33. Luis, "The Last Mass Migration." Several correspondence in the ILWU collection describe the recruitment efforts on board the ships and the '46 Sakadas I have interviewed on O'ahu, Kaua'i and Maui all verify the ILWU organizing activities during their voyage to Hawai'i.

34. Andres Salvador, "Kauai's 1946 Immigrants," in Hawaii Filipino News, *Filipinos in Hawaii, 49.*

35. San Buenaventura, "Hawaii's Filipinos," 38.

Sakada Dreams: A Portrait of My Father

P. de Los Santos

His frail, skinny body was riddled with black and purple splotches, and he labored heavily to extract every bit of oxygen from each breath that he took in. Yet throughout that summer Sunday in July he always managed to smile and say thanks to the many friends and relatives who came to see him and pay their final visit. After everyone went home and my mother fell asleep on the living room couch, I went to him to wish him a good night and sweet dreams. His eyes were half open, and he saw me but he could not speak. I tried to say I love him, but he closed his eyes and took his final breath in my arms. He died with a faint smile on his face, and as I cried I wondered with great sadness if his life would have been much more different if he had stayed in the Philippines instead of coming to Hawai'i. I also wondered what his dreams were and if he had accomplished them before leaving this earth. My father led a simple life, one which reminds me of being similar to that of Celestino Fabia, a character in Bienvenido Santos' short story, *Scent of Apples.*

In his introduction of Santos' book, *Scent of Apples: A Collection of Stories*, Leonard Casper identified a "recurring theme" of the Filipino author's works—a theme which delves in the importance and the difficulty of being "Filipino at heart" through the practice and maintenance of an individual's cultural values away from his homeland. This theme is portrayed by Santos' main characters, expatriate Filipino men leading lonely lives away from their mother country. Casper duly noted at the end of his introduction that the dream of most Filipino expatriates in Santos' stories is to return to the Philippines. Perhaps it was an unfulfilled dream that my father held before his death.

My father was born Nemesio de Los Santos in 1924 in Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. He shared the same birth date as Abraham Lincoln. But unlike Lincoln, he did not get a chance to lead his country, or even to die in his own country. He was the second oldest of eight children, three of whom died in their youth due to illness. He was a rebellious and stubborn youngster who was sent to live with relatives in Manila at an early age. He returned to Santa Maria as a teenager and fought to save his family and land against the Japanese in World War II. He grew up to be a strapping young man with strong convictions and a fiery temperament, and although he had a limited education he was quite proud of his physical strength and his self-reliant ways.

After the Japanese surrender and the end of World War II, my father met an old friend who had returned to the Philippines after working and earning a lot of money in Hawai'i. Benito Cordero was a "Hawayano" who had grown up in nearby Narvacan, and he impressed my father with his fancy clothes and the stories of working and living in the beautiful islands of Hawai'i. My father was enchanted by his friend's stories and asked him how he could also visit and work in this strange and wonderful place. Benito told him, "There are Americans recruiting workers for the sugar plantations. But you must make your hands rough and soiled to prove to them that you are a hard worker."

He disdained that and believed that he did not have to do this because he was already working hard on his family farm. But since the war's end it was becoming increasingly difficult for Filipino families to hold on to their own land, much less to tend their crops for bountiful harvests. His prospects for owning his own farm were very dim.

And so without hesitation he left his native land in 1946. At the age of twenty-two, he decided it was best for him and his family to earn enough money and then return home to pay off his family's debts and retain their farm. His voyage along with the many others who took that trip became a part of the last large wave of Filipino laborers recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) to work on the sugar plantations of Hawai'i. They were called "sakada."

They traveled by ship, and many who were unaccustomed to this means of travel became very ill. My father survived without getting sick, despite the long and arduous trip and unsanitary conditions. He was young and strong and eager to earn a lot of money and live the kind of life like his friend, Benito Cordero. When he arrived in Hawai'i he was amazed by what he saw as the beauty of O'ahu and, in particular, the lasting impression of Honolulu harbor's Aloha Tower. The climate was similar to the Philippines, and he was surprised by the different races of people milling around and working at dockside.

He told me once how he remembered the scene. "There were many pretty girls who danced for tourists and young boys who dove for the coins that the tourists threw from the cruise ships." He thought that life in this new land was going to be exactly as how his friend had described.

After disembarking from his ship, he and the other Filipinos gathered at the dockside, and each was given papers by the plantation representatives. They told him that he would be working for the Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar (HC&S) plantation at Pu'unene Mill on the island of Maui. He did not know anything about this other island, but if it was like the scene at Honolulu harbor, he thought he would not mind. However, when he reached Maui his hopes were dashed. Maui looked very quiet and almost similar to some of the less populated islands in the Philippines.

In his first months on this island called Maui, my father felt betrayed and lied to by his friend, Benito. Instead of high living, fancy clothes and meeting beautiful girls, he lived a spartan life and worked in an environment that resembled indentured servitude. Besides working long, tedious hours from sunup to sundown, he also had to deal with the alienation from workers of different ethnic groups and those merciless *luna*, or field supervisors.

As Ron Takaki pointed out in his book about plantation life, *Pau Hana,* many of the Filipino labor recruits who came to this "land of glory" to earn their wealth and return triumphantly to their loved ones in the Philippines had originally planned to stay in Hawai'i on a temporary basis. With the harsh working conditions and the bleak prospect of empty, friendless times, many of the Filipino recruits, including my father, wanted to go back to their beloved homeland and never return to Hawai'i.

But as the months passed, my father grew close to those men who had traveled with him from the Philippines, and he considered them his family away from home. (Later I learned that some men whom I had called "Uncle" and "Apo" were not related to me by blood but by a bond of friendship with my father borne out of loneliness and adversity.) Many of his co-workers shared the same anguish and frustration of working in harsh conditions. He was eventually befriended by other workers of different ethnicity, who respected his hard work and integrity.

Despite his limited education, he had learned enough English to get by in simple conversations. He was called "Mishong" by his Filipino friends, and "Dela Santos" by others who found his name awkward to pronounce. Through his new relationships, he learned new words like *pololei, hole-hole, hapai, kompang,* and *pilikia* to add to his vocabulary. He did not know it at that time, but my father 's linguistic bond with his growing circle of friends who spoke "Hawaiian plantation pidgin" would draw him into volunteer work as an organizer for the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). My father thrived in his new responsibilities at work and his growing acceptance into the local community. But something was missing from his life.

Since the majority of Filipino workers were bachelors and since there was a dearth of available young Filipinas, my father, like many of the single Filipino men in the plantation camp of Keahua, sought the company of other young women at community social events. He began to date "local" born women and developed an affinity for the young, fair skinned Portuguese girls who were the daughters of the plantation lunas. But in his heart he, like the character Celestino Fabia in *Scent of Apples*, yearned for the love of a Filipino woman.

In the early 1950s he ran into his friend Benito Cordero who was visiting Maui to attend the annual county fair. My father had prospered after struggling through his early years in Hawai'i, but he had not forgotten his hardship with plantation life in the beginning. Benito apologized and told him that he was planning a trip back to the Philippines to visit his family. He invited my father and asked him if he was still single and if he was interested in meeting his younger sister who still lived in the Philippines. My father sensed that this was his opportunity to meet and find a Filipina to be his wife. He also wrestled with the idea of moving back to the Philippines or remaining in Hawai'i and continue working for the plantation. He did not take long to make up his mind. He would return to the Philippines and bring a wife back with him to Hawai'i.

On his return to the land of his birth, Nemesio de Los Santos looked every bit the description of a Hawayano. He wore fancy, new clothes and shoes and dark sunglasses just like the movie stars he saw on the film screen at the Princess Theatre in Pa'ia, Maui. Although he did not keep in constant contact with his family, they were nevertheless happy to see him bearing monetary gifts and displaying his new fortune.

He was happy to see his family but he had something else on his mind—Filomena Cordero. She was the only sister among Benito Cordero's siblings, and she was their father's favorite child. Benito told Mishong that many suitors were treated rudely by his overprotective father, Mariano Cordero, the family patriarch. He and his brothers were subjected to beatings if Filomena was mistreated by them or anyone else. One of Benito's favorite stories was that of a beating which he had received from his father for letting a young suitor get too close with his younger sister. Benito chased the young man away from the Cordero farm only to encounter the young man's friends. The story ended with Benito administering a beating to every one of them. But my father was not very impressed by the story of a friend who had earlier told him of the promise of earning lots of easy money in Hawai'i.

Before Mishong finally met Filomena he had to receive the approval of Apo Mariano and prove to him and his sons that he was a suitable gentleman and

prospective husband. But the Cordero family was not willing to let this brash, young Hawayano take Filomena as his bride. They told him to bring live chickens for slaughter one day and a live pig the next day. The Cordero clan took his offerings and feasted without him, making him wait outside the family compound and promising that young Filomena would pay him a visit, but always offering an excuse at the end of the day when she did not come outside to see him.

This went on for several days, and Mishong became disgusted with all the money and effort he was wasting to win the favor of his future in-laws. He angrily decided to return to Hawai'i and find a wife elsewhere. But Benito, who had been visiting friends in the countryside and was not a party to his family's devious tricks, returned and admonished his father and siblings. He eventually reconciled Mishong with the Cordero clan and when my father finally met my mother, Filomena, he was not disappointed.

She had long, dark hair and soft brown eyes that gazed above high cheekbones. Her complexion was very fair because her father forbade her to work in the hot sun and relegated her to more feminine chores like cooking and sewing. During the war she was hidden in large rice baskets to keep her safe from Japanese soldiers. At twenty-three years of age, when most of her female friends were taking care of their third or fourth child, Filomena was still a virgin because of an overprotective father and her four rambunctious brothers. After a tenuous courtship, they were married in December 1953. But since he was not a U.S. citizen he could not bring his new bride back to Hawai'i. He returned to Hawai'i with mixed emotions. He was happy to be married to a beautiful young woman, but felt increasingly despondent because they were an ocean apart from each other.

When Mishong returned to Hawai'i in January 1954 the Democratic party began to establish itself as a dominant political force which received full backing by the ILWU. To get his mind off of his worries for his new bride, Mishong joined the Democratic party and volunteered his help in the party's political campaigns. It was an exciting time in Hawai'i, especially for the immigrant laborers because, with the emergence of the Democratic Party in Hawai'i government and the impending admission of Hawai'i as part of the United States of America, it seemed inevitable that there would be certain economic, educational, and social opportunities available for everyone.

In 1957, after four years of petitioning the U.S. Immigration Offices in San Francisco and in Honolulu, Mishong and Filomena were finally united. Like her husband before her, Filomena struggled to assimilate into the local community.

Reticent at first because of her limited English speaking skills and her education that only reached the sixth grade, Filomena quickly made new friends with her sewing skills and by quickly acquiring the vernacular of the plantation camp—pidgin English.

The newly united couple eagerly started their family with the birth of my older brother, Danilo, who was born in December 1958. I followed him in February 1960, just seven months after Hawai'i became the fiftieth state in the Union. My parents wanted a traditionally large Filipino family but abandoned that tradition when my mother miscarried twice after I was born. Although their family plans were not going as well as expected, their dream of owning a home in Hawai'i was soon to be fulfilled.

The promise of opportunity and prosperity that was proclaimed by the emerging Democrats of the 1950s came true for my father and mother as they were able to purchase their own home outside of the plantation camp. Our family home was purchased in a subdivision unofficially known as "Dream City," an area of barren sand dunes which previously served as a landfill for the plantation. Homes were sold to plantation workers at low but reasonable prices, and the subdivision name implied the realization of workers' "dreams" to own their own home.

Along with statehood came the new and promising industry of tourism. Just like O'ahu and its mushrooming skyline of condos and hotels in Waikiki and Honolulu, the island of Maui and especially the sakadas who chose to settle in Hawai'i were poised to reap its economic rewards.

The new prosperity did not come without a price for many of the sakadas. Many of those who stayed in Hawai'i felt torn between their allegiance to their beloved Philippines and to their adopted home in "paradise." Many left the sugar plantation to work in tourism, the "new plantation."

In the mid 1960s the passage of the new Immigration Act would reunite family members with their loved ones and bring yet another wave of immigrants to the shores of Hawai'i. It would become an awkward time for my father who enjoyed the mystique of being a Hawayano, and like the term his mystique became obsolete. He would petition for his youngest brother and sister to join him in establishing new lives in Hawai'i.

My mother outdid him by bringing my Apo Mariano and all of her brothers, despite the weak objections of her husband. And as they arrived and swelled in number, both sides of the family were almost totally reunited. But Apo Mariano

did not want to stay in Hawai'i and did not want to die here. Besides leaving two-thirds of his family back in Hawai'i, he left behind an extremely sad daughter and a very relieved son-in-law.

My father had become so enamored with his new life in Hawai'i that he truly wished to become a citizen of the United States. With the fortune of having his two sons born in Hawai'i with U.S. citizenship, he enrolled my mother and himself in adult school and they studied for the U.S. citizenship exams. In 1966, he and my mother passed the exams and became naturalized citizens of the United States of America. Life was good to my parents in the mid 1960s, so good that he sent my mother, my brother, and me to the Philippines to visit the rest of our families there. He had not been back since he married my mom fifteen years earlier, and he wanted to be sure that his family there would get a chance to meet his young sons.

When we came back after that trip my father began to change; he seemed worried about a lot of things. He argued a lot with my mother. Then one day he stopped going to work. He and his friends from work gathered in our garage and started painting signs and drank a lot of beer. All they talked about was better wages and benefits. I had learned early in life what a strike or work stoppage can do to a family. In our home there was an unspoken urgency to get our lives back on track, especially for the sake of our family's financial security.

For weeks we could not go shopping as much as we wanted. We went to the union hall where we took our pots and pans and came home with food like spaghetti and chili, the kind of food we would only eat at school. My brother and I had to come home early from school so that we could help my father load signs in the car and bring them down to the sugar mill where his co-workers waited. And when it was over, we were glad that my father was back at work because he always seemed happy whenever he was working.

My parents worked hard and saved money to send my brother and me to private (Catholic) schools. And to teach us that we needed to work hard they arranged for us to deliver newspapers in the morning and afternoon. The extra income that my brother and I earned helped pay for our education, but more importantly it taught the two of us the value of a good work ethic. For that, and also for my education I am extremely grateful to my parents.

In the 1970s my father nearly lost his life in a car accident. He never was the same person afterwards. His once powerful body quickly deteriorated. When he retired, the company that he had worked for nearly 40 years gave him a gold watch and plaque for his four decades of service. Four years later he died.

It was during his funeral that I realized how much of my culture I had suppressed in order to adapt, assimilate, and be accepted into the local Hawai'i society. Now that he was gone, I realized how much I had denied myself of my own heritage. I can only cast regrets that I did not realize this much sooner.

I was his youngest son and the first in his family to earn a degree from a university. And although he was very ill in the last months of his life and unable to see me march at my commencement ceremony, I know he was very proud and happy of what I had accomplished through him. But I never had the chance to share my experiences with him. I never had the chance to ask him if he felt happy or sad, content, or satisfied with his life in Hawai'i. I guess I never will know.

Sometimes when I visit downtown Honolulu to go shopping for vegetables in Chinatown and to visit my favorite Filipino food stand, I see these old Filipino men who seem to be the same age as my father, if he was still alive. And I think of my father, Nemesio de Los Santos, and of Bienvenido Santos and Celestino Fabia, and I wonder if our dreams really come true.

From American-Filipino to Filipino-American

Leonard Y. Andaya

Since my youth in the 1950s a noticeable change in emphasis has occurred in the role of ethnicity in the formulation of an American identity. The goal then was to become assimilated, to become an American as defined by the education system and the media. While one's ethnic background was acknowledged, it was simply to provide evidence of the hybrid vigor of America's racial/ethnic melting pot. Ethnic differences were to be thrown into the crucible and melded to form the American. Nevertheless, each American could proudly claim his or her unique identification with a specific ethnic group. The cult of the hyphenated American — the American-Italians, American-Irish, American-Greeks, American-Filipinos — became celebrated in the popular *Reader's Digest*, one of the most widely-read magazines in America in the 1950s. It and *Life Magazine* helped create the image of the American through guidelines and inspirational models captured in word and picture.

Today the emphasis has shifted with ethnicity being regarded as the dominant aspect in the forging of an American identity. America as reinterpreted is now simply the home of the diasporic groups from Italy, Ireland, Greece, or the Philippines, and the people are now Italian-American, Irish-American, Greek-American, Filipino-American, and even the curious hybrid, the Asian-American. It is the homeland which has become the true fount of identity, and the diaspora a source of enrichment of the original culture. Although this reorientation has been comforting to the new immigrants to the United States, it has introduced new problems for generations of Americans who have only a vague memory or understanding of the homelands from which their parents or forefathers came. The situation of Filipinos in Hawai'i is an interesting case in point because it highlights some of the implications of this shift.

Growing up Filipino in a Plantation Village

I was born during wartime in a sugar plantation village in Spreckelsville on the island of Maui. Spreckelsville consisted of three camps, all known by numbers rather than name. My family lived in Camp 2 which had some fifty houses, approximately half occupied by Japanese, four by Okinawans, and the remainder by Filipino "bachelors," many of whom had left wives and children behind in the Philippines. "Filipino" at that time meant simply "Ilocano" or "Visayan." Tagalogs for me were those people whom I saw on the screen every