Harold Fredrick Rice, Jr.

Freddy has been a leader in the ranching and cattle industry in Hawaii for more than 40 years. Born and raised on the family ranch on Kaonoulu Maui, Freddy Rice is a fifth-generation paniolo. A graduate of Punahou High School and Cornell University, his education was in livestock marketing, agronomy, nutrition & conservation; knowledge he invested in his long and distinguished career in the Hawaii ranching industry. He has developed water systems, grazing systems, wild life programs and soil conservation ranching techniques. In his career as a paniolo he managed or operated 4 different ranches on the Big Island and Maui – and even found time to establish a successful charter fishing business. Today he is the owner of FR Cattle Company that operates on lands on the slopes of Mauna Kea.

Series 2, Tape 2
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with

Harold Frederick “Freddy” Rice, Jr. (FR)

November 30, 2000

Waimea, Hawaii

BY: Anna Loomis (AL)

AL: This is an interview with “Freddy” Rice at his home in Waimea on November 30, 2000, and he’s being interviewed by Anna Loomis.

AL: Maybe you could start by giving me your full name.

FR: Harold Frederick Rice, Jr. (laughs).

AL: Could you tell me when and where you were born, just to start off?

FR: Born in Pu'unene, Maui, [September] nine, 1934.

AL: And Pu’unene is a ranch, is that right?

FR: No, Pu’unene is—at that time, was the only hospital on the island. (Laughter) Sort of a plantation supported hospital.

AL: And what was the name of the town where you grew up?

FR: Makawao.

AL: Makawao. Could you tell me about where you grew up? Your neighborhood?

FR: Well Makawao is a—it’s turned into be sort of a famous old town, but it was just supported sort of the up-country, was the most up-country sort of town, at that time. And . . . small town; everybody knew everybody. The post office was the place where you saw all your friends everyday. And we—we lived just above Makawao, which was the start of the ranch, my family ranch. Right at the bottom of it; because most of the ranch is in Kula. But we did have a section in Makawao. My folks lived in Makawao, and my grandfather lived in Kula, where the big part of the ranch existed.

AL: What was the name of your family ranch?

FR: Kaonoulu.

AL: Kaonolulu?

FR: Kaonoulu.

AL: Kaonoulu. Okay.

FR: It's interesting, because . . . Kipahulu ranch is next to Hana. And Kipahulu, that's like the *kipuka* where the *ulu*, the breadfruit, was grown. Right. And you come down the line, and you get to Ulupalakua, which is the hard grapefruit or the green grapefruit. And then you get to Kaonoulu, which meant the grapefruit was ripe. So we surmised . . .

AL: The breadfruit?

FR: The breadfruit. So we surmised that they would pick the grapefruit at Kipahulu, and they would walk along Kahikenui to Ulupalakua, but it was still green and hard at that point. And they would continue along, and by the time they got to Kaonoulu, where the land is, Kaonoulu, it was ripe. We figured that's about how long it would take them to travel across . . .

AL: In the ancient days . . .

FR: Yeah. And so those places got their names by the degree—you know, from the *ulu*.

AL: How interesting. How did your family acquire that ranch?

FR: They purchased it from the Cornwall estate. And Cornwall purchased it from a Chinese man that had gotten it from a Hawaiian man to raise corn and potatoes, and then they had the great potato famine of Kula, and he moved back to—or he went back for a visit to China, and word came that he was going to stay there. So Mr. Cornwall jumped on a ship, and went to China and found him, and bought the ranch. It's interesting that Spreckles, the famous Spreckles, Claus Spreckles, had sent a letter on the same ship, with an offer to buy the property. But him having gone in person got there first.

AL: And Cornwall was—was part of your family?

FR: No, Cornwall was not part of the family. Since that time, um . . . my great—my aunt married John Walker, whose mother was a Cornwall. So we became family. But at the time that the ranch was bought it wasn't family.

AL: How was it that your family bought that ranch from the Cornwall family?

FR: Well, my grandpa was born and raised on Kauai, and moved to Maui as a plantation—sugar plantation supervisor. And decided that that really wasn't what he wanted to do, and he wasn't

spending enough time with his family, so he had the opportunity to buy the—to buy the ranch, and just did so because that's what he wanted to do.

AL: What was your grandfather's name?

FR: Harold Waterhouse Rice.

AL: And that was your father's father.

FR: Yes.

AL: When did your father take over the ranch?

FR: Um, about—I would say in the middle 1950s. My grandfather basically—

Gail Rice enters the room and the tape recorder is turned off during the brief introductions. Mrs. Rice exits and taping is resumed.

AL: So I think we were talking about when your father took over the ranch.

FR: Yeah. So my uncle-in-law—married to my father's sister—and my father, bought the ranch from my grandfather. And they turned it into—it's a general partnership now.

AL: Could you describe the ranch for me?

FR: Yeah, it runs from—typical of the old Hawaiian land divisions—it ran from the top of the mountain down to the ocean. Runs from Kula all the way down to Kihei. And so you have about three different environments: you have the mountain environment, you have that sort of in the middle, which is—when we were kids—a lot of cactus and lantana [plants]. And then you have the bottom dry lands, which is mostly just *keawe* trees and very dry. So it was pretty typical of most land divisions before.

AL: Did you enjoy growing up there?

FR: Oh yeah. And it was—it was the last to convert to trucks and trailers, and even now it hasn't, really, because it's so steep that putting any roads in there is just asking for erosion, so it's basically a horseback ranch. So we rode to work and from work, and we ran it on the *Ukapau* system, where you had one job for the day, and when you got through that was it for the day; you might be through at 10:30 [am] or 7:00 at night, but it ran under that system.

AL: So did your dad put you to work on the ranch when you were a kid?

FR: Yeah. The ranches on Maui, all of them, the managers or the owners always accompanied the workmen on cattle work, and so we were just brought up that way. They weren't office managers, they were cowboys in their own right. And so we just grew up working that way. So—like in the summers and Christmas vacations and so forth, every day we were on a horse.

AL: How old were you when you learned to ride?

FR: Well I know that I—when we got to be in the second grade, I think that's about seven years old, we were allowed to go rope in the pen. And I have pictures of me riding way before that, but evidently by that time we were pretty good—good enough to go into a branding pen and rope with everybody, so I would say we started, you know, as soon as we could (laughter).

AL: Do you remember your first horse?

FR: Um, yeah, Nellie—it was everybody's first horse. Big black mare (laughter). The only problem that she had was every now and then a bee would sting her and she'd run off with whoever was riding her . . .

AL: (Laughing) oh, really?

FR: And it was impossible to stop. And so we had some terrifying rides through the trees and over the bushes and dale until she finally ran out of air, but she would just grab the bit and take off.

We were all deadly afraid of any honeybees. Nellie and Maile were the two horses that all the kids sort of grew up on.

AL: Who were some of the other kids that you knew around the ranch?

FR: Well my cousin Johnny Walker would come up from Honolulu every summer, and pretty much—**would**, in fact, work with us all the time. And my uncle Manduke Baldwin's son, Peter Baldwin, who's now the manager of Haleakala Ranch. And Edward Baldwin's children, Greg and Jane, kids who were—they were older than us. They grew up working on the ranch just the way we did.

AL: You mentioned that—I guess from an early age you worked on your father's ranch. What kind of a boss was your dad?

FR: Oh, he's the good kind of a boss. And I'll give you a story that typifies something that I really learned. One time we were working at the corrals that were right below my grandfather's house, and at lunch time we went up to my grandfather's house for lunch, and it started to rain. And when we went back down to work, my dad gave us all raincoats, but he didn't take his raincoat. And we asked him why he's not taking his raincoat. He said, well, the cowboys wouldn't have a chance go home and get their raincoats. So he wasn't going to—and they were all going to have to work without, so he went without **his** raincoat. And that really taught me something about leadership. He could have easily just put his raincoat on. I don't think anybody would have begrudged him that. But just because the men were going to have to work all afternoon in the rain without one, he didn't take his. And that kind of really stuck out, you know, how you work with people.

AL: By example.

FR: Yeah.

AL: Yeah. Um, maybe you could tell me about—well, I'm curious. Was there ever a time in your life when you didn't think that you would be a rancher?

FR: (Softly) No. (Laughs) Only in later life, in 1983, '84, when president Carter put the grain embargo, and ranchers and farmers throughout the United States went broke; prior to that all

the government banks, like the Federal Land Bank and the Production Credit Association and so forth, had been giving loans left and right to try and increase the production of the country. And when things went bad with the grain embargo, all these banks reclaimed their loans, and it was terrible across the whole United States. They say well over a thousand farmers committed suicide that year, because they were going to lose all their properties, and the whole works—I was one of the casualties of that.

So I turned to fishing, because my little fishing boat was the only thing that was leased—it was leased so it was the only thing the bank couldn't take, having taken everything else. And so I turned to fishing for ten years. And at that time, when I really got into it, I thought, wow, this is pretty neat, and I'll probably do this the rest of my life. But after about ten years I began to look at my clients as though they were pilgrims, and I wasn't having any fun anymore, and the cattle cycle was kind of at the bottom, so I decided to get back into ranching.

AL: Why do you describe your clients as pilgrims?

FR: Well I got to where—when I first started, I had all the enthusiasm, and I used to treat them as though they were like visiting guests from the—relatives from the mainland, everything. And then I began to look at them in a different light, like "oh no, here come the Gussmiths." You know, and the return clients, I'd heard their stories every year for ten years, and I just had no enthusiasm at all, and I decided that was the time to quit. Because I wasn't really doing the job, I was just sort of—I guess it's like a waiter who starts off and really gives his clients good service, and then he gets burned out and just throws him the food (laughter). That's about when I decided it was time to quit.

AL: But when you were a child, was there a certain point at which you knew that you wanted to be a rancher?

FR: I don't think there was any question, ever. One of my big disappointments was that out of college I fully expected to go back and work and live on the family ranch. And my father said that there really wasn't room for me. That they didn't have the—the pay wasn't there, and there really wasn't anything for me to do except just be another cowboy. So that was a really big disappointment. That's when I went to work for the HC & S [Hawaii Commercial and Sugar] Company for about a year and a half, year and a quarter, and then I went to Kahuku Ranch on the Big Island. It turned out that—I know in hindsight that my life has been much fuller because of that. And the experiences that I've had—if I had worked on the family ranch and I was still there, I wouldn't have done half the things that I've done, and experienced half the things that I've experienced.

AL: Why did you want to go back to your family ranch, specifically?

FR: Well I'd always just grown up thinking that that's what I would do. I mean, I never gave it a thought that I would, you know—I just figured I would be part of the succession. And I was content to do that—maybe—I had it in the back of my mind that I would start maybe leasing or purchasing, more leasing properties from older families whose children weren't into ranching, and start putting together a small ranch of my own on the side. Because I was—you always want to have your own little cows and do your own thing as far as genetics and so forth. And that was sort of what I thought I would do, would work on our ranch, and in the mean time, sort of have my own weekend ranch.

AL: On the side.

FR: Yeah.

AL: Was there a reason that you came to the Big Island and not Maui, when you realized you couldn't work on your family's ranch?

FR: Well, the Kahuku Ranch was purchased by the Damon estate, and my uncle, Manduke Baldwin, who was the manager of Haleakala Ranch is married to one of the—Haku Baldwin, who was a Damon. And the timing was perfect; I had voiced my dissatisfaction with the HC & S situation, the ranch there, just at the time, really unbeknownst to me, that the Kahuku manager job was up for grabs. And so within a week of resigning from HC & S, I was the manager of Kahuku Ranch at South Point.

AL: Uh, you said you voiced your dissatisfaction with HC & S. What were you dissatisfied about?

FR: Um, I was like the assistant manager, and the manager was not managing correctly, and had a real poor way of dealing with the employees. And when he started to get on my case—this is the thought that I had: you can't learn anything from somebody who doesn't know as much as you do. And so I—I didn't see myself going anywhere. Anytime I had a new idea or tried to do something that I thought was the right way, I was unable to do it.

AL: And what was his name, the manager?

FR: Tom Ligget.

AL: Tom Liggit? L-I-G-G-I-T?

FR: Yeah. E-T.

AL: E-T. Um, so you came to Kahuku Ranch through your connections with the Damon family?

FR: Yes.

AL: And am I correct that you were the manager?

FR: Manager for fifteen years.

AL: Could you tell me about Kahuku Ranch?

FR: Yes, it's a—it was basically—it had originally been a part of a couple private owners, and Parker Ranch had bought it. And um, Parker Ranch had sold it to Jimmy Glover, who was a big—construction, Glover Construction, here on this island. And at that time, he was married to the present Barbara Anthony. So they purchased it. And then he died, unexpectedly, as a very young man. And so the estate, his estate put it up for sale, to pay taxes, and the Damon estate purchased it. And Jimmy had done a real good job with his construction background, had put in roads and fences, and a pretty good water system, but he hadn't done much as far as developing pasture.

So the Damon estate's mandate to me was that they didn't want a fancy, white-rail showplace, but they wanted an efficient—as efficient, modern, commercial operation that was possible on that land. And so we set about clearing all the brush lands, and we cleared part of the forest, which was actually—the way we did it was pretty good. The forest was in a climax stage, where you had a lot of big, old, dying trees, and a lot of rubbish underneath. And what we did is we went in and we cleared out all the old dying trees, and we cleared all the young little rubbish trees, and kept all the sort of straight, good trees. And we took all the old trees and the little trees and put them in very tight piles. And . . .

AL: The cuttings . . .

FR: Yeah, all the trees we had knocked down, we put them into very tight piles. And we went back—and we went through about three-thousand acres like this—and we went back afterwards, and compressed the piles even tighter. And what's happened now, if you go to Kahuku, is that all those piles have grown up into little forests, with four or five varieties of native trees. Because the cattle couldn't get to them. So it's really—so you have the grazing underneath the forest. And you have this young forest coming up, and you have trees that were then in their prime basically still in their prime, and it's just wonderful. And I mean—and had that been left to nature, probably over a thousand years it would come back to what it is today. We just hastened the process, and it was—it was very—it turned out to be—probably if you tried to go in and clear a forest today they'd put you in federal prison. But the way it turned out because of the way we did it, which was just common sense, it's turned out to be a better environment than it would have been had it been left alone.

AL: Was forest conservation one of your goals?

FR: Not really, but we knew that we certainly didn't want to have a bare area. We knew that wherever there were trees we had more rainfall. I mean, it was obvious when the mist came through that wherever you had trees you had greener grass. So we wanted to keep as many trees as we could. So like I said, we cleared out all the dead trees that were going to die anyway, and all the little trees that come up by the thousands—you know that takes a hundred years for them to sort themselves out, they grow and the weak ones die, everything, you know. We just made the choice right away, we just—all of the weak trees we bulldozed out, left all the strong ones. So we just hastened the process by a thousand years.

AL: Could you tell me about the herd that was at Kahuku ranch when you first got there?

FR: Well it was an all-Hereford herd. And there were 750 breeding cows when I got there, and fifteen years later when I left we had three thousand breeding cows. So that was a big project. And the intensive grazing that you see today, we were doing that back then, when we cleared the land we'd take 300 acres at a time and cut it into four paddocks. And the cattle would spend one week in each paddock, rotate around. And that was the way we kept the regrowth from coming back. Rather than use poison we use heavy grazing.

AL: Was that your idea, to use the intensive grazing?

FR: Well, it was something I'd learned through the years. It's sort of a—it was a New Zealand type of . . . I actually felt that New Zealand was about a hundred years ahead of the U.S. in pasture management. And so the textbook that I used was *Grasslands of New Zealand*. And about that time this guy Shrimpton had come through as a consultant from New Zealand. And I'd seen what he had done on Haleakala Ranch, and Kukaiau Ranch. Some on Ulupalakua Ranch, and it just—you know, it just made so much sense. That you use the cattle as a management tool. That basically, your product was grass. And the cattle harvested, and sold the grass. And was used as a management tool. And that's still my philosophy today.

And some of the ranches that are in trouble today, the reason in my opinion is they think that the cattle is their product. And so they start adding up the numbers on the computer, and they get more and more cattle, and pretty soon they have no grass. Basically, a piece of land will only produce so many pounds of meat. So do you want to have one 500 pound wean-calf, or do you want to have two 250-pound wean-calves? Your given piece of land will only raise 500 pounds of beef. To me it's obvious that one cow, the maintenance of one cow, is better than the maintenance of two cows, when you consider transportation, medicine, mineral feeding area, so you're better off having one cow that raises a 500 pound calf on a given piece of land than you are having two cows raising 250 pound calves. The amount of money you get is going to be the same—you sell meat by the pound, not by the head.

AL: Yeah.

FR: So if the rancher will think of himself as a grass farmer, and manage for the grass, and just have the numbers of cattle to manage the grass and harvest it, um, to me that's been the success of **my** ranching career, is having that basic difference. Of course, you've got to have a good harvesting machine. You've got to take care of it, and all that. But my product is really grass.

AL: Did you come to that—I guess, did you come to the New Zealand school of grazing through your education at Cornell? Or was this something that you . . .

FR: No. Basically, through my relationship with my uncle, Manduke Baldwin, on Maui. Cause he's the one who got into it to begin with. And the consultant, Shrimpton, had worked with him. And it just made so much sense; I actually was able to carry it further than he was, because he had established the pastures as far as size and fencing and so forth, and I was clearing brand new land so I could do it all right to begin with. So it was a **great** opportunity.

AL: What was the reception to these new ideas at Kahuku Ranch?

FR: Um, it took a little bit of doing, but I had this—this guy, Carl Sunquist was in charge of Soil Conservation Service, at the time. And they had the mainland textbook out, which meant that you planted a pasture and you didn't graze it for two years until it established, and all this. But I was able to take him and show him where if I did that, the whole place would be covered with blackberry, and every other pest that you could think of. And I was able to take him around and show him examples of intensive grazing. And Hawaii was different in that we were using kikuyu and pangola grass, which have runners. And anybody knows that if you're trying to establish a lawn, the more you mow it, the quicker it forms cover rather than just let it grow up all scraggly. And I was able to take him to show him the side of the road where the county cantoneer, who I think is the best pasture manager in the state—cause the side of the road, always looks nice, always has clover, has no weeds, you know, and he mows it once a month [i.e., no selective grazing]. So I was able to show him examples like that, and he became very supportive of me, and put a memo or whatever he does, a policy statement out that Hawaii had to be treated differently, especially in the rainforest area.

AL: Differently from the mainland . . .

FR: Yeah. And he backed me up with the trustees of the Damon estate. And Carl actually went on to become one of the head people in the Soil Conservation Service on the mainland. But I was—he's one of the—you know, your life is Celestine Prophesy, right? The people you meet. There **are** no chance meetings, and I met good people along the way, that helped me. And I guess I'm sort of a lazy person, so I usually take the more reasonable, logical, easy way to do things.

AL: In terms of the herd that was at Kahuku when you arrived, were there many wild cattle?

FR: Not really. The tame cattle were wild when I got there, from being mishandled.

AL: Oh, yeah?

FR: And, uh, it was interesting—the first time that we tried to drive a paddock of about 300 cows, we got about 10 cows in. (Laughter) And I just had arrived there, and I'm sitting there with these cowboys, and they're looking at this 23-year-old *haole* kid from Maui, and I'm sitting

down, we're having lunch, and they're sitting over there, and I'm saying, "you know, people **are** smarter than cattle. We **are** smarter than them. Number one. So, there **is** a way to get these cattle in." And what had happened is that as we'd come near the pen they'd all turn around and just broke back. So I said, ok, said, "this is what we're going to do. We're going to drive the cattle to the back of the pasture, we're going to leave the gate open, because that's where the water is, and we're going to drive them to the back with a lot of noise, just the way we—you guys are used to driving, just make a lot of noise and everything. And when they reach the end and start coming back through us, we all line up on the top, just let them come through. Don't make any noise, just whistle so we can stay in line. And we'll follow them into the holding pen. And it worked.

AL: Why did it work?

FR: Well, because—that's—you know, you're thinking like the cow, right? They were used to running towards the noise, breaking away, so we drove them to the **back** of the pasture, so they just turned around and came past us, right? And by then they were thirsty, because they'd been on two drives and they hadn't had any water. And they just went—they all went—and then we didn't hassle them when we got near the pen; like I say, we just whistled. And they all went in.

AL: Just let them go in.

FR: Just let them go in. And, you know, that was like my first big test, right? These guys all had their arms folded like this, see, "ok, **now** what, smart guy?" And they all went in. And there was no question after that as to who was boss.

AL: Were most of the cowboys Hawaiian?

FR: All Hawaiian.

AL: You mentioned that—well, you might have had a little something to prove coming in as this young *haole* kid from Maui. Did you encounter initial . . . resistance to your leadership?

FR: Not for long, because it was obvious as soon as I got on a horse—you know, of course they gave me a horse that was going to buck.

AL: Right (laughs).

FR: (Smiling) And in those days, that was just like exercise for me. So you know, they could see right away, you know—I just rode the horse to the ground and said, ok, let's go. And they tried all their little things, and I was cowboy enough just to go right through it. So there was no question after the first day that I probably knew a lot more and was better cowboy than most of them.

AL: Did you have the sense going into that job that you would have to prove yourself?

FR: Not really, because I had confidence. I mean, that's all I'd ever done, that's all I knew. And I knew—I knew what I was doing. If you know what you're doing, it's just like in sports. You have the basics, and you start to have a bad time, you can go back to sound basics and get yourself out of a slump. It's the same thing; I had the basics. I knew what I was doing. I mean, I'd put in water systems, I'd done pasture improvement. I've done everything you could possibly think of doing. And they had been—on the other hand—in Ka'u it was very isolated, very country at that time, and nobody back there had any kind of the experience that I'd had. I was like a teacher. And I took that thing—I was like a teacher, and I didn't talk down to anybody, I just said, eh, you know, this is the way I think it might work.

AL: At that point you were living out in the country, and you were starting a family. What was it like to be raising your family out in South Point?

FR: Oh, it was great. You know, we just dragged them along hunting and fishing. I didn't take a vacation for about five years. There was no need to, because, you know, we'd go hunting in the weekends, and late afternoons, and we'd go fishing—I was a mad shore fisherman, and we had this ten miles of . . . perfect . . . waterfront to ourselves. And we could go throw-net fishing, or spinning, diving, whatever you wanted to do, and it was just, you know, all that you wanted. Of course, we only took what we needed. We kind of lived off the land there for most of the time. It was great for the kids. You know, they just got to grow up the way I grew up.

AL: So you mentioned that you had a lot of confidence going into your job at Kahuku Ranch—when you were working at HC & S, was that more of a learning experience for you?

FR: Yeah, I sort of—yeah, it was good experience, because, although Tom Ligget I felt knew nothing about ranching and so forth; I felt he'd been promoted to that job to get him away from the plantation. So one of those things where they didn't know what to do with this guy. But he was really meticulous on records, and weighing everything that came through, and he had a record of every—the weight of the calves that came out of every pasture. And because it was a big plantation, organization, he had—we had to do a lot of budgeting. And so I learned a lot of the administrative parts of ranching from him. And it stood me in good stead. I would give him credit for that. I learned—and I've used that: I've always weighed my wean-calves, I've always followed through how they've done. Even though I sell them to a feedlot, I still—part of the sale is that I get the records of their performance. And so, I've learned all that from that experience, which was

. . . valuable.

AL: I think it was either right at the end of your stint as manager of Kahuku Ranch, or right at the beginning of your next, your next job, that, in 1974, that the small ranchers of the Big Island made a move to—I think it was an anti-trust move against some of the big ranches on the Big Island. I don't know if you were at all involved with that.

FR: No, I wasn't.

AL: No.

FR: But maybe it was the—you talking about when they had the land auction . . .

AL: Yeah.

FR: . . . leases. Yeah, I was part of that.

AL: Yeah. Can you tell me about that?

FR: Yeah. In fact my attorney in the Rice-Cayetano case, John Gomans, was our leader. That's how I met John. And the small ranchers organized, and it was an interesting organization. Hawaii Cattlemen's Association is an organization of ranches, Hawaii ranches. But the people

who attend the meetings and so forth are ranch managers, paid employees, with no real say-so. So if you decide that we're going to all donate a thousand dollars to this project or that project, or we're going to take this stand with the legislature, they would always have to go back and consult with the owners. The organization that we put together, the Small Ranchers' Association, you had to be an **owner**. You had to be a **ranch owner** to be there, so that when we decided to do something, it was done. And politically we were very strong, because it was—most of the ranchers had huge families, the Ramoses and the Nobrigas and the Andrades and so forth, and so we—politically we were very strong, and we went to the legislature, and put the pressure on to have those state leases brought out to auction. And they were brought out to auction, and it broke up, um, a lot of the big ranches. Kukaiau Ranch lost several of its major leases, as did Parker Ranch.

AL: Just to clar—

FR: And some of the—those ranchers, those families, still have those properties, and are sort of major players in the ranching industry today.

AL: Just to clarify for the tape, the problem had been that the big-five ranches had continuously renewed their State leases? Is that right?

FR: And it had been at public auction, and the small ranchers just didn't have the money and the weretheall. They'd been legally renewed, you know, through public auction, but the time had come now when the small, so-called small ranchers **had** money. Lot of them had **cane** lands that were bringing in great—good income. And they had the money to go and bid on these ranches. So and—rather than—and the big ranchers knew that, so what they were trying to do was keep the state from bringing them out to public auction. They were delaying that action, and the leases were up and due, and they were going on temporary permits forever. So what we did was, you know, quote the law, phrase and verse to the state, and force them into bringing it out. We were going to take them to court, if necessary. But politically, we had it . . . pretty well made, to do that.

Interestingly enough, the big ranchers knew what these leases were worth, and they only went up so high. The—the people that ended up getting these leases—and I was not a successful bidder, so I know—I'm on the other side of the fence—they [the successful bidders] bid too high for these leases. So ten years down the road, they got together and they got the legislature to pass a resolution wherein the department of land reduced the leases by fifty-percent. So people like myself and, say, Parker Ranch, and Kukaiau, the people who had bid and not been successful, we went, "now wait a minute, that's not fair, that's **below** what **we** bid!" And till today, that's a real—that's a problem with those of us that were not successful,

because we knew what we were talking about too. And we knew we could only go so high. So they went higher than is reasonable.

AL: And sort of dug themselves into a hole.

FR: And dug themselves into a hole, and then instead of bringing them back out to lease again, when they defaulted and couldn't make their payments, they reduced the leases, all these state leases. So now all these leases are [profitable]. This lease across the road here, the Lalamino lease, was originally about 30,000 dollars. Now it's only 10,000 dollars. We'd all like to have that. I would—I would bid to twenty! You know? Not to thirty, but to twenty. But my bid—although I bid on it, you know, it's now at a lower lease. So we felt that was kind of unfair. But there's obviously nothing going to be done about it.

AL: When—at this point, in 1974, you weren't yet a ranch owner. Were you hoping to . . .

FR: Oh, I had planned, yeah, to be on my own. That had always been sort of my plan, even when I thought I was going to work for my family ranch.

AL: What prompted you to leave Kahuku ranch, in 1974?

FR: Well, we had reached the end of development. We developed all the really productive lands, and it was just going to fall into sort of a maintenance kind of a role. And I thought, well, if I'm that good, maybe I should strike out on my own. And—or, I wanted to be part of the business, I wanted to have some sort of a profit-sharing situation. And because it's a trust estate, the trustees felt that the liability was too great. They couldn't do that. So I said, I really want to go out on my own—about that time, Newell Bohnett had bought Pu'u wa'a wa'a Ranch. And he offered me a—like a salary plus incentives, on performance type of a thing? Which I really—was what I was looking for. After about a year into that, he decided that he really wasn't interested in the ranching part of it. He leased the land, and rented the cow herd to me. So I leased the cow herd, like you would a factory or a car, or a tractor. We took the value of the cow herd, put—I think that time interest was twelve percent, so I paid three percent above prime interest, like you would a car or tractor, and I leased the herd from him. He still owned the herd, so he got all the tax benefits, the depreciation, amortization and all that, and I had a set number of cattle, and at the end of the lease I would return the same number of cattle—not necessarily the same cows. You would sell the old cows and replace them.

AL: Sure.

FR: It's a unique and very workable situation, I've tried to get other ranchers to do that with me, but the concept is beyond their . . . capabilities.

AL: (Laughs) I was going to say, I've never heard of that type of arrangement before.

FR: Yeah. But it's **very** workable, especially if you have a family who owns a ranch, not really interested in ranching. They could still maintain the ownership, and just lease all the responsibility of running the cattle to somebody. But it hasn't got across.

AL: Before we go on and talk more about the time you spent at Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a, could you—I just wanted to make sure we got on tape the story about your riding against Dale Smith in 1960.

FR: Oh yeah, they had (laughs) . . . a couple Honolulu businessmen put on a really good rodeo at what used to be the Blaisdell Center, I'm not sure what it is now. Anyway, it used to be the HIC, Hawaii International Center, or something like that. And then—And it was right after the Cow Palace, and before the National Finals Rodeo, so you got all the real champions, world champions, just to come down for it. It was **fabulous**. What killed them is [that] two years in a row they had a *kona* storm the week of the rodeo, where the police were telling people not to turn out, not to come out, this and that, but it was fabulous.

Anyway, they had all these mainland world champions coming down, and I was just in my prime of—calf roping was my main thing. So I put up a challenge to any mainland cowboy for a match roping. And the mainland guys put up Dale Smith, who had been runner up world champion calf roper and was the world champion team roper. And I was fortunate enough to beat him.

And it was a major event, because it was set up that we didn't have very good calves. So we selected four calves. We were each going to rope the same calf—in other words, I'd rope the first two calves, he'd rope two other calves, then we'd switch for the next two. And so we had to flip a coin to see who would choose to see whether you would choose a calf first or you would choose your position, that you would rope, first. It's interesting that my thought was to not worry about whether I roped first or second, but to get the best calf first, to get off to a good start. That would make him rope the bad calf first, that would mean that calf would be roped and tied one more time before **I** had to rope it.

He won the draw, and he chose to rope second. Which allowed me to rope—to do what I wanted to do anyway had I won the draw [i.e., select the calf]. So I roped the first calf in a fairly good time—we were both very close on the first calf. We got to the second calf, we were again within a second of each other. And we got to the third calf, and because I was roping first I roped it real good. And now we were into—and that was one of the bad calves. So he—they were big calves, and he decided on his third calf to try and flank it rather than leg it down, because that way he could pick up—usually you're faster flanking than you are legging. But he couldn't get it off the ground.

Tape ends and is turned over.

AL: Okay, so [you were saying] that [Dale Smith] was behind by about five seconds?

FR: Yeah, by about five seconds. Went into the last calf, and really all I had to do was rope it and catch it—I missed it on the first loop. But I caught it on the second loop, and I was within nineteen—I was nineteen seconds. Which meant that he would have to rope about a twelve second run. You know, he would have to be like thirteen, fourteen, have to really rope him quick. And what he did is came out and really gave it a quick shot and missed the calf. And that was the end of the roping.

AL: Was there a big audience?

FR: Just the cowboys. Everybody had gone home; it was sort of a private event after everything. It was very exciting. I think it was one of the most exciting things I've done. I've won two national championships with college polo, but this one-on-one match roping, I think, is the ultimate in any sport. That's why when Tiger Woods goes on these one-on-one matches—that's really exciting, one-on-one.

AL: Against a single competitor.

FR: Single, yeah. I guess he, the young Spanish player beat him this year in the match, and that had to be his highlight, just the way it was for me. To beat Tiger Woods.

AL: To beat the great . . .

FR: Yeah.

AL: Yeah. Throughout your career, it seems that—even from the time when you were a student at Punahou, till today—you've been very active in competition.

FR: Yeah, I think—and I think I know how that happened. When I was a—was really young, like I'd have to be about eight years old, it was right before Ikua Purdy died—we went to an Ulupalakua Ranch playday. And Ikua Purdy came up to my dad, and said, "you better let your boy rope." And—you know?—so they said, "yeah, yeah! ok." So I was so little that I rode on Willie Kauai's horse, and Willie Kauai was the shortest guy there. And I had to put my feet in the leathers above the stirrups (laughter). Anyway, so they turned the calf loose, and it was out in an open pasture along the fence line. You know, all the cars lined up. And so I roped the calf. And so I was like the great—this little kid that suddenly was, you know, big hero. And I never thought about that until just a few years ago, and I went back there and I was showing Gail [Rice] where this thing had happened, and I realized—you know, over the years you begin to get some knowledge on why you are what you are. And I realized that that must have been—for a little kid that old—something that you liked; you wanted to have that feeling again.

AL: You were hooked.

FR: I was hooked. Yeah, I was hooked (laughter).

AL: Had you—I'm sure part of the thrill must have been having Ikua Purdy come up.

FR: Well, Ikua was just an old, gruff man. I was more scared than anything, because he was a very—you know, Ikua Purdy was just Ikua Purdy. You know, he was the foreman—actually he was retired, it was just about a year before he died. The war was still on—in 1944—so I would have been about third or fourth grade.

So anyway, see my whole life was brought up ranching. Go out ranching, doing ranching things, roping things and doing cowboy things. And all with Hawaiian families. It's interesting that—and I think one of the reasons that I was able to come out popular in the Rice v. Cayetano case is that I grew up with Hawaiian cowboys, and played with their kids. And I was associating with our ranch, Ulupalakua Ranch, Kaupo Ranch. And then I moved to Kahuku, for fifteen years I lived with seven Hawaiian families. Then I moved to Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Ranch

and again I was with other Hawaiian families, the Keakealani's, the Alapai's and the Hao's and the Aipia's. And even today, half the people I associate with are Hawaiian, just because that's who's in the ranching business. And so my body language and my . . . what I exude out to the public is, um . . . not anti-Hawaiian.

And the case was not about OHA [Office of Hawaiian Affairs], was not about Hawaiians, it was about discrimination in the voting box. Just happened to be OHA. And the people who know me, and any Hawaiian that talks to me knows that. Just instinctively they know that I'm not against them. And it was interesting, an old Hawaiian lady, who was really mad at me over this case—and she's a good friend, and I work with her family on the ranching—but she was really mad at me. So I went up as I usually do and I said good morning to her and everything else, and we got to talking about the case, and her comment was, "Well, Freddy, at least it wasn't some *haole* that did this!" (Laughter)

AL: (Laughing) That's great!

FR: So I thought that was, you know. But that's because of how I was brought up.

AL: You mentioned that—I think you were brought up speaking Hawaiian? Is that right?

FR: Listening to Hawaiian. And unfortunately, I feel just like the other Hawaiian children whose parents didn't teach them. Very unfortunate. Because as an older person it's very difficult to learn a language. And I can remember all the words, all the instructions and everything were in Hawaiian. But we never spoke it. And we didn't get any conversations in it. But when I get out working with Hawaiian guys in the branding pen or something, I easily revert back. But it's all sort of instructions, cattle stuff. So when I go to a Hawaiian language class, and I'm talking to a teacher that never been on a ranch, and they're talking intellectual stuff, they're talking cultural stuff, I'm really at a loss. But as one of my teachers said, because we do little papers and stuff, "it always goes back to ranching with you." Cause of course, that's what I'm familiar with.

AL: So you picked up the lingo, the jargon.

FR: Yeah.

AL: In your jobs at HC & S or when you were managing the Kahuku Ranch, did you ever use Hawaiian around the ranch?

FR: No, I didn't, and too bad, because I was with Hawaiians. And I don't think **they** spoke Hawaiian. But if I knew what I know now, we would have started, I would have started. I would have just said, "this is it. It's up to you. It's your language, and let's speak it. Let's use it." Even if we had to bring in somebody to teach us. Especially at Kahuku. What an opportunity. Not only for them and their children, but for me, to have really learned it. And I envy the Robinson's, on Kauai, because I've been over there, and they fall into English and Hawaiian—you know if they're talking to their men they're talking Hawaiian the whole time, and then they're talking to me in English . . .

AL: On Ni'ihau, you mean?

FR: Ni'ihau, and on Kauai, on . . . Makaweli. So. And my grandfather spoke Hawaiian. My father didn't.

AL: He did not?

FR: Did not. Well, he understood like we did. Instructions and so forth were in Hawaiian. But they never had conversations. And he knew what they were talking about all the time. It's interesting that he and I were brought up by Japanese nannies so to speak. Before the war? And so we spoke probably better Japanese than we did Hawaiian.

AL: Oh yeah? (laughs) Your nurse, she spoke Japanese to you.

FR: Yeah. So it's just—and you learn so quickly as a child, and the big mistake that they made years ago, and it wasn't the *haole* missionaries, it was the *ali'i* that decided that no Hawaiian should be spoken—only English should be spoken in the schools. Cause the missionaries' schools spoke Hawaiian. They gave their classes in Hawaiian. But around princess Pauahi's time, they decided, Kamehameha schools was instructed strictly English, no Hawaiian. That they felt that in order for their kids to get a good job, they had to learn English. And they weren't going to learn English as long as their parents spoke Hawaiian. So Hawaiian was forbidden. Which is too bad—it was the wrong concept, because kids can learn two or three languages. We know that, today.

So I really feel fortunate to have the *punana leo* and the immersion classes. And I think as far as keeping Hawaii Hawaiian, and keeping the culture going, the language is the main thing. The language and the food. If they really wanted to kill the Hawaiian culture they should have prohibited having *lu'aus*. (Laughing) Cause food's the main thing. You go to a Hawaiian's house and you better eat. You got to eat (laughs). So they didn't—but the language is the main thing. And I really regret that we didn't learn, because—I don't feel so bad; I saw a thing on TV a couple weeks ago where they went into uncivilized countries like New Guinea, and tried to teach people that were deaf how to sign-language and how to talk, so they could communicate. And they found after a certain age that they couldn't; it was impossible. They don't know why, but the brain shuts down the ability to learn language at a certain age. I hope they discover why and they develop a hormone or something, because I'm really having a hard time!

AL: Yeah, it is hard. I want to get back, just for the moment, to—we left off at your leaving Kahuku Ranch and beginning at Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Ranch, and I think you explained how you came there. You were only there for a couple of years.

FR: About five years, yeah.

AL: Could you just tell me a little bit about what your job was?

FR: Well it was almost the same as it was at Kahuku, where the mandate was to have a very efficient commercial operation. And the big thing that I did there was that they had no water system. That they literally hauled water from Waimea to the cattle six months out of the year. And of course, not having water limited the number of cattle you could carry. So what we did is we—there was an old state experimental well above Kiholo, which was on the Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a lease. And we got the state to lease us the well site. And the pump that they had used to test it just happened to still be in place. So we bought it from the state. And then we pumped the water, up to Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a headquarters, and from there pumped it to the cattle, rather than haul it. Since then, they drilled wells right up there at the ranch headquarters. And they've abandoned I guess the one at Kiholo.

But I guess my biggest contribution to that property was developing the wells and the pump system. And getting rid of the hauling—you can imagine, Christmas Eve we were hauling water to cattle. It was an **impossible** thing. Five or six loads a day. We had one truck driver, and I was the other truck driver when he was off or needed a break. And so after work, instead of going home I'd just take a couple loads of water from Waimea. It was an **impossible** situation.

AL: You only stayed about—you said about five years . . .

FR: Five years, yeah.

AL: What prompted you to leave?

FR: Um, Bohnett cancelled his agreement with me. He just—he felt that—he felt that—it was an ego thing, he felt that the ranch was his, he paid for it, but that everybody considered it mine. When he went to a party or something, he'd be introduced as the owner of Pu'u Wa'a Wa'a Ranch and they'd say, "oh, that's Freddy's ranch, up there!" So he said the only way it's ever going to be my ranch is I've got to get rid of you.

AL: So he wanted to take it over himself.

FR: Yeah.

AL: At that point—that's when you sort of went out on your own.

FR: That's when I went on my own, that's when I got—I was unsuccessful in the state leases, but I got the Hawaiian Homes lease up here in Kawaihae Uka.

AL: You'd been wanting to found your own ranch for a long time . . .

FR: Yeah.

AL: So how did it feel when you finally got around to it?

FR: (Smiling) Just great. Just great. I felt really—I was really happy. It was a really good time. Yeah. I would sit at the top of that thing and just look at that property and say, I can't believe that I'm the steward of this land.

AL: Your first ranch was called Kawaihae, is that right?

FR: No, it was FR Quarterhorse Ranch.

AL: FR Quarterhorse. Could you describe the ranch for me?

FR: Well, a very dryland ranch that ran from the highway, the Kohala Road, down to right above Kawaihae Harbor. And while I was there we had the worst three droughts in written history. And I was back hauling water. And it was very difficult, and the cattle cycle went down, and then we had that grain embargo deal, which—and at the same time that that happened you had the housewives' strike against the high price of beef. Boycott beef thing. And then, to top it all off, all these little books came out about how beef was so bad for you. Which they've had to retract now, which we **knew**. But nevertheless, the beef business really went to hell in a basket. And the bank wanted their money tomorrow. And I drove all the cattle up to the road and said, (softly) "here. It's yours." And went fishing.

AL: How long did you stay at FR Quarterhorse.

FR: About ten years.

AL: And what was there when you arrived? Were there any facilities?

FR: Nothing. Because Kahua, who'd been the previous lessor, had the feeling that they were going to lose the lease, and so they took out everything that they could take out. They took out the water system, they took out everything that they could carry out of there. Left it . . . you know. And that's one of the problems with the state leases, as far as land management: there is no incentive to improve the land. In fact, there's an incentive to rape it as much as you can. And I've brought this up time and time again.

Again, the New Zealand people, if you improve the land, and increase the carrying capacity, they lower your rent. In Hawaii, if you do that, what will happen is the property's more valuable, and at the end of the lease, the next guy can bid higher, because all of the improvements are there. So what it does is discourages—I mean, you want to make the land

as bad as you can, so that the auction price will be low. And so you look at the state lands and they're just—they might be, if it's a twenty-year lease or thirty-year lease, they may manage it well for the first ten years, and then they'll just rape it for the next twenty. And then they'll leave it in as bad a condition as you can imagine, for the next guy.

And that's really the fault of the state; it's just human nature not to put money into something that the next guy is going to benefit from. But again, they only look at that the—how much money they're going to make off the land, right? Where these lands could be much more productive—they should have forests all—there should be incentive payments for reforestation, there should be incentive payments for water systems. All that should be deducted from your rent. **And**, if you lose the lease, all that should be reimbursed to you double. Not double, but at least your investment plus a reasonable profit, say ten, twenty-percent over the next ten years, whatever that would be.

AL: As an incentive to the . . .

FR: As an incentive to do that work, yeah. Then your state lands would be twice as productive as they are now. Now if you look at them there's not a tree on them, you know? Nobody could care less, and the last few years of the lease they let all their fences and corrals go to hell. It's the wording in the lease.

AL: What about the herd when you arrived at that first ranch? How did you build up your herd?

FR: Oh there was no—I bought cattle. So basically I didn't have a **cow** herd, what I did was I started out buying wean-calves, and grazing them to a heavier weight and reselling them. And what I did, though, was I kept all the best heifers. So I had this genetic pool of everybody's best breeding. And I bred them the first couple years to Brahma bulls, which gave me the F-One cross, which is a really good brood cow. And then I bred those, the next generation to Brangus bulls. And I really developed a good herd. When I had to sell that herd, they had the best performance record at Hawaii Meat Company and later on the Hamakua feedlot. Even though I didn't own them, the owners of the feedlot would kind of clue me in that, boy your cows are just really performing good. So, you know, I could take a little pride in that.

AL: So you pursued some genetic improvement.

FR: Yeah. And I've actually done the same thing now that I've got started again. I bought cattle from everybody. This time I didn't just get the pick of their best, I took whatever they had. But I've used good Brangus bulls on them. And right now I'm getting a premium for my calves.

AL: It sounds like you, in your first independent ranching venture—it sounds like you had to go through ten especially difficult years for ranching. But I'd like to know a little bit more about what it was like to be in the position of the ranch owner, whereas before you had been a manager.

FR: Oh, I really enjoyed it. You know, I can't believe how hard I worked, looking back on it—I don't know where I got the energy from. But I worked **all** the time. Water—putting in water, putting in fences, and then the basic other things, like having to haul water during the drought and so forth; I'm a compulsive improver. And it was really nice knowing—I didn't begrudge the work, because it was my place. And when I was managing, I thought I was doing the very best I could do. But I found out, when you own the place, that wasn't the best: you could do a lot better. And it's really interesting, because I really thought I was doing a great job. I would have fought anybody that said I wasn't doing, you know, a hundred percent. But when you own the place, it's different. You do even more.

AL: What did it feel like to see the ranch eventually fail?

FR: Like, um . . . like the end of your life. I mean I really felt like, what the hell am I going to do without it. What am I going to do till I die? Why don't I just be old and die right now, because it's the end of—I don't **want** to live another twenty years. What would I do? But fortunately the fishing came in. But that's the point where you were. You seriously considered taking your life at that point. Yeah. Because there's—you know—there's nothing that you want to do. Your life's work is down the tubes. Everything you've always dreamed of, everything you had, you had it, you lost it. And it's just like, God, how long is it going to take to get old and die? It's very—it's a . . . I guess everybody should experience it one time and come out of it to know that there **is** a better—it **will** get better. But I could see where, you know, so many people have lost their family farms and ranches had been in the family for generations kill themselves.

AL: Did you consider going back to working in the position of manager or something for someone else's ranch?

FR: Um, yeah that would have worked, but I was just about fifty years old, and nobody wants to hire somebody that old. It was interesting when I was fishing, I would look up at Kona, I'd look

up at all this ranch land, and I would say, there's got to be a place for me up there somewhere. And so when I decided to quit fishing and get back to the ranching, I put resumes out **everywhere**. And I was over-qualified. I told Parker Ranch that I was going to sue them for the discrimination against age. I was over-qualified and too old (laughter). You know, I said, "good, I'll **retire** on you guys."

But nobody wants someone who knows more than them; it's like hiring your father or your grandfather. Nobody really wants to—I could not get a job. They didn't want me on the place. I said, "hey, I can drive the semi-truck, I can do this, this and this." It just doesn't compute. So I—you know these executives when they have these companies lay off their top people? Because they're getting paid too much and they want all these young guys to come through, and they say they can't get a job—it's—I understand. Even KTA [supermarket] wouldn't hire me to stack the shelves (laughter). People said, "oh, Freddy—it wouldn't look good!"

AL: Sort of a classic problem, isn't it.

FR: So I figured that the only way I could make a living was I had to go on my own. I was **forced** to go back on my own. I could run a boat, because I owned the boat. I could run a ranch because I own it. Nobody would hire me as a skipper.

AL: So you hired yourself.

FR: I hired myself. So, I'm unemployable . . . sad as it seems.

AL: It's sort of a classic conundrum.

FR: You know I have a lot of knowledge. And I talked to this guy Takumi Shirakawa, he's a retired University of Hawaii extension agent that worked with me at Kahuku, and he runs the Shirakawa Hotel in Waiohino. And I was over there staying there some years ago, and I had—we see these ranchers doing the same things, experimenting with the same things that we've **done** already. And it's like, why didn't they form a think-tank or something like that? Because all these retired people already have this knowledge. But they won't do it; they got to do their own little thing. And I said, it seems so hard to live with; and he had a really good philosophy, he said, "You know, Freddy, take satisfaction in the fact that **you** have the knowledge." Don't worry that the other guy, you know, you've done that, you **know** what the result is going to be. Just—you know it. Just keep it in yourself, be proud that you have the knowledge. So that's

what I—I see mistake after mistake. You know, the big article that came out about Parker Ranch in the business news a couple months ago . . .

AL: Yeah, I saw it.

FR: You know, we know what the solutions are. But nobody asks. And they don't really want to know. But the basic solution is just what I told you earlier, that they're—they think they're raising cattle, when they're really raising grass. Then that would—if they'd just change that—the same people and everything else, just look at it differently, they would start—instead of damaging the environment they'd be enhancing the environment. The profits would go up—**less** cattle, **less** men, **less** equipment, everything else. For the same pounds of beef, so. But they don't—nobody really wants to know (laughs).

AL: They've got to discover it all over again.

FR: (Laughing) Yeah, I know.

AL: Could you tell me about—well, we already touched a bit on your—the time you spent as a fisherman, and also your getting back into ranching. But could you tell me about your present ranch that you're working on now?

FR: Yeah. It's located in one of the most beautiful places in the world: above Pauilo, the old Kukaiau Ranch. It's above the Mana—it's right on the Mana Road at about—it runs from maybe fifty-five [hundred] feet elevation to seventy-five [hundred] feet elevation. And it's divided into about ten paddocks, large paddocks, and it has a water system; everything that was there is there, and I maintain it. And I have two herds, about 430 cows to each herd, and they each have their own set of paddocks, about six paddocks to rotate through. And my dogs and I do all that, and put out mineral, and keep them rotating, and then at branding time and at weaning time I get friends and family to come help. We found out again—yeah, food's the big thing in Hawaii, right? To get the help on the branding we go all out with food (laughter).

AL: As an incentive . . .

FR: Yeah. Laulaus, salt-meat, poi, rice, salad, barbecued steaks, everything you can think of. We take my horse trailer, convert it into a chuckwagon (laughter). Cook lots of food. So we get

the help. Cowboys from Ponoholo and Parker Ranch, and my family, basically, come up. And then—and at weaning time, I don't need so many people. And there's a couple like schoolteachers, and truck drivers and horse shoers that are good cowboys. And I hire them on the weekends to help me with stuff where I need somebody to help.

So it's great—it's a horse operation, and I basically drive up the Mana road to where my corrals are, and from there I do everything on horse with my dogs. Gail's a big help. She's not a real cowgirl, but she is becoming one. You know, she's learning. She's getting better and better, so. . . . And then we do fence work and stuff. Gail and I usually do that. She likes—she likes construction kind of stuff. So we fix everything, keep everything working. It's a very—it's very nice. I'm my own boss; I work—I help other ranchers like myself. And we kind of change—they help me and I help them. But basically like Malama Solomon, and Jack Ramos, when they need a good cowboy and they need my dogs, they'll call me up. And because I'm on my own I can go during the weekdays, which is good for them. And then what I will do when I need a weekday helper or something, I'll call them and they'll let me have one of their cowboys. Or they'll come and help me.

AL: Yeah, in exchange . . .

FR: In exchange. And I think that's how the small rancher's going to survive. I think other small ranchers do that with themselves too.

AL: Survive by helping . . .

FR: Each other. So they have no laborers. Because once you have an employee, you've got the book-work, insurance, OSHA, everything else. You know, OSHA would **kill** me if they ever came, and I had an employee. I couldn't afford it. No workman's comp, no back-talk, nothing. Just—I just do what I can, and I—one of my goals, or one of my limits is not to get so big that I have to hire somebody. And so it works out. I think that if you hired somebody you'd need an additional thousand cows. That's what it'll cost you.

AL: Really—that much? (He nods) One of the last questions I wanted to ask you was—I was just thinking about this, and you—you have a degree from an ivy-league school. And you brought a lot of education to your work. Not just as a businessman, but also in animal science. And throughout your career you've used a lot of modern ideas in your work. And yet you also are a man who comes from the heart of the cattleman's traditional way in Hawaii, on Maui. You were raised right in the heart of the traditions. So I was wondering—maybe you could talk

about how you've balanced those two, the traditional ways with the modern ways throughout your career.

FR: Yeah, well, it's interesting. Because what college taught me was where to look things up, and how to look things up. Because it changes all the time. So what you learn in college today may not apply. I mean, I got a lot of basic principles, but you learn in agronomy for instance that you call the extension service guy or soil conservation guy and have him come test your soils, test your grass, and then over the years I developed a key of minerals that I knew make up good paddocks. And now when I look at a fertilizer or a grass sample analysis of the nutrients, I can put it next to my key, and I can say, oh it's as good as that paddock, I know that paddock, that's pretty good—or that's not so good. So I was able to develop that, and that probably comes from my college background, learning to do things like that. And the other thing is—and that's sort of the scientific part of it. The scientific part came from the college and the seminars and so forth.

The economics of it, the learning how to make a loan, that comes from having to do it—having to make a loan, having to go get a loan. That's hard stuff. Putting together a deal, to buy cattle, to lease a ranch, to do the politics and all that stuff—it's not easy to make a deal. And you have to be able to cope with a lot of things and a lot of disappointments. And be able to override that. That I think comes from within a person; not anybody can make a deal. It takes a lot to make a deal.

But I think you have to have a goal, and you have to be determined. Like so many things—if you have an idea like say you want to turn this ranch into intensive grazing, you want to turn it into tourist eco system or something, it's only going to work if you're determined to make it work. If it's just a good idea and you throw it out there, and you have a couple setbacks and you abandon it, nothing will ever work—**you** have to make it work. It takes a lot of energy. And you got to—you got to—"this is going to work because I'm going to **make** it work," attitude. So you've got to have a good idea and plan before you get into it, because unless you're going to follow through and make sure that this idea works, it won't work.

When it comes to cattle work, my experience is that you either have it or you don't. It's like a bird dog. He hunts wild birds because he just **has** it. It's hard to teach a poodle to point pheasant. You know, they just don't have it. And the example I have is I had a couple college kids—I've had college kids all through my life come and work on the ranch. And some of them that **really** want to be ranchers—I mean, they're going to school, they want to be a rancher and everything. They just don't have it. The cow will get through the gate all the time, because he doesn't see that cow coming until she's already gone. And you'll get some kid that's just there because his dad made him come, or somebody else, and he'll move before the cow gets to the gate, he just sees it. It's called cow sense. And unfortunately, a person

without cow sense can become, probably, pretty good cowboy, but he's really up against it. And a lot of people who have a ton of cow sense could care less, but they're good cowboys—(laughs) they're good to have, you know? It's like some people learn how to duck and some don't (laughter). And so I think that I'm very fortunate in that my really strong point is I can really handle a lot of cattle, I can drive wild cattle, I know—it's just an instinct to me—I know how to get this pasture driven.

One of the things is that you can take cattle anywhere they want to be, or where they want to go. You have to make them want to go there. And half of it's setting up your pens and gates. And one thing that people in Hawaii don't—and I'm **amazed** that they don't know—even fence builders and people that I run into. In the northern hemisphere, everything goes to the left, naturally, counterclockwise. So if your corral is going—everything going counterclockwise, it'll work, naturally. If it goes clockwise, you have to push them all the time. And there are **major** ranches on this island, with **major** corrals that I go to, and if they would just turn them around, you'd take half the effort. So a lot of it's that—cow cycle. But basically everything goes counterclockwise. You take an arena that—where the catch pen, and the chute coming back to the release gate is to the left? The cattle will just go—it takes no labor at all. But if they go to the right, you have to push them all the time. They'll go, and when they come to the gate, if the gate's to the left they'll just go.

We were at—it was really interesting—we were at Ron DeReese's in Honolulu, and Ken Miranda, who's one of the major fence builders, said, "why do we always have trouble in this arena with the cattle going into the pen?" I said, "because they're going in to the right." He looked at me kind of funny—here's a guy that builds major fences, major gates, you know. He said, "you got to be kidding." I said, "no." Just think about it. Every arena that you can think of that goes to the left. And so now the Parker Ranch arena, here, goes to the right. And—but what we do when we have a rodeo there, we put a panel out, so that the cattle go left into the panel. Now they're forced to go to the right. But if you just left the gate there, they go to the right. They're always running back and forth before they go in. You didn't know that.

AL: No, I've never heard of that.

FR: The water in your toilet bowl . . .

AL: I've heard of that.

FR: Goes to the left. Okay? Gravity flow. And in New Zealand it goes to the right. Now in New Zealand, the cattle go to the right.

AL: (Laughing) Really?

FR: Yeah. Everything's to the right in New Zealand.

AL: Wow.

FR: And it's a basic thing, to me, I mean, mainland cattlemen—everybody knows that. Except Hawaiian guys. And it's—but it's those kind of things that—so people say to me, well you should spend more time [in the office]—you shouldn't be out there [driving cattle]—you should hire somebody to do the fence work or the cattle work and everything else. I said, eh, I can hire accountants and veterinarians and truck drivers and those kind of guys, but I can't hire—they don't turn out people like me. You know, out of college. You can't find them. Yet we're way low on the pay scale, because the guys that they do turn out don't know our value. But it's just—a lot of it has to do with that kind of stuff.

I don't know if you've seen Peter Baldwin's arena on Maui.

AL: I haven't.

FR: He just put one in, and we went up there, and he had it just about built. We went up and said, "oh no, Peter, it won't work." And he had to tear the whole thing down, put the, he had the release chute and everything on the one end, and the cattle were going to the right. Said, it won't work. And now it just goes [smoothly]—nobody needs to drive the cattle, they just go in, they go down, they go down the line. 'Cause it's all to the left.

AL: _____

FR: Yeah (chuckles).

AL: I never—I never even thought about that, that it would make a difference.

FR: (Laughs) It's where you have your gate, see, that counts. And the cattle'll come. My cattle will come down when I call. 'Cause they know they're going to a fresh paddock. And my dogs don't bite, they just bark, and they get right up in their face, and they may nip, so the cattle are not afraid of the dogs. They respect the dogs. It's like a farmer that walks around his tame cattle with a stick, and then he's got to hit them to make them move. That's basically what the dogs do. They can walk around the cattle, but when they want them to move they've got to really get up in their face. And so cattle are tame, and when you work by yourself you got to let the cattle, you know, you don't say, well how're we going to drive these cattle today? I say, well we'll start and see how they go. Just follow them. Maybe we got to go all the way to the back end before we get here, but if that's the way they're going, you just let them go! They're going to wander over there, fine, they hit the bottom fence and come back.

AL: Go with the flow.

FR: Yeah.

AL: Yeah.

FR: You can't force anything when you're only by yourself. And some of the—you know where the Parker Ranch guys go, they used to drive up above here with their whole army. And I'd be sitting here and I'd call up Robbie Hind, the manager, and I'd say, "hey, Robbie." Robbie's a good cowboy. I'd say, "Robbie, you know what I see (laughing) here?" He says, "what? The dog chasing the cow and the cowboy chasing the dog and the cow?" I'd say, (smiling) "yeah, something like that." And so pretty soon I guess he'd tell, I guess he said, "guys, you know Freddy's watching you when you're up there" (laughter). And the next time they came, they came really **quiet**, really **slow**. [He] said, "hey how was that? Better today?" I said, "yeah, they got through at ten o'clock instead of two o'clock." But—and one time when they told me this story that Carl Carlson had just been appointed trustee, and so he came and he was observing them driving these paddocks up here, and had the whole army up there, and he went back into the office, he went into Robbie's office, and Robbie said, "I know, I know, we should have just hired Freddy and his dogs." He said, "yes, that's just what I was going to tell you." I thought that was a great compliment.

AL: I'm sure.

FR: Was a real compliment, because you just don't need all that. If you have it you feel you've got to use it. I guess. But you don't need that. Just let the cattle move, set it up so the cattle want to go there. And be patient sometimes. Cattle work's something that the slower you go the faster you get through.

AL: Really?

FR: Yeah.

AL: Sort of like, why force something when you . . .

FR: You can't. Yeah. Slower you go, you know—go slow and be fast.

AL: Well, I've really enjoyed talking with you today. Before we finish up, is there anything that you wanted to add?

FR: No not really. I think we've pretty much covered the bases (laughter).

AL: (Laughing) We've covered it, all the way from the beginning to the present day.

FR: Lot of stuff, yeah.

AL: Well, thank you very much for sitting down with me.

FR: You're welcome.