

INTERVIEW #3 MARCH 28, 1988
AT THE HOME OF FEDELIA SWEEZEY
KALAPANA, HAWAII

E= Ehukai
F= Fedelia

poor quality recording

[We begin by talking about the War and Aunty talks about the blackouts]

E:.....Who provided the curtains?

F: We went and buy from the store.

E: You guys had to buy the blackout curtains?

F: You know how the garbage bags are...but thicker?

E: Probably like the kind they put on the ground..

F: It's kinda thick and you go and buy according to the measurement..

E: And as long as you put that on you could have light on in the house?

F: Yes..

E: Was there a time that they said had to be blackout or was it when it was dark?

F: When it was dark and before dark.

E: And if you didn't what happened?

F: Somebody would come and say that oh, you can't have light. You know Mr. Pe'a? Mrs Lee Hong's brother. He died..Gabriel. One time we didn't have the curtains and he came and told us..."No lights..." so we had to stay in the dark.

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E: Was all in the back here clear before?

F: Yeah, there was an Okinawan man staying here before.

E: He stayed here on the property?

F: Yes...he used to farm the place.

E: What did he used to grow?

F: Cucumbers....vegetables...flowers...

E: How long was he here?

F: I can't remember how long but quite long.

E: Did you folks lease the land to him?

F: No, just give...

E: Did he live with you folks?

F: We had an old house...he stayed under the house..

E: What happened to the vegetables that he grew? Did he sell it?

F: A few, I think he sold...

E: Was there someone like that who took care of that kind of stuff? A person that bought all the things that people grew down here and maybe took it into Hilo to sell? There wasn't anyone like that?

F: No, not that I know of.

E: So he just took what he grew?

F: Yeah, and he planted pineapples...

E: Did he take it into town to sell?

F: I don't think so...some he gave away...

E: Was it small lots that he grew his vegetables on?

F: Was all in the back here. Sometimes we plant flowers..

E: So he stayed with you folks but in another house?

F: No..in our old house..

E: How did he come here?

F: He met my father folks somewhere..and he wanted a place to stay...

E: And he was from?

F: I don't know...

E: You remember his name?

F: We only know by Oshiro..

E: You folks don't know what happened to him after he left here?

F: He moved to Kea'au, I think..one time my father had take some pineapples....

E: How old was he? Your father's age or younger?

F: Maybe in his 60's...

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F: Yeah..during the War over here was all surrounded....They stayed at the Catholic Church...they used to have a gym so that's where they stayed....Every three months they would change...You know the outpost out there?

E: When you say outpost..what do you mean? Did they have a building?

F: A structure just enough for them.

E: And they would take turns going out there maybe every eight hours?

F: Oh, all night...they would change shifts...

E: They did not have to live out there, huh?

- F: They did because they had to be on the watch.
- E: Your place was the only place they could go through to get out there?
- F: Yes...that's the only place...then they built the bridge you know in the back of the Catholic Church?
- E: A wooden bridge?
- F: Some kind of bridge...it's way in the back of the Catholic Church...I don't think that bridge is there any more...it was so they could get on top of the cliff..most time they went through back here.
- E: Had a trail to go back here?
- F: Oh, yeah...So much better than now...
- E: At that time had coconut trees? I noticed in looking at some old pictures of Kalapana...didn't have many bushes..so open it was...real bare.....Did you say that every three months the soldiers would change?
- F: Something like that...2 or 3 months.
- E: Even someone with a high position?
- F: I guess so...
- E: Your husband had a pretty high position?
- F: He was the seargent. That's how I met him.
- E: How old were you when you got married?
- F: 21...
- E: Were you the only Kalapana girl that got married to a service man?
- F: There's another one but she lives in Hilo...Chinese girl.. Yuk Li.. the store lady's daughter...we call the lady Ah Mu and the man Young Wai...
- E: I just thought maybe had others. They had all kind of Forces down here?
- F: No, just the Army..
- E: About how many men, you think?
- F: Maybe 100....150....
- E: Their only duty was to survey the area and keep a watch down here?
- F: They put barbed wire...
- E: All along the beach?
- F: Way later they used to allow us to crawl wherever there's wide space for us to go through..
- E: What happened...you know people were so used to going to the beach to get food and during the War they couldn't?

- F: They just stopped, I think...cause couldn't go to the beach. They used to have somebody to watch the beach.
- E: Must have been so hard for the people..
- F: After a while they got used to it.
- E: Must have been so hard for the people to just eat canned food. So you guys weren't allowed on the beach at all?
- F: Yeah...but after awhile....way after...they allowed us to go. Because my father and my mother used to go catch limu and they go sell...sometimes my mother give them the sad story and tell "that's our livelihood..." then they let us go..but they have someone who stand and he watch us...like that...
- E: The beach must have been nice those days...
- F: Sometimes we go get opihi on the cliffs those days...
- E: Did they shell it before it was sold?
- F: Oh no, 10 cents a pound.
- E: Is it all rocks back here? Are the cliffs high? So in order for you folks to go catch opihi, you have to climb down?
- F: Yeh. I wouldn't do that now.
- E: Was it by rope?
- F: No, there was trail for go down.
- E: When they went fishing did they go from the cliff or go down?
- F: From the cliff...as long as had place for go down.
- E: Did the Army people do fishing too?
- F: Just a few I think...I remember they say they use the guts of the mongoose...they kill it...one time they told my father to go....
- E: How did they fish....by bamboo?
- F: Yeh...yeh....one time we went catch ohua...like I said way after they allow us to go...
- E: When you say way after, what do you mean?
- F: Long...
- E: When they was down here...from what year to what year?
- F: Around '42... I got married '46... was it '45 the War ended?
- E: Your husband stayed here or he had to back?
- F: He had to go back to the Phillippines or something like that then he came back here. We got married then I stayed here.
- E: So you never went with him? Only to Honolulu?
- F: When did the Korean War started?
- E: '50... Where were you...Honolulu?
- F: Yeh....I left to come home.
- E: You said he died in the Korean War..yeah? In Korea?

- E: So the Army people were out here for a period of maybe 2 or 3 years...that long they were out here?
- F: Maybe '44 they were still here but '45 they left already.
- E: Did they change the lifestyle of the people a lot?
- F: No..not that much.. most of the people still lived the same lifestyle except they couldn't go to the beach. They rationed the gas..could have only so many gallons....
- E: Were there a lot of cars at that time?
- F: No...no...but as the whole island...
- E: Did your parents have a car?
- F: Yeh....1938 Volvo
- E: That was the one and only car they had?
- F: After awhile while we were in Honolulu...my husband bought a Willys Jeep..and then shipped it over. Then my father died.
- E: You know when the Army left Kalapana they took everything with them? What did they have at the outpost?
- F: They had a shack. My father went and used the lumber and built another kitchen..took off the old one and built that one...nobody cared, yeah? He went up there and got all the lumber.
- E: What about down where they were staying? What did they live in...tents or...you said in the gym, yeah? Were people of Kalapana ever invited to any of the functions that they ad over there?
- F: I know in those days they cry for steak or chicken.. I remem-one guy came...we were chasing chickens, I think...we were going to use for dinner...one guy came and asked if we could cook chicken for him and I said "No, we don't want to..." Some of the boys when they go to town...that's what they order when they go to the restaurant. They said that they miss that...
- E: During the War did the people down here have any parties? Do you remember anything going on down here?
- F: Hardly...Nothing like today..
- E: So the people of Kalapana did not see the Army as a threat but more as a protective thing?
- F: No...no...more as a protective...In those days we don't have drugs like that...
- E: Did any of the men from the community go in the Army?
- F: The National Guard.
- E: And most of them did not stay here? They went away?
- F: Yeh.

- E: As far as you know everyone that came here in the Army were all haoles...no locals?
- F: Yeah, mostly haoles...and uh..mixed I think..and 2 Indians and few Mexicans.
- E: What else do you know about the War and the Army?
- F: Only I know about getting material to make clothes...it was hard to get...and was hard to get corn beef or can salmon.
- E: They (the Army) did not provide for you?
- F: No..somebody go and hunt and we have wild boar or cow and salt it up.
- E: How come canned food was so hard to get?
- F: I guess during the War...
- E: So you folks main diet was whatever you could catch in the mountain, your chicken....
- F: Yeh...chicken...eggs...
- E: Who killed the chickens?
- F: My mother...mostly my Mom did all the household duties.. She used to make this kind mat (lauahala)...
- E: Were you able to get lauhala during the War? They did not stop you?
- F: No..no.Way after the War I used to go to the beach to get this little shell...the lehu..they call it pulehulehu... used to make lei... My father eats the meat inside..I don't like it...my father pulehu that..
- E: How did you make leis, now?
- F: We don't do it..we send it away...But we go and get it...we put it in the pot...cover it up and put it on some kind of.. smell awful..like my Mom she cannot smell... she rinse it all off...after you ready to set it..all niceyou don't wash it right away because it will come dull the color. So we let the meat spoil...we just set it outside...you put in some kind of container.then you cover on top with some kindd of rag.
- E: Had lots of shells? You did this from small time or just during the War?
- F: No..not during the War.
- E: They didn't boil it to get the meat out?
- F: No, if they did the shell would be dull..You have to look in the little crack to pick them up..they like limu..
- E: Must have taken a lot to make one necklace..
- F: Quit awhile...
- E: And it didn't turn white?
- F: I think the white was from different islands...Kwajelein..

F: Marshall Islands.....

E: Your father worked even during the War?

F: I think he stopped working during the War...

E: Did they stop everybody?

F: No...no...I don't know if there was no job or something... something like that...

E: How old was he at that time?

F: Maybe in his late sixties...early seventies....

E: What kinds of jobs were available down here during the War?

F: County...that's all I know.

E: Was there some kind of job to do with the park?

F: They had park keeper... I remember only one man who worked in the park....then the man died and I don't know who took over.

E: Did the Army get more lenient as time went on? Was blackout right through the War?

F: I think so...right through...

E: What kind of memories does the War bring back for you? Was it real scary?

F: No...OH...had rumors that the Japanese would be coming in any time to invade so my father went to the bank and drew out all his money...whatever he had in there...and they kept this money...my mother had this handbag...and everywhere they go they carry this bag...

E: I wonder if a lot of other people did the same thing..

F: Oh, they changed their money...you know that Hawaii note...

E: And that money was good, huh?

F: Yeah..had Hawaii in the back on a \$20 bill.

F: My mother used to go down the beach...get this shell...under the rock and she used to cook the meat...they call it papaua.

E: Was it a black shell...something like opihi?

F: But the meat was easier to come out...you just pull it out. It was really tiny and sticks to the rock...

E: Does it have an eye like the pipipi?

F: No. You cook that. I think we were the only ones to eat that.

E: How did you get your poi during the War? Did you buy it?

F: We buy our poi...

E: You ordered?

F: They keep for my father...all the time.

E: The store over here or in Hilo?

F: AhHee Poi Shop.

E: So you folks would have to go into Hilo to get it? Was this a weekly trip?

F: Yes.

E: During the War, too?

F: Only once a week on Saturdays.

E: You folks didn't go less during the war?

F: NO.

E: That was enough those days, huh?

F: Not like nowadays everytime you need something you get on the car and going into town. After the War we used to go to Pahoa to the store....get what we want...even if you already bought the thing and you forgot...when you home...that's too bad for you...let the tomato or whatever rot in the store. But like me I never made a list...I just go to the store...it's all in my head...the man used to put the grocery in the box for us....but sometimes he forget...some stuffs to put in. When we come home, we hunt for it and no more...my father blame the man. He blame the man for forgetting to put the particular item in the box.

E: What else did they ration during the War? Was there a lot of canned food before the War and during the War there wasn't as much?

F: Yes. The store shelves are empty...It was hard to get material...hard to get bobby pins...You know in Kress? Those underwears that ladies wear? If they come in, have to stand in line. Sometimes by the time come to you, all gone. I think materials too, had to stand in line.

E: Most of the clothes were sewn?

F: I had a dressmaker. In Pahoa. And was not as expensive. I remember Kress was 50 cents a yard...for 3 yards...and the dressmaker not even a dollar for sew. She did not take a long to do it.

E: So your mother didn't sew?

F: Way back...when I was young.

E: Who died first...your mother or your father?

F: My mother.. I have a chest up at my daughter's...if I had I would show you what she sew for me...long sleeves...

E: You're so lucky you saved that...your children are lucky that you saved that.

- F: And all the same style...Yeah, she used to make dresses...simple style...
- E: Going back to the War, did the Army people offer people anything in exchange for something else?
- F: You know those rations that they had? They didn't like that so they give us that.
- E: Did they ask for anything in return?
- F: I think one of them stole some bananas..Wasn't ready yet and they stole it but after awhile they came and they said "sorry". My father he smokes so he got cigarettes. Some they threw the rations in the lauhala so my father he found it and he brought it home. They had corn beef hash and the sweet crack-er.....candy inside...chocolate candy. Sometimes we find it on the beach...and still good, yet...sometimes we used to find them right over here where we used to pound poi. They tired of eating it.
- E: Were the people here allowed to invite them to their homes?
- F: Oh, yeah, but they hardly did...they didn't want to. I think once a couple of them came but usually they sit on the porch. When my father heard them coming, he told my mother to go make them something for them. My mother gave them cake and I think they opened a can of sardines...That's the only one I remember.
- E: What about your husband? Was he invited here a lot?
- F: No...Because wasn't too long after...he asked me to marry him. ..then he left.
- E: But before that...he didn't come to your house?
- F: No...he'll come but just sit out on the porch...
- E: Maybe during the War it wasn't as common for Island women to marry an Army man but there were a lot after the War...
- F: 1942 I met him.
- E: Long time you knew him, before you got married.
- F: Because he was shipped away...After he asked me to marry him then he left.
- E: Did you think he was coming back?
- F: You know sometimes you have doubts whether they coming back or not...
- E: Did he write to you while he was gone?
- F: Yeh...
- E: He came back though, yeah?
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- [Aunty fetches a picture of her husband]
- E: Ooh..handsome... he looks tall, yeah?
- F: That was before I got married.

E: Do you still have a picture of Mrs Goo Sum? I saw some old pictures of Kalapana but didn't have that many of people. I know you showed me of your father...Mrs. Goo Sum...

F: Here's one picture.....

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E: Some say she died at a young age, yeah?

F: This was down Kalaupapa.

E: You went down? Who do you know there?

F: You know this Kahilihiwa lady?.....When we went down there certain ones Miriam invited...

E: What was her last name?

F: [indiscernible reply]

E: Did she die, Aunty?

F: She died....another one died... another sister

E: Do you know if there were other people sent down to Kalaupapa because they had leprosy?

F: Yeh...[looks for pictures].....her, this woman had. I had a picture...

E: Benjamin Ili....

E: And around when was that? After the War? How did they find out (if someone had leprosy)? Did they have tests run?

F: Somebody here knows you get...

E: How would they know, but?

F: I heard of a man who hid his wife.
[Looking at more pictures]

E: Do you remember your mother's mother?

F: Not too much.

E: Did she die when you were 2 years old? That was your Aunty that used to live with you folks, yeah?

F: I had a picture but I don't know where it is.

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F: Used to have small kind opae down here....my mother used to go get, too....

E: How did she catch the opae?

F: With a net....

E: What did it look like? She made with the guava stick?

F: She bend it....put rubber on top...looks like ice cream cone.

E: That's the kind my mother uses and she get 'eke huluhulu bag at the bottom so that when they hau the opae, they take out the rubbish and put the clean opae into the 'ekehuluhulu...

- E:small the 'ekehuluhulu bag...
- F: They eat the thing raw...Had opae down here way before....
You know why no moa now? Polluted the water...Before had plenty...
- E: By Wai'akolea Pond?
- F: Yeh...before...jungle, the place.....Was during the War I think...but not over there...was different place.....
- E: No more that much fresh water, too, huh?
- F: You know before we could go swimming inside...I heard way back when he (her father) was a young boy and before he was born they used to keep fish in there (Waiaokolea). It was like a fish pond...ali'i comes from Honolulu...then they go get the fish for them...I remember because my father told me that his father...when he was younger went in there and stole some of the fish
- E: Never have opae down here?
- F: No, not too much...we used to take the barrel of poi after the poi pau...instead of we go wash it we stick it in the pond...and all the opae go inside.
- E: How big were your barrels? Was big ones?
- F: Yeh..as the kind we use to store water...we just leave it like that...When my tutu lady died, there was a church by Opihikao side...she brought this tank...my father and mother went to get somebody and brought the tank down. Six years I think the tank last.
- E: One tank water?
- F: Yeh..they brought it down and built it up...and left it up for long time. But before that we had this barrel.
- E: What is the name of the pond back here?
- F: No name...It's just large enough for one person to go in...that's all...a little bigger...
- E: Is that the original Queen's Bath?
- F: I never heard that one.
- E: That's what some people say, huh?
- F: Yeah, I guess so...I never heard my father mention about it.
- E: You not going sell this place, huh?
- F: No...but maybe the volcano come take it, huh? Let's go look take a look at the pond, now....