

ORAL INTERVIEW ABOUT HISTORY OF KALAPANA #2

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retranscribed
by C.L.

F: How were you taught when your father passed away?

C: Well, when my father was still living he was sort of strict man. As we grew up, we got to do lotta things that he would tell us to do. But, you just do what you can, finish and that's it. He don't force you to, you know, continue. Cause everybody had little chores to do.

But, he's a Catholic. Of course, you can't blame him for being strict with his girls. He had two older girls, then the boy. And we had to--during Sundays, you got to go church. I don't care what it is, but you got to go church. You cannot stay home. So he would wake us up about--that was when we were old enough to walk. But before we moved to Mokuhulu [from Kaimu] wasn't too far from the house to the church, you know. We didn't have to wake up so early [then]. But, you know, those days church starts at 7:00, so about 6:30 we're at the church.

F: When you were young is the teaching was mostly from your father?

C: No, from both. If my father is not home, it's my mama.

F: What were your father teaching you? How's your folks to you?

C: Oh, she would call me by my Hawaiian name, and I was known those days for a name like, in the Hawaiian they call me Ka'iawe.

F: How you spell?

C: Ka'iawe. K, A, I, E [sic], U, E.

That was my Hawaiian name that time. But after I was married, that's when I found out that I was not Ka'iawe. I was Leimanu.

F: How is the school, teaching, with the family? the way your father taught you.

C: Well my father taught me things on the outside, yeah? Cause inside, my mama would do most of the talking. Like in home, go clean house, or if you have chores, she would give you chores. And if you finish, then you supposed to help the next one. And learning, my dad is the one always check on my lesson. The school is little bit different too from the teaching nowadays, cause you had to do a little culture too, during our days. Like maybe weaving mats or making something out of lauhala leaves.

F: Talki6ng about lauhala leaves, how you learned to weave?

C: Oh, my mama was a weaver.

F: Oh, she taught you.

C: No, she never taught me, but. I just watch. I follow from what she was doing.

Even going--well, fishing, I never did go out on the canoe. But on the shoreline, I would go with my dad.

F: How were lauhala leaves prepared?

C: Oh, you had to go gather them, clean them. Just cut off the head and just bring them home. Then we cut off the thorns and roll that. After rolling that for few days, then my mama would

go and open them up again and make it into bundles, so much in one bundle.

F: How much in one bundle?

C: Maybe about twenty-one pieces or more. And then we would have to pound that after the roll. After pounding them she would go and strip. After she strip that lauhala into different sizes, mostly its in half-inch and one inch. Strip that. Then she start weaving.

F: Do they put the lauhala leaves in the sun to dry?

C: No, no need. Its dry from the tree. It falls. So the dry one is what we pick. We don't pick the green leaves. Cause the green leaves, you have to cook em in order to use that.

F: So that's some of the way you get money too, yeah?

C: Yeah, by weaving. She does mostly mats. And I would weave with her, but I would take the smaller size mats. Sometimes they ask for basket, so we weave basket. Basket, dinner mats. You know these small [shows a mat]? This is called dinner mat.

F: You can make big one too?

C: Yeah. We used to have a lot of that lauhala mats in the house. And then we didn't have this kind rugs, eh? So today everybody want the rug. (laughs) Well, I plan to make my own too. Cause I took off all the rug. I didn't want the rug.

C: Well, mostly mats, and I would weave with my mama, but I make smaller size mats. Sometimes we weave basket and dinner mats.

F: So mostly you just watched when you stayed with your parents during those days?

C: No, but they never really teach me. So even with the hat, my mom weaves hat but she never taught me. So that, I didn't catch on yet. But any other things they have beside that, I know how to do. So she makes her earning too from that, weaving.

My dad, well, he's a little different too. He has his work on the outside. I said before, he works for the county, eh? When he took sick, I knew already part of what he did. He do farming and he was raising pigs. They came. The pigs he would sell if somebody comes there and buy em. We, after that the vegetables, like watermelon and cucumber. Oh, he used to plant in big patches.

F: What kinds of foods you feed the pigs?

C: Those days we have plenty papaya, but it was a different kind. We called it a solo. Well, [the pigs are] in the pastures, so when guava season you don't have to sweat so much to go and find extra food, eh? And we use the coconuts to feed them.

F: What way the 4H's club get to make money?

C: I used to make money from pick lemon and our club leader would take it and sell it.

F: How is the club?

C: That was pertaining to learning. I think the school was sponsoring that. Our elementary school. Was mostly the girls was learning these things, learn how to sew and cook.

F: Who taught cooking at home?

C: I think the cooking was mostly my father. Was him. So that's how I got to learn how to cook, from him.

F: How? Just observe?

C: Yeah, just observe what he does, and help to cut what ever he is going to cut. You find kids today, they don't do that. Yeah. Age of five, even seven, eight, they not even helping.

F: Yeah, it's kinda different from those days.

C: Yeah, it is too different. I never spoil my kids, too. I make them chop vegetables. You have to cut meat, chop. I make them learn. So now they all on their own. They know what to do. But I see my grandchildren, they don't lift a finger.

F: So... How you clean lauhala tress those days? with water?

C: No. When you gather those things, you bring them home. And it it's too hard to roll, you have to either sprinkle water on or let the rain wet em down. If it's soft, eh?, then you can work on em good. We really don't soak em in the water.

F: Why?

C: Get too soggy, eh? Lotta work involved. I have some of them, but I never get a chance to clean those, cause I went to the doctor.

F: So mostly lauhala was one of the...

C: I think to all the folks down there, most of the ladies were weaving. Some of them will have orders, from people in Hilo, Honolulu. Cause my mom used to have orders. Sometimes she have to go down to their house and weave that. All over--right up to corner to corner. (bit omitted) After that, they would order and give her the size. Maybe its 9 by 10. Usually it takes her a few days to finish, depending on the size. Cause this size [one-half inch] takes a little longer. Sometimes quarter inch--oh, tedious! Those days didn't have much things for people to do, but the ladies were kept busy. They don't have anything to do, they would go out and help their husbands make garden--make potato hill or plant some taro. That's the things we used to do. They were simple. Living simple. And they didn't have bed, they had their mat. Some family didn't have bed. They would go sleep on the floor, with their mat underneath. Even the babies, when their mother would make their sleeping place, you know, thick with blanket, eh?

F: What kind of material they used for blanket?

C: Oh, they had this regular blanket while I was growing up. I never see yet the kapa been used for blanket.

F: Is there a reason why the don't used tapa for blanket?

C: I think cause too much work.

F: Not too many people were using it?

C: Yeah, not too many people using those days. Even if they have the material but they weren't using it. Cause by the time I was old enough, Hilo was just full with stores. But people still couldn't afford that much.

F: Last time you mention about your father's car, Model T. Was it only one car?

C: Yeah only one.

F: How often he used his car?

C: Oh, every week. He goes to work with his car too. So we don't have no car at home. The kids used to walk to school.

F: Does he only use his car to go work? Does he use it to

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transport other people?

C: Maybe he would have about two persons riding when he went to work. One to two. Cause some of the neighbors don't have, so he would take them with him to work.

C: But when he died we got stuck. We didn't have a driver. I only learned a little, but I don't have the permit, eh? So I would sneak sometimes, drive that down to the store. But she wouldn't allow me to drive.

F: Were you too young to drive?

C: Yeah, I was too young. Because I lost my father at 9 years old.

So our transportation for me and my mom, we would use the mule or the donkey to go fishing or go down and pick limpets. That's another way too my mom used to make a living, go pick limpets, 'opihi.

F: Would you sell it to the store?

C: Yeah, we used to sell it to the stores.

[unrecorded bit missing]

Throw-net, go throw the net.

F: Why?

C: I never... Well, maybe cause I was too young too, eh? to throw. But to hook, yeah, hook fish with the regular bamboo. We never used to get that reel. With the regular bamboo, you tie your line on the point. And 'ulua. I used to watch him go catch 'ulua. Hoh! The biggest one I saw him catch, the donkey had to go carry em. Smelly, eh? I can still smell. You know the big 'ulua fish. That's a black one. Oh, that smell. But, you know, when he finished cooking, and he fried the skin, never had the smell. Was crispy, though, he makes em crispy. He even would go dive for lobster. I see him dive, and when he came up, he lookin at em, an he go back down. So I ask him, how come? what he's doing, lookin at em, then go down. He say putting back. It's a female. He put back. And if it's a good-size male, that's what he take.

F: What is the reason?

C: He would protect the female one.

F: For reproduce?

C: Yeah. They don't take all. He say don't get greedy. Even fish. If he catches--mullet, 'aholehole, moi--if it's too small, he throw em back.

F: So mostly those days, what people do to get money is weaving.

C: For the ladies, they would do weaving. And some would be raising pigs. I know had a few families raising pigs, like us... On a different area they were raising pig. Of course, mostly was for house use. Depending too on the person. If they want your pig, they would come up and buy em from you. I know I used to sell my pigs for, maybe around \$ 40. That's the biggest. They go by size, not weight. You see, they would come buy our pig. They say was cheaper than go buy em from somebody else in the area. That's about the highest I used to sell one. Cause they was big and fat. Some pigs were skinny. They don't really feed the way that we feed. Get the breadfruit and you know the taro tops. That, we would cook that, and mix em with anything.

F: How you cook that?

C: Just boil em, and then put salt inside. Sometime my dad would get da kine, carbo (?), boil em. I give them the honohono grass. And whatever waste he get from his farm all go to the pig, like the watermelon, the cucumber. And they eat that.

F: So the food mostly, really...

C: Was from the ocean, umhm. And of course people that live up, mauka, they would come down with the taro, potato, whatever they have. Vegetable, fruits, maybe orange. They would bring down to the folks down the beach. Then the beach people would give them fish. They would go home with fish.

F: What were the folks mauka planting?

C: Some were raising cow, a few. And of course planting too. They have their 'ulu tree. Then they have their potato farm, they plant their cabbage, bean. Because everybody does this, and they go work for the county, all the men.

F: What were some activities that helps the family growing?

C: Well, no such thing as playing. And if you want to play, well I had cousins that loved to play. They would play only around their area or our place. We never did go far from the house. They would play around my uncle's house. They would come and play with us or we would go play with them.

F: Which house was that?

C: His name is Bonaventura [Kealoha]. And we would have the Elia Kaho'okaulana family. The Makua family. Keli'ihō'omalu family. Maybe once in a great while, we would go down to the park. To play. If you're old enough to take care of yourself. Cause those days didn't have much to do. Unless you join with the older group. They out during the night, eh? Go out. I used to go ask my cousin, cause it's close by, when I was growing up, the Lee Hongs, Helen and Peter. We'd follow them to where they're going, and it's what they're doing--singing. And the Keli'ihō'omalu. With my close relative, hardly. That's the one we called the old maid, uh?

F: Which one is that?

C: The Bonaventura Kealoha's children.

But all the kids used to live down there, most of them all away. You know, they not around here now.

F: They go to the mainland or?

C: Yeah, in the mainland, or they in Honolulu, or all different places. Cause I don't have one of my schoolmate here. All away. But I went away first. I didn't like the way it's becoming. I came home. Didn't take long for me to come back home. Yeah, some stayed away twenty something years, and they still away. lots of them own land [here].

F: So mostly the only thing that kept the family going was get together.

C: Um. Sunday and Saturday. Well, Saturday if you finish with your work, then you can go out and go play, or go with your friend. But we hardly had any other friend except our relatives. That was our friend.

[CN smokes]

I think was in 1930 something, that's the only time that

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they were showing movies. But silent, it wasn't this talking type. We hardly go.

F: Who showed the movies?

C: Oh, was the Japanese. And that lady is still living.

F: Do you remember her name?

C: Yeah, we called her Mrs. Kauai. The theater is called Akibono. (that's her husband)

F: Did she stay down at Kalapana before?

C: No, she lived up here in Pahoa.

(she speaks of the Kapa'ahu folks, land covered by lava)

So all these children, too, moved away. I don't know where they living. (mentions Ka'awaloa) I know the two. There's William Keli'ihō'omalū and Henry. Well Henry, Ka'awaloa they're living on Henry's place now. The Ka'awaloa boy. Cause he married to the Keli'ihō'omalū girl, the one. But the William, his grandchildren is livin on the place. (Half of the Hawaiians are gone because of the eruption.) Of course, we have the subdivision down there too, so you get mostly the whites in the area. Cause my brother-in-law [Peter Hauani'o] has a place down there too.

The houses are still there, except for that area where the volcano covered. My mom moved away from the place where we was. She sold the place to my aunty, uh?, when she was still living. But the place is still there. It's been sold again I think.

You can imagine, over here, not even a century, I think, the cane. They were planting cane, eh? Then the younger generation would go work plantation. Not everyone. Our Hawaiians never cared to go cut cane. Those days you had to cut with a cane-knife. Yeah. That's how they brought in all the Chinese, then came the Portuguese, the Japanese too.

F: Did the Hawaiians have a chance to work?

C: I don't think they wanted to work cut cane. There were only a few, like maybe my brother-in-law's father. Solomon Hauani'io. He was one of the first Hawaiians that work plantation. I don't know what other Hawaiian that used to work plantation. But mostly was the other nationality, they were the workers. Hardly have any Hawaiians. But mostly the Portuguese, the Japanese, the Filipinos, they were the workers.

F: Is it because it's hard?

C: No, I think that they didn't want to go cut cane. It wasn't that hard. I went cut cane. Cause you cut and you pile em on the cable, uh? (a bit more on cutting cane)

