

The Kale Langlas Hawai'i Island Oral History Archive

5 Main Projects Archived

- Kalapana Oral History Project (1987-1990 +)
- Kohala NEXRAD Project (1993-1994)
- Saddle Road Improvement Project (1996)
- Native Use of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Project (1996-2000)
- 'Opihikao-Pohoiki Oral History Project (2000-2001)

Kalapana Oral History Project

James Ahia (b. 1913)



James Ahia

When you think, living those days, everybody was all alike. And then I remember when going down the beach. Saturday's mostly beach day. Go there all the time and you go there. Just get the 'opihi, just enough for Saturday and Sunday, that's all. And then you go home. And leave the rest for the next one. And then the next week come, you went there and you still have, cause you only taking the big ones, leave the small ones. Even the limu, everything. You take what you need and then... Like 'opihi, we don't have refrigerator, just the only thing is salt, eh? So 'opihi, leave em too long salty is not good, eh? All dark. So just take enough.

Then when used to go for 'ōpelu. I remember my young days. Then, right where we used to live, the bushes, the trees wasn't high, like now. Cause the animals go all roaming around--the place is cleaned, see? So. In the morning you, others like Helen Lee Hong and all that, they all waiting for the canoe come in. So we wait and...well, way off we saw. If the canoe is just steady, as means they get lot of 'ōpelu. So we wait, and then get the 'ōpelu, take em to the Chinese store in Kalapana. And then one 'ōpelu, you get one saloon cracker. That's our lunch. And then when you leave [for school], father them, they coming home with the 'ōpelu and all that. You go school and come back, the 'ōpelu is not cleaned yet. They still workin on the 'ōpelu. And then, like there the community, they got about four or five canoe going out. Then when they come back, they share the 'ōpelu. Give em all to the community. Anybody that's on the sand...they share.

They go daytime, come back with 'ōpelu. And then they getting ready for go night-time, for mempachi. They call em 'ū'ū. Or kawele'ā

And then, when the weather is all good, they all try to get all the fish they can. They salt em up. They dry em. And then when the ocean's rough, they all go up the mountain, my father and them. They used to get one shack. They stay there. And then they clean the taro patch and plant taro and all that. So they no idle time. And right down in Kaimū, they raise sweet potato. So we used to take care a that kind when was small kid.



James Ahia

JA: You know when I think back, that was a good life. Everybody was the same.

CL: Everybody had equal...

JA: Equal, yeah, clothing and all, we all the same.



Kalapana Oral History Project
Emma Kapūnohu Konanui Kauhi
(b. 1916)



Konanui family cluster in Kapa‘ahu

Kaipo Kaawaloa & Aunty Luika	Mokuhalii Konanui & Aunty Kuliana	Grandmother & Emma	Oulu Konanui & Aunty Kanoë
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Emma Kauhi

EK: Mainly seafood. Mainly anything from the ocean. Also the pa‘akai [salt], which was very important. Now, the wild pig... when someone went hunting, wild goat—that was always shared. Like the hunters were usually Uncle Oulu and Uncle Kaipo, and my cousins. And when they had, they always shared it.

CL: What about if somebody went pole-fishing and got moi or ulua? Would that be shared?

EK: It depends, if the catch was plentiful. If the catch was plentiful it was spread out more, you know. But if it wasn't plentiful... We have to also remember that when they went fishing, it was just usually fish enough to eat for a day or two. And sometimes I recall when the men went fishing—like say Uncle Kaipo when he went thrownet and the moi—what they call *kau ka moi*, the moi was plentiful, there was a whole school. Maybe he made one or two throws, he had a whole lotta fish. And this is the fish that he spread it out to everybody. But if he went to fish, you know just enough for his family, well, there, that was it. Because it seems like almost everybody fished, almost everybody went to the beach. So, the fishing part is shared when someone catches something way over the amount. Then they share. Now, as far as the meat is concerned—wild pork, wild goat—not everybody went hunting and that was something that was usually shared.

CL: So, I guess if you went for ‘opihi or limu, probably you just go for yourself. 🗣️

EK: Yes. And the other thing was, of course, they know by the weather, the stars, whatever, the sign. “Oh, the weather is gonna be good these few days.” So Auntie Kuliana talks to Auntie Kanoe, Auntie Kanoe talks to Auntie Luika and, you know, there's a whole bunch of women that would go down. And we children would go along. So, I don't know, it seems to be like, it was more fun I think for the ladies, you know, three, four, five of them from each household going to get ‘opihi

Emma Kauhi

But, I think in certain circumstance where... Let's say Uncle Mokuhalii and his family were going to the mountain to *mahi'ai* [farm] and so the *kai* [ocean] was good, but only Mama and Auntie Luika went to the beach. And when they came home and we cleaned the 'opihi and everything, and then, maybe Auntie Luika would say, "*Lawe i pā 'ōpihi na 'Anakala mā.*" They were living right next door. "Take a dish." Cause Uncle Mokuhalii folks had gone to the mountain. But, it was that usual form, "*Lawe i pā 'ōpihi.*" And like Mom, well, we raised pigs. And mom was a great one. Gee, she was very hospitable, she was a good hostess. Whenever people came, *malihini*, she would tell my cousins to go and catch. Go in the back and, "*Moe, moe, moe.*" Call the pigs, and the pig come running. Then she put a little food in the trough. Then she lock the gates, she go around. And the pigs are all eating, right? She go and she look, and then she catches em by the legs, you know, depending on the size, whatever. And then she'd call my cousin, "Come on. *Eia mai ka pu'a.*" And he takes it and cleans it. And then, like when, if you had company, then the pig would be kalua'd and it was always... Well, if we had an early meal, like say a late lunch, we had company and we had kalua pig, after we ate, mom would always get these... *Lawe kēia pā pua'a na 'Anakala Mokuhalii mā. Lawe kēia pā pua'a na Auntie Luika mā. Kēia na mea na mea.* And my cousins, they were the runners, you know, with this plate of pua'a all covered up, and they go deliver it. But, if it was an occasion, then she would say while the *pu'a* is still in the *imu*, "*Hele 'ōlelo iā 'Anakala mā, iā Auntie mā, hele mai e 'ai kēia ahiahi, 'ai ana i ka hola 'eono.* Whatever. It was that way, they'd be invited. And if people came to eat, and if there was plenty, the customary thing was, you go home with something. You go home with a plate. It was always customary, always, the way they did down there.



Native Hawaiian Use of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Project

Robert Keliioomalu (b. 1939)




Robert Keliihoomalu

As I was raising my children we make ends meet by going fishing. And we usually plan to go into Apua, Kealakomo, all in that area. Well what we do is, we get our animal ready, before Friday. Because Friday is the last day of working, working construction at that time. So, after working construction we have all our things ready. What we do is take it all the way down to the end of the road down here and saddle up and by the time we leave the road, it's just about dark. So we saddle up and in we go. Usually my cousin and I, or else with my brothers.

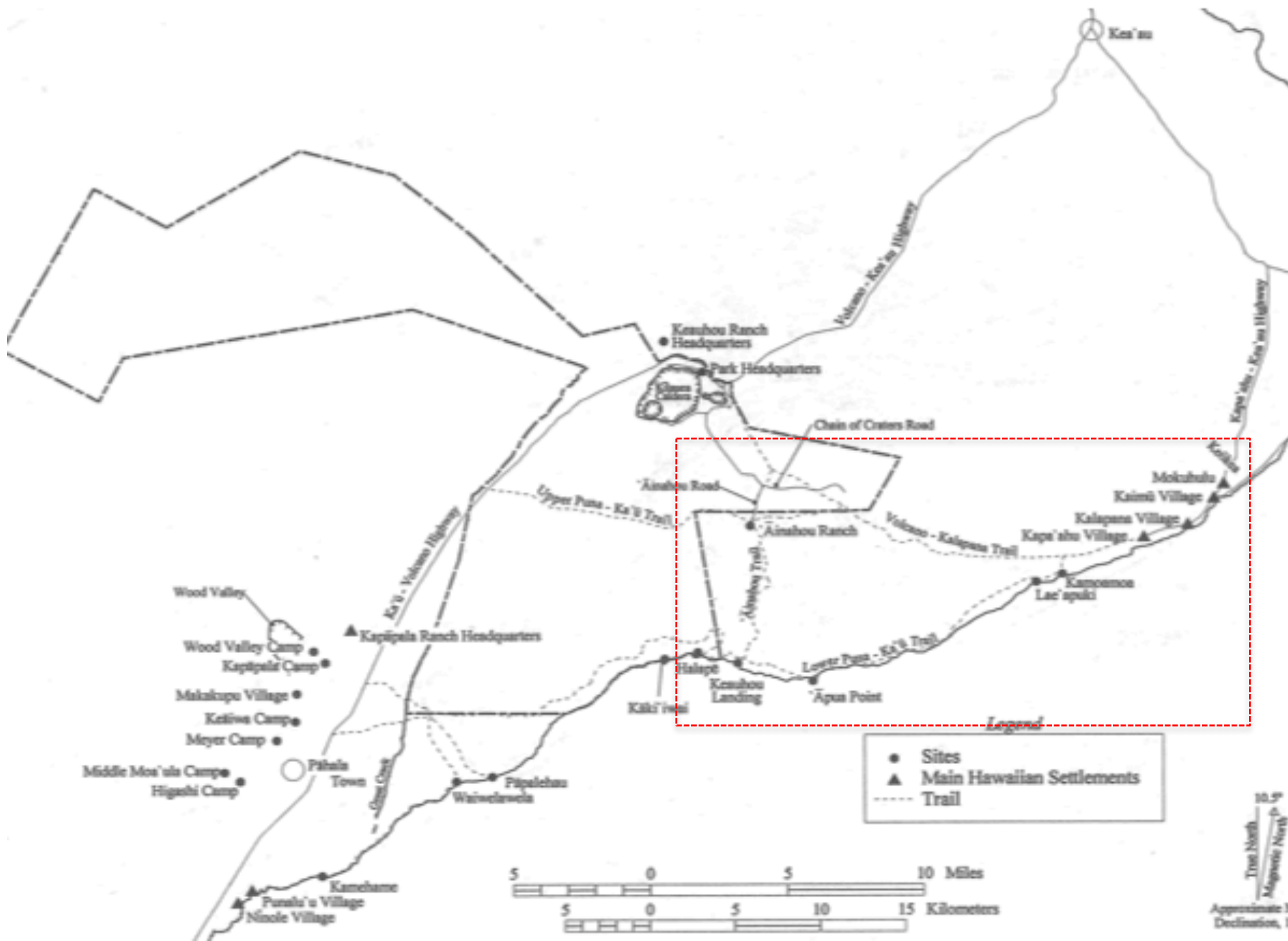
CL: Which cousin are you talking about?

And we talking about Sam Kahookaulana, yes.

And we get on our horse and start going. By the time we get to Kahue it's dark already. So we don't know where we going. Only the animal know in the dark. So we put our faith and trust in the animal. But they trick us couple of times, especially me. I'm behind of my cousin. Going down I hear the ocean on my left hand side, baim bye, the ocean come on my right ear. I said, hey no sound right. Thought maybe you folks going home. Sure enough, going home. I turn em around give him the spur, back on track again, all the way down to Apua. Usually we plan ourselves where we heading to. And sometime it's Kahue, sometime it's Kealakomo, most times it's Apua because we have bigger ground to throw net, usually thowing net. Then if we going to pound opihi, then we saddle back up again and we come back to Kahue. The fact is that when we get the opihi we can throw em on the horse instead of throw em on our back and coming back to Apua. So that's what we do. And all this fishing that we does is to support the family. And all this fishing that we does is to support the family. Of course we share some when we come back from down there to our families.



Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Area, c. 1930



Mokuhulu to 'Āpua, 1940



And when we get down there that night we, we know we reach because the animal stop. So when he stop then we shine our flashlight, we look, oh yes, we are here. So unload, oh we reach down there maybe around 9:30, 10:00 that night. Unload everything, then get our supper ready. After supper cousin say, what, we go throw net? Oh up to you. Let's go. Go throw net in the dark. Yeah, we catch quite a bit. Then we come back to camp. Then just leave it in the bag under a cool area. Then the next day we wake up, clean the fish. Then cut it up, salt it up then just let it set there. Then we go out to pound opihi, get what we want and we come back. Then we leave em underneath the shade. We tend the opihi in the evening after we finish throwing net again. That's our job during the night, to shell opihi. And sometime it goes, well would start maybe sometime 7:00, we won't finish until 11:00. Yeah it is a lot of work. So we talking about maybe five gallons like that. So that's it. And we prepare, salt it up and everything, then put it away. Then the following day we usually go out again, throw net. With all the fish we caught that day is, the next day we clean it up, salt it up again and let it set, maybe one hour, two hour. Then we shake the salt off in the salt water and we dry it out. Usually about three quarter of a day, that's good enough, dry. Put it in the bag, hang it up under the tree. Then I used to go hunt goat too. So the second day, the third day, I usually go up to the mountain, chase goat. Get one goat, two goat, three goat, that's good enough. Heading on down the ocean. Reach down there, unload, we skin the goat, then we salt em up. Then maybe after that, two hours, then we shake it off and dry it out. Oh my gosh, that goat taste good. Ummm. So we get all the opihi, we get all the fish. The day that we coming home, then we throw net again and we bring home fresh fish. But the days before then, the two days before then, all what we did was dry all that, then we bring home dried fish, fresh fish, opihi, dried goat. So we have a load coming home. And lot of fun. Of course a lot of work. But we enjoy it, we enjoy that. And I look forward to going back down again, maybe another month or so.



Native Hawaiian Use of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park Project

Api Kanaka'ole Oliveira (b. 1916)



Api Oliveira

AO: *Oh, yeah. I was introduced, my father took me. And he bought, nowadays they have small packages yeah. Before you had to have a whole pig, yeah. And the whole bottle all brand new liquor and all that and we took maile leis. My father would go get it put it all in a big package and he took me down and he introduced me to Pele. That was his...He said, "This is my daughter." And he chanted and danced and he threw, you should see when it comes up it's so beautiful when they throw the [offering].*

CL: *Yeah it comes up.*

AO: *Yeah, it's just, oh and then they `a and get lit up and everything. So nice. But now days they have small. Is that all you going bring? Yeah. Well you supposed to give a whole pig. And they say no not anymore. [Some folks] take just a small package of pig and they kalua and give. Whiskey, and maile lei. He'd go up the mountain get the maile and then he'd chant and throw and chant and throw and this is my daughter.*

CL: *So he danced too?*

AO: *Yeah. He chanted and you know, how do you say that?*



Api Oliveira

I don't know. I haven't been up there recently but I know there never used to be any place for it, you have to just go through the lava, there was no road eh. He'd take me right up to the tip. I told you, eh? Then we went up and then he had, first we took, he bought a bottle of whiskey and then we went to get some awa. He had it all wrapped up. Whiskey, awa and there was one more, what was it? Oh a little pig, kalua pig, and wrapped it up. And he tell, I'll take you up now and because she had just, what you call it? [erupted]



Api Oliveira

It must of been short. Anyway, it was just start erupting and then he says, well I have to take her up to introduce her to Pele. So and he bought, he hired this Ford. There used to be a man, Japanese man driving a Ford. You know those old Ford cars. And we have to start early in the morning because by the time we get there it's almost 2:00. And you know how slow they travel. Finally, we got there and we walked up to the pit and then he, I didn't know he could dance and then--what you call it in Hawaiian? oli. Yeah he oli'd and he danced and everything. And finally he started and he introduced me to her. I wish you could see, beautiful, it just came right up. The fire just came almost in front of me, go right up. Then he introduced me to her and asked me to throw the thing in. So we threw the present in. And my mom said look out if you don't, if you giving it with a bad heart she throw it back to you. So I was kind of scared, but I did it and it just came right up and oh it was beautiful. And then so.

CL: And didn't throw it back?

AO: No. She didn't throw it back



Api Oliveira

[I asked if she ever went later. Api said only with her husband, when the volcano erupted]

CL: Oh, when it erupts. But you didn't take anything then?



AO: No not with Portuguese, eh?

CL: Oh he wouldn't do that.

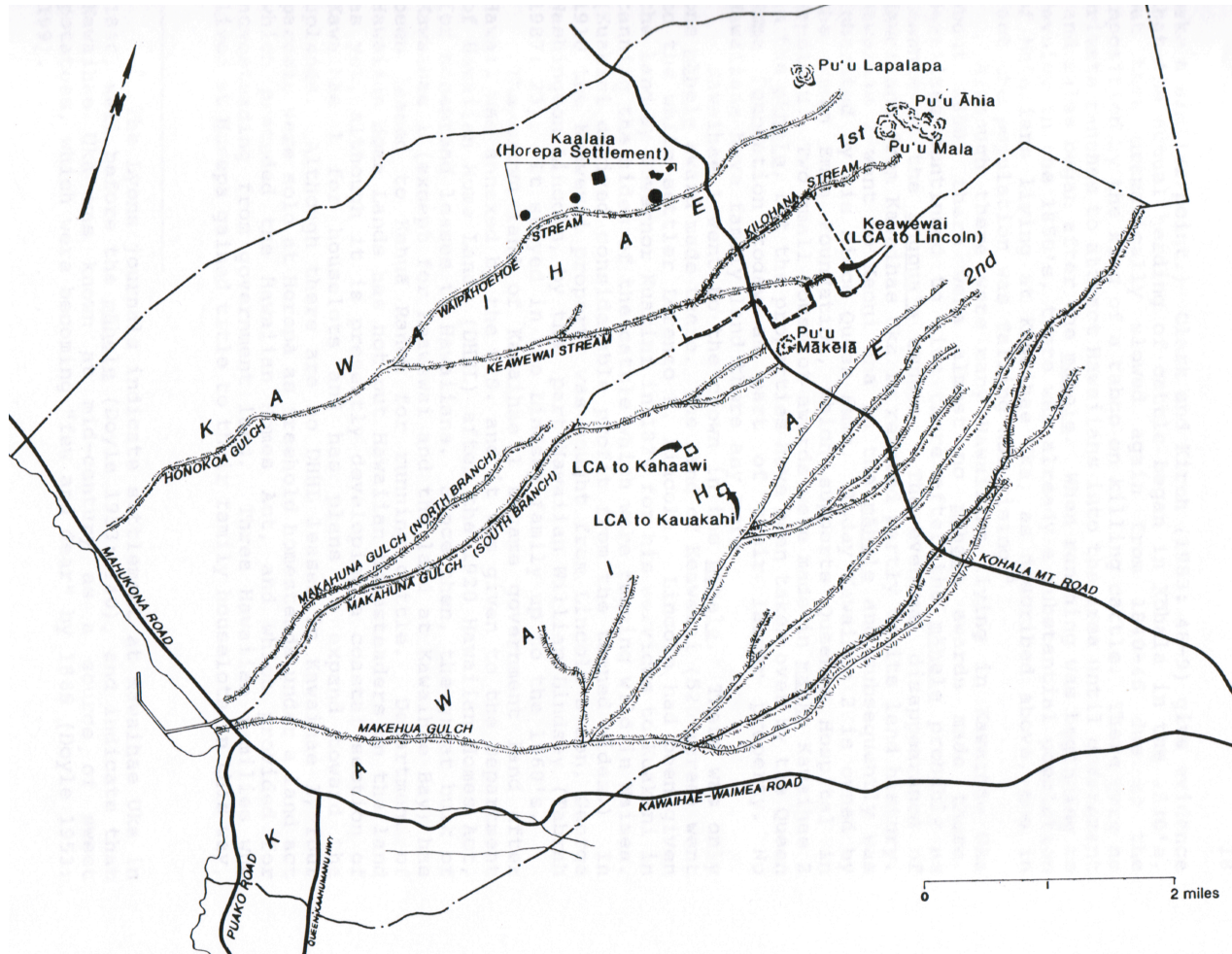
AO: Oh you dirty kanakas.

I could eat that [food] you know.

So I bet if we threw it in, Pele would spit it out again.

Kohala NEXRAD Project

Helen Awa'a Aveiro (b. 1915)



Helen Aveiro

HA: But around here we get 'auwai [irrigation ditches]. Where that dam, or what, had the head of the... then they go for feed all the homes over here.

CL: So did you use that for drinking water (HA: No) or just for water your...

HA: For water your plants and your bamboo. It was important to have, what do you call, windbreak. So bamboo was the best. They get eucalyptus, but on the side eucalyptus. Bamboo behind for block the wind eh. Every house gotta get windbreak on the bamboo. And this water is water the bamboo and whatever you get in your yard. You plants stuck then. Your farm gotta be near the stream. . You know our farm away, further down, where we used to live way down, when we moved up here we still went back down to maintain, because the farm was well set. You know they had the 'auwai for go inside and all around for water all the potato and whatever they get.



Helen Aveiro

You know they get certain time, my dad look up to the mountain, the stream dry, pretty soon no more water. Look up to the mountain, I don't know, they say things. The rain come down, fill up eh. But you no wash, don't wash in the stream when no more water.

When the stream flowing you can go inside wash, swim all you can, you know, jump from pond to pond. All us running naked, eh. That's how we. When you see nobody naked an' you wonder. We use to swim, swim, swim, then I look, oh my oldest [sibling] no swim with us. Funny kine. They came old eh. And you know they go different place and we don't know. We just wonder, how come they not swimming with us, but then not like kids today, eh, they inquisitive. They know, they know already. We never. We dumb, dumb. But was good. I think sacred. And then they no swim with us in the open. And when came my turn then I know. I was hadda go hide. (laughs) Then had to go over by the rock on the other stream. You gotta look nobody around. You know for yourself but you don't say. You come your age you learn why and then the next person like that.

But when you think back, so sacred. Life was so pure. Nobody, you know, nobody say anything. That's your secret. You don't have to tell nobody. When they come to their age, they learn and they change their personality and you get your own responsibility. And the children free. They going free. Then once you become a lady then you realize you in a different world. Even the men, they don't swim no more, they men. They start having responsibility, they start telling the other, you know the younger brothers or what, you know, giving orders for duties and they hold their position and people going in your own and the others follow. That's a wonderful way of growing, yeah? Go back to Adam and Eve days, eh. But today you no need be old to know what and what. The children age fast. Even the little babies. They're not in their world of childhood, an angel or whatever, they not in their sacred life. We lived in our sacred life till our eyes opened and we go on yeah? And 'as a new world and a new experience and you go ahead you know on what you going do and you come like your mom and your dad, ya, till the day when you meet a man, eh. Nobody tell, you no need look in the TV and see what they doing and all that kind, eh.



Saddle Road Improvement Project

Kaumana Group:

Tadao Tanouye (b. 1923)

Kiyomi Omoto (b. 1923)

Tomoichi Fujii (b. 1922)

Saddle Road Improvement Project

Yutaka Kimura (b. 1905)

Waiki'i Village

