

# DONALD GEORGE “DONNIE” DESILVA

## PARKER RANCH, HAWAI’I



DONNIE DESILVA WAS BORN AND RAISED IN THE HāmākUA DISTRICT ON THE BIG ISLAND OF HAWAI’I. DONNIE’S FAMILY WAS WELL KNOWN IN THE CATTLE INDUSTRY AND HIS AFFINITY FOR THE FAMED PARKER RANCH BEGAN AT A YOUNG AGE AS HE AND HIS FAMILY WOULD SPEND WEEKENDS VISITING THEIR FRIENDS WHO LIVED AND WORKED AT THE RANCH.

BY THE TIME DONNIE GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL IN 1958, IT WAS CLEAR THAT HIS CAREER PATH WOULD LEAD TO PARKER RANCH. JUST A MONTH AFTER GRADUATION, DONNIE WAS HIRED ON AS A RANCH HAND AT THE OLD DAIRY AT PALIHO’OŪKAPAPA UNDER THE MENTORSHIP OF FAMILY FRIENDS—THE NAKATA BROTHERS.

SIX YEARS INTO HIS CAREER AT PARKER RANCH, DONNIE DECIDED TO LEAVE AND TRY HIS HAND AT THE THRIVING HOTEL/GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND THEN ON TO CONDITIONING HORSES AT CALIFORNIA RACETRACKS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF SOME OF THE BEST TRAINERS IN THE INDUSTRY.

HOWEVER, THE LURE OF PARKER RANCH WAS VERY STRONG AND IN LESS THAN A YEAR, DONNIE WAS OFFERED A PRIZE POSITION ON THE PARKER RANCH COWBOY GANG. THE WORK WAS HARD BUT DONNIE WAS A GOOD STUDENT AND LEARNED EVEN MORE ABOUT ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND ALL PHASES OF RANCH WORK UNDER FINE TEACHERS LIKE YUTAKA KIMURA AND HIS SON, CHARLIE. DONNIE IS CREDITED WITH MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RANCH IN THE AREAS OF HORSE IDENTIFICATION, STRING ACCOUNTABILITY, EQUINE HEALTH, BREEDING, NUTRITION AND REPRODUCTION. A GOOD AND FAIR LEADER FOR THE YOUNG ROUGHNECKS OF THE BREAKING PEN, HE TAUGHT MANY YOUNG MEN WHO HAVE SINCE GONE ON TO BECOME LEADERS IN THE RANCHING INDUSTRY.

NEVER ONE TO SIT IDLE, DONNIE ALSO QUICKLY BECAME RECOGNIZED FOR NOT ONLY HIS SKILLED HORSEMANSHIP, BUT ALSO HIS BEAUTIFUL ARTISTRY IN SPUR MAKING AND LEATHERWORK. AT THE 2009 PANIOLO ARTISANS SHOWCASE, HE WAS NAMED A MASTER SADDLER, AND CONTINUES THIS TRADITION BY PASSING HIS SKILLS ON TO HIS SONS, GRANDSONS, AND MANY OTHERS.

OF ALL HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN HIS 37 YEARS AT PARKER RANCH, HE IS BEST KNOWN AS THE FOREMAN OF THE FAMED "ROUGHRIDERS" OF PARKER RANCH. SKILLED HORSEMAN THAT HE WAS, DONNIE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORSE DEPARTMENT FOR 20 PLUS YEARS. DONNIE AND HIS STAFF HANDLED THE YOUNG FOALS AND GREEN BROKE THE TWO AND THREE YEAR OLDS BEFORE TURNING THEM OVER TO THE COWBOYS FOR THE FINAL STAGE OF TRAINING. BECAUSE OF THE SKILLS OF PEOPLE LIKE DONNIE DESILVA, PARKER RANCH IS STILL KNOWN TODAY FOR THE EXCELLENT QUALITY OF ITS HORSES.

DONNIE RESIDES IN HĀMĀKUA WITH HIS WIFE PAULA, AND ENJOYS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS THREE CHILDREN AND EIGHT GRANDCHILDREN. HE IS A FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF THE PANIOLO PRESERVATION SOCIETY FORMED IN 1998, AND CONTINUES HIS SADDLE MAKING.



## Oral Interview

### **Donnie DeSilva Paniolo Hall of Fame 2011**

LW: I was reading your bio this morning... and it does talk about your family as being well known in the cattle industry.

DD: My grandpa... on both sides did... had a little bit of cattle. But I wouldn't consider them... cowboys. My grandpa from my mother's side... did a lot of cowboy work. In his younger years. But he was also a policeman and...

LW: Now what's his name?

DD: Alfred Branco.

LW: Okay.

DD: And... he did horse... horse work on the race track with race horses and... that was his thing. And his family raised a lot of cattle. And he and his brother were partners at one time and then the partnership... I guess dissolved. And on my dad's side, my grandparents were... my grandpa was an immigrant from Portugal. And he came here and... I guess in the old days, everybody raised a cow. And he was known to be a land buyer. He had a lot of kids and what he did he bought land and put it in his kids' names and things like that. As time went on, being the daughters outnumbered the boys, the daughters owned most of the land. And they moved to O'ahu in the '40's. '30's and '50's... to be with their husbands for... went with their husbands for work. And they... in return, they started selling off their land to their... one of their older sisters. Which became... she was a... a businesswoman. In those days, hotel and restaurant and...

LW: Here in Honoka'a?

DD: Yes... the Andrade family.

LW: Oh, she married into the Andrade family?

DD: Yeah... and they own land and they acquired a lot of my grandfather's land. Or my grandfather's daughter's land. And being that she was the one that had the money, she bought the land and paid it off and the sisters went off with their fortunes in Honolulu.

LW: Yeah, yeah.

DD: So my parents, we never have... land to raise animals so my father was a worker. He worked for the plantation for a short time. He worked for his sister for a short time. And then he worked for the Board of Health. You know that time was territorial days. So he retired from the Board of Health but like you say... or I say that everybody owned a cow. And everybody knew how to ride a horse. So my father was a good horse person, too. And he never was a roping cowboy or anything but he knew how to handle himself on a horse, I think, so maybe that's why I got this horse in me, too. You know what I mean?

LW: Yeah. Well what did make you decide to be a cowboy?

DD: Well, when I finished high school... well all through high school I used to spend a lot of time on a ranch with my friends and... Paliho'oukapapa... it's a dairy.

LW: Which friends would those be?

DD: These Nakatas. Japanese guys. So I spend a lot of time with them, up on the ranch. Aside, I learned what they were doing. I learned how to do this and how to do that. While I was still in high school. Then I worked for one or two summers, at the ranch. And after high school, I was supposed to become a welder. I was supposed to go to trade school. You know those days was at HCC. It was like a trade school. So... being that I started to work on the ranch, I decided to stay. I retired thirty-seven years later. So... I learned about the dairy world, about the cattle... you know, like beef cattle. I learned about horses. And that's the thing that I really like to do. And I did... more time... in the horse world, than in the cow world, although I spent a lot of my younger years working cattle. And... I was a foreman in Kohala. I was a foreman at the breeding station at Makahalau.

LW: These were all for Parker?

DD: All for Parker. See I worked for them... I had a short time that I left and everything was oh my, got to work back at Parker.

LW: For Parker?

DD: Yeah.

LW: So there were two Nakata brothers?

DD: Actually there were three that worked for the ranch. One of them was still working yet, you know. Oh, four... four of them worked for the ranch. Two of them worked at the dairy and eventually they became... one of them worked at the breeding station, and the pure bred cattle, and then we all did cattle work together and stuff. So... they were all ranch people. In fact they were born and raised on the ranch. So... you know I got first hand knowledge of the place. Was all from that Nakata family.

LW: You just met them in school or...?

DD: Well, family friends, yuh. My parents... and you know... just meeting them and knowing them all my life.

LW: I want to ask you about Tadao Nakata. You were very young when you were around him.

DD: He was a mentor in a lot of ways.

LW: Tell me about him.

DD: See... Tadao was born and raised at Paliho'oukapapa. And his family ran the dairy for Parker Ranch. And he became my boss. When I started working for Parker Ranch he was my boss. And... we worked dairy cattle, fences, waterlines and whatever.

LW: So when you first started at Parker, he was your boss.

DD: Yes. As a kid, I was always around him. He would take me up the mountain and do this and teach me this, teach me that. So a lot of the things I know today, I learned from him.

LW: What kind of things would he teach you?

DD: How to work with livestock. Working around cattle and horse, how to be like a horseman instead or a cattleman instead of just a plain, old cowboy. And we did things the right way. And he also taught me some leather work, working with rawhide and teaching me how to hunt the right way. The whole thing.

LW: So what's the difference between a cowboy and cattleman.

DD: A cowboy works the cattle. A cattleman plans what he's going to do, why he's breeding this kind of cow, and what kind of calf he's going to get from that. Or in the dairy world, which cattle would be more productive for the area. The type of feed they had and stuff. That's being cattleman. The cowboy was out there roping and working the cattle. A cattleman would kind of manage the cattle.

LW: And he was always saying stuff about when you were a little boy?

DD: He was always telling me what to do and what not to do. Like had one milk cow. He wanted her to calm, so that when time to get the milk, milking her and stuff, the milk just flows. You don't want her excited and kicking and dumping over the milk containers and stuff, and just being nice to them while you around them. And they nice to you when you around them. Kind of do things to make them feel good. As far even trimming their feet and stuff. But it's the kind of things that he taught me. That's things that he learned from being around the animals from a little kid, too.

LW: So about how old do you think he was when you were around him?

DD: Well... he might have been in his mid-twenties and I was around him until he died. You know what I mean? The day he died I was at the hospital with him because he meant so much to me. But actually he and his family, they were real nice to me. He had other brothers that worked with me, too. And I would share my skills with his other brother that never had some of the skills that I had so... we were just one team.

LW: In Billy Bergin's book, he talks about the jobs you had when you were first hired at Parker Ranch. When you were under Tadao. And he talks about you inspecting the waterlines.

DD: In the ranching world, you can have all the grass in the world, but you need water. So your water is first priority. Monday Wednesday, Friday would be water day. I would go out in the morning, I would check a few tanks. I would come back, go back to the pump house, the guy that would pump the water and tell him what the condition of the tanks were. The heights of water in the tank and stuff. Then he would know where to pump first. Or if he had to pump water late to get caught up. Then in the afternoon we'd go out and check the far... the distant tanks. That way we would rides the lines, too. So if you see any water shooting or something is wrong... and you know where to go find them. So it was a real important part of me becoming

one cowboy. Learning what the first things that had to be done were. You not going get one calf if you don't breed the cow. Or you don't put the bulls out. You know what I mean? So all those kind of things was... after a while it was skills that I learned. You like your calves be born in certain time of the year. Well you breed a certain time of the year. All those things I kind of learned with the Nakata brothers because of Nakata... Tadao. From then after I kinda got "weaned" off him, I started doing work with other guys. The cowboy gang and other people with different skills, too.

LW: So you worked with him till about when:

DD: About maybe in the beginning about six years... and off and on for the rest of my life... for the rest of his life, let's put it that way.

LW: And then it's from the job with him that you take a little break?

DD: No, I worked at Makahalau for a while. And I took a break and I came back to being a cowboy.

LW: Who was in that second group of people that influenced you?

DD: You had guys like Alex Penovaroff, William Kaniho. William Kaniho was the boss in charge of breeding and Alex was our boss. And then after a while I was with Charlie Kimura... Charlie Stevens. That's in the breeding station... Makahalau breeding station. So it was kind of quite a few guys in between but... everybody kind of go in that same direction, yuh. Having me go in that... moving up towards being a cowboy... the work that we did.

LW: But you must have already known you liked to do that? Being out there, yuh?

DD: Oh, all my life... when I was a little boy I used to always like horses. I was about six years old and I stole my dad's... we had one family horse that I took and went out riding by myself and that was a no-no, you know what I mean. But...

LW: How old were you?

DD: About six, maybe.

LW: Oh, that's pretty young.

DD: And you know... it's something I can remember. And I've always loved horses. In those days when I started work on the ranch, a horse was only a tool. Cattle was the... you know, the thing that made the money. So everybody, the focus was on cattle. Horses was not... was secondary... cattle was number one. Then eventually I found out that you can also make money raising horses. Because the ranch raised horses for their work. And whatever they didn't want, then it was surplus. Then they sold. A lot of the plantations bought the surplus animals. For plowing and... pulling wagons and the foremen or lunas to ride and things like that so. So... you know horses were just tools, yuh. And then donkeys and mules and whatever they had. But I was always interested in horses.

LW: So do you consider yourself a cowboy or a horseman?

DD: Both. In order to be a good cowboy, you got to ride a good horse. Or have a good horse. To me, a horseman... wait now... let's say to be a cowboy you got to get a good horse. Or ride a good horse. And that was my thing. I used to like to train horses. Train good horses. And to be a cowboy, you got to understand the animal. It's not just ride, ride, ride. You got to learn how to care for what you have, you see. And care for your livestock, too. So it's kind of both ways.

LW: So hopefully you can tell me more about working with horses and all that you have to do, because obviously it's a big project to kind of do all that.

DD: Well, I can tell you about my cowboy years, too. Prior to doing horse work on the ranch.

LW: Okay. Yeah so you spent a lot of time with the Nakata boys and...

DD: Yeah. I was up at Paliho'oukapapa. That's where I started.

LW: And that was before you graduated high school?

DD: Well, one summer, I think. And then after high school, I had to go see Mr. Carter. Which was Hartwell at that time. So I could get employed by the ranch and... my employment was anything on the ranch. When I went to apply. But I mentioned Paliho'oukapapa. Because I knew the people, the people knew me and they really helped me get a job there. And I was real proud to be the only... other than Japanese ancestry, to get hired at Paliho'oukapapa. You know... they never hired Hawaiians or anybody else. They hired me as a Portuguese boy and I was just eighteen years old. Mr. Carter said I'll let you know in two or three days. In two or three days I got notice to come up to the office. Signed the papers and I went up to work the next day. So that... was something that I really appreciated and that's why maybe I became a devoted employee. They took good care of me. I got to take good care of them. And when then when the care went right through our whole life... our whole lifetime, right... because Paula is still employed by the ranch. I did thirty-seven years. I retired at '55. And you know... she... retired two times. And they always called her back in.

PD: Working on the third.

DD: Yeah so... you know we get a lot of aloha for the ranch. You know that's what made me a better person, you know. Doing... helping those who helped me. And while at the ranch, I worked in all sections. I was transferred to Kohala in the late '60's. Early '70's? Early '70's. To be a... from the cowboy gang... and then to Kohala. Some foreman training.

LW: So now when you say cowboy gang, so... I don't... I'm kind of a... dairy and a cowboy gang... what...?

DD: Okay. The dairy was like support facility, yuh. For the ranch. We raised all of their orphan calves... the ranch orphans. We bred the Holstein cattle for bull power which the ranch sold mostly to other dairies, and the cows went back into the... action line for milking cows and... and whatever they didn't want, like I said, we sold the surplus. A lot of the O'ahu dairies or through the whole island that was buying cows. Okay and... like I said, support facility, we would do all water... check water and repair fence... and my... the cowboy I did at the dairy, was gathering cows, matching the mother and the calves and...

LW: You mean taking the orphan calves and putting it with the mother?

DD: No. The orphan calves were... the cows that stayed at the dairy were nurse cows. The older cows were nurse cows. And also brood cows. We used that for the calves. The milk would be for take care the nurse... nurse the orphans. So... like everything done for purpose.

PD: What does mothering up mean?

DD: Well to... say if you get cow and calf... a bunch of a group of cow and calves running around, you would have to kind of be patient and watch when they would go and drink milk and the cow would kind of take this calf off to the side and you know like... and then we used to have the term mothering up, yuh. Matching calves with the cows.

PD: Matching the cow with her baby.

DD: And then when the dairy shut down, I went to the next support facility. Was Makahalau Station. And Makahalau Station is where they had the breeding... purebred breeding herd. Okay, at the station, I did... and that's for support... and whenever they needed the extra hand with the cowboys, they would send me. Or extra hand with the cowboys at the station... you know... get cattle... Work, brand and whatever. So that was my... my first year of four years of... well anyway... and then while at... the breeding station... as the ranch hand... or in the support group... I started to do more cattle work with the cowboy crew. The cowboy crew was just the group of men that did cattle work. They went all around the ranch.

LW: Wherever they needed... where cattle were.

DD: And to become one cowboy in those days, you had to be inducted to the gang. The management had to pick you to become a cowboy. You wasn't just I want to be a cowboy, you a cowboy. They just chose a certain few. Every five years or one of the old guys retired or got transferred out of the gang to do other work. They hire... I mean pick up one guy within the overall ranch. 1964... I think... I got into the cowboy gang. But knowing... the ranch, knowing me, and my ability, they asked me to stay at Makahalau to build my work string. That was my horse string.

LW: That was your horse string?

DD: Yeah. So I went to the breaking pen and I picked six young horses. And... I had to get these horses ready to go out to work before I went to the gang. Although I was being paid as a cowboy, I was doing Makahalau purebred cattle work and stuff. But I was riding my young horses. Be there you work in the station you get more time, see... with the horses. So I got my six horses ready. When they were ready, then they sent me back down to Waimea. Down in Waimea was my station. Down in Puhiale.

LW: Puhiale?

DD: Yeah. That's where they get the subdivision right now outside of Pukalani Stable. So, there's a big rock corral out there. That was our station. When I was with the cowboy gang. Then every day you do different sections of the ranch. And I stayed there about what? Maybe four, five years. Then I went to Kohala.

PD: Until 1970.

DD: Okay. Then I went to Kohala. And I stayed in Kohala about three years. In fact...



LW: Let's see... now wait... I'm just trying to get this. So... they're in Waimea when you were at this station. Were there other...? You were a little gang of cowboys there?

DD: Yeah, we were the cowboy... we were the... like the top cowhands of the ranch.

LW: Oh, okay. So the gang was located there?

DD: We... we handled...

PD: They go all over and...

LW: The gang was located there? The cowboy gang was located there.

DD: Yes. Our station was Puhiale.

LW: Did every cowboy when they joined the gang pick six horses?

DD: No. All depends see... like the person that left the gang... the guy I took his place, was an older cowboy and he had a lot of old horses. So the old horses was passed down to the stations for the old fence men to ride and some of them maybe was sold. I don't know. So I had to kind of upgrade my string. 'Cause everybody didn't... you know had a lot of people had enough to go but being that I was capable, my boss... or the manager at that time was Rally Greenwell... suggested that I pick a bunch of young horses, stay up at Makahalau, get them all going, and then go into the cowboy gang. 'Cause that way the horses could go to work already. You know? Instead of me riding these older horses...

LW: Yeah, that somebody else had developed. So how long does it take to get the... to have six horses going?

DD: Well, see at the breaking pen they would start them. Then you would kind of do... more or less what we call the finishing or... put the finer points... teach them the finer points and to where you could actually take them out and go work with them.

LW: Well that's what you were trying to do, get them to be a work horse.

DD: So... cow wise, yuh? Cow smart, yuh. And some horses would be easier, some would take longer. So within about maybe six, seven months, I get the horses going pretty well. Then I went to the cowboy gang. But before they're really finished, it took me about a year and a half. Some longer, yuh. The more time you put on them, the quicker it gets done, yuh. So... and then so we went. After being in the cowboy gang for a while, there's a big change on the ranch. Management change.

LW: What was that management change?

DD: That was... Rubel and Lent Associates... when I went to Kohala. There was a change at the station.

LW: Oh yeah... Kohala... that has a history... where somehow a lot of people... when the plantation closed they went into the hotels.

PD: And we moved there just as the plantation closed.

DD: Yeah... just as the plantation was going out... in fact just weeks before they went out we moved to Kohala. So... actually it was kind a sad time for the people over there. So I stayed... I worked in Kohala for a while and then...

LW: So up in Kohala you were a foreman, then?

DD: Foreman... and cowboy. Just working...

PD: He started as a foreman trainee. In Kohala.

DD: You know the foreman training... doing cattle... we did cattle work every day. Every day was cattle work. Work cattle, work cattle.

LW: That's some rich grazing land up there. You have a big herd up there or...?

DD: Yeah... I don't know now but we used to run about eight thousand head of cattle. That's Parker Ranch itself, yuh. That's one station or section. So we ran about eight thousand head of cattle and the breakdown was between market animals and breeding... the commercial breeding herd. So maybe we get about three thousand breeding cows. The rest was market animals which would come and go. Ship out so many, they send so many to... like banking. Take out some money, put back some money you know. I learned a lot working in Kohala, too. Working with the different kinds of weather. 'Cause Kohala is very windy and a wet place. Lot of our grazing was up in the back in Kehena. The forest up there where they get all their water from. So we had lot of cattle up in the back. Used to call it the forest.

LW: Sure. It's forest. I think we can call it forest.

DD: You know we had between the wet and the real dry because we had along Puakea Bay and... along the lower areas was real dry country so we had... dry, average, then lush.

LW: So way low down was dry?

DD: And above was wet, yuh. Wet. So...

LW: That's a challenge.

DD: You know that's... you know being a cowboy that's what you got to face, yuh. It's not only peaches and cream. It's not like in the movies, let me tell you. But I enjoyed every bit of it. Then from Kohala they sent me back to Makahalau, to take care Makahalau Station and the heifer herds. The replacement... heifer herds we call that. Up at... we called Kalopa. That's way up on the mountain.

LW: Wait now, what's a replacement heifer herd?

DD: It's heifers to be bred. 'Cause you know you keep them on the ranch for breeding purposes. When they are ready to be bred... breeding age... like in those years was about two year olds. So when they was about maybe twenty months old, we bring them all in. we select them. And each... oh, about two hundred would go here, three hundred would go there. And get them acclimated to the area where they going get bred, for all kind of reasons. The weather, the ground conditions, everything... and when it came to breed, it

was usually late February or early March, when they put the bulls in, they were ready to be living in that area. So... and live and calve in that area. So I went back to Makahalau doing that kind of work. Then as we changed and the manager noticed, from I guess, the grapevine, my ability to work with horses, and there was an opening at the breaking pen to be a foreman. So I got transferred from the Makahalau Foreman, back down to the breaking pen. That's where I kind of stayed until I retired. So I did a lot of cattle work. At the breaking pen, now. Lot of the work is seasonal. Like the foaling... and handling foals and the breaking... so in between those short periods of time, I would do cattle work, too. They sent me to Ka'u. I did lot of cattle work in Ka'u. We'd go to Humu'ula. And Keanakolu. But doing... being in charge the horse program, I would go out and do cattle work, too, so... I considered myself kind of universal. Not only... I never specialized in one thing. At the breaking pen, I gave a lot of my knowledge to all the young cowboys that came to work on the ranch. And I going tell you something that... it's not trying to praise myself or anything but... all the experiences I had on the ranch... like being in the cowboy gang, the horse department and everything, I learned from the *kupunas*. I never went to... only I went to high school. So I learned from the... what you call... the *kupunas*... the teachers. And I was very picky to know... to pick my *kupuna*. I never... if you told me something that I wanted something that I wanted to show up and... I would look around and who I'm going to ask to get this thing squared away. You know what I mean? And I kind of grasp a lot from the old timers.

LW: Do you want to name any of them?

DD: A lot of them... I can say the Nakata brothers. I learned a lot about them. About the area like Makahalau, Paliho'oukapapa. And... the Kimuras... from Charlie, Yutaka, a lot of them in the Cowboy Hall of Fame. And Yamaguchi's. My cowboy foreman was Lakalesa at that time and he was not a talkative person but if you would ask him for anything he would kind of come across with insight, yuh. He wasn't much of a teacher, but if you ask him, he tell you. And...

LW: I think that's... the old time way.

DD: Yeah, and he would keep a lot of that... to themselves, yuh. You know... George Purdy. I remember him telling me, he just was about ready to leave the breaking pen as the foreman. He was of age. I was one of the younger cowboys, during the handling season they would take me and some of the other cowboys. But I was the youngest of all of them. To go to the breaking pen and handle foals. And watching what he did and that and stuff. Taught me to do what I did when I became... when I had the ball in my hand. You know what I mean? And he told me one time... "Now boy... you have all the chance to do what you was taught right to do." And was by him I learned. But he never said what I taught you to do. But what you was taught right about doing. You know what I mean? So that's the kind of guys that I kind of looked up to. We had kind of people that supervised us and foremen and things. There were a lot of people that had real good qualities, and yet never shared unless you asked. And I was... I call myself *ni'ele* (curious)... I wasn't afraid to ask anybody... hey, why is this or why is that or how come this name or how come that name or... and he would take the time and tell me. And a lot of the things just stuck, you know. So... yeah... we had a lot of good people, very interesting people on the ranch. And in those days, I said to be a cowboy on the ranch, to get in the cowboy gang, either you had to be inducted, or you had to work at the breaking pen for years and years and years, until somebody would replace you. Then that guy from the breaking pen would go to the cowboy gang. Because they did so much cattle work and horse work. But if they couldn't find somebody to replace you, you stayed in that breaking pen for a long time. Yeah, so...

PD: The breaking pen was kind of like boot camp.

DD: Boot camp. For... you know...

PD: For the younger boys coming in. They had to go through the breaking pen to learn how to shoe a horse, how to do different things.

DD: That's another thing, too, that I get my handwriting on the wall in horse shoeing on the ranch. I taught a lot of boys... men... young men... how to shoe horses. How to... everybody knows how to ride a horse, but they don't know how to ride a horse correctly, too. Show them to do this on a horse, how they sit up on a horse... how to teach the horse this, how to teach the horse that... because I had people... and the ranch sent me to seminars. Actually, learn other people's ways. So what I would do, if you had ten good ways, and I could pick out two, to add to my collection of good ways. That's what I did. Because I cannot learn everything that you know how to do. Everybody get different ways, that's all. So... I always had an open mind for people and open my ear to listen to what people had to say.

LW: How old are these young men?

DDS: Oh, maybe twenty... eighteen, twenty... some were a little bit younger. And some of them turned out to be really, really good horsemen. Some of them turned out to be real good cowboys. And some of them just never panned out. I used to teach them how to... from splicing... tying knots, splicing rope, making different things like our cinches and stuff. We did all of that at the breaking pen on our slack time. And some of them became good doing things like that, and some of them just didn't care. And from the beginning, you're working with these young guys, you can always pick who is going to make it and who's not. Some of the guys think they're smarter than the horse. They become the loser. 'Cause you got to think you're smarter, but you got to work with the horse. You got to be the type of person to get the best out of what you have. Every horse has a job on the ranch. Whether he's just riding the fence line or somebody checking the water on him, or roping calves or dragging calves, or getting wild cattle. Every horse has his job. When picking the offspring, would come from what the mother would produce. It was interesting.

LW: Some of those young men would advance in the system at Parker and some of them would just give up?

DDS: Some of them became foremen... or lead men on the ranch. I was just kind of like... like a teacher, you know, in different ways. Taught them how to shoe horses and how to handle horses. You do this to get that. Everybody was different. It's like handwriting. Everybody had their handwriting on the wall. And all the handwriting wasn't mine. Everybody was different, but you could see where they kind of picked up a lot from me.

LW: So wait now but when you went into the breaking pen as a foreman, or how...?

DD: You know, I got to kind of back up, I guess. I worked at the breaking for a couple of months before I went to Kohala. Before they decided to send me to Kohala. And so I had that time there knowing what was what. So with my ability, when I came back to the breaking pen, I came back as a foreman. You know what I mean? Because I skipped that step.

LW: Oh, that's right. Okay. Okay.

DD: See at that time the ranch went through one big change with management.

LW: And what was that change?

DD: Rubel and Lent, Associates came to Parker Ranch. And they kind of reorganized the whole ranch. That's where we started making divisions... ranch divisions. Like Mana Division, Kohala Division, Mauna Kea Division. You know what I mean? Getting in groups together, and instead of calling them stations, they were called divisions. To pick up the little stations within the area... okay... that's Mana Division. And this, that and everything else. And Gordon Lent was one very, very *akamai* person. You know what is *akamai*, huh?

LW: Oh, yeah.

DD: But he was a very, very... he did all kind of changes. And before he did any change, he would have names, dates, numbers. You know like say... I'm asking for something in my division. He tell me when would you be able to carry another twenty cows or two thousand cows... you know. But... got to be justified before he did anything. So I guess through the grapevine he found out that I was a horse boy so he sent me down to work with the horses. And I told him this... and I never forget this... when he asked me, Donnie, I want you to become the horse foreman. I sitting down in his office and I told him... You know, Gordon, I used to work... you know Gordon, for a while I don't mind being the horse foreman. He said what do you mean for a while? I said the future of the ranch is in cattle. I won't look down. I look up. I would look up and don't look down. Like moving forward... you know what I mean? But not saying that the cattle was... anything wrong with the cattle... but I probably had future in the horse department. And I probably pretty much did, you know. I kind of bettered myself in a lot of ways. You know with people and up in the ranch and stuff.

LW: Do you think he recognized where you were gifted?

DD: I think so. And you know... lot of people put in good... good word... you know for you. You know like... going back to the cowboy gang... the horses and stuff. I never did ride an old pony. You know what I mean? I always had a good horse. Just like a mechanic... working with good tools.

LW: Right.

DD: You can do such a good job with a wrench or a crescent wrench... or a monkey wrench or you know what I mean...

LW: Yeah.

DD: And my horses were capable of separating cattle, they were capable of... I would train the horse for me to ride... but that you could ride. But you could do as much as I did on the horse.

LW: 'Cause the horse was well trained.

DD: They were... you know... Paula knows... I used to bring home horses that I would tell her if the horse is lying in the yard dying, people call Parker Ranch Office, don't go out there and touch the horse 'cause you going get hurt. But yet I would bring home horses... the whole neighborhood would spend the weekend around my house riding on that horse. You know... it was one family horse. And yet... he went out to work, and he did his eight hour job and stuff because in those days, we never had trailers. Until the '70's when Gordon Lent... when Lent came in. That's when they brought the first trailers to the ranch for us to use. In case we went someplace that was extra far, and then we'd put our horses on the cattle trucks. Other than that we rode. We rode from Waimea to Kawaihae, from Kawaihae back to Waimea. And...

LW: That's a ride.

DD: So you know... you get on that horse in the morning... early in the morning, that guy got to carry you to down to Kawaihae and you work your way back. Although, you know, you not going be running all over the place. You kind of take care of what you get and come home. So... you know... we did everything on horseback. And that was my thing.

LW: There's a whole lot that, of course, most of us don't know about how you work for a big industrial ranch like Parker, and make sure that their horse stock is really worthwhile.

DD: Well, I'm going tell you something about our horse stock... you go back... I cannot say a hundred years. Maybe a hundred years... during the War days and stuff. Parker Ranch was noted for their remount horses.

LW: Now what's a remount horse?

DD: A remount horse is... a remount is a horse bred for the military to ride. So the remount would be, they're bred and raised here, and they're sent to O'ahu or to the mainland or something for the military to start using for war. Whatever was... the riding or pulling the... what do you call that... the cannons around or whatever. Parker Ranch was noted for that so... a lot of the military remounts came to Parker Ranch to breed. And that's how we get a lot of our horses. That's where we get a lot of the powerful and tough and pretty horses. The remount horses were pretty horses, but they could do everything. So we kind that in keeping all the different strains. Like in our brood mare... and we wouldn't go to the Mainland and buy a brood mare and bring her home... We'd take one of the mares within our herd to like... knowing what her sisters and their brothers were like... we'd use her for replacement mare.

LW: So were you still supplying the military?

DD: No, no.

LW: In the '60's they used...

DD: Yeah. But see, what we did, we had the offspring from a lot of the remount stallions that we kept. The stallions and stuff that we used. So in my time a lot of the brood mares that the Ranch was using... were descendants of the remounts. Like the father was a remount or the mother was a remount or... or brother or sister... whatever. And in my time at the horse program, Charlie Kimura ran the livestock herd. And he was my boss. I worked directly under the manager. The breed and stuff... we would sit down every afternoon and discuss this... that... the next day, the next week, or what you think the next stallion we should have. And we had Morgan stallions, and quarter horse stallions, we had thoroughbred stallions.

LW: The horse herd in the 1960's and 1970's, how big was it? Parker Ranch's horse herd?

DD: I cannot tell you exactly, but it was big. We cut down the horses between early '70's... we got rid of a lot of different horses. We had thoroughbred brood mares. And we were breeding thoroughbred horses. But I guess the market wasn't the greatest. And a lot of the thoroughbred horses were descendants of the remounts as far as their bloodlines. So the ranch started crossing Morgans on the thoroughbreds and quarter horses on the thoroughbreds and Morgans so... we had all kind of cross bred horses. And we also had some registered quarter horses. But number wise I cannot tell you but in the '80's and the '90's we ran about three

hundred fifty... total... horses on the ranch. That's brood mares, work horses, and stallions and whatever foals that we had. I used to work with horses in the '80's and '90's.

LW: So in the '80's and '90's what were you breeding for?

DDS: The ranch always bred for workhorses. So that's why we brought in the quarter horse. They have a lot of cattle sense or cow sense. And we'd cross them with whatever mares we thought were the right mares for our replacement foal. And a lot of the mares were... Morgan, thoroughbred crosses and... you name it and we had it. But all the horses... the main thing was for breeding, and if it didn't work, we could always sell them. But usually they kept whatever they had.

LW: Did you work with deciding what the next generation of horses would be?

DDS: Yes. Between me and the top management, we would go out, first identify the mares, then I'd identify some of their offspring that were already working. And see if we want to kind of keep that blood line between the stallion and mare, or get rid of the mare because of age, and keep her babies that were already working that we could go back and breed. So we'd use their fillies or mares as replacements. Sometimes we would just take them right off the mother... just start them and use them for brood mares. Not even take them out to work. Just start them.

LW: So what did you like best about working with the horse program?

DDS: Well, first of all I like working with the horses. And after a while they become just like your family. You know every single one. You know the good and the bad. Some of the bad ones get lots of good points. Like they might be hardheaded or kind of mean but yet they have their real good traits for work. So because of the type of ranch that we worked on, we would work with them. Break them and work with them. Some of them were... well, would like to buck you off every day all their life. And yet some of them got out of that and they were real good horses. Some of them were just naturally friendly. But it seemed like... we call them the sassy horses, were the tough horses. They carried all day long. Because of their being just... I guess being sassy and arrogant. They were strong horses.

LW: That's a huge family to have... three hundred.

DDS: Yeah. And hey... you learn to work with them like you work with kids. Especially the foals. And after the second or third day working with them they just come right around. You know what the end result is going to be. But they were very interesting to work with. Some going bite, some going kick, some going slap... but... some would be right next to you all the time. To be a school teacher you got to work with the group.

LW: So when did you feel like you'd really become a cowboy?

DD: When you had your first paycheck from the cowboy gang you get cowboy pay.

LW: You had better pay as a cowboy?

DD: Yeah. See, the cowboys was the top gun on the ranch. Like I said, you just don't become a cowboy. You got to get inducted into the cowboy gang. And by doing all this other jobs and going branding as one

ranch hand and doing this and doing that, they see you get the skills. Then eventually you start doing more skillful things at branding. Like for you to work as one of the ropers or one of the...

LW: So what's the bottom at branding? What's the bottom level of skill?

DD: Knocking calves. See you knock calves to a certain point. Then after you knock calves then maybe they ask you to inoculate calves. That's another important skill because of being... you got to be sanitary, you know. You no can be poking mud in the calves and stuff. You got to inject the right dosage and you got to know what medicine to use for what shot and stuff. So that was one pretty big thing, you know. Actually kind of trained to do that. In different levels... like maybe the first thing you do was just give... maybe one five, six cc shot. Then after a while you might give 5 cc's for this, 2 cc's for that. Some under the skin. Some in the muscle. All the different things.

LW: To require different...

DD: Require you thinking before you poke'um. And then... they teach you how... even before injected, they teach you how to brand. Where to place different brands and this and that. And then you learn... to do ear marking. And you learn to do castration. You doing all this little things.

LW: And the top is roping the calf?

DD: Up the line they say okay... you go rope. 'Cause when you rope, it's... looks like it's the easiest job of the day but... although you got to rope your share of the animals. You know what I mean? You got to rope maybe about between seventy-five and a hundred head. It's not something that you're over there playing. You got to just bring in those calves. And after a while you become... when you become pretty good, you rope more than your share. But that's the way it went. And then how you teach your horse to do the roping. Everything is you and your horse. It's like you and your dog. Teaching your dog how to sit... she'll never sit. But you're the owner, you got to teach them how to sit so... working with the horse you got to teach the horse how to face, to the animal or back or do whatever you want them to do. You in command. So that's what make the cowboy a better person. And like going back to the beginning, handling the calves. You can go in there and jerk those calves around and stuff but if you handle them right, you don't hurt them. You want to do the least... give them the least pain by dragging them in and where they're going be cut and poked and everything... branded. So you like try be nice to them, too.

LW: They're money on a hoof, right?

DD: That's right. That's true.

LW: Plus they're still living things.

DD: You wait nine months for that calf to be born. When the calf is about... maybe about eleven months old... yeah, just about eleven months old, you going do all this work. You don't want to kill them because you're wasting the cow's time and the ranch money and stuff, too. When you really stop and think, I'm a cowboy and this and that and stuff. I tell everybody, it's not the size of the hat you wear... it's what's under the hat. And you work for the brand. You work for the company so you like see the company... the company make money, you make money. We learn that early off with profit sharing, the plan that we had. On the ranch, if they made money, we made money.



LW: I didn't know Parker did profit sharing.

DD: Yeah... we had.

LW: So now remind me when you joined the cowboy gang.

DD: Actually, 1964, in December, I was hired back to be a cowboy. See but... while being hired back, I had to... the boss, Mr. Greenwell, at that time... Rally Greenwell... wanted me to start a bunch of horses. Young horses. Because the horses that I was going to take... I was going to get... there was a lot of the older horses. And what they did in those days, the older horses went to the older people. Because the horses are gentle and stuff. So me, being a younger person, I started... I don't know if I mentioned... six or seven horses that I picked, then I went up to Makahalau and worked with them for a while. Then I went back to the cowboy gang.

LW: That system that was in place in '64... where when you were hired onto the cowboy gang, you got five to seven horses?

DD: No. I picked that because of the string that I had a lot of older horses. So I just picked a number of horses to build up my string.

LW: Was that the custom for every cowboy at that time?

DD: No, you usually took whatever... whoever's place you took, whatever they had you took. Like from when I took his horses, I think had two young horses, but...

LW: Whose horses? Whose did you take?

DD: Louis Pelekane. He was one of the older guys.

LW: He retired?

DD: He was sick. He was crippled already. Medical retirement. So I took his place. When I took his horses, I had one or two young ones from him that I finished, but yet I had to ride a few more to keep my string kind of balanced. Because in those days we didn't use a trailer. The horses didn't ride a trailer. They would have to ride to wherever the job was. Unless the horses was sent there a week before or something. Then you ride the truck to Waiki'i or Humu'ula or whatever. Otherwise you would have to ride the different section on horseback.

LW: So you need your string to get there?

DD: Young horses, you could use them to work and back home. Like in a training mode. Then when you get to where you going work, you ride one of the older horses to get the job done. So that was kind of the way things were done in those days. 'Cause we never had trailers until... in the 1970's, I think. Then we started teaching the horses to ride the trailer and taking them to work on trailers.

LW: Did you have fewer horses then, when they rode the trailers?

DD: Yeah. When we started using trailers, they cut back on a lot of horses. Well, that was a different management thing, too.

PD: Wasn't the maximum eight horses?

DD: Yes. It was eight.

LW: The maximum before the '70's was eight?

DD: No, no... after the '70's.

PD: You couldn't have more than eight horses.

LW: But how many could you have before?

DD: I had twenty-three. The first time I ever did ride, they was too old or crippled or something. But you just keep piling them up and piling them up and...

LW: Right. Well you must have used some for one thing and...?

DD: Say if you were working... your string during the branding season, you have sixteen horses working and you have fifteen horses resting. And then when you change after the branding, you get ready for weaning, the branding horses go out and rest. And the other horses come in and work. You know it doesn't mean that you got change sixteen and fifteen. You can five or six or whatever you want to change.

LW: So how long are those seasons?

DD: In those days... every two, three month season. You work one section... say if you get in Kohala they get say six thousand cows. You got to work all those calves. Wean all those calves. You work everything and then...

LW: How long would that take?

DD: Well, all depends 'cause we wouldn't do it every day. Because we had other things like getting shipping cattle ready to go O'ahu and so the cowboys would maybe work... Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday outside on the station doing whatever. And then maybe Friday they had their thing to do in Waimea. Like... say change horses or get ready for Monday's shipping or whatever so it was... you would work... maybe the whole ranch would take two and a half months to do the complete weaning or the complete branding or...

LW: For just that section or for the whole ranch?

DD: Say maybe for the whole ranch. 'Cause say like now I told you we would... ride or our horses would stay at Waiki'i, while we're branding up there so maybe we're up there for three weeks. We ride the truck every day up to Waiki'i. And those horses are for while we're working. So when we get done in Waiki'i, those horses probably move across the mountain, go to Makahalau. Or Hanaipoe or whatever. Then we do that couple days a week on that side. And maybe you brand... hoo... maybe four thousand, five thousand calves. Then from there those horses go back to Waimea, then if somebody's going to work in Kohala or work in

Wakai'i, or whatever... the horses just go and we do whatever plus other work that's lined up for us. You know we used to brand a... they still brand a lot of calves.

LW: You know I've watched them load them onto the ship at Kawaihae. It was a morning and every half an hour, another truck arrived. Hundreds of calves in them. That went on all morning long. You have to see something like that to get the scale of Parker Ranch.

DD: And that is just one class of cattle. Maybe steers or maybe heifers or whatever. And you going have your other classes. Stay home on the ranch you figure maybe eight thousand replacements. How I going to put it to you? There's not too many ranches in the United States that work that much cattle. Big numbers, like how we worked at Parker Ranch. And I think in those days there was a lot of discipline. Everybody was there to do this, everybody was there to do that. You figure if the truck comes to the dock every half an hour, out there you got guys loading cattle for that half an hour plus... you know what I mean? So it's... it's one big, big, big circle.

LW: Yeah and I'm pretty sure the herds were bigger when you were talking about them than when I saw them in 2000.

DD: Number wise we had more. But you know, if you go back and you look about numbers, where in the United States they have one ranch... other than maybe the King Ranch, shipping ten thousand yearlings or ten thousand stocker cattle from point A to point B. And us guys was from point A to point C, we had to go to Canada. But we used to ship a lot of cattle. Big numbers. And prior to that they would ship cattle to Honolulu every week. Every week, we put on the trailer the... the trailers that would go to Honolulu, eighty cows and ten bulls. Eighty cows... each trailer we have cows and bulls so every week we ship eighty cows, ten bulls, forty cows on each trailer. And that's every week.

LW: The cowboy gang in the '60's, how many cowboys were there then?

PD: About thirty something.

DD: Our livestock people was... with the outside guys was maybe fifty, I think. That was Waki'i, Humu'ula... each station had their cowboys. The guys would handle cattle. But the cowboy gang itself I think they had about fifteen guys. That's my time, now. There were times when they had seventeen guys and more. But already... my time was about fifteen.

LW: And the thirty you're thinking of would be...?

DD: The sections combined. Like Makahalau maybe had five, and Waiki'i maybe had six. Humu'ula might be had five. So when you're working on the station... when the cowboys would work on the station...

PD: The station guys are different.

DD: They would work with the cowboys.

PD: The cowboy gang was more like roving... roving crew. And then the station guys were always at their own station.

DD: And if no more cattle work they do other.

PD: But they did fence work and repair waterlines. Plus working cattle.

LW: Did they all have horses, too, from the ranch?

PD: Some of them.

LW: Some of them? Did those guys who stayed at the station, did they have horses... a string of horse out there, too?

DD: Oh yeah. Everybody had. That's why I say... when I started work on the ranch, the ranch had an abundance of... how would I call this? What's the word, now?

PD: I don't know what you're trying to say.

DD: The amount of horses that they had, some of them weren't even being used.

LW: Surplus?

DD: Surplus. In the sense of surplus. The other word for surplus... like extra... extra horses that they just...

PD: They're just there.

DD: Just roaming. They had lots and lots of horses.

LW: So then you're talking about a kind of a change that happens. And when does that happen?

DD: In the '70's. In 1970 we had different management come from the mainland. And then the ranch was divided up to divisions. We had Waimea Division, Mauna Kea Division, Kohala Division and... so each division was run by individual ranches. So they had a number of men, a number of horses per man... like say eight horses. And you were... like if your division had X number of cattle, you were in charge of like X number of head per... employee was in charge of X number of head. Some guys was three hundred head, some guys was six hundred. All depends on the size of your division, and the amount of acreage. The number of head of cattle that were... so you know... like they would justify one man would have to kind of be in charge of X number of cattle. Everybody was looking for... they were starting on the bottom line. You got to... you cannot just get this and not do that.

LW: So who was this management from the mainland?

DD: Rubel and Lent. I think in that book you might have a Rubel and Lent... or I don't know if in that one. Maybe the second... that is the third one, yeh?

LW: This is the...

DD: The stewardship.

LW: This is the third one.

DD: I think that would be in there.

LW: So that's after Hartwell?

DD: Yeah, after Hartwell, after Penhallow, after...

LW: Oh, Penhallow and then...

DD: Rally... Rally Greenwell, yuh.

LW: And Mr. Green... Rally Greenwell.

DD: And then come Walter Slater and Rubel and Lent group. See Walter Slater was with the Rubel and Lent team. He came to Hawaii.

LW: Gordon Lent.

DD: Gordon Lent. Right. He was the main guy... well, what would you call it? The CEO, Paula?

PD: He was the General Manager.

LW: Okay. So who's Rubel and Lent?

DD: Rubel was Gordon's partner. Jack Rubel. But Jack Rubel was like a silent partner. He was on the mainland.

LW: Oh, I see. The company was called Rubel and Lent.

DD: Yeah... Rubel and Lent. I tell you something. In our little time that we've been here... I mean I work at the ranch... we went through a lot of managers. Me, I went... Hartwell was when I started. You know... Hartwell, Penhallow... Rally... Walter Slater. But in the meantime we had all kind guys like... Don Hanson and... who else?

DD: Charlie Kimura.

PD: And then Robbie.

DD: Robbie Hind...

LW: Those are managers of the cattle division, yuh? Was that part of that system change where the divisions...?

DD: No, no. That was after. That was after Rubel and Lent left. They kind of kept the divisions going, but the management in the office stays. This was Richard's choice.

LW: So when you say the bottom line, so each division had to watch their bottom line?

DD: You made your own budget. Stuff like that. And it was becoming little bit above lot of the supervisors and foremen and stuff... what we knew and doing budgets. We had to go learn how to do budgets. They send you to management training. So... it wasn't only riding horse. You are a cowboy, you got to do all kinds.

LW: So all the cowboy go to management school or just the...

DD: No. The management team. Once you became a foreman or something. But we worked in division, we worked with the cowboys and stuff so we got to go to management training. We did all kinds.

LW: That's really important, you know. To have training.

DD: You know lot of people say you were cowboy. Yeah, I was a cowboy but...

LW: They taught you to be a businessman, too.

DD: All kinds. Because that's what...

PD: That's your responsibility... keep costs low.

DD: You got to keep track of your paddocks. How many cattle you have in your section. Every time you move the cattle or bring them in or let them go back in the paddock, you got to count them and make a report, goes back to the office. And the office would keep tabs. Because lot of times when you move the cattle, you miss one or two or they die or something. So you short here and... you got to account... go in and sit down and talk... maybe Paula was doing the cattle books at that time. And she... the office would make the adjustments. 'Cause some paddocks would be over. Maybe a fence broken or something. Was really, really, really interesting. That's why when you ask me what were the highlights, I could tell you oh, roping cows or something. I got so much different things that went through my brain... and like I say I can sit down and talk about because I did it. It wasn't only sit on a horse and smoke a cigarette or what. Brother, you are sitting on that horse, you got to be thinking what you're going to do the next day or the numbers you going use to balance your budget or stuff like that.

LW: If you had to account for every cow...

DD: Oh, yeah.

LW: You got to go hunt the dead cows?

DD: No... after a while it's dead. You know you just mark it dead. And then some people would say okay, how come in this paddock now... if she was doing the paddock books and she never realized what was going on within the general operation, she would get all jammed up, too. 'Cause one week... I get eight hundred cows. The next week... the paddock get eight plus another fifteen... say sixteen hundred in the paddock. Why? We went branding. We branded so many female calves, so many male calves. And until they're branded, they're not in the inventory. So we would have to code the report, brand, worm, castrate, vaccinate. Or for bulls we'd have to put so many bulls. And then they would pick it up and that's the way they would do our inventory. So like I'm saying, it wasn't just getting up and go. You had to think. Which I think it made me a better person. Because... hey, plenty of the other guys I worked with, they don't care. What they want to

do is come to work in the morning, pick up their paycheck and go home. They don't care if the cows was green or blue or whatever.

LW: Maybe they don't make foremen.

DD: Maybe that's why... I was more in with the program. Even the horses. Even your tack. Your saddle, your bridle, your... everything. Went through my... my mind or my... office. My desk. I would know how many saddles we have, I would know how many horses. What horses and where and what. The whole thing.

LW: So is your tack something you had to purchase yourself?

DD: No, the ranch did.

LW: All the way through the years you were there?

DD: No. I started... that started when Mr. Penhallow came. But for the simple reason that if... for the horses... this was mostly for horses. You have a saddle that hurts the horse. Makes sores and stuff... the ranch would take it back, you'd get another one. Or have the saddle maker shave it down... do something. To make the animal comfortable. So they would buy things or get things for the animal. Like our animal health program. That's what it was.

LW: So Penhallow started the horse health?

DD: More... more sophisticated horse health. And when Dr. Bergin got here in the '70's, then we went full blown animal health program. We had a full blown animal health program. Cattle, horse, the whole works. Like I seen one part of and it grew and it grew and it grew. It's what it is now. We'd have days where nobody went out to work. Everybody came in and we had one big, big meeting like. Figure out numbers, and figure out profit or losses... everything happens at the feedlot begins at the ranch. So all kinds of different thing. Like we'd make game plans and stuff.

LW: So you would hear what had happened at the...

DD: The feed yard, yeah. No, the kill pen. The grading...

LW: And how much they paid for the beef because of the way it was graded.

DD: See... now... I don't know if I should say this but in one part of our management team, we wasn't... we were sending... we were culling drastically. And a lot of the cows were carrying on the kill floor. And that was a big no-no. And all the boys that were able to learn and stuff would learn preg checking. So before the cow would go off to the market, we'd preg check. And anything that was in doubt, we'd call Bergin. We never like sending anything that would make the ranch look bad. And what you're doing, the bottom line was on the kill floor. So... we did it. All those different things.

LW: So you were here. So they would bring back that information to you. So that you could plan better at your end.

DD: Oh yeah... we had to plan better because we were the people that looked bad. You know... how come they're sending pregnant cows to kill? I can see if you got one, but not twenty or thirty of them. The cowboy

out there picking what we call dry cows, we no can tell you this cow was bred six months ago or three months ago. You just picking dry by looking at the condition of the cow, the bag and this and that. And then when they get down there, they have a calf... we call it calving on the kill floor. And that wasn't right.

LW: Well that's good management for the ranch... not only the management knowing what's happening in the final end, but getting everybody, all the foremen to know what's going on at the final end 'cause you guys are the ones that have to plan.

DD: That was a big thing in our management training. You can teach your workmen all that you know. They can do your work for you and you go on and look at more things for you to do to better the ranch. And a lot of people didn't think that way. They said if I teach my employee to know as much as I knew, you don't need me. Which is being ignorant, I think. So I don't forget that saying. If you teach your employees what you know, to do what you do, you can do other things and he can do your work for you.

LW: So the management training... where would you go for that?

DD: They would come. Like Rubel... no... what...?

PD: Dale Carnegie.

DD: Dale Carnegie used to send people up maybe every Friday. We got a day of management training. Different... other things, too. But mostly it was Dale Carnegie come talk to us. And advice... explain...

LW: So what part of the management did you like the best? I've heard you talk about different parts. You talked about planning for the horses, planning for the cattle...

DD: Well the planning part, it was all depends on what department you worked for. The carpenters would plan on how much lumber or roofing they were going to use. We would plan on... in my department I had horses, I had orphan calves, things that I would plan on feeding. Horse feed and different things... horse shoes and...

LW: You'd think about that stuff, right?

DD: Just a lot of things to become a Paniolo Hall of Fame member. It's not only cowboys... let me tell you.

LW: Well that makes sense. Now we talked a little bit about... these topics that Bergin had listed here like string accountability.

DD: Oh, okay. That's the horse inventory. See the horse inventory was for the whole ranch. The number of brood mares, the number of stallions, the number of two year olds, the number of yearlings... the three year olds, two year olds and yearlings. And then it goes down the work strings. Every section or every division, each cowboy had a work string. See, I had all those numbers. And I would have to with Dr. Billy... Bergin... we'd go inoculate the horses for all the different shots they need for the year and whatnot. I would go through the work strings. Where's this horse? He's died. Okay. You got to mark them dead. But now, because it's marked dead, and you, my foreman, you got to make the death report. 'Cause on the death report going to have comments. So I don't know the comments so I just put down on my list dead. And then the office going to ask your for a death report for that horse. Stuff like that. Okay, that's work string accountability. And then...



LW: Well... equine health... you already talked about that.

DD: Yeah, it's like the different medications we would use or is somebody would come up and ask me... what you using for proud flesh... of what you using for this and that? So I would tell him you go see the doctor, you tell the doctor your horse has proud flesh. Maybe he can give you some kind of healing powder or caustic powder or something like that.

LW: What did the horse have?

DD: proud flesh... it's like one when they get cut. It just keeps growing.

PD: It's like there's a growth.

DD: Like a flower.

PD: Scarring.

DD: And it doesn't heal. And it's always...

PD: It's almost like a flower that keeps blooming.

LW: Like cancer... skin cancer or something.

DD: Yeah, some kind of form of cancer. So we would do, the vet would come and he would cut it off and treat it with caustic soda or caustic powder or whatever. And if it was worse, sometimes they do cosmetic surgery. And then treat them with liquid nitrogen.

LW: And that would be Dr. Bergin doing most of that?

DD: Sometimes, yeah. And you know, I did... I helped them a lot. Oh we did all kind of things. You name it, and we did it.

LW: So the horse population involved work horses... breeding stallions and brood mares. And would some of those be working?

DD: No. They probably were work horse. And we picked them for their ability to become brood mares or mothers for ranch horses.

PD: Because of their...

DD: Genetics.

PD: Yeah, their genetics so they could pass on to their babies.

LW: You liked their confirmation, their behavior... their nature...

DD: Right. It's not only one thing...

PD: Their ability to do certain jobs. And lots of them have cow sense.

DD: That's the way we would breed them. We would breed them back to the stallion that had cow sense. See... all the stallions we brought here, that we use on the ranch were for a purpose. Some was for size, some was for their bones... big, tough bones. And that's where we would go different breeds. The Morgan or the thoroughbred or cutting horse or draft horse or whatever. So we'd use all these different characteristics to make up our work horses. And then so if we get one mare that is one really, really good mare, and we bring in this stallion from the mainland that had a lot of cow sense so we bring him to her. And if you'll get a colt that is good and get cow sense and stuff. Then if you have a little dumpy mare, that is awesome, maybe she's the toughest mare on the ranch or something, you bring a big stallion and you breed for height. For her baby to have height or vice versa. But everything was done for a purpose. You know Charlie Kimura and I, we used to sit down for hours and hours and hours to discuss all of these things. Because he was one of the guys that really kind of changed the horse program on the ranch. And in fact he was here the other day asking me about a stallion that somebody from the mainland had wrote to him about and wanted information. And he knew that I had just a little bit of information about the stallion that I read some place. But he and I were discussing it. We didn't actually know the stallion. Or know what it looked like or whatever. But we knew his offspring... generations of his offspring. So that's what we were making comments on. And anyway, we were making different comments and like this certain stallion, he was one of the greatest brood mare sires in the Morgan world. So... that was his highlights. And his offspring were awesome. You know as far as endurance and confirmation and stuff.

LW: I was thinking about how we'd talked last time about the system that you and Charlie worked out to brand the horses. And I'm not sure it got in there so let's get that down again.

DD: Okay. We used letters and numbers. The most important letter was "P." That was the Parker brand. Then other letters that we used were codes like AH and V and D. For the stallions. Stallions are coded. The T-1s would be Parker 2001. Then the P... I mean the number will be the foal's name. Say if the number was 20, she would be the 20th foal in that group. And that was her name. And if she was registered that number would be like a 00... something... something... D-1, which would say that her sire was... I mean D... whatever her number was would be her sire was Doc Bar, and that was her number and under that number, we'd have her mother's name or her mother's number. It's almost like you do the cattle registry. See every registered heifer has a name like... how I going say Mischief Domino or Miss... Mischief Domino. Miss is the female, Mischief is the father. Mischief Domino... that's the father's name. So they are going to have Paula or Jade or something... it's all Miss... or Misty or whatever. Mischief Domino. All the females have the same name. But the... because of knowing who the mare is, and who the sire is. So the foals would have numbers.

LW: But only certain cows are registered, yuh.

DD: Well, it's just like our horses. The registered ones would have their number and that number would become their registered number with adding a couple of zeros before it or another code, and then that was her name or his name. Otherwise you have to... if you did it... I guess it's the way they do it now. There's names. You got to send in three names per head. So if you get... ten horses, you got to send thirty names. And then... Quarter Horse Association... or Thoroughbred Association... picks the name. Because they got to back to check all their names that nobody has the same name and stuff like that. So if you use numbers would be easier because hard to get something that going get the same number. But... that's the way we did it.

LW: So when did you start doing that?

DD: 1979. Was the first horses ever bred. Like Blue... remember Blue? Because '79 was the freeze brand. That was the first horses we brand that year... we brand in 1979. Was interesting because we took maybe about two year to really get the thing the way we wanted it. We had to use regular freeze brand numbers and liquid nitrogen. We started off with jet fuel and dried ice and after you brand twenty horses or thirty horses you get just as high as a jet plane. (Laughs.) Or you get a headache. That's where we started... the jet fuel activates, the dry ice to freeze the brands. Then we started using liquid nitrogen.

LW: Is that the way you still do it? Liquid nitrogen?

DD: Yeah.

PD: They don't brand now.

DD: They don't brand.

PD: They're all micro-chipped.

LW: Oh, micro-chipped. That makes sense. Where do they put the microchip?

DD: Under the mane, I think.

PD: I thought it was under the skin by the ear.

DD: Yeah... under the mane.

LW: Do they read those? Can you read them?

DD: Well you see in the old days, when you run horses, you run them through the chute. So you get guys on the chute reading brands. The male was on one side, the female was on the opposite side. So that was like the male, somebody would look for the male brand. Somebody on the right side going be looking for the male brand. The female was on the left. And they just call them out and then they cut them out. But like now, no more the numbers they had like in the old days so they can go and catch them. But it's hard because if you get rid of one horse just by its description, you got to get one pretty good mind. Or good memory because some I would remember, but some I couldn't remember.

LW: Oh, I'm like that with my students. There's about half the class that I can truly remember and then there's this fuzzy group that I just can't get straight.

DD: Okay... you know what is the fuzzy group. The way they act, the way they dress... the way they talk to you.

LW: Just imagine what hundreds of horses would be like.

DD: A lot of time I remember them because of who their mother was. Not... the father. The mother. The mothers was around for a while... you know what I mean? But Charlie did that. He and I, we sat down and kind of got that squared away.

LW: So you actually worked on equine nutrition, too?

DD: Yeah. Minerals and... because in Hawai'i we have deficiencies. Deficiencies... the different kinds. We have a calcium deficiency.

PD: Different minerals.

DD: Mineral deficiencies. So the ranch...

LW: I understand that the grass has deficiencies because the soil is young. Right?

DD: Yeah.

LW: It doesn't have like magnesium, and calcium...

DD: Calcium and stuff. Lot of time when their body calls for calcium, they get magnesium and everything else, but the calcium amount is less. We had to give them mineral supplements and stuff so...

PD: So you have to order certain minerals...

DD: Trace mineral...

PD: ...to supplement so they get enough.

DD: And the funny thing was...

LW: Do we have a unique mix for Hawai'i or something?

DD: Yes. I know the cattle in my day, was the Hawaiian Range mix. And what they did, they had people go... I think they started off of Parker Ranch. And they had people going through Parker Ranch and people going through all the different ranches and finding out what it was they lack. So maybe in Ka'u, they might lack something. Like the Ka'u mix would be little more of this and less of that. 'Cause actually salt is the base. And then in Waimea there was a deficiency... calcium... and copper. Real bad copper deficiency, we had in this area. So... at... at one point we used to inject the cattle with copper. But... very painful, and very, very... if they tell you poke'um under the skin, no poke'um in the muscle because you would kill the animal. So we'd have to be real careful. So in the little calves, we would poke'um in the armpit. That's why I tell you like... you had to learn how to inoculate the animal. You poke'um, you back up. And then start push the medicine in. It was a very, very touchy situation, and we made all kinds of experiments out on the range. Twenty head with one medication, twenty head with something else, twenty head with a control. Then the next time we bring in these animals we bring them in because they would tag them all. We check on this and check on that and do all kind studies. And when they go to slaughter, they... check on those tags again and tell you what this was and that and so...

LW: So it was calcium, copper... what else is Hawai'i missing?

DD: Calcium, copper and... I don't know what else.

LW: Yeah, lot of salts, mostly.

DD: 'Cause we didn't have natural minerals in our ground.

DD: You know like up at the Volcano... I don't know...

PD: Sulphur.

DD: Sulphur. But you know the cattle... if you dragging a bunch of cattle and they come across one carcass, that's been on the ground for maybe a year or two, and get bones, go right to there and they start chewing on the bones. Because they like that... that mineral. So I guess calcium, yuh. And we would find some with bones stuck in their nose. And stuff like that because of... you know greed... they just... and the bone gets stuck in the nose and stuff. But... it's a big thing, you know.

LW: It is. I mean after all, that's part of creating good beef is to get them to eat right.

PD: Balanced diet... just like humans.

DD: You know in the old days, everything was salt, salt, salt. Yeah, the salt is good. The animals love salt. You know like during the dry season, the animals... the cows just go to the mineral. But when it's raining, everything is moist. The grass is moist. They don't need much mineral. Because their bodies are not craving. But during the dry season, they love that mineral. They fight for the mineral. Even the horses. And the horses was a different mix than we used to give the cattle. 'Cause the horses would get big head disease. That's another thing that because of the lack of calcium, just like the bones in their nose just grows like one honey hive. If you see the skeleton, it would be all crumbly. And they would end up they cannot breathe and stuff. So it was goofy.

LW: So who set up this convalescence care thing?

DD: Convalescent?

LW: Convalescent care... the surgery barn?

DD: Dr. Bergin. That was his... where all the ranch horses would go for surgery, and actually we got a lift at the surgery barn, before he got one at his practice in Waimea. I guess the ranch bought the lift. They had somebody install it. So if the horse is down...

PD: Then they'd take the lift up so they could work on it without breaking their backs.

DD: Yeah... sedate the horse, and then could raise them up to your level and you could work on them.

PD: It's like a car lift.

DD: Yeah, but they have extension for the legs. They have extension for horse's neck. And... really interesting when you stop and think about... I never believe what they would do to animals. In my earlier years, I never did see or think about that.

LW: Right. They just put them down? They just kill them if they were sick?

DD: No, we would try to work on them. And if they died... like after he would go in and do a really good postmortem. And we used to do that with cattle out on the range, too. We had one or two... that died within a certain area... we'd go in, see if it was poison or bloat or whatever.

LW: You were trying to figure out the cause?

DD: Yeah. We kind of knew... but see when he came he was kind of new in his practice. So that much more... he would get all that under his belt. By posting this animal and that animal. Poison and all... see what causes... how the poison affects the animals' intestines and stuff.

LW: So you just go out in the field and open the cow up out in the field?

DD: Yeah. If say get something that doesn't look right, like sometime we used to have few dead calves... they born and they die. If we get one or two of those, we used to try bring them home. And tell him in certain area this is happening and they're going to check. Lot of times was the cows were either too old or would have problems giving birth or something. But that's where we go back to being cattlemen... that's cowboys, yuh. You see... you go back and...

LW: Yes, so part of being cattlemen is figuring out what's wrong so the other cattle don't...

DD: Yeah, you got to because they cannot talk. You know what I mean. You go out... like any other... anything... even with your own kids... you sit down with them and you talk to them in the morning. You only look at them, you can tell if somebody is sick. Either their head is down or... you talking to them, they're looking out a window... that's the same thing with the cows.

LW: So you took care of the animals after they came out of surgery.

DD: Under the doctor's... like say if changing the dressings and even medication and stuff. We had somebody that would do it. I would and some of the boys that I worked with would do it, but if we were busy doing work away from the barn, like on a different station or something, we had one guy to do it. Or Billy (Dr. Bergin) would have his people come.

PD: I can remember them changing dressings and doing all that kind of stuff. I remember one horse that had a huge cut and they had buttons... buttons here... and they kind of released it.

DD: The buttons would hold the... see, the horse's skin is thin. So you go in maybe an inch or two from the incision or whatever, and you sew button here, take the suturing material, you go through, sew one other button on the other side. You pull it up and you tie that... the material. Okay? And then that will hold that thing to a certain degree. And if it's not going hold enough, then like she said, you kind of weave... weave through it. 'Cause you know... the horse's skin real sensitive, too. And then certain...

PD: I used to go with him on weekends and change horse dressings and... horses that either had surgery or...

DD: Or they get cut or...

PD: Cuts or...

LW: Did you finish your career in the horse department? Did you spend the longest amount of time there?

DD: Yeah, my last year... my last two years, I did a little bit work at Pa'auhau Station. Like... maintenance... gofer. Gofer... checking water and doing this and delivering mineral and stuff. Robbie had hired somebody to do my work. And he wanted me...

PD: At the horse department.

DD: And he wanted me stay back and teach the guy. I just... wasn't interested.

LW: Okay. That's where you spent the most time, in the horse department?

DD: The horse department, yeah.

LW: You have this great list of interesting people you met over the years who came to the ranch and either wanted to ride or Mr. Smart wanted them to ride... so this list is pretty impressive. So Jackie Kennedy and her kids were there?

DD: When they came for branding. One of them was branding.

LW: Oh, they watched the branding. And the kids were little, you said.

DD: Oh yeah. They were maybe five, six years old, I think. The older one.

LW: Must be in the late '60s.

DD: The late '60s. It wasn't the '70s. Was kind of late '60s. The thing was, why I got involved with a lot of those people, was because of a lot of them went for commercials. TV commercials and different things like that.

LW: But Jackie Kennedy must not have been a commercial...?

DD: No, no, no. That was when I was in the cowboy gang. I was working right there. I was one of the ropers. So... I remember when we were working and...

LW: So you think she just wanted to see that happening?

DD: Take the little children. They were in Hawaii for some reason or another. And they came to Parker Ranch and we were branding so they came up to watch us brand.

LW: But you just recognized her or did somebody tell you...?

DD: You see, what happened, I guess she was staying at Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. And then people brought her... security, first... came up and walked around and that's how we probably knew it was going to be her because some of the Mauna Kea beachboys came with security to show them where we were, knew us. So Mrs. Kennedy coming... you know... the President's wife. So you start looking around, huh. Came up, sat on the fence and watched the work.

LW: Okay... Lawrence Welk and his wife.

DD: Yeah, Lawrence Welk had his own orchestra...

LW: Oh, yeah. Sure. I remember Lawrence Welk.

DD: They came to some kind of party up at Mr. Smart's. They spent the weekend, I guess. They went out horseback riding. The wife went. Lawrence never went. Maybe he went to play golf. I don't know. But the wife went horseback. Different people... I cannot remember all the names.

LW: Like Roy Rogers.

DD: Yeah, Roy Rogers we were up at Makahalau. And he was going hunting in the forest... the State forest. So he came up with one of the guides. They stopped at the station for coffee. This was like four o'clock in the morning. So everybody wakes up the next guy... hey, Roy Rogers in the kitchen. So we talked to him. And he never looked like he looked in the movies.

LW: He must have been elderly.

DD: Oh yeah. Stocky and...

LW: Little guy.

DD: Yeah, he wasn't a big man. And he was chubby. In the movies you see him slim, trim. So he could jump off of Trigger in a flash.

LW: And you knew that Trigger was the one who was really well trained, right? Okay... who's Lorne Green?

DD: Lorne Green was...

PD: Bonanza. The father from Bonanza. Lorne Green.

LW: Oh... did he come for a commercial?

DD: Yeah, we were doing some dog feed commercials and... for some company... I don't know if Purina or what but, he was the main actor that day. And we were trying to get the cattle to come down or... I've forgotten what it was but...

LW: What was he like?

DD: They all were nice. Friendly...

LW: He's a big man?

DD: Big man. Yeah, yeah.

LW: Okay... Jack Lord and Hawaii 5-0...?



DD: Yeah, Jack Lord, he was main actor plus producer, I think.

PD: They did a shoot on Parker Ranch. They got to work with them.

DD: The whole week we worked with them. The whole week we worked.

LW: Did you figure out which episode it was?

DD: We Hang Our Own or We Hung Our Own or something like that, it was. It's about this family that was having problems and stuff...

PD: They actually did a hanging. Up at Mana.

DD: That's why a tree up there we call the Hanging Tree. But... you know...

LW: Wow... that's kind of spooky.

DD: The moves, yuh... that's why after that I never care to watch movies... I knew what was going on.

PD: Wasn't Leslie Nielson...?

DD: Leslie Nielson... that's the guy I took. He was the main actor other than Jack Lord. Yeah, Leslie Nielson. And he was a nice man. Real nice.

LW: He's supposed to be really funny, yuh?

DD: Yeah. And he was just like one of us. We had a tack room... he said hey, I can come in here and just look. Whatever you see in there if you want it, take it. But he just wanted to see what kind of tack room we had. Versus what they had on the mainland. I guess he must have seen a whole hundred of them in his movie career.

LW: Let's see... Frank Bogart, Mayor of Palm Springs?

DD: He was one of... just a nice old man. But he was the Mayor of Palm Springs and he used to come on this... we call Cabalgata... Paniolo. It's one group of people from the mainland, get together and as cowboys, come to Hawaii. And we would take them out for...

PD: Take them to ride... trail ride.

DD: The whole week we would take them here and there and everywhere. And Bogart, he was a character. And he was old and he used to brag about all his young wives that he had. (Laughs.) He was rascal, just like everybody else.

LW: Bob Norris.

DD: Okay... Bob Norris, I met him with Cabalgata Paniolo. And he was one of the first...

PD: He was the first Marlboro man.

DD: Marlboro man. And...

LW: Those were some handsome dudes, boy.

DD: Yeah... and he had... he owned T-Cross Ranch... in Colorado. And I guess the ranch bought one or two horses from his ranch. For brood mares and stuff. So we became real good friends. He would come every so often he would come visit. T-Cross Ranch.

LW: So he had a longer range relationship with Parker?

DD: In that time, yeah.

LW: What do you think was the highlight of your career?

DD: I don't know... I would have to sleep on that over two weeks.

LW: Like night cattle drives to Kawaihae and...

PD: That was one of the highlights, right? And the exchange of herds.

DD: Yeah. The exchange of herds on the mountain.

LW: What does that mean? Tell me about that.

DD: Going to say... we had cattle in Keanakolu, and we had cattle in Waimea. The Keanakoku cattle were coming to Waimea to be bred. The heifers... the replacement heifers.

PD: See they would raise the replacement heifers up on the mountain.

DD: In Keanakolu. And what we did, we would take the ones to be grown out in Keanakolu to Keanakolu from Makahalau, and we would bring the Keanakolu ones back to Waimea. But the cowboys from Keanakolu and whatever... the station... would bring the cattle to us, and we would take our cattle down to them. And we would exchange these cattle like maybe six o'clock in the morning or whatever time we get to meet. And that was like maybe we had two thousand head. They probably had fifteen hundred, eighteen hundred. And we would just... they go one way, and the other Keanakolu cattle come the other way. You see the guy in the morning... oh, "Good morning." And then so long, he's going. You turn around he's coming back with his cattle. And until you get to the end. That was it.

LW: How often did you do that?

DD: Maybe once a year. And then...

LW: And you took one night to do that?

DD: See, we would be on this side. We would plan the day... to Hanaipoe... maybe halfway to Keanakolu. And they would stay at Keanakolu and then get their cattle ready. So when they come out of one holding pen, then we go in another one, and we would meet in the middle.

LW: How many cowboys did it take to do that?

DD: Oh, maybe fifteen from one side and fifteen from the other.

LW: Big group.

DD: But that's... that's what I say. We were very, very sophisticated cowboys on the ranch. Like I say, you never just take any guy from on the street to do your work. You had to know, you had to think what you was doing. And in those days I was young so I wasn't thinking of my future at the breaking pen or whatever. It was just... cattle work.

LW: Was it pretty? What made it so special, do you think?

DD: Cold... nice night.

LW: And they don't do it anymore?

DD: No. They don't do it anymore. Everything is done on trucks.

PD: See that's pretty special.

DD: And then just before Mauna Kea... well, right after Mauna Kea opened the hotel, we stopped taking cattle down to Kawaihae. And I was lucky that I went on two trips. Not the last trip. I cannot tell the last trip because no. But at two different times, I went down at midnight to take cattle to the dock. And then they load them on the barge; they take them to Honolulu.

LW: Same thing? Fifteen going down...?

DD: No. This is one group going down. So you take maybe about seventy, eighty head, I guess. This used to be steers. And they drive them down the road. But you start off in the afternoon. You take them down... just about maybe six miles above Kawaihae, maybe seven miles above Kawaihae.

LW: To Pu'uiki?

DD: Pu'uiki. And then from there, you drive them down midnight.

LW: So you drove them down the road to Pu'uiki?

DD: In the afternoon. Like this afternoon we take them to Pu'uiki. Come home, get our horse ready for the next... for the night... some cowboys went off drink beer, do what they had to do, and then midnight you have breakfast. Where the Chevron station is in Waimea. So the ranch restaurant. You have breakfast over there; then you ride down and get your cattle at Pu'uiki, split the bunch and then go down. When I say split the bunches, fifteen guys you would divide up... and make three bunches. So that they don't... everybody would be on the move. All the cattle would be moving. Not squirming around and stuff. Beause cattle, they follow

each other, see. Take one bunch, the other bunch follow. Then the last bunch goes in the back. Then when one car would come, we would have to put them on the side. That's the big reason they stopped all of that. Because of the traffic. Had more and more traffic with the hotels shifts. So they stopped that, and then they started trucking.

LW: Both of those were happening in the sixties? The late sixties?

DD: Yeah, late sixties. Already in the seventies, if we went up Keanakolu, maybe one or two times. That's all. Already, things were happening on the trucks.

PD: Things started happening on the trucks in the early seventies.

DD: Hauling?

PD: Yeah. So more the late fifties, early sixties.

LW: Now what made you decide to be a cowboy again?

PD: We talked about that.

LW: Was it some kind of a dream...?

DD: No. I always liked horses and being around livestock. That's all. You see, when I graduated high school, I was going to become a welder. At that time it wasn't Hilo Community College. It was Hawaii Technical School. So I was going to become a welder. I got myself a car, and I owed my grandmother a hundred bucks. So I had to work a little while longer on the ranch. Instead of finishing out the summer, I think I worked another month so I could pay her. And I decided I wanted to stay. So I applied for a full-time job. Not only summer hire, but for full-time job. And right after high school I went to work for the ranch. Mr. Carter hired me.

LW: So the debt to your grandmother kind of sent you on your way there.

DD: Well... more myself, yuh. I could have done anything I wanted to do. My father was that type of person. Never said you go do this, or do that or what. So I went to the ranch, asked for a job and I got the job.

LW: So did you ever have to think about whether you were a cowboy or a horseman?

DD: I could have gone both ways. But I finished my time more in doing horse work. 'Cause Gordon Lent... see, I was doing lot of cattle work up until when Gordon Lent got here. And he was the guy started to push me up the ranks. Like... foreman training and this and that. When I was with cattle. So... they call me into the office and he mentioned me going to the breaking pen. Help take care of the horses and stuff. So I told him but you know, in ranching the horses are not as important as the cattle. He told me Donnie, don't look down... look up. And I kind of got what he meant after a while. I did a lot of cattle work in my younger years. And I always wanted to do horse work. I had the chance and I did it. Some of the old timers told me well, Donnie, now is the time. You wanted to do this, you wanted to do that... now is the time to apply. Apply to the program. Not for the program, to the program. So I did. But I could have gone both ways. Either way. Because my beginning skills were cowboy. And while being cowboy, people ask me to ride their horses for them and this and that, everything else. So I was doing horse work and cattle work. And I could

catch a cow as fast as John Doe could and... you know, I wasn't just stuck in a rut. I could do all kind different things.

LW: If you had to live your life over, would you be a cowboy again?

DD: Yup. The only difference would be I would go to school for little bit more training. Mental training. Not physical. Mental training. Like animal science or grass... learn about grass and stuff like that, you know.

LW: Yeah... because people just five years older than you, a lot of those boys went to Cal Poly.

DD: Yeah, yeah.

LW: Like Carl...

DD: Carlson.... Corky Bryan. You know, that was a big thing. You know when they was in Cal Poly, I was in Agua Caliente, Mexico. Exercise boy on the race track. That's about the same time they went school. Early sixties... mid-sixties.

LW: Your mainland adventure was work related.

DD: Yeah, in the sixties. In different ways, yeah. I worked right... I worked former Parker Ranch horses on the race track and stuff.

LW: That race track had horses from Parker Ranch?

DD: Well, the guy I worked for. He was from O'ahu and used to buy horses and take them to the mainland. And I work for him on the mainland.

LW: But you came back pretty quickly.

DD: Seven months. Came back and went to work. And after two years I got married.

LW: I was wanting to add some things about your families at the end here. Were you able to get any of that information together?

DD: Yes... my wife, Paula, is of part Hawaiian descent. Her mother, Rebecca Lyman, was born and raised in Hilo. And dad, Charles Erskine, was born and raised in England. We got married in 1967, and raised three children on Parker Ranch. Stacie, our oldest daughter, married David Francis of Honoka'a. They have three children, Cainin, Caisey and Caide. Our second daughter, Loriann married Lance Slevin of Montana and share two children, Dillon and Bailey. Later divorced, Loriann remarried Troy Fernandez and have one child, Emily. Our youngest son is Donald, married Lyndsey Rock of Montana. They have twin daughters, McKinley and Madysen.

LW: So what do you see in the future for ranching and Parker Ranch, and things like that?

DD: You know, it's hard for me to say it because... all the years I worked for Parker Ranch, like I said I worked under so many different managers. I worked under Mr. Smart. And nothing went full circle. You know what I mean? Mr. Smart... well in the livestock thing we started this, we started that. Different

programs. And nothing went full circle before management changed. Every time the circle was just about complete, Mr. Smart blew up and there went the program. Going to another manager. Then this manager comes with their big ideas and tries this and tries that and... we're all in the back hundred percent for the ranch, now. Not exactly for the manager, but for the ranch. Okay. Even Mr. Smart's things never went full circle. So... I cannot see... what's happening within the last fifteen years... fifteen years I'm retired now, yuh? In our day it was the Hereford cow. The Hereford cow took us through hell and high waters. And... I think was in the eighties... the late eighties when they did cross-breeding. Yeah. And then you cross-breed like that, you got to know why you're breeding this cow and that bull and they're going to live in that climate and you know... like way back moving cattle. So everybody different.

LW: Did you retire before or after the feedlot closed? The one on O'ahu.

DD: Just about the time they were closing.

PD: After.

LW: But not too long after.

DD: No. Right after.

LW: After.

PD: About 1995 or something.

DD: You know that's... I think that... that kind of killed the industry. I'm looking at ranching. Just like what's happening to the sugar companies. Hundreds of years it's been our business. Then all of a sudden, no more. When Parker Ranch was the real Parker Ranch it had two hundred twenty-six thousand acres. They had only maybe twenty thousand head of cattle at that time when I started. But we had everything. Horses, cows, milk cows, pigs, poultry... you name it, they had it. Corn...

PD: Sheep

DD: ...sheep, right? In my time it was sixty thousand head of sheep.

LW: What did they do with the sheep?

DD: They sold them. Just got rid of them. Actually it became a problem. Nobody wanted to shear them and lot of wild dogs and stuff. So they weren't making money with wool. So they just gave it up.

LW: When it was that diverse, when was that?

DD: Right after Hartwell. Mr. Penhallow's time, I think. In the sixties. See, in the sixties, the butcher shop went out. The business was sold. The whole facility... slaughterhouse, butcher shop was sold.

LW: You mean up Waimea?

DD: Waimea. The dairy was sold. Mr. Carter... when he retired from the ranch... the dairy... in the meantime Waiki'i was shut down. There used to be school up in Waiki'i. There was corn. That all went

down. Everything went back into cattle. And the village moved down to Waimea. The school moved to Waimea.

LW: It was at Waiki'i?

DD: Waiki'i.

LW: So they had all of that extra livestock to sell on Big Island or in the State or go to the employees or...? All the chickens and the pigs and the...

DD: You could buy eggs from the ranch or...

LW: Oh, the store sold eggs, too?

DD: Yeah, but in those days I don't know if they shared it with the ranch people. But I know milk was dirt cheap, and I guess if you lived close enough to the dairy, you could get it free. They would make cottage cheese, they would make butter. That's where I come in with Paliho'okapapa. See, when I went to Paliho'oukapapa they just had phased out of the butter and the cheese and stuff. But we still were breeding Holstein cattle or dairy cattle. Then when it phased out in the sixties, the cows that we had, dairies on O'ahu bought them. And some stayed here with Meadow Gold. Meadow Gold bought out some of the cows.

LW: What about the beef ration Parker Ranch employees got?

DD: We used to get... the single guys got what... ten pounds a week?

PD: Five pounds. And the married would get ten pounds a week.

DD: Ten pounds. For ten cents a pound. Up until the seventies. That was the ranch beef.

PD: Until Yaro went out. When Kamuela Meat Market phased out. Or he retired, I guess.

LW: Then you stopped getting beef?

PD: Well we got, but it was at a different... we got like an allowance. We got \$65.00 a month, I think. And then when that phased out, then they put that extra \$65.00 in the paycheck.

DD: We had... I tell you, the fringes that we had on the ranch, no other company in the State gave their employees.

LW: What kind of fringe?

DD: Like medical.

PD: Well wait... medical and dental. We had group life insurance. We had meat allowance. We could buy gas from the ranch at cost. And then we had the other...

DD: Hunting and fishing and...

PD: Hunting and fishing we could...

DD: Taking you friends on excursions and...

PD: ...camping.

DD: Even our housing was free. Then we bought property from the ranch. The ranch gave us property. Not gave, we paid for it. House and lot and some people bought lots. So...

LW: No wonder you were wanting to work for the ranch.

DD: No, you know... I have no bad things to say. Once in a while you get mad and grumpy and stuff but... everything we got... even they helped our kids go school.

PD: Oh yeah, education. And they paid for the kids to go to Parker School and HPA.

LW: So was that part of this profit sharing thing?

DD: No, the profit sharing was different.

PD: It got converted into a 401K.

DD: Like mine never went to 401K. Because I took mine out when I retired. 1995.

LW: But the tuition allowance was either for Parker or... 'cause they're different, right?

PD: In those I think it was only Parker. But now it's also HPA.

DD: In the old days the girls would go to Kohala, to the seminary. And the guys would go Kamehameha. But lot of the old cowboys, went little bit school from Kamehameha.

LW: Wow, the ranch paid for them? Well, old cowboys meaning who?

PD: This is way before.

LW: Way back. Well it was worth going.

DD: The educated ones... went to Kamehameha. I'm reading... a book about the Portuguese that came to Hawaii. And a lot of the kids went St. Louis College in Honolulu and stuff. Was amazing. Some they sent to the mainland. But I don't know book f what happened. All of a sudden... I guess as time went on, the families that had thirteen and fourteen kids... the older kids had to stay home, take care of the younger ones and if the parents never push they never went out to go school.

LW: That's very true. And that's the social structure that goes along with being agricultural. Probably starting about the sixties, where the U.S. really takes off as an industrial power, right. What happens is the family structure changes so the norm isn't six kids. The norm becomes four and three and then in my generation it was like you were ashamed if you had more than two. Well you were part of the ranch when it was in its traditional time. And also then you were there when major changes occurred.



DD: Yeah, yeah. We went through a lot of changes. We went through all kind of different changes. Which I guess in life you got to go through changes. And even with the ranch, if you don't go through changes, you cannot be stuck in an old groove someplace.

LW: So Mr. Smart died in '92? So that succession of managers was something that he wanted? He would change the management?

DD: Kind of.

LW: It occurs to me that Parker Ranch is a unique ranch. So I thought maybe we'd close this one by what you think makes it special. It's big but there's more to it than that.

PD: I think the legacy being passed down...

DD: The paniolo...

PD: ...in generations and how it went to a corporation. From the old days it's...

DD: It's real different now. Really different. Because we used to keep a lot of the old ways of doing things like handling the cattle. Driving them, separating them... why they walked instead of rode the truck. All the reasons were because times change. But in the old way we drove cattle right through town and it didn't bother nobody. Now you can't ride a horse without getting run over. There's more cars than anything else. And then the people... the change is so great. Even the kids go off to college on the mainland and come back and work for the ranch. They have altogether a different outlook from what my outlook was when I started working. When I started working, I wanted to learn. I wanted to learn the Parker Ranch way. The way it was done on Parker Ranch. And almost all the ranches on this island, do a lot of things the way they'd seen the Parker Ranch boys do them. The way they knocked their calves, the way they brand, the reason why they do this and why they do that. Because it was the Parker Ranch style, it was a standard. Even the horses. The same thing. When you rode a Parker Ranch horse, you got to ride with dignity. Because he was out there to give you everything, but he wasn't going to make a fool of you. He would give you something back. In return... but times change. Everybody has a truck now, on the ranch. Before no more trucks. Every place you went, you went on your horse. If you went from Waiki'i to Waimea you rode your horse. You ride across the mountain, you with your horse. And then now they got four wheelers. But you know... now it's more that you got to learn to do more things than just be a cowboy. When we started the ranch, before you became a cowboy, you had to work through the ranks, so you learn. These days, the kids, they go to school, and then they come back and they think they're cowboys. The time they spent in school, we spent out there working. Hands on training. And there's nothing wrong with that and there's nothing wrong with going to school. But it was different. A lot of the old guys never know how to read and write. But brother, they could keep good records. They went home, they asked their wives to do the work. They'd have another cowboy come home or work alongside of them that could keep notes. We worked with other numbers. We had to transfer cattle from place to place on the ranch and you got to explain from what paddock and the balance in the paddock and where you're putting them, and when you put them in, how many you're putting in, and all of that kind of stuff so... it was not hard work, but you would have to remember what you did. Although like us I went to school so not too bad. I could write. Could carry a pocket notebook with them. Write down numbers. Then in the afternoon when you go back to the office, you get your worksheets to fill out, we had our diaries that we would write in what we're doing for the day and numbers that was transferred or... at the breaking pen I used to take care of the market cattle, too. On the ranch. Whatever was slaughtered in Waimea. Not whatever left the ranch, but what was slaughtered in Waimea. So every week, a couple of days a week, I had to put in cattle.

I get cattle from Kohala... I get cattle from here, from there. What you have to do is take them out of their home paddock, put them in your paddock, then from your paddock it goes to the slaughterhouse. So you would have to know where they came from and the numbers, and the different classes. Like you would have a three year old market heifer and then a four year old would become a cow. And then you'd have culled cows. It's all different classes. You know what I mean? Even if they never had a calf they would call them a cow because of their age. When they became a culled cow... see all that is a write off. The culled cows were in the blue herd and stuff. They cull them out. Animals that were purchased and then slaughtered have to be reported. They would do the audit and that stuff. And same with the horses. The horses were sold, slaughtered or whatever. We used to slaughter a lot of horses. At one point, most of the horses were going to O'ahu for the zoo. And then after a while, people on O'ahu would buy the horses live up here, send them to Honolulu live, and they'd slaughter in Honolulu. And we used to kill a couple of head a month for the Hilo zoo, for the tigers and stuff. For providing meat and stuff.

LW: Oh, they feed them to the zoo. Well, that's a good use of an old horse's carcass.

DD: Yeah, but some of the cowboys...

LW: They don't like that.

DD: I think I never sent any horses to the zoo. I always put them someplace else where you let nature take care. Or... I'd sell them. We would sell them at sales before the time. After eighteen years old, we'd try to sell them off. For somebody who wanted them as a backyard horse or light work on their home ranch or something. We did all kinds with those animals.

LW: Well, I guess Parker had to update itself in order to stay a viable business... become a corporation and...

DDS: Well, times change, yuh. We used to send our cattle to Honolulu to grow out. Get them up to a certain weight, you have to sent them to Honolulu. Take them to the feedlot, feed them there, and then market. But after a while the feed is so expensive since everything has to be brought into the island. It started in... I think it was kind of the late or mid '80's. Sending our cattle off to the mainland. We would send them to Canada. Then from Canada we would send them to different places in the U. S. Because we couldn't send from Hawai'i to an American port because of the Jones Act. We'd have to go from far... one American to one foreign. And so we'd take them to Canada and then haul them down to different parts of the United States. That was interesting, too. We were on the boat for nine days. Take them across.

LW: Did you ever do that? Did we talk about that already?

DDS: I went just to Canada and... what's the word... used to observe the treatment of the animals. How the animals reacted. And the conditions they were in in the nine days. And if they've had deaths, why. And the transferring from the ship to our staging area in Canada and then from the staging area to different feed yards. They would go to feed yards first. Then after reaching a certain weight, they would go to the feedlot. Because we had to send them light to Canada for the simple reason the lighter the animal... but they had to be light and healthy... you could put more head on the boat, than sending big animals. Because of the space. So that's what they did. We sent them just as the spring grass was coming up in Canada. Would be late February or early March. Send all these animals there. They go out on spring grass, and then from there they'd put on a couple of hundred pounds, and then they go into the feed yard.

LW: So they were trucked around once they got...?

DDS: To Canada. Yeah.

LW: Did Parker kept possession of them until they were slaughtered?

DDS: All depends on the market. If the live carcass was the top price, they'd sell them live. They would have auctions... cattle sales. And you'd put maybe a hundred in a lot. They'd go by the weight, the condition and such. And if the feed price was right, and the timing, they would keep them, retain ownership until slaughtered. So they played the market like the stock market or whatever you want to call it. Because we had a broker in Canada, and that's all they did. Go from sale to sale. And look at cattle and stuff like that. So that's what we did. And before we shipped anything, he'd usually come to Hawai'i, see the conditions of the cattle and while he's here he'd kind of figure out how many different numbers in the weight classes. And then already he would know where to place them when they got to Canada. I'd like to say I never went to school to learn all that kind of stuff, but just working with the animals, working with different people, you learned how to do this and that. Same thing like doctoring animals. You had to be interested in what you were doing, otherwise the work would be boring. Why this, and why that, and this and that and... everything had answers. Actually what I can say about Parker Ranch was everything that was done on the ranch was done for a purpose. Like even going to the mainland to buy a bull. Or... going to Kona and buying a battery of bulls. Maybe a whole bunch of Angus or Brangus bulls. And bring them back to the ranch. We never used to buy heifers because of the amount we would need. So we had our special breeding programs for red cattle, for black cattle... everything was done for a purpose.

LW: Well that's a good endorsement for the ranch. What's your fondest memory of the Parker Ranch? What's your best memory of Parker Ranch?

DDS: When I was hired. I was so proud to be a Parker Ranch employee because I had a job. And as long as you're loyal to the ranch, you had a lifetime job. And I worked for thirty-seven years, retiring at fifty-five years old. And... I loved it...I love Parker Ranch. I retired at the right time so I could enjoy 10 years of retirement before the debilitating effects of ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease kicked in. Aloha and a hui hou!