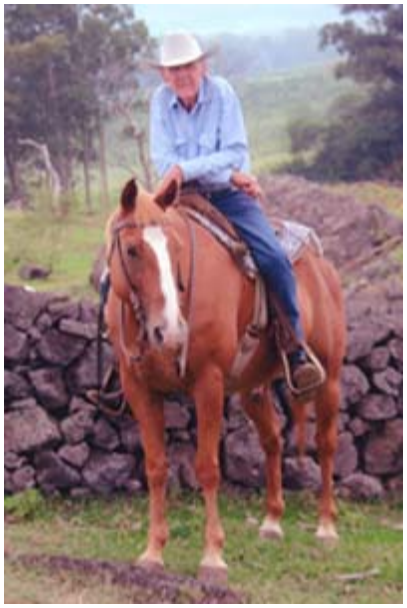
J. Gordon Cran, S.C. Ranch, Hawai`i
Kapapala Ranch, Hawai`i



Kona rancher Herbert Shipman once told him that he'd have to be in the cattle business 10 years before he'd know enough to manage a ranching operation. Now that J. Gordon Cran has been in the industry for more than 50 years, it's fair to say he's built up some expertise.

After starting his career at Shipman Ranch in 1945 and working at ranches around the Big Island and Oahu, he found his biggest challenge was still ahead of him, when he established his own family cattle operation, Kapapala Ranch, on 30,000 acres in Ka'u in 1977.

The first years of catching and selling wild cattle at Kapapala were fun, he recalls, but after that job was done it was time to really get down to work and run the ranch like a business. Today, Gordon fills just about every position on the ranch himself – "owner, manager, laborer, farrier, goat herder, cook, fence mender."

Gordon says he and his family are able to keep the ranch running because of their hands-on experience and knowledge.

"We know about cattle, we know about dogs," he says. "If you don't know about cattle you better get out of the business, because they tell you everything you need to know."

Even though running his own ranch is the hardest thing he's attempted during his long career, he also says it's a high point for him. Because cheap imported beef is making it harder than ever to make a profit raising cattle in Hawaii, Gordon calls Kapapala "the greatest test" of his career, and he welcomes the challenge.

"Looking forward, that's the highlight," he says. "Looking back, that's just history."

Paniolo Hall of Fame

Interview with Gordon Cran (C)

By Ilima Loomis (I)

March 14, 2003

Kapapala Ranch, Hawaii

I: Can you start with the date of your birth?

C: July 28, 1927, in Hilo.

I: What were your father and mother's names?

C: John Scott Cran, and my mother's name was Frances Wright Cran. My dad was an engineer, born in Aberdeen, Scotland. Came to Hawaii around 1914, and he left for a few years for the First World War, then he came back, and stayed here most of his life thereafter. At that time he was an engineer for the Hilo Sugar Company. Those days there were just two engineers, the night engineer and the day engineer. My mother was born on a farm in the country outside Cadilac, Michigan. She came to Hawaii as a schoolteacher in 1921. She taught school most of the time she was here, started at Hakalau, about 15 miles from Hilo. My dad died young, 60. He died in Oregon, while he was staying with my sister. And my mother died at almost 93 in Honolulu. That's about it.

I: Was it your dad's job that brought him to Hawaii in the first place?

C: Yeah. He came as an engineer. Prior to that he'd been at sea a little while. There was lots of Scottish people here, and the word gets back (chuckles). Around 1937 he started his own business, but he was out of business in 1941, when the war started. He was doing engineering work, and subcontracting various jobs. On the present Volcano House, he did all the water work, the boilers, the hot water, the radiators in the rooms, all that. He put what he called a callandria, it's part of a boiler, put it in a steam crack. Instead of the water going through the tubes, the steam went through the tubes. I think rated at something like 140 degrees, before it went into the boilers. Just like a Scottsman. Save fuel. The people were very frugal

We lived right next to the plantation office, and the mill was right down the hill from our house, just outside of Hilo, in Wainaku. It's on the old road, past the Wailuku bridge. It's a little village, not much anymore.

I: Can you tell me how you first got into ranching?

C: Our house was right there, next to the office, and there was a wooden, rail-type fence between us, and the driveway, and the parking back here. All the lunas would come in and tie up their horses when they were meeting. It was a good place to steal a horse (laughter). So I used to get on them and they'd come out and bellow at me. That went on for a few years. That's about it. I got out of high school, and I always was fooling around with horses. I decided I was going to go to work on the ranch, and got up all my nerve one day, and

went down to see Shipman at ranch headquarters in Hilo. I knew him, and he knew who I was, because I used to get permission to go goat hunting in his area. He said yes, he'd give me a job, I had to go to Puu O'o. I told him, "That's fine, that would be very nice." So a few weeks later, when I was out of high school, I went to Puu O'o. Since then, I've been working in ranching, with one exception of when I was in the army for two years. That was in 1945 to 1947. The other time I wasn't working with livestock was in 1953. I worked for three months down here at the plantation. Then I moved up and worked here (at Kapapala) at this ranch.

I: Which Shipman did you talk to to get your job?

C: Herbert. W.H. had already passed away.

I: Can you tell me a little about him?

C: Shipman? Yeah, I can tell you a lot about him! We'll start with the good. He was a very brilliant man. And he had many interests. He was involved with horticulture, he brought in all kinds of plants, and he was involved with raising nene, bringing back the numbers. When I was working for him up at Puu O'o, I asked him one time what was this bird that was flying around in the evening, cackling. He said they're nene. I'd never seen one before. He was a very, very astute person, and always would correct somebody on the pronounciation of Hawaiian words. Then: he's very lazy, and he did not have a good managerial ability, because he could not keep his emotions out of business, and he would not give anybody authority to do anything -- it had to be, "Well, you wait, and I'll come up there." So the jobs never got done. He was a procrastinator, and put everything off. When he was on the job, he was very intelligent, knew what he was doing. He was very subborn.

Many of the names up at Puu O'o have names that involve him. There's a hill called Puu Nuha. And he evidently was angry with his father, didn't like his father at all. And he got very angry with him, and he went up on this hill, where he pouted all day long. So it was called Puu Nuha. And then, down in another area, was a pasture area called Kanaka Nuha, named because he was nuha (stubborn) and walked home.

When I was working up there, we used to wait for him, out where we have the market-ready cattle, way over on the north side, about 14 miles from the headquarters. He'd say he's coming up, and we're going to bring in the cattle. We would bring them in the day before he comes up, and then he'd go through them. He and the foreman would decide what they were going to do with the cattle, how many they were going to market and so forth. The cattle were all put in a holding area, maybe 100 acres, and we then waited for Herbert. We waited one day, two days, and on the third day -- it was pouring rain every day -- by the third day he arrived. And every day his horses were saddled, his and his driver's horses were saddled and led to the point where it's nearest the corral. And you wait for him to come, and they get on their horses, and so by the third day, why, we decided we'd just go ahead and do the work. But prior to that I was sitting there. It's on a little knoll, our horses were tied up to the trees. It's a little knoll, and there's a big flat rock on the top. I was sitting there. I had a big nail that I used to pull staples out, and I had a fence tool that I carried all the time, so I just took the big nail and the fence tool and I chipped into this rock: Puu Kali -- "Waiting Hill." Under it I chipped some more -- I don't

think anybody read it, it would be covered with moss by that time -- I put, “Never a man with soul so dead never said ‘Waste time.’”

So time has gone on. I left there in 1952 -- worked from 1950 to 52. And about four or five years later I was somewhere else. The same thing was going on, and Herbert Shipman went up there. He had a different manager now, very impatient. They didn’t wait for him, just left his horse there and went on down, did the work. He got up on this little hill, looking around, and looked down, and he can read Hawaiian, and said, “ ‘Puu **Kali**’!?” He got down and stormed around, and there was not one employee that knew anthing about that, and then he came to Toshi Imoto. Toshi says, “Oh yeah, that’s Cran!” (laughter) I’d been gone for four or five years. So that little story came to me, I don’t remember how.

Jon Cran asks Gordon to tell the story of his appraisal of Puu O’o.

C: This was 1965 or 1966. I used to do some appraisal work, mostly for Hawaiian Homes, and that was Hawaiian Homes land that I came to look at. He was very friendly, but he didn’t think the land was worth as much as I appraised it for. He wouldn’t bid. Nobody else would bid against him, because everybody else in the ranching business knew he had such a temper that he’d get even with them someplace. And so they just sat on their hands. So they asked me would I lower the upset price. We lowered it to $25,000. They had another auction. He wouldn’t bid again, said, “Too high.” I appraised it at $27,000. They lowered it to $25,000, and the bidding went up to $31,000, so that’s what it was leased for. So I don’t think I was too far off.

I: Can you go over the years that you were working for Shipman again?

C: I worked a little while in 1945, only about four months. I got notice (from the military) but they didn’t call me right away. Then I went back there in 1950, and worked until late in 1952. That’s all. Their ship was sinking. So there was no need to pull on the oars there.

I: Why do you say that?

C: The things I just mentioned that Shipman was so poor at. He couldn’t delegate any authority. His selection of foreman were people that were not capable of the job. The person that was there before, who I worked for the first time, when I got out of high school, was a very good man, but he was a carryover from his father’s employees. And he hated his father, so he hated the people he had working for him.

I: Did you know the father at all?

C: I didn’t know him. I was a kid and I knew what he looked like.

I: What did he look like?

C: Not tall -- he looked tall, but he was a slim person. The working men liked him very much.

Jon Cran (wife): I know this is your interview, but when we were coming from Honolulu back to Hilo, Mr. Shipman was on the same plane. We were sitting there, and I said to Gordon, “Oh! There’s Mr. Shipman. Why don’t you go over and shake hands with him?” He said, “You don’t shake hands with Mr. Shipman. If he wants to shake hands with you, he’ll put his hand out to shake **your** hand.” I remember that.

C: I wasn’t going to add that.

I: What about the son, Herbert Shipman. What was his appearance?

C: Oh, heavyset. Big person, very big. About six-foot-one. Thin brown hair, with a shade of gray.

I: Did he dress like a cowboy?

C: No. He just came in trousers and a work shirt and a jacket.

I: Was there any talk about why he didn’t like his dad?

C: No. He just didn’t like his dad. And so anybody who smoked cigars he didn’t like, because his dad smoked cigars. He was just a difficult person, is all I can say. So I left there.

I: Now, before we move on, do you know what Puu O’o means?

C: Echo. Echo from the hill. The ranch was started up there by John Baker, and Willy Shipman bought it in 1895. You asked why the men liked Willy -- because he worked. He would leave Keaau on horseback. He’d ride to Puu O’o, change horse, go to work. He had to leave maybe about two o’clock in the morning to get there by eight o’clock. He’d changed horse, go to work with the men. They liked him very much. He spoke Hawaiian, but up there, over the years, the Hawaiians didn’t really pan out working on the ranch. There were more Japanese employees. They could put up with the cold. It’s very cold up there, cold and wet.

I: Can you describe the area?

C: At that time it was 21,000 acres, and it's on the Hilo slope of Mauna Kea, from the house there at Puu O'o you can look down and see Hilo, the lights in the nighttime. From about where the old ironworks were you can see a few lights going toward main town, slightly on the Hilo side of Waialoa River. At that time the ranch came right out to the saddle road. You'll see a row of trees going up the slope of Mauna Kea, and at the top of that row of trees is another little clump of trees, and that's where the houses are. It's about 6,500- to 6,700-foot elevation. And then the ranch ran on the contour around Mauna Kea, for approximately 14 miles.

I: How many cattle did it have at that time?

C: At the time I first went to work there, they used to keep about 4,000 head. It's good land. When I came back from the service, they didn't have any management there, the other fellow had gone. The herd had increased to a number that nobody knew. Everything was tumbled down. I worked there two years as a cowboy, doing mostly cattle work. The ranch was in such sad shape that everything was wild. So most of the job was roping and tying them up.

I: Are you talking about wild cattle?

C: All the cattle were wild. If you have wild men, you have wild cattle. It's that simple. And he employed very incompetant men -- in general, I'm talking in general. He had some very good people that he just put down all the time, so he didn't get any benefit from them. One of the outstanding fellows, who he was friendly to but didn't really use his abilities was Tommy Lindsey. Tommy Lindsey was a very outstanding person, and he should have been having the top job. And he did, off and on, but only when nobody else was available. He'd try to clean up things and do a good job, and then he'd be put down again.

I: Do you recall anything about the management structure?

C: Yes. As far as the ranch was concerned, Herbert Shipman was the boss, the president of the family corporation. And Dick Divine was the office manager in Hilo. And then in the same office was Hilo Meat Company, which later became Miko. Now it's all gone, closed. That was in the same office, but there were different personnel in the office that took care of different things. Tony Chang took care of the selling of beef, and the pricing of beef for the Hilo Meat Company. And for the ranch, the next person under Herbert was a fellow named Big David. David Kekuawela. He was a nice guy. Head foreman. Shipman didn't like him, but he used him for going between him and the ranch, but that ended around 1951, when Big David died. I wasn't there at the time. So he was the go-between. And Tom Bell was the ranch foreman. He was a good man. Both Big David and Tom Bell worked together. They were the old-timers.

I: How many workers did they have?

C: Oh, up at the ranch, about five. And when there was a big cattle job they'd bring in another five. At Puu O'o there was about five, and at Puaakala, which is another camp, there'd be about three people. Their job was mostly patching fences.

I: So what did you do there.

C: Oh, we used to saddle up about seven o'clock in the morning. The bell rings at six, you have breakfast, and then you go. And while the rest of us were eating, one fellow, either Toshi or I, when I was there, would go out and drive the horses, bring in all the working horses. About seven o'clock, everybody would be through with coffee, and we'd come down and catch our horse. If we were going to work at the far end of the ranch, we'd separate all the horses we were going to take -- everybody might have two or three horses -- and then some of us, mostly the young guys, would drive the horses over there. Then the others would come in the old truck and meet us down there with the horses. Then if we were going to be doing work at that end of the ranch, the horses would be left there in the holding area, and we would just ride back and forth on one horse, usually a young horse that we were training. And we'd use the old, steady horse for work. We'd ride in the morning and change horses at noon and change horses to go home again. As time went on, though, more and more we would just leave the house, go to some area that had the biggest cattle, and rope and tie them up. Then come and lead them. No way to run a ranch, but the paycheck still came. And the groceries were always at the house, so I stayed two years. Roping every day. Rope one day, lead them the next day. Rope one day, lead them the next day.

I: At that time, it sounds like it was practically all wild cattle.

C: It was. We used to try -- in the open areas we'd build a wing fence and line up and drive them over to a corral. In places that the cattle would break out and run. If it's open area. But down in the forest area, no, there's nothing that can be done.

Lani Cran (daughter): You know I'm your daughter and I never realized -- all this time I thought you worked for Shipman for **years**, and you only worked there for two-and-a-half years?

I: No, I got out of there. I wasn't going to squeal on the foreman about what he did, and so I decided I'd leave.

Lani: When you told me stories as a kid growing up, about the Parker Ranch cattle, and how the hardest thing about moving cattle through Parker Ranch places was usually moving a herd, because Parker Ranch cattle were so herd-broke, they'd run in and get in your herd.

C: That's right. And then later on, when I was pasturing cattle, Parker Ranch cattle would still come in. You see, Parker Ranch used to drive cattle all over. And they'd trail drive them up from Waimea, the heifers mostly, and keep them at Humuula. And it was quite a sight to see 2,000 heifers all lined up on the road. Instead of going through Puu O'o lands we'd come out and go by the mountain road. You're familiar with the road up there, it goes around the mountain on the Hamakua side? We'd get up on that road then bring the cattle along on the road. These were Shipman cattle.

Lani: I'm sorry to bring this up, but I grew up on Mokuleia, on the Dillingham operation, and that was a total tame-cattle deal. I'm just trying to bring things into perspective. Shipman was a very small part of your life. You spent 17 years running Dillingham's operation. And that was impressive watching you drive those cattle. It was 12 miles at least -- as the crow flies it was maybe five miles, but you go in every canyon. That's what I remember.

C: I'm just answering questions.

I: Before I came, I spoke with him a couple months ago, so I'm aware of his history. I guess I'm interested in the Shipman Ranch, because I've heard a lot about it from other guys. But I am planning on asking about other things.

Lani: Just to put things into perspective, I had never seen wild cattle until we came back here in 1977. I had never seen cattle that acted like this. You get to the gate and the cattle go -- **pheeew!** A hundred cattle ran away, and you got 20 of them caught.

Jon: One of the things I'd like to be sure you bring up is in 1969, and Richard Smart asked Gordon to come and work for Parker Ranch. At that time, Rally Greenwell was the number-one man on Parker Ranch. And Richard Smart asked Gordon to come work for Parker Ranch. At that time, Gordon had just been able to swing a loan with Bank of Hawaii for 200 cows so that we could run them on Ray Benlehr's ranch. In that meeting that he had with Richard Smart, Richard Smart said that if Gordon took the job as number two at Parker Ranch, he would like Gordon to relinquish his holdings on the cattle that he just purchased. So at that time, Gordon told him, "If I were number-one man at Parker Ranch, if I had Rally Greenwell's job, then I would feel there was a conflict of interest. If I'm going to be number-two man I don't think there would be a conflict of interest." Gordon declined the position. But I thought it was nice that Richard Smart would even consider Gordon to be number two at Parker Ranch.

I: Before we move on to those other ranches you worked at, I just wanted to ask you -- as your daughter mentioned, the Shipman was kind of a formative time in your life? What did you take away from that job?

C: I learned how to train horses. Lots of experience. All kinds, both good and bad. I learned how to work cattle. I learned how not to work cattle. The cattle taught me what I needed to know. It was quite obvious at the time that what we were doing was something radically wrong, so I left. That's it.

I: Do you know what happened to the ranch and when Shipman lost the leases?

C: He didn't bid on it, I think it was 1964, somewhere around there. You could find out the date if you wanted to. *This was when Cran had appraised the ranch at a price Shipman thought was too high, and Shipman refused to bid on it.*

But the fellow who did bid on it and got the lease was a person I knew, Ray Benlehr, he was the manager of Meadow Gold Dairy on Oahu.

I: After Mr. Shipman gave up that lease, what was the effect of that? Was it a big deal at the time? In the ranching community?

C: No, not really. It was one of the earlier ranches to fold up, W.H. Shipman Ltd., soon after, went out of the cattle business completely, and they had been very big in it prior to that. They had raised cattle at Keaau, Keauhou and South Point, and up at Puu O'o. They had lots of animals, and they had the market, which became Hilo Meat Company. It started as a co-op, and then lots of the members dropped off, and Shipman became the major owner. I think there was Hawaiian Agricultural Company, that's this place, and Kaalualu Ranch, that's at Naalehu, were two other stockholders. When I was working here and prior to that, the directors of Hilo Meat Company were the managers of the three companies.

I: Let's go back a little bit. When you left Puu O'o in 1952, where did you go after that?

C: I came to Keauhou. Shipman had just sold Keauhou. In fact, Jon and I were at the movies in Hilo, and a guy tapped me on the back. I looked around, and it was Bill Nobriga, and he asked me what I'd been doing, he heard I'd left Shipman. Of course, Bill Nobriga was handling his dad's affairs. He said, "You want to come to work at Keauhou? Come to my office tomorrow." So I went to see him, and I went to Keauhou for a short period of time. One year, maybe. It's located on the volcano. You know where the golf course is located? It's a strip of land running up from there. That's all national park now.

I: Any memories that stand out of your time at Keauhou?

C: Yeah. I used to go back and forth. They had another ranch at Kalopa, out in Hamakua. And then they had a lease up at Hanaepoi. I think they had lost the lease already, but they were still in operation on it. We'd go get

cattle up there and move them to Keauhou. They'd bring the cattle down to just above Paauilo and load them in the trucks. Small trucks in those days. And the Hamakua Road was just so bad. About as bad as the road to Hana. Every gulch went all the way down in and all the way back up. I was driving one truck and another guy was driving another truck. Every day we'd go make our runs. I'd leave the truck at my house in Hilo at night. In the morning I would have breakfast at Paauilo, then go load up cattle, one load a piece. Big. Ten head in each truck. Then we'd drive all the way around, go up the Volcano, up the Mauna Loa road. Go into the pastures and drop them off. Then come back and get to Hilo by dark. Then he'd drive home and meet me again at about eight o'clock the next morning and make another trip.

I was coming up the gulch at Hakalau, and the truck wasn't handling just right. I looked back through the window, and I was looking right underneath the bed of the truck! (*i.e., it was tipping over*) And it had ten head of cattle in it, and the more it tipped, the more they were going to get down to the lower end. So I swung one way and slammed on the breaks, and darn if it didn't give it enough force to put that thing right back down, and I drove all the way to Hilo very carefully to keep those cattle from shifting their weight around. I got to Hilo and went to a repair shop that we used to deal with. It was a welding shop and automobile mechanic. I said, "This truck -- the cattle rack is loose." There was only one angle-iron piece left holding it, and the rest was just sitting on the frame! Then to top it off, the guy said, "Oh, I'm so busy, but I'll help you." So here's the cattle on the truck, and we're parked in front of his shop, and he comes down to get down under the truck. One cow shits right through the side and it nails him. Oh, he got wilder than hell! (laughter) But he was a good guy. He went and got cleaned up and came back. That's one story for there. Can't remember too much else. We used to go up to Keawewai and camp out up there -- there's a cabin up there -- and spend a week or two at a time, up there. It was nice. It was good. I can't think of anything else besides that back and forth.

Oh, yeah! This Nobriga got a sale of cattle to go to Hana, Maui. Well, the cattle were up at Hanaipoi, which is up above Waimea. We trucked them from Hanaipoi down to Opolu (?) Point in Kohala, there's that airstrip. Then they got this freighter plane -- I don't know if it was one or two -- and there was an airstrip at Hana. So this other guy and I were assigned to the job of hauling these cattle down and loading the plane. Have you ever tried to get 450-pound calves and jam them into a little dark hole? We backed the truck up one side along the DC-3, and there's this cargo hold there, black inside, and we wound up pushing, we'd hold hands and push them in, one at a time. It was a hell of a job (laughing). Oh, we got crap all over us. The loading part we did all one day. Then other people came to help shuttle the loads down with other trucks, so we could keep busy, shoving them in.

I: Why did you leave after one year with Nobriga?

C: Oh, she (Jon) and I were going to get married, and I didn't think that was a very good job! (laughter) That's when I got the job down here on the plantation for three months. And then I came up here. The boss had wanted me to come up here but he had no place for me. He had another foreman here. So I came up here (to Kapapala) and was the ranch foreman. Stayed here four years. It was a good job. Everything was okay except that it was unionized. I came here in October, 1953, and I stayed until October, 1957. Four years. And it was too much. Nice place, nice ranch, everything was fancy. It was a big ranch in those days, went all the way from the ocean up to the area we have now, 54,000 acres. The boss was nice, but the men were in the union, and the boss was not. It's that simple. And I was not in the union, but my job was to go between the boss and the men, I was the foreman. So every morning we'd meet down here at the shop -- it used to be called the garage.

And we'd have what in the old days we called "stand." You'd go down there and you'd stand and get your orders for the day. Well, I'd get my orders and then I'd have about 15 minutes to decide who's going to do what. Who'll take the truck, who's going to do this, who's going to do that. The truck drivers were union, which means they can't do any other job, except they can be cowboy, too. But if they're a truck driver, they get truck driver's pay, even when they're a cowboy. And if they're cowboys they get cowboy pay even when they go to build fence. And then once a month they had a stop-work meeting down in Pahala, and the boys would get so riled up at the union's approach, and it would take about a week for them to cool off. And in the mean time the boss was on my tail to get more and more things done better and better, and on the other side, everybody's mad. They were good guys, but they'd get riled up with the union meetings -- and the company was not treating them right, no doubt about that. One of the things this company did, was when the union first started, they started to charge the cowboys rent. But they didn't increase their wages. That went on for about two years before the fellows here joined the union. That was a big issue.

I: Who was your boss at the time?

C: Allen Johnston. He was manager. Hawaiian Agriculture Company was the owner. The boss down there was a fellow named Ramsey.

I: How long had it been union before you came?

C: Maybe a year or two. Not very long.

I: Did you know how it was unionized?

C: From the plantation. Well, the plantation was unionized for some time before the ranch was unionized. They did not join the union here on the ranch. But C. Brewer, their bosses didn't use good judgement. They should have raised the ranch wages if they're going to charge house rent, or waived any house rent. But they didn't, they treated them like they were all in one union down there. So they **did** join the union. It was hard to run the ranch, because you had to remember to get the cattle in before 11 o'clock, because after 11 o'clock they have to have a lunch break. If they don't have a lunch break at 11 o'clock, for one hour, you have to start paying overtime for every 15 minutes thereafter, until they have their lunch break. Then, you go to work on the company time, but you come home on the employees time. Anytime that you have a cowboy job and you can't get through by 3:30 in the afternoon, why, it's time-and-a-half, and you've got to figure it all out. Then the boss would say, if they're going to have time-and-a-half, their job ends when they unsaddle, and the truckdriver gets overtime, but the boys all ride home on the labor truck. So that would make them more mad.

(break for dinner)

I: We're talking about your time at Mokuleia from 1959 to 1975.

Lani: I can tell you what happened because we lived in the last house at Mokuleia, and he came in with his underwear all burned.

C: This would be about 1964, 1965, and we were burning a lot. Every summer we would burn to get rid of the weeds that we don't like. And then we'd oftentimes throw grass seed into the ashes, to improve the place. The ridges out there, they go up and they go down the other side. This one place we were burning, it's a steep slope. The fire was going up this canyon. We were burning it all off. The cattle would graze the whole thing, but it was pretty steep. It was a place where the fence went down, and we had it cut open as a firebreak, and we back-fired it there, and this flame jumped across to the other side of the fire break. It was on a steep slope, so the flames came swirling up, and then the sparks would fly across. So I went after that -- this was right on the edge of a rock -- I thought I could grab that, and knock that grass down and it wouldn't spread up the hill anymore. But I slipped, and went down this real steep spot, and the fire was coming up, with smoke and everything. John was with me, our boy. He saw me disappear through the fire. If it had been flat down there I probably would have gotten smashed, but I slid down there and was alright. He wanted to come down and get me. He was probably eight. And an old Filipino was with me, his name was Pilipi. He got hold of John and just said, "No! You stay here, you stay here." So, that's the story. I walked down the canyon. The fire was up on the sides where there's lots of grass.

I: When did you get to Dillingham?

C: A friend of mine called me and wanted to see if I wanted the job. Sept 1, 1959. I was sitting in Kona. We'd come back from Kauai. Jon was working in Kona. She (Lani) was born. I'd come back from the hospital at maybe 2 o'clock in the morning. I sat down in the big chair at her grampa's house and fell asleep. Then the phone rang. It was this friend of mine, saying, come down and look at this job. So I did. Long story short, we took it. We lived there the first 15 years of her (Lani's) life. Then we moved back here, and she stayed to finish school over there. She stayed one year longer. It might have even been two years, because she was going to Kamehameha as a boarder. She went back to Mokuleia on the weekends. She stayed with Kenny and Jackie Dillingham.

I: Why was it an attractive job for you?

C: Oh, it was a beautiful job. The Dillinghams were excellent people to work for. After the first year or two, I saw the Dillinghams once a year, other than when they'd come out to stay in their vacation home. I had contact with the treasurer, and I would see him maybe about once a month. That was Bayard Dillingham. They'd have their annual meeting at the end of December, and I'd go in and give them a report for the year, and then submit my budget for the coming year. They'd thank me and dismiss me, and I'd see them again next year. The only thing I couldn't do was lease or sell anything that was there. But I kept in close touch with the treasurer, and anytime there was a major purchase I got it approved. That's all.

I: How big was the place?

C: At the time I took over we were farming about 200 acres. But they owned 5,000 acres. Then we leased additional land. Kuaokala was 2,000 acres, the air base was another 500 acres. So that would be about 7,500 acres.

I: When you say farming, do you mean ranching?

C: It was on the ranch, but at the time I was hired they wanted to raise alfalfa. They were trying to, but they were having problems. I'm no genious, but they already knew the land needed to have boron added to grow alfalfa. They were fooling around with the amounts needed. Nothing happened, so I figured there's a threshold effect. So we put in 100 pounds of borax per acre. We grew alfalfa, but we also grew a lot of weeds. It's hard to control weeds in Hawaii. Anyway, we grew it, and sold our stuff. That's how I got to know Ray Benlehr, all our alfalfa went to Meadow Gold Dairy.

I: So, they had all this, including the leases, when you came in 1959?

C: No, I picked up the 2,000 acres at Kuaokala.

I: At the time you got there in 1959, was there anybody above you, or were you the top man?

C: No, there was a go-between with the owners and me. It was a fellow that's a good family friend now, but I knew him when I was working at the plantation. He was my boss for three months that I spent down at Pahala. He knew me and he was looking for somebody to come and take care of the place. He is Jack Larsen.

I: At that time, in the Dillingham family, who was the head man?

C: Lowell Dillingham, although Walter was alive, and I used to visit with him quite often in the first three years I was there, before Walter died.

I: How old was Lowell at that time?

C: Maybe 50, 55? I'm guessing. He was the head of Dillingham, and the corporation was being built up bigger and bigger. He's the one that started the international portion of the company. Walter was a nice, nice person. But the director's meetings were headed by Lowell, and the family was all there. Nice people.

I: What was he like to work for?

C: He never gave me any orders. I had very little contact with him. His secretary was Miss Rodick. I could walk in and talk to him any time. He was very open. I did a couple times, but only in extreme cases. It was really nice.

I: What was it like to have that much control over the ranch?

C: Well, it was good. I got my financial report at the end of every month. Then I realized my report was too late and not really helping. So we changed -- I hired Kenny Dillingham's wife to sit in the office of our shop, just a little office, to take phone calls. But what we started doing was keeping track of our expenses, not our payments. The bookkeepers all keep track of the money going out -- they're paid 30 days late, so the report is already two weeks late from the end of the month, but then the numbers don't come in for another 30 days if they're on a charge account. That's two months delay by the time you know what you're spending. And if you're running in the red for two months, it's awful hard to dig out of that hole. So we started, when anything was purchased, this gal in the office, the statement was given to her, so it was charged as of that day. And the same thing -- we were selling sand, and the trucks were hauling sand out on a daily basis. At the end of every day, she knew how many loads of sand had gone out. So if the following day you wanted to know what we were doing, she knew exactly how much we owed and exactly what we had coming in.

I: Was that your idea?

C: Yes it was.

I: What were some of your goals when you came to the ranch and had this much control?

C: Oh, to keep making money. And to make the ranch a more profitable place. At the time I came, why, they weren't running any cattle in the big areas that they had, because they were afraid of handling them and couldn't get them back in.

I: Why was that.

C: I don't know. I wasn't working there at the time. But I know from other experiences that if you have wild men, you have wild cattle.

I: So it wasn't a matter of the terrain or the fencing?

C: A little of both. The terrain was very steep, which made it easy, really, because I worked with dogs, and the cattle can't run away from the dogs going up a steep hill. It was easy to keep the cattle tame because they had no place to go, except where we wanted them to go.

We kept about 400 to 500 dairy replacement heifers, and we dealt with the dairymen, mostly in Waianae. At times we would raise large numbers of bull calves. And then they would go to the feedlot with the cattle we raised. At first the feedlot was at Honouliuli, then it moved to Barber's Point. One time we raised about 300 and the next time we raised about 500. But then the price dropped out from under them and they cost more to feed. Then we carried about 500 breeding cows.

I: How many did you market each year?

C: We always had cattle in the Hawaii Meat Company feedlot, and some of them were purchased. If there was a good buy I'd buy and stick them in with ours. We kept always one lot there, and there would be times when we had two lots. They would be fed for a little over three months, 120 to 150 days. We would have at least one lot -- sometimes 75 and sometimes 150 head -- there all the time.

I: At what age did you start feeding them?

C: Oh, not any different from anybody else. Between 15 months and two years. They'd be sized up equally but not aged. The older small ones would go at a later date, and the bigger young ones first. Size was what we judged.

I: What breed of cattle did you have at that time?

C: Oh, we started with some Hereford cattle. They were the easiest at that time to buy, when we were expanding. Almost everybody in the islands raised Herefords. And then we brought in some Santa Gertrudis cows, and started breeding with Santa Gertrudis bulls, until we had a half-breed herd, with part Brahma in all of them. They do real well in that area. And then the last few years I was there we started to breed them with Angus cattle. Not much different than what we've been doing here.

I: I know feeding was still kind of a new concept at that time. Was it accepted by management and other ranchers?

C: Oh. It was a salvation. The only reason we got into feeding cattle, because the price dropped out from under the grass-fat market. That happened about 1954, somewhere around there, when New Zealand started shipping chilled beef to Hawaii. We were getting 50 to 52 cents on the pound for the carcass, wholesale, and when New Zealand came on the market, within a week we dropped to 26 cents a pound. That's when these big ranches all started to feel the pain, and they couldn't get out of deficit spending. We couldn't compete with New Zealand, so we started feeding cattle at Hawaii Meat Company. There have been several other outfits that tried to get into the cattle feeding business in Hawaii. None of them are in existance today except one on Maui, and Buddy Nobriga has been able to keep that one going with the pineapple pulp. That's a pocket market. It does fatten good, good beef. But it's too bad we had to give up the grass fat business. It's better beef. The fat is omega-three, and with fed beef, the fat is omega-six. Omega-six doesn't carry any congregated lioletic acid. Now we're finding that it is very necessary in the human diet. That has been recognized as one of the natural preventatives of cancer. It's not being talked about much, because it's going to put a lot of people out of business. But the cattle in the United States are almost all feedlot stuff.

I: When the New Zealand beef first came in, do you think that caught the local ranchers by surprise?

C: Yeah. Nobody expected it. My boss, at this place (Kapapala) was just beside himself wondering how he was going to make ends meet. It was the beginning of the end -- ever since then, the big ranches that had lots of employees were fading out of the picture. And those that were on leased land, like this one here, when the leases came up and they had to bid, they were bidding against smaller people who had enough money to bid against them. To get it, and keep it in production for the big companies, why, it just took away their profits. They essentially lost 50 percent of the market.

I: What ranches do you think were most affected by that change in 1954?

C: Oh, all of them. Everybody. In those days, the supermarkets were just getting started, and they started buying competitive beef. Just the same as what's happening to the little markets today, with Costco and Wal-Mart and so forth. Everybody's folding up. It's happening nationwide -- all our products are coming from China, South America, Brazil, India. I never realized until fairly recently that Caterpillars are built in China. And the Buicks are being built in China.

I: By the time you got to Mokuleia, the feedlot practice was pretty well established?

C: Yeah. But we used to sell a few grass-fat cattle.

I: Was there any market for that?

C: Yeah, a little bit. Not much.

I: Can you describe the area as it was when you first got there?

C: The boundaries of the ranch ran from Crozier Drive along the ocean to Kaena Point at the 1,000-foot elevation all along and went down to Kuaokala. But Kuaokala was state land. And from the edge of Kuaokala coming back, those properties were all in the Mahele. So the ranch originally was all in little pieces, up in the canyons and down in the bottom. The ranch was made up by the people who bought these little parcels, put them all together. When Walter Dillingham bought the place, it had been divided. And the Silva family had the other half. Gasper Silva was related to this other family. I think they were cousins, but I'm not too sure. The story goes that one of the owners used to drive the cattle to Red Hill, where they slaughtered them for the ships and then salted them and sold barrels of salt beef. Then he'd come back and pick up another bunch from the ranch and go back and forth. In those days they grazed cattle all the way from the ocean, and up to the mountain top. So a visitor came by, and spent the night with Gasper. Gasper had a wooden leg, so he didn't ride much, except around the ranch. Lowell told me this story. And the visitor congratulated Gasper, told him what great beef they were producing and what a handsome price they were getting for it over in Honolulu. So Gasper began to think about it -- he didn't handle the money, the other partner did. So when the partner came back to get another herd of cattle to drive in, why, they had it out, discussing it at first, then with bull whips out in the yard. Gasper was hurt so bad that he never really recovered. He couldn't match the other guy, the other guy had two legs. The other partner's name was Silva, same as Gasper. Gasper is the one that the Dillinghams bought out.

That was the history of the place. And all these other pieces that were in the Mahele, names like Emerson and stuff like that were on those parcels. But they sold out. So all these lands were put back together in one piece. So Dillingham bought that place for a subsistance farm or ranch from Gasper. That was in the 1890s. Walter had already made the railroad to Kahuku and Laie. After the railroad was in was when he bought that place. He used it to produce butter and turkeys, eggs, beef, and what they had was put on the train, for the Dillingham families in Honolulu. So they were eating pretty well, compared to most of the people. They would get the fresh butter, and nobody else got butter. They didn't have refrigeration, so the butter was made up on the mountain in a place we called the butter house. It was hanging -- in fact it fell over while I was there. We bulldozed the trees away from it, and the wind caught it, and it was right up on the edge of a precipice. What they did, they had a long, smooth wire, like used in fencing, and it went down the pali. Up there it's high enough and cold enough at night so they could churn butter. Then they put it on the wire and zooooooom it went down. Somehow they stopped it at the end. I watched them ship sugar that way when I was a little kid, down at Honokaa. They had a cable that they'd send down to the ship. It would be tied to a winch on the ship, and they'd control the speed of the sugar. In the morning they'd have all these cut-cane guys, and they'd put them in this box, and they're in there with their kaukau tin, and holding their straw hats, and they'd turn them loose (laughing) and **there** they'd go! Sheeeeeeee! Out to the ship! (laughing) And the ship's moving, so the guys on the ship would control it so that just as they'd see it coming down they'd give enough slack so that it would get up to the ship slowly and drop on the deck.

I: How far a ride was it?

C: Well, it's a high bluff, and the ship was out there. I would say a quarter-mile? And they'd start from about 200, 300 feet high. And the big sugar warehouse was right up there on the edge. They had a railroad track that came out from the mill, and they had it all stacked up ready to go.

I: What did you call Dillingham ranch?

C: It was called Mokuleia. Prior to that it was leased to Walter and Lowell, father and son, before I came over there. When Lowell was a young man, possibly in the 1930s or 1940s, he ran it as a purebred Hereford herd, raising bulls and such, kind of a hobby deal. It was called Crowbar. And Crowbar was the name of the stables that Walter Dillingham had, where he raised his polo horses. After Walter died, they leased the stable there.

I: At that time, most of the ranch income was coming in from the beef cattle?

C: Oh, I wouldn't say that. I think the dairy heifers made the most money of the agricultural ventures. But we sold water to houses on the beach, we had several wells, and we sold sand at various times -- that was big money as long as there was a lot of building going on. They built most of Honolulu during that time, as it is now, during that 17-year period. So we sold the sand, and then the cattle would make some money. Not an awful lot, just like now. It always costs more -- everything keeps going up in price. But the biggest money that Mokuleia Ranch made was from the accumulation of money in the bank, drawing interest. That had been from previous land sales, stuff like that. They had sold a bunch of land in Waianae side, and they got big bucks for it. Then that sat in the bank. It was Mokuleia Ranch and Land Company, so the holdings were applied to the ranch, and the biggest money we made was in interest.

I: You said that when you came to Mokuleia, your goal was to make it profitable. How did you seek to accomplish that?

C: By production. I started out raising alfalfa. They were doing it when I got there, and it was not working out very well. It was costing us every bit as much to produce as it was worth. So we rotated it with sweet corn, and that was great. We made money on that for a while. Then, Sure Save in Honolulu told us, "You can sell us all the corn you can raise." We were selling it for 7 cents a pound, so, "Oh, **all** we can raise? Well, that's a great deal!" So we planted 40 acres of corn, four every week, and God, we flooded the market in Honolulu, down to where they wouldn't take any more corn (laughing). We were only getting paid about 3 cents and they were throwing it out of the ice boxes. So, that didn't work. By then, I was grazing on the more productive areas, I was raising dairy heifers. And then, after that, the directors authorized I spend so much money to buy some cattle for more extensive areas. So I did that, and I overspent my budget for it, but it wasn't anything that hurt anybody, but we got a cattle herd started. So of the agricultural ventures, the dairy heifers definitely made the

most money, and had the least investment in them. We would take a contract with some of the dairies, most of them in Waianae: for so-much per head a month, they would deliver the animal, we would keep it and breed it until it's ready to go back to the dairy. Without having to lay out any money, the gross profit of that was from the production of our own efforts. So we didn't have a capital outlay. But when we got into the more extensive areas, then we had to start with some beef cattle. Actually, the first cattle we started with were some dairy heifers that were cross-bred with beef bulls. It's a good cross, because dairymen like their heifers to be bred to Angus bulls, because it has a small calf. And for a first-calf heifer, you don't want them to have a big calf. So we'd get those heifers, and we raised quite a few of them with the bull-calves, and turn them into cows. The ranch made money, but it couldn't compare to the dairy heifers, because you had a capital investment. More labor, more miles of fence, miles of waterline, while the dairy heifers had the best place. Then as we went along we took all those farm fields and put them into irrigated grass, and raised dairy heifers. And then we'd put wean-calves in there too.

Another thing. People are always talking about discrimination. They think it's bad. It's the most natural thing in the world. You have a pasture with black-and-white calves in it, and then you bring in a bunch of Santa Gertrudis, almost all red, some with white faces. You put them into the same pasture, and you'll see the red ones here, maybe with two or three black ones in the bunch, then over here you'll see all the black-and-white ones, with maybe one or two red ones mixed in, but definitely apart -- not together.

I: You said when you were at Puu O'o, that the daily work was mostly just roping the cattle.

C: That's why I left. The boss would give the foreman an order for so many cattle to go to the slaughterhouse, and they had all these big old wild cattle down there. Some of them were 10 years old already, down in the forest. We'd go catch those big ones. Some of the biggest ones dressed one-thousand pounds, so when they were alive we would try to catch them and hold them with a 1,200 pound horse, and their live weight is about 600 pounds heavier than the horse. You had to have help in a hurry. But like anything they're wild, so they're intent on running away. All you do is hold them a little while, get them tangled up around a tree, but most of the others we roped were not those giants.

I: If that's what the day-to-day work was like at Shipman, what was the day-to-day job like at Mokuleia?

C: Hmm, a little of everything. Mokuleia would be building fence, repairing and operating the wells, irrigating the dairy paddocks, cowboy up in the mountains -- going up and gathering cattle, bringing them down, weaning the cattle, and selling the cows. We sold a lot of cull-cows to the people in Waialua and the surrounding areas. We'd select the ones that didn't have a calf. We'd put them in a holding area, and I'd bring 10 or 15 cows into a corral on Saturday morning, sometimes Saturday and Sunday. We had a little scale there, and these Filipinos would come about 7 in the morning, I'd bring the cows in. I had one price, that would be across the scale. If they picked a big, fat one they payed more money. It was the same price per pound. And if the cattle had just come off green feed, belly full of grass, I'd deduct 5 percent. It's stuff they can't utilize. Filipinos will eat almost everything, but a belly full of grass they don't eat. Then they'd buy them, "I like this one, I like that one." We'd weigh each one, and that would be the price, and they'd give us the money. But we wouldn't kill them there, because it's illegal to kill before you get the money. The other party has to own it. Otherwise you have to go to

an inspected slaughterhnouse. The Filipinos don't like that, because they can't get everything. So we sell them the animal, we get the money, we put it in our truck, then we run it down to their place. Then I'd kill it for them, but they had to ask me to kill it, and it was in a dump truck, we'd raise it up and it would slide down, my daughter would hold the dump lever. They'd pull the head out -- it was dead already -- and then they'd bleed it, get eight gallons of blood. And by then they're all dancing around and drinking whiskey, pouring the blood in the whiskey. "Oh, you like one?" I never participated in that, I said, "Nah, nah, I got to go drive truck." Sometimes I'd have four or five head in a day, but that made money. We got a good price for those animals. We'd sell them for about twice the price of what we'd get at the slaughterhouse, because there's little cost against selling them.

I: You were also saying ealier you could drive cattle at Mokuleia, while you couldn't drive cattle at Shipman.

C: Oh, well, we didn't have any wild men. We started using dogs because I didn't have anyone else imposing their ideas on what would work. Up at Shipman it was terrible, terrible. I got to the point where I would sleep at night and dream of cattle falling into the gulches, because that's exactly what they did. I estimated there was probably 10,000 head of cattle on the place, just running all over, while on the books in the office I often asked them, "What's the inventory?" "We carry 4,000 head on the inventory." I said, "That's not what you got. You got more like 10,000 head up there." To just rope one big steer or one bull that's running with a bunch of cows along a gulch, you come back the next day and there's five or six dead cows in the gulch. It's just not the way to do anything.

At Mokuleia we didn't have any trouble. There was a time or two that we had to rope something. Mostly bulls that get ornery with age. If one bull gets a licking from another bull, then he gets so that he doesn't want to come in. So then you have to go catch him somehow.

But that Hammerhead was something else. We were bringing cattle back from Kuaokala, which we did every year. Put them out for several months, then bring them back to the ranch. We'd take the wean calves off, work the baby calves, then turn them back out. The wean calves would stay -- we'd keep them in the corral for a few days, then put them out with the dairy heifers. And trailing them back, we had a bulldozer road that goes in the gulches and out, but it all dropped off steep on the other side, above Camp Erdman, up on the cliffs above there. We'd start from right above Kaena Point, on the flats above there, and we'd gather them going back towards Waialua. We'd put the bunch all together in a little fenced area we had there, and then we'd go on. We had two water troughs up there, where we'd tap water out of the gulch. There was an old well, a hand-dug well, only about five or six feet deep. And then it tunneled, and the tunnel was all full of water, so as soon as we tapped into that, the water flow came back. It had just been sealed up by erosion. That (spring) supplied Kuaokala. Kuaokala we had divided into two paddocks -- big areas, about a thousand acres each. We'd get the cattle collected from the far end, because that's where we'd put them last, and the feed was all gone down there, then we'd gather them all and put them in this paddock. If everybody wanted to, sometimes we'd spend the night there. Come up one day, then camp out, good fun. Then the next day we'd start going all the way back, and that's what my daughter was talking about, getting them on the road, this bulldozer trail that goes on and on and on.

It's all pali on the side, and that Hammerhead, its calf was in the back, but it was a high-strung animal and always going to the front, and it was alright. But after a while it would miss its calf, and back it comes, down through the herd, passing all the other cattle -- and, see, the road's about 10, 15-foot wide, and there's cattle two or three abreast, coming along, all quietly walking along. The riders would go so far ahead, and then the rider in the front might have to plug a place, and then somebody else might have to get ahead and take that guy's place while he gets in front for the next one, to block the trails going off to the side. I used to take Girlie (Lani) and John up in the mornings, and put them on the trails in the morning as we were going out, and they're supposed to stay on that ridge -- sometimes they'd sit there crying until the middle of the afternoon until the herd comes back (chuckling). It was to keep the cattle from going up the ridges.

So this cow (Hammerhead) would come on back, and after checking on her calf in the back of the herd -- that's like a quarter-mile back -- she'd come charging back up toward the front. And I was right in the middle, we'd take about 40 head or 50 head, and then one rider goes behind, and then there's another line in front of that guy, and so forth. Anyway, she came charging past me and charging past, but when she passed me, I was in a steep place, and she **hit** my horse on the butt, and knocked us right off the edge, and we hung up on this Christmasberry tree that was growing right on the side of the hill there. But it wasn't so steep at that point that the horse couldn't scramble back up, and that's exactly what we did. Oh, it was wild with that cow (chuckling)! So, she gave me a chance to even the score. I tied her to a tree, at the top of a hill, where she wouldn't go down, came back the next day with a trailer and a jeep that we had with a winch on the front, and we just backed the trailer up to the cow, put the cable through and put it on the horns, and we pulled her right into the trailer, tied her up in the trailer and took her on down. I think she went to butcher. I'm sure! (laughter) You can't handle that kind. That's just temperment. But she must have been raising nice calves or she wouldn't have been there all that time.

I: How many guys did you have working for you at Mokuleia?

C: Well, it varied. We had a lot of people compared with what we get by with today. But we did a lot of things different too. I'll just say at one time, when we were raising lots of calves, I had one fellow raising calves -- both bull calves and heifer calves -- he had worked in a dairy, and he was blind. He had about 10 percent vision out of one eye. He could read like this (squinting, head turned) but he could also read braile. He was a herdsman at Meadow Gold Dairy, and they laid him off for some reason, but we picked him up and gave him a house, and he was teriffic at preg-checking (pregnancy checking). These dairy heifers, every 60 days we'd preg-check them, so that we set a day that it's going to be sent back to the dairy for calving. So he'd feel in, feel, say, "She's hapai." But he'd say, "But we'd better check her again in a little while, because she's only about five days hapai." How can you tell? Most guys can't tell unless it's 60 to 80 days, at the earliest. He said, "There's a blood vein that expands."

One time, we pulled a dirty trick on him. He couldn't see, so we run this steer down the chute. You know, they go through the intestines to feel the calf. So he gets his hand in there, and he stops and he feels the udder with his other hand, and by then we're all laughing!

Anyway, so he was one employee. And the main man on the ranch, we're very good friends with him, was Eddie Silva. He's kin to the original Silva family, but way, way back. And then he had his brother-in-law, Tommy Achiu. And Tommy did everything. Eddie did the cattle work and what we call nana aina, go look

around, make sure everything had water and the fences were okay, that was his job. He rode horse almost every day. Then his brother-in-law, Tommy, did everything. Then one day, a guy named Duke Kapuniai -- one of the enterprises we got into was selling rocks, field rocks, they sell them for construction -- he was contracted collecting rocks, and he had an army truck and a load of rocks on it. He came by the ranch on his way out, because he had to check in and check out, so we could see the rocks on the truck and keep track. So he came by, and he stammered, saying “Uh-uh-uh-uhhh-a-job?” He was asking for a job, and that was as much as I got out of him. And I looked at him and he had his work clothes on and he was ready to go to work. He was a good thing for us. I dubbed him later on our recreation chairman. He and his wife were just terrific. She got us involved in more parades in Honolulu, and I had acquired a team of horses, just for fun. Beautiful. They weighed a ton a piece. Oh, they were hard to shoe, so heavy. Just to lift the leg up you were holding 150 pounds. We used to have lots of fun. And there was a group of people, Queenie and Alan Freitas, that used to play music in Haleiwa, and we mounted a generator on the wagon, then we dressed the wagon up as a float, and they had all their instruments on the back, playing music, like a big family group. And when they’d be playing the music, oh, those horses would just pick up, and they’d really put on a nice show.

We had a good social group, and a big group of horse people in Waialua-Haleiwa area would participate and come ride with us. Some you know -- Bobby Napier, George Aiu.

I used to be the leader of a 4-H horse club, and George’s kids would ride with us. Once a year we’d go up in the mountains and have a camp. Oh, the parents enjoyed it more than the kids. They’d come on their trucks behind, we’d all ride horse. One time we rode from Mokuleia up to Kuaokala, and camped up on a high place. The families came up on the four-wheel-drives behind, and we had a good old time. Then we went on and rode down on the Waianae side, past the tracking station that’s up on the ridge, and down the road and around Kaena Point, back to Mokuleia. We had lots of fun like that at different times.

I: Did the ranch provide housing and all those things?

C: Duke Kapuniai had his own house up at Pupukea, and he raised pigs on the side, about 100 pigs. His wife always had a job, she’s a terrific bookkeeper and secretary. They live in Waimea now, way up in the Hawaiian homesteads. He came and worked here for a while. We’re still good friends, and every year since they moved in over there, he and his wife come over, she plays the piano, and we’d all stand around and sing Christmas carols, and that’s really good fun.

I: What was it like to be raising kids out in that area at the time?

C: It was good. The kids went to Wahiawa Lutheran School, and from there they went to Kamehameha. John started Kamehameha in 7th grade, and Girlie started in 9th grade, and stayed till she graduated. And then, my wife always had a job, not too far to drive. She was working at Schofield then to Fort Shafter.

I: Do you recall, at the maximum, how many guys you had working for you?

C: About seven. Way more than I could afford, really, but they were good guys and they didn't cost much in those days. Everybody had a ranch house, except Duke. And Kenny Dillingham worked for the ranch also, but he lived in a family home that was there. We all had ranch houses.

I: What were those like?

C: Oh, when I went there, two houses were pretty crappy, so we got Hicks homes, and they built two houses. Eddie Silva had a brand new, nice Hicks house, compared to what he had before. And his brother-in-law, Achiu, used to commute at first, and then he moved into this other house that had been just vacated by this dairy guy. I haven't heard from that guy for a long time, but he phoned one time since I've been here and was all elated that he now owned his own dairy. He was in Kansas, I think.

There was another crew that was just in the Dillingham yard. I watched over them, but I didn't have anything to do with them. When they needed something, I would get it, or if they wanted to ask Lowell about something, I'd go find out. Old Japanese family lived there. The Hinazumi family had lived there in prior times, but they were all grown up, and old man Hinazumi died. They used to babysit Girlie when she was about two years old. He was about 75, I guess, when he died, and then his wife died right after him.

I: Why did you eventually leave at Mokuleia.

C: Oh, they were selling the place, and I was tired of showing the place off. And I knew we couldn't stay in the ranching business over there with liability insurance. Oh, even here, we've been sued for cattle on the road, anything like that. The car hits them and they sue you. Liability insurance is one of the highest costs over here. And over there, with the name Dillingham on top of it? One night, way back, I was living on the beach at the time, before I moved up to a house that we had on the ranch. A nice house on the beach, but the main highway was right behind our house. I heard this click, click, click, click, click. And I popped up, looked out the window, and I saw all this black and white going by on the road. Ho! I got my clothes on jumped in the truck and off I went. Ran past those things got them stopped and turned them up the ranch headquarters road. Phew. They were in the alfalfa field and every other thing that time. With that congestion, you can't have it. It had outgrown its day. Waimea is outgrowing its day; Parker Ranch is in the real estate business. Some of the (Dillingham) family wanted to be in the real estate business, and I didn't want to do it.

They sold the place about a year after I left, and they sold it for $21.4 million, to Northwest Insurance Company. And I think that sale represented something like six or eight hours of income for Northwest. It seemed like big money to us, but to them it was just a little thing. And they held it a few years and didn't do anything but sell it again. It's been sold several times now. It just ran out of its time. When we first moved over there, you know Aloha Tower was the tallest building in Honolulu, in 1959. And when we left there, after 17 years, flying out on the airplane, you couldn't even **find** Aloha Tower. The island had just changed so much in those 17 years. It was no place to keep cattle anymore. And taxes -- they didn't want to dedicate the land, so

our taxes were on land value. So even though we didn't pay for the land in our operations, it was over $40,000 a year real property taxes. When you had to pay all of that it was hard to make money. The reason they were in the ranching business -- I don't know how the tax laws are now -- but they had a rule that if you had such and such amount of income from royalties (and sale of sand is royalties, money in the bank is royalties, grants are royalties) and if your income is greater than so much, you fall into a holding company pattern, where you're taxed unreasonably high. You could get away from it by being in a productive capacity, and they counted it by the gross return, not the net. So all of these ventures that fall into production lower the tax they had to pay. The sale of cattle is a big gross, but there's a lot of expenses that reduce the profit, and yet it provided the gross necessary to reduce their taxes.

I: So it was a tax strategy?

C: That's what it became. I think at the time it was bought from Gasper, the reason for it was a subsistance farm to get all the fancy, fresh foods.

I: Where did you go after Mokuleia?

C: I joined Dutch Schuman. He and I were supposed to be partners, but after about a year of working with him, I didn't want to be partners there. And one thing we agreed upon was never fulfilled -- what was my responsibility, how much input was put into it, what was his, and so forth. It looked like a good deal at first, because every dollar he spent only cost him 52 cents. Because any money he spent on the ranch came off his cut at the Schumann Carriage Co., and they were in the 48 percent tax bracket. But he was hard to deal with. So I left.

But when I was working for Dutch, I heard that Kapapala was available. I was just leaving Schuman, and I didn't know what I was going to do. I was at a Cattlemen's meeting, and we were meeting over in Kohala, at the dairy -- at that time it was a beef feeding yard. Parker Ranch had been letting some land go, here and there, spinning it off, pieces that weren't very profitable, marginal land. I saw the Parker Ranch manager, Don Hanson, and I asked him if Parker Ranch was going to spin off any more parcels, and I was very interested. He said, "Come to my office this afternoon." We got through with the meeting and had lunch, and I went to see him. He said, "What about Kapapala?" He didn't know I'd worked here. I said, "It's too much!" So Girlie and I, we still had our horses over at SC (Schuman's) Ranch. We hauled them over here, and Charlie Kimura was running this side of the operation. They had everything over here, took over Hawaiian Ranch in 1975. They had spun off some pieces on this side too. I said, "It's too big! I can't handle that." He said, "Let's see what we can put together. So we worked out an arrangement where we put in our money and kept paying on it. The farm credit system loaned us money. We worked it out, and we took Kapapala over. Parker Ranch was glad to get rid of it. Girlie can tell you some stories about the inventory we took. It was something. Talk about a flock of wild men. They had 27 men at the time of the inventory. And this table was where they ate dinner, and they had the cook in here, cooking the food. At 6:00 in the morning they were all thundering out here, and at 3 in the afternoon they were all back in here. In another house, my friend Herman Pacheco was living. Some years ago, we had been catching wild cattle down in Keaau before Paradise Park was formed down there. Shipman

had to get the cattle out of the area. Anyway, Herman and I had been friends from way back. In fact, he was a little kid when I was growing up in Wainaku.

Anyway, he was over there, working for Parker Ranch. We'd sit on his front porch, talking about old times. This was in 1977. He said, look, look -- there was a big water trough down there, and all the cattle were trailing in, getting a drink. He said, look! And the guys were all up here drinking beer. He said, see! See! We learned from Herman and the cattle that they don't want to be worked in the hot sun in the early morning. The cattle start coming out of the bushes about 1 o'clock. They start out slowly and graze, and move around. So we just started working the cattle in the afternoon, and it worked out fine. And in the nighttime I would set traps and catch a few of these wild buggers in the traps. Anything caught was just loaded in my trailer and taken straight to Miko. I had the key. Sometimes I'd get down to Miko way after dark -- 10 o'clock at night I'd be unloading the bulls in the trailer, and untying them down there. Big old wild bulls all caught in the trap. I didn't chase them and rope them -- although we did a few. But it's foolish. You risk too much, especially over here, where you've got a lot of holes. I've been banged up too much already to get involved in that.

We trapped a lot, and went out and started working the cattle when they wanted to come in. We always drive cattle to water, because that's where they want to go. Just drive them to water, bunch them up, talk to them a while, then take them to the corral. We'd get to the corral sometimes after dark.

Tony Freitas and his four young-adult children come out every weekend to work cattle. We have about 140 head of cattle of theirs, and they have other little parcels here and there where they raise cattle. They come out with their trailers and their horses all saddled and ready to go, every weekend. Sometimes we build fences, sometimes we repair waterlines, sometimes we do cowboy jobs. They're good help. On time, consistent, never have to worry about them not coming. They're good, good help.

I: Do you have any hired employees?

C: No. Nobody.The last one we laid off is Leon Chow, and he lives here and works with us. And if he puts in a day, we pay him for the day.

I: Can you go back to the first time you were working here. What year was that?

C: 1953 to 1957.

I: What was the ranch like back then?

C: The ranch was very fancy, like all the big old companies. Dinner at the manager's house was served, they had a full-time lady that did the cooking. The manager had an allowance for miscelaneous things, like entertaining. Prior to that, they had done even more entertaining here when Bradford Sumner was the manager, from around 1928 to 1950.

I: Who was manager after that?

C: Alan Johnston. You already got him. He was born in Scotland. He was working for Brewer as ranch manager at Naalehu, Hutchinson's Sugar Company. The cattle ranch and the sugar company were one firm. So he was managing Kaalualu Ranch. So they were making some changes. Bradford Sumner retired, he was known as Haole Sumner, and when he retired they wanted Alan Johnston to come here. But he did not do the entertaining that Sumner did.

So you're asking about what this place was like. It was fancy. There was a yard man, and a man who took mineral around to the cattle, and hauled the school kids to school, did the shopping for the families. There were 21 employees, of which 10 were cowboys, and two more which were cowboys also but full-time on horses. So 12 cowboys, and me (foreman), making 13 in the crew. I was over everybody, however there was an agronomy section that technically was under me, but they ran their own show and reported directly to the boss.

(Recording stopped. Continued the next morning.)

I: What were some of the hazards of ranching in this area, so near to the volcano?

C: Sulfuric acid in the air, and the deterioration of anything metal. Lava tubes and tunnels. Some of them are caved in and the animals fall in. Girlie has fallen in one that didn't have a hole on top -- the ground collapsed under her horse and went down the hole. There's really lots of things. But in most cases, the animals behave the same as they would somewhere else, although every area has cattle behaving different. Here, as we told you before, we work the cattle in the afternoons. There's a cloud cover that comes over usually, and if it doesn't, the tradewind will blow. It cools off. You can feel the air change.

I: Did you ever lose animals in the lava tubes?

C: Oh yes. You find them by smell, if you find them at all. But almost every hole has some old bones in it.

I: Can you tell me about when your daughter fell down the hole?

C: It was long ago, maybe 20 years ago. The ground gave way under the horse, and she and the horse went down in this tube. The rocks on the inside had already caved in, and the dirt on the top was just held in place by grass roots, so when the horse's weight went on it, it just went right through. The following morning after she'd fallen in, I opened up the hole so we could pull the horse out, and I didn't hit any rocks until the hole was about seven feet in diameter. It was just a crust of dirt. Luckily she wasn't hurt. We heard her call and were able to go over there, go down and help her with the horse. The horse wasn't hurt too bad, because where the ceiling had fallen in, there was a lot of dirt and gravel, and all the big stones had rolled off the cone-shaped pile of debris. So when they hit, they slid down on their side. The horse wound up in amongst the boulders. The drop was about 12 feet. There was another fellow working here, Greg Friel, I asked him to go find out what she was yelling about, so he took off in the direction of the sound, and he stopped, and I kind of scolded him, "Hurry up!" And he said, "Now the sound's coming from this way." And he points back at me. So he came back, and I started going towards him. She yelled out and warned him -- he was almost at the hole himself, and he might have fallen in. But he dropped his rope in and I climbed down. We piled up rocks and got the horse up on its feet, and fixed a little place for it to stand. It stayed there all night. We stayed with the horse, because if you leave it alone it gets frantic, but if it knows it's being cared for it's calm. We spent the night there. I'd come back and got a ladder, Jon had made a bundle of food and booze and blankets. The next day we had Bill Lacy's helicopter come. A veterinarian, Alan Kaufman, came and tranquilized the horse, put it up on a cargo net so the legs would go through, and the helicopter hitched on and pulled it out and laid it out on the ground. The vet sewed up some abrasions -- on the horse's face, mostly, where it went through. Medicated everything. No bones were broken, and the horse lived and worked a long time after that. In fact, we have it buried right in the back yard.

I: What was his name?

C: Well, it was a mare. Stormy. A good mare. She caught a lot of cattle. When we did roping, she would out-do any horse. Pure Thoroughbred, from Dillingham's stocks. Old Walter Dillingham had good horses.

I: What kind of horses did you find worked best out in this terrain?

C: Thoroughbred. They pick their feet up. Quarter horses are fast, and I was riding a Quarter horse for a few years here. If you watch a video of horses running, you'll see this. The Quarter horses reach forward in a downward motion. That's why they're fast on the starts, because they'll crouch. But in the process of running, they run low in the front, and the power is in the back. But Thoroughbreds tend to run up, and their action is high. When they start, they're slow starting, because their thrust is pushing them up in the air. But when they're running through brush and lava, their feet are up and clear of the rocks and lower brush. As far as sure-footedness there's not much difference. If they're raised on the rocks they'll be good on the rocks. But their basic action is what makes the difference. The Quarter horse is only fast on the flat spots.

I: Where did you learn that?

C: Watching. The animals will tell you. Everything you need to know, the animals will teach you.

I: What other kinds of natural disasters did you have to deal with out here?

C: Oh, we had heavy storms and minor flooding. We've had an earthquake in 1983, which shook the house apart, caved the water tunnel in, broke the pipelines all over. It took us a long time to get over that earthquake. We did not have water for four months, and friends from Pahala, the plantation, loaned us a truck, and from the neighbor rancher we got a tank, down at Kaalualu. So for four months, four guys at the plantation, kokua to drive the truck. It's hard to keep up hauling water. It's like a drop in the bucket alongside of what a little pipeline will carry on a 24-hour basis. But it got us by. Luckily it wasn't too dry.

I: What time did the quake happen?

C: A little after seven in the morning. I was just coming out. It was like somebody jerked the rug out from under me, and I hit the deck. She (Jon) was coming out ahead of me, and headed for the kitchen. It knocked her down right in the living room. It was quite a shake.

And then we've had droughts, which are normal for Ka'u. And we've had other floods. This last flood two years ago was about 10 times bigger than all the others put together. It was a flood of all floods. You can't believe -- water out there 200 yards wide, going by, the rocks came tumbling down. There were five waterways going through this flat. We lost the stable, the corral, the warehouse, saddlehouse -- everything out there on the flat, we lost. You can still see the shop area by the gas pump. One-third of that building was wiped out, and that was up on pretty high ground. The water was about three foot deep coming down in our yard. It came up slowly, came up through the floor, cause it was going under the house.

It's an exciting area to live in. There are all kinds of things. We haven't had many big winds here, but we've had one. It didn't do much. We're still in a drought, even though we're getting some rain. The last five years we've been getting way less rain. In 1998 it was terrible -- we only got 14 inches in the whole year, and that's less than one-fourth of what we'd normally get. That time we had to haul water. We lost about 300 head of cattle -- you couldn't keep up with the water.

I: Did you ever have fires out here?

C: Oh, we had one in the house here. No, along the highway there have been grass fires. We had a short circuit in the house, and Greg Friel was the first one here. He got the garden hose into the house and pretty much had it under control when the firemen came. Luckily we were working right down the road here. I sent him back to pick something up, and Api called him. That was a small fire but did a lot of damage in the house. We've done controlled burning a few times here. Up at Mokuleia we did it every year. But it's a bigger job here.

I: Why do you do the controlled burning?

C: Pasture management. You don't need to do it if your pastures are in good shape, and if you've had a constant, good pasture management program it doesn't do you any good to burn. It's probably the worst thing you can do, because if your grass and everything is in good shape, your animal impact has been maintaining the land in its maximum condition. But a lot of things change, and there's nothing you can do to not consider the economics of it. You can't do a lot of burning if you don't have the animal impact to follow up. The biodiversity -- that's why we got into goats, that's why we're looking at sheep. We want the income, of course, but for land management. It'll definitely improve it. A lot of our land has much greater potential here than the present use. It's a hard ranch to manage, because it's what we call a Kipuka Ranch -- it's where the soil type and the terrain is different. If a lava flow came down, and left an opening which was an older growth, and the lava flow is on both sides, that's a kipuka. In many cases they're long strips that run up the mountain. Over thousands of years there have been a lot of dust eruptions, so our soil is a volcanic ash. But as the eruptions from Mauna Loa have covered up strips, then the volcanic ash at later times has fallen on these lava beds. Then what happens is the next big rain, without any ground cover -- and this ash is very light, like bits of cinder -- they get washed down into the pockets. So there'll be a pocket of rock right beneath what has washed in from the surrounding hillside. These little pockets might be anywhere from a few square feet to 8 or 10 acres. They're hard to manage because they're more fertile, the soil's a little deeper. They hold moisture longer, then right surrounding it are the rocks, protruding out, or thin soil that hasn't been washed in. There's pockets all over, and I don't even know where all of them are. You follow a cow trail and say, "Oh! I didn't know this place was here." It's interesting, but it's hard to manage. Because these good spots get grazed into the ground, and you can't afford to go and fence each little spot. In the past they had big strips of land fenced off. But again, to manage these pockets within that area, the good spots were always overgrazed, and the poor spots were always growing rubbish and brush. By burning you can get the brush off, and then the grass has a chance to come back on the thinner soils. But even with that it's hard to manage, because the grass on the thin soil is not going to compare with the grass growing in the deeper soil pockets.

The fire is the cheapest way to control brushy land, but goats are the best way. The animal impact of goats -- they just clean out the forest. It's a hard place to manage, that's all I can say.

I: Can you tell me about the water sources on this place?

C: Yeah. We maintain some 30 miles of pipe. Our water tunnel is up at the head of Wood Valley. To get up there, we walk up from Joaquin Joseph's place. We have half a mile of tunnel up there. The ranch was using it as a seep, way back, when pipes first became available. But then the sugar industry started, and they were fluming cane. They went up to all these places that had seeps in the mountain, and dug tunnels in. They'd dig in on the side of the ridge, and then forks out. To catch all of the seepage that would be lost, all the seeps are brought to one central point. We're the only user on this one. We have a permit on it, since the state has claimed the water rights on all water. We pay a small charge for the water, we have to maintain the tunnel, overhaul the pipelines. That pipeline has a grandfather clause easement through the forest reserve.

I: How many gallons do you get out of it?

C: When we have good weather, with good precipitation, the flow is far greater than we could ever use. You couldn't hardly use it now that there's no fluming of cane. But we draw at the rate of about 20 gallons a minute, which is nothing, really.

I: Do you have any surface water sources?

C: Rainfall. And in the old days they had catchment. We have one place with a catchment roof, but we haven't been maintaining it. Catchement is alright, it helps during rainy weather. But you can't store enough water for it to help during the drought. And that's when the critical time is. So we maintain the pumping, and we're pumping year round.

I: What about the Honaunui parcel? Could you tell me about that?

C: The ranch was owned by the plantation, Hawaiian Agriculture Company, and then it became Ka'u Agriculture Company. Then it became Ka'u Agribusiness, getting more fancy. C. Brewer gained control of the company sometime around 1950. They got the majority shares. They were buying out all the independent stocks they could get. They were putting the soil areas, the better kipukas, into cane. And now they've been out of business for six years and it's all state land. We're trying to get it back. We got 5,000 acres about a year ago, and we're fencing it now, and trying to keep the ball rolling with the cattle operation at the same time. We have been working closely with the state wildlife program. We probably have more nene here than they do in the national park.

I: I also wanted to ask you about the Ainapo House.

C: It's probably the oldest house on the ranch at the present time. There were several houses there years ago. I believe there were three houses there. I saw an old map, and it showed three houses. I don't know if at any time there were more or less. There's only one house now. They set stones where the main walkway comes in, and the existing house is at the head of this walkway. And there's a walk that goes this way and a walk that goes the other way, and this very old map showed three dots; three houses were there.

That camp there was probably used by the Hawaiians for collecting feathers. I'm sure it was used when the wild cattle hunters were here. One of the stories is one of the later wild cattle hunters working on the ranch -- nobody knows his name -- he was called the Old Norwegian. He lived there. Then the ranch got into tourist activities way back. One of the things they did was put a good trail on the slope of Mauna Loa, up this side, and they took tourists up on the trail, about a three day trip, from Punaluu, then up here, then on up the mountain. Then coming back down. That house there was there then. Then later on, it was used by the ranch for cattle work in that area. Everything was horseback, and to go from here to the Ainapo House area, you're talking about a two-hour ride.

There were two other houses that have been removed now. Some of the houses have been removed recently. When the hippie movement was going on and these people were crawling all over -- I was at Mokuleia then, and we had the problem of having to take houses down that were old ranch houses along the beach. They'd move in, and then you'd have to go evict them. The same went with one house up here at the other end of the ranch. The site is still there, some old bricks and stuff. This was a busy place back in those days. After the flood came down, there were a lot of old artifacts, some old axles, wagon wheels, stuff like that. It was just debris from previous water runoff.

I: It's amazing that an area this dry can get so wet.

C: It's because it's pahoehoe. It gets down to this rock then starts to run off. And the more it runs off the more it does run off, because it opens up the waterway and becomes a great, long rain shed, and all the tributaries coming in add to the flow.

I: Before I finish, if I wanted to go look at old documents and letters relating to this ranch, where would I look?

C: The information we have gotten was from letters to Mrs. Shipman. As a young boy, W.H. Shipman was writing letters to his mother. They had a dairy there at Ainapo, and every other day, the mules packed butter to Hilo. So the fellow that was packing the butter, he was the mail carrier. So the letters were found in the old house at Reed's Island in Hilo. The first house in Reed's Island was the Shipman house. When Emmet Cahil was writing his book about the Shipmans, they let him go through it.

I: Are these letters and documents at the Shipman house?

C: I don't know, but that would be the place to start.

I: Are there any other stories that you wanted to mention?

C: Oh, I don't know. There are all kinds of stories, but I can't remember unless we get started talking about events. If one person started talking about catching cattle I'd get in with my stories, but you wouldn't want to write all those stories. One guy ropes a bull, and he's calling for help, the boss comes along and tells him, "Where's the wild cattle?" And he says, "I caught this one! Kokua!" And the boss tells him, "Tie him up!" and rides away.

Another time, this same guy, Toshi, roped a bull, tied his rope after he caught the bull, there was a big gulch next to where he was, and the animal went in the gulch. His horse was right up on the edge when he was able to cut the rope loose. But with the weight of the bull going down in the gulch, the nakii (tied rope) was just jammed in there tight. But he got it out. That kind of stories you could go on and on.

I: Well, I'd like to be able to stop by again when I'm in this area, and talk some more, because I feel we could go on and on.

C: Oh yeah. There's no end to stories. You get another person around, and then you start swapping stories. But it's getting hard to find anybody to talk to anymore. Their stories now are about rodeo and stuff like that.