waimea. He said to [tell him] either "yes" or "no." Take them out [the prisoners]. I think like that, they can kill me right away, right there. I'm the first man to be killed.

GG: But they assigned you to be the one to ask the judge?

MP: Yeah, they assign me.

GG: How come they assigned you?

MP: That's why, because the group appoint me. So I go, "No, you cannot do that because why no wait until he has the trial?"

"No, we like him right now because we are now standing. We do not have no food to eat." Because he's the collector of our food.

GG: And how did he end up in jail in Waimea? What were they holding him for?

MP: Because I think he was trespassing, something like that.

GG: To do his collecting?

MP: Yeah.

GG: Do you remember---how did he get arrested for trespassing? Somebody reported him?

MP: Maybe, I don't know. I heard only that he's in jail for trespassing.

GG: Do you remember what his name was?

MP: I don't know. Forget the name, too.

GG: And so the strikers wanted to get him out of jail because they didn't think he really trespassed?

MP: No. Just like doing by force. I think the strike really foolish, though, to think of that. Because they like to get that one by force.

GG: So when you got to the courthouse in Waimea, what did you do?

MP: We never do nothing because when we went over there, he [the prisoners] came out already.

GG: They had already released him?

MP: Yeah.

GG: How did you feel about that?

(MP laughs)

GG: Relief, huh?

MP: Yeah. When I was coming down, that's when I play safe, because of that kind---I don't like to go, that's why they put me in the car, so I could go over there. Oh boy.

GG: Do you remember how long before the Hanapepe trouble that was?

MP: Oh, that one, I don't know. I could not remember to what month, that one.

GG: Did you know Reverend Cortezan? Did you know who he was?

MP: He's a reverend.

GG: Was he responsible in any way for getting the collector in the jail? Or, did he ever come to the strike camp to help you folks in any way?

MP: No. I really don't know.

GG: What about Reverend Runes; did you know him?

MP: No.

GG: When you had your trial, for the Hanapepe trouble, did they have a jury; do you recall?

MP: Yeah.

GG: And do you remember what kind of people were on the jury?

MP: Yeah, they were some Hawaiian people, some Chinese people. I think.

GG: Any Filipinos?

MP: I don't know if there was Filipinos over there.

GG: When you were released, you said you got a ride home with one of the jury members, back to the camp. Is that right?

MP: Yeah. It was, I think it was Japanese, I think, I ride. Japanese or maybe Chinese. I could not remember, but it was that one.

GG: Did you talk with him on the way home?

MP: Yeah, we talking about....

GG: About the trial and how things went?

MP: Yeah, I think so but....

GG: And then, how did your wife react, when you came back?

MP: My wife said---because only me went home, though. Yeah, because the others, they have no way because only had contact one of the....I think he's a lawyer or what. One of the jury or what, I don't know. But I ask him and he said, "Okay, you can go with me." So I think only me that goes home, that night. So the others sleep over there and then the next day they went home.

GG: And so what did your wife say when she saw you?

MP: She said, "Oh, how come? Where is the others?"

"Oh, they have no way to come home." Only 16 of us come home. The others in jail.

GG: How long did you stay in the strike camp before then you went to Lihue, after that, to look for work?

MP: That day, afternoon, about 4 o'clock we went to look for job. We went to Lihue. We had friend over there. He said, "You sleep over here." We sleep down there, Lihue. Us, we are packed already. Because everything packed already, in that place. So we just easy to go.

GG: Did you get a job right away, in Lihue?

MP: Oh yeah. It's plantation work. Before, there were so much work in plantation.

GG: For which plantation was that?

MP: Lihue Plantation.

GG: Okay, is there anything else that you can think of, that I didn't ask you, that you remember, that you want to tell me? About the strike, or anything after the strike.

MP: That's all, no. I don't know yet.

GG: Looking back now, you think the strike was a good thing or a bad thing?

MP: Well, it was a bad thing because it happened like that. It would be good if we win the strike, because the strike was asking only for \$2 a day.

GG: Were they asking for anything else or that was all?

MP: Two dollars a day and eight hours job--of work--a day. That's all. Because we had only \$1 before, and 10 hours work.

GG: Okay. Well, I think that's everything, then. I think I remembered it all this time.

END OF INTERVIEW

The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

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