

# Oral History

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## History 493 Oral History

### 1. Materials read

Dexter, Lewis Anthony, Elite and Specialized Interviewing

Hoopes, James, Oral History <sup>an introduction</sup> for Students

Neuenschwander, John, Oral History as a Teaching Approach

Moss, William, Oral History Program Manual

Thompson, Paul, "Memory and history"

Neuenschwander, John, "Remembrance of Things Past: Oral Historians and Long Term Memory"

History Workshop Journal no. 8, Autumn 1979, "Editorial: Oral History"

Cutler, William, "Accuracy in Oral History Interviewing"

Henige, David, "The Problem of Feedback in Oral Tradition: Four Examples from the Fante Coastlands"

Hoffman, Alice, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History"

Carney, T.F., "Content Analysis: A Review Essay"

Fritsch, Michael, "Oral History and Hard Times"

Traub, James, "Aiding the Humanities: Arguing Ends and Means"  
(wrote response to this article)

Content analysis of transcripts.

I analyzed the first two interviews in volume II of the 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai project. I found the technique to be valuable in examining every piece of information from the interviewee against what was already known and against information from other interviewees. What quickly becomes obvious is that in order to be able to judge the accuracy or even probable accuracy of a statement, one must have a firm grounding in the specific and general history of that particular period.

I classified the information found into three categories:

- A. Events related to the strike; social and economic conditions that lead to the strike (Primary).
- B. Information on economic and social conditions, lifestyle, culture, customs of Filipinos on Kauai in 1920s (Secondary).
- C. Information that may be important to other people (Tertiary).

Lindsay Faye interview

<u>page</u>	<u>category</u>	<u>statement</u>	<u>analysis or comment</u>
460	C	Faye family went back to Norway between 1910-1914, considered settling back there because sugar industry was in bad shape.	check industry condition by looking at profits during those years.
464	B	Only 15,20 or 30 Filipinos at Waimea Sugar Co. in 1923, when Faye first started working there as manager; mostly Japanese.	seems correct. check company records if necessary.
464	C	Housing for employees was free.	correct from his perspective although it was an expense company calculated.
465	C	Workers were hired by word of mouth when jobs were open; no problem getting workers.	probably true during this period.
466	C	Kauai Sugar Planters discussed mutual problems, such as importing labor, lobbying at Terr. legislature.	general statements; labor importation probably more HSPA responsibility.
467	C	5,000 voters on Kauai in 1923. Japanese were illiterate, couldn't vote. Few people on island ran the political offices.	check voters list; other statement: true.
467	C	Kauai Sugar Planters Association met at Grove Farm office, Mabel Wilcox yard.	probably true.
467	C	Plantations on Kauai were Kilauea, Kealia, Lihue, Koloa, Grove Farm, Makaweli, McBryde, Kekaha, Waimea, Robinson	info easily obtained elsewhere.
468	C	KSPA made recommendations to HSPA.	probably true.
469	A	Strike camp was located near Brodie banana patch.	corroborated by newspaper.
469	A	10-12 Filipinos were shot.	16 killed, more wounded.
469	A	Followed Sheriff Rice from Lihue County Bldg to Hanapepe shooting still going on when arrived	According to Charley Fern, drive would take 45 min. by regular road shorter by cane roads. Doubtful that shooting still going on.
469	A	Arrived in Hanapepe about 2:30-3:00.	seems a little late in day.
469	A	Saw some policemen up on hill above the bridge taking potshots at those in banana trees	possible but unlikely. May have heard that this happened. Reinecke estimates incident took 5 minutes; Fern interview says was over by time Faye arrived.
470	A	Parked car where Brodie had pump	probably true

<u>page</u>	<u>category</u>	<u>statement</u>	<u>analysis or comment</u>
470	C	estimates not more than 100 automobiles on island	probably true, can check.
470	A	by the time he arrived strikers were not shooting back, policemen were mad and were taking potshots	probably heard this and later imagined himself to be there
470	A	Shooting lasted half hour after he arrived, 10-13 shots fired during that time	questionable, same as above
470	A	6-8 policemen on scene	approximately right.
470	A	Sheriff Rice arrived before he did	probably correct, so says Fern
470	A	Hundreds of people milling around as spectators, all the town was there	probable exaggeration
472	A	Took policeman to Waimea hospital at 4 o'clock	time questionable unless man was not seriously hurt; also other sources mention Makaweli hospital.
473	A	300-400 Filipinos in crowd, 400-500 in strike camp	both seem like exaggerations by about 100 or 200 too many
474	A	No Waimea Sugar Co. employees involved in strike	correct, in position to know
474	A	strike leaders not allowed in plantation camps to talk about strike	correct
476	A	KSPA met to discuss ways to supplement police force and how to protect property	probable
476	A	KSPA had no special fund to use for strike	possibly technically correct but evidence shows they were assessed for industry losses as they occurred
477	A	special policemen used during strike never paid by plantations	evidence suggests that plantation funds were made available to pay for special police

## Charles Fern interview

<u>page</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>statement</u>	<u>analysis or comment</u>
484	C	Barnstormed on Kauai, landing at Waipouli and Barking Sands, tried to make money by flying people	probably true
485	C	First one to make round trip to another island by air	probably true
486	B	Describe's camp policeman's responsibilities	probably true since he worked as one for awhile
487	B	Filipinos gambled with dice and cards in camps	probably true
487	B	Filipinos would work 20 days a month just to get bonus then not work. His job was to get them to work more; one way was by threatening them with being fired.	probably true
488	B	Tagalogs and Visayans like to shoot crap and wear silk shirts	probably at least some did, questionable whether it was representative behavior
488	B	They were making \$5-\$6/day instead of \$1	need to check
490	C	2 Japanese newspapers on Kauai in 1920, printed materials for Japanese community	probably true
491	C	3000 - 4000 spectators at inter-plantation baseball games	probably true, though seems little high
492	C	mostly haoles had telephones and each camp might have at least one	probably true, but some camps probably didn't have any
492	C	3-4 traffic fatalities per year in 1920	probably true
493	C	1 hour from Lihue to Waimea if took long way around Koloa, c. 1924	probably true
493	C	mail from outlying towns to Lihue arrived same day posted in afternoon	probably true
495	C	<u>Garden Island</u> circulation in 1920s 3000 by mail, carried only Kauai related stories	probably true
498	C	Fern wrote editorials, discussed with Hopper (mgr.)	probably true
499	C	wrote editorial in 1927 about Lihue Plantation train being dangerous to people; advertising cut by plantation in retaliation	probably true, but in other matters paper represented plantation perspective
501	C	county gov't run efficiently like a business; Hawaiians in Hanalei wanted more money for road jobs which had to be denied	probably true

<u>page</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>statement</u>	<u>analysis or comment</u>
502	C	Charlie Rice had strong influence on electoral politics in 1920s	probably true
510	A	Fern wrote story 7/22/24 on first mention of strike: 48 Visayans at Lihue, 40 at Koloa, information from plantations	probably true
510	A	Visayans struck, not Ilocanos who were newer and more thrifty	corroborated by other evidence
510	A	Was not a crippling strike, didn't shut down plantations, e.g. at Lihue if 40 struck, was out of 400 total men.	corroborated
511	B	Few Visayans anyway, more Ilocanos	correct
511	A	Visayans threatened others (Ilocanos) to make them strike	evidence suggests some of this occurred
511	B	Says Ilocanos thrifty, supposedly part-Chinese	would need to research
512	B	Filipinos not working on plantations would be store clerks or in business for selves	general statement; also farmers or hired farmhands
512	A	not only numbers of strikers, but jobs of strikers important, e.g. mill was important but mainly Japanese workers	probably true
513	A	plantations could probably have withstood the strike even if every Filipino struck; could have kept going with Japanese field hands.	probably true; could have hired all kinds of strike-breakers, although would have cost planters extra money
514	C	could find out if Manlapit or anyone else came to Kauai on certain day by looking at passenger list or watching passengers disembark from steerage	probably true
515	A	knew Pablo Manlapit in 1923 or 1924	possible, to what degree is question
515	A	talked to him after the 1920(?) strike, met him at friend's house (Gokan)	unclear, could be fabrication or may have been several years later
516	A	Manlapit was out for a fast buck, he was paid off many times to stop strikes	his opinion, reflects planters' bias
518	A	Filipino businesses opposed the strike because they didn't want everything shut down (would hurt business)	what businesses did they have to begin with? Doesn't follow pattern of Japanese merchants who tried to help during strikes. To what extent did opposition mean no help once strike under way?
519	A	in Kapaa strike camp a policeman discharged a shot by accident and scared other policemen	probably true

page	c statement	analysis or comment
522	A Manlapit had strike camp in Hanapepe; old Japanese shoolhouse used to house strikers and families evicted from plantation housing	corroborated
522	A 2 Ilocanos from Makaweli plantation went to buy food in Hanapepe and were picked up by strikers and taken to camp	corroborated
522	A police got habeas corpus order and took to demand release of men	incorrect. Police were able to get warrant to arrest 2 men for their own good.
522	A 50-100 men in crowd which police confronted, 300 Filipinos in all at Hanapepe.	seems about right, 50 is low.
523	A Police said later that strikers followed them out to road and kept pressing them. Police had rifles, some Filipinos may have had pistols	corroborated
523	A Goat hunters sworn in as policemen	corroborated
523	A Police said fight started when a striker stabbed a policeman	conflicts with other information
523	A Officers couldn't use rifles in crowd, went up to higher ground 10-20 feet above road to shoot	corroborated
523	A 3-4 policemen killed	correct; 4th eventually died
523	A Filipinos started running away;policemen were taking potshots at them, 19 killed	probably true. 16 killed.
523	A Sheriff Crowell stabbed; policemen took own wounded to Makaweli hospital then later came back to take Filipinos to hospital	true. probably true.
524	A Fern was in Lihue, got call from Chinese restaurant owner in Hanapepe, heard shots on phone. Went by cane haul road and arrived in Hanapepe 20-30 minutes later. shooting was over bodies being piled up Crowell wasn't badly hurt, Fern talked to him and got the story	probably true, maybe 30 minutes more likely " " " "
525	A Fern talked to 2 policemen who had done most shooting. 2 Filipinos who tried to stab Crowell to death both killed with knives in hands; immediately after shooting, police didn't seem angry, had a letdown after done what they had to do	probably true " "
525	A Fern's opinion that lot of unnecessary shooting took place after crowd broken up by police because they were mad at that time	probably true
526	A No bystanders; if any, they didn't know too much Lindsay Faye came after him	probably true " "

<u>page</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>statement</u>	<u>analysis or comment</u>
526	A	Fern's reaction was not one of shock, but main interest was in getting out story	probably true
527	A	Fern felt public reaction was to blame Manlapit and leaders, not Filipinos in general	that was his view, questionable whether that was "public" view
528	A	Never found out exactly who started to get 2 Ilocanos back, but was organized effort	opinion
530	A	sanitary code violations being enforced to get strikers out of building (overcrowding) and to try to break strike up too.	probably true
531	C	Assessment of Mabel Wilcox as medical and welfare worker who helped injured workers or families of worker killed in accident get some kind of support from plantations (not necessarily related to strike)	probably accurate
531	C	Wilcox had 6 nurses, one in each district; one job was to find TB cases and get them into hospitals She tried to get Filipino or Japanese nurse whenever possible	probably true " "
534	A	Fern's assessment of shooting is that policemen were overconfident, didn't expect the kind of resistance they got.	probably true.
		Fern felt that Filipinos wanted to demonstrate their presence rather than really get 2 Ilocanos back.	his editorials at the time were much more condemning of strikers.



## Questions to ask potential interviewees

### 1. WORKING CONDITIONS

- Outports. How often did ships call at outports?  
Who did the work? Regular longshoremen or plantation workers?  
Describe how cargo transported to and from ship.  
What was better than conventional dock? What was worse?
- General. What accidents or illnesses have you had? Observed?  
What makes a good longshoreman? What kind of worker did you respect?  
What kind of person would you have to watch out for? Why?  
What kind of injuries/illnesses seemed most prevalent?  
What would you do if someone was not doing his share?  
working in unsafe manner?  
working too fast?
- What mistakes did you make when you first started work?  
How did you learn to become a longshoreman?
- How old was the oldest longshoreman you worked with?  
How did their method of work compare with that of younger workers?  
Was there a difference in the kind of work done by younger or older workers?  
When and why did older workers retire?
- What made a good foreman? walking boss?
- Were there any side benefits to being a longshoreman?  
What did you like about the job? Dislike?
- Did you ever disagree with the way an operation was being run?  
What could you do about it?  
Did you ever walk off the job or stop work because you disagreed with the way an operation was being done?  
Did you ever think of changing to another occupation?
- What was the hardest longshore work you ever did? easiest?  
What was most satisfying work? most scary?
- Did your longshoring experience give you an advantage in getting another kind of job? What skills did you have?
- What is important to remember in making a tight stow?  
What could you do to slow down work? Speed up?
- Describe what you would do on a day at work. A week. a month.

working conditions, continued.

Did you ever feel cheated by the company?

Did you do anything to get back at the company?

Do you have an idea of how many bags an hour a gang would load  
of machine sugar? sling sugar?

Did you have any problems working with Hawaiians?

Japanese?

Filipinos?

Haoles?

others?

Did you ever think of a way to do an operation better? more efficiently?

What happened to your idea?

Were there fights at work?

What were they about?

## 2. WORK OPPORTUNITY

Did you ever have to pay somebody off to get a job?  
Treat them to something? Bring them something?  
Do you know of others who had to?  
How common was the "chicken and whiskey" system before the union?

How did you cope with the fluctuating amount of work?  
What did you do when you were not working?  
Was this fluctuation in work opportunity a good thing or a bad thing for you?  
Did anyone else provide income in you family?

Did you work at Matson?  
McCabe?  
What were the differences between working each operation?  
Why did you work for Matson? McCabe? Would you have preferred to work at the other?

Did you ever work on the mainland?  
Describe the working conditions there?  
What were similarities/differences with Hawaii?

On any given day, how did you decide whether you would go to work or not?  
If you went almost every day, when did you stay home? Why?

Did working a particular cargo have anything to do with your decision?

How did you become a casual?  
How did you become a regular?  
Did you have aspiration to become a winch driver, foreman, walking boss?  
How did you plan to get there?

How much would you make in a week? Month? Year?  
Were you ever fired? Why? What happened?

3. CARGO.

What <sup>#</sup>cargo did you like working with? Dislike?  
Were there any particular ships that you liked/disliked working on?

4. JOBS.

What kinds of jobs on the waterfront have you done?  
Describe what each one was like.

How much of your work depended on other people working together?  
Give an example.

5. PERSONAL/JOB RELATED QUESTIONS

What was your first job?  
Why did you become <sup>A</sup>a longshoreman? How?

What did you eat for lunch? Dinner?  
Who brought it or provided the food?  
What did you talk about during lunch? break?  
What did you do for the rest of the lunch hour?

What did you do after work?  
What clubs or organizations did you belong to?  
Did any of your friends work with you?

Where did you live?  
How did you get to work?  
What did you <sup>#</sup>wear to work?

What other jobs have you had?  
How do they compare with longshoring?

## 6. SPECIFIC HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

When did you first hear of a union for longshoremen?  
What union was it?  
What were its backers saying about it?  
What were your initial opinions about it?  
What were your questions or fears about it?  
What did the employers say about it?  
Why were oldtimers afraid of it?

How did the union affect working conditions?

In 1935, when the company gave a 10¢ raise after the union's first public meeting, what did you think?  
What did you think when the company gave Christmas turkeys in 1935?  
Had they ever done that before?

Was the union ever wrong on certain working conditions or practices, in your estimation?

Were you familiar with the Matsuda incident?  
Did you have any reaction to the firing of the Kukuihaele gang in 1936?  
What was your reaction to the Hilo Massacre in 1938?  
Did you ever talk with seamen from other parts of the world about working conditions? Longshoremen?

What changes in working conditions came about with bulk loading of sugar?

## 7. TIME PERIODS

Above questions could be asked in relation to following time periods:

pre-union  
early union  
war  
post-war  
bulk sugarloading  
1950s  
1960s  
1970s

One way is to find people who only worked during that one period.  
Can interview some long term workers, but must be careful to try to delineate periods being talked about.