

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Roberto Hera

Roberto Hera, second of four children, was born in 1936 in Kealahou, Kona, Hawai‘i, where his maternal grandparents farmed coffee.

His mother, Marcellina Hera, was raised and educated on the Big Island of Hawai‘i. His father, Florentino Hera, originally from Cebu, Philippines, received a degree in engineering from the University of Chicago.

In 1937, the Heras moved to Lāna‘i where Florentino Hera was employed as an agricultural engineer by the Hawaiian Pineapple Company. He also served as branch manager of the Filipino Federation of America.

Roberto Hera was raised and educated on Lāna‘i. Following his high school graduation in 1954, he attended college for a short while, worked in Honolulu, and entered military service.

Returning to Lāna‘i in the mid-1960s, he started his decades-long career with Dole Pineapple Company. He worked in virtually every department until his retirement in 1990 as a superintendent. After a few years with the Nature Conservancy, he was coaxed to return to Dole as Director of Facilities.

Retired for a second time in 1999, he remains active with ‘Ike Aina, Native Hawaiian Land Trust, on Lāna‘i.

He has seven children, thirteen grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Tape No. 56-37-1-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Roberto “Bob” Hera (BH)

Lāna‘i City, Lāna‘i

May 31, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, today is May 31, 2013. And I’m interviewing Roberto Hera in Lāna‘i City, Lāna‘i at his home. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

So good morning, Bob.

BH: Good morning, Warren.

WN: As I was explaining to you just before I turned on this tape recorder, we’re going to probably do two segments if that’s okay with you. The first segment is going to be your early life. And I’m going to ask you questions about growing up and what Lāna‘i City was like growing up—talking about your parents and your father’s involvement with the Filipino Federation of America, getting into your schooling, a little bit about moving to Honolulu with your City Mill work, and then getting you back to Lāna‘i in 1965. Okay, and then, from about that time, we’ll probably do another segment to cover that part of your life.

BH: Sure.

WN: Okay. So in other words, this is not going to be a real short one, but what we like to do is do life history interviews to get to know the people of Lāna‘i. So that’s why we’re here. So the first question I have for you, Bob, is what year were you born?

BH: I was born in 1936 in Kealakekua, Kona, Hawai‘i.

WN: Okay, and what were your parents doing in Kealakekua?

BH: Well, my parents were, actually, really getting started. They were going around picking coffee. My grandparents owned coffee land, so they were in the coffee business. So they were picking coffee, and it was part of the work force over there. So that’s what they were doing.

WN: They had their own lands?

BH: It was my grandparents’ land.

WN: Grandparents’ land.

BH: Yeah, so they worked . . .

- WN: So you're actually third generation in Hawai'i?
- BH: Yeah. So that's where it was. You know, they were coffee pickers. And that's where it started.
- WN: And your mother and father were born here in Hawai'i?
- BH: No, both of them were born in the Philippines. My mother [Marcellina Torrijos Hera] was born in Pangasinan. My dad [Florentino Hera] was born in Cebu. That's Visayan. So my mother is Ilocano, and my dad was Visayan. At that time, you know how the ethnic groups, at that time, they wanted to stay within their ethnic group.
- WN: Right.
- BH: Even in the Filipino—the Ilocanos and the Visayans—it was like separate, so it was pretty hard for my mom marrying into the Visayan side. But she developed a real—she could speak Visayan very well. My dad, well, he was interested in learning Ilocano, but he spoke Visayan. But he went to school in a university in Chicago, so he spoke English very well.
- WN: Wow.
- BH: You know, before he ended up in the Big Island.
- WN: Oh, interesting. Now, the grandparents that had the coffee lands in Kealahou, was that your maternal or paternal?
- BH: My maternal.
- WN: Maternal, okay. So how was it that your mother was born in Pangasinan?
- BH: Well, she came with my grandparents as a child to Hawai'i.
- WN: Oh, I see. So they were in Pangasinan, and then they came to Kona.
- BH: They moved to Kona, yes.
- WN: Do you know about when that was?
- BH: I don't know. My wife would know. (Laughs) She does the—what they call that?
- WN: Genealogy.
- BH: Genealogist for my side and her side. I'm hopeless in that part. You know, I go back to what I remember in Kona, and then I don't dig any deeper than that.
- WN: And so, you were born in Kona.
- BH: That's right.
- WN: And how old were you when you came to Lāna'i?
- BH: I came to Lāna'i in 1937, so I was a little over a year old.

WN: Oh, okay. So you really don't have memory of Kona, yeah?

BH: The only memories I have is going back and working with my grandparents.

WN: Oh, okay.

BH: You see, I'd go back during the summer to work in the coffee land, so I could learn about the coffee business.

WN: Okay, so do you know why your parents moved from Kona to Lāna'i?

BH: Well, there were two things. I think I mentioned it to you the last time we talked about that. One thing was they wanted to find something different besides picking coffee. You know, explore different areas. For him, as an educated person, picking coffee wasn't an ideal profession for him. The other thing was there was a need for a branch manager for the Filipino Federation of America on the island of Lāna'i. So those were the two things that brought him to the island. You know, to start the federation group and to find something different—you know, employment with the company.

WN: And your father was active with the federation in Kona before he came to Lāna'i?

BH: I think he just started to get involved in Kona. From there on, he was pretty active, all the way until his passing.

WN: Did he ever tell you how he got involved with the federation?

BH: No, I never really did question him. You know, there were a lot of things that were questioned. It was their beliefs, what they believed in because it was something different from the ordinary. In terms of what they ate, they were way ahead of their time in terms of the food that you needed. Now, it's exercise and eating the right food. They were doing that from day one. They stayed away from red meat. That's how I was brought up—chicken, fish. Of course, it wasn't affordable for them in the first place. They couldn't afford buying meat. So fishing and gardening. The federation is an interesting group. I'm a Catholic, but I grew up with that in mind. And they grew their own stuff for their—like what they ate, what they survived on. But they did, for instance, talk about the trail bar. You know how nowadays they do that? Well, so when I think back, he used to talk about—they're all gone, all the old folks are gone now, but I used to tell them, "You know, you guys were really ahead of the time because nowadays everything is nature trail bar." They were doing that—they were making that stuff with coconut, nuts, and honey, and oatmeal. We used to eat that. So I said, "You know, we are eating the same thing now that you guys used to make when we were kids."

So there was, you know, a segment of the federation group they called the "spiritual" group. They didn't cut their hair. They'd grow beards. It's like the hippies. So you know, in the '60s when the hippies evolved—long hair and all that stuff. Well, they already did that. (Chuckles) So I used to get a kick because I used to play in the federation band. We had a marching band. There was only the marching band. We participated in Lāna'i parades and all that stuff. So we had both the "spiritual"—and we used to call the other section of the federation group "material," because they believed a little bit more on the material side of life. You know what I mean, in terms of spiritually and physically. So I'd play in the band, and you'd have a bunch of guys that had a haircut. You know, young guys. And you'd have some of these old men that had long hair that they would roll up and cover it up, because we had like a military uniforms. And you wouldn't

know it. Of course, they had beards. So we had two different types but we all played in the same band, and we used to travel throughout the islands playing concerts and playing in parades. We'd go to different islands because the federation group was a big group. You know, it was Philippines, all the islands of Hawai'i and in California. There were a lot of federation groups.

WN: Were most of the federation members Visayan?

BH: No. There were both Visayans and Ilocanos.

WN: And Hilario Moncado, who began the movement here in Hawai'i, was he Visayan or Ilocano?

BH: You know, good question. I thought he was Visayan, but that's only my. . . .

WN: Okay.

BH: So it was an interesting time of my life because I picked up a lot of stuff from them. Of course I didn't maybe live up to the way they lived—the stuff you eat, exercising, and keeping yourself healthy. That was the main thing. And then, religiously, spiritually, which affected your whole [being], I still have concepts of that. I'm doing it, you know.

WN: Okay, I'm just going to back up a little bit. You were born in 1936 in Kealahou, Kona. Your father was from Cebu, Visayas. And your mother was Pangasinan from Pangasinan. And they moved to Lāna'i when you were about a year old. . . .

BH: I was little over a year old.

WN: . . . to take over the branch of the Filipino Federation of America here in Lāna'i, right?

BH: Yes, that was one of the reasons—looking for employment. Something better in life than picking coffee. Then, because of that, they wanted him—since he's going to be over here working—to manage the federation group here.

WN: I see, I see. So your growing up here in Lāna'i was pretty much—a lot of it revolved around the Filipino Federation of America.

BH: Yes, in a way, yes. And of course, how we lived in the community—the plantation life. You know, so that's one aspect of it. But it was a strong influence in my upbringing.

WN: Was your father a spiritual federation member?

BH: No, he was on the material side because he was educated. He looked at things in the different light. But you know, he managed the group because of his beliefs. But for me, he was the material side. Sometimes we had to eat Spam or something in school. That was okay, and we didn't have to grow long hair and stuff like that. So he didn't push us into anything, going along and accepting it as it was. It wasn't anything that was forced onto us.

WN: So you folks ate red meat occasionally?

BH: Yes, sometimes. We used to bring a lot of home lunch because we couldn't afford to buy the school lunch. But then, as things evolved, it got a little affluent. My dad had a better job, and he got a little more money, so we could afford. So we ate lunch at school, and it was okay. But our

diet didn't include too much red meat or stuff like that. There was a lot of chicken involved, and we did a lot of fishing.

Basically, when you go back, for the plantation people, they were very poor. Of course, the majority of them were very poor, so fishing was a basic subsistence for a lot of the plantation people, whether it was Japanese or Filipino. There was a lot because the fishing was so easy. You know, if you know how to fish. Even if you didn't know how to fish, there was so much fish that you could catch fish one way or another. But we lived on fish. It was hard times. I mean, money wasn't too much available. And you didn't earn much money—well my parents didn't earn much money. So you had to subsist. Like I said, going back to the basics—a lot of gardening. You know, people raised their own vegetables. That was part of the plantation life, raising pineapples and raising chickens. I raised chickens and ducks.

But at one time in the beginning, when the plantation first started, it was very strict. You had a camp boss that would go around, and there were a lot of picket fences. You'd have to take care of your yard. You couldn't raise animals. Eventually, they started getting kind of loose and a little more understanding about people trying to subsist. So they had a guy, a camp boss, that used to go around and make sure everybody is taking care of the yard and not keeping any dogs or cats. So it was an interesting evolution from the plantation life. It was hard, but it was exciting.

WN: And how come they didn't allow dogs?

BH: Well, at that time, I really didn't know. But they wouldn't allow you to keep cats or dogs. But eventually, like I said, it evolved because we had a dog, Skippy. The reason why it's really important because Skippy was like a husky—Alaskan husky. He had white fur. My dad used to take the fur and make fish lures of it for *menpachi* nighttime, so he didn't have to buy bait for night fishing. We used to catch a lot of *menpachi* with that, so I mean, when you talk about the dog, I think about the hair my dad used for *menpachi*. (BH and WN chuckle.) So it was interesting growing up in a plantation.

WN: Did your dad have that dog kind of illegally or on the side?

BH: No, no, it was, at that time, I think they started—it was before the war broke out. I think it wasn't illegally because the camp boss would know who was raising dogs. It was tied to the house, and it barked a lot. So if people complain, the camp boss would be there, but there was no problem.

WN: Someone told me that [Dexter] “Blue” Fraser, who was one of the big managers . . .

BH: Yeah, he was a big manager.

WN: He wouldn't . . .

BH: Brown, I think, was before him and . . .

WN: [Harold] Blomfield-Brown?

BH: Yeah, then Fraser . . .

WN: Dexter [“Blue”] Fraser, yeah. And who was the one who, when he would see some rubbish on the ground, he would pick it up or tell somebody to pick it up right away?

- BH: That would probably be Brown. (WN chuckles.) He was the guy, you know—he had boots—the kind you read about, the English kind. The high boots.
- WN: High boots.
- BH: You know, somebody had to polish them every time. Blue Fraser was kind of a little bit more easygoing. To me, he was a real nice guy. He kind of blended in with the community. In fact, he had this Hawaiian guy work with him on his boat. He used to do a long line. I remember him as a real nice guy. But Brown was tough, everything got to be so so [i.e., just so]. During his regime, I think that's when they had the camp boss that went around and made sure everybody was following in line. Then, I think when Blue came in, they started to get a little bit more lax in terms of the camp rules.
- WN: Now was there a Filipino Federation clubhouse or . . .
- BH: Well, all the different organizations, like the Buddhist had what we call a big hall. The Koreans had one up in the corner, Korean Camp. We had a little form of segregation at that time. I remember the cemetery. The hall, the federation, had—and the company gave it to the group because during the Second World War, they sold war bonds. Because we were state [territory] wide, the federation sold the most war bonds. They gave my dad folks the clubhouse. I [later] gave it back to the company though, when my folks couldn't take care of it. But they're the only ones I know that they [i.e., the company] gave because of their work during World War II—the sale of war bonds. So they took care of the yard and everything, all the way until I gave it back to the company because all of them were over ninety years old. They started to fade away like a lot of organizations if you don't have the young people to take over. It just started to fall on the wayside, which is what happened to the Filipino Federation of America.
- WN: And to what extent was Filipino Federation a religion and to what extent was it more of a social, cultural . . .
- BH: It was both. A social thing because my mom's thing was an Easter egg hunt for the whole community. And then, golfing, [Hilario] Moncado was a golfer. So they used to have golfing for scholarships for kids. So they were a social [organization], and they believed in a certain religion.
- WN: But basically Christian.
- BH: Yes, Christian religion. You know the same songs you sing in all—I go to Hawaiian church, I go to Catholic church—it's all the same basic songs that you sing. You know, Christians, they teach the same thing. But they wanted to instill that spiritual side into the membership. You know what I mean? So that you have some spiritual guidance in your life. So that's what it is. It's just like any religion. I teach my kids, but it's up to them after they leave to accept it or to do whatever they want to do with it, but it's the best thing to have some spiritual guidance. Somebody to turn to sometime in your life.
- WN: And what church were you folks a member of?
- BH: Catholic. I was baptized Catholic. But the federation was still part of the spirituality.
- BH: Most of the federation group [members] were Catholics.
- WN: I see, I see. Okay.

- BH: But like I said, it developed the moral character of the individuals. It's up to the individuals to take it from there.
- WN: So things like subsistence, living off the land, sustainability—all these terms that you hear today is what . . .
- BH: It's what we believed in.
- WN: . . . the federation would believe.
- BH: Yes. So to me, I look at it, "These guys was way ahead," you know.
- WN: Yeah, interesting.
- BH: And to this day, I look at it, you know, it developed my character.
- WN: Okay, now, let's see. How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- BH: I have one brother. He's gone. He passed on. I have two sisters that are still alive. One [Victoria] is still [working as] a nurse. I think she's thinking of retiring though.
- WN: She's the youngest?
- BH: She's the youngest.
- WN: And what number were you?
- BH: I'm number two.
- WN: Number two. Your brother was the oldest?
- BH: Yes, my brother Cecil.
- WN: So boy, boy, girl, girl?
- BH: Yes. The one right below me married one of my close friends. They were good friends, and (chuckles) they ended up getting married. And now, they just moved. They sold their home in Hilo. They moved to Waimea. They live on the Big Island. But they have a condo in Hawai'i Kai [O'ahu].
- WN: Oh, Kagawa is a pretty big family in Hilo from what I remember.
- BH: I don't know if he's related to that Kagawas but I know his family, because I have family in Hilo. I have family in Kona, cousins that are still alive.
- WN: Now, you said that your mother's side was the coffee farmers.
- BH: Yes.
- WN: When you folks moved to Lāna'i, they stayed in Kona?

- BH: They all stayed in Kona, yes. We don't have any ties anymore over there except we're all relatives. I go every once in a while when I'm there, visit my grandma [who] is buried in Kona. My grandpa is buried in Hilo.
- WN: What's your mother's maiden name?
- BH: Marcellina Torrijos.
- WN: Torrijos.
- BH: T-O-R-R-I-J-O-S. I loved that name. Torrijos. It's like that—you know, the Panamanian general? Torrijos.
- WN: Torrijos. Yeah, yeah.
- BH: That's one thing, you know, I love my name, Roberto. That's my real name. And Torrijos—I can track the name down to big people like Roberto Duran, the boxer. (Chuckles) Roberto Rossellini, the producer.
- WN: What's your middle name?
- BH: Torrijos.
- WN: Oh, Torrijos, okay.
- BH: Roberto Torrijos Hera.
- WN: Oh, you pronounce it real good.
- BH: Actually, my dad said our name used to be Guerra. Guerra in Spanish is war.
- WN: Oh.
- BH: I don't know for sure, but it's the story he told me. It could be a story, but Hera in Greek mythology is the goddess of love, yeah?
- WN: That's right.
- BH: So it's the opposite of Guerra.
- WN: Oh, holy cow.
- BH: So I don't know if it was for real, but that's what my dad told me. He says, "Guerra is war." So you know, he didn't want to be connected with war so they changed the name to Hera.
- Japanese is Hara, so I'm always mistaken for, you know, "Oh, Bob Hara!"
- So I say, "No, no, no, no."
- WN: So that wasn't your dad who changed it. It was generations before. But your dad's side.
- BH: Yes. So I don't know if it's for sure, for real, but . . .

WN: That's an interesting story though.

BH: When you look at it, it kind of makes sense.

WN: Okay, so let's talk about growing up on Lāna'i. You came here one year old, and you spent all your kid days here on Lāna'i. What was growing up like here?

BH: I think it was hard but exciting because we didn't have anything. Only *atama*. Only the head. So you had to be inventive because there was no toys. We couldn't afford any toys. So you'd have to find things that you could do to entertain yourselves because that's the only thing. You go out. When the sun's going down, you come home or your mother blow a whistle and you come home. All the time, when you're growing up, you're playing, right? You're finding a way to amuse yourself because the radio—all we could do was listen to "The Shadow," or "Red Ryder." All that kind of stuff. There was no television, no iPod, or no stuff like that. So there were games—I mean, the games I seen are not played anymore. The only thing I see that's played is marbles. But marbles—and what I was thinking of the other night about the games we played, we were gambling. You know, small kids, you play Quanto. You know what is Quanto?

WN: Oh, I heard that before.

BH: Okay, you dig a hole. And you bet. You pay twenty [marbles] for you, twenty for me. So you got forty in your hand. You got to say, "Okay. Three marbles inside the *puka*." So you got to put three inside the *puka* for win. If you win, you get all the marbles. You have it like Quanto but backboard. You put them against the wall, and you make one hole.

WN: Okay, right at the base of the backboard.

BH: Yes. And then, you bang them against the wall, and you got to put the amount of marbles at the . . .

WN: Oh, so you didn't shoot the marbles with this, huh.

BH: That was another game.

WN: That's another game?

BH: You draw a circle. And then you pile up the marbles. You bet, you know, twenty, twenty. Okay, forty marbles already. Then you shoot them.

WN: Try to shoot them out.

BH: You shoot them and you get your *kini*, yeah, you got some special marble for shoot them out. If you get them out of the arena, it's yours. If you don't, then the next guy goes to do his best. It's just like pool.

WN: Right, right.

BH: But again, like I said, it was a form of gambling for us.

WN: (Laughs) Yeah.

BH: When I think about it now, if you were a winner, we used to get all the marbles in a coffee can, and we bury them in the ground for safekeeping. Everybody know where their [own] marbles [were buried]—nobody know but you. But if you forget where you bury them, (WN laughs) that's hard luck.

We used to make swords from hibiscus [branches] because the hibiscus hedges was popular in those days for make a fence, because it's free, right? You get the cuttings and you plant them. So we'd cut sections of it and made [swords]. And then, [made] walkie-talkies, you'd use a tin can with a string. Like a telephone line. We would fly kites. We'd get—bamboo was available because a lot of fishing and stuff like that. We'd get the—you know the store paper? The butcher paper?

WN: The red butcher—the red one?

BH: No, the other.

WN: Pink.

BH: Kind of pinkish color one. Yeah, butcher paper. That's tough paper. We used rice for glue.

WN: (Laughs) Cooked rice?

BH: Cooked rice. You used that for glue. Oh, the thing's solid. When the *buggah* dry, it's solid. And we'd fly kite.

WN: So you make the frame first with bamboo?

BH: You make the frame, then you lay them down on the [butcher] paper, then you cut the side, and you glue the . . .

WN: (Laughs) And you glue and you fold the paper over onto the bamboo?

BH: Right, right.

WN: Oh!

BH: So everything was inventive. And then, we'd trap birds. Or slingshot. You know, make slingshot for shoot birds. We'd cook sparrow on a stick. We'd shoot birds, or we'd catch them. What we used to do was we'd build—you know chicken wire? And then, you peg them with sticks. Then you get chicken feed. You put sprinkled chicken feed inside the wire, then you make one trail. And then you make the fish trap—the openings are like a fish trap where they got to squeeze inside, then they cannot come out. So we used to trap birds like that for eat. You know, the kids would go down and make our own fire and take one stick and put a little bit salt on top and cook the *buggah* and have fun outside on our own.

WN: Sparrow?

BH: Any kind. Sparrow, doves, whatever we can catch, we cook 'em, and we eat 'em. (WN chuckles.) So things like that, you know, to amuse ourselves.

WN: So you made the trap with chicken wire . . .

BH: Chicken wire.

WN: . . . all the way.

BH: You know, you get scrap chicken wire, and you make 'em. The birds cannot get out, see. You know, they'd eat inside there and just squeeze—like a fish trap. You know, the opening like that.

WN: It's a really small opening.

BH: They have to squeeze in. But get the wire pointing this way, so when they try to come out, they're going to [be trapped inside]. So it's like fish. The birds, same thing. They'll squeeze their way because one way they can go in, but coming out, they cannot. So the big kind of doves, I used to catch them, and I used to trim the feathers so they cannot fly, the wing feathers, and put them in a cage and feed them until I get maybe a dozen or so. And then, you make *adobo*. You got to be imaginative.

When I was twelve years old, I learned how to dive for fish. There was this guy who taught me everything I know about fishing. That was another subsistence that I could help with the family. I started supplying all the fish for the family. You know, growing up from when I was twelve until I was late in life, I did a lot of diving. My dad didn't have to worry about fishing anymore. I took over as part of the family, growing up.

WN: What kind of fishing did your dad do?

BH: My dad was pole fishing. They go catch *ulua* with hang line. You know, you seen that. You go catch small fish, then you get the big heavy line, and you put bamboo, you hang the live bait over where they're swimming in the water. So mostly *ulua*. Big fish.

WN: Wow.

BH: *Mamo*. All the smaller fish. That was the kind of fishing he did. Pole fishing, hang line. Me, I started going out diving. I didn't have any nets then. When I raised my family, then I started picking up nets. But I did mostly diving. I go on the shoreline or sampan. I used to go with a group of people—some older people. I learned from them. They go on the sampan and we dive. There was so much fish when you divide the fish, my share would be a big burlap bag of fish. So what would you do with a bag of fish? Because that's how much fish there was. Everybody got their share. Me and this friend of mine, we used to try sell them, but it was legal. You had to get permit in those days to sell fish. We used to sell the *uhu*, the red *uhu*, twenty-five cents, one.

WN: For like, what, two feet big?

BH: Yeah, about this big, two feet.

WN: Wow.

BH: Yes, and the blue one is bigger. We'd sell them for fifty cents. The Filipinos loved that because they made *kilawin*. Raw fish. Twenty-five cents.

WN: Where did you used to sell them?

- BH: We go in the camp. After you build up a clientele, they know you. You just go there, “Eh, *Táta*, you like buy fish, make *kilawin*?” You know, oh, for twenty-five cents, you don’t even have to lift a finger. I mean, you can feed your whole family with that.
- WN: So besides *uhu*, what else you folks sold?
- BH: We sold mostly that because that’s the one that made—and that’s what we go for. We spear. You know, it was just lousy with them, so.
- WN: What about *tako*? Like that.
- BH: You know, for home, for my family, I speared all kinds of stuff. But for sell, the *uhu* was the mainstay. Our neighbors started to get tired of eating fish. So my mom had to go around the neighbors and give them fish because where you going to put them? Unless you dry them, you know what I mean?
- WN: And that was you catching all the fish?
- BH: That was me, I was catching all the fish, so finally, she ended up buying a freezer. Then I had to slow down because there was no place to put the fish.
- WN: Now, when you were growing up, and your father was fishing, what kind of fish you guys ate?
- BH: We used to eat *menpachi* for nighttime. And, I don’t know the Hawaiian name for it, but the moonfish. All kinds of fish that bite nighttime. *Āholehole*. Like us, we would dry the fish because you cannot keep it. What we ate was mostly what we call *utan*. It’s a mixture of vegetables and you put fish inside. Dry fish. So that’s our basic meal because we didn’t have anything else. Of course, sometimes, they can afford to buy maybe an *ahi* head. They couldn’t afford to buy the meat, but they could buy the head for make soup. Us guys used to fight for the eyeballs, yeah. You know how kids growing up in those days, we eat the eyeballs. But most of our fish were shoreline fish. We’d go down [to the beach], we’d bring water, raw rice, and *shōyu*, and salt, and onions. We had to catch fish to eat. You cook rice over there. And then the fish we caught, in the morning, we cut them up, we dry them up. So I helped my dad do all that. You know, salt them up, dry them up.
- WN: How did you dry it?
- BH: Put them on the rocks.
- WN: Oh, you just put them on rocks.
- BH: You see, I learned this a little later on. When I was doing that, I didn’t know. I was just copying my father, but then I started doing it. I found out, even now, like hunting animals, blood is the worst thing that you want in anything. That’s what attracts the flies. The blood spoils and smells, and the flies are attracted. But if you take all the blood out, the flies, they won’t do anything. If you clean [the catch] real good, then lay them out, even nighttime you can dry them. You know, air dry. Then, in the morning, the sun. We’d used to make them half dry because half-dry kind is the best. I mean, it’s not like stone [hard]. But you make *sabao*. We call it *sabao*. It’s fish soup in Visayan. You cook—we got the vegetables. We eat a lot of shoots from vegetables. You know what is a *pōpolo* plant?

WN: The little bean?

BH: No, it's got a black berry. We used to call them *pōpolo* berries because it's dark. That's why we call them *pōpolo*. We used to eat the leaves from that, and that's weeds. My mom used to teach me how. We would pluck all that. We'd cook them with the fish. Or like, use sweet potato. You pluck the leaves and you make *utan*. You know, throw some onions, season the thing up and put the dry fish inside. Oh, we used to eat a lot of that.

WN: This *utan*, what's the best kind fish to use for that?

BH: I don't know, we used anything. Whatever is available. You know, because it's just the flavor. It's like a soup bone. So I used to joke about how before, the old days, you had kerosene stove with a two burner. You see a lot of families with a string across. And you put the soup bone on top. When you cook your soup, you stick the bone inside the soup and boil 'em for so long. (Laughs)

WN: No kidding. And you used the bone again?

BH: I don't know if that's true. I never did it. But I always see the string across the stove, so I used to joke with that. But I don't know if people did that. I hear about it but they say to recycle the soup bone. So you could use the bone so many times, but I don't know. I heard about it. But you notice, every time, get one string across the stove. That's for hang stuff on top for use for the soup. But dry fish was a mainstay for our *utan*. And then, you put *mungo* beans inside. The *mungo* beans to make it more heavy. But we used a lot of vegetables—leaves. Like the *kabatiti*. I just planted *pīpīnola*, which is a Portuguese squash. We used to eat most of the shoots on that. Oh, my wife loves that. You know what you do, you take the shoots—well, first you get the insects out, and you kind of parboil it so it's not really limp. And you rinse it out and just put mayonnaise. My wife loves that.

WN: This the *pīpīnola*?

BH: Yeah. And the fruit, it's like a squash, right? That's why they call them Portuguese squash. But we never used to really eat that. You know, you can eat them. I thought it was a Filipino fruit—Filipino vegetable—until I went back with my wife to New Orleans. I went to—you know, I'm interested in gardening. So I go in the back to see what her father was growing. Oh, I look, eh, get *kabatiti* over here. How come they get the Filipino vegetable over here? Come to find out, I guess the French name, they call *mirlitons*. And you know how they cook it? They don't eat the shoots, they eat the fruit. They get the fruit, they boil them, they cut them in half, take out the seeds, scrape all the flesh into a bowl, mix some up with bread, oysters, pecans, all that stuff. Then they stuff the shell, put them back in an oven and bake it.

WN: No kidding.

BH: Oh, my kids loved that. Because we never—we ate only the shoots. We never really ate—except for maybe make stew. You know, it's just like potatoes. You cut them up and throw them inside. It's not as firm as potatoes but . . .

WN: So you guys ate the shoot more than the fruit.

BH: Right. Because the Visayans call that *kabatiti*, but Ilocanos' *kabatiti* is a different squash. It's the one with like a little star. You know, the shell has that lid—this kind of rough-looking thing. We

have different names for it. But we ate, like I said, a lot of the leaves. *Kalamunggay*. And I remember eggplant, you know, they used to roast them. Eggplants, you put them in with the fish soup, *sabao*. You know, put eggplants. Ilocanos and Visayans, a lot of their cooking is different. The Visayans have a lot of Spanish influence because the Visayans was—that's where a lot of the Spanish influence—they call mestizos. They're part Spanish, part Filipino. So their cooking is different. Like, I learned my cooking from my dad's side. But I watched how my mother cook, and she put in a lot of the Ilocano *patis*, I looked at how they fixed their meals. So it's different. So like I said, they got a little bit more finesse because of the Spanish influence.

WN: You mean the Visayan side?

BH: Visayan side. The Ilocanos are a little bit more simple in cooking.

WN: I see.

BH: So it's interesting, if you cook a lot.

WN: Did your mother cook both Ilocano and Visayan?

BH: Yes, but certain things that my dad—like cooking, you know, the—we call *dinuguan*, *dinardaraan*.

WN: Yeah, *dinardaraan*.

BH: You know, some guys call it chocolate meat. My dad did it differently. One time, I was surprised, he even used sliced green papayas to cook inside. And then, they used—what you call—*yerba buena*. Mint. If you taste a Visayan *dinuguan*, *mōhihi*, okay, local in Hawaiian. You can smell the mint. That's what I mean about a little bit of finesse—difference in the cooking—which you won't in an Ilocano *dinuguan*—*dinardaraan*, they call it in Ilocano.

WN: Yeah, I never had tasted mint in *dinardaraan*.

BH: Because you haven't tasted the Visayan way of cooking.

WN: Yeah, I tasted the Ilocano.

BH: Yeah, they [Visayan version] used mint. They add a little bit more *sabao*—soup in the Visayan way of doing it. Get a little bit more gravy. I know because my dad taught me how to do that. I used to help him kill the chicken, get the blood, clean the guts, and do it. I eat them either way, but there is a difference in the style of cooking when you see the difference in the Visayan and Ilocano cooks.

WN: And you folks had chickens around your house?

BH: I used to raise chickens and ducks. But it's all for food. Not for fighting. (Chuckles) But then, when I married, I raised rabbits instead of chicken because I could grow rabbit feed.

WN: Like what?

BH: Like I had New Zealand giants. Big rabbits. I had learned that from my friends. My friends said, "When you buy, you feel like you had your money's worth of rabbit if you bought a New Zealand giant." And I grew—we called it Puerto Rico beans. The University of Hawai'i said this is the

best feed for rabbit. So I grew that. It has little beans that you cook. Well, they eat the leaves and the branches. So I grew them, like a hedge, for feed my rabbits. So I'd kill a dozen at a time, skin them up, cut them up. The legs would be all fryers and the rest would be all stewers. Growing up, once you learn how to do all that, when you get married and raise your own family, you carry the same tradition. Subsistence. Gardening. Now I'm going back to—I brought my grinder out now. I'm making my own venison hamburger, now—because I eat all lean meat. Venison because that's one of our jobs we do out in the field—eradication program on our preserve. So we're always eating venison. So I eat mostly venison. I lost my taste for [beef] steaks.

WN: Pretty lean, yeah?

BH: It's lean, yeah. We eat it all the time when we make our bento for out in the field. Like on Wednesday, this guy had venison chili. (WN chuckles.) They make barbecue venison. And smoked venison. All venison and it's all good. It's good for us old farts. It's lean meat, not too much cholesterol and fat. So even now, when I make my hamburger venison, I don't put—I used to when I had kids and when I was growing up, I'd put either beef fat or pork fat inside to make it more [juicy]—but now I don't. Just straight. So when I make sloppy joes or chili, I don't. . . .

WN: Oh, as a kid, you wanted more taste, huh?

BH: Oh, well, I can eat anything, but for the rest of the family, they like to eat a regular hamburger from the store. But again, growing up, that's what I did for the family. I was a hunter and a fisherman. I was subsistence and gardening. We had a garden in the back.

WN: And you had chickens and ducks. So what kind foods did you have using chicken and duck?

BH: We had to buy the feed.

WN: You bought the feed. But what kind foods did you guys make with chickens and ducks?

BH: Well, we made like, again, *sabao*. It goes a long ways because you use the soup, right? The soup is—*bahog*. *Bahog* is, you mix the soup and the rice. You know, *gohan*. And I love that. You get all the soup inside, and you mix up with the rice like when you make *chazuke*. You know, all the *koge* rice. Same thing. (WN and BH chuckle.) You know, I know all that kind of stuff. I grew up with all *da kine*, you know. And so, you no hear young kids now say, “*Koge* rice.”

WN: *Koge*, yeah.

BH: Nobody burn rice anymore.

WN: Cannot because you get rice cooker.

BH: I know how to do it though.

WN: With the rice cooker?

BH: With the rice cooker.

WN: Oh yeah, how?

BH: You know the button? You put something to hold it down. (WN laughs.) And then you put something heavy on top. Because it happened to me. I thought, how come I smell burnt rice? I don't know how I did it, but—so I learned how to make *koge* rice.

WN: Oh, you did it by mistake then?

BH: Mistake first. (WN laughs.) I learned by mistake.

(Laughter)

Yeah, you hold the switch down, and it'll cook hard. You got to watch though because if you smell burnt, it's too late already. Really *koge*.

WN: Right. But growing up, before the rice cooker days, everything was good with *koge*, yeah, on the bottom.

BH: Yeah, *koge* on the bottom, so a lot of times, it's soup. You know, we made soup. Of course, you fry, you roast—you do the rest, but a lot of them is *sabao*. You cut them [the meat] in sections, throw them in a pot. First, you brown them. If you want to do a little bit fancy cooking, throw some garlic, throw in the [meat], mix them up with the onions and the garlic, then pour water inside. Then you throw your vegetables inside. You throw the hard vegetables first, then the soft ones last. You know, so just learning how to cook.

WN: What about sauces? Did you folks make your own *bagoong*? Or did you buy?

BH: Our family was not much of a *bagoong* . . .

WN: Oh yeah?

BH: My mother's side—see, the Ilocanos use a lot of *bagoong*. She had some *bagoong*. You know, like when you do bitter melon?

WN: Mm-hmm [yes].

BH: You roast the bitter melon over the fire, then you cut them up and you slice them thin. Then you get tomatoes—raw tomatoes—and then eggplant, same thing. You throw them on the fire, you burn them a little bit, you cut them up, and then you strip them, you put *ebi* inside or you put a little bit *bagoong*.

WN: *Ebi*—oh, shrimp.

BH: Yeah, the dried shrimp. Before, they're cheap, the dried shrimp. There's always another one that you use, even for make *utan*. If you don't have anything, throw some *ebi* inside for flavor for the *sabao* and the vegetables. That's the way we ate. And then *bakalaw* was cheap, too. You could buy the whole thing in the store.

WN: Codfish.

BH: Codfish, yeah. So we had a lot of that in our diet, *bakalaw*. You know, we cook them in tomato sauce.

WN: And what store did you go mostly to get things like rice and *bakalaw*?

BH: Yet Lung [Store].

WN: Yet Lung.

BH: Because I used to work—I used to help my friend deliver for Yet Lung. My brother used to go to Okamoto Store. They had an ice factory just like over there in the back. My brother used to bring his wagon and go pick up ice from there for our icebox, the block ice. So he'd get his wagon, he'd go down—he was the older one, older than me—so his job was to go to the ice factory over there and get ice.

WN: So you guys had one box, and you put the ice inside?

BH: Icebox.

WN: Yeah, icebox. But not electric?

BH: No, you just put the ice inside.

WN: Put one block ice inside the . . .

BH: Yes, one big block ice inside, and the cold air goes down. I used to do the same thing when I had my beach house down at Keōmuku. My family would stay there for the whole summer. I'd get a regular refrigerator that had a freezer section, I'd put the ice in the freezer section, and it would keep the refrigerator cool. You know, going back to the same basics. So I'd make block ice in my freezer up here, then I'd bring them over there for them because I'd be working, and my whole family would be down the beach. They wouldn't come home. I'd bring the ice and the food down to them.

WN: Oh, oh, so you didn't have electricity down there?

BH: No. Never had. I have generators, but too noisy. I mean, it kills the peace and quiet of the—you know what I mean, when you get one generator running. Once the light is out, time for sleep. I had television though. You know, battery-operated television (chuckles) for the kids.

WN: When did you start going hunting?

BH: I started hunting when I was about twelve, I think. You know, we couldn't afford rifle. My family couldn't afford, so I had a friend—I borrowed a rifle from the Kaopuiki family. I was real close. I kind of grew up with them. The old man, Daniel, I used to call him the marshal of Keōmuku town. He had a .30-30. In fact, I found one of his gun belts that I had borrowed from him and I never did return it. So I donated it to the museum. That was my first rifle—a .30-30 that was his. He didn't use it anymore. He was an old man, and I borrowed it from him because I used to go hunting with all his sons. So that's my first rifle. I never owned a rifle until I got married. No, right before I got married. This guy that taught me all my fishing, he also introduced me to hunting. He bought a rifle, Model 64 Winchester, and I used to use that. So I never owned one, really, until I came back to Lāna'i. I bought a secondhand rifle from him. I don't know, right on King Street, you had King's Sporting Goods.

WN: Oh, in Honolulu?

- BH: Yes, the Tom family used to own a King's Sporting Goods right there. Right close to Maunakea [Street]. One of the big-time sporting goods [stores] at that time. And Pacific Builders—do you remember Pacific Builders? I have his rifle. You know when they went bankrupt, he turned all his weapons to King. King's Sporting Goods bought them. And I bought. Tom family used to be close friends to one of my close friends that I used to help raise his horses. So you know, that's how I got to know them when I went to Honolulu. I got a secondhand rifle and a shotgun. So I never really owned any brand-new rifle. When my son grew up, I bought him a .30-30—a small strapper, .30-30. So my kids, I bought them new rifles. I bought for my dad, when I introduced him to big-game hunting. See, he was a bird hunter, but I introduced him. So I have all his guns that he had when he passed on. The rifle I bought for him. My main thing is I can shoot a deer, and I had the meat. That's subsistence. I don't need the best gun. I mean, as long as it brings down the deer. In fact, my friend just put a new barrel on it. I bring it home, but I don't use it anymore. I borrow my son's guns. He's got lighter guns. I mean, I got too old to carry heavy guns.
- WN: So back then, when you were starting to hunt as a kid, were there more deer here or less deer than today?
- BH: I think they had a lot of deer too because—maybe it's multiplied more now. There was a lot of deer. It depends on the amount of food that you have. Hunting is just a tool—a management tool. That time, the company had the authority to open up hunting or not. They started working with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to lease the land to control the deer. And the DLNR—I don't remember what year they got involved, but they started and there was [jurisdiction over] a whole island outside of the pineapple plantation. They had the whole area for public hunting, so Lānaʻi was the largest public hunting area in the state. And then, years later—when I came back, they decided they wanted to go into private—like Molokaʻi had Cooke Ranch that had private hunting. So they closed up, you know, they sectioned them off. And the state had only from Harbor Road to the Keōmuku roads. So they gave them only one quarter of the whole pie. The rest is still. . . . So anyway, I didn't own any guns, but I did go hunting from young. Borrowed or somebody got a gun for me.
- WN: So if you were to, say, bag a deer and come home, your father had no problems eating the red meat or anything like that?
- BH: No.
- WN: Because your dad was . . .
- BH: I introduced my dad to hunting, I mean, he shot. So I don't know. I got him going, so he was hunting. I told him to go into it because he had a son in Honolulu that could use the meat. You know what I mean? I said, even if you don't eat the meat, you have a son in Honolulu that could use the meat. My brother was still working for the postal department. So that was the idea. So the meat problem wasn't—they could still continue their lifestyle. And I was out of the house already, so they still continued. So it was really nothing that interfered with their lifestyle. You know, even the hunting.
- WN: Okay, when you folks were growing up, where did you live? Where was your house?
- BH: Okay, the first house we lived in, it's not there anymore. It's an empty lot. It's right there where the federation hall is.

- WN: Where is that? I don't even know where the federation hall is.
- BH: Okay, if you go down Third Street.
- WN: They still have the federation hall?
- BH: No, I gave it up. I didn't want it. I didn't want to take care of it. I think about it now, I could have accepted it and sold the darn thing, but that's all over and done with. But I gave it back to the company. If you go down Third Street, you'll see a purple building. That used to be the federation hall. It's a big—it's just like one whole [block]—street to street. It was a big property.
- WN: Oh, that was the federation hall?
- BH: Yes. When they called me back, I ran all the housing, so I rented it out to the Hawaiian church. A lot of people wanted to use it for this and that, but because it was a church, I wanted it to continue as a church, it would be continuity. So this Hawaiian pastor was looking, and was a friend of mine, so I said, "I'll set it up so you guys can use it." I don't know what happened after that. So it's still a purple church. I don't know what the status is over there.
- WN: And your house was right near . . .
- BH: Right across the street. From there, we moved to a bigger house in the Korean Camp. It was one block up *mauka*, northeast. It was in the Korean Camp. From there, we moved down to a better home. I mean, it's a newer subdivision. They moved us right next to an empty lot right next to our house. The same house that we moved out of—they bought it. From there, when they started selling the company plantation homes, my dad bought a corner lot right there by Ehunani Circle. If you come down Third Street, it forms a circle. That's Ehunani Circle. So if you come down, you'll pass one street going down center and then you keep going this way, you run into Noboru [Oyama's] house. That was the last house that—my dad bought the house from the company. When I came back to Lāna'i, I moved in with them, and from there, then I built this. When I first started [working] for the company, my first assignment was with personnel, human resources.
- WN: Right.
- BH: And we handled housing. So I rented the brick house. If you go up Ninth Street, it goes right up through the Haole Camp.
- WN: Right.
- BH: So I moved into the Haole Camp. For me, it was a sweetheart deal because I had two houses for eighty-five dollars.
- WN: You mean eighty-five dollars rental?
- BH: Eighty-five dollars a month rental.
- WN: A month? Wow.
- BH: Yes, a three-bedroom and a two-bedroom. So you know, I used to do a lot of guiding hunting, so I had hunting guys can stay in a separate building. Not because I was working for them, but there was an opening and I could rent it, so I rented it.

WN: What kind of facilities did the company actually provide you guys when you were growing up?

BH: When we were growing up, before the union, they used to have all kinds of free stuff. I think there was free kerosene, free this. They used to have year-end parties, Christmas parties, and so on when we were growing up. So that was all provided like a company thing. When the union started to come in, then a lot of this started to disappear. What they took back, they paid it in whatever the union—so I think it was a give-and-take thing. You know, like any plantation down . . .

WN: Right.

BH: You have a *bangō*, you go over there. Your number, and you can charge at the stores with your *bangō*. But after that, you're on your own. You open up your own account, and if the stores wanted cash, that's your problem.

WN: Oh, so after the union came in, less perquisites provided by the company.

BH: Right, right. It was a give-and-take thing.

WN: Everything was more on your own.

BH: Yes. You become more on your own because the union was there, negotiating with the company on wages. So it was interesting growing up there. That's when you learn about the union. You know, I learned a lot more. And then, I got involved. Because all my life, I've been with management. So I had to deal with unions and things different in different localities. I learned that when I first came back over here, because at City Mill, we had all the guys who went on strike on us.

WN: Oh, when you were working for City Mill?

BH: Yes, it was when I was a division manager. We put an in ad for all the positions over there. That becomes leverage because you're in a city that has enough people that you can do that. But Lāna'i is something else. All the top management guys, Noboru [Oyama], Sonny Fernandez, Johnny Botelho. You know, all those guys, the big top guys. He says, "You know, Bobby. If you fire all these guys, where are you going to find the replacements?" That's right, no? We don't have anybody else. They're all working for the plantation. That's one thing I learned about leverage.

WN: Yeah. You cannot find scabs on Lāna'i, yeah?

BH: No.

(Laughter)

Everybody works for you.

WN: Everybody's with the company.

BH: So my dad was management all the time. Most of his career was with management in research engineering, ag engineering. Because like I said, with his education, he could work his way through the areas that . . .

WN: So your dad was with Dole [Corporation]. . .

- BH: Management.
- WN: . . . all this time?
- BH: Long time, yes.
- WN: Wow. And when did he go to University of Chicago?
- BH: When he was single, he went.
- WN: So this is before you folks were born and everything.
- BH: Yes, before we were born. I got his diploma. He felt, what to do with his diploma?
- WN: That's an almost Ivy League college.
- BH: Yes, electrical engineering. He was smart, fixing radios and electrical stuff. Him and—you know Genji, right? You talked to Genji?
- WN: Genji Miyamoto?
- BH: Miyamoto, yeah.
- WN: I didn't talk to him.
- BH: Oh, he's another one. He's one of the very few old-timers left. Genji used to work with my dad. He's *akamai*. I mean, smart *buggah*. He used to work with my dad. He and my dad were good friends. I had him with my Girl Scouts program for almost thirteen years. (Laughs) But he's another guy that goes further back than me. I think he still remembers. I think he's still *akamai* yet. That's the one guy you should talk to.
- WN: You know, what do you remember about the [19]51 strike? You were still going school, yeah?
- BH: Fifty-one, I was still going school. It didn't affect the kids too much. A lot of our friends were from union families. It doesn't break the togetherness spirit. They used to come my house, my mother used to feed them, and all that kind stuff. So for the younger people, it wasn't really—they had a place to eat, but they kind of went on with their own life. It was the adults that had to fight it out. It wasn't as bad as the earlier strikes were.
- WN: Did your father tell you anything about the strike?
- BH: No, he just—they all got paid during the whole strike, so it didn't affect our family much. They could go to the offices because they did a lot of the work in the offices. But there wasn't really much I can tell you about that except that I don't think it was as bad as when they split the company. You know, the six-month strike.
- WN: Oh, you mean the [19]47 strike.
- BH: A lot of people had to leave. So that one really divided the—a lot of people left, some of them came back, a lot of them never returned.
- WN: That was the first one, yeah?

- BH: Yeah, that was a hard one.
- WN: And yet, [19]51 was the one that only Lāna‘i went out.
- BH: Yeah, there were some problems down at the [harbor], but as whole, it didn't—pineapples were rotting in the fields, but I don't think it was as bad as the one that people had to leave.
- WN: Okay, let's talk about school. What was school like for you? You went to Lāna‘i Elementary.
- BH: Lāna‘i High and Elementary. It was an interesting time in my life. We had teachers that I still remember very clearly. One of them was Kengo Takata. He [eventually] became [a district] superintendent.
- WN: Yeah, he was high up in the DOE [Department of Education].
- BH: Oh, yeah, that guy was with [military] intelligence during the Second World War. In fact, he was responsible for us guys getting blown up in 1952.
- WN: Blown up?
- BH: Yes, explosion. Honeybee boys, we got all burnt. He got burned too, so.
- WN: Wait a minute, what kind of teacher was he? Science?
- BH: What happened was, back in the [19]50s, the company—back in the early days, the company had an operation with apiaries. Did you talk to Helen Onuma?
- WN: A long time ago, I did.
- BH: Okay, her father was the bee man. Old man [Ichiro] Tamura. That's what I learned from old man Tamura. Honeybees. Well, the company gave—after the old man died, because he was the one who took care of the apiary. I think they had a business—honey with Love's Bakery. You know, *kiawe* honey. They gave it to the company. And I was with Takata in agriculture. I love bees, you know. In fact, there's one still—I cleaned them back there when I enlarged my banana patch, but then cut down one mango tree. But I still have one bee[hive]. I gave up . . .
- WN: You have a beehive?
- BH: Yes, I had a lot of them. You can see all my hives over there, but they all run away. I had a deal with [David] Murdock. He gave me two properties in Maunalei. He leased me two properties. And one in Keōmoku down at the federation camp so I could raise honey and sell it to the hotels. So that's what I wanted to do. What happened was, the school started to take care—went under Takata. We used to do the work, harvest the honey, put them in fifty-five gallon drums for shipment to Love's Bakery [in Honolulu]. But I don't know if *kiawe* honey is an exception to most of the honeys but after a while, it crystallized. I'll show you what I mean. I still have some *kiawe* honey. We'll talk about crystallization because you see honey is like this, right (BH points to a jar of honey on his kitchen table)?
- WN: Yeah. That's the kind you buy from the store.
- BH: This is *kiawe* honey that's crystallized. It lasts forever though.

WN: Almost like concentrated, yeah?

BH: Yeah, it crystallizes real hard. This is crystallized *kiawe* honey. As you can see, I turned it upside down. There's some liquid coming down, you see it dropping?

WN: Yeah.

BH: But the rest is all crystals. If you put them in heat, it'll all melt back. Okay.

WN: So almost like sugar?

BH: Yes. (WN chuckles.) So what happened was, one of the drums got real crystallized. Takata wanted to bring it back to liquid form before we shipped it. So he said, "We made a lean-to. Under the lean-to, we made a fire. We'll roll a barrel on top."

I was telling him, "Anything that's compressed, especially this, it forms—it gets soft."

WN: The barrel was sealed already?

BH: Yes, it's sealed. So I said, that's going to expand. He said, "Nah, we're just going to heat them." Slow fire kind of thing. So we went to work some of the other apiaries. When we came back, it was late. I don't know for how many hours that thing was boiling. There was a leak. You know, it was so compressed inside. There's just a minute leak and the *buggah*, pssst, you know, it was shooting out. He said, "We better move that." As soon as we went to move that thing, that thing went! But lucky the thing went blow this way up. It was lying down. But it blew straight up through the . . .

WN: Oh, so the barrel was on its side, and it blew a hole . . .

BH: It blew straight up—a hole right through the *totan* [roof]. Right through. It flew over a hundred yards.

WN: Hit the roof?

BH: Robert Kurashige had his feet on top to hold them back because he was rolling them back this way. Oh, so the thing blew up, so he got all burned. There was six of us who got burned. It was very interesting those days because burn victims, they didn't know what to do with them.

WN: Where did you get burned?

BH: I tell you, I took off my T-shirt. All the skin just hung on down over there. You know, I got so burned that skin separated. You see here? You can see the two tones.

WN: On your arm.

BH: This is me. This is my color right here. This is all the burn here. You see the two tones? I got burned on my face. I had on shorts underneath here because we'd go swimming sometimes afterwards. My engineering boots—up to my engineering boots, all the way up to my shorts, went above my shorts, all the way up my front and back. Everything was burnt. You know, I got a lot of remembrance. Everybody is gone now except me.

WN: Now, Takata was the teacher at that time?

BH: He was the teacher at that time. Agriculture teacher. But Takata was a good teacher. It's the only thing that happened, but he was a brilliant teacher. He got me into the bee thing. In fact, a lot of the kids that went through his class remember that. He had a beehive in the window pane. They have this, you know, trying to teach you about bees, and I got really interested in that because bees are very interesting, they're just like human beings. You know anything about bees?

WN: (Chuckles) Not really, no.

BH: Bee colonies have everything. It's like a hotel, okay. They have the housekeepers, they have security, they have air conditioning, and they have the drones and the queen. But they divide it into different parts to take care of the hive. So you have security, right, like a hotel gets security, yeah? They watch, they guard, the bees. So they start from—the labor force, they start from labor. Then they graduate into maybe housekeeping, and then from the housekeeping and they go into—the guys that go out and get the pollen that they make the honey with. The drones are only used for fertilizing. The queen uses him and they kill him. But it's very interesting. That's why Takata got that interest in me, and I start developing. To this day, I still work with it. I do trouble calls, even at my age. I guess it's a little dangerous, but I'm trying to teach somebody young because I have to climb up, do high stuff. I go and troubleshoot.

WN: (Chuckles) Now, at Lāna'i school, was agriculture pretty much the dominant curriculum?

BH: Oh, it was agriculture and home economics. That's when you learn your mannerisms and stuff. We used to take home ec, too. That's what was good about the days when we went to school.

WN: Even the boys took home ec?

BH: Home ec, right. You learn to iron clothes, table manners and stuff like that. I thought that was interesting because you got to know what's on the other side. I mean, you got to learn things like that. That always stayed with me. You know, I go home, I know how to iron clothes. I do all my own ironing. So school was exciting, but I didn't like math. But I was an honor roll student. I did study. I loved study hall. I loved lunch. I love phys ed.

(Laughter)

I love ag. But agriculture was something. I wanted to do something in my later life. Go to school, take agriculture.

WN: So besides beekeeping then with Mr. Takata, what other things . . .

BH: We used to raise vegetables. We raised corn. We do a lot of stuff out there. FFA was a very big thing.

WN: Future Farmers of America.

BH: For here. Future Farmers, yeah, because it developed the—so we had even one of—Viduya family. We had two from there. Robert and Liberato. He became [a DOE] superintendent too. I mean, those were all strong FFA days, you know, public speaking. They were good in public speaking. Agriculture was something that I really—I feel bad that they don't have it to teach the kids. Because a lot of things that we do is all agriculture connected. I mean, here, like whether it's pineapple, sugarcane—but that's all gone already.

- WN: Now, in school, did they teach like pineapple cultivation and so forth?
- BH: No.
- WN: No, not at all?
- BH: No. You learned right on-the-job training. You go out there and work.
- WN: So when did you start working?
- BH: I started working in high school. As soon as you're old enough, you wanted to work. You wanted to earn money because what you earn is your money. That's when you learn the value of money and you learn what work is. What do you call that? Work ethics. You learn that you got to work for your money. It doesn't come—nowadays, it's a different story. They don't learn any ethics about working. A good example is Albert Morita. You talked to Albert?
- WN: Yeah.
- BH: He told me, "Hey, Bob, I going get some kids to go work in Kānepu'u [Preserve]."
So I said, "I got the tools, sign a waiver."
He came back, he returned the tools, he said, "Bobby, the kids don't know how to work."
I said, "They haven't learned how to work." There's nobody to teach them. The parents don't teach them. Who's going to teach them? They don't know what work is. So I think that the way we grew up was an important factor in teaching us work ethics and the value of money.
- WN: So actually then, the working in the pineapple field was part of school, would you say? Or was that totally separate?
- BH: No, no, it's totally separate.
- WN: Now, you didn't have to go work.
- BH: No.
- WN: What if you didn't want to go—that's okay?
- BH: Your parents will kick your butt.
- WN: (Laughs) Okay, not your teachers though.
- BH: No.
- WN: Oh, okay.
- BH: My teachers had nothing to do with it. Maybe at one time, when we needed workers, we had to dip into the school for cooperation. I know one year we had to do that.
- WN: Oh, when you were with the company?

BH: Because the timing. You know, the timing and maybe it had a strike involved. I don't know, but there was one time that we had to—during the summer, we used to use the school facilities to house all the workers that were brought in for the summer.

WN: Oh, I see.

BH: Until they kicked us out. Okay, then we had to build—that's when I started with the company. We had to build log cabin dorms.

WN: Right, right. Okay, I'll get to that later. But I want to talk about your own experience as a school kid working the field.

BH: My own experience is—working in the fields was an education to me. That's when I learned about work because at home, my work was in the garden. Hunting and fishing wasn't work. I already had my own work ethics because I'm one of those that do things. I mean, I don't just sit around. So working in the fields just kind of refined it. Because that, in later years, you bring all that with you. And you use that up here.

WN: And what kind of work did you do in the fields?

BH: Oh, I did everything. You know, picking pineapple, weeding, *hō hana*. We learned about that. I know, I used to work with Muffy. He died a long time ago.

WN: Who?

BH: I call him the Japanese lawyer.

WN: Who is this?

BH: [Takanori] “Muffy” Ogasawara. He's long gone. I call him the [lawyer], because he used to dress up. He was in charge of the mulch paper. He taught techniques how for carry the mulch paper.

WN: Oh, to roll—to carry the roll of mulch paper?

BH: Carry, yes. We dropped the mulch paper for the mulch machine.

WN: Oh, you had to do that by hand?

BH: By hand, right.

WN: Carry that thing by hand?

BH: Oh, yes.

WN: Wow.

BH: You load them on the truck, but you got to unload them in the field. It's one by one, you know what I mean?

WN: Oh, I see.

- BH: Yeah, so Muffy was my teacher in that. So I did all kinds of stuff. When I really learned about everything is when I came back and worked for the company in [19]67. I went through every single department.
- WN: Okay. We'll get to that. But again, mostly picking pineapple. And this is, what, cutting off the tops too?
- BH: That time, no, no. We didn't cut off the tops at that time. Let me see now. In high school, we used to do mostly weeding work. By the time I came back, I was running [work] gangs. That's when they started. But the [early] days we did mostly—we did the other stuff that wasn't pineapple picking because picking was by hand. That was the adult side, so we did all the other work that was involved in preparation. You know, weeding and all the kind stuff that would help with the planting. That picking stuff was mostly—growing up time, it was for the adults. They didn't have the picking machine yet.
- WN: Oh, you mean the boom? The harvester?
- BH: Yes. So we didn't pick pineapple. Now wait, when I left, it was mostly *hō hana*. When I came back, and then, you know . . .
- WN: You were an adult already.
- BH: Yes, when I came back, it was all supervision already.
- WN: How much did you get paid as a school kid?
- BH: I don't really remember. It didn't matter to me because I'd give it to my folks. I just worked and give 'em to my folks.
- WN: And this was summertime only?
- BH: Yes. And actually, summertime too, when I had a chance, I used to go to Kona to work in the coffee land.
- WN: And what did you do over there?
- BH: Over there, my grandpa used to make me—you know how they separate the seed from the skin, right?
- WN: Okay. You mean the pulp.
- BH: The pulp. Yes. So they had a machine that . . .
- WN: Oh, the crank. Crank machine?
- BH: No. They had a big tumbler that separates them. And then, all the skin—the pulp comes down into one big section over there, and it sits over there and ferments and stinks. My job was to take that and spread it out with a wheelbarrow inside the coffee land.
- WN: Oh, okay, so the beans would go to the . . .
- BH: Yeah, that's the one they dried out.

WN: Dry.

BH: The dryer, yeah.

WN: Oh, and you took the pulp and you fertilized.

BH: I took the pulp. My job—yeah, the fertilizer.

(Laughter)

Dirty job. Dirty job. But hey, I enjoyed it. I learned about coffee. You know, parching and I did a little bit of picking. Learned about the coffee operation. And you know, how the water—it used to rain every night. The weather was—every night rain, during the day, beautiful. So the water runoff is what we used for our tanks—what our water tanks would use.

WN: Right, right.

BH: So that's another—again, you work by yourself. And Grandpa cracked you on the head if you screw up.

WN: (Chuckles) And then, how long would you stay? You would stay all summer?

BH: Yes, I'd stay the summer. I'd help him and get to know my grandparents.

WN: Did your brothers and sisters do that too?

BH: No.

WN: Just you?

BH: I don't know, I know I used to go. I don't remember my brother or sisters going and working over there.

WN: Did you go because you wanted to go or they made you go?

BH: No, I wanted to go. I wanted to learn something different. I'm a curious person. You see what's on the other side so you can say, "I did it." I'm the type of guy that would want to do it. I did the coffee thing.

WN: And did your grandparents pay you?

BH: No. I know I got a nice watch one time. Brand new watch that my grandpa gave me. But I didn't go there to work on wages. I just went over there to be with my grandpa, help him work in the coffee land, and learn about that side of the family.

WN: What did you consider harder work—coffee or pineapple?

BH: I think it's got every—they have the hard work. That [coffee] one was you were on your own. Here [pineapple], you follow, you have supervisor. Over there, my grandpa always said, "Do that," and that was it. You did it on your—whatever pace you wanted to go, you did it. Over here, you got a *luna* always watching you. So that was, again, a learning curve for my side, on the Big Island—what's out there if you want to do that. You know what I mean? So you look ahead and

think about what you want to do. Do you want to be a coffee picker or do you want to be a pineapple picker? (Laughs)

WN: So your parents never said, “Hey, we need money for the family, so work pineapple,” or anything like that?

BH: It was just a learning experience.

WN: Who were your *lunas* when you were a student?

BH: I remember the Matsuis.

WN: Matsui?

BH: Yes, Gilbert and Richard Matsui. They were two brothers, I think.

There was a strict Japanese [boss], but he [became] a very close friend of mine. You know, when I came back, I got to know all these guys. Some, we connected. Like with gardeners, we were always looking for horse manure, and I used to raise horses. I had a stallion that, when he used the bathroom, he always used it in one place, so when you go get manure, it’s all in one big pile, so that’s the one they want. They don’t have to go scatter here and there, they just get the manure. But yeah, Matsui was one of my—because I guess he handled the *hō hana* section.

WN: So working pineapple, you had bosses who are supervising you guys as opposed to Kona, which is your grandparents.

BH: Yes, they just told me what to do and I did what they wanted me to do.

WN: So what kind of lifestyle did you like better? You like the regimented kind over here or the . . .

BH: Well, it didn’t bother me. I mean, I could take it or leave it. You know what I mean? Like I said, it’s a learning curve. You know how to work around supervisors and you. . . . (Laughs) I mean, as a kid, you think a lot, but you learn from them because I came back and I started working with them. So I’m on their side. You have to understand where they’re coming from. I mean, I went to a lot of schools—the kind that involve management. You learn techniques to learn about people and how to deal with people. But I learned a lot is through hard knocks. I learned it in the military as a sergeant. I learned as I worked my way up in the building industry and in the post office.

WN: So you graduated Lāna‘i High . . .

BH: Nineteen fifty-four.

WN: . . . fifty-four, yeah? And then you went to UH Mānoa after that?

BH: Yes.

WN: What did you want to do?

BH: Well, I went into ag tech, technical agriculture, but I didn’t last very long. I don’t think I was prepared for college life. I didn’t prepare myself.

WN: Well, you did well enough to get in.

BH: But you see, I hated math. Where I failed was in college algebra and college trigonometry. That's where my downfall was. And there were too many women there. Too many girls. A lot of distraction.

(Laughter)

WN: Did you dorm over there?

BH: You wouldn't believe the dorms we had. You saw the veterans' dorms there, right next to Mid-Pac [Mid-Pacific Institute]? They were all Quonset huts like chicken coops?

WN: Yeah.

BH: That's what I stayed in. You had central bath and the one small cubicle. That was the veterans' dorm. Afterwards, they built it across the street, way down the other end.

WN: Where they have the dorms now?

BH: Yes, we had beautiful dorms over there. But I was in the chicken coop. Maybe that was one of the reasons why I didn't . . .

WN: So this is next to Mid-Pac?

BH: Right below Mid-Pac.

WN: Below Mid-Pac.

BH: Yeah.

WN: Oh, okay.

BH: So I didn't stay very long.

WN: So how long did you stay there?

BH: I guess, you would call it a quarter?

WN: Oh, one semester?

BH: One semester?

WN: Yeah.

BH: And that was it.

WN: And that was it.

BH: And then, I went out and worked for K & Y [Auto] Service before I went into the military.

WN: What kind of business was that?

BH: I was doing glass tinting and mechanical.

WN: This is over on Queen Street?

BH: Queen and South [streets]. The corner right there. There was a big service station that used to be K & Y Service. It was surprising, you know. I used to service City Mill trucks. Then, I ended up working at City Mill Company. But I used to do glass tinting and service vehicles at K & Y. From there, I went into the military.

WN: So you spent one semester at Mānoa, UH. Then, you quit. Then, you went to K & Y. And then, you went military.

BH: Military, yeah.

WN: How long were you in the military?

BH: Three years.

WN: Three years, oh, okay. And when you came back from the military, you didn't come back to Lāna'i. You went back to Honolulu.

BH: I came back to Lāna'i for a little while. And then, I ended up in Honolulu. That's when I started working for—you know, I was looking for a job. Any kind of job, just to get out of unemployment compensation. I was getting—I was enjoying that. You know, you don't work and people give you money. But everybody else was working, so I wasn't too comfortable, so anything will do. So I started off as a warehouse helper at City Mill Company. And I worked myself to division manager. But again, like I said, I worked for the post office too.

WN: So you had two jobs.

BH: Two full jobs, yeah.

WN: So what did you think of city life as opposed to country life?

BH: You know, I'm very adaptable. I can adapt to anything. So to me, it was a lot of fun.

WN: Where did you live?

BH: I lived all over. I started in the boarding house. When I went to the university, I stayed at private homes until I quit. Then, I stayed at the Japanese boarding house right there at Rose Street. You know, where the bus comes down on School Street.

(Doorbell rings.)

WN: Maybe we should end over here.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 56-38-2-13

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Roberto “Bob” Hera (BH)

Lāna‘i City, Lāna‘i

June 7, 2013

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: Okay, we’re going to begin. Today is June 7, 2013 and I’m interviewing Roberto, Bob, Hera for session number two for our Lāna‘i City oral history project. And this is Warren Nishimoto. And again, this is session number two with Bob Hera.

So Bob, good afternoon.

BH: Good afternoon, Mr. Warren.

WN: And well, last time we were talking about your young-kid days growing up on Lāna‘i, your father’s involvement with the Filipino Federation [of America], all the childhood chores and things that you did growing up on Lāna‘i. We talked about Lāna‘i High [and Elementary] School and you attending that school. And you went to UH Mānoa for a little while and then you went into the army. And you went to Honolulu and you worked at City Mill, where you became division manager at City Mill. What I want to do is to start with you coming back to Lāna‘i after your career in Honolulu with City Mill. And this was in 1965.

BH: In the mid-[19]60s, right.

WN: Nineteen sixty-five, you came back to Lāna‘i. So my first question for you today, Bob, is why did you come back to Lāna‘i?

BH: Okay, it was personal. It was a personal decision. I went through a family divorce thing, and I sent the kids for my mom to take care of.

WN: Oh, to Lāna‘i.

BH: To Lāna‘i. A couple years later, I came back into family court again and their court order was, “You either stay with your kids or you lose the kids.” So my kids were important to me, and I’m the type of guy that I’m not afraid of starting all over again. I was pretty young yet. So I made some connections. I knew Adrian DeMello. He was director of labor relations for Dole company. He was a well-known referee in sports if you remember the name, Adrian DeMello. He was a well-known sports figure in terms of refereeing and stuff. And he and I got to be close friends. You know, I attended one of his sessions—study sessions. I mentioned to him that I was leaving [Honolulu] and I was going back to Lāna‘i, and he said, “Hey, wait, wait. Let me call up the plantation.” So he called up the manager, and he said, “I have a Lāna‘i person that’s moving back—relocating to. . . .”

But I knew the manager. My dad worked with all of the management people. So he said, “Oh, wow, the timing is pretty good because we’re starting a management-training program, and he can apply for that.” So I came home and applied for that. In the meantime, I was working at my parents’ home, building additions so that it accommodates me. Then they notified me that I would start the program in June 1967.

WN: So between [19]65 and [19]67, you were employed with the company?

BH: No.

WN: Oh, I see.

BH: I was building a boat for my dad. I was building a jet boat for my dad for his retirement. He was going to retire.

WN: From the Filipino Federation?

BH: No, he was going to retire from the company. He’s fishing, and he and I go way back in fishing. He had a boat at one time. That’s how I got familiar with it. So I said, “I’m going to build you a boat.” So all that time while I was waiting to start with the company, I was building a boat. That’s when I first met my wife. So I stopped my project on the boat and took care of that business. And then, I finished the boat and started working for the company. So I kept myself pretty busy working on the house, doing renovations and stuff like that, and building a boat.

WN: And after eight years plus in Honolulu, coming back to Lāna‘i, what was that like?

BH: My life there was very active. I did a lot of entertaining—you know, you deal with your clients—you know, especially with contractors. I was the employee president for a few years. I was known as the party guy (WN chuckles) because I’d get all the donations from the contractors that I do business with, and they knew we’d have our annual party from donations from the contractors. So I was very active.

But I’m a country boy, so I cannot just do anything, especially if you’re not afraid of hard work. I mean, I could go dig ditches and work myself up from there. It’s just the part that I’m not afraid of doing anything that had to get me somewhere because you have to start from somewhere. So to me, even if I have to dig ditches, the opportunity was there for me for management because all my life since I left, I’ve been involved in management, whether it’s in the military or whether it’s in civilian life. So work was nothing. That’s where you have to be not afraid to work to get to where you want. Nowadays, you see a lot of the people who want everything on a silver platter without working, so that’s a different mindset from what I went through at that time. So when I came to Lāna‘i, it’s just a matter of adjusting, settling down, finding some people that I used to run around with, and from there, kind of work myself into working with the company.

So from there, again, it’s like I said, you’re always looking for opportunities. This, I learned when I worked for the post office, is you learn everything about what’s there, and with that knowledge, you become somebody that’s important to the company. Like in the post office, I used to drive around Kaka‘ako with my gabardines on a mail truck, collecting mail boxes. I did everything—mail, parcels. I learned everything. Whatever was there to learn for future. So when I told them I was leaving, they weren’t very happy about it. They said, “You know everything.” They can put me in everything. I can drive a mail truck, I can do parcels, I can sort mail, I can do anything. So

that's the same thing that when coming to Lānaʻi, learn everything about the operation and then wherever they need somebody, "Oh, we'll send Bob."

WN: So you were working post office same time you were working at City Mill.

BH: At City Mill, yeah.

WN: Was it both full-time jobs?

BH: Two full-time jobs, yes.

WN: Wow.

BH: So my family and my kids didn't—that's where the problem was. You know, not being around. So things happened and you live and learn, so from that lesson we just move on.

WN: Well, let's talk about [19]67 when you started with the company. What were your first responsibilities?

BH: Well, this program that they had first started, there was two of us—Joe Felipe and myself. It was to train a supervisor in every aspect of the company. So you are assigned to one division and you learn that, and then you go to the next. Start from, you know, you can go to planting department or harvesting department or field maintenance department or accounting department or personnel department. So you go through all those—just like what I was talking about.

WN: Oh, and how long with each department?

BH: You would stay there for a few months.

WN: Oh, okay.

BH: So this was a long-term program to develop a supervisor that is well versed in the whole aspects of the company. So trying to teach them everything so you can put them in any place in case you need them. I mean, cross—what they call that—that cross indoctrination into all the different departments.

WN: Right.

BH: In case they need somebody, they have somebody.

WN: And this Joe Felipe was with—he was training with you or he was one of your bosses?

BH: No, he was one of the other trainees.

WN: He was a trainee with you?

BH: There were two that started and there was only two that they ever did in that particular program. My first assignment was with the personnel department, which is human resources, and with Yasu Nagamine. And there, I went into a lot of stuff that I wasn't really knowledgeable of like setting up a newspaper for the summer program, running a cafeteria. It was part of the training indoctrination. My job actually is indoctrination for every person that comes into the company—teach them the house rules, safety rules—whatever division. I did that.

So I did a lot of stuff—you know, immigration work because we didn't have any immigration department. I remember helping people when you apply to bring somebody in. I knew all of the regulation and laws. That's where I find out where the state was—because they have laws about immigration where you can petition somebody, and if that person becomes dependent upon the government, on the state, like you go into welfare, that person can be sent back to the Philippines at the [expense] of the person that petitioned him here, because when he signs an affidavit of support, he is responsible to support that person. This is something the state never did, never followed up on, so it was a big thing.

A lot of the immigrants coming to the United States, the first thing they want to do is garner welfare, right? Well, that's the immigration department that had rules but nobody to police it. I saw that and a lot of people saw that, but to this day, I don't think the state does anything about it. So instead of sending them back, they're collecting all whatever they can collect, but actually, the law says that person has to be deported at the expense of the person that petitioned. You see, because they signed an affidavit of support. That's part of the petition program.

WN: And what was the company's role in all of this?

BH: Well, they didn't have anybody to do the paperwork, so I used to do the paperwork for them because a lot of the people that petitioned are our workforce.

WN: Right.

BH: They worked for the company. You know, the job opportunities were with the company. We would help them to bring their wives, their unmarried sons and daughters and so forth.

WN: Oh, I see.

BH: So we did that. I used to even take pictures of them. You got to have the pictures and ID—passport stuff too. So that's some of the things that we did and I learned to do. But personnel, you know, it's everything that has to do with paperwork. Like my biggest project with that department was to get everybody set up with the proper documentation for social security. So a lot of names changed because a lot of guys was nicknaming like "Squeeky" or "Mothball" and they were using that in their documentation in their personnel file. So I had to go to every plantation person to get them documented with social security. There were only two people in the whole plantation I couldn't get any documentation. You know, really legal like birth certificate, baptism certificate—information from when they make the survey and . . . What they call that?

WN: Census.

BH: The census. These are all the areas. Most of our workers were Filipinos. A lot of the records that I tried to get—all the municipality's records were all burnt during the Second World War, so there's no documents. So that was one of the hardest things. But one of them was a Hawaiian and one of them that came over, he kind of sneaked on a ship and came to Lāna'i. Two of the old-timers on the island. Those were the only two that I couldn't really get the proper document for, but they have ways to do it.

WN: So you had to get this documentation for everybody, not just the recent immigrants?

BH: Everybody in the company.

WN: So even the ones born in Hawai‘i?

BH: It was to make sure that everybody was documented for social security, so when it was time—you know, everybody was okay. That was an interesting project because it got me to go inquire to the Philippines to try get the—that’s where the story came up that the Filipinos could buy their documentation, (laughs) their birth certificate, in the Philippines. So we had to be real careful about that because most of the records were destroyed during the Second World War. So that was one of the interesting projects.

But again, I was on loan to other departments in case they needed a supervisor during the harvesting season. So it was like that throughout my career until I became the superintendent for utilities. But before that, I could go anywhere. I’m not afraid of heights. So when we had projects that involved height, like fixing a tank, they called me to supervise the job because I wasn’t afraid. I’d climb down Maunalei pipeline onto the gulch. I’d do high-rise tanks and stuff like that. So I was real—in terms of flexibility. . . . That was before I became the superintendent for utilities.

WN: Before we get to that, I wanted to ask you, you were assistant to Yasu . . .

BH: Nagamine.

WN: . . . Nagamine?

BH: Yeah.

WN: So he was the personnel manager?

BH: He was the personnel manager.

WN: Right, okay. And you said that besides hunting down everyone to get their records for social security purposes and helping with the documentation for the immigration and so forth, you also did things like run the cafeteria. What did that entail?

BH: Well, every summer, we brought in workers, right?

WN: Oh, temporary workers?

BH: Temporary workers for the summer season. I was involved in that portion of it. You know, indoctrinating all the incoming—and we tried almost every kind of groups. You know, Samoans, Micronesians, Mexican nationals, and Mexicans that were legally in the United States. And we had Boy Scouts. Then we had groups from schools—football teams. I was involved—and that’s why I said a newspaper—we had a summer newspaper, and I ran the cafeteria.

WN: So these are like groups from off-island . . .

BH: Off-island.

WN: . . . coming in?

BH: Even the students, I mean, everybody’s got to be indoctrinated. That was my *kuleana*.

WN: Oh, I see.

BH: Whether it's the Lānaʻi school program, where we get students from Lānaʻi school to come, it was every single person that had to understand the house rules—the safety rules. They had to come through me. That was my *kuleana*.

WN: And where did they live?

BH: Well, like I said, I mentioned about the school. They used to be in the schools—because you get the cafeteria and you have all the classrooms as dormitories. But the year that they said, “No, we’re not going to house them anymore,” that’s when I was involved in the utilities department. I was assigned there because as one of the assignments that I had, we built the log cabin dorms. We built eight dormitories, one huge cafeteria, one rec center, a cottage for the counselors, and laundromat. We had the whole works that you would have to accommodate.

WN: And where was this?

BH: This was—you know where the senior citizen [housing] is?

WN: Yeah, yeah.

BH: And then, you have also the apartments.

WN: Right.

BH: That was a park at one time. And if you talked to the old-timers that go back, that park was a center of activities. They used to call it, “Dole Park.”

WN: Mm-hmm [yes]. That’s the old—you mean the old Dole Park.

BH: Old Dole Park, right. That had all the parade grounds, football—we had track there. It was an all-purpose type of a park. The old-timers will remember it. Up on the Lānaʻi Avenue side, there was a big ditch there, and they had a big—like a bandstand. In front of there, going west, would be the baseball area. So you had like a [grand]stand over there where people would go to watch. But then you had a fence around so that it kind of separated away from the community. So that was a park. It was used for years and years. Every time we had a parade, the parade would end there.

The company used to have the annual end-of-the-year harvesting party to celebrate the season is over. We had free beer, free hot dogs, free sodas, and stuff for the community every year. We talked about how all the thing start to change when the unions came in. So after that, we didn’t have any, but that was a central area. They needed space to build a dormitory, so we ended up taking almost the whole thing, except for one section where the football players used to do recreation. It’s just like a recreational park. You know, one section of that. The dormitory ran from on ‘Ilima side, halfway through the park, all the way down to the border of the housing and went all the way down to Lānaʻi Avenue. No, they still left a big section up in the front opening. So it was very expensive in terms of a dormitory. You know, we did it with logs from the West Coast.

WN: And how did you folks deal with these hundreds of young teenage kids from Honolulu or other parts of the world gathering in the summer?

BH: Well, there were differences in the program and who came. You know what I mean? Because when we did the Mexican nationals, the first group of Mexican nationals were older. I don't know who did it, but they recruited old Mexican guys.

WN: What do you mean? How old?

BH: In their sixties and some of them were seventies, I think. So when they started walking off the plane—you know, because it's hard work out there. In fact, we have one of the guys buried out there because they couldn't afford to ship him back to the Mainland. If I remember, the deal was if you come work for six months for us, we'll pay your way. One way. You work for [another] six months, and we'll pay your way back the other way. You know what I mean? So that was a pretty good deal where you would have your way paid back and forth.

WN: So these Mexican workers came from Mexico or from . . .

BH: The Mexican nationals—some of them, they came . . .

WN: Oh, Mexican nationals.

BH: Yes, because a lot of them spoke only Spanish. They couldn't speak English. So that was a trial run. We had a crash course in speaking Spanish, and you know what happens, if you know just a little bit. . . . So we did the program and tried to get younger guys from California. We faced the same problem. They come over here, free trip, right? They work for a few [months], and they're gone. I think, one season, we had only one guy [left] from the original group who came. So we depended a lot on the students, and a lot of people came. Family guys, they come and work over here and they stay at their parents'—family places. And then, we had people from all over the islands that came because the visitor industry wasn't that great yet. That's where the plantation came in. See, that filled the gap.

WN: But when you got somebody from, say, Honolulu to come, same deal?

BH: Same.

WN: You work six months, you get the free trip back?

BH: No.

WN: You guys didn't pay their trip?

BH: No, it was different. They found their way over here, and then, you know . . .

WN: But the housing was free?

BH: We had the dormitories, but they had a certain percentage of their pay paid for a lot of stuff. They had to pay for some of their work gear—some of them were free. But that was all worked into the equation. So we did do that program for years. Then, what changed the program is when the visitor industry started. So if you give a person a choice, work in the pine fields or work in a hotel in nice clean clothes and stuff like that, we started losing people.

WN: But this was later on, right? I mean, like the . . .

BH: This was after [19]58. The building boom started in [19]58. So it went all the way to the [19]60s when they started building all these hotels. From there on, as the thing opened up . . .

WN: You mean like Hotel Lānaʻi and . . .

BH: No, no, you're going to figure, in Oʻahu and a lot of places—all the different islands where our work force came from. So that kind of messed up our system.

WN: Oh, I see. I mean, in other words, they had a choice of working in, say, a Honolulu hotel, as opposed to coming to Lānaʻi to work in the summer.

BH: That's right. That changed the whole . . .

WN: I see.

BH: The hotels were being built in Maui, Kauaʻi, the Big [Island]—you know, all over the place, hotels were coming up. So they took away our workforce. We had to get back together and say, “Okay, we're stuck with this.” Then, they came up with these Mormon kids. Because Maui Pine[apple Company, Ltd.] had the same problem as us. You know, they were using Mexican nationals just like us, trying to find laborers to work in their fields over there, especially after the hotels started popping up in Maui. Who wants to go work in the pine fields and crack their tail out there? So that changed the equation on trying to recruit. See, people don't really understand that. Like I said, I've been in that particular area at that time, so I knew what the problems were and what we were doing about it. So our recruiters on the Mainland came up with this Mormon program. They have an organization that had these kids all lined up. So we had a program where they'd supply their own counselors, their own supervisors and everything. So they'd come over here and work for three months.

WN: The counselors would come too?

BH: The counselors would come too. The job foremen would come with them. They had a whole program, so we had that. Maui Pine and us had that until the end. But again, things changed in the plantation because what happened is, we started to experiment with controlling the ripeness of the pineapple because we knew we were having problems with the labor force. At that time, everything was zeroed into the summer when workers were available. So the ripening of the fruit—you know, the cycle—had to coincide with that. You know what I mean? So summertime was when the workers—so summertime is when the harvesting is . . .

WN: That was how it was before?

BH: That's when we worked day and night because we had the workforce. So that changed again, in terms of—we were able to force the fruiting of the pineapple so we could harvest all year around. So it's things like that that really changed the whole thing. It affects a lot of areas. We hired Young Brothers to do the shipping operation because it's not a system where we'd work for the whole summer, day and night. And then they'd take our tugboats and rent them out. Like when Marlon Brando did a Tahiti [movie] . . .

WN: Oh, *Mutiny on the Bounty*?

BH: *Mutiny on the Bounty*, yes. That's our tugboats that were involved in that. But then, when we did the forced fruiting, it changes the whole picture again. But what kept us going, to tell the truth, is

our *wahine*. Our women workforce. The wives. Because we had a continuous [yearlong] workforce with the wives. You know, people never realized that, but the women kept us going [with pineapple harvesting].

WN: So these are like wives of the full-time workers—the men?

BH: Yes, the men were all truck drivers or they were doing this, but the women started coming in. They became truck drivers, they became supervisors—Matsuko was one of our supervisors.

WN: Yeah, Matsuko Matsumoto?

BH: Matsumoto, yes. That's how I got to know her real good. Matsuko. So they were driving trucks, shuttle trucks, harvesting equipment. The women were doing the jobs. So you know, if you talk to anybody, they're not going to say that. But I know because I was involved in finding the workforce. That's why, when I said in my first conversation with Noboru [Oyama], "Where are you going to get the workforce?" See, a lot of these immigrants came down—the wives of the young Filipino workers became the workforce. Some of them, I used to do immigration for bring them in. See how things evolve into. . . . And some of them were schoolteachers, they come from the field. Schoolteachers are now walking and picking up pineapple. But that's the way it was. That was the only kind of work available. So the women, to me, are what kept us going for a long time.

WN: Because they could work [harvesting pineapple] year around?

BH: All year around. So, we had a steady workforce of women.

WN: I see. And you know, the Mormons that came, they were from Utah?

BH: No, no, from all over. From California, from Utah, from all where they had the Mormons. But it's a Mormon organization. That's a big organization. The Mormons, Boy Scouts, in all kinds of stuff. The Mormons were really, really involved in that.

WN: So when you folks started to go year-round and relying more on women workers year-round, what became of the dorms?

BH: Well, the dormitories, people used to use them, but it used to be vacant most of the time.

WN: Ah, I see.

BH: The cafeteria maybe people used it for—because we never had a place for parties, for weddings and stuff like that. It was used quite a bit for community use. When [hotel] construction [workers] came in, we had a place for put the guys.

WN: And what about like the school kids on Lānaʻi? Could they still work summertime?

BH: They were part of the workforce.

WN: Like when you folks were school kids?

BH: Yes. But see, they'd work up till—and then they'd leave. So it's a workforce for a few years, and then they're gone—if they wanted to work in the fields. But they did. All of my kids worked in

the field except for the ones that—well, Marisa did work in the field. I think Christopher did, too. The school kids were working as much as we could use them.

WN: And then, the Mexican nationals, you said, after a while, they would just leave for other jobs?

BH: Yeah, other jobs.

WN: Where?

BH: The younger increments that came, you know, I'd go to Honolulu, and I'd just find them in pancake houses or different—you know, all the kind of jobs they could find. So you know, that, for us, doesn't work. We needed somebody that would be there for the duration, for the whole season.

WN: Now, this decision by the company to go year-round harvesting, you know, to delay or—I forgot what the term you used to . . .

BH: It's . . .

WN: Instead of just the summer.

BH: Forced—we called it, “forced ripening.”

WN: Forced ripening. Okay. So before, all the crop used to ripen in the summer?

BH: Yeah.

WN: So you would get all these workers . . .

BH: You know, summer, we had a workforce.

WN: Yes, right, right. Now, the decision to force- ripen and go year-round, was that because of the difficulty in getting labor for the summer? Or were there other reasons?

BH: I think this had something to do with that—you know, the available workforce. It was just another factor to that. You know, you've been experimenting, and finally, it comes to fruition. They say, “Oh, wow, we can do this,” or, “We can control this.” So then, it changed the whole operation mentality.

We said, “We don't have to wait for summer.” But then again, that changed the aspects of the shipping. Like I said, Young Brothers—we did away with this, we did away with that. But I'm in the corporate side. I didn't know much about the corporate level. So in the end, that's how Murdock came in [and said that] the plantation wasn't being managed right. We were losing money, we were going through bankruptcy. But you see these changes in terms of pineapple.

WN: Well, after personnel, you went to utility or you went to harvesting?

BH: I went to harvesting.

WN: Harvesting. Okay. How come you moved over to harvesting?

BH: No, it's not how come they . . .

(Laughter)

WN: How come they chose you to do that?

BH: I don't know. I mean, it's up to the management—the big guys say, “Oh, who do you want? This guy or that guy?” I was one of the guys. It's because of my relationship to all these old-timers. I had a very close relationship with all the big bosses in harvesting—John Botelho, Sonny Fernandez, Noboru Oyama. You know, because of that—when I went through the training with them, so they know my MO. They know what kind of person I was because I ran the program. If night shift, “Okay, Bob, you handle the night-shift program.” So that, in itself, the big responsibilities, so if you can handle that, you can handle anything because you're dealing with all the picking machines, all the gangs—everybody. I mean, you set the schedule, the lineup and everything. That's where the computer comes in. You start learning about the—going through the high tech . . .

WN: So was harvesting considered one of the major departments?

BH: It was. That and the engineering department, which I got stuck in afterwards.

WN: Oh, yeah, engineering too?

BH: Yeah, engineering, utilities. Engineering has all the mechanics, the welders—the whole works—the plumbing. When not harvesting, the support, it comes from the engineering department. The agriculture engineering is my dad guys. They studied the field ripening and do the stuff for incentive programs. Research—that's the old name for it—research department. So the engineering was the biggest support. You know, they had all the—not only for harvesting, but for everything—you know, like for land prep, field maintenance. All supported by the engineering department.

WN: And what was your title with harvesting?

BH: Oh, I had both. I had job supervisor. I was also a field foreman. As a field foreman, I was one of those that set up programs because of my familiarity. You do all the assignments and stuff like that and how to do all that because my mind is still young yet. A lot of the old-timers, they don't want to get involved in that.

WN: So you were the one assigning personnel to . . .

BH: Assigning gangs, reassigning in the fields because you got to kind of rotate. Heavy density, light density—you know, fields. Because people like incentives. It went into how many loads that you were required to pick for that day. If anything goes over that, it's all free money.

WN: And by that time, they had—they harvested by the boom harvester?

BH: Well, see, in the harvesting department, we evolved. There was a slow channel into a different technology. You see, the first time, picking was done by hand, loaded in boxes. They cut the top off, put 'em in the box. Then the loading man loads them on a truck. Everything was done by hand before we started mechanizing. So the first machine was a machine that operated by itself. I mean, it was just it had to move by truck. So it was set up where the bins go through a truck station. The truck station put a bin on a truck, okay. The truck goes out—single trucks. Now, at

that time, only single trucks were involved. Okay, and so the machine goes up. The truck goes underneath, and the machine drops them to the machine. So it moves with the truck.

WN: The machine . . .

BH: We used to call it, “harvesting machine.”

WN: Okay. But this is not a boom, this is a . . .

BH: Okay, the machine and it has a boom.

WN: Oh, okay, okay.

BH: So the boom handles one gang. So in that fifteen lines—because the block is set up to accommodate the boom.

WN: Right, okay.

BH: So you go one way, you come around the other way, you pick the other half. So you get the boom out here, and it goes to the middle of the block.

WN: Oh, I see. And the truck is driving on the road?

BH: The truck is driving the block road. When it hits the end of the block, you turn around and come back.

WN: Goes to the next road?

BH: Goes to the next road. You take the other half of the . . .

WN: I see.

BH: The harvesting machine in those days didn’t have radio communication. So what they did was they had so many trucks assigned to—depending on the density of the field. Because you could fill a truck in fifteen minutes if you had a *manso* gang. You know, when you get a high[-producing] gang that will *manso*—really out for kill.

WN: (Laughs) What’s the name of that gang?

BH: They call it, “*manso*.”

WN: *Manso*?

BH: Yeah, it’s like, “Go get them!” *Manso*.

WN: What’s that? A Filipino word?

BH: It’s Filipino—yeah. That’s where they’d go call a gang, “The *manso* gang.”

WN: Oh, these are the guys that can work hard and fast?

- BH: They can really work. We had one gang, *wahines*, that did really terrific. You know, it's called a *manso* gang. And people don't want to go with them (WN laughs) because they'd die in the line, you know what I mean?
- WN: And then because you had that kind of *manso* gang, the truck goes faster?
- BH: Oh, yeah, they'll tell the truck [driver], "Speed up, speed up!" (WN laughs.) But then, the truck only moves as fast as the slowest person. Before, there was no incentive. Before, if you can fill up the truck and wait for another truck to come, that was the incentive. There was no extra money. But then, they changed that. But first of all, it'd have a truck assigned. So this other truck would go back, this other goes in. But if they hurry up and fill it up, the truck is on the way so there's no truck, right? So there's a lot of lost time involved. So then, they came in with the radios. You have a dispatcher. So the job foreman can say, "Okay, takes X amount of time to come from the shuttle station to the field." So it became another responsibility for the job supervisor to make sure he gets a truck behind his machine before it's full. So that increased the capacity for more bins, more pineapples, with the coming of the radio. But you had to add on a dispatcher so that you could communicate.
- WN: So when one truck fills up, what, you take the machine off the top of the truck?
- BH: The machine go up, the truck would pull out and wait for the . . .
- WN: And the machine would just wait there?
- BH: Yes.
- WN: And then, a truck comes and goes underneath again.
- BH: Right.
- WN: And then, you start again?
- BH: And then, you keep on going.
- WN: I see.
- BH: So if you had it timed right, you wouldn't have much lost time because you'd have to put down—say supervisor—again, it keep the responsibilities. If you get too much lost time, then they question the supervisor, right?
- WN: Uh-huh [yes].
- BH: So that's the kind of stuff that evolved with that. So that all came into play with the incentive programs.
- WN: Now, incentive programs—was that the more trucks you fill up, that's how the gang gets paid?
- BH: You got paid extra. This is where the engineering department came in. They figured it all out that this gang, with this amount of pineapple, can fill up X amount of bins.
- WN: In one day?

BH: In one day.

WN: I see.

BH: You know, in the eight hour—you know, without any lost time and all that. So they put that all into their figuration. They developed this incentive program, and that's what the workers say, "Okay. If I can fill up two bins in the time . . ."

WN: Two trucks?

BH: Yeah, two trucks. If we were scheduled to fill up eight, if we can do sixteen, it's like double day, you know what I mean? So that kind of a mentality developed in the plantation workers so that you could beef up your productions. So it was an interesting time. And they [also] developed that with planting. But this would be individual, right? So you have individuals that are outstanding planters, and they make money all the time.

They give you so much time to plant a cut. A cut is a certain—they divide the block into cuts. And then, each one got assigned a cut. You have to spread the—*pulapula* trucks would come. *Pulapula* trucks are trucks with the planting material. Again, it's another whole operation itself. The [truck] guys would come and drop all the planting material in the block, you know. And then, the planters would pick it up in their little bag and just spread it out. And then, they'll plant, see. Again, you can finish this in two hours. If you finish it in one hour, you get one hour bonus. So it's like that. So there were outstanding planters. They're older guys. Top planters, you know.

WN: Now, because planting is—in essence, you're going at your own pace, so you had some good planters way ahead of the slow planters.

BH: Right.

WN: I see, I see.

BH: So you had an incentive program in the planting department also. You could make money if you got a tough back and you're efficient enough. So the *pulapula*, again, is another operation that we have actually changed the whole culture. So everything is set up time. You know, you cycle and you time. So we experimented. I was involved in a lot of the experiments with planting material also. But the usual way of doing it was—we called it, "slips," or, "suckers." So when a pineapple plant grows, and it comes up with the fruit, once you take the fruit, they have slips that come out underneath where the fruit was. So those, we let it grow at a certain size, and guys would go out, and they strip them.

WN: Those were the slips?

BH: The slips. And then set them up on top for dry because before you put the plant into the ground, the butt has to be dried, otherwise you'd have butt rot. So regardless of what material you used, it had to be dry to put it in the ground. Then, you'd have to come with a picking machine again to put it into—but instead of the pineapple [harvesting] bin going underneath, you have a *pulapula* bin that goes underneath. So the *pulapula* fills up, and he goes out, and they all have sides that drop down and guys with the hook.

WN: Oh, so they would pick slips—*pulapula* with hooks?

- BH: With picking machine and then the hook . . .
- WN: Oh, and they would sit in the machine—sit in the . . .
- BH: It would sit—the machine would sit on top . . .
- WN: Like a tractor or something?
- BH: So you put the *pulapula* into the conveyer belt instead of pineapple, and they would go up, and they fill up the *pulapula* bin. That would go out to the planting fields. But that had to be cured first, so somebody's going to be weighing the *pulapula*—you know, research guys collect data to make sure that it's ready. Same thing with the crown. Before, you just take the pineapple off and throw the crown. They would go and collect crowns after it dried up. But that's another operation by itself. Right?
- WN: You mean the crowns?
- BH: Yeah, because you'd have to go back again. Same thing with the slips and the suckers. Worse, if you didn't have planting material, you'd have to get the suckers that come out from underneath. And it's bigger material.
- WN: What was the best planting material of the three?
- BH: Well, the slips was the one that was popular. But afterwards, you see, again, evolve into an operation where you can set up so that you have a blower up there. They throw the pineapple with the crown inside. They remove the crown, throw the pineapple in, and before the pineapple drops into the bin, right in front there, they extended it. They made a bin for the crowns so that when you throw your pineapple and crown together, the blower would blow the crown into the crown bin, and the pineapple would go into the regular pineapple bin. So before they go to the truck station, there was the shuttle trucks. They'll stop by the crown dipping station, they call it, because every crown has to be dipped into a chemical so you don't have butt rot because it's not dried out.
- WN: Not like slips.
- BH: Like the slips, how they used to do that. Or it's sitting out there, all thrown over there. People would pick them up and load them up. So it'd be dipped. It has a hinge on the—so it'd drop down into the vat conduct, and then, it'd go into the shuttle station and the Ross carriers come pick up and load them on the shuttle trucks. They started to evolve into a much efficient type of operation, trying to get the crown at the same time as the pineapple, so you do all the same operation at one time. So that's what happened on the crown. But that was, again, a lot of this experimenting. That's how I learned about butt rot. People don't know about those things. You know, how you get the planting material ready because people don't get involved in that unless you're actually doing it. You know what I mean?
- So through my different operations that I worked with, I even worked with the research side where you have a pineapple crown, you can cut them into—before, we're always looking for planting material. We have a special pineapple. Because we do all this research, experimenting with the better fruit, that has translucent or you know, cannery fruit or fresh fruit or whatever. So we used to cut the crowns into so many pieces. First, you quarter them. You plant that, that grows.

- WN: You can plant—you don't have to plant the whole crown?
- BH: No, you don't have to plant the whole crown.
- WN: Oh, I didn't know that.
- BH: So we were doing it because we had special crowns that we were dealing with. Everybody's got their own secret. The kind of pineapple that every company—that'd be suitable for marketing, shelf life, and all that's involved in sales. I was involved in that. You could cut them into tiny slivers. We even experimented with the root because if you develop a clone that was fantastic, you would want planting material to start going and expanding that particular crop. So that's what it was. You know, we did come up with—like for cannery, where the thing would be translucent—it'd still be green yet, but the thing is ready to go in the cannery. It never even turned color yet, so that's, again, experimenting with the different types of clones of pineapple.
- WN: So how did you folks distinguish between what goes to fresh fruit and what goes to cannery?
- BH: That would be the cannery people who look at the fruit.
- WN: Yeah, but fresh fruit would probably be better, yeah?
- BH: Well, the fresh fruit, yes. The fresh-fruit pickers would go out—if the sales were good for a certain time—because you have the mother plant, first ratoon, second ratoon, and even third ratoon crops every year, you had. A lot of times, the plant crop was too big. A lot of them had a tendency to be like a pointed top. That was the mother, the first fruit, the second—the first ratoon might be a little better shape because people buy with their eyes. A lot of them, they don't know how to—knock, knock, knock. But all that is telling you whether it's full, juice or not—the knocking. It's not if it's sweet or not. But if it's really full juice and it has the tendency to be sweet. That's what it is. I go, *tok tok tok*, to like the watermelon. But see, all that stuff is not us deciding, you had some other people that decide what would be the best for fresh fruit. You look at the shelf life, you look at the color, you look at the fruit—the flesh itself—how long it's going to last. They come down and say, “Okay, you pick them at shell color number three.” So the fresh-fruit guys go out and pick—they got a special fresh-fruit machine that handles the fruit delicately.
- WN: Oh, I see. So they don't put them on the boom, and it doesn't go up the machine and into the truck?
- BH: It's a boom. It's a boom, too, but it doesn't have all that other stuff. We still pick them on the regular boom sometimes, but it's just handled differently.
- WN: Oh, more delicately.
- BH: Yeah, and then they also have fresh-fruit machines. But those are the kind of things that you have a supervisor that knows what's best for the shelf. So that's the difference. It's more hands-on and not like a mass production for the juice or for the chunk pineapple or slice pineapple. It's different, see. You have to be real careful because there's a lot of bruising. Then it comes right back to the job foremen, “You're smashing all the fruit.” So you have to have the production and quality.
- WN: Did it take the certain kind of picker to be a fresh-fruit picker as opposed to a cannery picker?

BH: Not necessarily. If you teach them right and then you watch how they handle the fruit. You know, because you pick [fresh fruit]—it's the crown and all, you put them inside. It's crown and all because you sell it with the crown. That's what people buy—with the crown.

WN: Right, so they're not snapping off the crown.

BH: No.

WN: They're leaving the crown on.

BH: No, the crown stays on. That's why people, when they plant in their yard, they take the crown, dry them up a little bit, and then they plant them. So sometimes, there's a lot of—it's not just simple.

WN: Right, right, very complex.

BH: There's a lot of variations, and there's a lot of work going into it. Because it's competition like every place else. You know, you got Dole, you got . . .

WN: Del Monte.

BH: Del Monte. And you get Libby. You know, all that competition. Then, we started getting competition from South America, from Indonesia, from a lot of places. Economics itself, I mean, like us, I understand the business side of it where, you know, "Oh, how come we built an operation in the Philippines?" It's just, that the market is right there. Same thing in South America.

And then, they say, "That's why we're losing our jobs." No, it's not that. It's competition plus, in the United States, everything is—your wages start to go up, up, up. We, in the middle of the Pacific, they don't realize that it's just basic economics that people don't understand, and they blame the company, but they don't understand the stockholders. The way the whole fits into the equation is you put your money in the bank, stockholders put their money in the company, and they want return just like you in the bank. But [people] don't understand that, saying, "Oh, the company, the company." Even when they're talking to me, I'm one stockholder, (chuckles) and I bought stocks in Dole [Corporation]. You know, I had stocks in Castle & Cooke and Dole. But people don't understand that, so they have a different view. But I love pineapple, though. The plantation was a very interesting . . .

WN: How departmentalized was it in terms of the personnel? I mean, was there—people who planted, did they just plant or did they go back and forth—they go different departments harvesting, planting . . .

BH: No, no. If you're a qualified planter—see, that's why the qualified thing is very important. If you qualify for planting—because you got to plant so much in a certain time, and some people didn't want to do that because that's back breaking.

WN: Planting is hard.

BH: It is hard. So if you wanted to go planting, it's the easiest way to get promoted. You know, to become a regular [full-time employee] because it's the toughest job. So if you were young and like, "Oh, I want to become regular so I don't have to worry about being laid off." They have

different categories in your status. You have regulars, non-regulars, and seasonals. So the seasonals are the first guys to go. I mean, it's a seniority thing. The next guys are the non-regulars. And the last guys that normally stay on would be the regulars, so you would want to be in that position up here so you don't get laid off. But a lot of guys, they want to get laid off. They want to collect unemployment compensation for the rest of the duration until they go back to work again.

WN: So to become a regular, was that mainly seniority?

BH: I think they offered regulars in the planting department, and it was seniority, again. If they said, "We're going to open up ten regulars." And in the system, union, you know, seniority is one of the important things. Sometimes, it's only by one day, two days. I mean, you're seniority. It makes a difference because that's also for bumping. When things get rough during the year where you start laying off, they start looking at their seniorities—who are the guys who are going to get laid off first, you know?

WN: And the *wahines* that you were talking about, were they non-regular or seasonal?

BH: Most of them were non-regulars.

WN: Non-regular.

BH: They all became non-regulars after a certain amount of time.

WN: And what's the difference between non-regular and seasonal?

BH: Seasonals are—you didn't get benefits.

WN: Oh, I see, I see.

BH: Non-regulars, they had certain benefits. Seasonals, you don't have anything. You know, you were just the run of the mill.

WN: But non-regular, if there's not enough work, then they take off? Is that how it works?

BH: If not enough work, they got laid off but they collect unemployment compensation.

WN: I see.

BH: Then, by seniority, that's how you get knocked off, too.

WN: I see. And regulars, no matter what, they stayed on?

BH: But even regulars, if there was no job available, it goes by seniority again. They knock off the guys with the lowest seniority. So the seniority system was really prevalent in this plantation.

WN: And then, regulars and non-regulars were both part of the union?

BH: They're all union.

WN: Oh, seasonal, too?

- BH: Only the seasonals, they don't pay dues, so they're not unionized. So they don't have the protection of the negotiated agreement.
- WN: So the big gap is between seasonal and non-regular.
- BH: Right.
- WN: I see, I got it.
- BH: So those are the things that—it's really interesting. I mean, you have to deal with that because being isolated on an island, you do things in a different way because of the situation. There's only so many people on the island. You have to look, sometimes, beyond. That's what I learned. When you come to a place like that, you have to look at the different situations. It's not like O'ahu. You have to slow down. Like you said, there's no stoplights, there's no fast foods. There's a lot of things that's different from O'ahu. There's no bumper to bumper [traffic], you know, every *pau hana*.
- WN: Well, O'ahu, you know, for example, if you don't do a good enough job, or you don't like the job, you can just quit and go to another job. But on Lāna'i, kind of hard, yeah?
- BH: You got to look at it carefully on your decision you have to make. (Chuckles) So even working, you have to look at yourself. You don't want to be fired, right? Once you get fired, you can find a hard time to get a job. So that's one thing you always—especially if you want to stay on the island. I mean, your record follows you. I know that. I learned that through my whole life that it follows you around wherever you go.
- WN: Mm-hmm [yes]. Now, when you were—for example, when you were with the personnel part of human resources and you were responsible for the immigrants—you know, the people who sponsor people to come over, family members and so forth. So it was important to not go on welfare to keep working, right? The company . . .
- BH: They had to assign us a special affidavit of support that's saying that I will support this person. I am responsible. Within the document itself, it tells you if the person ever goes on welfare, that person will be deported at your expense. That's what they signed. I mean, it's on the affidavit itself. So you signed it.
- WN: So it was important for them to keep employed, right? The company . . .
- BH: Well, yeah.
- WN: So you were with the harvesting department. Who were your immediate supervisors?
- BH: Well, I've had like Noboru Oyama, I've had Johnny Botelho, Sonny Fernandez, and the division manager—the department manager when I first started was Warner Hobdy. And then Choyo Yara. We used to have also Richard Nunotani. He used to be one of the big bosses over there. But those were some of my associates that I worked for—that I learned from. So those people, they're all gone already. In fact, all the supervisors that have gone through the various departments, they're all gone. You know, like Sadao [Miyamoto].
- BH: Yeah. And there's also—well, Sam Shin is kind of . . .

WN: Sam Shin?

BH: Yeah, he's one of the local *kupuna* over here that's still here. But other than that, when I look around, I'll see some of the ladies. You know, like Mrs. [Margaret] Hubin. She was one of the ones in the *manso* gang.

WN: Okay, so you also worked—you said the engineering utilities department.

BH: Yes.

WN: Was that after harvesting?

BH: Yes, after harvesting, I went to the engineering department in the utilities area. That's when we started building the dormitories. So from there, I ended up becoming a job foreman for the housing department, which ran maintenance on all the company facilities, mostly painters and plumbers, carpenters.

WN: And these are the ones that helped maintain the worker housing?

BH: Oh, everything. All the [company] buildings. We built new stuff. We built the dormitory, and we built—we're the construction people. From there, I worked as a job foreman for the utilities side. See, that's another—that's the water systems.

WN: Oh, okay. That's different from engineering?

BH: That's part of the engineering department.

WN: Oh, okay. Now, this is when you . . .

BH: The carpenter thing comes under utilities.

WN: I see.

BH: When I went over there, there was a—see, there's a job foreman level, then there's the superintendent level. You become the whole operation. That's everything that's not pineapple, which is different now, water is strictly water. Somebody else gets something else. So the engineering utility superintendent was involved in graveyards, water, billing, construction, road repair, landscaping—everything that wasn't pineapple.

WN: The harbors, too?

BH: No, that, if it came to maintenance work—that kind or plumbing or stuff—but the harbor itself comes under harvesting.

WN: Harvesting. Oh, okay.

BH: Even when I worked at the engineering, they used to pull me off to be foreman for the fields or down the harbor. Because of my experience, you know . . .

WN: Oh, I see.

BH: It's because of my experience, I worked everywhere. But things changed afterwards. I used to work field foreman. Before, I had the whole operation—all the machines, everything. When I went back to work with them, they divided the work. You got three machines, the guy get three machines. So they had more people to work for the same operation, where I had two guys. You know, me and one other guy to help me. It used to be, "Okay, you take this half, I take that half." You know, that kind. But after that, we had a different superintendent in harvesting. He was one of those that came from Libby, [McNeil & Libby], I think. You know, we bought Libby in Moloka'i, and it kind of folded up, so we sent all the supervisors to Lāna'i. I worked for some of those guys. So the superintendent took over Choyu's job.

WN: You said that while you were under utilities, you helped develop the irrigation system.

BH: Yes, I was involved in setting up the drip irrigation.

WN: For the entire . . .

BH: We just almost completed it. We were down at the far end already of the plantation. I don't know, but our returns—tons per acre—what happened was pineapple plants need water and sun. So as we went further down into the extreme portions of the plantation, we couldn't irrigate them properly because of the distance and the terrain.

WN: How was it before drip irrigation? How was the field . . .

BH: Before drip irrigation, it was hit and run if there was enough rain or moisture. The lower ends, we could pick up the plant crop. But with the drip, you could pick up another ratoon crop. The fruits were bigger. So your tons-per-acre return was much, much greater than before because it had water besides the sun and maybe some rain. When the plants are planted, we had overhead irrigation. Maybe if you're lucky, we had the walking sprinklers. But after that, it's just dependent on Mother Nature. But with drip irrigation, even how far down on the bottom, they would have the same amount of water as the same guys on the top. We just open the valve. So pineapple got much healthier, much bigger, and we could grow at least maybe one more ratoon crop. So that's another year you have pineapple instead of all those small, little bitty things that we'd have to throw away the field.

WN: And how long did it take to set up this entire system?

BH: Drip irrigation?

WN: Yeah.

BH: Wow, a lot of years because we had to do the whole plantation. It took a lot. Sometimes we'd go on the rocky areas—areas where there was a lot of *pōhaku*, we'd have to bring heavy equipment to lay the main lines. The main line, from there, we go smaller. It took us quite a few years.

WN: I bet.

BH: To do it, you know.

WN: That's huge, yeah.

- BH: Yeah, it required a lot of trenching. We had trenches crisscross all over the place. A lot of areas, like the rocky areas, we had to dig all the big rocks out. But most of the areas were good. We'd run the trench and then we'd have to deliver the pipes. A lot of women wanted to get involved. They look, "Wow, it looks like easy job." They're trying to get away from the picking, yeah? So we had women that worked with us, deliver pipe.
- WN: You drive truck and deliver pipe?
- BH: No, these ladies were strictly, you know . . .
- WN: Laying the pipe?
- BH: No, they just deliver the pipe and most of them, they just did that. It's the plumbers that did the hookup. We laid PVC pipes. We also laid I pipes. So the women can only do so much, but the plumbers did most of the hookups. So it was interesting, too, because we had to go through a process compaction. For every trench line, once the pineapple grows, you cannot see what's underneath there. So we had to make sure that our trenches were well compacted. You dig a hole and you throw dirt on top, you think it's—but it's all porous, so eventually, it settles. Sand is the only thing that doesn't really compact because it's all so fine that it fills up all the air holes. But soil, it's got a lot of air pockets. So when you water it, it'll settle down so we have to keep bringing water trucks. You know, back field, flood them. So there's a lot of stuff that . . .
- WN: So the pipes have to be exposed?
- BH: No, it's all underground.
- WN: They're all underneath. I see.
- BH: It's four feet underground. So, you know, it's all the main lines. That's why all the main lines—you know, we have a system over here if you want to run an operation with irrigation. I mean, the main lines are still there.
- WN: Really?
- BH: Yes. We have a network of lines all the way up to the 5400 fields. So we divided the fields in numbers. You know, 5500, 5300, 5200, 5400. You know, all the field sections. We had the plateau up. The plateau up there, we didn't have any drip irrigation.
- WN: Which plateau?
- BH: All the plateaus.
- WN: Oh, all the plateaus?
- BH: You know, you get one, two, three, four. All the way from—that's where the two-million-gallon tank is, all the way to Waiakeakua. But we had harvesting up on those hills. You know, we had trucks that go up, pick up . . .
- WN: But the yield wasn't as good?
- BH: It was closer to the moisture area up there, so, the moisture up there, it's up on high ground.

WN: So the yield was pretty good?

BH: Yes. And the downside is, down where it's hot and dry . . .

WN: I see, I see.

BH: So it made a difference. I mean, the higher the elevation, the more moisture you have. The only thing, you know, the location sets it back in terms of logistics. Everything is logistics. The easier you get to the pineapple and bring it down to the shuttle station. Again, logistic has a lot to do. . . . people don't think about that, but how long does it take to deliver one bin of that to reach the harbor compared to this side, that side, that side? Is it worth it? The big guys make the decision on that.

WN: Well, we could talk all day about pineapple. I'm sure we could.

BH: Oh, I can talk all day about pineapple. I got a lot of stories (WN laughs) about situations. Water situations and drip irrigation and pressures on the line because that's what happens. See, when we started drip irrigation, using a lot of water, right? Continuously, day and night, we run water. So the pressure doesn't build up. So the older pipes will handle it okay because there's no built-up pressure. But as soon as the plantation closed up, the same pipeline now—and a lot of them, I was replacing so much pipe, and I was shutting down certain areas. So there's all the pressure, it goes up to about 300 pounds in-line pressure that would blow up these pipes. They're all rated 220, I think. That's the strongest pipe, we had the 220 on all of our pipelines. That's why they had to put in all the relief valves.

Like me, I'm weighing Kānepu'u now. That's on the other side of the island. We used to have J-station right along the harbor highway that would pump the water from there to the other side of the island so that we'd have pressure out there. But J-station blew up. The transformer station blew up. They never replaced it. But then, we built a pipeline. The last one I worked on was Well 7 and we had some contribution into the system on this side, but they shut down the well when everything shut down. So right now, we have a problem with pressure up there, it was blowing up all the pipes because no usage of water, right?

WN: Right.

BH: So the pipes were blowing up, so they're having so much problems that they put relief valves to cut the pressure down. So now, we don't have pressure out on that side of the island. But nothing's over there. (Laughs)

WN: But if they were ever to bring back agriculture on a large scale onto this island, would that system still be—could you still use that irrigation system?

BH: Oh, if the PVC pipe won't rot. I mean, it's not like iron. You can still utilize the system, activate it. We had all these stations with irrigation, filter systems, and stuff like that. We shipped most of them to the Philippines in our Mindanao plantation. Because we have all the sand filters that we run the water through into the irrigation to clean up all the crap that was inside of the water before it goes into the drip system. You know, you chlorinate, you run your own through filters and stuff like that. So you have a clean system to work with. The maps are still available for all the drip [irrigation system].

- WN: Well, you know, you actually started with the company in [19]67 and you had your first retirement in 1990.
- BH: Ninety.
- WN: What made you retire in 1990?
- BH: Oh, I figured I'd look for something else.
- WN: So all these changes you're telling me about—you know, drip irrigation and the harvesting—the year-round harvesting and all that—was between 1967 and 1990?
- BH: Yes.
- WN: That's a lot of changes.
- BH: The changes like going from picking pineapple by hand and machine, I think I was gone by then. The machines came after I left. So you know, I didn't see that transition. Maybe I did. I don't know.
- WN: You mean the transition from packing pineapple into crates?
- BH: I think when I was in high school, it happened. It could be that.
- WN: Oh, you mean the mechanization?
- BH: The transition, yeah.
- WN: I see. Oh, okay. So that was before your time. So between [19]67 and [19]90, you worked as assistant to personnel manager, you worked in the harvesting department as a foreman, you worked in the utilities.
- BH: I worked as a job foreman and a foreman because there's two differences. A foreman is a field foreman. A job foreman is where you assign a gang.
- WN: I see. So you were both?
- BH: Yes.
- WN: Okay. And you were also in the utilities department?
- BH: Yeah. Also you have a job foreman and a utilities superintendent.
- WN: What were you? You were . . .
- BH: I retired as a superintendent.
- WN: Oh, you retired as superintendent.
- BH: I took over that quite a few years before I retired.
- WN: So you were the superintendent for the utilities department?

- BH: Of the ag-engineering.
- WN: Ag-engineering.
- BH: Yes. We were part of the ag-engineering.
- WN: And you said you retired first in 1990.
- BH: Mm-hmm [yes].
- WN: And you worked four years for Nature Conservancy [of Hawai'i]?
- BH: Nature Conservancy.
- WN: That's what I have here, yeah. Then, you went back to . . .
- BH: Then, they called me back in the company.
- WN: Until—and then, your second retirement was in 1999.
- BH: Right.
- WN: And by that time, you were director of facilities. Is that right? When you retired?
- BH: No, I worked three years as director of facilities. Then, they wanted me to train a new superintendent for utilities because he was leaving. Since I had the background, they wanted me to train somebody, so I went back into utilities again. They wanted me to stay back and find somebody and train them so that they'd have somebody to replace him. That's why I stayed until 1999.
- WN: Nineteen ninety-nine. Well, before we get to that, can you tell me what you did between 1990 and [19]94 with the Nature Conservancy?
- BH: Well, I was the only, you know, working out there—technician. What I did was invasives. You know, doing invasive—cutting Christmas berries. But those days, didn't have that much Christmas berries. It's after I left, then the thing went wild. So I was there. The two basic things is ungulate control, which are the animals in the preserve and invasives, which is lantana and all the [plants] that weren't native. The lantana and *haole koa* came with the ranching days. The Christmas berry, from what I understand, came as an ornamental for hedges. So the *koa* was brought in for feed. A lot of the grasses, like the paspalum, was all, again, ground cover and feed for the cattle. Okay, my job at that time was ungulate control, which is to remove all animals from the preserve, and to remove invasive plants, which is the Christmas berry. At that time, when I left, six of the units were deer-free. I had removed all the ungulates except for this big unit that now, I've cut it into different segments . . .
- WN: So, by animals, you mean mostly . . .
- BH: Deer.
- WN: Deer was the major problem.

- BH: So at that time, the second-largest unit with native canopy only so when you look at the forest, all you could see was native canopy. That was my accomplishment. I cleaned out all the units. I did all by myself. I had guys come and help me with the removal of deer, and I had kids come in to help me—like Kam[ehameha] school kids and groups that came in to help me with the removal of the invasive species.
- WN: And then, tell me what this [Kānepu‘u] Preserve is. What, when, why was it established?
- BH: Okay, this was established by George Munro. He was a conservationist, and he realized that we have some really endangered plants and native forests. It’s called a native dryland forest. Most of the dryland forest has been demolished for [the pineapple] plantation, either plantation or subdivisions. So it was getting to a point where it would’ve been [totally] destroyed by sheep, deer, goats.
- WN: And what part of the island is this?
- BH: This is in the northwestern portion of the island.
- WN: Okay.
- BH: It’s on the way to Garden of the Gods. It’s right there. So the access was terrific because you could get to it without . . .
- WN: So this is past Keōmuku or . . .
- BH: No, Keōmuku is that side. Kānepu‘u is this side.
- WN: Oh, okay, okay.
- BH: You’d have to go down to Polihua to the Garden of the Gods to get to it. That was my main job at that time. When I left, that was [one of] my accomplishments. I did a lot of experiments with—I ran irrigation systems. Because I had connections—like I knew all the construction guys. They used to come fill up my water tanks with water. You know *hanawai*? They’d come down with their water trucks and fill up for me so I could water my experiments. You know, drip irrigation.
- WN: So this is one of the few areas—this preserve—Nature Conservancy preserve is one of the few areas not owned by the company?
- BH: There was an easement developed back in the [19]90s, [19]80s. The easement was given to TNC [The Nature Conservancy] in perpetuity. I got involved afterwards. I’ll give you my card. ‘Ike ‘Āina. See, what happened was TNC laid off all their personnel and moved the operation to Maui. In my interpretation, it was a move to abandon because what transpired from when I left, they never did anything. Everything just went wild. Their contribution to the forest was zilch except for they put a new fence in, which they thought was deer-proof. To this day, they’re trying to still figure out how the hell they screwed up. So I came in as an organization [‘Ike ‘Āina] to try to bring that easement back to the island residence. That’s our goal. That’s our mission as ‘Ike ‘Āina, you know. We’re a land organization that can accept land and turn them in. So that was our aim. We worked with the company, with TNC, and the state because the funding is done through the NAPS program—the Natural Air Preserve Program. And the native organization at that time was Hui Mālama. The only native organization that—our mission was to turn over this. We had all the meetings all arranged and everything set up, but Hui Mālama didn’t want it. They

said they cannot handle something that big. Since then, the organization has died, so I approached Albert folks.

WN: Albert Morita?

BH: Morita folks. You know, they're the museum people. They have an organization that's pretty *akamai*.

WN: What organization is this?

BH: That Lānaʻi museum.

WN: Oh, you're talking about the cultural center [i.e., Lānaʻi Culture and Heritage Center].

BH: So I had a meeting with them. I said, "Why don't you guys take over this? Bring back this—500-something acres." The most important to Hawaiians is the *ʻāina*. I said, "I would run a program for you guys. It wouldn't cost you guys anything."

They said, "Okay." I had a meeting with all their board and stuff like that. Then, this wind stuff came up.

WN: The what stuff?

BH: That windmill?

WN: Oh, the windmills, yeah.

BH: This had really nothing to do with the windmills. It's acquiring this land and bringing it back to the island. It was one of my biggest disappointments. So I'm going to try again, but it's going to be harder now because of what we've done to the preserve. You know, all of the improvements that we've done—before, it was zero.

WN: So who owns the preserve, in terms of . . .

BH: It's The Nature Conservancy.

WN: The Nature Conservancy. TNC.

BH: Yeah. So I'm going to try again. But with all the improvements that we've done, we've got ungulate-free areas, we've got plants growing, we've got a lot of endangered stuff growing, and we've cleared up a lot of areas.

WN: How many acres are we talking about?

BH: We have pretty close to 590 acres.

WN: Wow.

BH: But divided into seven units. Right now, I'm working with two of the largest units, and we have sections that are ungulate free. And we've cleared out areas that the native plants can recover.

WN: I see.

BH: And we built fencing. We just finished one that's about eighteen acres. I think that's going to be deer-free also. It's just things that we've done. The way I look at it, it's going to be harder to take it back because they don't want to spend money. To me, Lāna'i is just the bottom of the priority list. They got Big Island and other places. So I'm trying to bring it back.

I've accomplished my mission that we started out, but I'm still involved. Right now, I'm trying to find people to replace because the youngest guy I have now is a volunteer. He came from Wahiawā. He's a retired fireman. He's about sixty-something, I think. The rest are all over seventy. You know, we're all one step in the grave, so. . . . But we work. I mean, we're going to start on another unit, and we're going to start cutting trees next week.

WN: So the major objective is to preserve the native plants.

BH: Forest.

WN: Right. And one of the big enemies are the deer and the sheep.

BH: Yes. One day, you should come. I should take you on a tour over there.

WN: Yeah, that would be something.

BH: I'll show you what we're doing over there so that you can picture in your mind. You know, talking about it sometimes, you don't see the really true value of what we're doing out there. And this is done by, you know, kids from all over the world helping me. From Japan, from . . .

WN: So these are kids that come over here . . .

BH: Yes, university kids that have come up.

WN: And they learn to work.

BH: Yes. That I've done. I've got pictures. That's what I was showing, pictures over there.

WN: Yeah, the poster.

BH: I keep pictures. I keep a picture documentation of what's happening at Kānepu'u.

WN: That's fantastic.

BH: So with the help of the companies—I get help from the company, otherwise I cannot do all this kind of stuff.

WN: Is [Larry] Ellison pretty supportive?

BH: Well, I've talked to Kurt.

WN: Okay.

BH: Okay, he's the commander and chief for Lāna'i.

WN: Kurt Matsumoto, yeah.

- BH: So I've talked to him, and he said, "Oh, we're going to follow [the] same [policy] as Murdock." I showed him one bill I got from them, so I'm going to take it down to one of the VP's and say, "You guys were supposed to pay for this." See, they [provide] support. They're not going to give us any money. That's what Murdock said—that we could support your equipment. And I buy fuel from them and stuff like that. That kind of support. But I have to kind of—because it's a new regime now.
- WN: Right. And to what extent does this preserve interfere or—any kind of *pilikia* with hunting—hunters or anything like that?
- BH: I've opened it to hunters. But you see, I have a "Work to Hunt" program, and when I mention the word, "work."
- WN: Oh, because it sounds . . .
- BH: We're hunting all the time.
- WN: It sounds eradication. It sounds like eradication if you use "work"?
- BH: No, when I say, "work," that means kids got to crack their butts cutting Christmas berries and lantana. I have some young guys doing it now. They're taking care of my fence maintenance. They're the only ones I have that's—but you know, they come, they might work a little bit, then they disappear into the woodwork. So it's tough. I try to combine that. If you want to be able to hunt, you have to work first.
- WN: But this is hunting outside the preserve though, not inside.
- BH: It's inside.
- WN: Oh, you're talking about eradicating . . .
- BH: Inside. We hunt all year round.
- WN: Oh, so even with the fences, you're having deer come inside?
- BH: That's why I mentioned . . .
- WN: Oh, I see. Okay.
- BH: You know, to this day, they try . . .
- WN: Okay, so people can go in there and hunt the deer that got in?
- BH: Right.
- WN: (Chuckles) I see.
- BH: I've found the magic to it, but (chuckles) that's what I do in the areas. That's why I have ungulate-free. And it's just simple because it is visual. It's a visual thing with the animals, with the deer. The old style is wire, right? When you look at the wire fences—you know, like the cattle fencing? You can see the other side, right? Okay, if you can see the other side, barbed wire don't

mean nothing to the deer. They'll go right through. You know, you got the wire, so they see the other side, right? If they want to go to the other side, they'll go to the other side. Right through.

WN: So what do you use? Chain-link fence?

BH: No, if you have hog wire, you'll keep it out because hog wire or chain-link fence, they'll still see the other side, but when they whack the fence, they're going to back up. But strand fencing, they go right through. Even if I have battens—I have battens every two feet—they still go. From the bottom, the graduation gets bigger and bigger as you get to the top. So the smaller ones are supposed to keep out the little guys—the Bambis. But you watch them go through—it's like nothing. Pew!

WN: Really?

BH: Yes. So I've explained that to the big bosses. They've seen it. They're still trying to get pictures of it. I don't know. But that's my program. I have a bunch of hunters. We hunt. I opened it to the community before, but they screwed up. They take advantage of it, and they don't follow the schedule, so I said, "Forget it." You know, "You guys go hunt public hunting. And you got to go wait for the season."

Us guys, we're all-year round. We hunt sheep. Whatever animal gets inside, whether it's lions, tigers, or whatever (WN laughs)—we will shoot them. I mean, it's all eradication. We have eradication, so it's hard for some guys when they got to shoot a Bambi. I mean, all guys had the hardest time, you know, "I got to shoot that?"

I say, "Yeah. Three months from now, that guy's going to be big, and it's going to be eating up all of your stuff. So you have to go beyond that." Now they understand that because I had one fawn in one of the units that is deer-free. You know, it was the last guy, and we couldn't catch him. A few months later, . . . (Chuckles)

WN: Oh, he's, what, big?

BH: Big already. I say, "You see what I mean?" So you know, there's an understanding. It doesn't take long for them to grow up. I mean, it's sad when you talk about eradication, but when you look at what we're doing out there and the efforts you're trying to bring the plants back. You go inside there, you see wonders inside. There's stuff I'd never seen before in my life. Oh, it's because the deer always ate them up. They never gave them chance to grow. So I never saw that. But now, we have areas that—I mean, you got to see it to believe it.

So a lot of these guys, they go look, they don't see. They look at us, "All these guys do is hunt, hunt, hunt." You know, we put up fence, we clear up trees, we are lumberjacks. A guy donated to me an arch welder—portable. He built a portable arch welder for us. Special. One of my friends.

WN: Arch welder. What is that?

BH: You know, the arch welder is using electricity. Regular welding, you got the oxygen and a settling tank, yeah?

WN: Oh, the blowtorch and all that?

BH: Yes. But arch welder, you use electricity. I got a generator. Big generator.

WN: Oh, okay.

BH: We're fixing all our gates and stuff like that. The kind of stuff that people don't—you know, they think that's all—like one day, somebody ran into the main gate. The two posts with the hog wire. I don't know, but it must've been hunters. But we never found out who. They must've really damaged their truck because they tried to pull it out because there's a ditch. If you just left it like that. So we got a report from a fisherman. He said, "Hey, somebody banged your guys' fence." So I have to send guys out to replace the posts, and we had to put the wire so that nobody can fall off if somebody drives over there and they don't pay attention, they'll fall off and get hurt. So stuff like that. We do a lot of—dig holes, you know, plant the posts.

WN: Posts inside.

BH: Yeah, we don't have that fancy kind—unless we really got a big job, then I'll go find a gas-operated auger for drill holes. Our work is a lot of physical work. That's why my ancient guys, I give them a lot of credit. We put up fences. But now, I got young guys, coming in, like from Nā Ala Hele. I'm the chairman from the Nā Ala Hele group here.

WN: Nā Ala Hele.

BH: Nā Ala Hele. It's a trail group.

WN: Oh, okay.

BH: I've been with that since 1989 when they got mandated by the state. We handle trails and access to the trails and stuff like that. So I get these guys—they work on the fishermen's trail, and then they come spend one day with me. They do a lot of the heavy work—chainsaws—they cut alongside the trail.

WN: Well, seems like you are involved in the present and the future of Lāna'i, too.

BH: Oh, yes.

WN: And not only the past, yeah?

BH: Right. It's interesting because if nobody does—I mean, look at the beauty. If you go inside there and you look at what it has inside there, then you start to get the feeling of, "Wow." This stuff was hidden over here, and it could've been wiped out from the animals or the invasive species." But once you let them grow itself, clear all that stuff, go down to pre-contact—that's the word I was trying to use.

WN: Right. Pre-contact, yes.

BH: To pre-contact days when no more the *'ōpala*. No more all that invasive stuff we had. All you have is—right now, with all the rain and no more the deer—all the *'ilima*, the wild *'ilima* and the *olua*. Oh, growing wild.

WN: Is that right?

BH: Yeah, that's ground cover. What if outside of the fence—a lot of the areas that's barren had that, you wouldn't have to worry about erosion. But that shows you that the animals have a big part

because we never had all that, pre-contact days. It came when Kamehameha got the gift from, you know . . .

WN: So that preserve is what the island probably looked like back in the . . .

BH: Back in the pre-contact days.

WN: . . . pre-contact days. That's amazing.

BH: The vast forest of that.

WN: So did you guys plant anything? Or you just leave it alone?

BH: No, no, no. We're planting other stuff like the *nā'ū*, which is a tree. Then, it used to be only thirteen. Most of it was in Lāna'i, in Kānepu'u. We got the seeds from the *kūpuna*, germinated, and come back, and we plant. I don't know how many hundreds. This last month, with all that rain we had, I got three of the original plants we planted had flowers.

WN: Wow.

BH: When you look, you go, "Oh, wow." From thirteen—and I found quite a few more, but you have now a few hundred. It's all on the drip irrigation though. Some of them are not, but I got two areas that are on the drip irrigation. You know, you don't have to carry water. You just open up the orifice and water them and let them drip for a while. So we have that. Oh, we get all kinds of new plants.

WN: Wow, amazing.

BH: We have some that's naturally—like the *ma'o hau hele*. That's endangered hibiscus. I mean, it's just germinating by itself. You know, coming out. Then, we have the *kōlea*. Ho, the *kōlea*, they're all over the *alahe'e*. They're just growing up all over the place, if nothing to eat them up. If you give them enough room, you get [rid of] all the *'ōpala* stuff, they get room for grow. You got a chance. You don't really get the feel of it and feel the sense of importance unless you really go over there, and you look at it, you touch it, and learn some historic thing about—they talk about—you've heard it—they catch the birds with the sticky sap.

WN: Yeah.

BH: I'll show you the tree—the one they used to take from, and they put 'em on the branch.

WN: And what do you call that tree?

BH: *'Āla'a*.

WN: *'Āla'a*.

BH: Yeah. *'Āla'a* and *keahi*. They used to take the sap to put 'em on the branch. The birds go, they pluck the feather, so they build the—the *ali'is* had the helmets and the capes. You look at what they used to do with this plant—you know, use for boats and stuff. See, I have an interpretive trail. I'm building another interpretive trail for the public that I'm going to dedicate to the remaining *kūpuna* we have. Hopefully, by next—they're still alive. I'll try to open it next spring break. I'm going to try and see if I can schedule that for that event.

WN: Terrific.

BH: But next time you come, you give me some heads up. I mean, I'll take you . . .

WN: Yeah, I'd love to come.

BH: . . . to go show you. You can take pictures and—I mean, for yourself, for your information, “Oh, I've been through a native dryland forest.” Then, you get to know some of the basic trees. I mean, people don't know. The *olopua*, which is the Hawaiian olive. The *lama*, which is the native Hawaiian persimmon. They used to take some and put them in a trail—like a trail mix. Harvest that in the forest and use that because it's like eating fruit—you know, dried fruit like raisins or cranberries? My guys walk around, they eat in the . . .

WN: They eating.

BH: Yeah. That stuff grows like crazy if you let them. Once they germinate, it takes years to grow. I have an *olopua* that's been like this forever.

WN: Like what, five—six inches?

BH: Six, yeah.

WN: Six-inches high.

BH: Well, it started like this, but then, it's still like this. That's been from when I was still working back in the [19]90s until now. It's this big.

WN: Wow. Can you imagine how long it would take to become a tree?

BH: So you look at why we're trying to preserve that. It takes forever for the damn thing to grow. I have *olopua* about this big.

WN: That's, what, about a foot high?

BH: Yeah, about a foot high. I think I found about three of that. And then, the *lama*, it grows up to this height, it took . . .

WN: About seven feet.

BH: . . . almost twenty years.

WN: Yeah, wow. So you're doing this for the next generations, yeah.

BH: That's why I say, you look at it—maybe the *alahe'e* grows pretty fast because I get one that's about this big . . .

WN: About two feet.

BH: That was like this when. . . . And that's beautiful that the leaves are shiny just like jade. It has small, white blossoms on it that smells—you know, the fragrance is kind of—you know, what is a *he'e*, yeah?

- WN: Oh, the octopus.
- BH: Yeah, octopus. It's octopus. So they call it *alahe'e* because the *he'e*, you know, it crawls like that. The smell comes like that.
- WN: No kidding.
- BH: Yeah.
- WN: Oh, interesting.
- BH: It's a beautiful tree. I'm going to plant one over here, I think. Some place in my front yard.
- WN: Well, we're just about finished. I just wanted you to talk a little bit about the future of Lāna'i. What you think the future of Lāna'i should be in your opinion. What you'd like to see for Lāna'i. You've seen all the changes that have gone by in your lifetime. And now you're doing all of this with the nature preserve. What would you like to see?
- BH: What I'd like to see. I've worked with the native culture, and we got to make sure that the—there are so many wonderful, beautiful cultural stuff over here, but nobody takes care of it. We got beautiful *heiaus*. So all the *wahi pana*, all those culture places that should be preserved—somebody should do it. Whether it's—it's related because you know, if you go back pre-contact days, there was a lot of beautiful stuff here. See, like the forest, like what they're trying to do up in the mountain. That has to continue to preserve what's there. Don't let it get away from them. The thing is, for us on Lāna'i, it's jobs. That's my first thing. To have an economic base that will provide jobs to all the young people so they can come back home and have a job.
- WN: And what would that be?
- BH: It doesn't matter. As long as you get jobs. You know, the windmills. You have to do some sacrifice—give up something. I mean, I've been all over the world, and I've seen windmills. It doesn't hurt—I mean, it might enhance the place a little bit, like in Holland. They got windmills but you just have to be careful that it doesn't really destroy everything. I mean, just because it's going to stand there and—who cares about if Moloka'i looks at Lāna'i and sees all the windmills? No, if it's going to help Lāna'i City it's got to be a win-win situation in everything that we do. Not only the big guys win and us lose. It's got to be two sides win-win situation in everything we do, regardless of whether it's cultural stuff, whether it's improvements or whether. . . . So Ellison, from the rhetoric I hear, is going to provide jobs. That's what we need—an economic base. Our economic base in the industry of agriculture is gone. The hotel industry, the visitor industry, is very shaky. It's not a permanent thing. It goes up and down. And it affects jobs. So if we have an economic base, if we're going to develop some kind of an agricultural product like he said we can, we have the water to do it. We got plenty water. And he's talking about—the water is no problem. He got this—couple of . . .
- WN: Desalinization.
- BH: . . . desalinization plants. That'll take care of the water. But jobs, to me, is the only thing that will bring our kids home, because, you know, the visitor industry, you get guys that say, "Oh, the only jobs available is busboys." That's a bunch of bull. They don't know everything rotates around any kind of business. But people don't realize that if you have a business, small businesses evolved around that. So it creates more jobs. The population has to grow if you want to build

business because population density affects anything, whether it's government—you know, the smaller the population gets, you lose all your services. People don't realize that. They're not going to run the hospital if there's not enough people. The post office. You know, all the services—even Maui—the boat that goes—they're not going to come in as often if there's . . .

WN: Oh, the ferry.

BH: . . . no more business.

WN: Right.

BH: Population density plays a very important picture. The more people you get, you could divide this little pie. But if you have 1,400, and you get four businesses, you got to divide them in four ways, right? If you build another business, it's a five-way. You build another business, it's six ways. So the part gets smaller. So population density plays a big part. We got to bring the kids home. There is a good economic base that other businesses can evolve around. That could occur. So jobs are very important. Population is very important, which comes with the jobs. This ties in with that, so an economic base is what we need, a strong economic base. It might be the visitor industry, some form of agriculture. Like me, my idea was to have a peace center. You know Sparky?

WN: Mm-hmm [yes].

BH: [Former U.S. Senator] Spark Matsunaga. He's one of my favorites. He gave me chicken skin when I talk about it. Build a peace center up where it's nice, and quiet, and cool up there. Ellison's going to build a Hawaiian university over there at Hale Palaoa. The reason why I talk about the culture over there is because centrally located, you have a nice beach area for all the canoe—Hui Wa'a. They all can congregate in Lāna'i at the center. It's close to Big Island. You can come over here. O'ahu can come bring all their canoes and beach them over there at Hale Palaoa. That's why I was looking—because I hang out with a bunch of guys that have big visions about the culture. We all studied at OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs]. That's where we started with 'Ike 'Āina because at that time, OHA couldn't accept any land for quota to give to. So we started there. We're all members of the historical cultural section over there. Then, they kicked us out because we went 'Ike 'Āina, (chuckles) so we all resigned and we tried to move on with 'Ike 'Āina and do stuff like this. You know, get projects all over the place.

So you know, I stick with guys that have visions. We sat with Murdock up in the mountain. I found one *heiau* up there. An hour and a half under the hot sun with somebody like his caliber. He listened to the *kūpuna*. I get a lot of paper stuff that he had. So there was my letter. When I wanted any kind of cooperation from the company, I would show them the letter. So I'm trying to develop that with Ellison to get his support. From the look of it, things are looking good. Hopefully, the jobs and population growth and economic base, all those things, all work together. Lāna'i would be someplace that the kids can come home to.

WN: Sounds like a good plan. I mean, it sounds like—well, I mean, at least you have one. (Laughs) That's good. You know, you have ideas and you have a vision.

BH: That's all you need to really be successful. Then the community wins, the company wins because the people would be on their side. It'd be an association that will be—not all this fighting. You have a segment of the community that doesn't—the way I look at it, it's all a power thing. They like to tell people what to do. It's just like what Washington is now right now. It's so damn screwed up. Our government is so damn screwed up. It's the same thing. You go down to a

smaller scale where people—when you start looking at power thing, where they can tell Murdock what to do, that's what it is. You have this animosity, and they try to sell their story to a lot of these guys that really don't know what they're doing, and then involve these guys in something that, maybe, they don't really want to get involved in. Those are the things that you got to really look for because maybe now they're all getting old, too, just like me, but I've seen that as a power thing. It's so easy to say, "Let's sit down and talk and see how we can—you win, I win." And everything is hunky-dory. It's so simple, I mean, negotiating.

But when you start throwing, "Oh, you this, you this, you this." Then you build up this animosity and it lasts for a long time, this animosity.

WN: Well, I am going to turn off the tape recorder right now. And I want to thank you so much, Bob. It was very, very . . .

BH: Just send me a copy. (Chuckles)

WN: . . . interesting. I'll definitely send you a copy. Thank you. (Chuckles) I'll turn it off. Okay, thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

Lāna‘i:

Reflecting on the Past; Bracing for the Future

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