

## CARL A. CARLSON

### Hu`ehu`e Ranch, Hawai`i



Carl is from Waikapu, Maui, where he would ride and work at the neighboring Eddie Rogers Ranch and feedlot as a youngster. He credits Eddie and the Rogers family with getting him into ranching and the Paniolo life, when he might have taken another career path.

As a young man Carl attended California Polytechnic University where he met his friend, Corky Bryan. After graduating, Carl went to work for C. Brewer & Co. in their Ag Trainee program and was sent to Kaua`i where he worked at Olokele Sugar Company. While there he met Joe Manini, who taught him leather working and saddle making. Brewer then sent him to Ka`u where he worked at Hawaiian Ranch Co. as a Cattle Supervisor. At that time the ranch had 17,000 head of cattle and mounted eleven cowboys five days a week. To Carl, it was great. He was always in the saddle, had a string of 8 horses and a

lauhala cowboy hat he wishes he could get back again.

Carl began his nearly 20 year career at Hu`ehu`e Ranch in 1969 when he was offered the Ranch Manager job, perhaps before he was ready for such responsibility, he says, looking back today. But, he wisely built upon the legacy of efficient management started by Bull Johnston, and credits Monty Richards and Freddy Rice for inspiring him to take it to new levels of sustainability. Carl was promoted to General Manager and eventually became part owner of the ranch.

When it was sold in 1989, Carl purchased the livestock and continued to ranch until he became a Trustee of Parker Ranch in 1994. While there, the trustees successfully defended a will suit. That action preserved the intent of Richard Smart to provide charitable support in perpetuity to the community of Waimea through the creation of the Parker Ranch Foundation Trust.

Carl served 10 years at Parker Ranch and is now semi-retired. He says he feels fortunate to have worked with many of the true icons of the industry, but it can be said that he himself is one.



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### Carl Carlson Interview

November 28, 2008

LW: Well, let's see, what's today?

CC: Friday the...

LW: November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. And Lynne Wolforth and Carl Carlson are sitting in Carl Carlson's kitchen in Kaloko Mauka. Is that what you call this area?

CC: Um hmm.

LW: What do you think is the most important thing about being a cattleman or what is it that makes cattlemen or what is it that's interesting to you about those kinds of things?

CC: I think if you start at the most important thing, I mostly agree that it's an opportunity to live outdoors. And to be outdoors in a place like this. Of course moving livestock is always a lot of fun but being in the outdoors with the birds and the trees and the cattle and the wildlife and the view, I mean that's pretty special. That's pretty special. It's close to nature.

LW: And if you were to say, oh that guy's really a cattleman, what would you mean by that?

CC: There are a lot of definitions of cattlemen. And my definition probably doesn't fit the politically correct one.

LW: Okay, I don't know that the politically correct one is so...

CC: I think a cattleman is someone who is successful at his craft and his craft really is one where you're in the business of raising cattle. You do it specifically for a market purpose. And you do it in a way that is humane to the cattle. And yet at the same time, your practices are good for the land. And although that is not a new concept, it is a concept that really doesn't fit the aura of the so called cowboy.

LW: Why is that?

CC: When you're in the ranching business, it is then a business. And so what you have to do is you have to identify how you're going to make money in the business. And that gets to identifying what your market is, Coming up with a product that meets that market and then changing your products as the market changes. Which is a difficult concept sometimes because most ranchers in the old days, were ranchers because they wanted to be. Perhaps because they inherited land and it was a family legacy. And it was what they did. But eventually ranching evolved, at least here in Hawai'i and really across the West, from being purely a family driven legacy business to one that's actually a business and you had to make money to survive. So you know the old story of how the rancher was asked if he was given a million dollars what would he do with it, and I think the response was something like I'd put it into the ranch until it was all gone. Well, with that sort of philosophy eventually the ranch is all gone. And if you look at the ranches around this island, and around the State, they don't fit the same image that they did years and years ago. The most successful ones are very different than they were when they started out. And that's true across the country.

LW: So what's the politically correct version?

CC: Well I mean what's neat is you have your horses and you get to go drive cattle and you know you rope and ride and you do all those wonderful things. And all of that's great. I mean that's fun, it's romantic, it's the cowboy lore. And we just had the great Waiomina (Wyoming) Celebration. You know a hundred years of Ikua Purdy. That legacy. And that's really kind of special, but quite frankly I can't find any direct correlation in making money in the ranch business and being able to ride a horse. You know there really isn't. The best horseman doesn't necessarily make the best cattleman. And the cattle industry has evolved and it's changed. I went to school out in California, Cal Poly, and I started out in agricultural business management. Which was an interesting major but it didn't have enough interaction with animals. And so, I was going to switch to animal husbandry and I was convinced by one of my professors not to go into animal husbandry but to go to dairy science. So actually I have a degree in dairy science. The question is dairy science. Why that? And I'm very fortunate that I made that choice and did it. And that comes down to the fact that dairymen, it's real easy for them to understand what they're doing. They have a product. The product doesn't vary much. They know how to market it and they sell it by the pound. And so dairymen learn that if you're going to sell your milk, by the pound, you have to breed cattle that produce the most pounds of milk a day. And so dairymen weighed their milk every day, per cow. And eventually they built their herds based around the high production animals rather than the ones that they liked. Old Bessie didn't necessarily stay if she didn't produce a lot of milk. Ranchers, on the other hand, produced what they thought was a good product, and typically they would sell

their calves right off the mothers. So they really didn't know what their product was because the product isn't the live animal, the product is the beef that comes from it. And as the market has changed over the years, and it's changed significantly and it's still evolving, ranchers have had to try to catch up with that. Dairymen caught up early on. With ranchers, it took them a long time. And why did it take so long? Because they could. They didn't need to change. They didn't want to change. I mean I like red ones, somebody else likes black ones. Somebody else likes ones with spots. So that's what they raised. But the color or even to some extent the confirmation of the animal, doesn't tell you much, if anything at all, about the quality of the beef that's produced. Because in the end, you're selling beef.

LW: What is confirmation of the animal, again?

CC: Oh, their structure.

LW: Okay.

CC: What they look like. Their phenotype.

LW: Okay. Sure. So you can...

CC: They change the phenotype with their genotype, which is the genetic make up.

LW: But the phenotype, their confirmation, isn't an indication of the beef in the end?

CC: It is a partial indication. But beef is now measured by the amount of marbling in the meat. Confirmation, it's tough. It's pretty difficult to discern whether or not there's marbling in the beef by the musculature, the muscular structure of the animal. On the other hand, you can tell if you observe it, you can tell other factors that are important, and that would be fertility factors. And you need fertility in order to reproduce. But typically, it's pretty difficult to accurately tell how good the beef is by how good the animal looks like. And nowadays, they've even gotten to the point where there are ways to test for tenderness. And they're now there are tenderness genes. And so you can now breed for tenderness. What the steer looks like isn't going to tell you much about tenderness. You probably see today, advertised, Kobe beef. And everybody hears about Kobe beef. Kobe beef comes from a breed of cattle, which comes from Japan and raised in Japan in a certain way. And oh, maybe fifteen, twenty years ago they started importing this particular breed, which is called a Wagyu. Started importing them into America. And I remember going... Corky Bryan and I went up... Corky's at Parker Ranch and he and I went to this feedlot, and we were classmates at Cal Poly. I mean we went to this feed lot and we looked at them. They were the ugliest things I'd ever seen in my life. (Laughter.) We were blinded by how ugly they were. What we should have done was we should have been true cattlemen, who were businessmen, who figured out that it didn't matter what they looked like, we're selling the

meat product. They didn't look the same alive as they did as meat, so we should have started a program back then rather than now.

LW: Ha... interesting. So what's your earliest memory of cattle and your interest in it?

CC: I was born on Maui and raised in Waikapu. And we were surrounded on one side by a rancher named Eddie Rogers who had a nice ranch up mauka above the sugar fields. There was also Waihee Dairy, back then they had a ranch. And as kids we were always up in the valley and always up in the pasture and always playing with the cattle and alongside the fence. And that was always fun. But where my interest really came from is... and I can still remember this... when my dad was a manager of Waihee Dairy for a year, kind of as an interim position, and so we were surrounded. We lived down at the dairy, which was right on the beach and it was perfect. We could surf and ride horse and we could do everything. But when I was in the fifth grade, one of my classmates, Eddie Rogers' son Wally asked if I wanted to go riding and there's only one answer to that, right? And so we went riding and then that became an everyday occasion, and then Eddie Rogers, his father said "Okay, you fellah guys, you guys want to go ride horse, that's fine. But if you want to go ride horse tomorrow, you got to feed the cattle today." Pretty soon it was if you want to ride horse this weekend, you got to feed cattle all week. So you know, 'cause we wanted to ride and we enjoyed work, we basically became the ranchers, if you will. And we did whatever he needed just so we could continue doing that. Great way to grow up. And I was paid with beef and milk. I milked the cow and some of that went to our house. Mostly it went to his house. But he did always feed us lunch when we worked on Saturdays and Sundays.

LW: So Mr. Rogers is long gone now?

CC: He's long gone. His son Wally is still in Waikapu. And I believe they're still in the meat business. Mr. Rogers and his family had a very great influence on my life.

LW: Did we see him in that new video?

CC: I haven't seen...

LW: Did he appear that night?

CC: I haven't seen the new video.

LW: I can't remember.

CC: I don't know.

LW: So that just hooked you on...

CC: Yeah.

LW: ... kind of the whole lifestyle?

CC: It did. It did. And here again it was an opportunity to be working in the outdoors with the cattle and horses. And as we grew a little older and learned a little more, and Mr. Rogers was a wonderful teacher. He gave us more and more responsibility. And it was a great deal for him because all he had to do was feed us. You know and free labor. It's perfect.

LW: Willing, free labor.

CC: I mean who could ask for anything more than that, really.

LW: Yeah. Yeah because I'm sure you were enthusiastic enough and we should all be so lucky to get our teens to work that way.

CC: Yeah. Well we were pre-teens and then teens, And the only thing that killed it was he also had pigs and when I'd clean the pig pens... I don't know if you've ever done that but it's a smell that doesn't go away very fast. (Laughter.) And none of my girl friends liked the smell of the pigs. So I had to make some life choices. (More laughter.)

LW: Girls... pigs... girls... pigs...

CC: Tough choice. I'll pick papayas, but I'm not going to clean the pig pen.

LW: So let's see... so you kind of worked for the Rogers on and off up through high school and then...

CC: Yeah, until I graduated and then when I went to school on the Mainland and when I came back, I had to make money beyond milk and beef for the family, and so I worked during the summers and when I came home

for Christmas to pay my Christmas transportation, I worked at Waihee Dairy. Which was really... it was wonderful... I loved it. And eventually they no longer had beef cattle there. They just had the dairy but it was good experience.

LW: So you actually had... I mean your Cal Poly major... actually there was...

CC: It was a fit. It fit.

LW: ...a possible, practical application.

CC: There was a practical application. I saw it daily. And the other thing about the dairy business, other than just measuring how much milk you produced a day, in the dairy business, dairymen figured out that they could improve the quality of their livestock through artificial insemination. So back then, everything was being bred artificially. Most ranchers would never condescend to do that. You know, other than some seed stock producers, and it took some very innovative seed stock producers before they'd do that. And so here again genetically the cattle industry was behind the dairy industry. And so when I got out of school and went to work for the plantation for a while and that wasn't for me, and then I ended up on a ranch down in Ka'u and hey... we started breeding cattle artificially. And when I came up here to Hu'ehu'e, we started breeding cattle artificially and everybody thought we were nuts but it helped us change what we were doing.

LW: So now what cattle were you working on then?

CC: In those days most of the cattle in Hawai'i were Herefords. And they also had some Shorthorn cattle and some Angus. But the bulk of them were the white faced cattle. And when I came here we had crossbreds of Angus and Hereford, but most of them were the white face. But I was intrigued and here again I liked the Angus, I was intrigued by them. Well, any way what we did was start to convert the Hereford herd to Angus. And the way we did that is we just started selecting various Angus cows that we thought were better looking than the others, and started breeding them Angus. And the University had an extension program that they called a Record of Production Program. ROP. And Monty Richards was really big in ROP. And so we started building a Record of Production herd and started expanding every year as we got better control of the cattle. More and more into the ROP program.

LW: So it was a...

CC: It's a way of measuring production of your cattle. You number all the cows and you select sires, specific sires for those cows, and initially that was a matter of buying the right bulls and then converting to being able to breed artificially. And when a calf is born you put a tag on the calf and when you wean them, you weigh them and you divide its weight by how old it is and then you know what its gain is. And that tells you a

lot about its mother. Because if you're tagging a calf, you know if she has a calf every year. You also know when she's calving, whether it's early in the season or late in the season. And by the weight of her calf, the heavier the calf is, generally the better the mother is. And so we could do that and then that's followed up by keeping the calf for some period of time afterward and weighing them again and seeing what it could do on its own. What the bull calves or heifers could do on their own. And then we'd take the top gaining females and those would go back into the ROP herd and the slow gaining females would end up at the feedlot. And so we were prepared to do that here. Perhaps sooner than other ranchers were mainly because we had a dairy experience. And that's what dairy people do.

LW: That was at Hu'ehu'e or at...?

CC: At Hu'ehu'e Ranch.

LW: Hu'ehu'e .

CC: Um hmm.

LW: So you come back from Cal Poly. There's quite a kind of Big Island contingency there, huh?

CC: Um hmm.

LW: Oh well, no. But you're from Maui...

CC: Yeah.

LW: ...and Corky's from O'ahu.

CC: Corky's from O'ahu.

LW: So who else... somebody else was your roommate, though.

CC: Charlie Onaka.



LW: Oh, yeah, yeah.

CC: Charlie Onaka, who has a ranch in South Kona. He was my roommate for a while. Corky's brother was also my roommate. But the only Hawai'i guy who was my roommate that was a rancher was Charlie. Jerry Boteilho and Leslie Correia were from Kuka'iau Ranch. And they were there for about a year and we weren't roommates but we lived close to them. But we partied.

LW: Yeah, so I hear.

CC: Well, we partied.

LW: We heard about it a little bit. Turns out there are quite a few people around that went to Cal Poly so...

CC: Oh, there's a lot. Monty went to Cal Poly.

LW: Yeah. There must be a kind of tradition that...

CC: Yeah.

LW: Well, it's a good school.

CC: It's a good school. I had a choice. I could have gone to Cornell, but Cornell was so far away.

LW: Oh God, yeah. New York.

CC: If I went that far, my parents made it clear that I wasn't coming home for Christmas.

LW: Yeah.

CC: Which meant then that I couldn't surf and I'd miss my girl friend and all of those reasons why you choose a school, right? (Laughter.) But I looked at Colorado State and Texas A & M and kind of the same thing. And Cal Poly was an excellent choice. Davis was a choice but everybody said well go to Davis to grad school.

LW: Did you go to grad school?

CC: Got married instead.

LW: I don't remember that in your bio.

CC: No, didn't go there.

LW: Yeah. So when you come back from school, you're in Ka'u first... or no?

CC: Well, I went back to Maui. And went to work for C. Brewer. When there still was such a thing. And they owned Waihee Dairy and so they had me at the dairy for a few months and then they sent me to Olokele on Kaua'i for a few months. And then they sent me over here to Pa'auhau. And when I got to Pa'auhau, that just wasn't my thing. Driving up and down the hill all day long. And in the sugar business...

LW: So each of those is really sugar business?

CC: Yes. It was all sugar. And so Peter Baldwin called me and asked me if I wanted to come to Maui. And work for him at Haleakala Ranch and the Dairy. And I thought about that and if that was the right thing to do. And then my father told me "You know, I don't know if you want to do that." And C. Brewer back then had a ranch down in Ka'u, which was really a wonderful place to live and kind of a neat ranch and so they told me don't resign. If you really want to go play cowboy, why don't you go to Ka'u? So we did.

LW: So we were trying to figure out what C. Brewer owned at that point down there. So that's the late '60's, yeah?

CC: That was the late '60's. That was 1968. And what happened was they had the lease on Keauhou Ranch, which is above the Volcano. They had the lease on Kapapala Ranch, which goes from Volcano to Pahala and partway to Na'alehu. They owned a lot of land in and around Kapapala, Pahala. They owned most of the land between Pahala and Na'alehu. Most of the land maka'i of Na'alehu. And then they had a lot

of leasehold as well as fee land, at South Point and that was Ka'alu'alu Ranch. And so they put them all together and called it Hawaiian Ranch Company. So it was kind of a neat ranch. I think it was a hundred and twenty-seven thousand acres so it was big. I think there was eighteen thousand head of cattle at one time. And yeah, it went from nine thousand feet on Mauna Loa above the Volcano down to south Point. Sea level. And we had miles and miles and miles of shoreline and I mean that was really fun. Mounted eleven cowboys every day.

LW: Wow, big group.

CC: Big group. Big.

LW: They all lived there at the...?

CC: Most of them were in Na'alehu. Some of them were in Pahala. But most of them were in Na'alehu and Wai'ohinu.

LW: So you were managing there or...?

CC: No. I went down there and because it was a C. Brewer Company, it was structured almost like a plantation and so there was a Ranch Manager and then they had these various positions and it was also unionized. C. Brewer, plantation style. And so they had a cattle superintendent position and they had a cattle supervisor position and that's what I was. I was a cattle supervisor, which was kind of a superintendent in waiting. And so I did that for close to two years. And then I got asked to come to Hu'ehu'e . And...

LW: Now who was at Hu'ehu'e then and...?

CC: Roger Williams.

LW: Roger Williams.

CC: And Roger Williams actually was from Maui. Both he and his wife were from Maui. I didn't know them when I was a kid. I knew some of their family. My parents knew them quite well. But he was retiring, and this is one of those stories... you know... right place at the right time. The people who owned the ranch were three attorneys from Los Angeles. Two brothers and a friend. And they had purchased it from the Stillman Trust, which was the estate of John McGuire, who had founded the ranch in 1887. You might know Hannah Springer

or know of Hannah Springer. Her family. John McGuire was her great, great grandfather. But these three attorneys had purchased the ranch in 1966. And they purchased it strictly as a real estate deal. There were little parcels scattered all around. You know, Kaloko, from the ocean up to fifty-five hundred feet on Hualalai. The whole ahupua'a they owned. And land over at Holualoa. Land at Hu'ehu'e . And other holdings and Kuki'o... Kuki'o was part of that.

LW: No kidding.

CC: ...was part of the deal. And so it was time for Roger to retire. He was of that age. Which is frightening because I'm getting close to that age. And so they needed a new ranch manager. And they had hired a development manager, 'cause they were going to do some development of this subdivision here. And he was young. He'd come from the mainland. And he was twenty-eight years old. And so they came up with a description of who they wanted to hire. They wanted somebody who was born and raised in Hawaii. Had a degree in agriculture. Had some experience in ranching. Was married. And was younger than twenty-eight.

LW: And you fit the bill.

CC: You go look today and see if you can find one of those.

LW: Yeah, really. Even in those days it must have been hard.

CC: I was the only one who fit the description. There were others who were close. Several others who were close. And so I was asked to interview and I wasn't so sure. I was going to go back to Vet school. And I wasn't so sure I wanted to do it and I thought oh, what the heck. And so came out and took... there back then, an oil and cinder road from Hu'ehu'e down to Kuki'o. And Dennis Haserot the development guy took me down and we sat on the beach. And of course, we're the only ones on the beach. Nice beach. We're the only ones there. And we just talked about some of the opportunities this might be. And I looked at everything and I started... you know... just like a private club. How much do I pay to be a member here? Sort of thing. And then went up and met one of the owners and he drove me around the ranch and we sat for a while and chemistry was right. And in December of '69, came here.

LW: So that effectively then, you're not working for C. Brewer any more at that point.

CC: I resigned from C. Brewer. And was working for a company called Kona Coast Company, d.b.a. Hu'ehu'e Ranch.

LW: Oh.

CC: And that was owned by these three attorneys. One passed away. From Los Angeles. And each were very wealthy individuals. Successful business people. Only one practiced law. The other two were businessmen. And so I was fortunate that when I was in Ka'u, I spent some time with Freddy Rice and Freddy, he had spent some time in Australia and New Zealand. And so he was one of the first, that I remember... Monty might have been also, but Freddy was one of the first who really got into pasture management. And what Freddy had done is he took his best lands, divided it up into four pastures with one pen in the middle. Water pen in the middle. And then that way he and George Manoa could move the cattle by themselves. Because they'll always run to the water. And they could rotate the cattle without having a whole crew of cowboys do it. And that also allowed them to manage the amount of time that the cattle were in each pasture, and the amount of time pastures were rested. And so I saw Freddy doing that. He gave me some books on range management. And I was fascinated by that. And so when I came here to Hu'ehu'e, Bull Johnson, Ed Johnson, who had been the manger before, when he came to... before Roger Williams... when he came to Hu'ehu'e everything was completely uncontrolled. Mostly wild cattle. With a big perimeter fence. And so what he did is rather than spend time trying to deal with the cattle, he just built fences. Built a corral in the middle of the property, and then he built pastures connecting to the corral with an alleyway. And so again, as they fenced off the place they got control of the cattle. And then he also could improve the pastures, again through range management. And then I was fortunate that I was then exposed to that. I had Freddy, and then with Bull's work. But there was still land at Hu'ehu'e that was uncleared. And so what we did is we started clearing it and converting it to that same type of pastures. And it became real clear that our labor time was better spent putting in infrastructure, than driving cattle and fighting the cattle.

LW: You're just maintaining the infrastructure.

CC: Yeah. And then so we started doing that and then one day Corky called me and said there's going to be a conference in Waimea. We should go to that. And he was at Pu'u Wa'awa'a at the time. And you know, by then I was already too smart. (Laughs.) I didn't have time to spend with any more of these things. He said no, no. We're going to go. And so I went and it was a presentation by Allen Savory. And the Savory Grazing Method. And it was one of those life changing events. You don't have many of them. That was one of them. And so within three months Pono and I went to Albuquerque to the Savory Grazing Method School. We spent a week doing that. And I came back and I looked at my four paddock rotation and under the Savory Grazing Method the whole idea is to have as many pastures as you can. So you have a very high stocking density. And you just keep moving the cattle. And so we took our four paddock rotations and cut each pasture into three and so all of a sudden we had twelve paddock rotations and we had two of them. And then so all of a sudden we had twenty-four paddock rotations. And we increased the number of cattle. And we improved the quality of the pasture. And we increased our production and so we set up several of those things. And that's also when that sort of thing happened is when it became clear that horses are better in pictures than they are in real life, because one guy can go up with a jeep and the cattle know where they're going to go. They want to go. You set the thing up for the cattle, not for you. Which is unlike the old style, where you have a lot guys and you force them.

LW: Force the cows.

CC: Force them to go. I mean the more guys you have the easier it is to force them to go someplace they don't want to go. But if you don't have the guys, or if you can't afford them, you have got to figure out how to move the cattle without...

LW: Horsemen.

CC: Yeah. And also back in those days I was running marathons and I'd just put on my jogging shoes, run up, open the gate, the cows would go to where they're supposed to go, and I'd run over to the next one and open the gate and come back to the first one and clean up whichever dumbie didn't move. And there's always...

LW: A dumbie or two.

CC: Or there's always... they're like people. I mean the bell shaped curve is real. (Laughter.) And if you take out either extreme, it gets replaced. And so you know you've got to go up there and you've got to take care of the last ones and move them. But I was getting my exercise and moving cattle at the same time. And the cowboys who worked for us at the time had been there forever and none of them wanted to run up and do it but they were all happy to drive up and do it or go up on one of their horses and do it. And just one guy rather than four or five guys. So we invested in clearing land and fencing. And that's what we did.

LW: Yeah, fencing is really, you know... especially when you have huge areas. Or when you have a lot of paddocks that you're trying to rotate them through. Yeah. I think we take that for granted. Us non-ranching folks.

CC: Well you know, if you think about it, cattle are just like people. They're creatures of habit. I mean we're creatures of habit. There's a certain time you want to go eat. And so you kind of get into that routine. Cattle are the same way. Cattle also, there's a certain time when they like to go to the water. And there are also places they like to hang out. And so if you spend a little bit of time trying to figure out what they want, you can design your facilities around them, or you can build your time around them. And if they like to go to water in the afternoon, hey, go move them in the afternoon.

LW: Yeah, right.

CC: Because they'll go. And what you'll find... and I learned that... you know you live with the animals and when you live with the animals, you observe what their habits are, and you can be with them or you can fight them. It's real simple. And one of the things I learned was that in this particular area, they'd like to go in the afternoon. They like to go drink water and they'd hang out there. And then in the morning, they'd go back to the end of the pasture. Which basically said that with that particular bunch of cattle, you only move them in the

afternoon. Because in the morning, they're trying to go away from where you're trying to move them. Or because we had two of these grazing units side by side, we set it up so that when they're going away from the central water, they're going to their next unit. You open the gate and they're going to their next unit and you know, so rather than go move them in the afternoon to the next unit, no, no, you go in the morning when they want to go.

LW: Makes good sense.

CC: I mean you've got to be flexible. You've got to be willing to adapt to the circumstance you're dealing with. Now if you have twenty cowboys, you can do whatever you want. But if you don't have twenty, and that's not saying you should, I'm saying you can.

LW: Well I guess probably even at that point Parker is the only one still using lots of cowboys.

CC: Yeah but they've completely switched how they do it, you know.

LW: Yeah.

CC: They've switched six or seven years ago. I mean it took a long time. They would have switched a long time ago, but nobody in town wanted them to switch. And the cowboys didn't want to switch, which was OK at the time. There is so much tradition there that it takes a long time to change. Change generally comes with necessity.

LW: Right.

CC: And I mean you know you get this routine, but there are excellent models that you can look at. You go look at how Pono runs Pono Holo Ranch. And it's right out of the Savory Grazing Method instruction that we had. You work with the cattle rather than against the cattle. And you give responsibility to somebody with the cattle. And Parker Ranch, you know they're a hundred and fifty year history. Of moving everything with twenty, thirty guys and so that's a legacy. It's hard to turn a battleship around. But it has to be done. And so they've switched and they now have stockmen or herdsmen. I don't know that their titles are but they have individuals who are assigned a certain area. And they manage that area and they move all of the cattle by themselves. And if they need help, they get somebody to help them. And they do it by water placement and you know cattle are like people. If you're offered a plate of food that was just cooked and a plate of leftovers that came out of the refrigerator, you can have your choice. You're probably going to take the fresh one, you know. Not a bad choice. Cows are the same way. They want fresh, clean feed. And every day that they're in the same pasture, the quality of the feed goes down. So there's less of it and the quality goes down. So they begin to look just like we look. And the old saying about the grass is greener on the other side of the fence,

hey, good choice. You go to the other side of the fence. How do you get there? You go through the gate that's open. That's how you go. (Laughter.) And so if you want to get the cattle to a corral that's three miles away, and you've got four pastures in between, you figure out when you want to get them there, and you move them to one pasture and a couple of weeks later, a week later, you move them to the next pasture and a week or two later depending upon what your schedule is. you move them to the one next to the corral. It's real simple. In the old days what they'd do is they'd drive them across all of the other pastures to the corral. So now all you've got to do is think a little bit, design a grazing scheme and let the cattle go. It's good if they're right next to the corral when you want to catch them. It's not a strange concept.

LW: So seventeen hundred head of cattle. That's cows or wait... that's heads...

CC: That was seventeen thousand. Back in Ka'u.

LW: Oh, that was in Ka'u.

CC: That was in Ka'u.

LW: So here at Hu'ehu'e ...

CC: Here at Hu'ehu'e I think the maximum we had was probably around fifteen hundred. We bred like twelve hundred cows one time. We might have bred more but we had about twelve hundred cows. And we had six guys then, counting me, and then five guys counting me and then four guys counting me, then two guys counting me. Doing most of the cattle work. And everybody doing everything else.

LW: Yeah, so you were there from '68 or... '69...

CC: Yeah, I came to Ka'u in... I went to Ka'u in June of '68 and Hu'ehu'e , I moved here January of '70. Came here really December of '69 and started January of 1970. And then we ran Hu'ehu'e Ranch until 1989, when it was sold. And I had some equity. I was able to structure my management contract so that I gained equity. Sweat equity over the years. And again it was purchased to sell. And so eventually it was sold. And that was in '89 and that's almost twenty years ago. And so what I did is I bought the cattle and the horses and the equipment. And Willy Gomes, who's in the Paniolo Hall of Fame, Willy and I and Clifford Medeiros basically ran everything. I set Karin Haleamau and Thomas Lindsey up on another job so that they could do other things. And we did that when it was sold. Eventually the land was sold again. By the buyer. It was a Japanese buyer and he sold it to another Japanese national and they didn't want cattle on the place and so I think it was in to '92, yeah, '92, possibly '93, early '93. We sold all of the livestock other than a few horses and that I kept. And now I'm down to one. You might have seen a grey over here when you drove in. That's Scoobie Doo for my grandkids.



LW: They learning how to ride?

CC: Yeah. Charlie is eight and Ka'ena is five. She likes being on a horse. Charlie does, too, but there's something about little girls and horses. There really is. But they're learning how to ride. And then my son-in-law has a three hundred acre Hawaiian Homestead Ranch which is just gorgeous. Up above Honoka'a. And it's really nice up there.

LW: Yeah that is kind of nice.

CC: Oh, it's beautiful.

LW: Who's that now?

CC: His name is Greg Cordeiro. His grandfather Joe Cordeiro worked for Parker Ranch. And actually I used to help Greg's cousins with 4-H steers. When you're in the ranch business you help kids with 4-H projects. And so Joe is from Captain Cook and a lot of his family were raising 4-H steers and so I was part of the program in the old days.

LW: So it's at Hu'ehu'e that you change, that you kind of create this herd?

CC: Yes. Mm hmm.

LW: You have certain criteria that you're breeding for and I remember when I did that ranching exhibit in '98 we talked to... who was it managing SC Ranch?

CC: Keoki Wood.

LW: Keoki Wood. And they had such an elaborate breeding scheme. You know the cow's first calf was bred for small, so that it would kind of prep her and then it was the second breeding from there on that she produced for market or whatever. Did you guys do that kind of stuff or...?

CC: We bred for cows that were easy calvers.

LW: Oh, so you just did... if they weren't easy calvers they just went in the other group.

CC: They were gone.

LW: If they had to go...

CC: They were gone.

LW: They were gone.

CC: You know, natural selection takes care of those problems. I'm not saying we should go let cows die.

LW: No, no, no.

CC: But with natural selection basically the ones that aren't easy calvers, they die.

LW: Anyway...

CC: They die. Okay. So on a big ranch where you can't really watch the cattle, like Parker used to be and Hawaiian Ranch was the same way when I was down there. I mean all of the big ranches were that way in the old days. If a cow had trouble calving, she died. And so because of that, the ones who lived were easy calvers. So how do you change that?

LW: You don't want to.

CC: You don't want to change that, but you change that by introducing a different type of genetics. And we all did that. And when you change the environment that the animal's in, and you change the genetics, then you run the chance that you're going to have some calving difficulties. And so if you're breeding artificially, you read the book. Easy calving. Okay, I'm going to breed that one.

LW: Because of that, the ones who lived were easy calvers. So how do you change that?

CC: You don't. That way, you don't want to change that. But you change that by introducing a different type of genetics. And we all did that. And when you change the environment that the animal is in, and you change the genetics, then you run the chance that you're going to have some calving difficulties. And so if you are breeding artificially you read the semen sales book. Choose sires noted for easy calving. Okay, I'm going to breed to that one.

LW: Oh, you mean each cow has a book? No.

CC: Each father.

LW: Each father.

CC: You're buying semen from these bulls, the bulls have all been tested and so you select the traits you want.

LW: Oh, based on...

CC: It's like ordering a car. What kind of car? Well I want a big engine, I want it to be fire engine red, you know. And I want leather seats and I want a moon roof. And a great stereo system. Cattle are the same thing. What do I want? Okay, you can say well I want them to be black. Well I don't know what that has to do with the quality of the meat. So that's probably not a good choice. Except people think that black is beautiful and Angus cattle have better meat so yeah, get a black one. Okay. So I'm going to start with Angus.

LW: So those are Angus bulls then?

CC: So those are Angus bulls.

LW: So I mean well, you're buying their semen.

CC: Yes, buying their semen. And then what you want is you want one who has a history of being an easy calver. His offspring calve easy. Okay. So you select for that. You want one that has excellent weight gain. And there's different types of weight gain. You know they test these guys for everything. And some don't do everything. Some do one of this and two of that but they won't do all ten that you're looking for. So you kind of got to ask what do I need here? And then you look at your herd and you breed them that way.

LW: Wow, so you kind of say...

CC: It's science. It's a business.

LW: I want a kind of a thirty thirty thirty mix in my population.

CC: Yeah. Yeah.

LW: And I'm looking for so much proportion that are going to be like this. And so much proportion that are going to be like that.

CC: And what Keoki and Dutchie have done is they decided they wanted to use this other breed. It's a French breed. Saylor. En francais... Saylor.

LW: Yeah. They said "sailor" (phonetic). It came out like that.

CC: Well it depends whether you pronounce it in French or it's sailor. But an excellent breed. Big, more pounds. You know a lot of those traits that you're looking for. That's the good news. I bred Simmental. Okay. Big, they come from Switzerland. And East Germany. They're Alpine cattle. But they're a bigger breed and saying this is going to be good. I'm going to get more pounds per head, more money. Right? Okay, it's good news and bad news. You take a small cow and big bull, what do you suppose happens?

LW: They don't calve well.

CC: They don't calve well. And so when you choose a new breed that is bigger, if you will, you have to know a lot about it. And here again, from the dairy side, in my case records meant everything. You study the records. And part of the reason we chose the Simmental and specifically a line within the Simmental called Fleckvieh.

LW: Called what?

CC: Fleckvieh. F L E C K V I E H.

LW: Oh, okay, good.

CC: Fleckvieh. But the reason we chose them is because they were reputed to be easy calvers. And they weren't as big as the other Simmental. And also my friend knew a lot about them and he convinced me that was the right thing to do. It's not as if we really knew everything. But we went that way. And that worked and it worked for us very well. And then I had some investors who wanted to raise these Simmental. And they wanted to bring in these bigger ones. And so... I raised their cattle for them, but I didn't have any control over their genetics. And so we had to pull a lot of calves. And when it...

LW: Oh, meaning help them to be born.

CC: We had to help them to be born. And in America, ranchers have a big herd and here again you know generally you don't see them calve. Whereas in Europe they generally have real small herds. And so these cattle, when you look at them, they're huge. And there's a lot of meat there. But the European farmer may only have five or more of them. He can't afford to lose one of them in calving 'cause that's twenty percent of his herd. So therefore they assist them in calving. You know when they started importing them to America, they were delivering some of these by C-section. Because theoretically they're so valuable. Well, what are you doing? You're perpetuating the fact that you can't use that animal on a typical herd. And...

LW: 'Cause you're not...

CC: Yeah. Natural selection. And I mean I've pulled more calves than I'd like to. And if I never pull another one I'll probably be very happy. And I probably won't 'cause I'm out of that business. Unless my son-in-law needs me to help him. So what a lot of the ranchers were doing, it was real typical, is the first calf you'd go get an easy calving breed like an Angus or a Texas longhorn. Or something like that. And you'd breed the heifer that way so that her first calf was known to be small. But to some degree, you're throwing away the first calf.

LW: Yeah, what do you do with the first calf?

CC: Okay. And the thing is the first calf, every calf... I mean when you're in the ranch business, what you need to do is you need to advance your genetics as rapidly as you can. It doesn't move very fast. Because you've got a nine month gestation. So you get one calf a year. And so if you want to completely change your herd from one breed to the other, you know you breed them one year and a calf is born the next year. That calf is a half bred and it can't be bred until it's almost two years old. So before that one has a calf it's about six years from the start and the resulting calf is now three quarters of the breed you are trying to change to. Then you breed that calf about two years later and so on. It takes a long time to get so that it's almost pure bred. And so you can't change your genetics rapidly. And a typical cow doesn't have a lot of calves.

LW: How many, about?

CC: Well, it depends how you want to look at it. But it's unusual for a cow to be as productive as you'd like after ten years. The genetics is... you know she may be a good cow but the older she gets the harder it is for her to produce. And the less milk she's going to produce. So she's going to be weaning a lighter calf. And so typically, if you want to turn your genetics, the first four or five calves are the ones that are going to be the most important ones. That generally is the most productive part of that cow's life unless... she's numbered, you weigh your calf, you know exactly what she's doing and she may be the best cow in your herd. Don't let her age get in the way of her being the best cow in your herd. If she's producing what you want, if she's fifty so what.

LW: Now did you say how many calves they have in a lifetime?

CC: Say eight.

LW: Eight.

CC: If she's culled at ten, then she's lucky if she has eight calves. You have an eighty percent calf crop. She's only going to have eight calves. Eighty percent of that, six and a half calves.

LW: Oh, six and a half.

CC: So don't throw away that first calf if she's only going to have six.

LW: Well you don't throw them away. So record production goes with the cow or with anyone?

CC: The cow and the sire.

LW: Oh, okay. So they each have their own.

CC: Yeah. You basically put an ear tag on them and then put a tattoo in their ear or on their lip so that if they lose the ear tag, you still know what their number is. And we also used to brand their number on the side.

Which is easy. Not really fun for the cow but easy to see who she is, right. And a typical way of numbering it, the animal, would be to have the year it was born and then which one of that year it is. So if you have ninety and if it's born... the first one's born today, it would be 801 and then the one born next is 802. But if you have over a hundred, you know it's got to be 8001. So all of a sudden you have all of these brands on them. Brands aren't the easiest to read but the other thing we need to get back to, is why are we doing this? We're doing this to make money. There was a time, and I don't know what it is today... there was a time where the market would dock you thirty-five dollars per head if the hide had brands on it.

LW: Well, there you go.

CC: In certain areas. So you couldn't go put all those numbers on them. And I know at Parker Ranch they changed and even went to the fact that they just put a brand... put the P on a cheek for those going to the mainland. Just put a P on the cheek and then that way you don't get that thirty-five dollar a head deduction.

LW: Yeah, well, we're...

CC: You've got to change with the times.

LW: And I suppose 'cause the market changes things, too. What people want and...

CC: Market changes. We're going back to grass fed.

LW: I noticed that, yeah.

CC: We're going back to grass fed. I mean did you read the Omnivore's Dilemma?

LW: No. Let's see... oh, but my friends did. They liked it quite a bit.

CC: It's a must read.

LW: Oh, really.

CC: You must read the “Omnivore’s Dilemma.” I’m trying to get all my cowboy friends to read it, nobody wants to read it.

LW: What you have to do is convince the author to create a TV show so that’s the way things go down.

CC: Well, you know ranchers. Most of us are very old fashioned. And so we’re in charge so we do whatever the hell we want to do. (Laughter.) Okay. But most of us aren’t the ones who go to the market to buy the food. So the good old boy’s sitting around talking stories about how to do it. That’s not going to get anywhere. The market in most cases, is their wives. And the market also is people. So you know the largest organic food seller in the world is Wal-Mart. I mean organics. The “Omnivore’s Dilemma.” By Michael Pollan. P O L L A N.

LW: By who?

CC: Michael Pollan. P O L L A N. And the sequel to his book is called “In Defense of Food.” Same author. “In Defense of Food, an Eater’s Manifesto.” Okay. And we, the beef industry here in Hawaii, in the old days everything was grass fat. And then after a while it became necessary to have feedlots and feed them. And so the ranchers would wean their calves, put them out in pasture, grow them out, send them to the feedlot in Honolulu. They get fed at Hawai’i Meat Company, which was owned mostly by Parker Ranch. Excuse me. And then Hawaii Meat Company, which was like a subsidiary of Parker Ranch, would market them. And they were sold as carcasses. And so a super market would come and pick up halves and quarters or the whole thing. And the super market really only wanted the back half. They didn’t want the front half. They wanted the hind quarter rather than the fore quarter. Because the hind quarter’s got all of the steaks. And it had the value, really the value beef. And so as the meat industry changed, the Hawaii Meat Company was having a harder and harder time moving the fore quarters. Because that’s the chuck and hamburger and ribs and that sort of thing. So then what happened... so what they’d have to do, they’d have to discount it to move it. When you discount it that’s not good if you’re a seller. Great for a buyer, but it’s not good for a seller. And then what happened is they figured out ways to chill meat and ship it from the mainland to here. And so ... real quality was coming in so we had to match that quality here. Well then the mainland, they figured something else out. They went to boxed beef. And what they did is they’d break the fore quarter or the hind quarter into those portions of the carcass that the super markets or the restaurants really wanted. You think about what you buy if you’re going to eat beef at home. You know, what cuts are you going to buy? Very small portion of the animal. And so they’d ship a box of all of those cuts here. Now we’re competing against those boxes of cuts that people want. And we’ve got carcasses. Guess what, we have to discount. And so how do you beat that? Well, the other thing is that it’s cheaper to ship... take the cattle to the feed than the feed to the cattle. And an interesting phenomena.

LW: Is that ‘cause they’re lighter?



CC: Seven or eight pounds of feed per one pound of gain. Live weight gain. One pound of live weight gain ends up to being a half a pound of what you eat. Because of the bones and hide and all of that. So I've got to ship... in order to give you a boneless steak I've got to ship sixteen pounds of grain here.

LW: And your cow...

CC: I got to ship it. Okay.

LW: Oh. For one...

CC: And for the half pound of meat that you eat. So after a while you run the math on that, it's cheaper to ship the animal and feed them where the feed is cheap. And it's easy to figure that one out because in California, which used to have a huge cattle feeding business, there were very few places in California ten years ago that were still feeding cattle. Very few. And they only did because they had unique circumstances. And so if the Californians... what did they do with their cattle? They shipped the cattle back to the mid-West. And you always hear about corn fed mid-West steaks, right?

LW: Well they were really grown... they were born in California.

CC: That's where the corn is. And I mean the Great Plains... the Corn Belt. The feed belt.

LW: I grew up in the Great Plains.

CC: You know you basically have cattle where the feed is raised. So you ship to feed... I mean the cattle to the feed. So what did we have to do here? We had to start shipping our cattle there. And I forget what year it was. We did that at Hu'ehu'e. But I think it was around 1980. I made a deal with a rancher on the mainland. And we'd wean our calves and we'd put them on a plane and send them all and we'd grow them out there. And then we'd sell them. We'd sell them at the end of the growing season. We'd sell them then.

LW: And we've watched them load the Coral Line.

CC: Yeah, Coral Line.

LW: Coral Line.

CC: Oh, it's a neat deal. That's a neat deal. And here again, one of the neat things that Parker Ranch did is they leased those ships because they had so many cattle. I mean how do you take cattle from here to the mainland? There's not enough planes to do it for Parker Ranch. And in the old days you shipped them by boat. And they were in pens on the deck. Matson went from pens on the deck to being roll on, roll off. So then if you're going to put cattle on the boat, you've got to put them in a trailer. Roll on, roll off. And so these cattle are on the boat for five or six days. In a livestock trailer with feed and water in the trailers. Well that worked. And then Matson went away from away "ro ro" ships to containerization. So now you've got to put them in a container. It works but it's not a very pretty picture. It may not be the most humane way to ship cattle. So okay, go lease a livestock ship. That's easier said than done. They're all over the world. Except that they have to be Jones Act qualified. Jones Act is American built, owned and crewed. There are no Jones Act qualified cattle ships. So therefore, the cattle have to go to Canada. They've got to go to a foreign port. They can go to Mexico or they can go to Canada. But what happened was once they got there, they couldn't come back into America. 'Cause the Jones Act basically means that you can't circumvent it unless your product changes form. And the Customs Service determined that a change of form was when they were harvested, which is the politically correct way of saying what you do when you slaughter them. You know harvest it. And then they'd come back as meat. So you can bring them across the border as meat, but you can't bring them back live. So when I went to Parker Ranch, I was young and dumb and I looked at that and I said no, no, no. This isn't right. We can get around it. And we did. But it took us a long time to get around it. And what we did is we set up a strategic plan on how we wanted to get somewhere. What we wanted to do. And back then they had the Jones Act Reform Coalition. JARC. Which was basically fighting the Jones Act guys which was Matson and this was 1994. And so we're fighting Matson and the Customs Service and that's a real winning proposition, yuh? (Laughter.) Guaranteed we're going to win that one. And so it was classic. So I remember I went up there and I knew the Senator quite well because I'd been involved in some things with him. And so I went to Washington and I met with the National Cattlemen's Association and they were part of the big fight. So I was getting indoctrinated and I also had an appointment with Matson's guy in Washington. And his name was Phil Grill and I met with him at the National Cattlemen's office and he grilled me. And I thought about that and I said you know, this is easier said than done. Went to Senator Inouye's office. I walked in and thought this is really more of a courtesy call. So I go ahead and sit down with the Senator and talked about some of the things we'd done before and he asked how he could help me and I just thanked him for all he did for our state and for our industry and it was a real learning experience. Came back, took a look at our strategic plan and how we were going to do this. Amended it a little bit. And figured out that what we had to do was we had to work with the Senator's staff. We had to build people within the Senator's staff who agreed with us. Because it would be easier for him to begin to see our way if the people who do the research for him and also know how the other congressmen feel and so we befriended some of these folks and these guys were already really supportive. But we started getting away from the reform coalition to what we really needed. We framed it as kind of a simple message. We're Americans. We just want to deal with our country. That's all we want to do. And that...

LW: That's pretty straight forward.

CC: That's pretty straight. And we were careful. We talked about it in a humane way. But we were careful not to push the envelope on the humane thing. So we didn't want to go prove that it wasn't right to put cattle in containers. And that wouldn't have been good because you know the small ranchers really depended on that. And so we had to be real careful. And then every now and then you really have luck. And I was on a trail ride on the mainland. And I was sitting down with a friend of mine, Ernie Hueter who's a lobbyist in Washington.

And he said hey listen... if you guys want to reform this, if you're going to do business in Washington you got to do it how they do it. That means you got to get a lobbyist and an attorney. When in Rome, do as the Romans do. And so he asked when are you coming next? And I say when can I come? And he said I tell you what, give me a month, two months. I'll put together a list of law firms who do business in the maritime field, who might be able to help you. And so I called Pono and I said Pono, how about this? Can you help? You know, do you want to come on this voyage also? And he said sure. And I don't know how well you guys know Pono, but Pono is a treasure, you know. I mean he is one of the best ranchers in the State of Hawai'i going away.

LW: Oh, we've talked to him a number of times. He's quite amazing.

CC: Oh yeah, he is. He's quite amazing. And so we had appointments with eight law firms and two lobby shops. The Cassidy firm and who was the other one? The Cassidy... you know we went to see them because Henry Giugni was then at Cassidy. And he had been Sergeant at Arms and the Senator's right hand. And they only wanted about half a million dollars in fees! And so anyway, we interviewed in three days... eight firms... eight law firms... two lobby shops... got to know K. Street and L Street very well. We were burned out and then my friend Ernie called us and he said there's another firm that heard about what you guys are doing. Before you leave I want you to go interview them. And Pono and I looked at each other and said oh, we just want to go home. And then we said what the hell, we're here. We delay a day and we went to this firm. Preston Gates. Bill Gates' father was one of the founders. Okay, Preston Gates, Rouvellas and Mead. Mannie Rouvellas used to be the Senator's right hand. He was the attorney for the Transportation Committee. So we go to Preston Gates. Come out of the elevator... who's about to enter the elevator but Phil Grill from Matson. Turns out he rents space from them.

LW: Oh boy.

CC: I'm thinking oh boy, this is dancing with the devil. But okay let's dance with the devil if we get what we need. And sat down with a guy name Rolf Marshall. A very fine attorney. His instructions basically were to figure out a way to make it work for us. Because the maritime industry didn't want us making trouble. And so we sat down with Rolf and it took us about six months, but we got the Customs Service to actually reverse themselves.

LW: Wow.

CC: Now that's unusual. There's always that that thing, don't ever ask a question if you're going to get an answer you don't want to hear. You know, delay the question. Don't ask. Don't put yourself in a corner. And the cattle industry had done that because the industry had just written letters to the Customs Service... can I do this? It's so easy to say no when you say it that way. It's harder to say no face to face. And so we got them to reverse themselves. And it was really kind of neat. But it was a great lesson. Because it's got to change form. Your product has to change form. And so it was really simple. All we said was okay, what are the various forms of cattle? Well, we had what we thought were forms. And so we went back to National

Cattlemen and asked them for definitions of official forms of cattle. It's hard to believe but there were no official forms, if you will. And so we got a book from Colorado State that described cows having calves, calves becoming weaners, weaners becoming stockers, stockers becoming feeders. Hey, here's all our forms. So in other words, if we ship them as a calf, when they get to Canada, then he becomes a stocker...

LW: It's a different form.

CC: It's a different form. And Rolf told us stories about how to move lumber on foreign vessels. What they do is the lumber would come out of the Great Lakes. It would come out of Michigan, be a two by four. They'd drill a hole in the end of it. Okay. The name of that is different.

LW: Now it's a two by four with a hole.

CC: It has a different name. That simple. And so all we did was we got the Customs Service to agree that these were a change of form. Now they never would have agreed unless they felt they had congressional support. We were fortunate that Senator Inouye took an active interest. Another one I went to Walter Dodds. Walter Dodds was on the board of A & B. He was also my banker. I sat down with Walter. I said Walter, I need your help. This is what we're trying to do. He immediately put on his A & B hat because A & B owns Matson. And I told him, no, no, no, Walter. I'm talking to you as my banker. You know our business is struggling. A lot of your clients are struggling. You've got to help us here. And so he asked "you ever sit down with Brad Mulholland?" The President of Matson. No. He said would you be willing to do so? You tell me when. I'm there. When are you going to be on the mainland next? I said I'm going to be meeting with the Senator two weeks from now, in Washington. He said do you have time to stop off in San Francisco? Absolutely. What do you want? So I went to Washington, sat down with Senator Inouye. And thanked him for everything he'd done and told him that Matson was cooperating with us. I mean we were really happy and I was going to meet with Mulholland next week. Perfect. He said you know, that's the way we need to do it. I'm really glad you guys are getting this done. We went to see Brad Mulholland. We had a real nice lunch.

LW: Okay.

CC: And I've told everybody I know. And he said if you guys want to go to Canada we won't get in your way. So I came back and we had a cattlemen's meeting. I told all the cowboys about okay, we're finally there. We're going to get there. And of course, they all wanted to go fight, right? You know what guys, this has nothing to do with that. It has to do with getting our product to Canada and bringing them across the border. We're not going to beat the maritime industry. We have to work with them. They are not the enemy. And we need them. So that's not the issue. The issue is we can get these cattle across the border. So the Senator was willing to, when queried by people at the Customs Service... and with staff members from his office meeting with the Customs Service people, they knew that he would like to see this happen. It happened. Then we went a little while later and we did the same thing about going to Mexico. We never did go to Mexico but we did get that changed, too. And those really were landmark decisions for the industry as a whole. It was huge. Because that meant that Parker Ranch and Pono Holo and Kahua could continue to move thousands

and thousands and thousands of head, by livestock vessel, and not have to compete with all of the small ranchers statewide for container space.

LW: So who used the Coral Line? Who uses it? Parker and Kahua and Pono Holo...?

CC: And Pono Holo. And every now and then we'll get some other ranchers to put some cattle on. And the biggest issue then, was nobody ever wants to help the big guy. So what we wanted was to get as many people as we could. And so we had some homesteaders early on as part of the deal. But we got them to reverse themselves. And you know Pono, he was great. I mean one of the most fun guys ever to go work with. And then it's hard to find a more delightful human being. He didn't go to Cal Poly, though. (Laughter.) Which is okay.

LW: Where did he go?

CC: I think he went to the University of Vermont and then got a graduate degree from UH, I think.

LW: Is he younger than you?

CC: Yeah, Pono is three or four years younger than me.

LW: So is he an inductee?

CC: Not yet.

LW: Not yet.

CC: He will be.

LW: Eventually...

CC: You know I think sixty is kind of the magic number. Not that actually there is. I mean Pono will be an inductee and he certainly should be.

LW: Okay so let's go back and look what makes a super cattleman.

CC: Well I think a super cattleman then is one who's a good steward of his land and who is willing to move with the market as the market changes.

LW: Now what if I asked that differently? What make a super Hawai'i cattleman?

CC: Same.

LW: Same, same.

CC: Same answer. You got to adjust your practices to what you're trying to accomplish. So you got to know what you're trying to accomplish.

LW: Right.

CC: What are you trying to do? Are you trying to make money or are you trying to breed cattle a certain color. They're two different questions. If the answer is you're trying to make money, but then you got to say okay now in what ways am I going to make money. And I think we all have to be responsible. So everything about ranchers, most ranchers are really environmentalists. I mean that's why they're out there.

LW: That's kind of an interesting answer. Most people wouldn't suspect that one.

CC: Well if you think about it, if you think about it, they're generally strong willed individuals who want to do it their way. But if you're out in the pasture every day, don't you want it to look nice? I mean do you want to see a stream that's polluted or one you can fish in?

LW: Well, Gordon Cran, when I asked him what I thought the history of ranch land would be into the future, and he said well Americans are becoming technogeeks and they just want a beautiful place to live. They can live anywhere because they can do their business on line and they can move their money on line and anything's possible no matter where you are so why not be in Hawai'i in a kind of a semi-cleared area that the cattle have grazed off. It's a beautiful place to live and it's that way because it's a ranch.

CC: Yeah...

LW: That was his answer.

CC: Yeah and it's bucolic, right? I mean how do you beat that? I mean it's tough. It's tough to beat. And so I think you have to know about taking care of your land first. And if you take care of your land first, it will take care of you through the products you raise on it. Whether they're cattle or horses or sheep or whatever. And so you got to start with the land. And we've learned a lot on the way through. We've all made mistakes. But, you know the Savory Grazing Method, I mean if you think about it, people refer to it as the cell system. When you talk about Savory which is a cell system, it has absolutely nothing to do with the Savory Grazing Method. A system means systematic. A method is flexible. I mean it can evolve. But a system, you set it up and you do it by rote. Easy to do. So if I didn't know how to think, I'd need a system. If I know how to think, a system's not good. You know. A system is let's see, I'm going to breed Hereford cows to Angus bulls or when the cow gets to be a certain age, I'm going to send it to market. And so every year when we wean the calves, we look at all the brands on the cows. Okay, all of the ones that are that age this year, they're gone. We don't want to breed them any more. That's the system. A method, you know the cows... you know whether they've had calves every year or not. You know the quality of their calves. And so this one may be ten years old, but she's better than that one, who's seven, who has a small calf. So I'm going to get rid of the one who's seven rather than the ten year old.

LW: The older, more reliable...

CC: And so the Savory Grazing Method really. Allan Savory was from Rhodesia. He was a Member of Parliament. At Rhodesia.

LW: Zimbabwe now.

CC: They're Zimbabwe now. Zimbabwe. Rhodesia used to be not necessarily a world power but it was a major exporting country. One of the wealthiest countries on earth. It's not any more. Which is unfortunate for the people who live there. And if you follow Zimbabwe, it's tragic what's happening. There's a great book about Zimbabwe. I read it about a year ago. "When a Crocodile Eats the Sun." Great title. Great title. Of course the crocodile is Mugabe and you know, he took the sun away. But the thing about Allan Savory, what he did is he was a very observant, brilliant man. Very observant man. And he watched the major herds of migratory animals and he saw how they constantly moved to fresh feed. "They didn't go into the refrigerator and take leftovers, they cooked fresh food." And then he noticed what happened behind them. And he saw the impact. And the impact of high stocking densities. He saw that impact. And then what he did is he related that to the Great Plains. Where you come from. Where there were these herds of millions and millions and millions of buffalo. And they were constantly on the move. Or the caribou. Constantly on the move. And so the greatest grasslands in the world are because of these big herds. Whether it's in America or Africa... wherever. And so he said we as ranchers can't run our livestock that way. But we can create that. And we can create that by fencing and we can control their migration with fencing. And stocking density if you have a

lot of cloven hoofed animals, they break down the soil. If you have soil that's exposed without any stocking density and it rains on it, it kind of caps. And you'll see that here on a beach after it rains, it's kind of a little...

LW: A little crust...

CC: A little crust. Same thing happens with soil. When it rains on crusted soil, water runs off. When water runs off, you get erosion. But if the cattle break the crust, it absorbs the water. So...

LW: And they fertilize it as they go.

CC: And they fertilize it and move their manure around. And so that's when he came up with the idea of creating all of these multiple paddocks, to create that same effect. Time controlled grazing. You control the time they're in, and you also control the time they're out. And that, you know, Pono follows that religiously. Better than anybody else. Others try, but Pono is a believer and the guys who work with him are believers. And the cattle business like any business here, it's a people business. It all relates to the people you work with. And if they get it and they know why they're doing something and they want to do it, then it's wonderful. But if they lack any of those traits, you fail. And so it's easier to run them extensively, big pastures, move them very infrequently. It's easier to do that because there are fewer chances for a wreck, than if you go high density or a real high intensity stocking. When you go high intensity stocking, there's a high chance for a wreck, because if you're moving the cattle daily or every other day, again the minute they go in. every hour after that, the quality of their forage goes down. And it goes down rapidly. At a real high stocking density. So it takes a lot of management and a lot of thought.

LW: And mostly we don't think of ranchers as being conservationists or environmentalists. But yeah, they have to be. I mean in order to be a good businessman you have to care for the pasture and you have to make it kind of systematic.

CC: You got to take care of what it takes.

LW: Sustainable.

CC: Sustainable. Not systematic, sustainable.

LW: Well, systematic, too, and sustainable.



CC: You got to take care of what takes care of you.

LW: Yeah. Yeah, and it's certainly an outdoor... big tracts of land. Yeah, all that. I've always thought of ranchers as sort of stewards, you know. Because they can't do it without the land.

CC: In the old days the buzz word was grass farming, so to speak. They're harvesting sunlight.

LW: Yeah, I don't make beef, I harvest sunlight. I steward grass... I...

CC: Very romantic, isn't it. Just perfect. How do you put a picture of that up on the wall? (Laughter.)

LW: For some people. You need to give them that. If you give them an alternative, sort of, it says the same thing but if they have something nice...

CC: Yeah.

LW: Well do you feel that there's anything coming up out of you that you'd like to make sure gets in your record here? Your book?

CC: Gosh, I don't know. We've been rambling along here.

LW: No, no, we were instructed to make sure that we focused on cattle issues rather than all the side things that go along with ranching and being a person involved with ranches. So this is it. All stockmanship and those issues are what you've been talking about. Very definitely.

CC: I'm sure as soon as you drive away I'll think of everything I should have said but...

LW: Listen, take notes because, we'll transcribe it, you will get a copy to read. And we can always add. So certainly we could do that. Very easy to do that. Even if you have your own little recorder and you drive long distance and think... I was thinking in the car... record some thoughts and...

CC: Yeah, that's the easiest place to think.

LW: Give them to us and we'll add them.

CC: Well one of the other things that I don't think we talked about is in the ranching business you have an opportunity to work with some really wonderful people. You know, meet and work with good people and then meet people. And I mean that's really pretty special. I mean I worked with Willie Gomes and Thomas Lindsey and Karin Haleamau and Clifford Medeiros and Bob Manuel here at Hu'ehu'e. And down at Ka'u, Johnny Pieper and Leighton Beck. Two guys off the top of my head, who were very, very special. And you know I run into a lot of people like that and they do have a major impact on your life.

LW: What made them special, then?

CC: Generally those folks were guys who could do just about anything. I mean that's one thing about ranchers, you've got to be resourceful. And now you just go down to the store and buy it. If you have the money. In the old days, you made it. And I remember Johnny Peeper, when I went to Ka'u, each of the cowboys down there had eight horses. And they'd keep four in and four out. And work cattle every day, five days a week. Dark to dark. And so anyway when I went down there, I had to get a string of horses. So somebody had to give up horses. You never give up your good ones. You never give up your good ones. And... Johnny Pieper was the foreman and he gave up a couple of good ones. I mean...

LW: Cool, just to get you started.

CC: To get me started. And I remember this one horse, her name was Tokyo Rose. She was a big Appaloosa. They had Appaloosas down there. And she was a great horse. But she wasn't as finely trained as some of the horses I'd had. She was trained for the mountains down there. And so one day we were riding along and going to go move cattle and there was this Johnny Bob Pestano, who lived in Pahala, up at where Gordon Cran is. That was Kapapala. Johnny Bob lived up there. He was originally from Hilo. And I said something about the horse. She had a hard mouth or something like that. Something pretty stupid. And he said hey, if you no like him give him to me. And I thought about that for a while and learned a little more humility and learned to be a little more observant and a lot of lessons in life like that.

LW: I thought it said that you learned how to do the saddle making... and ropes...

CC: Yeah, I did some saddle making. And that was with Joe Manini on Kaua'i. When I was at Olokele Sugar Plantation. And Joe's in the Paniolo Hall of Fame. A friend of mine from O'ahu, who I used to rodeo with was very close with Joe and so, he told me hey, go see Joe. And this was Shima Kapahu and I think Shima's in the Paniolo Hall of Fame. But we spent time in Shima's saddle house and then when I went to Kaua'i we spent a lot of time in Joe's saddle house. And he taught me a lot about leather craft and that sort of

thing and so when we came over here I made my saddles. Saddles and bridles and here again it was easier to make it than to buy it, right. I had no money so you buy a hide and buy a tree and away you go.

LW: That's the one thing I always admire about cowboys and ranchers is they get the job done. Whatever it is.

CC: Yeah. You've got to be resourceful. You've got to be resourceful.

LW: Riding up off Mana Road, a family I know run cattle up there. A couple of the boys rode off and they came back, they had a pig. A wild pig.

CC: Yeah, they roped the pig.

LW: They roped the pig, slit it's throat and later on I got smoked meat.

CC: They live off the land.

LW: And they don't need guns, they don't all the fancy stuff.

CC: Yeah, and it's also fun. (Laughter.) It's also fun. I mean you go chase and rope. And we'd rope goats and pigs and sheep and donkeys, you know.

LW: Did you have to deal with wild cattle much?

CC: Oh yeah, here. When I came to Kona, they were about to build the airport. And they had created the road to the airport and then they just started building the airport. And Hu'ehu'e had the lease, had fee land down maka'i here and had leased State land. Really from Honokohou and Ka'upulehu. And so the Western boundary was the ocean and the Southern boundary was the lava flow there in Kealakehe where the police station is. And the North boundary was the lava flow up there. 1801 lava flow at Ka'upulehu. And then there were some stone walls and everything back here. And so there were a lot of wild cattle down maka'i. And so we had to go get rid of them. And they were trying to get rid of them and they had been trying to trap them. And so they had a trap down here at Kaloko right above Costco. About a mile above where Costco is now. And another trap down below Hu'ehu'e called Pa John. And these were just stone corrals that went back a hundred years or so on the ranch. And they had water there and they set the trap gate and then tried to trap the wild cattle but a lot of the wild cattle would just go down to the ocean and drink out of the anchialine ponds.

And so what happened was we had to get rid of them. And we had no idea how many there were. And so what we did is we got together with Palani Ranch, Robert Greenwell and his crew, picked up our gang and we had a cattle drive and we unloaded the horses there by Kaloko Pond, rode down to Kaloko Pond and we had this drive and I wish I'd taken a movie camera or even a still camera. You know, it was just all in a day's work, right. When I look back it's unfortunate that we weren't able to record it.

LW: Yeah. Was there really more than you expected?

CC: Oh, hundreds. We had no idea. But they weren't big cattle. Not like the wild cattle in the mountains. Because here again, they're living down in the desert. You know Hawaiians call that area Kekahawaiole, you know. Dry land without water. And they were living on fountain grass and some pili grass and kiawe and whatever. And so they had huge feet, they were small, big heads, no hind end. They kind of looked like dairy cattle crosses. And so we drove them and as we were driving them, we got some of them to the trap pen but a lot of them ran away. So we had another big drive and we had about... I don't know... maybe ten of us. And we'd follow them in paho'eho'e areas. And same thing. We got a few more but most of them ran away. What we realized is like everything else, they're territorial. So what they would do, the ones living by the ocean would only go so far away from the ocean, then they'd turn around and go home. Didn't matter if you were on horseback. They'd just turn around and go home. And so what we figured out was the limit of how far they would go. And there was a finger of lava on one side, and another finger of lava on the other side. So we put a fence across it. And we put gates on the trail, so left the gates open and so they were used to going back and forth and then we had a drive. And they all just walked like troopers, right through the gates. We shut the gates after they went through. And this is what would have been good to have film because... and it was sad... because they'd turn around and try to go home and here these gates were closed. And they didn't know what a fence was, and they didn't know what a gate was. And rather than run and try to hit it, they'd just come and push it with their head. You know, we were far enough away that we're not chasing them. They're not spooked. Or they'd walk along the fence and try to push their way through the fence and they didn't know what it was. And so we just... we couldn't drive them from there. We just roped them and we had an old boom truck and we'd rope them and tie their feet and then pick them up and put them in the cattle truck with the boom. And then it got to the point where the remaining outlaws we'd follow them and when they came to the road they were building, we would rope them. Because down in that hot country if you'd rope them and try to lead them some place they'd die. So we'd rope them and we'd hobble them and then we'd try to catch another one before it got too far away from the road. And then we could lead them to the road, put them on a truck. Get them out of there... and in the end what we did. We had an old caterpillar tractor. An old war surplus D-8. And Clifford Medeiros, what he'd do is we'd follow the cattle and we'd rope them and tie them up and then he'd go in with the D-8, and then we'd tie them on to the blade. (Laughter.) He'd haul them out. And I still remember the number. The first year we had ten thousand seven hundred and seventy six dollars worth of cattle that came out of there. And in today's numbers that's not a big number. But back then where live cattle prices were like fifteen cents a pound and these... they all just went to the slaughter when Kona Meat was still in existence. So what we'd do is we worked down there four days a week. And we couldn't take cattle to the butcher on Fridays. So every Friday we'd re-shoe the horses. And we used one horse on Monday and Wednesday and another horse Tuesdays and Thursdays and then we had to put new shoes on Friday. Or if the shoes that were on were worn down but still good, we'd put them back on with new nails. Then we'd re-shoe them and we also had tried to bring some cattle up and put them in a... we had a big holding pen called Pa Kune, which is just a big branding corral. Tried to put them in Pa Kune. Every one of the bulls we put in there died. They just laid down and died. The cows generally were okay. The bulls all died. They just... and it's not that they got roughed up or beaten up or anything...

LW: How long were they in there?

CC: Just born to be free. They'd just lie down when they got up there and they wouldn't go anywhere, they just died.

LW: Just in days time or how long were they...

CC: Three or four days.

LW: Yeah? Gee...

CC: Yeah. We tried to load them up and take them to the market. They wouldn't go. Maybe we got a few but most of them died. I shouldn't say every one but most of them died. That was interesting times. We had wild cattle up here. And we had them at Hu'ehu'e also. And I'll tell you a fun story about Willie Gomes. Here again, talk about people. Willie... you know Willie was a very special guy. Very smart, very resourceful, very tough. And we had a trap pen. And it was set up. And it was one of those good lessons. It was set up so that the cattle entered the trap pen by walking up this stone thing, which was also the loading chute. And in those days, rather than have a narrow one animal wide type of loading chute, what they did is they'd have these big wide ones, the width of the truck. And they'd open the gates of the truck. Double gates would open up like that. Which was kind of a spooky thing, 'cause then you've got to shut the gates. And so we had this trap gate set up on this thing and four or five head went into it. And there was this one big bull. I mean he was one of those guys that you had to be worried about. And so we had our horses in the truck and backed up and this trap pen was big. It was probably five acres. I mean it was a big, big place. But again it was set up so that the animals came in through the loading chute so when they leave, they're going to leave through the loading chute. Just happened to be a truck parked there that time. And so we'd go in on our horses. And we didn't even need to take the horses. Was kind of foolish to have done so. We go in with our horses, and all of a sudden they charge. And they just go straight down to the truck. They wanted to get out of Dodge. And they don't expect the truck to be there. And Willie was right behind them as fast as he could be, jumped off his horse, grabbed the gates and shut the gates. And everybody else was sitting there with white knuckle disease on their pommel, right. (Laughter.) You know Willie just calmly shut the gate, put the pipe through and "Okay, let's go." I mean Johnny Pieper was that way. Leighton Beck was that way. Not a lot of cowboys are as good as they were, not too many were like that. Every ranch has some and had some. You know, fun times. And even this house, made out of redwood water tanks. Tanks that fell down and so all of the exterior walls and a bunch of the veneer. Made out of redwood water tanks. The floors are koa. Just logs that had fallen down. And we didn't cut down any trees. And so it's all kind of recycled and it's what I could afford at the time. Love to rip this floor up and sell it. (Laughs.) I mean koa is not good flooring but it's worked well for us.

LW: It's beautiful. Yeah okay, so this is redwood.

CC: Yeah. Even these windows. It's all just tank lumber. The doors other than that one. I got to make a door for that. That's an add on. I got to make a door for that.

LW: Some of these mugs resemble...

CC: It's a guy in Volcano.

LW: Oh, all three of them?

CC: We have a bunch. I like what the guy does.

LW: Japanese call it shibui. It's not like a bright artificial color. They're all earth tones.

CC: Right, earth tones. Yeah. My wife's involved with the Holualoa Foundation of Arts and Culture. And they have a very good pottery program over there.

LW: They're becoming more and more active.

CC: Yeah, they're real active. They do a good job. It's a good organization.

LW: Didn't they have a theatre that they...

CC: No. That's different.

LW: That's Kainaliu.

CC: But this was really Hiroki Morinoue. Who is an internationally renowned artist. And his wife... gosh, all of a sudden I forget her name... and their daughter. They do very good work. And they've gathered a lot of artists around there and then they built the Foundation. And they have the old donkey mill. The old coffee mill. It's actually at Keauhou rather than in Holualoa but many of them have studios there in Holualoa.

LW: So how is Willie Gomes connected now?

CC: He was a foreman here at Hu'ehu'e.

LW: But I mean how was he connected? The Gomes family is so extensive I shouldn't be asking...

CC: Oh, there's a lot of Gomeses. Willie's originally from Pa'auilo.

TAPE ENDS +