

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Margaret "Nona" Chang, 70, retired Dole Company  
(Hawaiian Pine Company) packing and trimming  
forelady

Margaret "Nona" (Ono) Chang, Japanese, was born in Waialua, Oahu on March 21, 1909. Her father was a carpenter, her mother, a housewife. Margaret has two sisters and six brothers. She attended Kauluwela School, completing the eighth grade in 1922. She also attended Japanese language classes at the Fort Street Hongwanji.

Margaret worked as a packer at CPC [California Packing Corporation] during the summers of 1925 and 1926. She later worked as a carhop at the Dairymen's Drive Inn [also known as the Purity Inn]. She married Thomas Chang in 1929 and stayed at home to raise a daughter and two sons.

When all but one of her children started elementary school, Margaret re-entered the work force in 1937. She began working as a packer for the Hawaiian Pine Company. She eventually became a forelady for the night shift in 1942. During the next 30 years at Hawaiian Pine, she held various positions, including that of labor quota girl and stamp-in lady.

She retired in 1973. She is a former member of the Jolly Packers Club and still maintains close ties with her friends from the cannery. She is a grandmother and great grandmother. Mr. Chang, a butcher, is also retired.

[Note: Due to technical difficulties encountered during the taping and transcribing of the first interview, a few questions and responses may be repeated in this series of interviews.]

Tape No. 6-2-1-79  
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW  
with  
Margaret "Nona" Chang (MC)  
February 20, 1979  
Kaimuki, Oahu  
BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Margaret "Nona" Chang on February 20, 1979 at her home in Kaimuki.

Okay, Mrs. Chang, could you first tell me when and where you were born?

MC: I was born in Waialua on the plantation where my father and my mother worked, and I had two others [siblings] born in Waialua before we moved out to Honolulu. So, I don't know much about Waialua. They asked me where I was born. But it's so vague because I must have been about three when we came out so I don't know anything much. I don't even know where I was born--in what part of Waialua.

MK: Do you remember what year you were born?

MC: Nineteen nine.

MK: How many were there in your family?

MC: Nine.

MK: Until what age did you live with your family?

MC: Nineteen.

MK: Okay. What type of work did your father do?

MC: He was a carpenter. Carpenter work. He learned carpentry in Japan. They live with some people and they learn. He was a regular carpenter when he came here.

MK: Is that the sort of work he did here in Waialua and Liliha?

MC: Yes, right through.

MK: Did he support the family?

MC: Oh, yes. He had to. Uh huh [yes]. He was very "old faithful." He went to work every day. On Saturdays when he'd come home, we'd wait for him, and he'd give everybody enough money to go to the show. All the kids would, we'd just wait. Because at that time, it's not like now. [Nowadays] kids go to shows, they pay \$2, \$3, or if they go to Waikiki, they can go to Waikiki every day. But at that time, going to Waikiki was a treat because they had to catch the streetcars at that time. So, we didn't have too much of, I would say, enjoyment. But we didn't miss it because we never had it. You see? We were satisfied with what we had.

MK: Did you and your brothers and sisters contribute some money to the family budget?

MC: Yeah, when we all started working, yes.

MK: Who handled the money that you brought in?

MC: My mother did.

MK: When you were little, what did you want to be?

MC: Well, I wanted to be a teacher. At those days, eighth grade, and then you go up to high school. Not like now, you go to elementary, and junior high, and then high school. Those days, you go up to eighth grade, and then you go to high school. If you want to be teacher, you have to go to---I think they had normal school, and that's where you had to go two years to be a teacher--not like now, see? When I felt that they couldn't afford to send me, well, I was satisfied with that. Figured that they would need me at home more.

MK: What did your parents feel about your ambition to be a teacher, and the situation?

MC: Well, they didn't have much to say because they knew I was satisfied with what was coming.

(MC greets someone. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Mrs. Chang, you were telling me earlier that your father had different ideas about girls going into a career like teaching, and boys going into a career. Could you sort of explain that to me again?

MC: You know how old folks are, they have high hopes for their sons. But they didn't turn out to be what he wanted, so I guess that was that. He was satisfied the way it was because I had two brothers, I think more or less went---I won't say into the trade he did, but I had one brother---two brothers I think, they were carpenters. Then, the rest were still in school, so.

- MK: What were his feelings about the girls in your family?
- MC: I think he had no difference between the boys and the girls with schooling or whatever they wanted to do. It was all the same. He had no preference. One or the other.
- MK: You told me that you went to Kauluwela Elementary School in Liliha up to the eighth grade. What did you learn there?
- MC: Just reading and writing, nothing else. They didn't have any sewing, or whatever---not like crafts or things like that. We didn't have that at that time, so it's just more or less reading and writing.
- MK: You told me that when you were going to that elementary school, you were sent to the kitchen sometimes.
- MC: Oh, yeah. That was part of the routine. You'd go to---I don't know how it went now. Your turn to go, you know? Everybody takes turn to go to the kitchen to work, and then you work, and then you help them serve. I think was once a month, or something.
- MK: Did you acquire any skills that helped you later on?
- MC: No, I don't think nothing much because most of the work was done by the teachers. You just help.
- MK: You told me that you stopped school at the eighth grade. What did you feel about stopping school at the eighth grade?
- MC: Well, you see, when I got through eighth grade, then I had two more years of Japanese school to finish high school. So, within that time, I was home helping my mother take care of the little children and going to school in the afternoon.
- MK: Was it because you had to help taking care of the children that you stopped at the eighth grade?
- MC: No, it was that more or less, they couldn't afford to. They figured, well, eighth grade would be enough to get by.
- MK: After you graduated the eighth grade, you went to work in 1925 at CPC [California Packing Corporation] for two summers as a packer. Why did you decide to go to work, and why to CPC and not another cannery or some other business?
- MC: At that time, most of these kids--during summer--went to work at the cannery. My friends went to work at CPC, and they told me, "Oh, it's lots easy to get in to work at CPC than Dole cannery." So I just went with my friends.
- MK: How did you apply for that job?

MC: You just give your name. You stayed there. Like now, they just sign up, and said you want to work. Then they say, "Oh, we'll call you." But at that time, you just go there, and they'll pick you. Then they tell you, "Oh, to come in to work."

There was a Japanese fellow that worked in an office that hiring. He caught up with me one day, and he asked me how old I was. (Chuckles) I must have looked very young. Then he was satisfied that I was of age [to work].

MK: How were the girls picked?

MC: Maybe when they needed so many, then they just pick. They weren't very particular on who they pick. I guess they say, "Oh, all you girls---certain-certain girls come in," and we'd start working.

MK: Did you prepare in any way so you would get the job?

MC: No. Uh uh.

MK: You said that you worked there because your friends were going to work there? Were there any other places that young people like yourself could work at that time?

MC: I don't think so. Not that I know of because like even now, majority of the kids apply at the canneries, uh?

MK: When you went to CPC, were you first hired as a packer?

MC: Uh huh. Yeah.

MK: What do you recall about those times at CPC?

MC: The work was easy. Once you learn how to work. It was easy, and you worked with your friends, and you have some tray boys that would come around, and we'd have lot of fun. But I really enjoyed working there because the work wasn't strenuous.

If you became a good packer, then you stay up [at the beginning of the table] and you don't have to work as hard as when you work down [towards the end of the packing table]. When you work further down past where you pack your fancy and your choice, and you go below that, you'll have to kind of sort out all that pieces where they belong, but otherwise, it was very good.

Only was kind of inconvenient because although they had lockers, you have to go upstairs and they give [only] so much time. We used to carry our lunch down to the table and leave it under the table. They had no place where you can have a soft drink. You had to go outside to the cafeteria. We never bought lunch because it took too long to go the cafeteria. So we brought our lunch and then we ate it there, all together.

MK: How much time did you have for lunch?

MC: It's half an hour but by the time you go in, you wash your hands, and you go up to the cafeteria, you have to line up, then it takes time. You have to kind of rush through your lunch hour.

MK: You mentioned that sometimes you would go and drink soda outside. How much time did you have after doing that?

MC: That was during your lunch hour, see? But in between, we didn't have any place where we can drink in the plant there.

MK: Did you have breaks?

MC: Oh, if you wanted to go, you'll ask whoever is your forelady that you would like to use the bathroom, or you know. But outside of that, they didn't have any special break periods. I guess maybe they do have now, but at that time, they didn't. So if you didn't feel like going, well, you worked right through until lunch time.

MK: Do you remember how much you were paid?

MC: I think was 15 cents [per hour].

MK: What did you think about the money you earned during that period?

MC: Was something big. (Chuckles) Then I'd bring it home and give it to my mother, and she'd give me some spending money. But at that time, we didn't go out too much and things like that, so we didn't need much spending money. Kids don't---not like nowadays, they dress, but at that time, we don't dress as they do now. Of course, things were cheaper, oh your wages were cheaper, but still we didn't need too many things.

MK: What sort of expenses did you have while working at the cannery?

MC: Nothing.

MK: You didn't have to buy an apron, or caps, or...

MC: Wait. Oh, when we started, we didn't have to buy at that time. They gave us a cap and apron, and then we'd bring our gloves home. We wash it and we hang it out, and next morning, we'll take it and we go to work. We didn't have to wear shoes, we can wear slipper and work. So, there wasn't much expense.

MK: Did you also take home your apron and cap to wash?

MC: Yeah. Uh huh. Wait, I think they washed the apron for us if I'm not mistaken, but the cap, we took it home.

MK: You were saying that you didn't have too much in terms of expenses, but how about transportation down to the cannery?

MC: We'd walk down. We lived up Liliha Street, so we just walked down. It's not too far to CPC, so no traveling expense, and you didn't get through too late in the evenings--very few overtime--and not as dangerous as it is now. Even though it's very lighted [now], you have to be very careful. In those days, no strain.

MK: Could you describe your typical work day at CPC from the time you woke up to the time you got home, and the things you did after you got home?

MC: You mean, when we got down there? You have your apron and cap, you put it on. Then you have your gloves. You put powder in your gloves so you putting on smoothly. Then you go to the tables. We pick whatever tables we like. Some foreladies are real nice. So we have a gang there, we'd go to the table that we like the foreladies. If she didn't like us, she chase us out, but otherwise, she'd leave us there. At the end of the day when we get home, there wasn't much to do. I think we read the paper, and that's about all. We hardly went out at night.

MK: What time did you wake up?

MC: I think we started at 7 [o'clock a.m.] at that time. We get up about 6 o'clock. I don't quite remember when we got through work though. Was early afternoon, I think. Was so far back, I cannot remember.

MK: You mentioned that you enjoyed the work, especially being with your friends. What did you do at the tables with your friends?

MC: Talk nonsense--joke--there wasn't much to talk about. Oh, maybe some shows that you saw, or things like that, but outside of that, we didn't have too many activities. We didn't have football, and all these things they do have now. So I guess [talk about] what you did, and joke around. Nothing much to talk about.

MK: What did the foreladies think about your talking at the tables?

MC: No, they never bothered you as long as you did your work.

MK: How were your relationships with the foreladies?

MC: They were all right excepting for one. Oh, she used to make me mad. But, we didn't mind too much about the forelady, as long as we got along with the girls. Because she only supervise us and she'll tell us, "Do this and do that." But outside of that, we working with the girls, so they more close to us than the foreladies. It didn't bother us too much what the foreladies told us as long as we did what we were supposed to do.

MK: Going back a little bit, I was just wondering, how were you trained as a packer?

MC: They'll tell you how to work. What part of the pineapple you're supposed to pick to put in your fancy can, and what supposed to go down. It's easy because you pick up your pine by the color of the fruit. I don't remember whether they told us to look for the core, or not to look for the core. Because the core is big sometimes [and the Ginaca sometimes failed to remove the core completely].

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MC: When the fruit comes out [from the slicing machine], what they used to do is to just take off the end pieces. Then you roll your pine to see if there are any eyes, or gouges. The pine had to be perfect in color and in texture. By looking at the fruit, you would know whether it was sour (overripe). In case we think it's sour, we'd smell it, but otherwise you just sort it out, and you just pack your fancy.

Then the girl further down---they have maybe about four or five packers that packed fancy, so you just pick up and the next person would pick up whatever is left. When you go towards the end of the fifth one, then you'd have more [to do] because maybe you'd discard [i.e., leave on the belt] too much that supposed to go in the fancy. They'll just have to pick it up, and sort it out, and put it in.

MK: During that training period, about how much time did you spend being trained?

MC: They don't train you. They put you on the table. You have to learn how to work from the others. Like now, I don't know. At that time when we went, they didn't have.

But now, at Dole Cannery, when you go into work, you have a training period. They give so many hours of training. They'll tell you---they take you to a special room. They have a trimming forelady that teaches the trimmers, and the packing forelady with the packers. They bring in lots of pans of fruits--all different sizes, color. They just put all the cans there and tell them how to discard, how to handle the fruit, how to roll your fruit, and what to look for--the core, or if the fruit is off center. If the fruit...it's not in the middle and it's more towards one side, then they don't use that for fancy. They discard that as choice. All those things. I don't know how many hours they give you.

After they give you so many hours, then they put you on the table. Then you work. You work on the table, and they---I don't know how many hours they usually give you. They qualify you, and then you're a regular packer. You have to work as much, just like the other girls.

MK: I was wondering, in that type of job, you have to use judgment. Would you have preferred doing a job that didn't involve that sort of judgment?

MC: No, I didn't mind.

MK: Did you prefer that kind of job?

MC: I won't say "prefer," but that's what I was taught. I never tried to do any other work besides cannery work.

MK: On the table where you have your packers, was there a certain position that some women preferred over others?

MC: They do prefer working up [at the beginning of the packing table] because---like now, the pine is not counted. It started off with if you have seven girls--maybe seven pine come out [from the slicer]. At Dole, when you pick up the whole fruit, you have your fancy and your choice way you grade, and the B's [i.e., broken slices]. You grade three ways. As you go down [towards the end of the table], if the girls on the top don't do their share, then the seventh girl--whoever she is--would have more work. So they would prefer being up. Then we have to warn the girls that---sometimes when they up, they kind of play their army game, and they say, "Oh." When they go down the end, all the fruit come down. [See second interview for a description of the "army game."]

I said, "You see, that's the reason why we tell you to pick up your fruit. Because when you come down to the end, if you're up there and you miss your pine, this is what's going to happen to the other girls that's working down here." Although we try to help them, we let them struggle on their own so they'll know that when they up, they supposed to do their share.

MK: This is all at Dole [nowadays]?

MC: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Was it like this at CPC?

MC: No, CPC is not like this. CPC, you just stationary [i.e., not rotated from one position to another]. You stayed there. So when kids go down early, they know where to go--they stay up.

MK: Did you go down early?

MC: Oh, yes. We'd go down early. All our friends go down early. If you don't go down early, they'll just fill you up to whatever space they need girls. But if you go down early, then you can all stay together.

MK: Based on your early experience at CPC, what kind of differences do you see between the CPC that you went to in 1925, and the early Dole that you went to in 1936?

MC: The work itself is different though. Like, you're stationary at CPC, but---I mean, Dole cannery was stationary too, but you would

work up [i.e., at the position at the beginning of the table]. Then you pick up the B's--you have another girl that does that job--or you pack if they don't have enough girls. Then you work down at the end of the table, and you work on the machine when they cut the pine in half... [Apparently, there was no formal rotation of positions at Dole in 1936.]

(MC speaks to grandchild.)

MC: You just rotate. When they said, "Oh, you tired?" Then they tell, "Oh, clean the rubbish, then." We used to have a little trough outside where you put your eyes, and your blemish [sour spots], all in that trough there. They tell you, "Oh, you better go outside and clean the rubbish." So they give you a little stick, and you just poke 'em in the hole there [to unplug the trough]. Then they give you a little pincher. You go to the water fountain. They have a little sink like. You go over there, and you clean all the blemish and things, and you bring it back to the table.

MK: You did that at Dole?

MC: Uh huh [yes]. But CPC didn't have that. That's why, according to working conditions, Dole was better.

MK: Could you explain that statement a little bit more?

MC: At Dole, everybody has a locker when you put all your things away. At Dole, I think we had to wash our own things, too. But when you go down to the tables, they don't have that stationary stool. You can adjust the stool whichever way you wanted. They have a fountain right there where you can drink. Your cafeteria was right in the cannery. When we first started, they didn't have a break hour, but you could always go up and get something. But it's not too far; you don't have to go out of the cannery so it was more convenient. But as far as work was concerned, I think CPC was easier.

MK: Why do you say that?

MC: I don't know. They weren't as strict as Dole, I think. They didn't demand more.

MK: Do you mean that the quality control was a bit stricter [at Dole]?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. That's why like CPC, they didn't have this inspection. At Dole, they have inspection. They take out--from each girl--maybe they take out two cans of your fancy, and your choice. They put it on a little cart. They bring it to across the table, and they inspect it. They grade you on that. All the mistakes they found, they'll bring it back to the forelady. The forelady get after the girls and say, "Oh, these and these were in the can. You supposed to be more careful with it." But at CPC, they didn't have that. They didn't have that inspection there.

MK: Were there any other differences that you can recall? Were there different types of people working?

MC: No, I think same. Only like CPC, they had one forelady---I think she had two tables. At Dole, they had a forelady and a reliever.

(Grandchild speaks. Tape stops, then resumes.)

MK: Mrs. Chang, in doing research, I found out that Dole sponsored sport activities and other fun-type activities for the workers. When you were at CPC in 1925, did you have that sort of thing?

MC: No, not that I know of. I don't think they had any. But at Dole---oh, I don't know. I wouldn't say right after I went to work there, but took a while before they had volleyball. Then we formed a bowling club, and we'd have bowling leagues. We'd have a monthly shoot to find out who would be queen. Then at the end of the year, we'd have an ace of aces shoot where all the queen for the month would compete.

MK: Now I sort of want to move on to your second working experience. You told me that you worked at the Purity Inn for two years in 1927 and 1928. Can you tell me why you went to the Purity Inn?

MC: Well, I'll tell you. My mother wanted to---somebody got a job for me as a maid for this---oh, I don't know where it was. Some bigshot, you know? So I went there, and I didn't care for that type of work. When I passed by, Purity Inn was right around the corner. I went in and applied for the job because I didn't want to work that maid---that type of job. I never tried it, but I thought it would be monotonous.

I stayed at Purity Inn; I liked it. You just carhop, take orders, help them when they have strawberries and things like that. You go in the back; you help them clean that out. Sometimes when the boys are busy--very seldom, but when the boys are busy--we'll help them make their order and things. That's about all.

MK: Why didn't you like being a maid?

MC: I never tried it, but I think I have enough of that at home with so many brothers.

MK: Why didn't you go back to the cannery?

MC: I didn't think of it. I wanted something steady. Cannery was more or less a seasonal job. Then at Purity Inn, it's all-year-around job. At that time, I was out of school already so I wanted something that's steady income.

MK: When you worked at Purity Inn, how much did you make?

- MC: I really don't know. That was so far back. I wish I could tell you, but I don't know really.
- MK: Do you remember what you did with the money that you would make?
- MC: Oh yeah, that went to my parents and part of it I kept. Most of it went to my parents because by then, all my brothers and sister was all going to school. They needed more--junior high, and things like that. So, more to help at home.
- MK: How was it different from the cannery work? What was the most different thing?
- MC: Waiting on people. Remembering whatever they ordered. (Laughs) Outside of that, I guess it's same--you work with people.
- MK: If you compared the two experiences, did you like one more than the other?
- MC: No, I guess the same.
- MK: Why do you say that?
- MC: You come in contact with people; you have your fun. You earn your money to bring home. (Laughs) But outside of that, no, not much. I didn't prefer one more than the other. It's the same.
- MK: You were telling me that you quit working at the Purity Inn in 1928.
- MC: Yeah. Uh huh. I got married. Uh huh.
- MK: Did you ever consider continuing work?
- MC: No, not at that time.
- MK: Why, or why not?
- MC: We just didn't think of going to work [said with emphasis].
- MK: Did most women at that time who got married stop work?
- MC: Yeah. Uh huh. Like now, everybody goes to work, but they take the children to baby-sitter. Like my daughter---none of them [i.e., MC's grandchildren] I baby-sat. She work and he [daughter's husband] work. My daughter-in-law work. So, all the children [i.e., grandchildren] went to baby-sitter, and when they grow older--maybe two, three--then they go to day care. I never did have to take care of the kids. She told me, "Ma, you took care of enough kids so since you going to work, you don't have to take care. We take care our own." So I didn't have to bother with the kids.

- MK: But you quit the job at the Dairymen's Inn or what was also called the Purity Inn because you were going to get married. What did your husband think about that?
- MC: Nothing. Because he was making enough. He's a meat cutter. So, he was making enough.
- MK: You were not working until 1936, after you had married and had your three kids. Why did you decide to go back to work?
- MC: Well, to help out little bit at home because the kids were getting---I mean, I wouldn't say older, but as they were growing. Then, nothing much to do, and my mother-in-law said, "Oh, why don't you go to work? I'll help you take care." I didn't want to go to work because she was paralyzed then, but I thought I'd try it and see how it works. I could make a little extra money.
- MK: Did you start [at Dole] in the peak season?
- MC: Yeah, uh huh. I started in July because that was already peak. At that time, they weren't hiring too many. Being that my mother-in-law worked there before and the man that boarded with us [worked there, too]. Well, they put in a good word for me and then I got in. That day, I went to apply for the job and I started that night to work.
- MK: Is that unusual? To get a job that soon?
- MC: Yeah, I guess. You have to have the pull or you know somebody that---at that time of year anyway, because majority of the kids are hired and I think they have a full crew by then.
- MK: Did you ever consider going back to CPC?
- MC: No. Once I started at Dole, I preferred staying there because the working conditions and things.
- MK: When you first went to work at Dole, you were a packer. Could you tell me all the other jobs that you've done at Dole?
- MC: During the war years [World War II], I worked in the field as a hoe-hana and picked slips. Once in a while, we picked fruit. I think one summer I went. Then, I worked warehouse where they pack cases. I worked out where they fix the lug boxes, where they paint the corners [of the boxes]. So, whenever they asked some odd jobs, we willing to try anything. We just went, and I think I did about enough odd jobs in there. (Chuckles)
- MK: You also told me that you were a stamp-in lady? What did that involve?
- MC: During peak season, I won't say they don't want to give the kids too much overtime, but they hire three crew like--three groups. Then, first, second, and third shifts.

In the meantime, while they are training all these kids, maybe we might have only one shift. We'd have too many girls. We cannot use them all.

So we say, the first shift girls, and stamp them, and tell them to stay home tomorrow and come back the following day. Then you go out, you just stamp the girls. You tell them, "Oh, tomorrow, you stay home. Come back the following day." We do the same with the second and the third shift until they are in full swing.

But usually, on the second and the third shift, they had just about enough because a lot of kids--young kids--don't want to go on that shift. On the morning shift, they say, "Oh, we don't want to go on the night shift."

We says, "Well, if you go on the first shift, we going to have too many girls. You going to be rotated if that's okay with you." But lot of kids take that.

Then, we figure we need just so many girls for the morning shift. We have too many, then we stamp them. "Well, you stay home tomorrow, and you come back the following day."

When we used to have one shift, we'd make it so half come in the morning, and half come in the afternoon. I'll have to go out and stamp them, and tell them what to do, when to come back. Then, all that has to go in the book so we know who came in the morning and who came in the afternoon--all that had to go in the book.

- MK: In assigning this work to the students working during the peak season, did you assign the work to the intermittents in the same way?
- MC: No. That was done by somebody higher than I because they felt that it was their job. They didn't want to leave the intermittents' assigning to me because I worked in the office only during the summer just to help out.
- MK: You also told me that you served as an inspector on an inspection wagon.
- MC: When I first started to work--a packer--and maybe couple of years, you work. Then they feel that you're doing fine. Then they pick you up, and they say, "You go inspection." You work on inspection, then they promote you to a reliever--seasonal reliever. Then, they come up to forelady.
- MK: You made forelady in about 1942?
- MC: I think---maybe before that, about that time anyway. Uh huh.
- MK: Have you had any other odd jobs in the cannery or in the field?

MC: No. Outside of the recovery job that we did before I started to do the stamp-in job. I did that.

MK: Could you explain to me what that recovery job was?

MC: Yeah. You see, I had about four girls working with me. At certain hour--every hour--two of them would go out. One on the Ginaca and one on the inside. Inside--where the cans pass through--they have a meter there so you'll know how many cans pass through that hour. Same with Ginaca, they have a machine that counts how many fruit. You check the number of fruits that went through and the number of cans that we pack. Then they cut 'em down to percentage. Your choice was so many percent and your fancy was so many percent.

If they find out that your choice was higher than your fancy, they'll check into that. We put it on a board every day. The foreladies---if your fancy pack was low, the foreman get after you and say, "Oh, this table---all different tables are high, and this table was low." They want to know why and all that.

But after we did that for I don't know how many years, then they said it wasn't necessary, so they did away with that.

MK: Why did they stop? Do you know why?

MC: I really don't know why. They just did away with that.

MK: Are there other means of checking?

MC: It's just that at the end of the day, the total pack for the day. When the shifts supposed to come on, we just turn up our meter to zero, so the next shift would start over.

MK: Since you were involved in that kind of work, do you recall how many cans were going through?

MC: Uh uh [no]. The fruit---about 50, I think, for a minute, or something like that.

MK: You mean that in one minute, 50 pines would come down through the Ginaca?

MC: Yeah. Then they would have so many. When it comes out, it's divided because the trimmers have---on either side they working. The machine is good--no mistakes. It goes like that [diverts fruits to the left and right sides of the trimming table]. Counting just so, so everybody has a fruit to work with.

MK: Oh, so the machine directs one to the right and one to the left, and each trimmer gets a fruit?

MC: Uh huh [yes]. Well, it's not that way with the packing. Packing, the fruit just goes in a chain. [See diagram section in the Introduction.] As the wages go up, they want more production. So it

goes fast. I usually have a chunk line, and that pine would come so fast, they'd give you extra girls.

The trimmers, when they trim, they throw the fruit in the chain. Maybe the next girl to her have a fruit and the (chains are all filled). So instead of putting one in the chain, they put two in the chain. When it comes out through the slicer, the pineapple all clogged up. Then, it just push and it falls down and you waste your fruit.

You tell the Ginaca or your foreman that too much fruit coming out and the girls cannot handle it. You just are wasting your fruit. They say, "Oh, we don't want to stop the Ginaca."

I say, "Well, if they don't want to stop the Ginaca, I'll stop it." So I stop the Ginaca, and I tell the boy, "Wait. It's overloaded." Every time you stop the machine, you'll have to chart it on the tally card. They have a tally card that they check at the end of the day.

They say, "How come you just stopped so many minutes, and then you stop again?"

I say, "I can't help it. If you rather have the fruit go over for crush, fine. But I'm not going to have the girls work any harder than they are doing now because they just can do so much." Boy, it comes down fast! We had a lady that worked there, I wouldn't say elderly, was in her thirties, I think. I think [forelady] told her, "Oh do this and that."

She said, "Oh, you work this kind place, you have to be an octopus to catch up with the fruit." She quit. Whatever they say when they quit goes on that separation notice. So, we had to laugh. We thought it was funny, but I don't blame them because actually, the job is real hard. Fast. So every time the wage goes up, you work that much harder.

MK: About what time period are you talking about?

MC: Just before I retired.

MK: So, just before 1972.

MC: Uh huh [yes].

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: (Tape garbled.) The old times was not as hectic as nowadays?

MC: You mean, the work? Well, it was not as hectic as it is now because everybody had their own pine and you would just grade your fruit. The main thing was as long as you grade it well, that was it.

But like now, it's accuracy--whatever you can do, as fast as you can. Like before, you just take your time and do the best. That's why now, they don't have fancy and choice can pack. It's not a fancy pack because they don't have the fancy kind pack in the stores. They only have one kind of pack. What they do is put bright fruit in one can and the light-colored fruit in one can. That's it. That's a regular pack they do now.

When we first started, they had the fancy and the choice. You pay more for your fancy because that was the best grade, and then you had your choice, and you had your B's. They were already cut up in half.

MK: Do you remember about when that change came in when they decided to do only one type?

MC: When the Libby [women] came in with us [1968]. That's about the time, I think. Or could have been about five years before I retired I think. Or so.

MK: You said that in the beginning, it wasn't too hectic but later on, it got hectic.

MC: Yeah. After they changed the ways of packing, and things. You just pick up whatever you can when we started off. Then, they changed the ways. They counted so many girls on the table. Everybody had a pine of their own. But it got so the pine just came out--before I retired--and you just had to pick whatever you can.

MK: You mean that each girl would pick out different types for herself?

MC: Yeah. You see, as the pine came down--when we first started off--you just pick the middle--the best part. But now, they just pick the whole thing. Just the ends, I think, you throw away. As long as the fruit don't have a core and it's all one color, then they pack it all in one can because after you cook it, it doesn't show. All color is the same so, fancy or choice, it doesn't make no difference. I think it all goes to one place--that same pack.

MK: So now, you don't have to pick out as many grades.

MC: Yeah. Uh huh. They don't have to sort as many as we used to do.

MK: Yet it's hectic?

MC: Oh yes, because the fruit comes down that much faster.

MK: Is the machine actually much faster than before?

- MC: Yeah. Because like the Ginaca, they can adjust the speed of how many fruit they feed. In case they want it slow, maybe two fruit, and then they leave one chain open, and then they leave two fruit and one chain. They adjust it. They can adjust the speed of the Ginaca machine but inside, you cannot adjust the speed.
- MK: I notice that there's been a reduction in the number of trimmers and packers, too. How has that affected working?
- MC: When I was there, they had a full crew. But like now [1979], everything is automatic, I think. The fruit---to the end of the table, and it goes direct to the double seamer. So they don't use as many boys as they used to. But I haven't been down there since they fix the cannery up.
- MK: From the first time that you worked at Dole until the time you retired, were there changes in the number of packers that worked at a table?
- MC: Oh, yes.
- MK: What sort of change?
- MC: Number of packers, I wouldn't say not much change, but the speed itself is the difference.
- MK: Can we move back and concentrate on your packing career? You've already told me how you were trained to be a packer, but you haven't told me how much you were paid in 1936. Do you remember?
- MC: I think was 25 [cents]. I'm quite sure was 25 when I started.
- MK: Twenty-five cents an hour?
- MC: Uh huh [yes].
- MK: Later on when you moved up to different jobs, did your pay increase?
- MC: Uh huh [yes].
- MK: How much were you making when you retired as a forelady?
- MC: Close to \$4.
- MK: That was in 1972?
- MC: Uh huh [yes].
- MK: What were your feelings about your wage in 1936?
- MC: That was the minimum wage. Everybody was getting, so it didn't bother us. Then, you worked every day, and you brought home your

pay. At that time, they paid you in cash so you bring home a little envelope with the cash inside. They did away with that, and they started to give you checks.

MK: Do you remember when they started giving you checks instead of currency?

MC: Uh uh [no].

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: Mrs. Chang, could you tell me whether or not you had any piecework or contract work at Dole?

MC: No, not that I know of. But my sister--she worked there before she got married, she worked there quite long. She said they'd have competition between the tables and whatever table packed the most would have more pay, and they put a flag there. Another time, we used to have what they called the pink pine. (It's not edible.) If you pick up a pink pine, they lay it aside, they cook it, and it changes to a maroon color--then you got bonus for that.

MK: Were there any other instances when you got a bonus?

MC: No, not that I know of.

MK: You mentioned your sister. When was she working at the cannery? When did that contest occur?

MC: Oh, that was before I went to work because when I went to work, she was already married. That was way back before that. She worked there many, many years.

MK: So it's before 1936?

MC: Oh, yes.

MK: At the time that you first started working, men were receiving more pay for the same grade of work as women filled. How did you feel about that wage difference?

MC: With the men and the women in the canneries? The men did a heavy job. They did the heavy job so they were entitled to more pay. Before I retired, they had boys doing both trimming and packing. We trained them to do packing and trimming and they got the same regular pay like the girls.

MK: Do you remember what period of time was it? The 1970's or the 1960's? When the boys first started trimming and packing?

MC: I would say about---I wonder if ten years? So. Because was way after I started. When they started to be short of kids to come

into work, especially on the night shift. Then they hire the boys and we'd have some boys. Very few boys came packing.

They prefer trimming. We had quite a bit of boys who worked there as a trimmer. I think they did a fine job excepting for butcher. (They cut off big chunks.) The foreladies would look for them. Say, "Eh, look the boy--butcher, butcher, butcher."

But I think as a whole, the boys did a good job. I had some boys--maybe not even 20 boys that came to work for packing--but I think the boys that we had did a fine job.

MK: That was about 10 years before you retired in 1972?

MC: Well, I won't say that far back--that was 10 years from this period--maybe about five, six years before I retired. I think the boys did a pretty good job though.

MK: When you first started at the cannery, were there definite lines between men and women in terms of what kind of jobs they could do?

MC: No. I mean, the boys were tray boys or truckers, mechanics. The girls all trim and pack. That's about it. Or glove room.

MK: The only difference you noticed later on was that the boys were coming into the trimming and packing?

MC: Uh huh [yes]. We had girls apply for mechanic's helper and trucking. We had some girls doing that, but they had to pass the test. I mean, they had to be hefty--big--because the truck is heavy, especially when stacked. It's loaded and they have to truck it away. The girls applied. They didn't stop them. In case they passed whatever physical they have to go through and they were able to do, they'd give 'em the job.

MK: Did you ever want to do a man's job at the cannery?

MC: Too small to do anything much.

(Laughter)

MK: If it weren't for your size, would you have liked...

MC: Well, I would like to try anything once.

MK: Going back to your income, I was wondering, was your income enough to meet your expenses?

MC: You mean at home? Yeah, I had a little extra to go on trips once in a while.

MK: What kind of trips?

MC: I never went away from these islands. Lot of people say, oh, they born here and they never been (to the outside islands). So, when my kids were a little older and Mrs. [Rose] Yim [a Dole co-worker] said, "Oh, let's go on a trip to Kauai." Oh, I felt kind of leery because I've never left the kids at home and it's only for couple of days. So, we went and that was it. Then we went to Hawaii.

Couple of years later, they said, "Oh, let's go trip to the Mainland." So we went West Coast, and couple years later, we went to East Coast to a world's fair. You know how far back that was--the World's Fair in New York. One year, the kids paid part of our fare. We went for three weeks in Japan, and one week in China [Taiwan].

MK: This is together with cannery working people?

MC: Yeah. Majority, yeah, cannery. Because cannery people would form [a group tour]. Like Mrs. Rose Yim was the one that actually went about getting the girls to go. Last year, she went to Europe, too.

MK: Besides using your extra money for your trips...

MC: The kids schooling, because my daughter went to Sacred Hearts, and my two boys went to St. Patrick's. After St. Patrick's, they went to public school.

MK: If you were not working at the cannery, could you and your husband afford to send the kids to the schools that they went to?

MC: I think so. We could manage somehow, yeah.

MK: What would you have to cut out if you weren't working?

MC: Nothing much because we didn't go out or anything. It was just home, uh?

MK: While you were working, I'm sure you must have had to use some money for work-related expenses. I was wondering what did you have to put out money for in terms of getting ready for work?

MC: Oh, nothing much because you can wear anything. Of course, later in years, they wanted you to wear covered shoes because it was dangerous, but before that you can wear slipper and you didn't have to dress. So, no expenses there because they furnished the cap and the apron.

MK: How about your transportation? Because you were living here in Kaimuki.

MC: I was on the night shift, I think my husband used to take me down or I used to go on the bus certain times. But when I came to day

shift--and I don't know for how long I had--Mrs. [Katherine] Nagafuchi [a forelady at Dole], she'd pick me up in the morning and she'd bring me home. No gas payments or anything. Sometimes, Mrs. Yim used to pick me up--Rose.

Like going out and things, although I don't drive, Katherine would pick me up, or Rose would pick me up. Same thing with bowling, they'd pick me up so I had no traveling expense as far as that was concerned.

MK: How about for lunch?

MC: Oh, you mean, at the cannery? I'd bring my own lunch or sometimes, you'd eat in the cafeteria. Maybe you don't feel like eating too much, then you eat a sandwich--little things--or they have hot lunch. But it didn't cost you much--you'd pay less than \$1. Then you have your dessert, or salad, or whatever you wanted. Mostly, I preferred bringing my lunch because all the girls--like Katherine and Rose--we all brought lunch and we all sit by the table, and half the time, we talking before our lunch hour [end]. (Chuckles) We have to rush. So, we usually brought our own lunch, so that was no trouble.

MK: Your pay, who handled it?

MC: His was his. Mine was mine. (Chuckles) No, I kind of helped him out. When I first started to work, we were still paying for this place---no, we didn't buy yet I think. When we bought this place, whatever I could afford, I give him part of it. Part of it I kept for use around the house, helping with the expenses.

MK: So you used your money for extras, plus sending your kids to school, household expenses?

MC: Uh huh [yes]. It did come in real handy--going to work.

MK: Were you able to save any of that money?

MC: No. Until finally when things got little easier, then I joined the credit union.

MK: When was that? You said "when things got easier." What do you mean by that?

MC: I guess when the kids got out of school. At least, when the two boys got out of St. Patrick's. They went to public school. Then, you able to save a little--payroll deduction.

MK: Besides the credit union, did you use any other financial institution?

MC: No.

MK: How about the tanomoshi? You're Japanese, I was wondering did you use that?

MC: We had couple of times. The girls would say, "Oh, you want to join tanomoshi?"

They say, "Oh, okay." I remember the first one was fine. It went along fine, everybody got their share back. But the second one when she made---it was Chinese-Hawaiian girl. She was about the second or the third that took the money, and then we never got it back, the rest. When whoever ran this thing approach her, she's crying. She say, "Oh, this and that." The one that ran that thing couldn't afford to give it back to us, so it just got out of hand. So, pau. Only one--I remember we had--that was good.

MK: Were cannery workers involved in that tanomoshi?

MC: Yeah, it was all among the cannery. Oh, maybe about 20 girls, but those that were in it, everybody knew each other real well. They were all friends. So, we just pick a number, and said, "Your turn, or my turn." But this one [the first tanomoshi], we didn't have to give back. You see, tanomoshi. When it's your turn to pick up, then you pick up the whole amount. It's more like savings.

MK: Why did you join the tanomoshi?

MC: Did you go to Violet Yonenaka's place? Well, you saw Lillian Taira? Ah, she wasn't there? [Violet Yonenaka and Lillian Taira are Dole foreladies.]

MK: Yes, I talked to Lillian Taira in Waimalu.

MC: Well, she was the one that made that tanomoshi. "Eh, Nona, you like join tanomoshi?"

"Okay. Who and who going to join it?"

"We usually check. We don't want anybody to join." But they usually got more of these Oriental girls. You know what I mean.

So, say, "Okay."

Then they say, "Oh, you number two or number three." Something like that. Maybe you feel kind of hard up this week, I think I need the money.

So you tell 'em, "Eh, whose turn this month?" They tell you. Say, "Oh." Then you approach the person, say, "Eh, I can pick up my tanomoshi [this] month."

You can take out. Say, "Oh, okay." Just like that, we'd change because we didn't have to give any back, see?

MK: How often did that tanomoshi meet?

MC: We didn't meet, we just (Laughs) handed in your tanomoshi money first of the month because it was scattered in the cannery. Whoever knew that they have to pay the money by that time would be there to, you know. That's why they kind of screen the person before we get them to come with us.

MK: How did you screen a person?

MC: Like you have to know them real well. More or less, you know they don't---some kids go around and say oh, they borrow money, or when you go out to eat and they always kind of sponge on you. Even in the cafeteria when you go eat, they say, "Oh, I go get your coffee." Stuff like that. They never kind of put in their share. So we know more or less what kind of person they were before.

Then, we'd ask them, "Oh, who and who is going to be?" Then, we say, "Oh, okay then." Because we know some---like the last one we had, we didn't get our money back so.

MK: Was it quite common to have something like the tanomoshi among cannery workers?

MC: I don't know about the others, but we made only about two or three, that's all. When the last one got jam up, then she [Lillian Taira] did away with that because too much responsibility for her--because she cannot afford the money back, eh?

MK: When you first started working for the pine company, you had your wages. What else did you get from the company in terms of benefits?

MC: Nothing.

MK: Nothing? They were no medical benefits?

MC: No. None, until I made intermittent. When you make intermittent, then you have your medical benefits, but no dental. Only just HMSA [Hawaii Medical Service Association].

MK: That would be after the union came in [i.e., International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, 1946]?

MC: Yeah. Uh huh.

MK: Prior to the union, did you have any benefits?

MC: No. Not that I know of. Because you have to work there so many years, then you make intermittent. When you intermittent [and] when the union came in--you had your benefits. But outside of that, if you're seasonal, you don't have. Of course, they have industrial. Then if you are seasonal, the cannery will take care because it's industrial. But if you outside and you get hurt on your own--maybe

accident or things like that--then the company not responsible so they won't be paying your bills. Only when it's industrial then the company takes care of that.

MK: I want to now concentrate on your work as a packer and I want you to describe your typical work day as a packer. Was it different from when you were working at CPC? By this time, you had a family to take care of, so could you elaborate from the time that you woke up to the time you went to bed?

MC: When I worked on the night shift, then I'd have supper ready and go to work. Then, when I came home, I'd have my breakfast, take a bath, and do a little laundry--whatever had--then I'd rest seven hours, then I get up. My mother-in-law--although she was paralyzed--she did help me quite a bit, so that made it easy.

When I first went to work, was summer. I didn't have too much laundry or things to do because the kids didn't go to school. At that time, we have to starch and iron the kids' clothes. Well, home, just as long as they're clean, it didn't matter. It was no trouble at all.

When they started going to school--they went to kindergarten. Only my youngest one [was home]---by then. My mother-in-law was able to get around on crutches. That's when I went to work. He was three---now, I would say he's wild, but at that time, he'd never leave the house without her. He'd just tag along every place she'd go. He was right there with her. So, I had no trouble.

MK: It wasn't too bad for you because you had a mother-in-law who took care of the kids.

MC: Yeah, uh huh. Then, with one hand, she would try to do--she couldn't run the machine--so she would try to help me do laundry with one. I told her, "Don't do it because I can always manage to do it." At that time, I think I had---wait. Oh, my sister-in-law, they were all out, married already. Because when I first got married, I had two sisters-in-law, one brother-in-law, and two of my husband's nephews. We were all living together.

MK: Those nephews that you just mentioned, did they continue to live with your family while you worked?

MC: Yeah. When I got married, two of them were living with my mother-in-law already because that was my brother-in-law's boys and he had passed away--he got drowned. He passed away, so they came to stay and the mother had gone out to live. When they were four or five--five I think--the mother passed away so they continued staying with us until they went in the service. Then they got married and they moved out. So, I always had somebody stay with me.

MK: Your primary household duties were doing the laundry, ironing? But your mother-in-law also helped?

- MC: Yeah. Somebody say, "Oh, when people get paralyzed, they get grouchy." Oh, she was very pleasant. She was very, very nice. Although she was Chinese, but I don't know. I really got along fine with her.
- MK: So when you went to work for the night shift, did you feel well-rested?
- MC: Oh, yeah. Because she wouldn't let the kids bother me and the two older ones would go out and play. I'm grateful though because they never got into trouble. Maybe they would do some little---naughty. Then I have my Portuguese lady across the street would say, "Oh, Chang. Bobby did this, and Ah Tau [MC's daughter] did this." But as far as those things, I never had much trouble with those kids. I was lucky. They would be around here, playing.
- MK: Besides that Portuguese lady who lived across the street, did the other members of your neighborhood assist you?
- MC: No. She was the only one because next door had children of their own. This side didn't. I don't know who they had at that time, but they didn't bother.
- MK: During your early days at Dole, you were working the night shift. How did you get this shift?
- MC: Night, you mean? Well, being that I couldn't work during the day, I applied for the night.
- MK: Did you like working the night shift?
- MC: Well, it gave you more time to do your housework and with children. I think that's why lot of people go on the night. Then they have more time to do their work during the day, and rest. Then go to work. At that time, you don't have to sleep so much, but when you're younger, it's different. You don't have to work as hard---the work doesn't make you too tired.
- MK: Later on, you said that you did shift to day shift occasionally when you were forelady. Why did you shift?
- MC: You mean, from night to day? When I shifted from night to day, I stayed on the day right through until I quit.
- MK: Why, though?
- MC: Because the children needed me---when they were getting older. Then maybe I figured they didn't need me at home so I asked for the day shift.
- MK: So you felt you should be home at night?

MC: Yeah. At night. When they grow older, they would be going out more at night.

MK: You also told me there is an element of opportunities involved in getting night shift or day shift. Could you explain that again?

MC: On the night shift, not much of an advancement, but you do get promoted faster because being that they need more. Then if they feel that you qualified, then they'll promote you to inspection. Then you go to reliever, then you come to forelady, then you come up to assistant head.

MK: Was that one of the reasons why you stayed on the night shift?

MC: No. No. Because I appreciate working night, then I can do my job at home. That's the reason. But not because I felt that I would have a better chance of going up. At the cannery, they don't count your seniority. They just pick whoever they feel that is able to handle the job. That's why. Like Fannie Kealoha. You met her? She was with Violet Yonenaka.

MK: Co-worker?

MC: Yeah. She had been at the cannery not as long as we are, but she comes up to head forelady on the night shift because she's able to do the job. So, they feel that if you look around, if you able to do the job and handle the foreladies and the workers, and take orders too, and give out, then they promote you.

MK: Going back to the scheduling of your work during your work hours. When you first started in 1936, you told me that there were no scheduled rest breaks. Did you ever ask to leave the table?

MC: Yeah. they would let you. You say, "Oh, I want to go." Then they see if nobody is out, you can go. Or maybe she'll [i.e., forelady will] tell a reliever to take your place and do the job.

Like now, they have rest period. I don't know how many rest periods. Let's say if you have five rest periods, they hang the tag on every table. First, second, third. [The rest breaks are staggered so that only a few machines are stopped at any one time.] You're on the first break, then the machine stops, and they have a red light. As soon as the green light goes on, the Ginaca stops. Everybody--the whole table--goes out for their break. All included, it's going to be around 15 minutes. Then you can go up, and you have your coffee or whatever you going have--your pastries. Then, you come back down in time to look for the table to start again.

MK: Is that sufficient time for you to eat something and use the bathroom?

MC: If you don't talk too much, then you have time.

(Laughter)

MC: When you get to know the girls well enough, they bring their own pastries. So she say, "Oh, buy my coffee. I meet you upstairs." Where the foreladies meet. Foreladies go to the bathroom, whatever they have to do, and then they come back and everything's ready. So, if you have a regular group of girls on your table, they always bring something and lunch, too. She say, "Oh, I brought lunch." Bumbai, the forelady say, "Go eat, I buy lunch for you folks." They kind of treat each other.

MK: Right now, you just mentioned a "regular group of workers." Is there such a thing as a regular group that works at your table?

MC: We try to. Some foreladies are real nice with the girls, and you have the same girls go back to you every day. Especially intermittents. But during season, the head forelady would come around and say, "This certain-certain forelady has all seasonals and she's struggling. You have to give her some of your intermittents." They change. But otherwise, off-season---like now, it's different. But at our time, we would have all the regular girls. They always come back to you. Then, you go to lunch together with them. But like now, they have intermittents according to seniority. The ones with more seniority line up on this table and gradually it goes. Mrs. Nagafuchi's table--season--she has all seasonals. When the shifts change, she have different girls. She works hard though. She's struggling. See, she wants to retire, but she has I don't know how many more years to go. I think she has about five years to go before she make 65.

MK: You mean the senior foreladies sometimes have more intermittents than less senior foreladies?

MC: Yeah. During season, because they line up the girls according to their seniority. Once they set the table, all the girls know who has more seniority than the others so they usually go back [to the same tables]. Then they have a certain table that they have---what do you call industrial? They cannot work more than 7-1/2 hours a day. So in case we have a long day, they have to leave after 7-1/2. They not injured or what but, on the sick list like. Then they leave. They work 7-1/2 hours. They cannot work more than 7-1/2 hours--they have to leave.

MK: How about the new workers? And, the foreladies--if it's a busy time--do they work overtime?

MC: Oh, yes. If they are really busy, they'll work about 12-1/2 hours. 6:30 [a.m.] to 6:30 [p.m.]. We've done that. They say, "Oh, we going to have three shifts this year." (Foreladies work one of two shifts; girls work one of three shifts.)

"Fine." You prepare for that. You figure, oh, 7-1/2 hours

would be. But they have a hard time getting that many foreladies go. We usually end up with 6:30 to 6:30.

MK: That was about what time? When you first started, they were doing that, too?

MC: No, no, no. At that time, we had two shifts--morning and night shift--but they didn't need as many foreladies like now. Of course, now, they don't need too many because they just make trimming and packing as one forelady.

They didn't run as many tables at those days. I don't know how many tables they actually had altogether, but way over on this--- about one-third of the cannery, they didn't have any tables there. It was all empty until they started building up.

MK: Do you remember about when they started building up? Whether it was right before the war, or after the war?

MC: The tables were built up before the war, I think. That's when they were short of people--workers. I think we had only one Korean girl working with us. We called her "Yobo." She retired already I think, but the rest all went to work for defense job. Most of the Japanese people went in fact.

MK: Do you mean during the wartime?

MC: During the wartime, yeah. Then we'd have air raid practice. We couldn't get in the cannery without a gas mask. We had to carry our gas mask every day. Back and forth from home. They wouldn't let you go in the cannery without a gas mask. It was required.

MK: Since you mentioned the war right now, at that time, did you ever work for the Hapco Candy Company [part of Hawaiian Pineapple Company during World War II]?

MC: No, I didn't. I never did.

MK: It was during that time that you also worked in the fields?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. Like off-season, we were able to collect compensation. But when they ask you to work, if you refused it, you would be disqualified. You won't be able to collect compensation. But I figure, "Heck. Go to work. Try anything once." So I really did enjoy, although we had to do, you know? We had Mabel Kozuki [head forelady], and her sister [Violet Kozuki] was a section head, too. So we would work under them, and we'd have all these old Japanese ladies come, they bring plenty bento, and we'd have a picnic.

(Laughter)

MC: All odd jobs, I think to me, most Japanese ladies would volunteer

to go. Even field work. When they were short of help in the field after season. Went hoe-hana and pick slips.

MK: Why do you say that most Japanese women want to do it?

MC: I don't know. To me, they volunteer more I think.

(Laughter)

MC: It's not that I'm prejudiced.

MK: Getting back, we were talking about the scheduling and everything--rest breaks, lunch, overtime. Now, how about scheduling over the year? Like at pine, you work the peak season. How did you feel about this work being so concentrated in a couple of months?

MC: We didn't mind because we were able to collect compensation.

MK: Could you always collect compensation when you started in 1936?

MC: No. Wait. Let's see. I don't think, not right away because I remember--I don't know what year I started to go--we used to be on Bethel Street. You know where the old post office used to be? It was there. We'd have to go down there every week, and, oh, what a crowd we used to have.

But now, all you do is you go filing for your compensation, and they'll tell you how much you're going to get a week. Then they give you a card. So all you do is every week, you sign a card; you send it in; you get your money. Some people get maximum. Fannie [Kealoha] gets maximum I think. So, we didn't mind. Off-season, you get your compensation.

MK: You were one of the people who were also called in for work during the off-season?

MC: Yeah. You'd accept the job. If you don't, then disqualify you for compensation---it's happening now because they have the fresh fruit. When they need girls for fresh fruit, they don't have enough. They tell you, "Oh, you have to work fresh fruit." But they told me the last time that it comes in a big bin--the fruit--and you have to lift it up onto the belt so they can sort it out. (Lots of stooping, picking up fruit to place on belt.) They said that's real hard job. So they said lot of people don't want to go there. They can get some kind of excuse, maybe you have no way of going down [to the cannery]. Still, they wouldn't consider that an excuse because they asking you to work and then you don't work. You don't qualify for your compensation.

MK: During the off-season, did you ever look for another job?

MC: No. Not when I had my children. So, figure, off-season, can stay home.

MK: Do you remember how your work at the cannery during the off-seasons was distributed? How did they know who to call?

MC: Oh. They called according to seniority. Everything was based on seniority base. I had the highest seniority. Okay, you have all the foreladies lined up, and all your intermittents lined up. Maybe they call you and say, "Oh, you have to work tomorrow." Maybe you work for about five days. Then your time is up. They call the next forelady to come in.

But now, I think Frances [Ito] and Violet [Yonenaka]---I think Violet has the most seniority. Every time the cannery run, they have to go. We used to work five days. "Uuh, we have to go to work tomorrow." Five days. But not anymore.

MK: Why do you say, "Uuh?"

MC: Uuh. Stay home, collect compensation.

(Laughter)

MC: But I didn't mind. Of course, it made so the work was distributed among all these people. I don't know now how they do it though.

MK: Was it the same situation when you didn't have too much seniority? Do they use the same steps?

MC: Uh huh [yes].

MK: Getting back to...

(Grandchild enters. Taping stops.)

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-26-2-79 and 6-27-2-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Margaret "Nona" Chang (MC)

March 22, 1979

Kaimuki, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Margaret "Nona" Chang at her home in Kaimuki on March 22, 1979.

Mrs. Chang, in the last interview we ended off by talking about the time you were a packer in 1937. You told me how you got the job and everything so I thought from today, I'll continue with the same year and ask about that packing job. Can you first tell me why you became a packer and not a trimmer or some other job worker?

MC: Well, I learned how to pack at CPC [California Packing Corporation]. When I went to Dole cannery, my mother-in-law worked there before so more or less she was a forelady so people knew her, and the timekeeper, Kanky Chun, knew her well. I figure well, I might as well go to Dole to work. And like when you work at the cannery, like when you have people sick at home or children, especially housewives, then they can always call in and say your children are sick and things like that. Not like working in an office that you have to be there, see, so that was a good reason for my going to work too. You were able to stay home whenever things came up.

MK: You just mentioned that your mother-in-law had worked at Dole. The timekeeper, Kanky Chun, knew her and knew that you were the daughter-in-law. Do you think you could have gotten the job if your mother-in-law had not worked there and if Mr. Chun didn't know who you were?

MC: Well, I think so because when I went work more or less the season was partly gone. I went in July so they must have had a full crew. So they gave me work because I took night shift. A lot of people don't want to work on that night shift. That's part of the reason, I think.

MK: Can you sort of describe your job? How did you pack in 1937?

MC: Well, different canneries, maybe different ways. When you start off, you start off at the bottom with the easiest job, not easiest

MC: Well, different canneries, maybe different ways. When you start off, you start off at the bottom with the easiest job, not easiest but easiest when the foreladies teach you how to work, huh. Then you stay at the end [of the packing table]. You pick up the half pieces, you put it in the gallon or this type of machine that you line your half [i.e., broken slices of pine] you know, little over a half up on the machine. Then you put it [broken slices] together and it would be B's. We used to call it, broken, huh. [See diagram section in the Introduction.]

MK: So you used to work on the broken B's and the B cutter?

MC: Uh huh [yes], and then you graduate. Then you go up [i.e. move to positions at the beginning of the table] and then you pack regular. We used to work together, and then we always work with the same gang. We used to have three, I think. One would strip and there would be two girls that would pick up the B's. Same like [the B's] at the end of the table, only these, we pick it up and we pack it in the can and they are to be cut later. Then maybe one would pick up the end pieces that not trimmed off too much. Then the next one roll it [i.e., sliced pine cylinder] and look for any gouges so they can pack it in the can. You line the gouges up so when they bring 'em to the table where they cut the B's then the gouges are all lined up so you just cut 'em with the B cutter. Then you graduate. When you graduate, then you start packing fancy and choice.

MK: Uh huh. So you start off as a broken B's person and sometimes you cut the B's, then you become a regular B packer and then you go on to be...

MC: Packer. I mean, Y packer. They call it Y.

MK: Is that the fancy packer?

MC: The fancy packer, yeah.

MK: Then, how about the choice?

MC: So many girls pack the fancy and so many pack the choice and then.... Packing choice and fancy it didn't matter. You knew more or less the grade of the fruit already because when I went to Dole, I already knew the grading of the fruit. You just have to start at the bottom because you never worked there before.

MK: Was the grading the same as at CPC?

MC: Uh huh [Yes].

MK: Was the packing procedure the same, too?

MC: No. CPC, when the fruit came out they didn't have the B packer or stripper at the top. You just pick the center, the best part

of the fruit, and you pack it. If you way up, then you pick up just the best [slices] so it was the easiest part but as you go down to maybe--they call it the last Y packer--then you'd have to pick up whatever fancy slices coming down on the belt or, you know.

MK: At Dole in 1937, which girl was at the top and which girl was at the bottom?

MC: [At the top] was the stripper and at the bottom was the B cutter, B gallon girl. They call it B's. They used to pick up the B's, and place it in the gallon and cut [the broken slices] at the same time, whatever, which way. We used to have two [girls] there, I think.

MK: So about how many girls did you have packing at one table?

MC: Oh, I don't know.

MK: You had one stripper?

MC: Uh huh, two B packer and then I know had two at the end. That made it five. I don't know how many we had in between.... 10 or 11, I think.

MK: About 10 or 11, 1937 time. Okay. Was one position any harder than another especially between fancy and choice?

MC: No, same. I think the part that I wouldn't say hard, [but] you have to work faster, was where you strip or pick up the B's at the top because you would try to get every fruit. But when you're a Y packer, you just pick whatever you can. You don't have to be in a hurry, rush, rush. Like because they usually try to put somebody there [at the top] that's faster on the hands because you have to try and catch every fruit on the B packing. Catch the ends, roll your fruit....

MK: Did you have one position that you liked over another position?

MC: Well, I guess it was all the same.

MK: Did they rotate the positions?

MC: Uh, no. At that time, they didn't.

MK: So once you got there in the morning and became a stripper, you were a stripper all day long?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: Okay. Nowadays they rotate positions, yeah?

MC: They rotate, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Which way do you like better? The 1937 time where you stay in one position or when you rotate?

MC: Well, at that time one position would be better for us because we knew each other so well, we worked together so long. But when it comes to getting everybody to do their share, I feel rotating would be better because some people don't [do their share]---they play their army game. Then they don't work as hard especially when they up there [beginning of packing table]. They pick up when they feel like. Then the fruit goes down and it's not (packed) but like when they play army game at the top, when they [i.e., the girls at the top] go down to the end and all the extra fruit come down for them, they know they'll have to do their share when they up so that [i.e., rotation of positions] was good.

MK: You just mentioned the army game. What's the army game?

MC: Well, they [i.e., the girls at the top] feel that, oh, I don't have to do.... As long as I pick my fruit, they don't care what happens to the rest of the girls. But when they go down on the end, then they have to do their share and they know. That was good. That's why Katherine [Nagafuchi, forelady] says, she sometimes send the girl down the end. She make them stay there an extra hour maybe just so they know that when they goof off at the top, huh, then the rest of the girls down at the end have to work hard. If you are the last one (i.e., fancy packer) there before the end girl (i.e., B packer) you have to pick up all the fruit, whatever comes down even if you get pile up.

MK: Did people in 1937 play that army game?

MC: No, in 1937 the pine didn't come down as fast. Then we didn't have so many school kids. More or less regular workers and intermittents so we had no trouble. I don't know about other tables but the table we stayed, we usually had the same forelady and she knew how we worked so there was no trouble.

MK: How come you folks always got to stay together and have the same forelady?

MC: Well, we always went back to her. There was a girl that I worked with, only her I remember. We used to call her Cherry. She and I used to be partners and I know she had a daughter that was named Nona.

(Laughter)

MC: But, I mean, it's nice if you can get a person to work together with you. The first forelady I remember was Hilda Kekina and she works at the credit union office now. She's the clerk there and she was very nice. Oh, she was only 19 or 20 [years old], I

think, at that time when she was our forelady. She was very nice and she had a lot of patience so I enjoyed my work there. I started off right because we had a good forelady.

MK: How did you folks work it out so that you would get a partner back then? How did that come about?

MC: Well, when you start working, you don't know too many people and then you start associating with people and then maybe, I think, Hilda put us together. She put me with Cherry and then when we worked together, we got along so fine that we stayed together. The foreladies more or less look forward to seeing you there. They can more or less depend on you to be there so we had no trouble.

MK: So at that time in 1937 you would just go down to the cannery at the regular time and then go to your table?

MC: Table, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Was it hard to get back to the same table all the time?

MC: No because majority of the girls more or less had a regular table to go to.

MK: Oh, okay. Then you were saying that Hilda was a good forelady. She was patient.

MC: Oh yes, she was very nice.

MK: What else did you consider back then as being characteristics of a good forelady?

MC: Well, she had a lot of patience. She'd joke and laugh with you and she was good to the old folks, too. She's Hawaiian-Chinese but she lives down by Moiliili [Japanese] School and she went to that school, I think. She's pretty good in Japanese, and she talked Japanese to the old folks and things like that. That made you kind of feel at ease because she's so patient with the people.

MK: Was she unusual or were other foreladies like her?

MC: I don't think they had too many but I would think being that she was so young, I give her credit for having so much patience with the people. She was very nice.

MK: You said that she was 19...

MC: I think she was 19 [years old].

MK: How about the other foreladies? How old were the other foreladies?

- MC: They were older, I think, but this was during the summer so I think Hilda was one of those that came up during the summer season.
- MK: You were telling me that when you first got the job, you would start from the easy jobs and then you graduate and then you go to the next job. How did the forelady teach you to do a certain job? Did she stay by you all day or...
- MC: No, no, she just go over there [to the end of the table]. The job that was easiest for you to start off with to learn how [i.e., B cutting and packing], she just tell you to pick this [i.e., broken slices] up and put it here [in the cutter] to certain height. That's the height of the can that would [be filled]. She said you just cut it down [i.e., broken slices] put it together and turn it over. Then in the B gallon, the pieces could be a little less than a half or half. You just put it in and then she tell you to watch the rubbish, or anything that's going down. Two little boxes at the end of the table, you just throw it [i.e., rubbish] in there.
- MK: Back in 1937, did you have relievers, too?
- MC: Yeah, uh huh.
- MK: What did the reliever do?
- MC: Help the foreladies around. Then in case anybody wants to go out, they take their places because at that time we didn't have any break period that would say this whole table is going out at certain time. You just say, "Oh, I want to go use the bathroom," or "I want to go out." Then the reliever would take your place until you came back. She was more there as a reliever to relieve the girls whoever went out and things like that.
- MK: At this time in 1937, what were your hours like? What time did you start work? What time were you pau?
- MC: I think we started late in the night. There was a break in between the first day shift and the night shift. What time we started, now ...about 10 o'clock [p.m.], I think, until morning because I remember when day shift we used to get through....
- MK: So that time you worked night shift and was it 8 hours or 10 hours?
- MC: We didn't have the 10-hour shift so about eight hours a day.
- MK: At that time, do you remember how many shifts they used to have?
- MC: They just had two.
- MK: At that time in 1937 when you first got the job, were you seasonal or...

- MC: Yeah, uh huh, seasonal. Then after season when they keep you --they'll keep you and then you become intermittent.
- MK: Later on when you became intermittent, how did you arrange that? How did you become intermittent?
- MC: They'll tell you that you're intermittent.
- MC: They ask you if you want to stay on and then they'll make you intermittent.
- MK: Did a lot of people want to become intermittents after the season was over?
- MC: Oh, yeah, quite a bit. Especially housewives, yeah.
- MK: Was it hard to become an intermittent? Were there so many people that it was hard?
- MC: No. They pick you I think according to the way you work to be an intermittent. According to the way you work and your attendance. August attendance counted a lot because they can't have anybody being intermittent.
- MK: You mentioned how you work as one of the qualifications that they would consider before making you an intermittent. At that time in 1937, did Dole evaluate the packers?
- MC: I....
- MK: You don't remember. Then how did they know that Mrs. Chang is a good worker and that she would be good as an intermittent?
- MC: I think Mabel [Kozuki, section head at that time] goes around with the timekeeper. Wasn't Mabel, was Mary (Kunani, head forelady), I think. When they make you intermittent, they give you a different tag, and then you know you made intermittent.
- MK: How often would she come around and watch?
- MC: She'll ask the foreladies about the girls, how they are and this and that. I don't know if she jot it down but she can more or less remember who's who, who to keep and who to let go.
- MK: At that time, was Mary Kunani the head forelady? She was?
- MC: Was above Mabel, she was, yeah, top.
- MK: When you were working at Dole in 1937, what kind of cafeteria facilities and rest facilities did you have?
- MC: They have the same as they do now. They always have the cafeteria upstairs and then they have so many bathrooms downstairs. The locker room is quite far when you go from table

3 all the way [upstairs] so you want to go up, you just go up to there [i.e., bathrooms located downstairs]. They have three (toilets) downstairs on the floor. They have a fountain there where you can drink water.

MK: Did you eat in the cafeteria back in 1937?

MC: No, I used to bring my lunch.

MK: How come?

MC: It takes too long to wait in line. Then when you get to know the people there, then we all sit together. You see at that time, the hours weren't so long so we used to start later so you have time to cook your dinner and cook a little extra and take. My kids used to like to bring lunch [to school], too.

MK: You were saying it took too long. How long did you have for your dinner break?

MC: Half an hour but, when you go then you have to stand in line, pick up your things.

MK: You were saying earlier that back in 1937, you didn't have scheduled rest breaks. You would go when you want to go, huh?

MC: When you want to, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Where would the women go if they wanted to rest, maybe not just use the bathroom, but they wanted to...

MC: No, you cannot go out and rest. It's either you go to the bathroom or drink water and you come back. There was no time limit. Maybe five or ten minutes. You don't rest, you just go up necessary and then you come back down.

MK: Uh huh. How about when you had your period or something or when you felt...

MC: Yeah, then you can---well, some of the people cannot stand, then they say, "Oh, I have cramps." They go to the dispensary and maybe they stay there for a while. If they can't take it, well, they get a pass to go home because the dispensary would give you a pass to go home.

MK: What is that pass that you go home? I never heard about it.

MC: They give you, a sheet of paper. Then it says there that you're going home because you're not feeling well. Or if you have a cold or thing, they give you pass and they say you can go. Of course, maybe when you have cramps, you don't have to go back to dispensary for checkup. But if you go home with a cold or you're feeling sick, you cannot go back to work unless you have a note from the dispensary saying you're able to come back to work.

MK: About that dispensary, people mention it but I was wondering how good was the dispensary?

MC: They good. I don't know how many beds they had. I've never slept there so I don't know but they do. Then they have the heating, in case you have strained muscle or things like that, they have heating lamp. Oh, was wonderful in there, uh huh.

MK: At that time when you worked in 1937, did they give you any physical?

MC: No, you don't have to take physical, not unless you make regular [work status]. We never did have physical working there.

MK: I heard from another woman that when she was working later on in 1951, she had to take a pregnancy test. She had to go get a physical and find out if she was pregnant or not...

MC: To be intermittent?

MK: Yeah.

MC: Oh, yeah, to be intermittent, yeah. They usually give you---they don't give you a total physical. They just give you blood pressure, see if you have high blood pressure. Or if you're pregnant, they don't want to make you intermittent because, you know.... So that's about the only thing, pregnancy and if you're too fat, yeah. Even for seasonals, if you're too fat, you have to take not a complete physical [but] see if you have blood pressure and things like that.

MK: So when you became an intermittent later on in 1937, you had to go take pregnancy test and...

MC: Oh, not. No, I didn't have to. I mean, it wasn't required. Only for those, maybe they say, "When was your last period." Things like that they ask you.

MK: Oh, okay. You know, when you worked at the cannery in 1937, were there any things that you didn't like too much, maybe things that were not too comfortable or things that you sort of felt like griping about?

MC: No, I don't think so.

MK: How about things like noise or smells or...

MC: The smell didn't bother me but I know a lot of people get kind of nauseated with the smell. But it didn't bother me.

MK: How about your position at the table? Whether you could sit or stand?

MC: You could sit, uh huh.

MK: Did you sit sometimes?

MC: I felt better standing. (Laughs)

MK: What can you tell me about the rules and regulations in the cannery? What sort of things did they tell you you're not supposed to do in the cannery?

MC: Eating things, like chewing gum. You can eat fruit but when you eat, you're not supposed to throw 'em back on the belt because it goes to crush. So you can eat but you throw it under the tables.

MK: How about your clothing? You have regulations?

MC: Yeah, at that time, I don't remember because people used to wear more or less, shirts or things. But later on in years, we started to get all these kids. They'd wear spaghetti straps and more or less bare on the top. We would tell the kids not to wear those for their safety because the pineapple juice or things might go in. After the orientation then we tell them to come in for their training. When they come in dressed the way they were warned not to, we'd send 'em home. Then skirt up to certain length. They cannot wear shorts. [Skirts] have to be knee length and in case they wear anything that's out of the question, then we send 'em home. We feel that if they had a big hem---we hate to send them home, we just take off the stitches and see if we can make it a little longer to keep them, especially in their training period.

MK: Uh huh. That's more recent times?

MC: Recent times, yeah. We didn't have to wear shoes. We could have slippers, uh huh.

MK: Oh, in 1937 you could wear slippers?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: Earlier you told me about your co-workers, you would work together. Were the other tables like that, too, set up about the same way?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: They would try to work together as partners?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: You mentioned that Hilda was a good forelady. At that time, were there foreladies that were not too good?

MC: Well, I don't know because we went back to the same forelady all the time.

MK: All the time?

MC: Uh huh. All season they would be our foreladies so we always go back to the same forelady so.... I mean, I don't remember because you're new yet and you don't come in contact with so many people excepting for the people that you always work with.

MK: How were your feelings about that job? The first year you worked, did you enjoy the job?

MC: Oh, yeah, uh huh.

MK: You enjoyed it. Why?

MC: Well, the people you come in contact with. No gripes. Everything was so good and then to get away from home, too.

MK: To get away from home?

(Laughter)

MC: Well, the money coming in, too.

MK: Yeah, yeah. How about company-sponsored activity? Were you active then in 1937?

MC: No. We had the Pine Parade [employees' newspaper] at that time, I think. Then they did away with the Pine Parade for a while. When the Pine Parade came back in, I was one of the reporters. I had somebody working with me. We used to have picnics once a year and they took us to Lanai one year.

MK: The company paid for everything?

MC: Oh, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Took you to Lanai?

MC: We stayed there a couple of days, I think.

MK: Was that like a vacation or did they take you there to see what they were doing in Lanai?

MC: Yeah, for vacation. They were building a new reservoir like, I think, for the water and then they took us there to see that. I think that was the main reason they took us there to see the new place they were drilling for the water.

MK: Did they take everybody or just some people?

MC: Just the staff, Pine Parade staff.

MK: Oh, so, I think the Pine Parade, they stopped at the beginning of the war and started putting out again after the war started, yeah?

MC: Yeah, I think so, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Then they stopped early 1950's?

MC: Yeah.

MK: So you worked on the Pine Parade from the 1940's all the way until the Pine Parade ended?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: Did you enjoy that?

MC: If they had news, fine, but in the cannery, you don't have much news, just marriage or death or some happy occasion. Outside of that....

MK: So, how would you do your reporting? How would you find out what was going on?

MC: Well, I had a couple of girls that worked with me. They were the one that did [the reporting] more or less.

MK: When would you find out that so-and-so was going to get married or so-and-so had a baby luau? When would you find out? During lunch time or...

MC: Um, words get around, huh, and then you know more or less.

MK: How does the word get around? I'm just curious because you were working...

MC: You know women, huh? (Laughs)

MK: You were working at the table. When do you talk?

MC: Well, lunch hour or in between maybe when you go rest, like that. Then you see them and then somebody might come up to you and say certain certain person getting married and this and that. Then they know you are one of the reporters. They come up to you, approach you and they tell you.

MK: Oh. You know, back in those days, say you just got married or you just had a baby luau or something happened in your family, how fast would the word get out? You come back to work and then how many days later do they know?

MC: Oh, right after that.

MK: They all know?

MC: It doesn't take days. (Laughs)

MK: It doesn't even take days?

MC: No, you know women. News travels fast.

MK: Uh huh. How about word about cannery stuff? If they're talking about their foreladies or something, is it common knowledge that Hilda is a good forelady?

(Interruption because Mrs. Chang is talking to someone else)

MC: Yeah, I guess some of them were more strict than others, some more lenient like Hilda. She just want things to be done but in a nice way that everybody would be fine. We can get along well, huh.

MK: I'm moving on. In 1941 or 1942, you told me you made reliever. Can you tell me how you became a reliever?

MC: I guess the head foreladies go around and check the way you work, the way you do your work and your grading [of the pineapple slices] and things like that. Then they ask the foreladies how this girl is and how that girl is. They'll just try you out and then if you're good, they'll keep you.

Before you become a forelady, you have to go to the wagon, inspection. You check out whatever packed, take out whatever not supposed to be in there. You put it aside then you call the section head. They check that and then they call the table forelady to see where all the mistakes were in the pack. Then [after working on the inspection wagon] you come [promoted] to reliever.

MK: Okay. When you were asked to be a reliever, how do they ask you and what did you think at that time?

MC: Well, they don't ask you. They just tell you go get your brown cap--that's reliever. (Reliever wears a brown cap.) But you have more chance of coming up if you're on the night shift. Then you go on the night shift and then when season is over, then you go back [to being a packer]. Most of the time, they keep whoever they bring up [i.e., promote]. Then you work with the foreladies. You have the foreladies at the table and things like that.

MK: So what did you think, though, when they said, "Oh, Nona, go get the brown cap?"

MC: Well, you feel kind of up. Up in the air, huh.

(Laughter)

MC: It's an honor. I would say it's an honor if they say you can come up and be a reliever. You feel that you did your job right to be promoted one step.

MK: Yeah, uh huh, and do you also get a little bit more pay than packer?

MC: Yeah, uh huh, uh huh.

MK: About how much more pay?

MC: Oh, I don't know how much it was at the time. About 15, I think, 10 or 15 cents, I think. Not much more.

MK: Back then in 1941 or 1942, if I wanted to become a reliever, could I go tell the forelady or somebody that I want to become a reliever?

MC: Well, they have nothing to do with that, you see. Like I think relievers you don't have to write out. But when you come up to forelady, you have to write the reasons why you want to come up and be a forelady and all that. Then they judge you according to what you wrote.

MK: So if I wanted to become a reliever back in 1941 or 1942, what...

MC: You just going be picked by the heads.

MK: Oh. I wouldn't have a chance to say, "I want to be a reliever, make me a reliever"?

MC: Well, well, I don't remember if they tried anybody out to be one or not. But I'm quite sure they just pick you to be one.

MK: Were there job postings at that time?

MC: No, not that I know of. Not until after the union came in [1946] then they had job postings so you can apply. According to seniority, you can apply for the job, huh.

MK: Okay. Even back then before they had the union, was it by seniority that a person would be moved up to be a reliever or forelady?

MC: More or less, uh huh.

MK: Back then, did you know that I was number 16 forelady [in seniority] or anything like that?

MC: No, no.

- MK: Do you remember when you folks started doing that when you knew that so-and-so was number 1, so-and-so was number 2?
- MC: According to the seniority, yeah. According to when you got your cap. So we would know more or less, though. More or less the majority of them come up [i.e., promoted] all about the same time, yeah, and then we would know. Very few seasonals, new ones would come up. Usually have all the same ones because we didn't have as many tables so they didn't have to bring up too many. Then they would be about the same.
- MK: So that was back in 1941, 1942 that you're talking about now?
- MC: Uh huh. [Yes].
- MK: You were saying that back then there were not too many tables. About how many tables were running?
- MC: I forgot how many tables they had at that time because almost half of the cannery, they had. Then they had big open space to go up to the locker room and then they fill it all in so.... I don't know how many tables they had at the time.
- MK: You were saying half of the cannery was empty?
- MC: Almost half, yeah. Then in between they had crush table, you know.
- MK: Yeah. So nowadays they have about 48 tables, yeah?
- MC: Yeah, 48, and they came down because they took some tables off so according to the what, supposed to be 48, yeah, uh huh.
- MK: Maybe about 20 to 24 tables [in 1942]?
- MC: Yeah, something like that, uh huh.
- MK: Oh. That was during the peak season that they had 24 tables?
- MC: Uh huh. [Yes].
- MK: When you were reliever, you still had the same hours?
- MC: Yeah.
- MK: Same hours, night shift?
- MC: Uh huh. [Yes].
- MK: When you first became a reliever, how did you learn your job as reliever? How did you know that was the things you were supposed to do?

MC: From watching our regular reliever, the one that you work with.

MK: Uh huh, and the forelady, you said, would also tell you?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. If you had a good forelady--of course, maybe some things you don't know, they'll teach you to do this and do that, you know.

MK: Were there any special classes back then?

MC: No, they didn't, no.

MK: Okay, and as a reliever, you relieve people who go to the rest-rooms. How about when you had to go?

MC: Well, you tell the forelady you have to go. Yeah, she would keep an eye on the table.

MK: Okay. Were there any hard things about being a reliever? What was hard or what was easy?

MC: No, I don't think so. Yeah, uh huh.

MK: You know when you're a packer, you just deal with the fruit, yeah? When you're a reliever, you have to talk to people... Was that harder than just being a packer?

MC: No. I don't think so.

Mk: Were there any special rules or regulations for a reliever?

MC: No.

MK: Okay. I know this is probably hard to answer but how were your relations with the workers when you were the reliever?

MC: Well, I think I got along fine. I never made nobody cry. I made one girl cry, only. (Laughs) But, you come up reliever and you would want to be treated---the girls would want to be treated the same way, when you were a white cap and the forelady and reliever was nice to you so you try to be like they were. So you try to talk to them and help them out in case they get jam up and that's about it. No difference. You just have to be nice to them.

MK: How about your relations with the foreladies? Now, you're not a packer, but you're a reliever. How does the relationship change?

MC: You have to work together with her. I don't know if at that time we had tally card or not. I don't think we had tally card. I don't remember but later on we had tally card where you had to put the girl's name and the bango number. This is so they can keep track of who and who was on your table for the day.

MK: Now back then when you were a reliever, did you have to go and talk to the section head more?

MC: No, same. The forelady did all that.

MK: Back then, if you were a reliever, did you always go back to the same forelady?

MC: More or less, yeah, they assign you to the same forelady.

MK: Oh. Did you like the forelady that you were assigned to?

MC: I don't even remember who I had for my first forelady.

(Laughter)

MC: But anyway, when you first come up, you kind of more or less nervous because then you have more people to work under you, huh. But you get used to. More or less the same girls would come back then you know their way of working and things like that so it makes it lots easier.

MK: You were just saying a little while ago that you made somebody cry?

MC: Oh, that was way back. I was a forelady then. They needed girls to work on the tidbits table. So I send one girl there and then I think it was after lunch. They couldn't find her and I didn't notice that she had come back.

She had come back to another table right near mine so I told her, "You're not supposed to come back here. You're supposed to report back to the same table where I sent you." She started to cry. I said, "I sorry." (Laughs)

That's about the only time I can remember I made anybody cry.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MK: Mrs. Chang, to end this section on the reliever experience, can you tell me how you felt about the job?

MC: Well, more responsibility. That's about all because the girls more or less knew what they are doing except for the new ones that come in. But if we have new girls come in, then you'll have to teach them how to do the job because the forelady don't do that. The relievers are the ones that more or less teach the new girls how to work.

MK: Then which job did you prefer? You could compare your packer time and your reliever time. Which one did you like more?

MC: Oh, the same, I think. Uh huh. No difference, I think, excepting for the money part. (Laughs)

(Laughter)

MK: Oh, when you were a reliever, how much time do you spend actually packing, say in one day?

MC: About two or three hours, yeah. Because if you have so many girls there not everybody would [leave the table]---there would be a certain number of girls that always want to go [i.e., leave the table], you know what I mean. It's a habit like. They just want to go. But not everybody goes.

The old folks, like that, they say, "Oh, I want to go to the benjo."

Then they go and they come right back. So it's a couple of, maybe five minutes, less than five minutes because the bathroom's right upstairs, right near there, see, so not too much.

MK: Uh huh. So you would have gloves on all the time?

MC: Yeah, we always work with gloves.

MK: You would just sometimes help the girls when they're in trouble and you help teach them and you used to walk around and watch how they were doing?

MC: Yeah. And check the cans, whatever they pack, inspect.

MK: Okay. After, say about 1942, you said you became a forelady. How did you become a forelady?

MC: I don't remember that but I know we had to go in the office and write out why we want to come up to forelady and all that thing.

MK: So it's after they tell you or ask you to be forelady that you write that up or do you write it up before?

MC: You write it up after they ask you. They'll show you a printed [form]---it says all the foreladies duties and all this and that, what you have to do. But before that you write down why you want to be a forelady.

MK: Yeah. What kind of reasons did you put down?

MC: I don't quite remember. (Laughs)

MK: Were there women who asked to be foreladies and then they wrote up their reasons and then they said, "No, you cannot be a forelady?"

MC: No, they just don't tell you. They just don't pick you. That's all, you know what I mean. They just leave it as it is so you know you didn't make it.

But later on in years, I remember, you sign up you want to be a forelady. Okay, you have to go to all different tables to learn how they work. Maybe you stay so many days, packing. Packing not so bad. Then they go to "specials" and then chunk line and your attitude, all that. They grade you on that.

The forelady says, "Oh, she's all right, this and that." They all have different forelady. The cleaning forelady comes to check up later. But they ask the table forelady wherever you are training on, how you are working and then they grade you on that.

MK: How about back in 1942 when you became a forelady? Was someone checking on how you worked?

MC: No. At that time, they pick you up on how you work. I think they just go around and see. Maybe they feel they needed more foreladies or relievers. Then they ask--the head forelady would ask who you think is good to come up and this and that. Then they'll more or less keep their eye on you.

MK: How did you learn the job? You said later on they would sort of teach you, yeah, right before you said that. How did you learn how to be a forelady back in 1942?

MC: Well, by watching the other foreladies -- whatever they do like the tally cards and setting the girls up. Then you have some other, foreladies on the next table or head forelady and then the forelady next to you, you might need her help. Then you tell her, you'll ask her certain, certain, how to go about it and then they'll tell you. Especially when the union came in [1946] and things got faster and things like that.

Then sometimes during season, maybe they'll give you about three or four girls, new ones, and you have to keep your eye on them, teach them how to work. Things get all pile up and you go ask and they tell you don't put the girls together but put them in between (the experienced workers) and the regular ladies would help them.

MK: So that was about later on that you're talking about, huh?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: How about 1942? Did you go and talk with the other foreladies and ask...

MC: They teach you, yeah, uh huh. I know Mabel [Kozuki, head forelady] did. Any time you get problems, you ask your next forelady or come up and see me and we'll help you.

MK: How about during lunch time, did you talk about certain problems you had that day and ask for suggestions?

MC: No, we only joke around, eat lunch.

(Laughter)

MK: Oh, lunch time is for relaxing.

MC: Yeah, we did because we had a good bunch in the locker room. All the crazy nuts were lined up so we just laugh.

MK: You know, when you became forelady, you still had the same bunch stuck together?

MC: Yeah, Before you become a forelady, you stay in the big locker room. But when you become a forelady, there's a forelady's locker room so you go in there. Then you get to know all the regular foreladies you stick around with. Then you stay there for ages until you retire [said with emphasis].

MK: Oh. (Laughs) So what if you had a friend who was still a packer and not a reliever yet? She would be in a separate place?

MC: Separate place, yeah, uh huh.

MK: So you won't eat lunch with her. You're eating lunch with the other foreladies?

MC: Uh huh, uh huh. By then, you would know all the foreladies anyway.

MK: You would all come up [i.e., be promoted] about the same time?

MC: Yes, uh huh, more or less.

MK: Can you just kind of briefly tell me the duties of a forelady back in 1942?

MC: Yeah, I guess. In the morning, we just set the table. It's not like now. It [cans] doesn't go up direct. It's all set, you see, fancy, choice and B tray and you have to see that all the trays [of cans to be filled] are lined up in their regular places. Then check on your girls, how many girls you have and then see if everything's working right. Sometimes the belt don't go, things like that. The head forelady comes around and asks you count, how many girls you have. You have enough or you don't have enough then they add on.

MK: Then the girls get to the table?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: And then you watch them, how they work?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: You inspect how well they're doing?

MC: Inspect, uh huh.

MK: Is that about what you do as a forelady?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: What if girls they had problems? They can be cannery problems or personal ones. Does the forelady handle those problems, too?

MC: Well, if it's between the girls, you know what I mean. Sometimes they don't get along. Well, we'll ask the head forelady to change one of them and put 'em to another table. Some girls argue with the foreladies and things like that. We always ask them to change them. We don't go into further.

MK: Uh huh. Okay. When you became a forelady, you were still intermittent?

MC: Uh huh.

MK: Night shift?

MC: Yeah.

MK: Okay. When you were forelady, did you have any problems with the girls?

MC: Not that I know of. Hardly any. In order to get good girls, you have to be good to them, you know what I mean. You get along fine with them, then you never have problems having girls on your table.

Like some foreladies, they're too strict with the girls and every morning they'll be short and they say, "Oh, I'm short so many girls." But if you play ball with the girls and treat them just so-so, you always have girls on your table.

MK: Whenever you're watching, what were the common problems that you'd have to talk to the girls about besides mistakes?

MC: It's more discarding (of pine slices), I think. You see, some girls, they discard too much. Instead of packing the whole [sliced pineapple]--take the whole fruit and put it [i.e., slices] wherever it belongs--they just throw away and take the good part and pack it in. The rest of the girls down at the end maybe have to pick up (slices). That's the worse problem, I think, discarding.

MK: Were there any rules or regulations for foreladies, things that said you can do this but you cannot do this?

MC: No, not that I know of.

MK: How about on the paper you said the company would give you and tell you to read after you filled out the reasons why you wanted to be a forelady? Did that say anything about those things?

MC: No.

MK: It just described the duties?

MC: The duties and the machinery, not to touch anything that's moving and things like that.

MK: Now that you were a forelady, you had the section heads right above you, yeah? What kinds of things did you have to report in to the section heads?

MC: Well, there was no reporting to be done. It's only that they came around to see that your table was running smooth and you were doing your job right. In case they come and see the girls weren't doing their job right, then they'll tell you, "Certain certain person is not doing right. You'd better correct them," or things like that.

MK: You know, at that time they had quality control checks, inspection, yeah? What if your table back then wasn't doing certain things correctly? How would it affect you on your record as a forelady?

MC: The head forelady would come back. They'll tell you, you have to do better and then what your mistakes were on the inspection.

MK: Back then in 1942, did they have a written record of how, say, Mrs. Chang was doing, how her table was doing?

MC: Oh that, I don't know.

MK: Did they have the tally card by that time? You just mentioned it.

MC: I think they had tally cards, uh huh. Yeah and you'll have hourly [tallies]. So many fancy cans or choice cans packed within the hour and then you draw a line. That's for our first hour or your second hour.

MK: How did you feel about being a forelady?

MC: Just so-so, I guess.

MK: Did you really look forward to going to work to be forelady?

MC: No, no.

MK: You didn't look forward to it? Did you look forward to your other jobs when you were a packer, reliever?

MC: Well, it's all in a job so it didn't matter too much. As long as you had---the people you work with, you got along with them. That's the main thing.

MK: When you're a forelady or when you're a reliever, you're not just packing. You get to talk with people, you walk around, you watch. Was the work more interesting than being a packer?

MC: Oh, yeah because you get to talk to all different people and you have a lot of old folks, Japanese folks, like that.

MK: Back then in the 1940's, you still had quite a few Japanese ladies?

MC: Oh yeah, uh huh.

MK: When you were the forelady or even before when you were a packer and reliever, did you ever feel bored?

MC: Not that I know of because you have to just keep on going. You don't have time to get bored. Yeah, gossiping, too.

(Laughter)

MC: At that time, you see, you don't have only one table. You have two tables, I think. Yeah, uh huh, and then you have a reliever to help you so you had more or less enough things to do without getting bored.

MK: I'm going to move back a little bit but from 1941 to 1945 it was wartime so how was working in the cannery during the wartime different from when you were working before the war?

MC: I don't think any different, only we were short of people, huh. Then during the war years, we had to take our gas masks. They wouldn't let us in without a gas mask and then every so often we'll have to, how would you say it now, drill. We'd have a drill and at night certain tables would have flashlights because the lights go off. You had to go---I think was on the second floor, we're having a bomb shelter like. Everybody would have to go up there but we had to have our gas masks wherever we went in the cannery. All on the chairs they had a little hook, then you can hang your gas mask.

MK: (Laughs) Oh, uh huh, and then you had to take it around wherever you went?

MC: I don't think when we went to the bathroom but you had to have it with you down on the floor in case anything happened.

MK: You mentioned that it was labor shortage time, yeah. Since it was labor shortage, the company tried to hire more people and I was wondering, did they shift you to different jobs because of the shortage?

MC: No, we kept the same jobs.

MK: Kept the same jobs. Were there different kinds of people coming in from before because they were so short of workers?

MC: Well, they hire younger kids, yeah. More kids had chance to work, uh huh.

MK: Wartime, it was blackout time nighttime. You still had night shift?

MC: The cannery had, I think, all the time. I wonder. I don't remember but I know...

MK: Because you were working night shift 1942, huh?

MC: I don't remember. I know it's supposed to be blackout but I wonder. I know I worked on the night shift all during the war because we had practice and everything. It must have been blacked out.

MK: Whatever windows they had or other openings, they just darkened?

MC: Yeah.

MK: Was there anything else different? Like I think there were some military men who used to work warehouse side, huh, wartime and they had Hapco Candy Company. [The Hapco Candy Company was a part of Hawaiian Pineapple Company at that time.]

MC: Oh, yeah, they had a candy company on the third floor, I think.

MK: Did you ever work there?

MC: No, I didn't.

MK: Did you ever help pack the C-rations?

MC: No.

MK: But during the wartime, you did go field, yeah?

MC: I went to the field work, yeah, uh huh. We went field work, lug boxes [i.e., painting the boxes used to pack fresh pineapples], scrub floor, warehouse.

MK: Other women did about the same things? It was not only you?

MC: Well, they'd ask more or less the foreladies to do the odd jobs but not too many people went. Field work, we had quite a bit but lug boxes and warehouse, scrub floors.... Rosie Yim and I we scrubbed---we took the rust off our machinery.

Yes, and that's when we had Mr. Bown [a supervisor] (Laughs) and Rosie Yim and I used to work together and he just happened upon Rosie, she was reading the Pine Parade and Mr. Bown came over there and saw. (Laughs)

MK: That Mr. Bown, what position did he hold?

MC: He was a superintendent.

MK: Superintendent of the department or the whole cannery?

MC: I mean it would be packing, trimming. I wonder if he was [superintendent of] Ginaca [Department]. I think he was only for the canning. He was very strict but he was pretty good in Japanese, too. He used to write Japanese, too.

MK: Was he a local-born haole man?

MC: I don't think so.

MK: At that time back in, say, the late 1930's, early 1940's, was the management mostly haole. They were local-born or from outside?

MC: Well, our superintendent was, I guess, was the Mainland. They more or less knew the job but during season we had a lot of foremen come in. They were some schoolteachers. Majority of them were schoolteachers. We have Punahou School teacher, I remember, Mr. Silverman, I think. We had one from Roosevelt and at one time we had couple from Kam School.

MK: Would they be your foreman or they're watching machines or...

MC: Well, certain sections. It's [their duties are] just like head foreladies', section heads' duties. Just keep their eyes on the foreladies and the boys, how they work, and things like that.

MK: That was just for the late 1930's, early 1940's?

MC: Uh huh, during season, yeah, they came in.

MK: Oh, was it different having a male foreman than having a woman head forelady or woman section head?

MC: No, the section heads, they always were the same, the job. It only had that foreman there to see that everything was carried out right and then the boys were doing their job and all that.

MK: Oh, so they would watch more the boys than you folks?

MC: Yeah, uh huh.

MK: That's when they still had tray boys?

MC: Oh yeah, tray boys and truckers.

MK: So wartime, it wasn't too different for you?

MC: No.

MK: Was it hard to get to work since you had to go nighttime or evening time?

MC: No, evening, no, not...

MK: I was wondering, you know, since you're Japanese and, you know, wartime, some Japanese had hard time certain jobs. Did people treat you any differently during wartime?

MC: Same, uh huh. No difference. Only thing, we didn't have too many different nationality in the cannery, more Japanese.

MK: Did most of the Japanese there---were they nisei or issei or...

MC: All mixed.

MK: About half-half or...

MC: Yeah, about, I think.

MK: So in those days you used to talk Japanese sometimes?

MC: Yeah. I spoke Japanese and I could speak Chinese little bit so when I used to work in the office, they say, "No, (Nona, you) not Chinese, Chinese."

I said, "Me not Chinese."

(Laughter)

MC: So I used to tell Mr. Healy [Preparation Department superintendent]. I said, "You know, Mr. Healy, you supposed to pay me extra for interpreting."

He laughed.

MK: Was your language skill a big help?

MC: Oh, yes because a lot of time we'd have some Japanese people. Chinese people. Maybe one day it rained and then they supposed to come in to work the following day and then we don't work the following day. Then we'd have to tell them to stay home. Then

you see, most of those [Chinese] people who worked there Puntí but I learned how to speak Hakka. So our section head was Puntí so I ask, "Hey, Bea, how you say this in Puntí." She'd tell me. Then I remember so next time when I call the lady to say don't come to work the next day, I know what to say.

MK: Oh, oh, and in those days, how did you call them to work? You call them the day before or what did you folks do?

MC: It usually is the day before. Like they feel that oh, tomorrow we're going to be rained out. We'll tell them, "Don't report to work, call up pau hana time and see what time cannery is operating again. Then come in to work."

But there were a couple of times when it got rained out and we had to work Sunday [to make phone calls]. They were supposed to work on Monday and then we didn't want them to come in. To call the whole cannery, we have that attendance sheet and then we go upstairs.

Mr. Healy would say, "Oh, we want for you to come in and help us make phone calls." That was maybe 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock [p.m.] on Sundays so we go down. Then they open up the office for us and we'll make phone calls.

MK: Mr. Healy used to ask the foreladies?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes]. There were only about six of us, I think. Only the foreladies and the one that took charge in the office. We were working in the office with the attendance job and all that stuff.

MK: That was in addition to your regular work, huh?

MC: Uh huh, uh huh. [Yes].

MK: I don't know if you can answer this but later on in the 1970's if you had to call people, did you have to know different languages from when you were doing this in, say, 1942?

MC: No, same.

MK: How about the intermittents, say, in 1972, you know, before you retired? Were they still Japanese, Chinese people or different kinds?

MC: All mixed. Uh, huh, just like a lot of Filipinos and Samoans.

MK: In 1972 was it still necessary to call some people in Japanese and call some people in Chinese?

MC: No, no, no because lot of them, lot of them you can make them understand. Japanese people easy. Majority of them all been working for years intermittent and you tell them. But a lot of

these seasonal were old Chinese, China Jacks. You know what I mean, China Jacks?

Then they come in. They don't understand so good and then you have to talk Chinese to them but otherwise, Japanese people, they all more or less, you can tell them tomorrow you stay home, you come back the next day. But very few because majority of them work during the season so all school kids.

MK: Uh huh, okay. Now, going back to the 1940's. In 1946 the union [ILWU] came in. When the union first came in, what did you think? What did you know about the union back in 1946?

MC: Just that had union and that certain, certain one [i.e., person] going be your union steward and all that. It didn't bother us too much.

MK: What did you think about the union when you first heard about it? [Pause] You didn't have any opinion about it?

MC: No, none.

MK: Did your husband tell you stuff about the union?

MC: No. Like they had their own union, too, butchers' union and things like that but....No, it didn't bother us.

MK: When were you asked to become a member of the union?

MC: When you're intermittent, they ask you to be a member and you sign up. Then you work for a while and then they'll ask you to be a union steward.

I said, "No, I have enough troubles of my own without getting into that." This people--some of these people they always griping and they always come up with minor things that they this and that. We [i.e., stewards] don't want to go back to the union with all those minor details and bother them when they have so many other things to do.

MK: So you didn't want to become union steward?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: Who asked you to be union steward? The union?

MC: No. They have Esther---Esther used to be the head like. Esther Scharsch would more or less ask you and I said, "No thank you."

MK: Oh, and, let's see, did you become a union member in 1946?

MC: Yeah when they started off.

- MK: You know, during those times, 1940's, 1950's, people used to worry about the union because they'd say, "Oh, Communists," or something. Did you have any worries about that?
- MC: No, no worries.
- MK: It never bothered you. Later on in 1947 you have your first strike. What did you do during the strike?
- MC: They tell you they're striking and for you to report down there and picket, that's all. Was like a picnic, I think.
- MK: It was like a picnic. Why do you say that it was like a picnic?
- MC: (Laughs) Everybody joking and they singing. Then they walking around in a little circle. We didn't picket all the way. We just picket by the gate that we went in and wasn't even from here until [15 feet]. I think, just like house. You just go around and they talking and they laughing. Some reading paper and they have the radio on. Some Japanese people, they singing song.
- MK: Uh huh. (Laughs) For you folks, cannery workers---mostly women work cannery, how about the women who had children? What did they do? Did they come out? You had children, what did you do with your children?
- MC: We go out. Well, they were going to school and things so it didn't bother me.
- MK: They were going summer school? This is summertime.
- MC: Yeah, they went to Summer Fun.
- MK: Oh, so they went Summer Fun and you went out picketing?
- MC: Yeah, because it wasn't for the [whole] day. So many hours, you go. Maybe you 7 o'clock to 8 o'clock or 8 o'clock to 9 o'clock. They give you hours and you go out. I wonder at that time if Katherine [Nagafuchi, co-worker at Dole] was working because I know the big strike, the last one we had, the big one, how many weeks...
- MK: The 1968 one.
- MC: ...Yeah. She used to pick me up and then we'd stay for so many hours. Then we'd come home or maybe we go gallivanting somewhere else.
- MK: So, 1947 you went picketing and you folks sang, you folks had something like a picnic?
- MC: Oh, yeah.

MK: Were you worried---it only lasted five and a half days but were you worried in any way about what would happen?

MC: No.

MK: Did you know why you folks were striking?

MC: We just follow. (Laughs)

MK: You just follow? (Laughs) Who did you follow? How did you know that I'm supposed to go picket today or I'm supposed to ...

MC: They'll tell you. Maybe they have a listing and so you have to come in certain time and picket. Even the long one we had [the 1968 strike] and we tell 'em, "Oh, we want to come in at certain time."

They'll tell you, "Fine." Then they mark you up and then you come up at a certain time. I don't know about the others but I wasn't too worried because we weren't the bread-winners so we had the regular bread. This was only, you know what I mean, so....

MK: Oh. You were helping out your husband so you didn't worry too much?

MC: Yeah, uh huh, and then when we went back to work and then they suspend us for one day.

They say, "Oh, you went---you never come work." They say, "You picket, you see, you didn't come back one day, so you suspended for the day."

"Fine." I go home.

(Laughter)

MC: We'd laugh about it because those who got suspended say, "Oh, tomorrow I cannot come work because I suspended." They laugh, thinking it was good fun.

MK: What did you think about the strike [in 1947]? You know it lasted five and a half days and you just got an increase of 10 cents per hour, huh? What did you think about the strike after you got that result?

MC: Well, we didn't think anything much of it. Everybody would say, "Oh, certain, certain person came in to work, you know. No talk to them. They scab."

But for our part, we didn't care because that was their business. When we went back to work, we talk to [those who crossed the picket line]. But they, themselves felt guilty and they held back for a long time. But to us, it didn't matter. If they want to go in, fine, let 'em work. But they, themselves felt guilty

for going in to work, crossing the picket line. But otherwise, it didn't matter to us.

MK: But for the people who said don't talk to them, they didn't talk to them?

MC: I don't know. We didn't bother---we didn't care what the other people did as long as we treated the people right because we were all together and we've been friends for so long. They must have had a reason for going in. Otherwise they wouldn't have gone in.

MK: Between the first time you went to work, 1937, and 1947 at Dole, what sort of changes do you remember? Do you recall any changes in working condition?

MC: No, about the same, I think. No different.

MK: About the same. So even though the union came in, in 1946, not too many changes?

MC: Not too many changes.

MK: How about your pay? How much had it gone up? You had been promoted?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes]. I don't know what I made.

MK: You don't know? (Laughs) Okay, how about any machine changes? Were there any changes during the 10-year period?

MC: Yeah, they added more tables and...I think they changed the speed [of the Ginaca]. Then they lessened the girls on the table, I'm quite sure.

MK: That was between 1937 and 1947?

MC: Uh huh. Yeah, I think so, uh huh.

MK: You said that they added more tables? We were saying back in 1942, they had about 24 tables?

MC: Uh huh, they add, as they went. They added little by little.

MK: So by 1947, about how many tables did they have? Maybe five more or.....

MC: It could be.

MK: Ten more?

MC: No, I don't think so.

MK: You said they lessened the girls on the table?

NC: Yeah, I think they lessened the girls. They changed their way of packing because the first when I went, everybody pick whatever they can [i.e., each girl picks the particular grade of slices that she was assigned to select]. Then they did away with the stripper--the stripper had to strip and count. Then they changed. They didn't have any more B packers on the top. It was moved down. It was just fancy pack, choice pack and B pack. Then they had, I think was five or six girls, I don't know how many. Anyway, whatever number of fancy packers they had, a girl would count, you see. The first girl would count and everybody had to pick your pine.

MK: So the stripper became a counter. She didn't strip any more?

MC: No, she counted. Everybody had a fruit of their own to pick up.

MK: So the first girl counted all the pines, right?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: Then each girl, no matter where she was, would have to pick out her own B's, pick out her own choice, pick out her own fancy from one cylinder?

MC: Yeah. You know they had the three trays [of cans to be filled] there. That's why you pick up and you grade your fruit, you see. So I think they had---I don't know how many---all the way down, I think, the girls had to do the same.

MK: So you had a person who counted, then you had everybody---even the counter would have to [pack]?

MC: No, no, she just counts.

MK: You know that girl that just counted, that was her only job?

MC: St that time, yeah. Later on, they say, "Oh," because they all had to learn how. Usually we had the older folks working there, you know.

MK: You know, when you say a counter, what does she do?

MC: On the table belt and there's a little puka there, you know. [When the sliced pine cylinders come through the puka] she just hangs on to the fruit and counts how many coming out and she lets it go and then she start counting again.

MK: Okay. This other woman told me that the woman [i.e., the counter] would have two cylinders and let the two go down first.

MC: All depends on how many girls you have, yeah.

MK: And let four go down next.

MC: That means you have six girls, uh huh.

MK: Why do you do that?

MC: That, I don't know. At that time---after a while, they had a regular machine that would do it. But they did away with that [machine]. I don't know why they did, though. They count two and four. That means you had six girls, you see. The top two [i.e., the two girls at the beginning of the table] would pick the first two pines and the four pines would go down to the bottom girls.

MK: How come the first two [sliced pine cylinder] just didn't go to the bottom [girls] first?

MC: I don't know. Maybe it was the way they worked it. Then if you had all good girls, fine. But if you had junk kind [pine], they pick up and stick 'em to the other [girl]. Or as the pine came out and if they feel you had a junk one, they just pick the good one.

(Laughter)

MC: You have to watch for that because you know more or less who does that.

I say, "Hey, pick up your own pine, never mind doing that." Then some of them would just crush the fruit, you know. That we have to watch...

MK: Crush the fruit?

MC: Yeah.

MK: (Laughs) Oh, they would squeeze it too much?

MC: No, they just don't want to pack so they break it up like, you know.

MK: Oh, oh.

MC: So we had, I wouldn't say many, but we had some that we have to tell the head forelady. [We say,] "Oh, she's broking the pine up, destroying company property and they wasting fruit." But there weren't too many, though.

MK: You know, you were telling me that the machines seemed to be going faster to you?

MC: A little faster, yeah, uh huh.

MK: Can you tell me whether it was because the girls had been lessened or if the machine was actually faster?

MC: They can adjust the speed, you see. All depends what table you are on. Then they have speed and a half [i.e., one and a half times the original speed]. Then they put more girls on and then the machine would be faster. But after a while it got so that they stopped counting. They made it so it just came out. We didn't need any counter, you see. So, everybody pick whatever they can. That made it mad because the machine was faster and the girls have to work that much faster.

MK: When did the counter go out? When was it phased out?

MC: That, I don't know.

MK: Was it after 1947 or before 1947?

MC: About that time [1947]. I wonder if was after. Must have been before, I think.

MK: Before the strike?

MC: I think so.

(Interruption by someone covering the microphone)

MC: Pay went up and then they say it's not necessary to have anybody there counting. You're just wasting one girl there. So the old folks [who worked as counters] had to learn how to pack. It was kind of hard because they so used to doing one job for years and then they had to learn how to pack.

MK: You know, you said the old folks were placed there [at the counter position? Was it company policy to let them have the job?

MC: No, no. They never learned how to pack, you see. They can be there for years and they'll never learn how to pack. I mean, they never were taught how to pack so we just take it for granted and we just leave 'em there.

MK: Oh, okay. So the main changes you saw from 1937 to 1947 were the lessening of the girls, the speed in the machine and the way they were packing, the packing procedures?

MC: Uh huh. [Yes].

MK: Going back to the lessening of the girls, were there lay-offs then if you had less girls? Where did the others go?

- MC: That was during season, I mean, more or less during season so they didn't have to hire that many.
- MK: I don't know if you'd remember but back then, between 1937 and 1947, how many months out of a year would you be working?
- MC: We had the summer crop and we had the winter crop. We worked up till September, I think. It was May, June, July, August, I think and then a couple of months of winter crop.
- MK: So you worked May, June, July, August?
- MC: September, I think.
- MK: September. Then you stay home?
- MC: Yeah.
- MK: Then you go back what month for your winter crop?
- MC: November, December, January, I think was.
- MK: So you work about eight months out of the year then?
- MC: Eight or less.
- MK: During those years, 1937 to 1947, did you have unemployment compensation?
- MC: Oh, yeah.
- MC: When we became intermittent, we were able to collect compensation. But it was a hassle. [See transcript 6-2-1-79]

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 6-27-2-79; SIDE ONE

- MK: You know, between 1937 and 1947, you had worked 10 years already, huh, so you had 10 years seniority over those...
- MC: You don't count the years you were a seasonal. You just count the years that you were intermittent.
- MK: Oh, so you had nine years, yeah?
- MC: Uh huh. [Yes].
- MK: So back in 1947, you had worked nine years more than someone who was starting out so at that time, how did having that nine years seniority affect you?

MC: Didn't make no difference.

MK: No difference at all, okay. You know, between those same years, 1937 and 1947, were there any machine changes besides---you were saying that later on the counter before or after 1947, became mechanical.

MC: I don't know when it started but when the cans used to come direct from upstairs to the table we didn't have to have extra tray boys. It came so---the two [can] lines, fancy line and choice lines, you pack your fancy on the bottom [row of cans], your choice on the top [row of cans]. All you do is when it's filled up, you push it and it goes direct to double seamer. I don't know when it started, though. That saves a lot of labor, too. That was after, of course, after the union came in [1946] and they [i.e., the company] tried to save.

MK: You were telling me that you used to work chunk line, too, yeah?

MC: Chunk line, yeah.

MK: Did they have any new products during that time, 1937 to 1947?

MC: No.

MK: You said you had tidbits, you had chunks...

MC: They had spears, I think. Yeah, spears and stars. Yeah, the fruit was cut, (into different shapes). But I think the stars, they waste too much fruit. Like spears, too, the overhead was high, I think. They just pick the choicest part and then they ---if it's too green, they put 'em back ---Katherine [Nagafuchi] used to take care of the spears. It's just cut up oblong and they just pack it. So they did away with that, too, because it was costing too much. It wasn't worth it, I guess.

MK: When did they have that and when was it done away with?

MC: Spears worked only for a while. I don't know how many summers they worked. Katherine would know that. She was over there.

MK: That was after the war? [i.e., World War II].

MC: Yeah, after the war, I think, yeah, uh huh. Then they did away with that for quite a while. Then, I don't know when it was, they made a new spears table. They didn't have to have people go and get the fruit and bring it to the spears table. It went direct. The trimmers while they're trimming, if they feel that the fruit is ripe enough and good enough for spears, they just put 'em on a belt. It goes direct to the spears table and Katherine was taking charge over there.

MK: Yeah, okay. Going to sort of jump, but, going up to the 1957 period, okay? Nineteen fifty-seven, you were still a forelady of

packing. That was the year that you had the Dee Dupont walkout. Can you tell me what you remember about the Dee Dupont walkout? Why did you folks...

MC: I wonder if it [i.e., walkout] was because of that too much grading. She was getting on the foreladies' nerves. Every day, the foreladies had to grade the girls, how they work, and the head foreladies would have to grade the foreladies on the work. I think it was because of that. I'm not too sure because at that time I think it was almost summer. I think I was in the office at that time.

MK: So you think that was why the walkout occurred?

MC: I think that was it.

MK: Okay. Did you walk out?

MC: Oh, yeah. I followed them. Might as well go with the group.

(Laughter)

MK: You just followed? In that walkout, 600 women participated. They all walked out, 600 of them. Can you tell me how this happened? How did 600 women walk out?

MC: I think the union stewardess, huh. I think was union stewardess.

She said, "Oh, tomorrow we not coming in to work, it's walkout. We're going to walk out."

I don't think we were working. It must have been from the morning. They just notify all the union members that there's going to be a walkout the following day.

MK: How were you folks notified? Did a friend tell a friend and it was done or the stewards...

MC: I wonder if they had a meeting because they usually have a meeting when they have a walkout. I don't think we had a meeting. Steward just tell the girls and then they all notify so they all would know.

MK: Okay. That was your first walkout, huh? What did you think of it? You've never done this sort of thing before?

MC: It didn't matter to me.

(Laughter)

MK: Were most women like you? Were other women like you? Follow and...

MC: I think so. They just follow.

MK: Did you have any strong feelings about Dee Dupont?

MC: No. I know the foreladies did because of the extra job [i.e., daily evaluation of workers]. Well, at one time when we were working in the office, she made my girls do a lot of double job like. Same thing, what we were doing and what she wanted; and the girls had to do it for her. It was all gone down the drain, I think, because it was the same thing. The girls had to do extra work for her.

MK: You say that you were working in the office?

MC: At that time, yeah.

MK: That was in addition to being a regular forelady or...

MC: No, you see, they assign you to the job during the season or when---that was when we were doing the hourly check, I think. That's when we were in the office and she would come and bother the girls. She say, "Oh, if we feel we can do this for her." It's our work and she wants extra. Then they have to double the copy. Then used to do a lot of extra job for the girls.

But it was all a waste because I don't know why you have to grade the girls every day and the head foreladies have to grade the foreladies I don't think their job is going to be any different from what they were doing daily.

MK: How did you know all this when you were up in the office?

MC: I mean, the grading? Yeah, they (company) tell us. Even us, we were graded, I think. I'm quite sure.

MK: Oh, and do you remember what the results of the walkout were? What happened after the walkout?

MC: They did away with all those things. I think more or less---to me, I think (before the walkout) the superintendent whoever was there let her have the run of the cannery. She was nobody and then she came in and she gave everybody else extra job to do.

MK: In reading the newspaper stories about this walkout, they said workers were suspended for two days. Were you suspended?

MC: One day.

MK: You were suspended for one day?

MC: Mabel [Kozuki, head forelady] said, "Nona, stay home tomorrow. You're suspended."

I said, "Fine."

(Laughter)

MK: Fine? (Laughs)

MC: The other foreladies laugh at you. That's why it was funny because they don't think anything much of it [i.e., the suspension].

MK: Yeah. (Laughs)

MC: Well, if we have to go strike like they do months and months, then it would but this just for---we figure it won't be too long. Just for the time being so....

MK: Did your feelings about the union change in any way after the walkout?

MC: No.

MK: No, no effect. In 1958, according to the newspapers, they say 1,000 cannery workers staged a two-day walkout because they didn't want to work on Saturdays. Do you remember anything?

MC: That, I don't remember. I think it didn't concern us because a lot of times we don't work on Saturdays. More, the men, I think. That, I don't know.

MK: Oh, okay. In 1963---well, before I go to the 1963 period, I think I'll ask you. Between 1947 and 1957, were there any changes, say, in working conditions? You have the union already there for 10 years. Were working conditions any different from before the union time? Your facilities?

MC: They were same, yeah.

MK: How about the breaks?

MC: Oh, they got the breaks. I think it was after your four hours, huh, and then you have one break and eight hours, you have two breaks. It's 15 minutes break, I think...

MK: Fifteen minutes?

MC: They give you so many minutes like it's all included for going up and coming down. So maybe you have first light [i.e., first break], second light [i.e., second break], third light [i.e., third break]. They have the sign up at the head of the table and you say, "Oh, you're going out first light." [All the women on a single table take rest breaks at the same time. Rest breaks are staggered so that only a few tables will not be in operation at any one time.]

As soon as the green light goes on, everything stops, Ginaca and the tables. Then we all go break and when we come back, there's a light upstairs in the cafeteria and in the locker room. You watch the light.

You say, "Oh, red light now. Time for us to go down."

You have time to use the bathroom and then go back down in time before the green light goes on for the next break.

MK: Oh, okay, and then, let's see---facilities, the same. Breaks were different. How about conditions in the cannery? Smells, noises, safety?

MC: Well, those things were the same excepting for the---only the main thing was the speeding of the machinery, yeah.

MK: When you folks noticed that the machines were going faster, did anybody go to the union people and say, "The machines are faster. Can you do something about it?"

MC: Yeah, they tried to but there wasn't much they could do about it.

MK: Were there any changes in the company-sponsored activities? You know, you mentioned activities like picnics, the newspaper?

MC: Yeah, we used to have picnics before, yeah. When season is through and they say before the kids go back to school, you say, "Oh, let's have a picnic." We go on a picnic and then---I don't know now, though, you know. We used to have bowling teams and then...

MK: Were they union teams or company?

MC: Yeah [company], and then company would give [money]---for every member, they would give us so much.

MK: Uh huh. That was 1947 to 1957 time?

MC: I don't know when we started bowling. Way back, I think.

MK: Uh huh. You had that that time [1947-1957]?

MC: Yeah, and then we used to have commercial league. Then we'd bowl and then the company would pay for everything, shirts and alley fees and things. Then a couple of times, I think---couple of times they gave us trip to Lanai. The bowling team, we went and Lanai have only four alleys, huh.

(Laughter)

MC: They give us a trip up there.

MK: Then, I don't know, but did you folks still have the Christmas dinners in...

MC: I don't know when they stop the Christmas dinner.

MK: Did they stop it after the union came in [1946]?

MC: After the union came in, I think, they stop.

MK: Since the union came in, did the union take over a lot of those company-sponsored extra stuff?

MC: No, I don't think so because it was mostly---just like bowling and things like that. The union had nothing to do with our bowling and had volleyball, [too]. The girls used to play but union had nothing to do with that.

MK: So after the union came in, the company still helped out with the bowling team and volleyball team?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. Volleyball, I think, used to be only in the company area so they didn't have to. But the bowling, we have leagues and things like that and for each member in that bowling club, the company would---for recreation, I think, they give so much.

MK: You mentioned volleyball, huh. Were they playing in the company gym? I know there used to be a gym, huh?

MC: Oh, yeah, uh huh.

MK: When was the gym taken away because now they have parking lot over there, huh?

MC: They still have the gym there, huh?

MK: It's still there?

MC: Yeah. The parking lot was the baseball area.

MK: Oh, the baseball area. I'm mistaken.

MC: Yeah, they don't use that gym any more. I think only when they have special meetings and things like that because they used to do a lot of hiring in there before. But they stopped that and they hire upstairs now in the---they have a little...

MK: Employment office.

MC: Yeah, employment office and they have a little room there.

MK: Yeah, yeah. From 1947 to 1957, you had more, let's see, you added on 10 more years of seniority, yeah? So 19 years already by that time. Did you have any privileges being a senior person?

MC: No, no privileges. Only thing if anything new that came up different maybe like this job I had in the office or the hourly check, they always give 'em to the seniority and try out. Because the union steward would say, "Oh, how come she come up before somebody else when another girl has more seniority." That was the only reason.

Only on the job get seniority, yeah. Like when they have, like Rose Yim went to work print shop. They had posting for print shop and to be regular, so Rose Yim says she'll try. Since she had the seniority above the others, she tried and then she got it and she became a regular.

MK: Do you think it was a good thing, then, that the union made it that way?

MC: Well, in one way. Everybody---the older people would have a chance for coming up instead of somebody that the company liked and picked because the union would always come up and say, "How come they got the job." That's why whatever job comes up, they always have to have a posting.

Even for foreladies, they have a posting and they say, "Oh, those who want to be forelady or reliever, they have to sign up." Then they sign up and then they pick accordingly. They cannot squawk because the posting came up and if they don't sign for it then somebody else get the job.

They say, "Oh, how come you didn't sign up for the job"

"Oh, this and that." But if you don't sign up for the job, you won't be able to get it because that's company policy that the job was posted. In fact, they always post the job.

MK: Do you wish that it was like that before?

MC: No, I don't think so. It didn't make too much difference, I think, because if you have seniority, you have more experience then.

MK: Yeah. You know you said before that the company would take the people that they liked. Was it more favoritism then, before the union?

MC: Well, I don't think so. Maybe a few but majority came up on their ability to do the job right, I think.

MK: Okay. During the same years, 1947 to 1957, were there changes in the machines or anything, besides the speed? Did you have new...

MC: I think that was the only thing they added was the cans (mechanically) coming from can storage. I don't think there were any changes. Like I wonder if the tidbits and chunks were done on a different table. Then they made it so it worked all on the packing table, too, you see.

MK: Oh. Was that after 1957 or before 1957?

MC: I was still on the night shift so must have been before.

MK: Okay. We talked about the 1958 two-day walkout and then another important event was in 1963. They opened up the cannery out in the Philippines. Did that in any way affect working at your Honolulu cannery?

MC: No, I don't think so.

MK: The production was still about the same?

MC: Yeah. (But after I quit in 1973, they packed more by color. As long as the color of the slices in a can are uniform, the canned pine can pass as Dole pine.)

MK: Let's see, 1965, you know they had the one-day strike. You were telling me you don't remember that one?

MC: No, I don't.

MK: Okay. Then in 1968 they had the long strike, huh, the 61-day one. Do you remember what you were doing during that strike?

MC: Every morning we had picketing. I think Katherine [Nagafuchi] picked me up or another lady that lived on Palolo Avenue, Helen Takasane, she used to pick me up and we used to go down.

MK: What were people doing there, just picketing or were they...

MC: Yeah, they have---we were about the first ones to go in to picket, I think, that hours. Then you picket for so many hours and then you don't have to stay right through that hours that you're scheduled. You can take off and go for a drink or break like.

MK: Uh huh. What did you think about the strike back then?

MC: I don't know what they were striking for. Raise and, I think, pension plan and things like that. So there was nothing we could do. We just see what the company union wanted. Then we went out with them.

(Interruption Mrs. Chang goes to check on her grandson)

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 6-33-3-79

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Margaret "Nona" Chang (MC)

March 27, 1979

Kaimuki, Oahu

BY: Michiko Kodama (MK)

MK: Interview with Mrs. Margaret "Nona" Chang at her home in Kaimuki on March 27, 1979.

Okay. Mrs. Chang, today I'll continue with the 1968 61-day strike period. First of all, I want to know what were you doing during the 1968 strike?

MC: Well, we used to go out picket every morning. I think everybody had a certain time to go out to picket. We usually take the first one because it's much cooler early in the morning. We'd have a break in between, and we'd go back and fill up the line. Then we'd leave, and report back the next day.

MK: Did you have any problems when you were picketing?

MC: No, not at all. No bother, no riot, or anything.

MK: This strike lasted 61 days. How did you manage financially?

MC: Well, what I made was more of side money like, uh? So it didn't affect too much on the household expenses. I think at that time, my daughter was working and my son, so they more or less gave a hand.

MK: In your case, you were saying that your money was side money, so you didn't worry too much, but did you have friends who were widows and were depending on the money that they would get from the can-nery?

MC: Not that I know of because majority of them were older folks. They had husbands working. If husband and wife was working, I really don't know how they managed. But outside of that, I didn't hear of any hardships from the people that we came in contact with.

MK: This was your second strike, yeah? Because you had the 1947 one before that. Did you notice any differences between the 1947 strike time and the 1968 strike time?

- MC: No, no difference. Only this was longer, so they gave us food. Outside of that, I don't think was much difference.
- MK: What did you think about the strike back then when it was continuing on?
- MC: I didn't think anything of it. Say, "Uuh, we don't know how long it's going to last." We used to say, "Uuh, we tired come out in the morning, every morning, picket." Outside of that....
- MK: I'm going to move on a little bit. You told me in 1972, you became a forelady for the packing and trimming side, yeah? Can you tell me why you were moved to packing and trimming?
- MC: I guess they wanted to save money. I don't know how much we got at that time. But for the forelady's pay, with a little bit more added to it, they gave us trimming and packing and they did away with the trimming forelady. So they saved quite a bit on that. We didn't mind. I mean, I didn't mind because like trimmers, they know trimming. Trimming, you don't have to worry too much--just you watch them, make sure they don't trim too big. But like packing, we knew more or less, so we concentrated more on the packing. So, it didn't make too much difference.
- MK: You were saying that they did that to save money. Some trimming ladies, did they lose their jobs?
- MC: No. You mean, foreladies? [MK nods "Yes."] No. Oh, according to seniority. They had so many packing foreladies and so many trimming foreladies. The trimming foreladies had to learn how to pack. They didn't do away with too many. At that time, all designated foreladies--they're the ones that are forelady all year around--and then they'd have the summer foreladies. I don't think they did away with too many foreladies because they were all designated foreladies. They needed packing forelady and trimming forelady.
- MK: When you became forelady for packing and trimming, how did you learn to be forelady for trimming side too?
- MC: We were trained. They take us into a little room there. They have lot of pans there with all different types of fruit--eyes, sour pine, red pine, and ones with the core--and they teach you how to handle a fruit, and how to hold your knife, and what to trim off and what not to trim.
- MK: Then they just put you on the tables?
- MC: Yeah, after so many hours, I think. I forgot how many hours they gave us. They put you on the table and they keep their eye on you. But after a while, you have to compete with the girls---well, you don't stay long enough to catch up with the fruit. Just enough so you know what you're doing. Maybe they put two foreladies---

Violet [Yonenaka]. Violet and I used to always be together. She used to always fight with me. "Eh, Nona, you miss your pine."

I said, "You miss your pine."

But in case you had to keep up with the girls, you usually go to the same table. The girls would be nice--the trimming girls would be real nice--and they know. They say, "Eh, forelady! Pick up your pine!" They just joking. Those tables, you don't mind going because you know they joking. Then they bang on the flume---if lot of extra fruit goes down, they have a flume there, and whatever extra go down, you put on a flume. Maybe the people on the top [at the beginning of the table] would help you. They knock on the flume and say, "Put 'em up! Put 'em up!"

(Laughter)

MC: Then we put 'em up, and they laugh. Say, "Uuh, you fellow, forelady, you no can trim."

I say, "We cannot help that. You go packing side, you don't know how to pack, too."

But I think trimming foreladies had a harder time to come on the packing side.

MK: How come?

MC: Because like us, we knew how, if the extra fruit went down over the edge--down the end. We know how to pack, so we take out, and we grade the fruit, but the trimming foreladies didn't know too much. You go to the table and their pans [to the side] would be full, and then we have to give 'em a hand. So, they had a harder time than we did.

MK: Since you became forelady for packing and trimming, you could compare packing side and trimming side, yeah? What did you like or not like about trimming?

MC: No difference. Only trimming is harder---not harder, but harder work. You have to lift the whole fruit up. Like packing, it's cut in slices already, so you can always break it up. The work [trimming] is heavier, that's all. Otherwise, I don't think any much difference in the packing and trimming.

MK: 1972 was the same year that they eliminated the male-female wage difference. What's your opinion of that?

MC: I don't see much difference because I don't think the boys did any harder work than the girls. Because sometimes---of course, we not supposed to do it, but when the boys are busy, we used to give 'em a hand. Like gallons, and things like that. If everybody is

packing gallons and it's [i.e., the tray is] all fill up-- maybe with two or three [cans]--then we make our own stack, then we put it up, and we put empty cans. We used to give them. So, I don't think the boys did any harder---they had to work any faster. But the job itself, I don't think it was too heavy. I think the truckers got a little bit more, but the tray boys had the same with the girls.

MK: The next year--in 1973--you retired. Why did you retire?

MC: I figure I work there long enough and was getting old. You know, going up and down the stairs and whatnot. So, my kids told me, "Ma, why don't you retire? You worked long enough."

I said, "Okay."

(Laughter)

MC: I think if I stayed longer--up until March--then I would have better benefit. But I figure, well, end of the year, I might as well leave. Then I wanted to leave before cannery started operating. I hate to retire when the cannery is operating, and I miss my friends more. Like now, everybody would be home. You feel, oh, everybody's home. You won't miss 'em. But if you have to retire when the cannery is in operation, then you go down there and they have the ceremony---retiring, they call you in, and they give you a certificate for so many years of work. You feel kind of---I don't know, I didn't like it, so I said, "Oh, I'm going to retire before that."

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: When you retired, did you get a retirement party?

MC: Oh, yes. I have some pictures. I'll show it to you.

MK: Oh. Okay.

(MC gets pictures. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MC: We always laughing. This lady's daughter was the one that made the statue. [MC and MK look at photographs.]

MK: Is it a tradition that every worker that retires gets a retirement party?

MC: No, no, no. Your friends make for you. This is Mabel [Kozuki, head forelady]. This is Katherine.

MK: Is that Katherine Nagafuchi [forelady]? Is Violet [Kozuki, a section head] in there, too? Mabel's sister?

MC: I think Violet was there. I don't know where she sat. I don't see her.

MK: When you retire, the company gives you a little ceremony and a certificate?

MC: Yeah, in the office.

MK: Did you get some jewelry too? A 30-year watch, or...

MC: Yeah, I got a watch.

MK: Did you get pins, too, along the way?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. I gave 'em all away. You know why? Like only had her--my daughter--but some of these people that--men folks--they work in the cannery, maybe they have three daughters. They make pendant with that. If they have only one or two [daughters], they say, "You like [to have a pin]?" I think it's supposed to be pure gold. I don't know.

I say, "You like?" I say, "I have some home. I bring 'em for you." Then I give it to them. They make charm bracelet. I never keep one I think. I gave 'em all away.

MK: Did you keep your watch?

MC: Oh, yeah. My daughter has it upstairs. We just had it fixed. You saw it? Well, let me bring it. I don't think she's using it.

(MC gets watch. Taping stops, then resumes.)

MK: When you retired--that was 1973--I was wondering if you noticed any major changes between 1960 and 1973 in terms of technology? You were talking about the chunk line?

MC: Chunk line. Uh huh [yes]. Going direct to double seamer. The gallons were being---we packed it on a regular table, but whatever went over---at the end of the table, we'd have another machine. [Whenever that machine] couldn't take it [pineapple slices], they'd cut it up in a pan. That went to double seamer. They just dump it in, and it went in the gallons on the double seamer.

MK: You also mentioned another change on the chunk line where there used to be three women doing it, and now...

MC: That was way back. I know when I was working on night shift, they had. I don't know. Not too long after I came back to day shift, they did away with that. Instead of using the three out there--we had one boy and two girls--and they did away with that. It went direct to double seamer. That, they save one tray boy too, you see? The boy didn't have to take the trays away from there.

- MK: When they saved using a number of people, what happened to the people?
- MC: They place 'em all different places because that was during summer. After summer, they didn't care because they all would be out.
- MK: Between the same years--1960 and 1973--were there any changes in labor-management relations because Dole was now bigger?
- MC: No. I don't think so.
- MK: How about working conditions? Were there any changes from 1960 to 1973?
- MC: Conditions? No.
- MK: When you retired in 1973, you said, oh, you sort of felt you were going to miss the people. What were your feelings at that time about retiring?
- MC: You want to go, and you want to stay. But, well, I figure I worked long enough and was getting old, so I felt that I should retire. I kind of held back because of the friends--all the people that I would miss working with. That's about all, I think.
- MK: I'd like to switch now to your home life. You were telling me that when you started working, your youngest child was about kindergarten age and you had a mother-in-law watching the children so you could go to work. If you didn't have your mother-in-law watching the children, what would you have done?
- MC: I wouldn't have gone to work. She was the one more or less say, "With two of us home, then nothing much to do." She said to go to work.
- I said, "Well, take a chance."
- MK: So you started working back then.
- MC: Because she was very good. When the youngest one was small, he'd never run away. He'd always be with her. He was very attached to her.
- MK: Later on, when you were working, the kids were all in school, and they were old enough so that they could help with the chores. Did you set it up so that the children would help with the housework?
- MC: My daughter did all that. Those other two were boys. They just out. She was the one that gave me a hand. She did a lot of things at home.

MK: Later on, when your daughters and sons grew up and got married and had their children, you were telling me that the grandchildren used to help you out too?

MC: Yeah. They used to wash the dishes, clean the yard. They used to wash dishes every night. Then on Thursdays, they take out the garbage for the man, next day.

MK: I was wondering, since in your family, your husband worked and you worked, who handled the pay?

MC: What was his was his. What's mine was mine. (Chuckles)

MK: So you did it separately?

MC: Well, more or less. Buying things like that, we....but otherwise, for your own expense, you kept whatever.

MK: In your family, the times that you bought a car, or when you bought maybe refrigerator, or stove, or furniture for the house, who made the decisions?

MC: He did.

MK: Mr. Chang made the decisions?

MC: The man [Mr. Chang] comes with that thing, then I know he bought one. Same thing with this one [coffee table]. When they brought, I say, "Oh, throw it away."

Bumbai, my daughter said, "No, don't throw it out, Ma, let's put it in the garage." So, he usually does.

MK: How come he made the decisions?

MC: He always does.

MK: Even when you weren't working, he always made the decisions?

MC: Uh huh [yes].

MK: How about in taking care of the children? Maybe disciplining them if they did something wrong. Who would do it in your family?

MC: I had a brother-in-law who did that. (Laughs)

MK: Oh, you didn't have to do it?

MC: We do it, but with us working and everything, those kids were pretty good. Only, maybe, Mrs. Gonsalves would say, "Oh, the kids did this and that." You know, my neighbor. Then we'd scold them, but if one person does the scolding, I don't think the other one

should do it because after all, they got their share of scolding. So we tell 'em they did this and that. You can talk to them, but don't scold them because they already had their share of scolding.

MK: As a long-time working mother, working grandmother, what did you think about women like yourself who worked, and raised children, and took care of the husbands and the homes while they were working?

MC: In what way?

MK: I just want your opinion of working women.

MC: Well, we manage because at the cannery--as I said before--when you have anything come up at home and you can't go to work, you just call in and tell them you can't come in. It didn't bother too much, working. I liked it. The only reason I went was a little expense money for your own. Then you can give it to the kids. Maybe they say, "Ma, I want so much." You know, instead of their asking the father. Then I'll be able to give it to them.

MK: You worked at the cannery a long, long time. I was wondering, what did you enjoy about the work? You worked there so long, so maybe you enjoyed something.

MC: The people--I told you. (Chuckles) That's the main thing, I think. Coming in contact with all these people. There was a lady--Mrs. Mizuta. We'd sing Japanese songs. At the end of the day, they say, "Kyō no keiko mo sumimashita...(We've already completed today's lesson...)" Then we sing that, and they'd go. I mean, especially the old folks, they talk about all different things. I really enjoyed the people, working.

MK: You were saying that you don't miss the work though.

MC: No, no. I have enough to do. I get up in the morning, I have my coffee, and I do my crossword puzzle. Then I pick up the laundry from there, and I do all the laundry. I press a little bit. I get through about 10 o'clock, 10:30. Then I go to the store and do my shopping, come home, have my lunch. Take a nap. When I get up, it's time for dinner.

MK: So you're busy. You were saying that your children are all working and grown up. Did any of them ever work cannery?

MC: Yeah. All three did. She [MC's daughter] worked two years, I think. She went to Academy--Sacred Hearts. When she got out, she worked two summers, I think. She said, "Ma, I don't know how you can work."

I said, "Well, I manage."

She went around, look for a job--office work, anything--she'd work a little while--maybe she's just taking somebody's place--then she pau, and then maybe she get chance to go back to the cannery. She work a while, and she get another job. I think when she was about 20, or 21, she got the job at quartermaster, and she worked there long time. My boys worked only during summer.

MK: Did you ever encourage your kids to stay in the cannery a long time like you did?

MC: No.

MK: Why not?

MC: She [MC's daughter] got her job as it is. Then, the other boy, went in the service--the older one. Oh, they both went in the service. I think my Bobby was in the Coast Guard and he was stationed in 'Frisco. He couldn't get a job here; he was going back to the Mainland. Being that my husband was a butcher, at that time--I don't know if now--at that time, you can go training. So, he went--he stayed down--he went. He made journeyman. Then he got a job at Kaneohe Marine Base commissary. I don't think he worked there a year, then he applied for a job. So, he's been there at the Post Office for---he was saying, the other day, he worked there 21 years now. The other one, when he came out of the service, he worked at the cannery for a while--he was in the Navy. Then, he applied for a job. He works at the Royal Hawaiian.

MK: Would you encourage young people like your children to work at the cannery a long time?

MC: No. Because there's no future in the cannery. Maybe if you worked in the office places, you might have, but in the cannery, you can just go so far. You can come up to maybe forelady, that's about all. Or boys come up to foreman, during summer. Off-season, you would be regular worker. You see? There's no future in it. You can just go so much. There's no chance of advancement to another department because you're not trained for that.

MK: Do you think the women who are working now--the young women who just started maybe one or two years ago--do you think they're going to stay a long time like you did and your friends did?

MC: Maybe the older ones would. But I used to tell those kids, I said, "You folks went to school--graduated school--take something else that would be to your benefit. You see, you don't want to stay in the cannery all your life." I say, "You don't get anywhere." I try to encourage because, well, we working there so we, you know, but I try to encourage the kids to get out of there if they can get a decent job.

MK: How come you never quit?

MC: We had--as I say--we had family. Then we weren't trained for anything else outside, so we just stayed there. We stay home when we want to. Like cannery, it's a seasonal. During summer, after season, then you have long periods of rest so was fine with us. But if young kids that's going to work, they don't want to be working so many months and then staying home so many months. You want to get a regular job that's steady. That's why my daughter went out to work. She worked for quartermaster a long time, even after she had her children. She worked there, but when she had her youngest one, they moved the office to Schofield. She'd have to take her baby to the baby-sitter early in the morning, about 6 o'clock. Then she'd have to go; she'd have to come back; she'd have to pick up the baby. It's kind of late. So the husband said it wasn't worth it, so she quit.

MK: When you look back now on your whole pineapple life, what do you think?

MC: You learn quite a bit about people. You come in contact with all different people. Same thing like when you travel. You go to certain place, and you see how they live and how they work. In Japan too, we see these old Japanese ladies cleaning the place up, but they're working for their annuity. When you go to Taiwan, I think, we see these ladies--even with the babies on their back--carrying rocks and things, bringing it up for they building something. So, you see all people living all different ways. Like the cannery, you come in contact with all different people. I don't know, you learn lot of things--what you cannot learn in books.  
(Laughs)

MK: So it was a good experience for you?

MC: Yeah, uh huh. That's why I said I only went to the eighth grade, but I think I can compete with a lot of kids that have lot more education because through this contact with all these people, you learn.

MK: I think I'll end the interview here. Thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

**WOMEN WORKERS  
in Hawaii's  
Pineapple Industry**

**Volume I**

**ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

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

**June 1979**