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11/7/87

Interview #1. James Ahia (by Charles Langlas), wife <sup>Frances</sup> ~~Francis~~ present also

(Note: Langlas talked briefly w. James Ahia earlier and obtained some information alluded to in the interview.)

Tape 1,  
Side 1

C.L.: So, let's see, you were talking about luaus--for birthdays, for Christmas and New Year's.

JA: New Year's

CL: And was there any other occasions?

JA: Well, they have the regular church, like there at the Protestant church, the Catholic church, we all together. They doing something for their church, we all go. Then, the Protestant get, the Catholics all come..

CL: Oh, so you weren't like separated?

JA: No. We all work together. I remember we used to go to the Catholic church and the Catholics used to come to your church. And they used to have one Mormon church there too. Yeah, next to the drive-in. /Walter's Store and drive-in//

CL: For some church occasion or...?

JA: Sunday school rally. I guess when the missionaris came and the churches started to flourish, they had these rallies, Sunday school rally. Ho'ike, I don't know if you're familiar with the term ho'ike, and then they review what they had and it still is going on. We go down. We have it in the district, so we going down to Opihikao in November. We still carry on from way back..

JA: Next week, next week Sunday. We start from Saturday, until Sunday noon.

CL: Would they make an imu and kalua pig and stuff?

JA: Yeah. Oh yeah. Sometimes when they figure they going make kulolo, so they start from Wednesday, Thursday.

CL: What happens at the ho'ike..the kids...

JA: Kids, adults take part. The, ah, lesson...

JA: Each church.

JA: Each church.

JA: in the district.

CL: And they...What do they show?

JA: Well, they start, um, memory verses and all that and singing, you know. Each group come out from each church and then you sing and memory verses.

CL: So maybe, 1 person, 1 person...

JA: Yeah, read certain scripture and all.

CL: Do they have to know by heart?

JA: Before was by heart in old days, but now with papers.

JA: And a...what they used to do then was, a, not so much kalua pig for the ho'ike, they did laulau. They kalua in the imu. Which you don't see now.

JA: Don't see that now.

JA: And Kalapana church was the last church I think. They always had kalua laulau and that was the last place we ever ate kalua laulau.

JA: It's a different taste. Lotta hard work.

CL: Yeah, just making the imu's hard work.

JA: Yeah, then sometimes the imu get burned...lot of waste. I've seen

/section omitted/

*Handwritten note:* 4 copies separate - [unclear]



## Interview #1, James Ahia (contd.)

CL: I know you said you were born in Pahoa. That was 1913?

JA: Yes

CL: And then, you moved to Kaimu. When you were 3?

JA: About 3, yes--3 or 4 years old.

CL: Can you remember moving to Kaimu? or that was too early?

JA: No, I seem to remember Kaimu. But I remember Pahoa place.

My father was working for the Pahoa tie mill, eh? lumber mill.

We used to live right across the bakery.

CL: And you remember that place?

JA: Yeah, I remember that place.

CL: That's pretty good.

JA: I was 4 years at that time.

CL: And when you were there, it was just you and your father and mother?

JA: Yeah.

CL: Did you have any other brothers born at that time?

JA: No, my other brother 2 years after that.

CL: So he was born when you were still in Pahoa?

JA: He was born in Pahoa too.

CL: You have only 1 brother or 2 brothers?

JA: Well, I have 4 brothers. No, 3 brothers, 4 with myself. 2 sisters.

CL: Could you tell me the names of your brothers and sisters, maybe starting with the oldest?

JA: Well, I'm the oldest, and then the second was Bill Jr., and then the third was Jarrett.

CL: Jarred?

JA: Jarrett. He's deceased. Then my sister Helen. Then my brother Abraham.

CL: Yeah, I met him.

JA: He's down Kalapana. And then my sister Annie, deceased.

CL: Six?

JA: There's myself and then my brother Bill, we born at Pahoa, during that time you know. And then my brother Jarrett was born at... now they call it what?, the Black Sands subdivision.

CL: What did you call that place in those days?

JA: Wai-holo-ku'i I think. I think there's something else too. What was? Let's see now. A different name I think.

JA: Keula I think I recall.

JA: No, Waiholoku'i.

(JA notes location--near the water-tank after you pass the 1955 flow on the way down from Ophikao junction)

JA: That's the place they were cutting trees there for the wood chips, eh? And then my sister Helen was born in Kaimu. Then my brother Abraham was born at ah, where the lava flow--the 55 lava flow--was at Kamelamela's house. And my mother and father went there for New Year's celebration and then he was born, on January 2.

CL: Oh, while they were visiting.

JA: Yeah, yeah. My kid sister, Annie, she was born in Koa'e, 1926.

CL: Was that a visit too?

JA: Yeah, that was a visit too, yeah, to her parents. And that one is covered by lava flow. 1960. Their area. Elderts.

Interview #1, James Ahia (contd.)

CL: So, when your family moved from Pahoā, they lived at Waiholoku'i for a while?

JA: No. my father was just, ah, he was, you know when county slack--those days the county was only a few days, working for the county,--so take care a taro patch and work for somebody else you know? Not really get paid, but you trade, eh? That's how the olden days Hawaiians, my father, used to live down Kalapana. Well, certain of them, group, maybe 6 or 8 people. He say, "Oh, I like clean my place." Okay, they all go there. Then they feed you lunch, eh? And then. That's why, the next time when you want, you ask for them, they all come.

/section ommitted/

CL: So when somebody comes to help you, you always feed them.

JA: Yes. Lunch, yeh.

CL: Only lunch, not dinner? JA: No.

CL: You fdks, did you have a taro patch up mauka also?

JA: Oh yes, we used to have taro patch way up there where the lava flow was, 1955. Mostly all the Hawaiians, they all have.

CL: What's the name of the area?

JA: Uh... Kāōla CL: Kaōla?

FA: Where Kamelamela's got their house.

CL: There's still some Kamelamela land up somewhere I think.

JA: Yeah, they still have there. I think that's one, like now they call that kipuka, when you see that (unintelligible--lava has flowed around). They got some orange trees in there. That used to be all mostly 'awa. So they used to plant 'awa in there that time. This was before world war one, or two? Yeah one. I think all around there was mostly all 'awa.

CL: So then the awa was sold, I guess.

JA: Was, was sold. They dry 'em, I think was sell em to Germany and then--what?--nobody know what Germany was doing with that. Was making powder and all that. (unintelligible) and all that. It's a hard job. I used to help my father.

CL: To dry it--

JA: Yeah, to dry is the hardest thing. You, um, even to cut and all that. That was all in small blocks to dry it.

CL: You had to cut it into small pieces?

JA: Yes.

CL: Could you dry it up there or did you have to bring it down?

JA: No, well, we used to leave em up there. And then used to have a shed and then, you know like a oven, and then get uh wood going and then steam.

CL: Oh, I was thinking by the sun.

JA: Well, we used to take em by the sun. Cause if by sun you have a better weight then put in the oven.

CL: After you dried it, then...

JA: Then you put em in the bag. Then somebody come and take em to the wharf, eh?

CL: Oh, so you didn't have to take it to the wharf yourself..

JA: No. Cause you need a truck, a big truck.

CL: So there was a buyer?

JA: Yes. Oh, there was a buyer. They take em.

CL: Was that somebody from Hilo?

JA: I think somebody from Hilo. You know, da kine agent, eh?

CL: Yeah,yeah.



## Interview #1. James Ahia (contd.)

JA: My father was living down, and then 1924 when they had the first Filipino strike on the plantation, Then my father was called for special police officer. Then my father came, stayed at Pahoa, then Keaau, then he went down to Kapoho, and then 1925 he was moved to Mt. View. Then we all moved Mt. View. 1926.

CL: When he moved to Mt. View, was that for work here?

JA: Yes, for work, for Olaa Sugar Company. Those days was Olaa.

CL: Was, uh, Mt. View must have been a pretty good settlement then at that time.

JA: Oh yeah, cause they had all the camps and all that, eh? Japanese, Filipinos. When was living in Mt. View, that's when had more Filipinos was coming in. Cause before that they had mostly Visayans. Then I think then 26 and up was all Ilocanos was coming in. So my father used to be a camp police there and used to take care of them and watch over them.

CL: Camp police?

JA: We call that camp police those days.

CL: So would you have started Kalapana school when you were 6?

JA: I don't know. I think I was, I wen start maybe when I was 7 years old I think. Yeah. Cause my father was away often you know. I was with them all the time.

CL: With your grandparents?

JA: No my grandparents always stay in Kalapana. Just my father and my mother.

CL: Oh.

JA: My grandparents always stayed in Kalapana. So summer time, go down Kalapana. Preferred to be there anyway.

CL: Yeah. So when you left Kaimu to move up here to Mt. View you would have been about 6th grade I guess.

JA: Yeah, about that. 5 or 6. Yeah 6th grade I think. Then I flunked, went back. 2 years. (laughs broadly) *1 year*

FA: What were you doing in Kalapana?

JA: Oooh. Kalapana was, we have only one teacher for all 5 grades, teaching. And was lunchtime you get about 1 hour for lunch or hour and a half.

CL: So school was harder up here?

JA: No. Kalapana--so you don't learn much, eh?, with 1 teacher over there. Tourists always come there and they like sing. Alright, go sing for the tourists. And they bring 1 box cracker. I think, well, the drivers know uh? There's about 50 or 60 of us eh? But those days the tourists was good. I, well, depend on the drivers too I think, eh?

CL: Yeah, I guess if there was that many kids and only one teacher, be hard.

FA: (laugh)

JA: After that, we have 2 teacher. *Sun*

CL: Do you remember the names of your teachers?

JA: Yeah. One was Mrs. Annie GodSan. And the other teacher--I didn't have her but my brother had. Mrs. Sarah Kaua... ←

## Interview #1, James Ahia (contd.)

- FA: Kealoha. She was Mrs. Kealoha.
- JA: But when she came was Sarah Kauaulalena.
- CL: Kaua ulalena. Oh, that's all 1 last name?
- JA: Yeah. and I think when she came she had a piano. Oh, was first time we heard the piano. Oh, we all go over the teacher's cottage and listen her play.
- CL: How did she get it down there?
- JA: I think was a truck. Those days they have trucks. They still have, like Helen Lee Hong, she remembers. She was Kalapana girl too, and then Mrs. Lum Ho, eh?, the one just passed away, eh?
- CL: Yeah, I was really sorry that she passed away.
- JA: Oh, when you always meet together, you always talk Hawaiian. I enjoyed talking with her. And then, get the other's Annie Maluo... Ka'aukai. As all our same time. Then my cousin Minnie Ka'awaloa, she was younger than us, tho'.
- CL: Mrs. Lum Ho, was she in school at the same time as you?
- JA: I think was ahead of me. She's about 78, eh? She's 4 years older than me. But I know her sister.
- FA: Violet?
- JA: No, Violet, was, she's way younger.
- CL: Are there other important events during that time you were in Kaimu that you remember? You told me about the births of your brothers and sisters. Was there anybody important to you that died during that period? passed away?
- JA: Lotta people died then.
- CL: But your grandparents were still alive when you moved?
- JA: My grandfather was still living there, and then my grandmother was still living.
- CL: What about cars. When you first moved down to Kaimu was there cars?
- JA: I think they had only what? 2 or 3 car, Model T, touring car.
- CL: Do you remember who had those first cars?
- JA: Well, I remember used to be, uh, that the Lee family used to have one, they more like taxi, eh? And then used to have Charley Kaina, no Harry Kaina, no Kaina--I think Charley. Used to have 1. And then, uh, Waipa--the old man Waipa used to have one Model T.
- CL: Which Waipa was that?
- JA: Mrs. Lum Ho's father. And then after that was, a, Kini Aki. That's all I remember.
- CL: Do you remember John Kama? the Reverend John Kama?
- JA: Yes, I...
- CL: Did he have a car during that time?
- JA: I think the son, I think, had one. But the father, the Reverend John Kama, he didn't have. I don't remember him having a car.
- FA: He has a funny story about immunization. When they get their vaccination in school, the parents told em come home and go swim in Wai-a-kolea so that get all that medicine off. So you know what happen, they get a big scar.
- JA: Yeah.
- CL: Oh. Cause you thought you should wash it off?
- JA: Yeah.



JA: Ear, yeah, with the pig, only the ear--left side or right side.  
 CL: It wasn't like, different shape of notches?  
 FA: How did you foks mark yours?  
 JA: On the right, just right.  
 FA: No, what design? Everybody else marked their pig, you know.  
 JA: Yeah, but ours was a just striaht cut across.  
 FA: Cut it off? At the tip or?  
 CL: At the top, the tip?  
 JA: Some they make a groove underneath, some they slice and some one the left side, right side. So we all know.  
 CL: Yours was on the right side?  
 JA: Who?  
 CL: Yours.  
 JA: No mine was, ours was straight. Both straight.  
 CL: Both ears?  
 JA: Yeah, both ear.  
 JA: Some just one side. You know. That type of a...Was a good (custom). Everybody's honest.  
 CL: Was there ever any arguments over somebody taking somebody else's pig?  
 JA: No, never had no argument, no. Only thing sometime you get you... Oh, say I get my pig, you know, didn come back long time. So, okay, say baimby I go. I'm going up for look for my pig too. So they go up, e say, oh it's up there. Okay. So. Run up \_\_\_\_\_ go up there and get the pig. Just kill it up there or just drag em home. But sometime they go up there, they get sap or they just stay there. Sa lotta ulu trees here and there, keep going, than other's places. So. See one thing too, like down there, was, you uz living Kaimu, they had this little pond. Where during drought season all the pigs and all the cows all come down to the pond, eh?  
 CL: Yeah.  
 JA: Then you would see all the animals there.  
 CL: And then you could catch em I suppose.  
 JA: Yeah, then they generally, they stay there. Yeah, we used to get a lotta fun then with the small pigs, on the sand, run... tackle, and catch em, grab em.  
 Yeah. You won't see that again I think. That black sand beach come back. The way it was.  
 CL: Yeah, I'm afraid not. /portion omitted/  
 JA: Here's a old picture of Kaimu. You wouldn't believe how it was.  
 FA: That's not a very old one. That's about the 40's I think.  
 JA: But before the big tidal wave. FA: Before the drop.  
 : heard that it changed the way the waves come in.  
 JA: Yeah.  
 FA: You know it was. In the 40's, when I got married to him. Prior to that. When you drive there, there's a certain time, according to the way the wave action is I think, there's this limu lipoa, the one wha's not so thick, would all get washed up on the shore, the sand you know, When you drive thru Kaimu, oh, the 'ono smell, the limu smell. And now that, it doesn't happen.  
 JA: And then the pigs used to like to eat that.  
 CL: That limu?

## James Ahia, Interview #1 (contd.)

JA: Yeah, all the stink.

FA: We have another picture down at the beach-house. A very, very old one. /patriot omitted/

CL: Did pigs ever get into, or cattle ever get into people's gardens?

JA: Well, we all prepare our certain, wall up our place, and all that.

CL: With some walls. JA: Yeah.

FA: But what happens after earthquake?

JA: Oh, well, when we get earthquake, we all rush to put the wall up. If not, they sure would come in, eh? help themselves with sweet potatoes and all that. That's what we all used to raise down there. Some garden, peanuts, beans and all that.

CL: But normally they couldn't get in. Was there a gate in the stone wall?

JA: Oh yes, you have to make a gate. (unintelligible)

CL: Do you remember earthquake when you were living there?

JA: Oh yeah. Think the worst one was 1922 or .. FA: 3

That's the one that rocked Kapoho and all that. Koa'e. Think it's 20, 22 or... in 20's.

FA: It shook Kaimu too?

JA: Oh yeah, it shook Kaimu up. As when all stone walls all just flatten down.

CL: That was, maybe that was the one there was a subsidence over toward Kapoho side?

JA: Yeah, a subsidence Kapoho side, yeah.

CL: You remember that happening, that quake?

JA: Yeah, I remember that quake.

CL: Were you inside or outside?

JA: Was, a, outside...that time...happened morning. Oh, those days, happened more like continuously tho'. Stop and then shake again.

CL: Could you tell me a little story about how that day was?

JA: Yeah, was really bad. Because those days, uh, \_\_\_\_\_ with earthquake. We have kerosene lamp, so the minute we have earthquake everybody run for the kerosene lamp.

CL: So it doesn't set it on fire?

JA: So it doesn't set it on fire, yeah. Anytime get earthquake, afraid of kerosene lamp.

CL: Were you with your family when the quake happened?

JA: Yeah, my father was there. Yeah, that time. My grandpa.

CL: But, at the time that it happened were you with them?

JA: Yeah, I was with them. We was in house. Then after that was, a, school. Same thin, shake. But Kapoho was worse.

CL: So did you have to go build up your stone walls right after that then?

JA: Oh yeah, had to.

CL: You folks had garden right on your property there?

JA: Yeah, down Kaimu we used to have garden. Yeah, sweet potato, onion, we used to plant beans, peanuts, \_\_\_\_\_. So my uncle used to raise and all that, from that time, that 1955 eruption, No, what was that volcano, that blew? I think 1922, no, 24. That dust and all that. That's one that came and then we lost lot of pigs and cows.

[1924]



## James Ahia, Interview #1 (contd.)

CL: Oh really.

JA: Yeah. That thing has sometime, after that we get something to that. Lot of people in Kalapana know all that.

CL: Oh, that's the first time I heard about that.

JA: Yeah--put that down too.

CL: There was a lot of dust in the air?

JA:- Yeah, dust in the air, oh yeah. Was, was in church that Sunday, and then going home, when we go home was... Oh was in the ponds and all that... sandy, eh? First thing when we come home, go cover our water barrels and all that. Cloth on it and all that. And then, not long after that, they all \_\_\_ cows just died and all that.

CL: Maybe from eating the dust?

JA: Something like that.

CL: So what did you folks do. Was there a few cows that didn't die or did you have to get stock from elsewhere?

JA: No, after that we had to get stock. Some, some survived, some died. Pigs... a lot of them died. Just smell, all over the place.

CL: So that would have been close to the time when that earthquake was I guess.

JA: Yeah.

CL: You remember whether it was before or after?

JA: I don't know it that was Napoho one or that Volcano one, that dust. Yeah, I'm not too sure about that. But I know the earthquake and all that, with that dust. Yeah, that went wipe out Kalapana side, all the animals. I think the Lee family, I think, lost a lot of animals. They was big one, a, raising pigs, eh?

CL: Raising pigs. JA: Yeah.

CL: Was there any stores in the Kaimu area?

JA: No. Kaimu never had. I never did hear about a store. I think Ching /Black Sands Drive-in/ the first one. First was Kalapana. Yeah, they had lot of stores. 5 or 6. Right by the Catholic Church, ever there had 1 store. Back of that had 1 store. And then way over, the Lee's have store. And then, well, across where the school used to be, now where the canoe house is, right there used to be 1 little store too, a Chinese guy, they call Young Wai. Yeah, that, he had all kind restaurant --everything.

CL: Was that the biggest one?

JA: Yeah, that was the biggest one. And then, ah, had 1 other behind too, was a Chinese store. Ah Wah and all them.

CL: Ah Wah.

Tape Two, Side Two

CL: By the Roman Catholic Church, do you remember the name of who owned that one?

JA: I don't know that one. So long. Wah Yeth, no.

CL: Was that Joseph Chun Fat's

JA: Yeah, no, I think, yeah. Umhum.

James Ahia, Interview #1 (contd.)

JA: Isn't there a book by Chun Fat?

CL: Yeah. Yeah we were talking to him. But he had a stroke, so. C'n't talk very well any more.

So Young Wai had a store, Ah Wah, Lee's and Chun Fat's, and there was one more I think you said?

JA: The bakery, oh yeah. Portugee family. Um (Can't remember name) [Paulina

FA: Helen Lee Hong would know.

CL: But only the 4 Chinese stores, that you remember.

JA: Yeah, that I know of.

CL: Then, there was some other Chinese that did other things I guess.

JA: Yeah, well. Lee Hong, well he used to work in town, so, Peter Lee Hong's father. And the Koreans, I know when I was down there, they had some Koreans. But all single men was.

CL: Oh, yeah.

JA: That's right below, where you live is right. They used to live at the Desha's house.

CL: Did they live there the whole time or did they just come...

JA: Just visit, I think, Desha's.

CL: Cause he was doing stuff in town I think, wasn't he?

JA: Umhum .. The plantation, maybe not I think.

JA: on the mother's side he was, Kauwila.

FA: He married into the Pe'a family.

JA: Yeah, he married into the Pe'a family.

CL: Yeah, yeah.

JA: That's why, like, Kalapana church, I think, they have that Queen Lili'uokalani's cup, eh? To celebrate 100 or 150 yrs. And the leader came from Kaimu, Kauwila

CL: You mean during the celebration, the leader?

JA: Yeah. That's one, the leader choir, the whole thing.

the church and the contest, eh? Then they walk down.

You been in Kalapana Church, that Protestant church? No?

CL: I've been in there, but...

JA: They didn't shown you the cup and all that? Maybe you could see Annie Maluo. Annie is the custodian there. You know who she is? No?

FA: Ka'aukai.

JA: Ka'aukai. Yeah. Well, they the custodian there. Maybe you could talk to her and all that and you know tell em that you want to see that cup.

CL: So, was Stephen Desha, did he ever come down to be pastor down there?

JA: Well, I think the old man, I think was. Oh, I'm not too sure. Maybe you can find out from the annual.

CL: But during your time there, he wasn't.

JA: I'm not quite sure. Only Kamau I remember, Kama.

CL: Yeah.

JA: Reverend Kamau used to be down there. That I remember. I think they had the list--all the ones that sang for that contest and they won the trophy. That all the name of the ones that participate.

CL: That would have been how long ago?

JA: What was it, 100 or 150?



## James Ahia, Interview #1 (contd.)

FA: The celebration?

JA: 100. Yeah, last year we have that.

FA: He had some clippings.

CL: So the whole time you were there you think Kama was the pastor?

JA: Who?

CL: Kama or Kamau?

JA: Kamau.

CL: Oh, Kama' u.

JA: He was the pastor there, but my time was more the John Kama was. When I was growing up.

CL: And, a, for a while wasn't Gabriel Pe'a also?

JA: Oh, Gabriel was, way back. (FA: Recently.) JA: Recently.

CL: That's recently.

JA: Yeah, but I know he used to be faithful going to church when I was still down there.

Yeah, he's oldtimer, boy. I remember when I was small we used to go to church together.

CL: Well, I feel like maybe we should stop for now...

