

Edward T. "Eddie" Silva, Dillingham Ranch, O`ahu, Ka`ala Ranch, O`ahu



After more than 20 years working at Dillingham Ranch on Oahu, Eddie Silva decided it was time to strike out on his own. The ranch had been sold to a Mainland company, and he had the opportunity to lease about 1,400 acres on Oahu's north shore, the same parcel of land he had grown up helping his father ranch.

Eddie always wanted to be a cowboy.

"When I hear dogs bark and see cattle, I want to get on the ranch," he says.

Some of his happiest moments working at Dillingham happened during the time he and his family spent at their ranch house, high in the mountains. He recalls waking up to find pheasants perched on the fence, and nights so quiet and peaceful it felt like they were the only people on the planet.

Eddie is proudest of his ability at hands-on ranch work – "Raising cattle, jump on a horse, move cattle, breed cattle, get the calf on the ground."

Today, his children have other jobs to support themselves, but they've kept ranching in their blood, helping out at Ka`ala Ranch, where three generations of Silvas have worked. They learned from their father that ranching is more than a job; it's a way of life.

As Eddie says, "Money wasn't there, but good fun was there."

Eddie Silva

July 14, 2003

Kaala Ranch, Waialua, Oahu

S: Medonsa Estate used to own all of this, from the forest right down to the beach. Two-thousand something acres. And when the family started getting older and older, well, everybody want money, this and that, so they sold this whole thing to Castle & Cooke. That was a long time ago.

This was Medonsa Estate. My father came from town -- you went to my brother's house (in Waialua), that's where we were raised, in that place. My father had that place, Medonsa gave him that property to live in with six boys and four girls. The ranch pay was small, but they got a free house and water. We never had no place to go because the old man's never going to take you in the car, and you're not going to walk. We were always home, home, home. So when the old man came up to the ranch, seven days a week, to check water in the truck, we would always come. Me it was a must because the old man would take the car and I'd just run down check the water box and tell him how the water box looking. I thought it was a big thing.

So when the years went up, the years went up, and what stopped everything from moving _____ was when the war came in 1941. Everything was grounded, and the troops was all in here.

I: There were troops in that area?

S: Oh, this was all. When you come up here you see that big cement slab, that's where they had the guns. And they had the guns in the back. So my old man and us we just used to come and check around the cattle, and out, we couldn't stay. Then they went back and everything.

When Medonsa was still around, he leased this place to Ted Vierra, he was the architect for the Honolulu Airport. He took 10 years out of this place. It was a tax break for him. When he was running this ranch I couldn't see what he was doing. It was backwards and disgusting. So I went out. Then by other brother went out and he went to Schofield. Then my other brother stayed on the ranch with Ted Vierra. So after 10 years, Ted Vierra went out in a _____, so my brother took the lease out of Ted -- that was Medonsa yet. Then, when Medonsa sold, Castle & Cooke came inside and I took the lease out of my brother, and this is where I am yet.

I: When did you take the lease?

S: You can go back maybe 15 years or so, something like that. But before all this happened when Ted Vierra got disgusted and put me out and my other brother out, and kept only one of my brothers just for take over the place, one went Schofield like I said, then I got a job with Dillingham -- Walter F. Dillingham, the original. And Lowell and Ben. So I went over there to strike job, and all the men piled up already, then the old foreman told me they bought land at Puuwaawaa on the Big Island, and they had a lot of cattle up there that they wanted to ship down here. He called me up to work part time, cut koa and fix fence. So I went, I took whatever I could, because I wasn't working at that time, unemployed. So I went down, he told me meet him down in the office, said it's only part-time job, maybe three months, four months. I stayed there, and the men he had were not with cattle. They don't know about cattle. So when I came in, he was trying to push me all where the cattle was. When I started it was 80 cents an hour. And anything overtime, you're not getting nothing. So I stayed there. Then one man, who used to take care of the trucks, he got hurt, so he put me on the truck. Then he gave me \$1.10 an hour. Oh, big money! Twenty cents more, ha!

Then the old man always used to tell me, hey, the other boys all went out Schofield, Wheeler field, all wartime jobs -- come on, it's big money, they'll push you in. I couldn't see myself there -- I had to go out with the dogs and horses, stay out in the open.

I: Why couldn't you do the Schofield job?

S: I didn't **want** to go! I just -- come down the ranch, get on your horse, work cattle, stay with your dogs. The hours never mean nothing, because everybody used to get together, and we had more fun than anything else. And the bunch that I was with was all old-timers, not young boys, all old-timers. We used to talk stories, oh, I used to like that. So that went, went, went. And I stayed with Dillingham, he raised me up, put me on truck and I went full-time cowboy. When Dillingham sold, that went to Mokuleia Ranch and Land Company, that was the (Dillingham) family. That's when they brought Gordon Cran in. Gordon Cran came in, and he took over everything. Then he needed me to go, because I knew the area, and he wanted me to work for them.

But Joe Pedro, he used to work for Walter F. Dillingham, he was the number-one boy, like Akau and John Morgan. He was with the horses, he used to raise the polo ponies, all high-class horses. And the old man Hinazumi, the foreman for the cattle, used to raise the pure-bred cattle, Herefords. So I was with him working. We went till we clean out the cattle, then Joe Pedro wanted to put me with the horses, which I never want, because horses can cripple you up, and I had plenty falls already.

Then I meet Gordon and Gordon says, "Gee, when are you going to come work for us, because I need you" because I knew the area and the dairymen want to give us a lot of Holstein heifers. So Gordon said he wanted me to go up and check one pasture and see if it's ready to bring in cattle. So I tell him, "Well, Gordon, let me see tomorrow." I went down and, same thing, when pau with the cattle he put me with the horses, so I never went with the horses, I came up and met Gordon. Said, "Okay, Gordon, I'm ready to go." He said, "Did they let you go?" I said, "No." He said, "Gee, Dillingham might be _____." I said, "No, we try it that way." Because Joe Pedro knowed me that I never like go with the horses, so Joe Pedro never make a fuss. So I went with the cattle, then he told me, "Your job is with the cattle. Whatever cattle come, you take care of the cattle. If you do your job right, you're alright. If you don't do your job, we'll get another man." So I stayed there. We went up to 700 dairy cattle and 500 beef cattle.

We had Waianae cattle, we had Bobby Toledo cattle, but most was from Meadow Gold.

I: So you were working with Gordon Cran and Joe Pedro at the same time?

S: No, I left Joe with the horses and with the beef cattle from Lowell Dillingham was just about pau. Few more, then was out, Mokuleia Ranch was taking over everything. But they still had the horses. And then Ben went to Big Island, and Lowell went to Puuwaawaa. They kind of went out on the horses, so the beef took over everything. Then I picked up this lease from my brother (on Kaala ranch) when he went Colorado. And there I am today.

I: How did you start ranching?

S: With my old man. Like I told you, the ranch never paid much money with the pile of kids we had. So he was raising calves, he was raising pigs and everything, and I was helping all with the pigs, the cows and everything he had around the yard. Go school and come home, pigs and stuff like that. Then I went work in the chicken farm, Campbell chicken farm down there. I stayed there about two or three years, but I had to get out of there because I just never like chickens. Strictly cows and horses.

I: Your dad worked for Medonsa?

S: Yeah, my dad worked for Medonsa full time till he retired and passed away working for the ranch. He was a foreman, running the ranch for Medonsa Estate.

I: Who was Medonsa?

S: Medonsa used to own all this. They had big land in Kalihi, and they had from the forest lands to the beach, along the Dillingham's boundary right down to the ocean. All that land to the ocean was theirs. They had the water rights and everything. Then Medonsa sold to Castle & Cooke and my lease went to Castle & Cooke. This is almost 1,500 acres.

I: Today. And back when your dad was working here?

S: Well, all that (lower parcel) was in cane. And we lost that piece over there from _____. They bought that two-hundred-something acres from Medonsa. That was the mother's area, so they sold that for inheritance tax. But about 1,400 acres.

I: So you started here as a young man working with your dad?

S: When I came up here I must have been about nine. There was no place to go. When the old man get in the truck, everybody got to get in the truck. You got no place to go. Nothing to do. It was cane, the whole thing was only cane.

I: What was it like up here back then?

S: Nice, nice. It was like what you see, but more rough. This is all rough because nothing but dry weather we had, and when the rain came everything grewed back fast. It's alright. When rain come it's better than you see it now. I runned about 170 head.

I: When your dad was here, was he the only guy working here?

S: No, no, no. He had about two men with him, cutting fence lines and stuff like that. Then when he used to work cattle, he had the plantation boys, they like to cowboy. A couple good men down there used to come help weekends.

I: Did you have many wild cattle back here?

S: Had wild cattle, but wild cattle no last too long. We get the dogs. And just put the tame one inside, let them mix a little, put the dogs on and run them down. And no water, eh? You could regulate your water.

Then I started with dairy heifers for Meadow Gold, some for Wayne Costa, Henry Costa and Richard Freitas, but their dairies were small enough where I could handle their cows, maybe each guy's got about 15 replacement heifers, that's all. That was good income coming in.

I: That's when you had the lease?

S: Yeah.

I: Okay. Have you ever had big brush fires around here?

S: No fires, but we had a big rain. When they put this big road in, they put these big culverts underneath where they should have left them all open. So the rubbish came down and plugged that culvert. The water ate all this place up down here (lower cane fields) so I could get this from the plantation because too much rocks came on the field, they couldn't get them out. And where the trails from the cattle used to go, the river came down about eight feet. Had to get the bulldozer and make a path so _____ . And that's what killed my water. I used to get my water from the gulch inside -- one spring, nice spring water. I used to run about 14 sprinklers.

I: Sprinklers? How did you make that work?

S: Gravity flow from the mountain. Come down all this way, we had all these pipes down here. We used to bury the needle at 80 pound, almost 100 pound pressure if you close everything down, just natural flow. So I used to run sprinklers all on this grass here, never worry about feed for the horses, whatever, and 24-hours she's just running. Now, when the big water came, it must have shifted the rebar around with the stones. The water completely died. And that's when it hurt us plenty. Oh, that water was nice water. When it's a dry summer maybe you water more, then you cut back maybe two, then you cut back two. Before the rains come again, you still get about six sprinklers running. And dry like this, you put the sprinkler on this pangora, kikuyu, she grow like hell.

I: How long ago was the big flood?

S: It must have been about eight years ago. After that we had another kind of big one, but not as big as the first one. Hoo! It went right down by my brother's house and right down through the road to the beach. And in 1946 we had the tidal wave, eh? The tidal wave ate all up down there too. In 1946 I was just about getting out of school. It was on April Fool's. So guys said, "Oh, tidal wave! Everything is washed out on the beach!" And we thought everybody's joking. Then came the ambulance and all.

That was when the Oahu Railway was running. We used to take our cattle right down to the train tracks, had a pen there. When they go to Kahuku, and they used to go to Waimea Bay and pick up sand. And on the way back, they used to pick up those cows to go back. They had that railway -- I tell you those big, heavy rails, (the tidal wave) bent them over the pine trees. So the train couldn't run, they were trying to fix them up as fast as they can and they finally got the train running. But nobody can forget the 1946 tidal wave. The water came back to way back, by my brother's house, maybe 200 feet in there. One or two soldiers died. The power line went in the water. And this guy was with his horse, and the line electrocuted him, and the horse went down and threwed him against the fence and broke his collar bone.

I: What did it look like afterwards in the area?

S: Everything dead. It was just like this. Pipes was shooting water out, so they closed the pumps. One guy just built his house, nice little house, it picked it up, brought it over there and just smashed it. Then you go down a couple days later, signs up everywhere, "For Sale." The guys who went there with their money and bought made out, because when no tidal wave everything's beautiful, but when they came and see the tidal wave nobody wanted to buy. Picked up those houses and just smashed them.

But I couldn't get the ranching out of my life. My wife told me she wanted me to go and look for higher paying job. Then the wife went pineapple where she was working, then she went to Wahiawa General Hospital, she's 41 years there.

I: Tell me more about how you got your job at Dillingham.

S: Well, they needed men but they never wanted to get men, because they never knew what was coming, I think. But when Lowell went up to the Big Island and they bought Puuwaawaa Ranch, and it was overstocked with cattle. When they brought them down, some couldn't move. So they needed men to go cut the koa when the cattle come down, check the fences so they're not going all over the place.

I: Do you remember how many cattle they brought over?

S: Gee, he must have brought over about 300 or 400 head. We'd separate the steers, separate the old cows, but some of those old cows was hapai. And when they came over here they bloomed, and they came out to be nice-looking cows. So they needed men to go cut that koa. That's why when he give me that job he tell me, maybe four months, five months, just till the cows pick up some weight where they can move around. So we took them all down the airbase, and just let them go. Some lay there till they got their strength back, then they get up, they drink water, and when they got strong enough then we segregate them. Some of them turned out to be beautiful cattle. Puuwaawaa had nice looking cattle but they were so skinny, they were overstocked. That's why I was there.

But the man they had there was all Filipino men. So he brought me in, then this Filipino guy that used to haul molassas and drive the truck to the butcher house and everything, he got hurt, and they put me on the truck. And I was supposed to be only part-time, but I stayed there till all the rest of the men went out. To myself, when you do something like that, you know you must be alright, otherwise they're not going to keep you. So the old man and me got together good. Then we used to work cattle on Saturday and Sunday, so we'd go pick up cowboys from _____. I don't know if you know Peter Kama and Aphram High. Peter was managing the slaughterhouse, so he'd come down and pick out _____ for butcher. So I used to do all the trucking and haul them to the slaughterhouse every day. What we had was 40 cows went to the butcher house one day -- I made four loads. And these other Filipinos, these old men, used to tell me what was happening on the ranch.

So we had four loads. It took the other truck driver two days. I used to take them in one day and I had time after I got through. So they said, "Oh, you go slaughterhouse today?" "No, I went slaughterhouse yesterday, all pau." "No, no! You no can pau! The other man take two days!" I said, "No, pau!" Oh, they couldn't believe. So, Hina was happy with me, I was happy with him. Then he called me one day to go with his truck and put all the molassas. Then I was here working at that time, so I took the truck, put the tank on and went down. He said, "when you come back, _____." So I went. I went all through. Gee, it was early, only about one o'clock. I took two loads. So I came back by the barn. "Okay, Hina, pau. What you like I do? You like I do something else?" He said, "No! You no go all over yet?" "Yeah, I go all over." "All the place I show you go?" "Yeah, I go **all!**" "No can **pau**, you! The other man, he going tomorrow yet!" (pause) "I **pau**, Hina!" So he look his watch, "Oh, plenty more time! But you get job for do your place. Okay, you go wash the truck, hang the tank, go **home!**" So I went home.

But when I was coming out of the driveway, coming up to take the tank out in Crowbar, I know he wasn't satisfied with me, see? So I see him go to his Jeep, and get on his Jeep, and he's going, see? He's going look all the tub, and if that tub wasn't full, next day you pau -- he's a wild man. He never figured I could take all that molassas down that time. The other guy never could do the job, and I could do it.

So next morning I come down the barn. "Eh, Hina, what you plan for today?" And this and that. He's **smiling** and he's all happy, and me and him got together good, see? And he told me, told the grandson, "Now, at least, more easy with the cow. Filipino, you talk, they no **understand**. Now good, good." So I stood there forever. Everybody went out, all the other men was full time, I was part time, I stood there. The other men out, Gordon came, he put me take care the ranch, cattle, everything. I was still there with Gordon Cran, then Northwestern came inside -- Northwestern Insurance Company bouth Mokuleia out, that's when Gordon had to go pick up Kapapala. So I stood there, and then they started picking a couple more men up on the side. Everything was going good, but they wanted to cut back on the cattle; they were going to make a subdivision, dig wells, everything, and they said they were going to keep about a hundred-something cows, just for me, and maybe one or two more men just for caretaking, to keep the grass down. But they had too many bosses. I couldn't work that way. You talk to this guy he tell you one thing, then the other guy come back and tell you to change the thing. What is going on, see?

So the cows were going good, everything was going good. And then had one bunch, they were going to put them in the feedyard, then the other bunch we had ready to go to the feedyard, take them out of the truck and the other boss wanted to send them to the Mainland. I told them, please tell us what you want to do, because no can like this. So they say, "Let me go down the office, and when I come back I tell you what to do." So he come back he say, "Okay, we're going grass-fat." I say, "Okay, right on, thank you." So I put them all in the pasture with a lot of feed, then this Bruce Bearman came down the way one time to borrow our spray tank. So I just got through spraying the cattle, he say, "My **God**, Eddie! You supplemental feeding these cattle?" I say, "How we going to supplemental feed these cattle when those guys don't realize _____? They're tight!" "You guys gotta be feeding these cattle -- they no can look like this!" I said, "Bruce you can go follow these cows today, tomorrow, you look, they don't get a grain in this pasture." So that went that way, the boss came, "Oh, we got to start sending them." I said, "No, not yet." I said, "Wait, I go see Peter Kama, Peter Kama will come look." I call Peter, I say, "Eh, Peter, I think we can send 10, 10, 10, maybe every week, every other week, 10." Peter came, "Oh, lord! This is going to be hot cakes! These cattle will go in no time!" So I brought them in the pen, I cut out 10, put them on the truck, took them to the slaughterhouse. Then couple weeks later I see the boss chasing me with the Jeep, and he say, "Come to the office!" So I went to the office, she showed me the slip from the slaughterhouse. They went dollar-quarter a pound, **choice**. They dressed out 600 pounds. They were so happy! And I wanted to prove a point, see? When these guys want to buy calfs from up, they say the price of Santa Gertrudis going to drop down a couple cents from the other cattle. I told them, why? These Santa Gertrudis don't grade in the slaughterhouse. And that cattle we sent from the pasture was going as choice as the ones from the feedyard. The feedyard was getting a dollar-twenty-cents, we was getting it for grass fat. So I proved my point.

Santa Gertrudis can climb on this mountain and take the calf. The cow can go up there, eat and produce a good calf. The Herefords are going to stand down here and grow hair. They're not going up. The calf is going to come not good. So even if the calfs of the Santa Gertrudis, they don't like them -- you're getting paid by pound. This calf will no more pound. The Santa Gertrudis get pound. That's why we go for the Santa Gertrudis.

I: When did you go with the Santa Gertrudis?

S: Oh, We went Santa Gertrudis when we started Dillingham. My life was all Santa Gertrudis. I just look at them and know those cattle will **climb** those hills. The Santa Gertrudis, in droughts, they survive. They get a thin coat of hair. The Herefords grow a wooly hair, and you find them by the water boxes about eight o'clock, nine o'clock. The Santa Gertrudis won't do that. They take their baby up. They'll sneak for water, then they go right back up, till the calf get chance to follow them down. But what I'm trying to tell you, when I went to the slaughterhouse, grass fat came out as choice as the grain-fed. I proved my point: Santa Gertrudis calf, if they can grade on the pasture grass, they can do good on grain.

I: Tell me the kinds of things you did to care for the cattle at Dillingham.

S: There I put feed for the cattle, I wouldn't let them starve. If I see them, they're not doing right in the pasture, I take them out and move them to the next pasture. And if you want to find sick cattle, you go by your water box. That's where the sick cattle going to be. They get fever or something, they want want water, they want to cool off. And they don't want to travel because they don't think they can come back. So my lunch was always by the side of my car from day one. I'm 60 years old, and I eat by the water box, and while I'm eating they're coming for water, I can see them. Sick? Pau lunch, I go down, get the horse, get a couple boys, we pick 'em up, bring them to da kine and whatever I need to give 'em, give 'em. Put them in a different pen, when they're ready, throw 'em back, if they're not ready, let them put on a little bit weight then go slaughter house and they check 'em out -- if they pass, pass, no pass, no pass.

If you don't do that kind of thing, go yeah okay and drive away, maybe you lost them. You no go back tomorrow, that poor guy might be dead. The quicker you get sick cattle -- it's like you you sick, you don't take care of your cold _____. If we went there lunchtime and we never see too much, in my mind, I always get something that I think may be wrong. I got back there, sometimes I go back on the horse. I see something, the men no more ready, just about pau hana, no can get them, so I take my horse, with my dogs, and if I see 'em I can push them below the paddock before they all go away and I no can find them. I save a lot of cows, and dairy heifers, I used to check them, because they don't want to calf in the field, they want to take them home and calf. I gotta go back and check them out, then I gotta check the earmarks for them, I gotta check the brand for them, because we ride one lease from Henry Costa, his brand and earmark, and Wayne Costa, Dairyman. And they all go in the same paddock. So you gotta check those cows from Henry Costa, how many they got, everything, so when you bill 'em, if they got 60, you bill for 60. You no bill for 60, 60, 60, then at the end of the month you find 58 or 59. That guy maybe had two dead in the beginning. He paid you the bill -- that's shame! I no go for that. So I go check all that out.

I: Can you tell me about the land and the trails over at Dillingham?

S: It was always open. Road-map trails, wide open. The cattle used to use them, the bull-dozer used to go clean them. Jeep can go through. Usually all horses. When you go up in that place, if you're going to check water, you take a little salt block and throw it by the water box. It's good to go with horses, but if something's wrong, you got to take them and put them back.

I: What were the trails like?

S: Well, you got to get good horse. You get good horse, you can go up hills, if you don't get good horse, don't ever go. We got a trail down there by the airbase, nothing but rock, and sisal. All through the years, the rain come, go through there and bring 'em down. First time was not too bad, had a little bit of grass. When we start using that, going up with horses and coming back with cows, that all went out. And some places, you get stone, kind of bad stone, and if your horse is not sure footed, you're going down and you're not coming back, horse and you going down. That's only the trail to get to the stop. The side is steep. Someplace I'd say you go down a hundred feet. You don't think so, but you go through the gulch, you look up, you got that and maybe more. But plenty sisal, so if you go over and your horse go too, you're not going to get up no more. So we tell the guys, if you're coming up, you shoe your horse, if you no shoe your horse and you want to go up, okay, plenty never come back. And when you're going down you're a little more _____, because your horse is with shoes. So we usually lead them down. If you no trust your horse, you no like work him too much, lead him up. If one guy get good horse, he go up, let the horses go, and then pick them up at the top.

Ranching, nobody can tell you what to do. You're out there by yourself. You think it should be this way, you **do** it. Not, "What you like I do?" You go back and use your own judgement. And if the boss respect you, he leave you alone. If you gotta run back to him, he'll think, "I don't know about this guy if I gotta go find out these problems." So when Gordon wanted to go away or something, he never care. He knew everybody working right in the back. He used to live right above me, so I'd do my job, and we go in the car, pau, everything good, water alright, I go home. Call him up, "Come on up, throw some meat on the fire, some kaukau." So we talk about what we're going to do in the week, and this and that, and when we want to go buy cows, go get something for sell. We know what's going on with him. The boss has got to work with the man, but the boss has got to think that the man _____.

I: Can you tell me about the cattle drives over at Dillingham.

S: Cattle drives, we no come the whole paddock. We come to try clean **one** paddock, and leave 'em. We get paddocks, eh? And the water box is by this paddock, and the water box is across the other paddock. These cattle cannot drink in that paddock. But when we drive, we open the gate, we bring them to this paddock, and we leave them. So any cattle left in the back is going to come by that water box to find the mother, or the mother trying to find the calf, and they cry, they want to be together. Then we go up in the morning, "Oh, there's something over the fence." Open the gate, and bring 'em in. Then take a ride back, look around, something crying, no more? We got 'em. Then we leave 'em there a day or so, watch 'em, then we bring 'em back down the trail.

We used to leave the ranch to go up to Kuaokala around 4:30 in the morning. It was about an hour and a half, two hour ride to Kuaokala. When we took that place from the state, 2,000 acres, they didn't want people to go on the tracking station with their cars, interference with the workers. So we went all up the _____, all the way to Kuaokala, and we'd drive back through there. If it was a big job, we'd camp out, nighttime.

I: How was that?

S: Well, it wasn't too bad. A lot of the time you're talking story, by the time you fall asleep it's morning already, you catch your horse and go. You're going to get up when the sun is up. It's automatic, you no care to sleep in, so get up, and whatever you have to eat. And then during the night, before we go sleep, when it's light yet you can see where the cows are hanging. One bunch there, one bunch there, what kind of color cow, horned or whatever. So when we go, we take that bunch, we know that's the bunch we seen, and if we get the bunch we seen, we run down and get the other bunch. And when you reach down, oh, that's the ones.

One time we came across a Santa Gertrudis bull over there, we was cleaning up the place already. And they used to fight and hang all in the hollows over there. So I told the guys go on top, and I come down the sides with my dogs. It was right above Camp Erdman. So my dogs down there, bark, and they came back, so I said, "Something's down there." So I put the dogs down again, they went down there and they bark, bark, bark, and fight, so I went down, this big Santa Gertrudis bull come up. Then he start walking on the side, he stop, he try duck away, he stop, then I watch him, he went to the water. So I went in the back, and the boys came down, my brother-in-law, and Kenny Dillingham, he was working on the ranch too. And he had a palomino horse. And my son was there too. I seen these two guys with the horses, going that way. And there's the bull in the back of the horse, and the back ham (of the horse) was all blood, all red. That Santa Gertrudis bull caught him in the gulch, and with the horn he ripped his back end. I said, "Good Lord!" And I went by them, they told me the story. Then the other horse, they had him tied, the palomino, was all blood. So I told Dillingham, he was the boss after Gordon went, "What you guys gonna do? You cannot leave that bull over there. He's going to get more wily, going cut up some more horses." So we went, went, went, and the cows were right in the back of the fence, it was a lucky thing. So we roped 'em, the other guy throw the rop on him, and he couldn't go for no horses at that time. We went drag him to one nice tree for tie him up there. So when we got him to the tree, he was pulling back, and he fell down. The rope twist on the hondu -- that's where the rope slide through. So we went down there to try and loosen the rope -- it was a big bull, a big bull -- it choked.

I told Kenny, "What you going to do with the bull?" "Oh, I no do nothing. Leave him there." "No, no, no, no." So we got two front-wheel-drive trucks on the road right there. Tie him up, drag him, throw him on top, take him to the boys down there. "Hey! You folks like one bull?" Ho! They was happy. So we get the _____, and put him on the truck, down to where they got the hoist. They put him on the hoist, they jacked that up to the end, and that bull's neck was on the ground. Big, nice Santa Gertrudis bull. But it would be a hard time to bring him down because he like fight. But if you had him tied, we probably could take one trailer down there, front-wheel-drive and get him out. Better die than get somebody hurt.

I: Tell me about the house that you lived in at Dillingham.

S: Well, the first house that I got there was from the old, old boss. The Japanese man, he used to live there. When he died, had the son with him, the wife, and they bought the house down on _____, and they moved down, he left that old house. I was living Haleiwa that time. So Gordon said, "Eddie, you want the house, you can come." Big house but old, old. One day he come tell me, Eddie, we going to put up a new house for you. I said, "Nah. This house plenty, Gordon." "No, no." So he brought two sketches of houses. So I give the wife, "Look, what house you like? This one? Okay, we take this one." Broke the other house down, put up a brand new Hicks home. Four bedroom, two full bath, big parlor. Nice, beautiful. Carport, and a little patio in the back. Oh, we all move down there, oh, it was a blessing. You go home, you sit down, the boys come talk story, your dogs all around you sleeping, like this. And you stay there, and your horse is right in the pasture, you can catch him, put him right by your house, saddle him up, it was beautiful. Then when the ranch went, awww. Made me sick. Nobody wanted to go out of here. When you go sleep nighttime you close your doors, no more nobody, no more street lights, no more cars, no dog back. Now the place I stay, cars come turn around and, you know, not quiet.

I: How far up in the mountains was it?

S: Right below our catchpen. Where our catch-pen was, that's where my house was. And from there, pasture all over. And from the main road up, it was all pasture that we could irrigate. That's where we had our dairy heifers, was hundred-something in one pasture.

I: Sounds beautiful.

S: Hoo! But you never seen beautiful till you drive up that road. Big sprinklers going, black-and-whites all there, horse pasture in there.

I: So where did the water come from on Dillingham's?

S: Oh, that place is full of wells. It had a big banana plantation over there. Chicken farm from Campbell had it, rented from Dillingham. So those bananas used to be all irrigated by ditch. They started with a big diesel pump. Oh, that water used to come out of a big, 24-inch valve. All that place got water. So we turned that into a sump pump, and a booster, with the big walking sprinklers. As soon as the cows got out, put the sprinkler in there, two pastures, move them, let the feed come back. Running the whole night. That place is thick with water. When I tell you thick, I mean **thick!** Ho!

I: Tell me about the herd you had at Dillingham.

S: It was all Santa Gertrudus, then we brought in Angus bulls, Brangus bulls.

I: What kind of a breeding program were you on?

S: All year round, leave the bulls out. When you go all year round, your bulls is all out working. You go season breeding, you gotta bring your bulls back. Where you going to put your bulls? You get 10, 12 bulls in one paddock, they're going start one fight and tear everything up. With the cows they find their mates and they're scattered all over. Even when we drive the cows back some bulls stay back, we don't care. Let them stay back -- they're picking up weight so when the cows come back he's ready to go. No worry about the bulls. And with season breeding, at the same time, you lose good cows, because your cows is all over, not by the water boxes, in one place. If the bulls camp by these water boxes, and your cow is up there in heat, she run out of heat, by the time she come down, the bull is too late. If you leave the bulls out, he no catch them this week, he might catch 'em the next one. If the bulls is all (in), you might lose some damn good cows. So make it like six months, bring them in, work them, then another couple months after that, wean off everything.

I: How many years were you at Dillingham?

S: Gee, Dillingham, I must have spent about 30 years. I was before Gordon, when Walter F. was, and when they went to Mokuleia Ranch and Land Company, Dillingham was dead at that time, that's when Gordon came. I already had 15 or something years there.

I: What was Walter Dillingham like?

S: Good man, oh, he love his horses. He used to come down weekends. You ought to have seen Crowbar Ranch at that time. And Joe Pedro was a good polo player, he could train horses. But when Walter F. come down, with a _____, his colts got to be all on one side of the stables, and the mares all on one side. All full, all horses. Then he come down the line and just look at that, all nice. That was what made him feel happy and got him out of town, you know? Beautiful, beautiful!

I: So he was a big polo player?

S: Yeah, way before. When I was down there, Walter F., he used to come along, but he was kind of old already. His wife was kind of old too. But Joe used to put 'em on a horse, the old lady, and lead 'em. The roads was all sand. They never wanted no paved roads, so when the kids ride, the horses no slide. Summertime, the kids would be all down, riding and everything. Joe would bring all the horses in. Then when they were all pau summer, they go back school or whatever, all out to pasture. And Joe used to break those horses. **Good** polo player.

I: What about you, did you play polo?

S: No! Those horses! I had too much hurt when I was too young, I think. I used to be no care, and just go. I figure I get crippled I lose too much. Cows more good. I got smashing with one bull in here when we were taking him slaughterhouse, a brown bull. He was getting too much already. We put him in the pay loader, went right up on the trailer. As soon as he hit the trailer he turned around and came back, and I went to close the door. He hit the door, I went run back in the other corner where we had the gate locked, and I climbed on the fence, and he was big one. He came with his head, he picked me up, and I thought I was going over the top but I came right back in front of him. Lucky I'm skinny and small -- I couldn't climb out cause he was there. And I just went like this (in a ball) and he start banging me. Then Roland was there, the other bull run on the truck, then he hit Roland too, but not like me. And then he locked the door and took me to the hospital. Was all bruised up on this side. But if I was a big guy, I think I would have died in there. I was small, I could get in the corner. But a big guy, he's not going in the corner.

But anybody tell you they worked on a ranch and never fall off a horse or never get hurt, I cannot believe that.

I: So what did you do for recreation?

S: Horses, cows, hunting. I used to like my hunting, hoo. At that time I was down at the old man's house. I was about 16, 17. I had about 16 dogs, all well-kept. We used to come in the morning, go, chase a big boar with the dogs, fight him, get all cut up, run away. Then I put the dogs in the car, go home, have a couple beers, talk story, throw the other bunch in the truck, go where the boar was fighting, because when the boar get hurt, he no go too far too, eh? Then the dogs brought it down, put it in my truck, bring the boar home, that was a fun time. I should have brought my album of the boar pictures. Hunting was one thing, and summertime we'd go down, catch the squid down the ocean. Nothing else to do. You could go to the theater down there, but you got to ride your bicycle.

I: What about your kids? What was it like raising kids out here?

S: Oh, the kids was alright. They liked the place too. That was the time they had the crusher going, so my boy worked the crusher. And then the other boys, they went plantation a little while, part-time. We was all living down there, plenty room. But recreation? No more _____ you can go. Sometimes we go church.

That was a big thing for me (going to work with my father). And Dad, he bought me one horse, one stud, one palomino horse, from Waianae. The army was going back to the mainland and wanted to do something with him. Tame as a lamb. Beautiful horse, stud. We brought him here, we bred him with some good horses, came out tame, you could ride them any place. I used to like ride him -- the old lady never like I go, she was scared. But the old man said, "Well, he gotta learn, you gotta teach him now or bumbye too late." So I'd stay in the room, open the door, see if they're up: they're not up. I go back in the room and wait. Gee -- the old lady open the door, up! Gee, I'm all pau already, all clean, eh?

So we were going on the horses that day. So the old man says, "Don't go by this horse. This horse will kick!" They call him Peko, "Kick" "Stay away!" So I was going, and the trail was starting to get a little bit narrow. So I went that side. And that Goddamn horse gave me one kick over here. But when he kicked I was numb, I never feel nothing, and I never wanted to tell my father, because oh, he and the old lady are going to get mad and no can go already, you know? So I never said nothing, and then, gee, I feel something going down (my leg)! I look, all **blood** going down. So I went and told my dad. He never said anything. Cause he knew it was my life. So he said, "Okay boys, you go together. I'm going to take the boy to the doctor." "What's the matter?" So we were in doctor, and ho, when we reach home the old lady had a fit!

I: Broken?

S: No, just nicked, chipped.

I: Tell me about when you got the lease on this place. Why did you want this place?

S: Me? I been here from when my old man was. So I knew I could do **something**, with the water, and the dairy heifers already coming in and making money. I was working down Dillingham, so this would suit me right. But I never had the money to take the lease. So I told the old man the story. He said, "You want the place?" I said, "Oh yeah, but I got no more money." So he said, "You come down tomorrow afternoon." So when I went down afternoon we talked stories, then we went to the boss down by the beach where he lived, and he paid the lease for me. Picked up the papers, gave us the papers. Cause he knew I was going to do it. Then I went with the heifers, I start patching fences, everything, get a little beef herd, increased the dairy heifers -- until the dairy heifers went back and I went up on my beef herd. I was up to 150 cows, but in this dry weather, I lost a bunch of cows. Buying feed from doles, \$40 a bale, I **still** lost cows. So now I'm picking up a little.

I: If there was someone else to come in on this land, what advice would you give them?

S: I no give nobody no advice. Cause nobody told me, I just went on my own. I used to watch my old man shoe the horse, clean the feet and everything, so when my horse needed shoeing I never said nothing to nobody. I'd go there the next day, still on, eh? He just told me, when you shoe, make sure your nail go out, not in, and no put them too high.

I watched him castrate, I watched, and I castrate 'em. He used to call the vet to cut his big boars. The vet would come with a squeeze chute, run 'em in -- gee, \$40, \$30! For the boars. When you're pau breeding, you cut him for sell and you can get more money. So I thought, "I can cut 'em." So I never say nothing to the old man. So this pig raiser down here had a big boar. We used to drink together and everything, and we started talking one day and he said, "Gee, I like cut him. But your old man get the doctor, eh?" I said yeah. He said, "You no can cut him?" I said, "If you no care, I cut him." "Sure, yeah!" Okay, so I going to cut him, this big boar.

So I see what the vet was doing, I get a little bit of kerosene and this and that. I made one snub for his nose, and I got one bench like this, and a bunch of guys. So I put it in his nose, and snub him right up to the post, and these guys pinch him against the wall, he going to sit down, see? So I put the chair, and when he sit down, his balls fall down over the (edge of the chair). So I wash 'em with the _____, wash them all clean, take them out. "Okay! Let him go! Let him go!" And then I told him, "No feed him heavy for a few days." So next morning I was down before daybreak with my flashlight to see if the poor bugger was dead or not. (laughing) I would feel bad if he died, you know what I mean? Hey, that suckin' boar is standing up and walking around, boy! So the guy was happy, the old man heard the story, said, "When we get, you cut them all." So I was cutting all for the guys. Oh, they were happy, save money, eh? Then when that thing healed, guys used to buy them for make laulus. The big stud comes thinnner, and the meat, big difference. They used to cut 'em and make a pile of laulus. Pay the vet \$30 to cut that bugger? (laughs)

I: What was the most important thing you think you learned?

S: Everything on the ranch is important. Watch the horses, watch the cows for sickness. With animals, the nose dry first. When you see them drying like that, it's fever or something coming into that cow. So if you can get it in the pen and hit it with the penicillin, maybe three days. Maybe they start to get good, maybe you better off getting rid of 'em. But no let 'em go back. They might get back sick again. Animals you got to watch, because they show you the signs. How they walk. How they eat. And sometimes when they get bad teeth, they eat and they spill 'em, cause they no can chew for go down. That's the kind of cow we had, no more teeth, just like this. That cow was skin and bones. So we brought 'em in the pen, and Gordon said, "Gee, the cow skinny like this, we better just let 'em go *make*." But the other, behind teeth was okay. So I told Gordon, "Take 'em, throw 'em where the feed stay." I was watching that cow, he put his mouth right in the feed like that (reaching deep down in the feed), and bite 'em in the back, and he took 'em down. That cow came fat! That's the kind you gotta watch.

I: So you really look at cows individually then.

S: Well, when you go water box you gotta see them individually. If you see this bunch here today, and you don't see the other bunch, you go to the other water box. You gotta check the water boxes, that's where you're going to find your problems. Or get on the ridge with the binoculars and hang out there. Sometimes they abort, or calf stuck, you gotta go get 'em, bring 'em back, pull out the calf, and you can butcher the cow. It's not going to be what you could make -- but you try save 'em, try save 'em.

I: What was the hardest thing about ranching up here?

S: The hardest thing about ranching is fencing. You gotta pound your pins, and you gotta dig your hole, climb up that ridge, push the wire down. After the fence is fixed and everything is good, not too much hard.

I used to like to drive cattle. You get the whole bunch running nice, put the dogs on 'em. No more cows run away. Soon as the cow run away, the dog bring 'em back. I tell these guys, when they're piled up, keep them in the pile. One run away, don't go chase one. Chase one and let go of 50, it no make sense. Hold 'em. The dog going to bring him back or he going to come back. When they're in the pile, they know they're safe, the dog no going bother 'em. But when they go on their own...

I: Tell me how you work with your dogs.

S: You know why plenty people no more dogs? You got to stay with them. Your dogs sometimes make you sick, training them. And licking them is no going to solve the problem. (Inaudible due to wind). The best is to throw young dogs in with the old, because that young dog doesn't follow all the time and (the old one) will lick him. So he going to listen. But if you throw in more young ones than the old timers, you going to lose them. The old timers know what you like. So when you give the commands, they go, and this dog going to follow them. But if you take all the dogs, and more don't know what they're doing than know what they're doing, these old timers no can work.

These dogs all work good. Very, very good. Guys no can believe. Plenty guys tell me "Oh, train my dog." It's not I train your dog. If I train your dog, you gotta start over and train them over, because he knows my command. He got my smell and everything. And your voice and everything is different. You going to have to start all over. You might as well start from the beginning. I trained dogs ever since I had cows. But I couldn't buy them because heelers was big money. But when Gordon came here he had a bitch and a stud, so he had the pups. So one day he said, "Hey, Eddie, I got some extra pups, you want to come look?" I said, "I got no more money, I no can buy." "No, no! I going give you!" "**Hey?** Oh, boy, jump and go."

There was a playpen like this, and one other guy was going to pick one too, but I went there first. And this dog was in the house like that. When I came by the fence, that dog ran from there and jumped to the fence, and I grabbed him like that (in my arms). And I look up, and it was a *kane*. I told Gordon, "Not this one, eh? Nice looking dog." "Let me see -- hold him, hold him, hold him. Hmm...yeah, this guy nobody pick yet. This is nobody's." Ho, it went in the car. Went home, it was the best dog, even better than what he had. Oh, what a dog for work! The airbase was a long runway, eh? And we're bringinng cattle down the runway, he worked the whole runway, any cow in the back of the pile he go down, put him in the pile and come back.

I: What was his name?

S: King. Oh, what a dog for work. And I bred from there. But it was alright because we had three or four guys on the ranch, everybody had cut dogs, so if you need dogs _____. That was the first dog I had, and I always wanted one, and boy that dog came out good, ho.

(inaudible)

Down at the airbase, had about a 34-acre strip. We had one sick bull, we put him on the trailer and throw him in there. And every time I have to go look for that bull. He no stay where the water is, he'd come for the water and go back. And I got to go through that tangle, open up, and there the bull. I come back. So one day I say, "I going put this dog on that bull, see if he can find 'em." So go up with a _____ dog. He went and he came back. Then he went and he never came back. Pretty soon he bark. So I went inside, and there the bull. So I call him, he come back. Next time I jump down the Jeep and he looking at me, (whistles). He went, (barks). There the bull. He found all the bulls. What a dog!

And then George Webster, when he got retired, he used to like go on the ranches, drink with the people. Sometimes he came down to Mokuleia. I said, "You guys no more dog? Gee, here we get dog all in the cage. Take 'em out." Pau hana time, George says, "Yeah, sounds good." So my patio like this, and the table, a little bit low. He says, "How you train your dogs?" I said, "You just give them the command and you let them know." Ho, those dogs underneath the table, scratching the cement. They went out, I gave them one call, they all came back. Those men could not believe. "Ho, if they could do that up the ranch!" I said, "Well, you can. But you're not going to take them all out at one time or they'll start one fight and eat the calfs up." You gotta learn them how to jump on the truck, jump down, all that. It's a lot of work. And if you've got a hard-headed dog, you've got to tie them. When you call him, he come.

Plenty ranches you go, they don't use dogs. They no more work with them. You no can just throw them in pen with some *kaukau* and go home. Play with them a little bit, let them smell you and know what you're like. Just like the kid -- you don't put the kid in his room and throw him one candy bar.

When you learn your own, its better than when you go through books and everything else. Plenty books say, put your cows in the pasture, leave them for 30 days, take them out -- but how the hell do they know what kind of pasture you get? Maybe you've got to leave them 13 days instead of 30 days. Your rotation is not like on the Mainland. Everybody know what they doing on their own. They're happy with what they're doing.

I: Did you grass these pastures?

S: No, this was all from before. They picked up koa beans way before. When we were small kids we used to go with my mother, my mother used to drop us, pick up the koa beans, I think, \$5 a bag. Throw them in the molassas and then mix them. The cows take that molassas and go dump them. Where the poop stay it's all seed, and when the rain come, the koa come, the cows eat. That's what Dillingham done with Camp Erdman. They pick up the koa, they took it down Camp Erdman. And all the hikers that go to Camp Erdman, on the trail they give them bags, little bags of grass seed, koa seed. That's how they got the feed all along there.

I: The cattle didn't eat the baby trees?

S: The koa, when it grows, has a pretty hard root. You're going to take time to pull them. And the cow not going to pull, the cow is just going to zip them off. And then branches going to come up, she's going to get more

strong. And then next time she's like this, then she's too high. But we had these big Santa Gertrudis bulls and cows. They got their horns, and in dry weather I used to watch them. That bull put his horn. He bent the koa, then he put his leg over the koa, and it get brittle and that tree snap -- this is no fooling -- and he eat. I was watching and I said, "Goddamn." Pretty soon, the other cows got the word, what was happening. (They stole his food) I seen all that, boy.

I: What was your favorite time in ranching?

S: When I was at Mokuleia. You go work. You no more responsible. *Pau hana* is *pau hana*. Over here, *Pau hana* is not *pau hana*, because if there's something left over it's your business, and if you no make out this and that, you have bills to pay. Down there, I no say that I was goofing off, if things go wrong we all go, and Dillingham treat us good. But over here, it's yours. You no leave this damn thing and go.

When I go home, I cannot go home early, because I got to close the (water) tank. When I close the tank, these boxes all going to get dry. If the cows are not *pau* drinking water, when you come next morning, the boxes might be all be bent over, you got to go fix them all. Who's going to fix them all, one man? When the boxes are all full, they all drink, they're never going to touch them in the night. Maybe one or two will come, but your box is full. Open your tank, there's your water in the boxes. So you gotta do that, crack 'em early in the morning, crack 'em in the evening.

But when you're working for somebody, *pau hana* is *pau hana*. They're not going to bother your if you need to take off a day or whatever. But over here, when you're working your own, it's tough. You got to make it good. But now, I like do what I used to do, and I no can. But before, no problem, you know?

I: Do your children work with you?

S: They help, but they no like ranching. (inaudible)

I: Why is that?

S: I no can tell you, because I don't know. Even my brothers them, only me and my other brother _____ . The rest all went Schofield, Pearl Harbor, all went work for big money. My one brother was _____ at Schofield, then my other brother went in the Army, and when he came back from the Army he went in ranching. But he wanted a long lease and they never gave him a long lease. He went to Colorado and picked up a pretty good place. But he used to work hard, because outside in Colorado, on the Mainland, is not like here. You gotta put your feed away. If you don't get enough feed, you got to go buy. So he work, work, work, and he had a little heart trouble. He was supposed to go for surgery and stuff, but he never had the

money, because his kids never like farming either. He had one boy, but he went in the Army. Then he had that stroke.

Over here just open the gate, paddocks, go inside and poison the bad things. Up there you gotta bale, you gotta get the machines. The machines broke down you no can bale, you got the hail or whatever, all when you're ready to cut. Sometimes they get the machines with the lights, go cut them and bail if you can, because when the thing come in you're going to get sticks, you no can sell, you no can feed your cattle. I was up there one time, oh, it's work, work, work! They made the round bales, eh? And when I see the bales out in the field I say, gee, it's all spoiled, eh? He said no, good. So he put his hand inside and pulled it out -- oh, the nice green color! Outside it's all snow, eh? But inside it's all good, cause it's tight.

I: Someone told me the Dillingham land once was owned by the Silva family, is that true?

S: This whole place was combined with Mokuleia. They had it separated, Medonsa and Gasper I think it was. And they had a fire or something, it's what I heard. And then they divided them. But this was the best part at that time, although Dillingham is big. So they had the fire, and he had to sell his share and Dillingham bought.

I: Medonsa was the first name?

S: No, Eddie Medonsa, but they changed the name to Silva. Because this is mixed breeds, so I think they never like carry that name. They had a little bit colored inside. If you see the mother, right off the bat you see it, they wasn't no *haoles*. So they get Medonsa out and bring Silva in. But the place was Medonsa Estate.

My father's father used to work -- they had a place in Kalihi Valley. They brought my father down for take over this place, so put us all in the car, all us kids and guys came down here to look the house. Oh, my father and mother just fall in love with the place! My old man went back and quit his job, load us in and came over.

You know, ranching is good, but telling people how to ranch, no, you no can. In other words, when they do something, whatever they do wrong they got to find that mistake and solve it then, right on. I never did call nobody. I just went out on my own and watched them. I don't come out of it? I'll just try something else next time. Cows no go this side? Make the fence where the cows go. They go there, make the gate where you want to move them, stuff like that. You get them. If a bull no throw no good calfs, no breed him again; throw another bull in. No keep the same bull -- if it takes nine months and another seven months for wean, gee, where are **you** going? You got to solve the problem quick, you know what I mean?

I: Did you ever have cattle rustlers up here?

S: Right on this flat we had one, this paddock here. It all used to be cane. So they had the road right along the boundary where the plantation boys used to go. And I was missing one cow, missing one cow. One day I was working Dillingham, and we went to Kahuku to cut corn. So when I came it was kind of late. So when I look with the binoculars on the grass, hey, the cow I'm looking for is on the grass. It was the cow I'm missing. That was a Friday. So Saturday morning I came out, I got my horse and go back to look for the cow. So when I was going through the trail, my horse jumped back! He's looking in the grass on the trail. I jumped down from the horse and lead him. Somebody had shot the cow there, and they took the hams and the front legs, drag them to the plantation and load them in the truck. I come to find out this cow had a calf, a nice calf, and that was a cow I wanted to keep the calf. But the calf went out onto the other _____. Oh, I was mad.

Called the cops. The cops came on the plantation road. "Gee, what are you going to do now?" They said if I find the guy to call them up.

There was one way in the valley, the same thing, only the shoulders and hams. And what they used to do, put them on the car and go out and sell them to these retired guys.

I: I'm almost done with the interview, but I was going to ask what you would like people to know about the work that you do.

S: What I told you already. If you're going to ranch, you've got to watch the cows. And if they're going to ranch, make believe they like it. If they don't like it, somewhere along the line they're going to jump out. Plenty guys from outside look in, eh, look at that, beautiful. Eh, go try and put it like that -- the fences and rotation and bad grass. And when the prices don't look too good and you no can help. If you like it, you try a little bit, if you like it then you do it. You've got to love it. If I never love it, I wouldn't be here. If I never love it, I would be retired and, I tell you, sitting pretty. But if they would give me a chance to go ranch again I'd go ranch. I'd start tomorrow.

I: Why do you love the ranching so much?

S: I tell you all the time, with the dogs, the cows, the horses. The air is different already. No fighting traffic. You get up, it's you, you do what you want. You want to develop that, do it the way you like, go ahead, it's yours.