James Moehao Duvauchelle, Sr.

Jimmy is a 4th generation paniolo of Molokai Ranch. His maternal great grandfather worked as a paniolo for Molokai Ranch in the late 1800's and early 1900's. He raised his children on the ranch and his children raised their children and their children raised their children on the ranch. Jimmy grew up working with his uncles who also worked for the ranch as na paniolo. Because of his outstanding ability, Jimmy became pipi luna (foreman) for Molokai Ranch in 1973. His son and daughter are now following in his footsteps as 5th generation paniolo working for Molokai Ranch.

Series 2, Tape 7
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
James "Jimmy" Moehao Duvauchelle, Sr.
(JD) on January 16, 2001

at Molokai Ranch

BY: Anna Loomis (AL)

AL: Okay, this is an interview with Mr. Jimmy Duvachelle for the Oahu Cattlemen's Association on January 16 at Molokai Ranch, and he's being interviewed by Anna Loomis.

AL: Now, maybe you could just start by telling me when and where you were born?

JD: I was born in Kalamaula, Molokai, and I was raised in the homestead of Hoolehua. Graduated from Molokai school, and I became a part of Molokai Ranch ever since. And been here for thirty five years.

AL: And what was the date and year you were born?

JD: February 8, 1944 is the year that I was born.

AL: And you said that you grew up on the homestead.

JD: Yes.

AL: What was that like?

JD: Oh it was actually—we were surrounded by pineapple fields. See, in those days, Molokai, you either become a farmer or rancher, or just work in the pineapples. And because of my family background, I was practically raised being around my uncles, who was a cowboy for Molokai

Ranch. And after I graduated from high school, I decided to become a professional cowboy, and here I am, been here ever since.

AL: (Laughing) "The end." And was your father a cowboy too?

JD: Yes, my father was known for his rough riding ability: his ability to get on horses that would buck, or what we would call an outlaw horse that people would not ride. He was known for his skill, riding skill, and he worked for Molokai Ranch—I'm not sure how long he worked for Molokai Ranch, but he worked as a horse trainer, or Rough Rider, in particular. I think he worked for about two years for Molokai Ranch, then he went on to work for Molokai Electric. And there he was—whatchacall . . . he died from electrocution. And I—from a four year old boy—we were raised up practically by my uncles, who worked for the ranch.

And we've always been around cattle, around horses, or doing things that involve both horses and cattle. And, you know, it was part of our lifestyle, and as a kid I enjoyed that—I **loved** to watch my uncles rope and ride and then do the things *paniolos* always do, and as a kid I decided that one of these days I would be a part of that, and get involved in doing what a *paniolo* does. And that's how I started liking cattle, to be a part of that.

And I started Molokai Ranch in 1966, and—as a cowboy, raised as a cowboy—the skill and the style of a *paniolo* was so different in those days than it is now. Now, in those days we never have the facilities that we have now, so everything was: you got to get up there and depend on your horse and the skill you got with your rope, and get out there and rope a wild cattle and bring them back. And anybody can rope a wild cattle, it's not a problem with that—anybody with guts or, I might say, people without brains sometimes—anybody can do that. But the whole skill part of being a *paniolo* is to lead that wild cattle back to the corral in one piece, where the cattle would end up in one piece, and your horse would end up in one piece, and **you**, as a *paniolo*, would also end up in one piece.

So there's three things that you're trying to take care of: your life first, the life of your horse, and then the cattle. So that's really an art, a dangerous art, but that can be done, we've done it before. Now we don't, because you rope them and you just drive up there with the trailer, put them on the trailer and bring them home—it's not the way we used to do it before, we never had trailers.

AL: What was the proper way to bring the wild cattle home all in—and everyone in one piece?

JD: Well, we would try as much as possible to drive them as close as we can, or if that's all possible somehow we'll get them to get into the corral.

AL: Drive them as close together . . .

JD: As close—yes, yes. You want them to come together because they travel better in a bunch. Once they get out on their own they're on their own. I think the best thing—first thing the cowboy foreman would try to tell you is get them into a group and bring them down to the corral. We get as close as we can to the corral, and if anything happens after that then we'll go out and rope the cattle and try to bring them back down. Although that's not the way you want to do it, because as much as possible we'd rather bring in twenty-five head, then one head. But sometimes that's just the nature of those cattle, the nature of the game—that's the way you got to bring them in and so you're going to bring them in that way.

But it's rough, and it's fun. It's something I enjoyed, but it's something that I don't do today because there's so much better way to move—faster. I think because of the—when you look at the time today, the change in many things that we did not have, we have. In those days, you never bring the corral to the cattle, you bring the cattle to the corral. Today you—there's such thing as portable corrals, where you put it on the trailer and take it to the cattle! Set up the corral and drive the cattle in there. So we never thought of that back in the 1960s or the 70s. Today, it's a different thing. The convenience is so much better than it was in those days.

AL: Before we talk more about what ranching is like here today, I'd like to go back in time and ask you a little bit more about growing up out here on the ranch. And you said that your uncles were a big influence in raising you into the ranch . . .

JD: Yes.

AL: Could you tell me about that?

JD: Well, during the summertime, the best time we enjoy [is] when they would have a branding—and this is where they begin the counting of the cattle. And the branding would be the highlight of—us as kids, because we would come along and we'd watch the branding, we'd watch the cowboys work all the branding the way it's supposed to be done, and at the end they would save some little calf for the kids to go out there and try to rope the calves, and knock the calves down, and try to get the calves brand.

And after that it's *ho'olaule'a*, or party time. And it was such a **meaningful** time. It was time when the cowboys and their families would come together to enjoy what's on the land, to enjoy what they worked so hard for throughout the year to provide. And the importantness was the count of the calves, because **that's** the money in the bank, that's where we make our money from. And so we do that, we got a 85% calf crop, it's time for celebration, because that's where we start making money, at 85%. Very rare when we get 85%—we usually end up with 80%. But when we do, it's bonus time, it's party time, and it's a time to celebrate and enjoy.

Enjoy watching the kids get involved—my kids were brought up the same way, and I had them doing the same thing, and they came out, every one of them started working with me, and then they found different careers that they want to get involved in, so—all except one is now working for me no more. I have a daughter that works for me as one of the *paniolos*, so . . .

AL: What was the *ho'olaule'a* like, after the . . .

JD: Ah, it was . . . beer for the adults, soda for the kids; then there was singing, music, dancing—I mean, you never go home till night. When you get home, you're covered with **dirt**. . . . And some of the cowboys would, I remember when—never **made** it home! Some of the cowboys would get up early in the morning, find themselves still in the corral (laughter). And that kind of stuff—it—it was an all-out drinking party, but it wasn't an all-out, uh, **bad** party, know what I mean? It was—you just enjoyed it, forgot the work, and just went in and celebrate. And so that was kind of the season that us as kids look forward to.

And once in a while we would go with the cowboys on horseback and help them drive the cattle, and that was a **thrill** of my life, you know. I really **loved** that, and I guess—that lifestyle I could not get rid of. It was always with me, and no matter where I went, try to make it—doing something different in life, I always referred back to my young days, and came back home and made a decision to become what I am today, so . . . that's part of my life story, I guess.

AL: Could you tell me what went on when you rode along with the cowboys out to drive cattle?

JD: Like the things . . . ?

AL: Like how would the day begin?

JD: Oh. Oh, well. The typical day would be something like getting up **early** in the morning, and getting out to the pasture and driving the horses in to the barn, and putting barley in front of them so they have something to eat. And watching the adults saddle all the horses, and putting the horses—in those days, we'd put horse trucks—not on trailers, like I say, we never had trailers—so they all go on the truck, on the big truck. And then we'd go to a certain pasture and get off early, before daybreak, and start out for the drive.

And that was really, **really** exciting, because you would be with . . . the natural things of life, you know? Walking down you could hear the crickets coming in, and as you go you hear the birds getting up—as the sun rises, the birds start making noise, and letting us know that they're up, and they going to be doing their thing—and we would move—by the time we would get in position, by the bottom of where we're going to drive, the sun is just out, and the day is just perfect.

So we start our day by moving those cattle—and what's really exciting when you watch the cattle from—they're in the gulch, you can see them running, and the trees would be shaking, and you know the cattle would be coming up there. And the birds would be jumping in the air, because the cattle were moving. And you know that song—I don't know if you heard that song, *Kaula 'ili*. It talks of the "*ho'omakaukau kaula 'ili*" it means to get ready your rope—your skin-rope. "*ho'olohe ike kani ulumanu*" meaning, "listen for the sound of the bird."

You see, when we come on that hill, and those cattle moving in there, they shake the tree; the bird chirp when they go up. So when we hear the bird, we know the cattle there. So he says, "listen to the sound of the bird, and then go where the bird stay." That's where those cattle hiding. And that's true, there is a song of that. I've sung it, *Kaula 'ili*. And that's exactly what happened, you know, in the old days. I've experienced that to be true.

And bringing those cattle out—but when we hit the top it's already **hot**, and us as kids, we're **tired**, we're **thirsty**, we're looking for water and there's no water, and the old timers would yell to us, "come on, hurry up! Get up there!" and that kind of stuff. And once we're halfway through, then all that excitement is—is gone, because we're tired! We're tired—we want to get back to the corral and get off this horse and lie down, and eat—we're hungry! We're all that—so, that's where the tough part come in.

And the old timers keep yelling at us, "never mind looking at things for eat." And we're looking for guavas so then we could eat guava, and stuff like that. And just kept on going, and we just kept on moving, until we came onto the top. And when we see the corral we so happy, because we know that's our lunches waiting for us, and we going to have a good time, and we going fill our bellies, and we going to be **fine**! And that's the kind of. . . .

AL: So about what time in the day would you get back to the corral?

JD: When we would reach the top? About one o'clock. . . . Yeah, just when that sun is **hot**! Twelve-thirty, one o'clock—it depends on what paddock we driving. And . . . to see the natural

things that is out there—so much deer out there. Deers would be moving around—we more excited about watching the deers run than watching the cattle. And we'd get scoldings sometimes, because the old-timers would yell at us, "what you looking at the deer for? Look the cattle going behind you!" and you had to run back down, and stuff like that. Or they would make us follow behind them all the way—all we doing is following behind them, because we did something wrong—it was a punishment to us. So, that's kind of what we . . .

AL: Could you tell me about some of the old-timers who taught you?

JD: Actually, they were my uncle Sonny Joao, who was . . .

AL: Was he a Duvachelle?

JD: Joao. He's my—my aunt married to this Sonny Joao, so he's actually the husband of my aunt. And he taught me—he was a real good roper. He was a good cowboy—people look up to him, and he was kind of a guide.

But those days, the old-timers would not say much. Very little—they say very little. When you riding with the old-timers, you got to watch them very carefully. They won't say—they won't sit down and make a plan. All they do is point their fingers. And where they point their fingers, you better move. And if you're not paying attention when they point their finger for you to move, and you're in the wrong place, boy, you catch hell. They **screaming** at you—the only time they make noise is when they screaming at you (laughter).

But very, very quietly they would move. The foreman would be in the front, he would be the front man, and then the old-timers would follow behind him. And when he make like this (raises one finger), this the sign of one—one person would break off and go. When he make two (raises two fingers), two person would break off and go. Then he'd make one wait (raises one finger, then holds up a palm), one stay there (raises one finger, holds up a palm, then points to a distant place) and not move. And so you really have to watch to know what was going on.

The old-timers were very **serious**. I mean, if they're going out there to drive cattle, they going out there to work. And it's not fun and games to them, like us—riding horse, and all that excitement, and watching the cattle run, and trying to race with the next guy, and that kind of stuff which the kids do. But they were very—very serious about what they did.

And when they would walk, the foreman would only make his hand signal. And once that's taken place, a lot of times you'd see the foreman would climb on the highest hill, so he can watch all these event going on. And if he have to, he would yell from there, "going *mauka*! going *makai*!" Then the cowboys would switch to *mauka*—and us as kids wouldn't know what they yelling, we just following the old-timers until we catch on.

And as a young man I became foreman in 1973. And I was lucky, because, well, my ability of doing the work, getting the work done, doing a good, clean job. . . . You know, sometimes you never know when people are watching you, and if you do your best all the time, you don't have to announce the fact that, hey, I'm the greatest. But they know what you can do.

And I was called in one day; our foreman was going to retire. He wouldn't retire until somebody like myself would come and step forward. So they asked me if I wanted to be the foreman. So I said, "why?" They tell me he was retiring. I said, "that's fine, if you think I'm capable of doing it." Said, "yes, you are." And I became foreman, and I had that habit of

(raises a finger) pointing, you know? "One man." And a cousin of mine, who work with me for 35 years, he still carry that habit today. And lot of times when we're out there, the cowboys would look around and say, making like this [holding a hand to their ear], meaning, "what he said?" And I keep telling him, "you need to change the style, because this is different generation now. You need to tell them what you want done!"

AL: So the old-timers would use a sign-language.

JD: Sign-language.

AL: Did you know—did they ever tell you why that was the way they did it?

JD: They wanted nothing but silence. The cattle—I don't want the cattle to **hear** us—that was the whole idea being out there, being very quiet. And not yelling until you are told to yell. Once you hit that cattle, then you start yelling. Other than that, the whole plan to the movement is all done by signal. Done by signal. The foreman, which was my uncle at that time, just pointed.

And he, my uncle, retired—well he didn't retire, he went, ventured to Honolulu at thirty years with the ranch. He went to Honolulu and found a different work, and then another foreman took his place, and I took that foreman's place. He worked for 33 years and he decided to retire and I took his place. And been here ever since.

But I think the best years of my life is being out there early in the morning, driving cattle, and learning from the old-timers, teaching you how to lead cattle, how to bring cattle back from the wild. And we were so . . . young and crazy, so to speak, that when we chase one cow from out here—we just learning to rope, and the foreman would yell for us to rope—and that cow would run for about five miles, we'd chase him for five miles, because we couldn't rope! We chased—we missed, chase and miss, and the foreman chasing behind us. And he just couldn't keep up with us, because we were young, and we were flying those horses so fast. And it was funny, because he tried to stop us . . . quarter-miles ago. And we end up another four and three-quarter miles, you know—we ended up down the beach, actually, so that was a **long** run.

But we look back on that days of learning to become a real *paniolo* was such a laugh. We've made our mistakes, and we've paid for some—I think I broke almost every bone in my body trying to learn to be a cowboy. You don't have to, but when you're young a lot of the young men take the challenges. It's a macho thing. They get out there "I can do **anything**." You know they grumble who can ride a bull, who can ride better, and then first thing you know you got these two guys on a bull.

And the worst time when you sitting down drinking, and you challenge one another who can ride the worst horse in Molokai Ranch, and the next day, when you sober, (laughing) oh, man! That's when it really hurts, because you know that you—I really never mean that, but I'm trying to be macho! Now I got to climb on that horse! And so that's what I mean when I said that we paid for a lot of that.

AL: Could you—could you remember a time, or give me a story about a time when that was the case, when you dared yourself into a . . .

JD: Yeah, well. . . . There was this particular horse, I think it was back in the late 1970s, where—it went from hand to hand, and people just couldn't ride him. He would—he was—he bucked off eight people. He went to eight different owners, and every owner he plant him upside down on

that ground. And so people were telling me about that, and I was—sort of Molokai Ranch's best, supposedly. So we were drinking that time, and of course I say, "no way. Somebody have to be able to ride that." They said, "who," and I said, "well, me!" They said, "you? You can not ride . . ." and we got carried away. So I said, "okay, tomorrow you bring him up here and I'll show you how to ride him." And they brought that horse up there, and we put my saddle on. And of course, I'm sober. Here I am, sober. I watched—when you let that horse go and he would buck, you know what that horse can do! And I said to myself, oh, man! What did I get myself into? Because this horse was a **killer**.

And I climb on him—as fast as I went on him I went off. Spinning like one—top. But I wasn't about to give up yet, I said, no way—there must be a way. So one day I kind of rode him until I could ride him. But this one time when he couldn't get me off, he went—he bucked—it's very unusual—he bucked, he bucked straight up in the air, and he threw himself down on the ground, like that. With me on top. I passed out—I hit my head, and was knocked out cold. And yet that horse stood up—he came for me. And luckily was my friend there, my friend—and we was right next to a house. My friend came out—the horse turned and saw him, the horse chased my friend—now this horse not thinking like a normal horse. He chased my friend—my friend run in his house, up the stairs. The horse ran right up the stairs.

So after that, I said, no more. Because this horse wasn't just a horse that can buck. There was something about that horse that he wouldn't let man get away. If he can help it, he will not let a man get away from—it almost seemed like he had a mind to . . . play with people. And he would—when he started bucking, on that day, I tried to get off, because I know if this horse buck, I ain't got a chance. I ain't got a prayer. So I started to get off, but he wouldn't let me get off. He would come right into my stance. Now I go the other side—he would scoop—bend down and push into my side [he would dip his shoulder under my weight to prevent me getting off]. So I'd come back up like this. He'd hold me on. Then he went. Then he started bucking. And he was something else.

He was—nobody could ride him. And finally they sent him to the zoo. But it was foolish of me to even think of riding something like that. I wouldn't let my—my boy, he rides bull, he's a good bull rider—I would never let him get on something like that. But I think that was the most challenging ride I ever had in my life, and after that I became a little gun-shy.

AL: Did you ever figure out what made the horse's mind like that?

JD: No, he was almost like—he would go so good, I mean he would work the bridle, he would work the rope, he would go so good—all of a sudden he would just stop and his mind start spinning around, and, ho boy, he would come after you. You on his back he wants you down. He not only knock you off, he wants to come after you and hurt you, yeah. He would bite and snap at you, and I think that was the worst horse that I ever encountered, all my life.

AL: You broke and trained horses for Molokai Ranch.

JD: Yes.

AL: Where does the ranch get its stock of horses?

JD: The old days, or . . . ?

AL: Well, in the old days.

JD: Well, before my time we had our own breeding stock, but when I came in, during the 1960s, we would buy from Parker Ranch. Parker Ranch was the big seller of horse. We'd just go up there and buy a bunch of them, like ten, and bring them back and then we'll start riding them. And Parker Ranch had some rough horses at that time. They call the horse "Easter Tye," I'm not sure how—you pronounce it "Easter Tye." I'm not sure.

AL: How do you spell it?

JD: I don't—I'm not really sure how you spell that. But he was known for his bucking ability. But they were—once you get those horses trained, they were **tough** horses, they were really good horses—strong horses—they would—you could sit on their back and they would work all day and not give up on you. Those kind of horses. Then that's what you want—when the horses are determined to buck, most likely, if you get them broken they will stay with you all the way. So that's what we were buying all our horses from Parker Ranch.

AL: In the 1960s and 70s when you were doing that, how—once you got the horses, how would you go about breaking them and training them?

JD: Well, actually, they are *hapa laka*, or what they call half-trained. The cowboy would put—they would put the saddle on, put the bit in, ride one, two days, and then send it over to Molokai. They call that *hapa laka*. Once we get them to Molokai we let them rest a little while, from the barge ride, take us about one week, then we go up there, we'll assign cowboys to their horses. And then we'll take our horses and start training them.

Every day we'll work on them. Sometimes some cowboys get four to work on. So I'll ride this one two hours, the next one another two hours, and the next one another two hours, and the next one another two hours. Depending on what process the horses is in. And then we'll go until we get them turned—the olden days it's as long as you get them [to] turn, and stop, that horse goes out, and the cowboy from outside takes him, and then they'll work them until they can put what we call the straight bit, or the standard bit on them. And that horse will just go through the process until he's too old to ride. So that's kind of the deal.

AL: And in those days, how often would you bring new horses into the ranch?

JD: Well, we like to do it every five years, especially when you bring ten at a time. Because those days, we had like six cowboys, and it wasn't much. But ten would last us five years, then we'd get rid of them—or the older ones would go and we'd replace [with] the new ones. And every cowboy had like about five horse to they string. That was your main tools, your main equipment, your main—your partner, your everything. It's just you and that horse.

AL: You said each cowboy would have about five horses.

JD: Yeah.

AL: Would the cowboy want his horses to be specialized, for different tasks? Or . . .

JD: If you want—that would be kind of up to the cowboys. Most of the cowboys want their horse to be standard. I want a horse that can do everything. But what happened is sometimes you end up with a horse with what we call a strong back. That's good for heavy roping, so when we go out driving bulls and stuff like that, we need to rope bulls or something heavy, we take the strong horse. So and then, once we know that he's the one, **the** strong one—we kind of keep him to work the strong cattle. And then the faster horse we go out to drive the younger cattle,

cause the young cattle, they run crazy and they run fast, and you need something to get up there fast. So depends on the speed—you want them with the young cattle. And the strong one you want them with the strong cattle, so to speak.

And that's about the difference I find, that an average cowboy would want—faster ones you can get out there, and rope, and then you can have that combination in one horse. Most guys don't though. If get my strong horse, every time we work the bulls or do some heavy roping, then I take that horse. And other than that, driving, working the calves, I'll take a certain horse.

And then, another thing was important to us is what we call the pen horse, or the corral—the horse that we use to work in the corral. There's a lot of separating, and what you want is horses that is quick, horses that are intelligent—to almost know the work that's going on. When you separating cattle, or *ka'awale*, like Hawaiians say, *ka'awale pipi*—to separate the cattle—you want horse that can move in there fast, and get between two head. So if you get cattle moving this way, you just want one pass, one stop. And we call this a gate horse, where the gate horse would just—just like a gate, he would stay here, you bring the cattle here, he would open to the cattle you want, when the cattle pass that you don't want, voom! It's closing, and the next cattle, voom! And keep doing that. That's the kind of ideal horse for the corral. So we got three different type of horse we normally use.

AL: And so it might be the quality you see in the horse itself that decides . . .

JD: Yeah. Yeah. Right. Yes—except for the bulls. For the bulls you want one old-timer, who knows that rope and he knows his stuff, and he know when to turn, he knows when to stop. Because when you stop a bull you can not **stop** him one time. Bulls are too heavy. So you get horses know that. They know the bull is heavy—they stop them easy, easy, easy, then they shut him down. But if you stop him one time he can hurt your horse, or he can bust your rope or stuff like that, and we don't want that to happen. Usually you can jerk your horse right out of his ground, and never again he want sit down! And when you rope calf you want that horse to **sit** one time so you pull that calf right off that ground, like that. So there's different, and the old-time horses, they know the bigger cattle they're not going to stop them one time, they'll stop them slow. Just like a cowboy, the animals build experience with their work.

AL: So are you still using horses the same way today as you were . . .

JD: No. Today's so different—we run cattle in close paddock, smaller paddocks—200 acres as compared to 5,000 acres. And I think the cattle—we breed for disposition, too—if they're wild we send them to slaughter. We keep breeding disposition in the cattle, so it's easy to handle. You can get anybody go out there and pretty much handle them, unless the guy never been on a horse before and don't know the characteristics, or the movements of the cattle. Other than that, today I can open a gate and they see me, they'll come to the gate and I'll just open the gate and let them go out. So there's very little from what we've done in the past that we do now.

And it's so much—we can put up a fence in one day, the same amount of fence that we did for two weeks. Two weeks of four-man—the fencing that we put up during the old days, it takes us—what it took us for two weeks, we can do it today in one day. And that's—with machine, the type of machine. Before we did it with what we call the *o'o*, dig it down, plant the post in, today we get this machine just pound them—boom, boom, boom, boom. Go to the next one—boom, boom, boom, boom.

So it's—you know the technologies are just great. I mean—you never run cattle like you run them before in the old days. So there's a change. I think what we miss having is the actual . . . techniques of . . . combination of man and horse, getting out on the range, and really working together to accomplish what need to be accomplished out there with cattle. Today is—oh, open the gate and bring the dogs, and the dogs bark over here, the cow go over there.

It's less challenging. I mean, like everything else, if it becomes a challenging thing, it becomes fun—I mean **real** fun. You know, like playing baseball there's a challenge who's going to win, and to beat them you got to go. . . . It's the same thing with the cattle. They're out there, they're watching you, they want to run away from you and you're figuring how I'm going to block this cow from running away and stuff like that.

So . . . technology is great. The price is (smiling) very, very poor. I guess the fun is not as much as it used to be. But I think everything have it's place, and now the technologies of raising cattle has to be that way, because the marketing price is not great—it's probably the worst time of the year or the worst time in history.

AL: The price for beef?

JD: The price for beef is so low, so the less labor you put on them the more you can make. That's kind of the name of the game right now.

AL: I—I read in an article that at one time in your life you wanted to be a policeman?

JD: Yeah. (Laughing) Yeah.

AL: How old were you when that's what you wanted to be?

JD: Nineteen.

AL: Oh yeah?

JD: Yeah (laughs). And it just never worked out. I went there and tried to get in—I couldn't get in. There were some technicalities that I couldn't . . . make. And so they turned me down and told me try again; I tried again and, finally, they told me no—with my past history they didn't want me to—those days it was different then, yeah? Today anybody can be a cop. Those days you have to have the size, you have to have the height requirements, and you have to have the right scale. And well, I was in perfect shape too that time, but I just couldn't pass the test, so I figured, well that's all right. And I think it was a purpose for that, you know? Because of that I figured, well I can come home. Then I came home and became a cowboy. And I think I like being a cowboy better! (Laughs)

AL: At the time, how badly did you want to be a cop?

JD: Oh, I want that—you know, I was so strong in trying to be a policeman, because at that age I really wanted excitement, and watching my friends in Honolulu Police Department, getting all this action, and I wanted to be a part of that action. But I guess, you know, God has His timing for everything, and he sure didn't want me to stay Honolulu, and there was a purpose for me to come home. At that time, as a young man, I never thought—God was the farthest thing away from my mind. Today I'm a minister, and . . . it's my **goal**. Anyway, I came home, and I became a cowboy, and I'm a minister for this ranch today, so I know there was a purpose for

me in coming back home and not staying Honolulu. And I glad I did. I glad I did. I think things worked out better. . . .

And so, you know, when you're nobody, nobody wants you. You—you're—you were known as trouble makers at that time, and it's hard to get somebody to help you out, because you're—as far as they're concerned—as far as the public's concerned—I'm a rebel, I'm no good. And so there was only one person that I—or one thing that I could do and that was to pray. And that's how I became captured and involved with the Lord, and learn how—or learn who's my real friend, and learn who's willing to help.

And I just started to develop myself in the right way. Actually I never really learned right away, but as I grow—keep growing up, and keep getting in trouble, I keep finding out who can help me and who will help me, and who will not. And eventually I outgrew that, and left that behind me, and I don't want to even turn around and look at that again. And that's why my life was such an interesting way to tell people, don't do that—don't do that, because I been there. I know. This is where you should go, and not that way.

And I kind of—today I kind of—I got a lot of young people with me, and I try to tell them, this is how you're supposed to work, and this is what you should not do, and stay away from drugs, and stuff like that. And I got all these young kids working for me now, and I think my goal is to try to teach them to become—first of all, not to do what I went through, an to become somebody in your life, because life is precious, and you live it only once! You might as well live it the best way you can. So. . . .

AL: When you came and started working for Molokai Ranch as a young man, how—this was 1966, yeah?

JD: It was '66, yes.

Tape ends and is turned over.

AL: So you were saying that you were about twenty-two . . .

JD: Twenty-two, twenty-three, I **think**. Twenty-three.

AL: I was going to ask you if—you were looking for the exciting life, and as a young rebel, coming into Molokai Ranch—did the job, the exciting job chasing cattle, catching wild bulls and things like that—did that turn you away from your rebellious days at all?

JD: No, I don't think so. Because, being a cowboy **was** being a macho man, in those days. That was—that was part of being macho. You know, I thought—that's all the girls like, macho men! That's—that's not so, but that's what we thought, those days. So macho was part of tackling the wildest, riding the wildest horse to fighting with the best fighter. You know what I mean? That's kind of where we were coming from.

So—no, I think it put an influence on me to think I'm better than everybody else, because of the things I did, although it shouldn't be that way, but really that's what it was. And that's why I think a lot of this young cowboys rather ride bull than rope, and just ride a pleasure ride. They rather ride bull—my son, Jimmy Junior, he ropes, he's a good roper, but he rather ride broncs, and bulls. He say, that's macho, that's why! See? So there's this macho thing about, I guess, being a policeman.

Whatever you be in life, there's sometimes—a lot of these people do it because there's a **man** thing about it. And I think, you know, nature is just the gravy that goes with that. Dealing with nature, being out there, watching the birds, watching the deers, working with animals with minds—it's just, to me, it's all gravy. That took away that macho. But now it's not macho to me—(smiling) to me it's just gravy, period! So that's—that's what I think.

AL: You said that cowboys back then—maybe today too—would think that being macho would impress the girls.

JD: Uh-huh.

AL: And that makes me wonder: were there any girls out here (laughs)? How did you socialize? Who were your friends?

JD: School—schoolmates, actually . . .

AL: As a young man working for . . .

JD: Molokai Ranch? Oh, we were just men. Those days was just men. I mean, we never had women, and there wasn't anything about this Women's Lib. It was such a different thing. I mean, was—it just was from—after work we would go out and be with our friends, and go dancing and stuff like that, so that's where we would meet our girls, women, or our schoolmates and stuff like that, that we go steady with, you know, high school lovers and stuff that—we reflect back to. So we—the macho guys—that's just like when we were going school. Boys and girls separated—we got to be the macho boys. And same classroom with the girls—the girls got to be girls, and we got to be macho, that kind of stuff.

AL: So was Maunaloa the main center of activity after work?

JD: No, no. Kaunakakai. Maunaloa was a nice quiet town, just filled with immigration pineapple workers, from the Philippines. So this Maunaloa was Filipinos. Although to us, at the time, all the pretty girls come from this—Maunaloa! So that's—yeah, that's our social life, and that's how we meet girls, and we want to get to be macho, that kind of (laughs)—so that's the way it—but I guess today's no different, I don't know. (Smiling) It's been a long time.

AL: Young men will always . . .

JD: (Laughing) Yeah . . .

AL: When did you decide to get married and raise a family?

JD: In—when I was 21, I think—21 or 22. Just before I got in this ranch. So actually my oldest daughter becomes . . . 35 years old . . . yeah, 35, and I become 35 [years] on the ranch. Yeah. So that's . . .

AL: And what was it like to be raising a family out here, after you yourself had grown up in this area?

JD: Great—I just turned them to the life that I been through, because I was the foreman of Molokai Ranch.

I've always—I'm a 24 hour man here, and there were times that, you know, the kids would come home from school, and I got to be out here—I would work from sun-up to sun-down. I leave my kids—they sleeping when I come home from work, they're still sleeping, because they go to school, they come back home, they do their thing, and it's nighttime, they fall asleep again. So I leave them sleeping, I come home they're sleeping.

So when—when they're young, I take them with me, because a lot of times the wife would come out and help me on the pastures and stuff like that. There's things that they need to do, we need to do, she need to do—she was always my right hand, she was always there to help me out with the calves, and feeding calves, and stuff like that. And we would take the kids with us. But when they're big enough, we leave them home. So when they're—my oldest girl was about . . . thirteen year old, I think, she could stay back while we go and do our ranch work.

But they always was involved, and during the branding time we would take them all. I'd take them all—they'd come down here with their friends, and we would go through the same things we went through. In fact, I've still got some pictures of that. So their life was always a part of Molokai Ranch, for practically all their life, and till today, they're still a part of this—whether they're here or not. My oldest daughter work for the MEO, and after work sometimes we'd put on a night rodeo and she'd join the family, so it's always a part of their lives as well.

My son just started about six months now that he's gone out—he left the ranch, and started on a new venture. He said one day, "dad, I don't want to be a cowboy. I want to be something else." I said, "well, you got to go find your own dreams." So he's been working as a mason, and liking it. But he comes home and does the shoeing for us, and stuff like that, so he's involved in—he's not completely out. He'll always be—I guess my kids will always be involved, as long as I'm here.

And my grandchildren, they're roping, they're in the rodeo too, so it's a lifetime from generation to generation. And see, I'm the fourth-generation cowboy for Molokai Ranch. My great-grandfather worked—my great-grandfather's name was Antone Rodrigues. And everybody ask me, "Antone Rodrigues? How come you Duvachelle?" Well, Antone Rodrigues is my grandmother's father. **He** was the first generation that work here. And my grandmother, and all her brothers were involved in the ranch. Her brothers were all the cowboys in the ranch. Sometimes she would cook for them, and stuff like that. And my father, raised up under the guidance of his uncle, and he became—he was always involved in ranch until he came as a professional, for about two years, I think, somewhere in the 1930s and in the 1940s. And then he went off, venture his own.

My brothers all—my older brothers—every one of my brothers worked for Molokai Ranch. And them too, you know, after a while, they want to find out what Honolulu is like. What's a big city like? And so after working here eight years, two of my brothers went to Honolulu. One got involved with driving truck, and the other one became in the construction business. And then my youngest brother worked for me too, he worked for eleven years then he went on his own and started his own business.

And I'm here, and my kids are still here, and the generation is still carrying down. So now we're down to sixth generation. My grandson works for me during the summertime. So whether he'll be sixth generation, I'm not sure, but . . . I guess it all depends on what they want.

AL: Sounds like it'll always be part of their lives no matter whether they . . .

JD: Yeah, yes. Yes.

AL: In 1974, you became foreman?

JD: Yes. In ’74, ’73, around there.

AL: Is that the same job as you have now?

JD: No, after the foreman, I came 1985, I think, I became a supervisor. And then in 1990, I think, I became a manager. And today I’m a livestock division manager. But I’d rather be out there (laughs).

AL: How much time do you spend behind a desk, and how much time do you spend outside?

JD: Oh, you know what? I’d rather spend time in the dust, but I’m going through all this paperwork, and I guess—I’m just learning, so I’m not fast, but they need to get my knowledge of what I’m going to do out there, on paper. So I’m trying to doing that kind—putting in a lot of paperwork, keeping time, administration work, so I think right now, I’m fifty percent [in the office], and I hope to be twenty-five, twenty percent, and then out in the dust most of the time!

When I can, I would get on my truck and I’d run out, go check the cattle—I would just get lost in that world. It’s like my own world out there, you know? And you get this sensation feeling, and when you get home, it’s a different kind of tired. This here [this desk work], when you get home, oh man, you cannot sleep—you tired but you cannot sleep, and you would get up in the middle of the night and get restless. But I really—I’m hoping that I can get out of here and get out there more, but I find it not possible, because a lot of things in here I need to put them in the papers so they can understand where I’m coming from. So that’s the deal, I mean, it goes with the territory. But I’m hoping someday I can be like 20% here and the rest of the time out there.

AL: One thing I wanted to ask you about was, over the years, it’s my understanding that Molokai Ranch has had an interesting relationship with the community, because it’s always been an important part of this area. And I think in the 1970s there were some conflicts over beach access and things like that. And I wanted to ask you how your position at Molokai Ranch, especially as you become more of a manager, how that’s affected **your** relationship with the community here.

JD: I always was—I always was Molokai. And to me, Molokai Ranch plays a very important—a vital part of this community. Like it or not. That’s a fact, and that’s where we are. In the 1970s, when the plantation shut down, a lot of our people had to move out of this island because there was no job to replace them. So families had to move out, to start a new life, because of this loss of job. And to replace that, they brought in Kaluako’i [a resort], to do that—the hotel, Kaluako’i Hotel. And we start off with this big vision, so everybody got on board. And wow, at least we got job to take care of some of the people. Well, that started going down. And then Molokai Ranch came in. Molokai Ranch came in with a vision.

Here’s the problem. Here’s the problem. I love Molokai. I been here longer than most of the people on this island—even the ones that older than me, because they just came back. I want to stay on Molokai for the rest of my life. I want my children to be on Molokai, but that’s not possible because of the economy. I want my grandchildren to stay here, but how can, when I can hardly keep my kids here? Because of the economy again.

So this is the thing that Molokai Ranch is presenting. To me, first of all, the environment—to work with the environment. If you look out there, there's no cement buildings. So that's fine, I'm for that. Because this means lending a hand to take care of our economy problem—**some** of the economy problem. Not all, but at least they're bringing the apples to the table. See, out of all the businesses here, we're the only ones bringing the apple to the table.

But everybody is so negative about it, but nobody seems to come up with an idea of—okay, we take away Molokai Ranch, we shut Molokai Ranch, we move out of here—then what? What do we do? What about our people? What about our kids? What about our future? There's no settlement on that, nobody knows. "Let's go build fishponds, on grant money." On grant money? How am supposed to send my kids to college and come back here and build fish ponds, take care of fish? So there's still that question of how do we keep people here on this island.

And so, seeing that Molokai Ranch is the only one putting apples on the table, naturally I want to see that go through. Not for the sake of only Molokai Ranch. It'd be a lie—I'm not worried about only Molokai Ranch—I mean, I am, because this is my job, this is my security—but it also would be a lie if I say I don't care for Molokai. Because that's—**that's** my whole basket, is Molokai. And for that to survive I need the ranch to survive.

And one of the biggest problems here because of the economy, is health programs. I broke my hand a year ago. Just a minor fracture. I got to go Honolulu for surgery. We can't do it here on Molokai, because there's no health program that would take care of a minor surgery like that. We have **midwives**—which there's nothing wrong with midwives, except that we don't have what Kapiolani Hospital have, because we don't have the economy.

We don't have the schools and the education we should have. Why can't we have a Kam [Kamehameha] School over here? To me, we're facing—not that the rest of the islands don't have their own problems, we all have our own problems—but I think, in order for us to survive, we got to make sure that our kitchen got all the food we need. And I think that's what makes me want to see Molokai Ranch, and any other company, survive. Mainly because we need to be here, we need to have our children here, and we need to have our—the next generation, to come in. And that can not be done with one poor economy.

So that's why I **am** for Molokai Ranch, and I am for the coffees, and I am for Kaluako'i. But my job right now to stand up against the public, and just to say, "alright." And I respect their opinions, but nobody answered the question, if Molokai Ranch step out, then what do we do to bring the economy up to par? If Molokai Ranch went out now, the whole island folds up, because Kaluako'i is the next biggest and they're already gone. So we really got a problem that we really need to work together as a community to get that working. And I don't mind that people have their opinion against the ranch. Fine. Just, if they can come up with some ways to build our economy, then maybe I'll be for them as well. And that's . . . that's kind of the attitude I've taken.

AL: How have you found that people, in the surrounding area, the community, relate to you on an individual level, knowing first of all that you're a man who comes from Molokai, a cowboy, and that you're from Molokai Ranch?

JD: Well, half of the island is my family, for one thing! And I do have a lot of respect for people, because in spite of our differences of opinion, my respect for them is like my friend, except we agree on two different things. That doesn't mean I hate them, it just means that I disagree with him, or her. And I think we've developed that respect towards one another. On this island,

everybody calls me Uncle Jimmy. I'm everybody's uncle. So that kind of gives you an idea, you know, the respect people get from me. And there are people that, till today, say that if Uncle Jimmy get out of this ranch, all hell would turn loose. And I don't want to see that, I'm not wishing for that. Because I'll be here all my life, unless they tell me I got to leave.

And other than that, I been through a lot. I stand against the community when I been alone, by myself, until—when I was a rebel, I was still standing for Molokai Ranch. That was a little different—people never respect me then. But today there's that respect. There's a truth between me and the public. And I think I'm the public as well. It's not just Molokai Ranch, but I'm Molokai as well. And to that I think we've gained a respect toward each other, to understand—being that we walk through the same life, and we eat from the same bowl of *poi*.

AL: It's interesting, because when you started here, it was a ranch, and you were a cowboy, one-hundred percent . . .

JD: Yes, yes.

AL: And now, in the 1990s, and I guess in the 80s, too, the ranch has become much more than that . . .

JD: Yes.

AL: It's not just—you're not just a cowboy, you're part of a larger institution.

JD: Right.

AL: How has that affected your job, or the way you feel about your job?

JD: You know, when I got in that position, maturity—because of my age—maturity played a big part of that. And I think . . . through my experience, knowing what a rebel, so to speak, can do, that there is a lot of negative things was just a cowboy. So here I am, I'm just a worker. So I'm out there, and I'm doing what **I** want to do. At three o'clock I'm done working, four o'clock, whatever, I'm done—everything stays here. I'm going home, or I'm going into the community; that shouldn't be done but, I think, can be done. And I'm going to be just a rebel out there just like I've always been.

And to see the negative that that caused the community, to know that people **dread** seeing me in the community, and to know that I can **hurt** people out there, when I became—mostly, though, when people are what we refer to as "big shots," we never could walk in the same building together, because I would be like one—**germ**! And to me, I have no respect for these people because they're "they don't like me, I don't like you," kind of deal.

But I think what all that taught me is: we need to work together. No matter what position you are in, you need to work together. And especially when we—when I grew up, matured in my—I know that that has to be a goal in life. Life is not irresponsible and rebel. Life is responsible.

And when you marry—not to change the subject, but when they ask me if I wanted to marry people, I said no. They said, "why?" And they asked me if I wanted a license for that—because I'm a minister—if I would marry. I said, no. Because marriage is such an **important** decision in one's life. When you marry a woman, everything that you own is given to her to share. And your life is not **you** no more; it's you—and her. Or vice-versa.

And so to me, marriage is so important. I don't want people come to me, and I marry this guy and then he think, "I don't love this lady, because I thought marriage was different." So I want to stay away from there, because to me, marriage is a sacred thing. If you can not take the responsibility of being a father, or a husband to a wife, then you shouldn't marry. Anyway. . . .

AL: So has there ever been a couple that [you've married]?

JD: No. Well, the ranch asked me several times, and my church asked me. My mom would tell me that I could perform marriage, and she's the one with the license, and she can sign it, but I've always said, no, I don't want to marry people. And I think it's mainly because of responsibility. And when I look at that, when you talk about responsibility—if there is a goal in life, and if we can not come together—no matter what status of life you're in, if you can not come together as a community, then your community going fall apart, because you don't have the strength of unity which we need.

So to me, being in this position has changed me from being non-participant to a participant. Because (holds out his left hand) **this** Jimmy, nobody want nothing to do with this Jimmy. And **this** Jimmy (holds out his right hand), this guy, well if he's a manager, if he take care of this and that, maybe he's changed. So we need to get him involved. And I become involved, and from being involved we know how important we need to work together. And I guess that's the position I've taken from being this Jimmy to this Jimmy. It's just that I can give more support to the community than I ever could in the past. And with my ministry, I think I could be an asset. And anybody can be an asset if they want to. It's how you feel and what you want done, and how much you're willing to give, to become that.

AL: Another big event on Molokai, at least in the ranches in the 1980s was the eradication of cattle with bovine tuberculosis—I think that was in 1985 or '84?

JD: In 1985.

AL: I just wanted to ask you about how that affected your job, and what your involvement was with that.

JD: Well, actually, because <u>we were at that time up to 6,000 head of cattle, we were like total 3,000 cows, and 6,000 head we got rid of that year</u>. And we played the biggest involvement, because we were the biggest stakeholders, and that meant cut-back on jobs, so that took away some of the jobs of our people. So it hurt me on the cut-back, job cut-back, but I knew that sooner or later we'd come back and start all over again.

I think what really felt not right about it is . . . all my life on Molokai I've seen cattle. And all of a sudden this one year there was not one head. And I mean, I was the foreman at that time, and I drove around, and every time I'd get out there, it's me and the cattle, working. And all of a sudden I'm driving around Molokai and there's not one sight of cattle. It just felt like, I guess, there was something missing. Just like getting up one day and you look around Molokai and there's no Keawe trees. I mean, there's always been Keawe trees here. It just never—in that respect, it never felt right, because this Keawe tree that was no longer there anymore.

But I think what's great about that is when we returned the cattle, it gave us the choice to restock the type of animal that we wanted to. And as I check back in the market of what we've accomplished so far, as far as meat, we find that Brangus was one of the most popular cattle. Because Brangus are a tropical-tolerant kind of cattle. And so then I thought that would be

perfect for Molokai. So we brought back the Brangus—so there was a time that we could go out there and hand-pick of what we need for Molokai.

And I think . . . the first day the animals returned, it was such a—it was a big event for us! We went to the wharf and pick up this trailer of cows and brought them up and turned them loose, and I would go back in the night and just stare at those cattle. And oh, wow! I never seen this cattle for a long time, and I guess that's the way we all felt, especially me being with the cattle all my life. It was such an exciting time to see them returned. And we bred them all to where we're here today.

AL: How long was the island without cattle?

JD: One. One year, one year. And it seemed **forever**. Forever—oh, boy! I was counting the days down when we could bring the cattle back! So when we was ready to bring them back they sent me to Kauai. Princeville Ranch was getting rid of all their cattle, and they just so happened to have the Brangus. Princeville, Kauai. So we went there, and Causely—Causely was in charge at that time, he was the manager. I forgot his first name. But anyway, he was in charge at that time. And we went to Kauai and picked those cattle—he brought all the cattle in the front for us to pick from. What I don't like, he was going to get rid of. I took **everything** (laughs)! I mean, I didn't tell him that I wasn't choosy—I mean, they never had all good cattle in there, but I took them anyway! Oh, man! So I took them all. And they ended up being good cattle though, yeah.

AL: So it sounds as though that was a kind of a silver lining to the eradication, that you got the chance to select . . .

JD: Yes, the breed that to me—what we really need on Molokai—kind of a balance with the market and being able to raise the ones that are tolerant to our land.

AL: And have you been pleased with how the brangus have worked out over here?

JD: Very much. Very much. And I don't know what it is—maybe you can tell me—the market for black cattle is so. . . . People come here from the mainland and look and say, "you know what, I like all the black ones." I don't know what it is, but it's the black ones that they like. I don't ask them, I don't care—I don't want to look stupid and asking, "why do you like all the black ones for? What about this ones?" So I'm beginning to take out all the colored ones (laughs), getting rid of all the color ones, and then stay on the black. Because the market for black is. . . . I know the Japanese, they have this superstition about black cattle—they like that black cattle. And they pay good money for the black cattle too.

AL: To me it's all the same . . .

JD: Yeah, the same! And so that's why I'm kind of staying on the black side, because the market on the mainland—black cattle is good.

AL: Well, before we finish up, I just want to ask you to talk a little about how you see the ranch **life** going in the next ten, fifteen years. I mean, it's obviously changed a lot since you've started . . .

JD: Yeah.

AL: How do you think it's going to keep going?

JD: Well, you know . . . I think because of the market, the cattle market—I'd like to see cattle stay here, and perhaps it will—but I don't see cattle ever becoming big again. I see the ranch being a ranch—not in a big way, but in numbers of a thousand cows. And I don't think that's bad, I think that's real good. But I see the ranch leaning more toward tourism. And a good reason for that is because of the market price—not only on cattle, but the market price is better on tourists. And I see us employing more people with the tourist business than we can with cattle.

If I had my choice, I would want only cattle. But that would be selfish of me, because I'd be thinking of myself, and not everybody else. So I like what is best for the island of Molokai, as well as Molokai Ranch. Because who knows, my daughter might retire here as well—and have a grandson or whatever retire on Molokai Ranch as well, you never know. But I think as a whole, Molokai needs—we need to build the economy, and a lot of people get afraid when you talk about tourism. They're thinking of cement building and all that. I think on Molokai there's a way to do it that we can steer it away from that, and a way we can have a good balance of Molokai being Molokai. But I think what's most important is to keep Molokai Molokai, but to keep Molokai economic balance. And I think if we, the community, can get together, then I think we can make that happen.

But I see Molokai Ranch going more to the tourist industry, because I think that is a better deal than just to do what I did all my life—just because of the selfishness of wanting all that gravy. I don't think that's the way it should go, but I think if we work the market right here, and—in the future we looking at having a slaughterhouse here—and my plans are to raise grass fat cattle, and supply our own market here on the island, once we get that slaughterhouse going through.

So to me, I see the light in that tunnel, for cattle—not in a big way, but in a small way. And I think cattle need to be here, because we **are** Molokai Ranch. And I think that is part of the way we can use to attract tourists here, too—*paniolo* games and stuff like that, and give them a chance to be "city slicker" cowboy. I'm thinking of doing something like that—selling more of our **lifestyle** to the tourists—or to the guests. People like to be called "guests." To the guests. To me that is positive, as far as the future for Molokai Ranch.

AL: Well, thank you so much for meeting with me. Before we finish up, is there anything else you'd like to add?

JD: No . . .

AL: I really enjoyed this interview—I think it's going to turn out to be great . . .

JD: Great.