

FILIPINO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HAWAI'I  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
INTERVIEW #2

NORA GOZON-TAGALOG (NT)

**Interview Conducted By:  
Melinda Tria Kerkvliet (MK)**

September 2, 2009  
Makibaka Village, Waipahu, O'ahu

MK: Let's talk about the Ota Camp struggle. The other day we talked about your family. So you came here in...what year did you come?

NT: In 1970...April, 1970.

MK: Uh-huh. And where did you live when you came?

NT: I live with...[laughs]

MK: Oh, OK, we got that in previous interview. And then you moved to Ota Camp. What date?

NT: The same year, because we only stayed with my uncle about five months.

MK: And that was...

NT: 1970.

MK: Can you describe the house?

NT: Well, the house is owned by Primo Fontanilla. It is a single-unit house.

MK: You mean, one-dwelling?

NT: Yeah, one-dwelling house.

MK: Uh-huh, how many bedrooms?

NT: We have just like a...one...two bedroom...two big bedroom, and then the sala and then we got kitchen. Kitchen is just like Philippine Island.

MK: Describe.

NT: Like you put the stove here and then you put the utensils, you call that banggera. And get puka puka [holes] and you can see the road and stuff like that because it's facing the road.

MK: But you had electricity, yeah?

NT: Oh we got electricity.

MK: You got regular stove.

NT: Yeah.

MK: So how many people were there?

NT: My grandfather and my two brothers and sisters. Later, my auntie came and stayed with us.

MK: So there's six in the family.

NT: Yeah. At the other side of the house, that's where the old man stay. His name is Manong Inciong-Dionicio Tarbala.

MK: He was alone? Single?

NT: Yeah. He loved to cook so whenever he cook he give us some.

MK: Mabait. [Good person]

NT: Yeah.

MK: So how did you like the area? How did Ota Camp feel that first year you were there? Did you like the place or did you not like the area?

NT: I like that area better than my uncle area. [laughs]

MK: In Chinatown.

NT: No, in downtown.

MK: Downtown.

NT: In my uncle place, it's just like we are a prisoner. And we only looking wall to wall, you know what I mean. [laughter] And the kitchen is very small, yeah?

MK: Uh-huh.

NT: And then, you know, we live on the third floor...we no more things us to do.

MK: And so in Ota Camp.

NT: In Ota Camp is like we got place to play, and we can play in the road, we can grow things, you know, and then when we get up and stuff like that we see banana

patch. The old man grow banana in the surrounding. Manong Inciong takes cares of the banana patch.

MK: This is your neighbor. The one live near you?

NT: This one is Manong Inciong who has a room attached at the back of our house. He has his own dirt kitchen, stove and toilet. He takes care of the bananas which really belong to Primo Fontanilla who owns our house. He's old man too.

MK: He own the house, and you pay to him.

NT: Yeah, we pay to him. [laughter] And then he pay to Ota. He lease the place, I think. He pays to Ota.

MK: So, what about the people? Who were the people in the camp?

NT: OK, when we just moved, slowly by slowly I know my neighbor. The first one I know, my neighbor is Ponciano Paladero, also single. And then Islao- Wenceslao Flores, I think that's the surname. There was also Doroy.

MK: Are they old men?

NT: Old men, yeah.

MK: Single.

NT: Single men.

MK: Ah, how old, in their 80's?

NT: Yeah, around there. Islao is I think is about 86. Then maybe a month after that, I know Pete and Sally Tagalog - they live one house away. And then right across, I know Magallanes family, and then eventually, I know Enrique and Esperanza de la Cruz, you know they call him "judge." And then Mariano, then Johnny Dombrique, and then Pate Niebre. Mariano was a relative of Johnny but he returned to the Philippines before we relocated to Makibaka Village. Pate used to be very isolated person.

MK: Single?

NT: He's single man, yeah.

MK: Is he living alone?

NT: He is living alone but his house is next to Magallanes house. Then when the struggle start, I was graduating in high school.

MK: But before that, did you notice the relationship between people? Did the Ilokanos keep to themselves, the Visayans, the locals...how was it?

NT: Ah...

MK: Was there a community?

NT: Before the struggle start?

MK: Yeah.

NT: We was too young yet. We playing in the road. That's how I know these people.

MK: So in terms of interaction, for you, as you saw it, did you see any conflict between Visayan, Ilokano, local, immigrant?

NT: As we live a little bit longer, maybe about three months after, then that's when the time I get to know them, yeah? But I really don't know about their interaction among neighbors because it seems to be they are more self-isolated. Like, no bother, no bother each other. But only I notice that they always get together - Mariano and the Dombrique, yeah. They always get together.

MK: What did they do?

NT: Sometimes, they have occasion like, they just have dinner among families and stuff like that. And then Pate used to go there and join with them.

MK: And the other single old men?

NT: The other single men - they among themselves. They isolate themselves there. But these single men - Siano, Islao, Doroy - they all single, yeah, but they live in one house. About 4:00 p.m., they sit in the porch and watch us. They talk story. They ask about our needs.

MK: What did they do during the day?

NT: They wake up in the morning, go out, and come back at 3:00 p.m. with little packages. Holoholo.<sup>1</sup> Maybe they go to Aala Park and Hotel street for entertainment, go to pool halls.

MK: They lived by themselves?

NT: Yeah. And then they somehow, like they help each other. More community-kine among themselves. And then because we are new, and stuff like that, seems like they look after us. Because these guys are Visayan, they make sure that we are safe. So every time, every day they come and talk to us, if we need anything, stuff like that. Because they notice, only us kids around. So my grandfather always go out.

MK: Saan siya punta? [Where does he go?]

NT: Oh, either chicken fights and then he stays with my uncle them. My grandfather doesn't stay one place. And he come home only night time.

MK: So, kayo lang [you were left alone], the children.

NT: Yeah, the children. My father only come stay with us when he got fights from the girl friend.

MK: Where was your father staying, outside?

NT: He staying outside with the girl friend.

MK: Ah, so in 1970, the eviction came in 1971, isn't it?

NT: Eviction papers?

MK: Yeah.

NT: We received the eviction papers in 1971, but the actual eviction is in February 1972.

MK: That's...ah, they said you had to vacate. So what did you do? Who told you about the eviction?

NT: My grandfather because he...[laughs]. My grandfather, he also can get along with all the Ilokanos...the "judge," Pate...my grandfather mingle with them.

MK: What language did they use?

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1 Holoholo = "To go for a walk, ride, or sail; to go out for pleasure, stroll, promenade." Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, revised and enlarged edition. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986. [editor's note]

- NT: Who, Pate and stuff?
- MK: Pate and stuff.
- NT: With my grandfather, you have to talk Tagalog.
- MK: Tagalog. So the Ilokano guys, they can also speak Tagalog?
- NT: Oh, they always. They always can speak Tagalog. That's where I learn.
- MK: Interesting, isn't it?
- NT: Yeah! I learn from them how to speak Tagalog because in my island, Mindanao, Philippines, they don't teach Tagalog until high school.
- MK: How did they learn Tagalog, the old men?
- NT: The old men...that's all they used in plantation time, Tagalog.
- MK: But they are Visayans.
- NT: They're Ilokano. My grandfather Tagalog and in broken English. He mix it.
- MK: But your neighbors who are Visayans...
- NT: Visayans that side only speak Visayan. They speak kapakai<sup>2</sup> Tagalog. But I think only Siano speak Tagalog kapakai.
- MK: Kapakai is...
- NT: Mix up.
- MK: Mix up.
- NT: But like Islao and Doroy, they speak plenty Visayan.
- MK: So how did they communicate? Just Tagalog mix-mix?
- NT: Yeah. Tagalog mix-mix and English mix-mix. [laughter]
- NT: That's how they communicate and that's how my grandfather communicate - Kapakai-kine English.
- MK: So your grandfather told you that eviction...
- NT: We have to move.

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2 Possible variant of ka'ahōkai: "To mix up, disturb." Pukui and Elbert, *Hawaiian Dictionary*, revised and enlarged edition. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986. [editor's note]

MK: You have to move. So what did you do? What did you think at that point when he told you?

NT: I don't know what to do. [laughs] I don't know what to do. I just high school. [laughter] I said to myself, "gotta move again." [laughter] My mind get all stars already. How we gonna move? How we can afford?

MK: You are going to high school? Waipahu?

NT: Yeah, uh-huh. How we can afford? No one like give us money. And then my grandfather, too, you know, no more income. So how we can do it?

MK: OK, so what happened after that?

NT: And then I still continue school and...

MK: 1972 now, there's a rally, yeah?

NT: We no more rally yet. We go hashing out, you know, and then finally, one of the students at Leeward came to see my grandfather.

MK: Who is that student? Remember the name?

NT: Ah...it's not Leon Dagdagan?

MK: It's not Carlito?

NT: No, no. Carlito was later.

MK: It's OK.

NT: Yeah. It's...I think it's Brian.

MK: Brian...

NT: Taniguchi [Brian Taniguchi, Senator, 10th Senatorial District, Hawaii] and Gail Hamasu.

MK: Who is now...

NT: Brian is now in Transportation and stuff like that. I think Brian come to see my grandfather, and we gonna get together. That's the first meeting that we gonna have.

MK: Brian said that?

NT: Yeah. They all go house to house....

MK: Brian Taniguchi?

NT: Uh-huh.

- MK: I guess he was coming as a supporter?
- NT: Yeah. They the one went encourage Pete [Tagalog] to get the people together, and they will make the initiative for first meeting to plan for the demonstration on March.
- MK: So did you go to that meeting?
- NT: Yeah...even my grandfather. All of us went to the meeting.
- MK: OK, and do you remember what happened in that meeting?
- NT: First, there was all talking about how we gonna counter Rex Blackburn, and who doing the stuff...and stuff like that.
- MK: And at that point, was Pete talking already as a spokesman? Why was the meeting held at his house and not somebody else's house?
- NT: I guess because the students, the political science, only recognize Pete, yeah.
- MK: Uh-huh
- NT: He wasn't the leader yet, and he don't treat himself as the leader.
- MK: Ah...because Pete went also to Leeward [Community College].
- NT: Yeah. They the one encourage Pete to do something and get the people get together.
- MK: Uh-huh.
- NT: Because he [Pete] said in the political science [class] they asked what is the problem, then he issue the problem that we got the eviction.
- MK: You mean, they were in the same class at Leeward?
- NT: Yeah, he was in Leeward already.
- MK: And so in a class, he talked about the problem.
- NT: Yeah, the problem...with Ernie Libarios.
- MK: Ernie Libarios?
- NT: Yeah. Ernie Libarios and Lucy Gay. So these are the people encourage him to...I guess to me was an



experiment, you know. The way I observe, you know, I was in high school, the first demonstration is just an experiment because they are a bunch of students - Gail Hamasu and Brian Taniguchi, and the other one, Japanese one, Randy, he love to surf. [Laughter] He is computer guy now for Bank of Hawaii. I forget his name. Also Johnny Verzon, Leon Dagdagan. So all these guys encourage Pete to organize the place.

MK: OK. So, in that first meeting, what was said? Do you remember?

NT: All I could remember is, that, try to organize how we could do and counter the demonstration, if there is any police brutality and then how we gonna react.

MK: Were the people...did they want to protest...

NT: They don't want to.

MK: They don't want to protest.

NT: No. It's something new, yeah. It's something new, like my grandfather once said: "You cannot fight against the landlord."

But then again he doesn't understand...that Rex Blackburn not the landlord, you know what I mean; Ota is the landlord. But then, again, most of them have the impression that Rex Blackburn is the landlord. So how could we fight against that?

MK: So how was it explained?

NT: They went explain how. First, if we do not do something about it, we get kick out anyway. So at least we do something. Do something, we'll stay in the same place, at the same time, they're gonna relocate us, if they do relocate us. So that was the plan.

MK: But in the meeting to talk about the plans, what was the language used to communicate to everyone?

NT: They talk English and stuff like that, and Leon Dagdagan is the one...

MK: Was he in the first meeting already?

NT: Yeah. He translate, yeah. [translate into Ilokano]

MK: What about into Visayan?

NT: No more. [laughs] The Visayans only listening; we are only few Visayan. So I guess they ignore the minority.

MK: So the majority are Ilokano-speaking?

NT: Yeah.

MK: So what was your role in this first phase of the struggle? You were in high school...

NT: My role is that give coffee to the residents. [laughs] I wasn't in steering committee yet.

MK: Not yet.

NT: Yeah. Give coffee to the people who come to the meeting. [laughs]

MK: You were in the food committee.

NT: Yeah. Doughnuts and stuff like that. And Gail Hamasu used to bring doughnuts. Make hot water, serve coffee. That's my job. [laughs]

MK: Until when?

NT: Until we establish - after 1972 - after the first demonstration we had, and then we formed the Steering Committee. It was suggested by the students that we have to form a Steering Committee. But the first Steering Committee was lousy - Bautista, Gonzales, Rabang, Ganigan, Sr. - who were all drinking and pushy to the people.

MK: What do you mean, lousy?

NT: They only like drink and make trouble.

MK: But who appointed them?

NT: I don't know. I was still young.

MK: OK.

NT: And then I wasn't appointed. [laughs] Just like you only support.

MK: So, what happened? That's the first Steering Committee.

NT: Yeah, first Steering Committee. The support group must have told Pete since they always have meetings with Pete. Then Pete, I guess, he got fed up with them. He changed it.

MK: Changed? He just came forward.

NT: Yeah. Pete becomes spokesman.

MK: Uh-huh.

NT: Just like nobody else can speak up, only him. Then he changed the committee. He pinpoint who he like.

MK: So, he got Pate, Dombrique...

NT: Yeah, he got Pate, the "judge," Johnny Dombrique, and then me and Marciana.

MK: Who is Marciana?

NT: Marciana Rambaoa. She's one of the same age as me.

MK: What about Nora...Nora Bautista?

NT: Nora Bautista is only later.

MK: So that is a new name [Marciana]. I never heard about that. Marciana...

NT: She not only, she not too involved too much in the struggle, you know.

MK: So what did you do as a member of the Steering Committee?

NT: They made me secretary.

MK: Secretary. Oh... [Nora laughs]

NT: They made me secretary. I have to make coffee and serve. [laughter]

MK: So, by secretary, what did you do?

NT: I take notes.

MK: During meetings?

NT: Yeah. Nora used to be secretary.

MK: Nora Bautista.

NT: Nora Bautista. I was secretary for a little while but I no like.

MK: Bakit? [Why?]

NT: I think they don't like me.

MK: Why?

NT: Because, you know, I cannot take notes that much, you know, and stuff like that. When Nora steps in she becomes the secretary, I was the treasurer.

MK: Is Nora older than you are?

NT: Yeah, she's older.

MK: By how many years?

NT: Only by months.

MK: Only by months. But what did she do? Was she a student, working?

NT: No. She's a housekeeper.

MK: Housekeeper. Married to Richard Bautista.

NT: Richard Bautista.

MK: Before, hah?

NT: Yeah.

MK: Let's see, is she local?

NT: Local.

MK: Did she speak any other language?

NT: No.

MK: So when the struggle started, when you had the Steering Committee, did you notice a change in the community?

NT: Oh, yeah, lots of changes.

MK: Like what?

NT: The people become more close.

MK: Really?

NT: Yeah. The people that they don't know each other before, now they know better. The people think about one another; they become close.

MK: Why do you think so that happened?

NT: I guess because they got more involved and see each other more often, you know.

MK: Uh-huh.

NT: Especially, when there's a gathering and stuff like that, and they exercise the birthdays of the residents, they make more closer.

MK: You had parties?

NT: Yeah...no just in the meeting, they sing "happy birthday" and they bought small cake, you know, instead of giving doughnuts. It make them feel important. And we also have gathering, potluck, right after the second demonstration to hash out how you feel and how to make better next time.

MK: This is the Blackburn demonstration?

NT: Yeah. Then Dr. Duke Choy came...

MK: Clinic?

NT: Yeah, then I'm the main one who helped the free clinic.

MK: You're like the nurse assistant.

NT: Yeah.

MK: When did he come?

NT: He come every Wednesday.

[Topic switches to demonstrations]

MK: By that time the residents were going? [to demonstrations]

NT: Oh yeah.

MK: They were not scared anymore.

NT: No, because we passed the first demonstration. [laughter] So that's it.

MK: How did you feel at that time? Were you scared? Or not scared? Why did you join the demonstrations yourself? Why did you do it?

NT: Well, this is how I feel. My grandfather listen to different people, yeah?

MK: Your grandfather was scared?

NT: No, he wasn't that scared. He said, "What for?" You know, "You cannot demonstrate against landlords, we owe to the landlord, this is not our place. So our

obligation is to pay the landlord, so why go against the landlord?" Big questions to him, yeah?

MK: For you?

NT: For me, gain or lose, yeah? If I don't participate, if we win, why should I have something that I never worked for? So might as well I go participate. I will not feel too bad if I have something out of it but yet I worked hard on it.

MK: Did somebody encourage you, because you are going against your grandpa?

NT: No, my own way of doing it, you know. Even my auntie she discourage me from going to the meeting.

MK: Bakit? Why?

NT: Because it's useless.

MK: She said that?

NT: Yeah.

MK: Did she participate later?

NT: Well, she have to.

MK: Everybody...

NT: She was forced to...to participate.

MK: And your grandpa, too?

NT: Yeah. When I to go to the meeting and stuff like that, my grandfather used to lock the door, so that I cannot come in. They have lock the door, even the windows, except my bedroom window. I climb to my bedroom window. [laughs] Because that's the only one open. [laughs]

MK: He did not like you to go to meeting.

NT: No, he no like.

MK: You're strong woman, Nora.

NT: Yeah. He thinks all negative stuff, you know.

MK: Where did you get that independence of mind?

NT: I guess because I went through a lot of struggles of my life. I don't know, something inside.

MK: And you were not scared?

NT: I wasn't scared.

MK: Of course, you were just...you're new to the country.

NT: I new to the country. Everything strange around me, and stuff like that, and then I see in high school, I see how we've been pushed around by different nationality.

MK: High school? In Waipahu High School?

NT: Yeah. We used baseball bats.

MK: What do you mean?

NT: We used baseball bats to protect ourselves against the different ethnic.

MK: You, yourself?

NT: Ah, well no, my brother did.

MK: Your brother?

NT: Yeah.

MK: He went to Waipahu.

NT: We all went to Waipahu High School.

MK: He had to carry a bat?

NT: He don't have to carry a bat. He know how to punch but his friends they carry bat.

MK: Who were pushing them around? The other ethnic groups?

NT: Other ethnic groups...

MK: Because...they are...

NT: Because we are the minority. This other ethnic, they bully the Filipinos because they small. They take away their lunch.

MK: The lunch?

NT: Yeah. Money lunch.

MK: Money lunch, the baon. [money allowance]

NT: Oo. [Yes] And then they end up with nothing.

MK: But you yourself did not experience...

NT: No, because...

MK: Others did not beat you up or bully you?

NT: No, because I the kind of type that I go to school because to study. So I stay in one tree, reading my assignment, because at home I cannot do my assignment.

MK: Bakit? [Why?]

NT: Because I get too much to do.

MK: Ah, so you stay under a tree and you work there.

NT: Yeah, I keep on working and do my homework.

MK: Were there teachers there who encouraged you at Waipahu High School? Nice to you, who were good to you? Or not good to you? [laughter] In general...

NT: Well, they're so-so, stuff like that. I get two teachers kind of new, yeah, maybe she mean well...

MK: What do you mean?

NT: She very strict.

MK: To everyone?

NT: Huh?

MK: Not just to you, to everyone?

NT: No! To me! Because my hand no like move.

MK: Huh?

NT: Everything strange to me. That's my first high school, right?

MK: Uh-huh.

NT: OK, yeah, my hand no like move and everybody tok-tok-tok...

MK: Oh, for the typing.

NT: Yeah. [laughter] I don't know what to do. I did I get licking.

MK: Huh? What do you mean?

NT: Yeah, the stick, the ruler. [laughs] In my hand.

MK: Hmm.



NT: Yeah.

MK: So what did you do?

NT: What can I...[laughs] I try to obey. But my hand no like move.

MK: Oh...oh...

NT: Yeah. And they're all advanced. From Philippines, I go high school right away and everybody is way advanced than me. So what? You froze.

MK: So, did somebody help you? Or you just survived on your own?

NT: I just try survive. Because who will help me?

MK: Friends.

NT: I no more friends. I'm stranger to them.

MK: Hmm. Hard.

NT: Yeah.

MK: So, anything else you did as an activist during this period? Joined the rally, helped Dr. Choy, served coffee...but how did you do that? You were a student, you were taking care of the house, brothers and sisters, and then community? Time?

NT: I guess do whatever, manage my time. I sit down and think, think, "How can I manage my time?" When I get up I do this, I do that.

MK: I forgot you had to work, too, for money.

NT: Uh-huh.

MK: Where did you work?

NT: I...remember I have that sickness [allergy]...

MK: Yeah.

NT: Then I become a dishwasher.

MK: This is 1973 already?

NT: No, 1972.

MK: OK. Dishwasher, where?

NT: In Wailani Inn, restaurant owned by Major Okada who helped us a lot in the struggle. He contacted Mayor Fasi about our problem. During events, he looked for places to get free food for events. He was a good man. So, Mayor Fasi provided the land, and Governor Ariyoshi able to help us fund the houses here in Makibaka Village.

MK: Where is Wailani Inn?

NT: You know the 7-Eleven now, by the bridge right across...over there.

MK: How much, how many hours did you put in a week?

NT: Oh, eight hours. I start 3 o'clock afternoon and I finish 2 o'clock in the morning.

MK: Hah? My goodness.

NT: Yeah.

MK: And you were paid how much an hour?

NT: Dollar something an hour. [laughs] But the kine before...

MK: Yeah, you can buy a lot.

NT: That's how I learn how to work in restaurant, serve customer...because I accept any kind of job. I'm not picky. And then eventually...

MK: And you had to get up, you're a student, too.

NT: Yeah, that's why I hardly get friends.

MK: Yeah, no time.

NT: No, not no time. You know, why should I waste my time being friends that I have plenty work to do? I gotta do my homework...

MK: So, how long did you work there? Dollar something a hour?

NT: Dollar twenty five, I think. Plus I get tips, yeah?

MK: Tips is the one.

NT: Yeah, I get tips at the end of the shift. Depends on how busy the restaurant. Because the waitress, when they get tips, they put in the kitchen. I get 10

dollars, you know, that's good for me already. Ten dollar or 20 dollar a night.

MK: How many months were you there in the Wailani Inn?

NT: Long time.

MK: Long time - one year?

NT: About there.

MK: Oh. And then?

NT: And then at the same time I worked for Maruyasu saimin stand?

MK: Where is that?

NT: Near what is now a market place

MK: How much did you get for that an hour?

NT: She give me \$1.50 an hour, plus tip.

MK: And you worked eight hours still, a day?

NT: No, not eight hours. Only so many hours and then I go to Wailani Inn.

MK: In addition to Wailani Inn? Wow...

NT: Yeah. I only work there when I no more school. She only needed help from six o'clock in the morning until two o'clock afternoon. And then go to Wailani Inn at three o'clock until dawn.

MK: How did you get these jobs? By your own or through a friend?

NT: No, Maruyasu one...Sally [Tagalog] went introduce me.

MK: And the other one?

NT: The other one, Wailani Inn, I think it's Gloria Tagalog.

MK: Who is Gloria Tagalog?

NT: Pete's sister-in-law.

MK: Wife of Candy [Candido]

NT: Yeah. Because Gloria is also working in Country Inn.

MK: So, it's important, isn't it, that friends introduced you...

NT: Oh yes, they are neighbors.

MK: So, you were active, first phase of the struggle?

NT: Yeah. First phase and second phase.

MK: Second phase, when you moved here [Makibaka Village], how did you move? As a family?

NT: From Ota Camp to here, when we moved...[cries]

MK: Umiiyak ka na. [You are crying]

NT: Sorry. [laughter]

MK: Heartache? This is where...OK.

NT: Everybody against me.

MK: Who is everybody?

NT: My family.

MK: Your grandfather, Dad, brothers and sisters?

NT: Yeah.

MK: Why were they against you?

NT: Because they listen to him [Dad], listen to the wife [stepmother]. They said, "Why take my word, we're not completely win yet." "So," I said, "if you guys don't move, I move." So the only one that we move is my youngest brother and my youngest sister.

MK: You mean they want to stay there? [old Ota Camp]

NT: They become opposite. They don't want to move. They don't believe that we moving in. Because, see, they against the struggle from the beginning. That's the reason why I work hard for the struggle because my family don't.

MK: Even when it's very clear?

NT: Yeah. It's very clear but get plenty negative stuff.

MK: Still.

NT: Still yet. Because before we're moving in, we assign the house for everybody. OK, the Steering Committee

give me extra house for them to stay in, which is this house [current house of Nora and Pete].

MK: You mean, for the family? So you were given two houses?

NT: The Steering Committee give me two: one for me, and my brothers and sisters, including my grandfather. And for him.

MK: Who is him?

NT: My father. My own father and my stepmother.

MK: But he was living outside Ota Camp? Why was he given? Because you were in Steering Committee? Because he was not living in the old Ota Camp.

NT: Yeah. He was not living, but I'm the daughter.

MK: You are entitled?

NT: Yeah. Because he asking for a place. I don't know what get my stepmother, quick, he married my father and demand a place. Then time for move in, they got too much, and, plus, they cannot wait for them to move in here. Instead of moving in here, they kick me out of the other house.

MK: You mean, the house already, in Makibaka Village?

NT: Yeah. The house for them ready but still questionable. The people living in the house not responsible, meaning, if they asked to leave, then my father and stepmother can move in. Instead of waiting, they move in into my four-bedroom house that only me, my youngest sister and youngest brother that help move all things inside. OK? My grandfather, I thought he was faithful to me, and my brothers and sisters, they all gone together with my stepmother. I become the black sheep. I come home from work...

MK: Including your younger brother and youngest sister.

NT: Including my younger brother and sister.

MK: They got brainwashed?

NT: Yeah, that's why I hurt. I really hurt because they grow up with me. You know what I mean, they grow up with me, they struggle with me and just one stranger and...they go against me.

- MK: And your grandfather, too.
- NT: Yeah.
- MK: So you came home and...
- NT: All my things outside. They kick me out.
- MK: So, what did you do?
- NT: I cannot enter the house. So what I did, I tell Pete and then make a meeting.
- MK: In the Steering Committee.
- NT: In the Steering Committee and then they help me, the old folks, the single men - Siano, Isyong and Pate.
- MK: They helped?
- NT: Yeah, they carry my stuff to the single men's home. I slept one night in the sala of Pete's house
- MK: Hmm. And the single men, they had their own house, they were sharing?
- NT: Yes, they were sharing. There were two houses for single men, six of them.
- MK: In this Makibaka Village?
- NT: Uh-huh. The single house is where Darrel Tagalog used to live, over there...that's where Pate, Siano, and...they had their own bedroom.
- MK: They were nice to you.
- NT: Uh-huh.
- MK: What happened to that house assigned to you?
- NT: They lose it because they don't pay rents; they don't do their responsibility.
- MK: OK, so, let's move on, Nora. You came here and then, that's actually the second phase, isn't it, of the struggle. So, did you stay with the Steering Committee?
- NT: Yes. I still work in the Steering Committee. I still work treasurer.
- MK: Treasurer. OK. So what did you do as treasurer?

- NT: Keeping books, keeping track, and stuff like that. Same thing, I have still a busy schedule.
- MK: What do you mean by keeping books? Did you collect money from everyone for the rent?
- NT: Yeah. They pay the rent to me, and then I gave that to developer, to Ujimori.
- MK: So did you take receipts for that?
- NT: Yeah.
- MK: You still have the records with you?
- NT: No, they take out, they take them. They accuse me of not doing good record but...
- MK: Who took it out?
- NT: John Moore.
- MK: And so...
- NT: John became treasurer, but he make a big controversy and even blamed Pete. And Pete, too, that's why I tell Pete sometime, "Do not sign blank check." But he trust. "I'm not the treasurer, do not sign blank check. I'm not the treasurer anymore." No, he continued; he showing that he trust them, yeah?
- MK: Uh-huh.
- NT: He continued signing blank checks and not just one, plenty checks had to sign. And you know what, turn around, he the one big crook. He got blamed that taking so much money in the account. But actually he not; he not taking even one penny.
- MK: Yeah.
- NT: And yet this guy, the treasurer, got paid. I jealous. I'm not getting paid, you know; they don't even spend one penny. And, yet, I am the only one working. Providing for my family, that my family can eat three times a day. And, yet, they had money, they get all the time.
- MK: So these things are happening before...
- NT: In the second phase.
- MK: Before '84...'85?

NT: No, no, after.

MK: Because '84, '85...

NT: I still the treasurer.

MK: Because that's when you sort of had that big demonstration, too, isn't it?

NT: Yeah.

MK: So these things that you are mentioning...in the '90s?

NT: In the '90s.

MK: But that article [MK shows copy of article by Gregory Y. K. Pang, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 15 April 2001], this one, 2001, this is when you succeeded.

NT: Yeah, and we bought the land.

MK: The land. And it said there that the treasurer was Stefan Ibarra who straightened out the accounts.

NT: Yeah, that's after John Moore. He is after John.

MK: So he organized the money...

NT: He got hard time.

MK: He did it, huh?

NT: He did it though.

MK: Because it says here [in the article] that Ota Camp did well because the money was collected, and it was all in order.

NT: Yeah.

MK: So it was difficult.

NT: It was really difficult.

MK: So, describe the community here. Was it different after the struggle? From '75 to '84 you're still preparing.

NT: Still close, and then '85 to '87 still close, and that's when finalize the land, and then the ownership. And then from the '87 to the '90's - that's when we divide.

MK: Individual.



NT: Yeah, we call that "condominium." And then from that time on until now, big changes.

MK: From the 1990s to the present?

NT: Yeah.

MK: What kind of changes? What do you notice?

NT: I notice now people getting hard head.

MK: Meaning?

NT: They park any place, just like don't care about another person. They block way and stuff like that. Only certain people can you go eye to eye. Not like before, you just walk, you know.

MK: No more get-togethers as a community?

NT: No more. We no more celebration like, you know, celebrate the victory. We choose to celebrate the victory in March. The reason we choose March because that's the first demonstration we had.

MK: Ah...alright.

NT: And where everybody get into...you know, doubting each other...into appreciate that we accomplished something.

MK: Yeah!

NT: And then that is erased.

MK: You don't have that anymore.

NT: We don't have anymore.

MK: Did you have it for a long time, like until 1984, '85? Yearly celebrations?

NT: Yeah.

MK: And then it disappeared after that?

NT: Yeah and we also have, you know, we used to have every year collection to celebrate Christmas.

MK: Oh, Christmas, you had Christmas celebration for the community.

NT: Yeah.

MK: Where did you hold it?

NT: Johnny and De la Cruz's parking lot. Joined together, they are big space. So we usually do it over there.

MK: The whole community.

NT: The whole community. Get together, have potluck.

MK: Potluck.

NT: Yeah, but donations we use for buy gifts for the kids and stuff like that. Mainly for the kids so that they have that enjoyment. And for adult enjoyment, we just play any kind games.

MK: Fun, huh?

NT: Yeah. Exchange gift, that's it. Mainly for the kids.

MK: So why do you think it disappeared - the community spirit?

NT: Community spirit is not there anymore.

MK: Why?

NT: Uh, I guess...because...

MK: It happens, you know, in other areas, too.

NT: I know. I guess because of the leadership? Yeah. The leadership is not there anymore. The thinking is now different from we used to have, you know, more now on themselves, yeah?

MK: Uh-huh. Because one of the things that you fought for was to keep the rural style of living together.

NT: Uh-huh.

MK: That was the lifestyle. So the lifestyle now seems different from, from...

NT: From way before.

MK: From way before and even when you moved here, the first part, at least you were trying to keep the lifestyle. But it seems now that lifestyle is disappearing.

NT: Disappearing.

MK: Everyone is on his own.

NT: Uh-huh. (long pause)

MK: [switchings topic] So, is Dombrique, is it Manang Pacing or Precing?

NT: Precing.

MK: Precing. P - r - e - c - i - n - g.

NT: Her real name is Eufrocena.

MK: OK. So, I think we're OK. Thank you very much, Nora.

NT: You are welcome.

[End of Interview]