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Interview #3. James Ahia 1/13/88  
by Charles Langlas, w. Frances Ahia contributing

Tape 1, Side 1

untranscribed portion on James' life after he left Kaimu (notes):

1926 moved to Mt. View

James and his brother Bill joined "kid gang" at Olaa Sugar Co. (for kids 10 yrs. or older) during summers; got 30¢ a day on up (depending on age--he stated at 36¢); at payday, once a month got \$10-12 ("That was big money for us."); worked summers of 1926-1928

1929-30 worked summers as painter (\$1/day)

1931 graduated (age 18), then worked for county--janitor at MT. View school

*late says 9th grade I think*  
/1929-1931 joined FFA, orgd. MT. View chapter

before graduated, applied to Kam schools, Hahaione farm, but had no room; in January they wrote had vacancy, but in November he'd already started work at Olaa Sugar Co.:

"So my father says 'Well it's up to you now, you working.'"  
And when he told his boss (Stuart Bell), he said:

"Jimmy, you have good chance to stay on the plantation. I'll see that you get promoted."

1932 apptd. kid-gang supervizor ("1.50/day), over 30 schoolkids

1934 substitute luna and time-keeper

1936 scale supervizor (\$75/mo.), then promoted--worked as supervizor of cultivation

1948 harvesting supervizor (hand-cut)

1955 shifted to mechanical harvesting; was a lot of "hatchet" (layoffs); he was thankful he kept his job; went back to cultivation

1959 back to harvesting supervizor (mechanical)

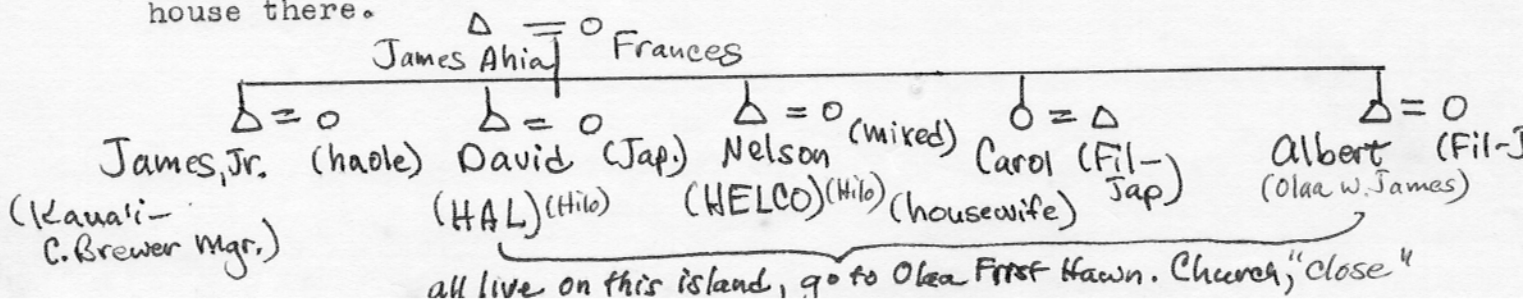
1974 retired (\$920/mo.)

James & Frances got married June 15, 1940:

James lived at Mt. View w. parents; his F&M were still members of Kalapana church; then in 1935 they joined Olaa First Hawaiian Church where they were in the habit of attending. (They all came by bus in the morning, stayed with his father's cousin until church service, then went back by bus after the service.)

Frances & her grandparents, sister also went there; James got to know Frances thru church. They married 1940, had first child, James Jr. in 1942.

They lived first w. James' parents in Mt. View, then moved to a separate plantation house. 1953 they moved to their present Kurtistown lot, to the old house there of Frances' family. In 1964 they bought the property from Frances' family and built their present house there.





Int. 3. James Ahia. 1/13/88. Tape 1, Side 1 (contd.)

(320 on counter)

- CL: What I'd like to do now is maybe goback to when you were very young, the earliest thing you can remember, either in Pahoa or when you moved down to Kaimu.
- JA: So I remember when I was small at Pahoa, I used to just cry, I liked the pastry, I like pie all the time and the bakery right across, so my father and mother had to go and get pies for me. (laughs). And I was told by my parents, right in Pahoa, right across by the theatre, there's an orange tree, it's still there, last week I passed by it's still growing. That's where they, mother had an orange plant I think it was growing somewhere around and then they, like the Hawaiians before, they bury the navel, yeah?, and so under that... orange tree is my navel.
- C: Oh, your piko?
- J: Piko, yeah. Last time had a Japanese person that was living the house and I told him, you know. How's the orange tree? Yeah, still there. Say, Oh I used to live in that house, that's where I was born, and I know my piko is plant under that orange tree, eh? still, yeah? Everytime when I pass there I look at it, I tell em, oh, my orange tree is still growing. Nobody knock em down.
- C: Terrific. So would your mother tell you that your piko was there?
- J: Yeah, and my father and all.
- C: Anything else you remember from Pahoa time?
- J: I used to remember the tie mill. See that.
- C: You remember going there?
- J: Yeah. Just passing by, looking all what they get and stacking up. I remember the train going with all that tile /ties/ eh? for railroad, tile, that's what they was making all the time from there, and that all on the flat car.
- C: Do you remember things like when your mother weaned you?
- J: No.
- CL: Maybe too early.
- J: Too early yeah, cause my mother said that I was weaned when I was , what? I think one year or something like that. I was weaned fast.
- C: I don't remember too.  
Do you remember sleeping with your parents, sleeping beside them?
- J: Yeah, remember sleeping with them, my mom and dad.
- C: While you were still in Pahoa?
- J: Yeah, still in Pahoa. We were small, and then going down Kalapana, staying my grandparents' area all weekend and all that, sogo down. And I remember riding horse with my mother, in the front /of her/ eh?
- C: When you were really little?
- J: Yeah.
- C: Do you remember actually the move, when your parents moved down to Kaimu?
- J: Yes I remember, yeah because \_\_\_\_\_ grandparents?
- C: How did that seem, when you moved in w. your grandparents?

- J\*: Oh, wasn't too bad, because my grandfather and grandmother they used to come up at Pahoa too, see? and that's when they come for they big shopping and all that. Cause Pahoa used to be alright see, because the trains bring up all the grocery, eh? So they unload at the station, then go up there and get their goods, so...
- C: Did you ever sleep beside your grandparents?
- J: Yes, my grandmother, yeah. I remember that.
- C: Which grandmother?
- J: My, ah, Annie. She was more close to us.
- C: She was?
- J: Yeah, she was more close to us. Cause, uh, she was more, my other real grandmother, Awihi, was more on her daughter's side, but my married-to grandmother, she's more on my father's side.
- C: Oh, I see yeah, she was closer to your father so closer to you.
- J: Yeah, to use, Yeah.
- C: You remember then the years before you went to school when you were in Kaimu, what did you do mostly? Did you play by yourself or go with your grandparents while they worked?
- J: Um, well, I used to go on both sides, though. And I used to go on my mother's side grandmother, no? I used to go there too. They were good to us, to me.
- C: By yourself you went, or?
- J: Yeah, most of the time I go by myself.
- C: And you'd stay there...
- J: Yeah, weekend and all that. Then they'd take me back down to Kalapana. They used to live way up here where they call that, the Black Sands subdivision, eh?
- C: Waiholoku'i.
- J: Yeah, so...
- C: Oh, they did? Not at Koa'e?
- J: No, as was later that. But you talkin' about my young days, eh?
- C: Yeah.
- J: Sometimes they take me back down in the afternoon and they just sleep down at our Kaimu house. My grandfather. Or sometime come down on Monday morning, early in the morning. Come in and then go school.
- C: Umhm.
- J: I were close to them, to the Elderts.
- C: But when you were at home, with your parents and grandparents, did you mostly stay with them or did you go off by yourself?
- J: No, mostly we stayed there, in the house, all the same house.
- C: Yeah, you didn't...
- J: I didn't go out. If we go out we... I don't know, those days the Hawaiians were particular that they rather have the children home all the time. They don't let you just go roam here and there. house to house. So you have to go with blood-relation house, that's all. /That's how/ our grandparents are.
- C: And, uh, they didn't let you just go by yourself.
- J: No, my parents were particular, they strict, even my grandfather was strict on that.
- C: So...
- J: So, like with my grandfather, well being at Boarding School, so he's strict, so he always says, well you folks be home certain time, before dark, so we have to be home. All us tell, well we



going catch crab. Ok. Then he knows where we are. But if just tell him, oh we going to go play, he say "No, no, no. You flocks stay home.

Or unless my father them, well or my uncle, go out fishing, lidat, alright, say, oh we going on the sand. Umhm, he say O.K. We have to let them /know/ where we go.

- C: Ok. You were telling me that sometimes you went to play with the Waipa kids.
- J: Oh yeah, just above me, eh?
- C:\* Would he let you go over there? ←
- J: Yeah, oh yeah, it's all day time, yeah.
- C: As long as you told him you were going?
- J: Yeah we there.
- C: Did you mostly spend time playing with your brothers?
- J: Yeah, we all played together. All played together. Played marbles and all that. Or just pitch ball. 7
- C: What kind of ball?
- J: Oh, softball.
- C: One that you bought?
- J: Bought one, or sometimes you just make out of bag or something lidat, like a ball. Played kamapio. Maybe you know that, eh?
- C: I did hear the name, but I'm not sure how it's played.
- J: Well you just \_\_\_\_\_ and then you hit, and...first you hit that bird and then the other side grab, and then they throw it he? Hit the rock or between the two rock, something like that, well you out, eh?
- C: There's a rock between the two sides?
- J: No, they put a rock, stone, on two end and then put a stick, eh? /shows: \_\_\_\_\_ and then you going throw the kamapio, eh?, the shave on the sides, and you hit em to the place and here you stand, then you going to protect to hit your goal, eh?

Tape 1, Side 2

- J: None of your students know kamapio?
- C: They heard the name from their informants and some of the idea of the game, but I don't think anybody knew the game themselves.
- J: Um, no? Well, was kamapio. They have to show you, oh back when we was about 30's, we still play that. But now I don't see that, they say, oh it's dangerous because the points, sometime you get hit and all that.
- C: How come it has, the stick that you throw is pointed right?
- J: Cause when you hit, lidat, cause if you own the goal, well you gonna hit that and then try put em away from your goal here, and then if nobody catch em, cause all the others gonna try to catch em, uh? So they get chance to come in and be, you know, to take score. And if nobody catch em, well, from there /the goal/ you go with your stick--1,2,3--you get points, eh? And somebody keeping your points, eh? until you /reach/ to the goal.
- C: But how come the stick is pointed?
- J: So when you can kick on the side, it comes up, and then you try hit em away from the goal so you get more points, eh?
- C: Oh. Hard to understand unless you see it I think.
- J: Yeah, hard to understand. Oh, we used to do all that.

- C: There's only one stick? or?
- J: Well, you get only one stick for /goal/ and then you get this kamapio one, the one that pointed w side so you can hit, eh? You know, when you hit em one side because you know it bounce, tilt. Then you try hit em far away, and then same thing everybody be coming--dodging, blocking the way, eh? So your points would be low, eh? So, if you hit em high, they catch em, well you lose, you get out, eh?
- C: If they don't cathe it...
- J: Well, you still, you can measure and then you get your points. And then keep on going and after that, well, it everybody get their chance and then they count, oh, I'm the winner. And then used to have, you know those kakaliao, the one that we picked? Well, used to get all that see. So that's more like the points, eh? We get all--if you get all that and you the winner. When everybody come and you the last one you take all those marbles, eh?
- C: Did you play regular marbles with them?
- J: Yeah, we do too. We have that. We use the agates for head, eh? And then we used that kakaliao, that's what we used to get in the ring, eh?
- C: I never did play marbles myself.
- J: A lot of fun.
- C: But the agates, that was a actual marble?
- J: Yeah, well used that for the head, eh?
- C:\* For shooting?
- J: For shooting yeah.
- C: Did you play any other games?
- J: Well, we used to have the top. Used to play top,
- C: That was a homemade top?
- J: Yeah, we used to make some homemade, and well, the first time come, we used to buy, eh? and after that used to top. Then we used to make em, add nail, long, so they dance around, all that. Then after that they stopped that, no? It's illegal I think, eh? to use top. /bit omitted/  
Somebody had, I think was ~~was~~ when they were throwing somebody walked and then... hit the foot. That' what they said. I don't know if its true. But I don't see them playing tops no more.
- C: Did you have a top that you throw to make it spin?  
What kind of top?
- J: Oh, that type used to get the string. You gotta pull em. Something like yoyo, you use a string first. /bit omitted/  
...you make a ring and all that, and then..
- C: Was there some kinda points with that?
- J: Yeah, the points is, uh, if your top can come out from the ring.
- C: Then you win?
- J: Then you, well alright you win, you get out, eh? But if your top stays in there, well just too ba# for you. Everybody gonna just hit on your top and bruise you up (laughs)  
Then you can't play: eh? till e everybody's top. So you just stand by and wait. It's something like marbles too, when you play, eh? And then if your head's stuck in there, just too bad, you stay in there. Unless you make agreement that, you know, play bet and you say we play for 10 marbles in there and then if I put your head out, you gotta give me 10 marbles, eh?



- C: Yeah.
- J: So, sometimes you shoot the head and then you stuck in there. You collect the 10 and then you wait until somebody take you out and then you can play again.  
I don't know, maybe they have different ways how they play.
- C: Yeah, probably. But with the tops you'd have to wait...now what would happen once you got in the thing and your top didn't come out of the circle? Then how long would you have to wait?
- J: Well, till everybody get their share, there be 5 or 10 of use, well, everybody get their chance, sometime might get 2, 3 in there, throw.
- C:\* And then after everbody throws their top then you're done and you start again?
- J: Yeah, start again. You know that, they just do their own rule, eh?
- C: What about this game called steal eggs, did you ever play that?
- J:\* Oh yeah, I do. Steal the eggs, take the stone, or what they have in the circle, eh?
- C: How did you play that?
- J: Well, the guy gonna be in there, more like you gotta push him off, eh? If he sit on it, you can't do anything, eh? So they just gonna try take the eggs out.
- C: So one person sits on the stones?
- J: Well, he's guarding the eggs, eh?
- C: Is there several people on each side?
- J: No, no, just 1 person.
- C:\* And everybody else tries to steal the eggs from him?
- J: Well, if they can, well, you be the loser. /bit omitted/
- C: So all these games must have taken 4 or 5 people.
- J: Oh yeah. Well you all lined up, first group and second group or third group.
- C: So was there usually enough kids around to play those games?
- J: Oh yeah, there were, there were lotta kids.
- C: Would you have played these around your house?
- J: No, we usually goes in the park, in big area, we all meet together and say, ok, we going there. So we just ask my father and mother, oh we going over play. Ok, alright. Be sure come back. And sometime they say, oh, make sure you folks go take your / clothes and then when you go, after that you go take a bath and come home, so.  
Well, we always do our chores before we ask them, eh? Make sure that enough firewood and the water and all that. And then we go.
- C: Would you have done this before you started going to school?
- J: No, mostly all after. Later, after school. Cause most times morning time, we usually got plenty to do because we have to feed the pigs, we have to prepare everything and all that. Then what, we milk the cow in the morning, and then feed the calf, then see the calf get enough, then move the calf away from the mother so the mother can go out. And then we get the calves tied up in the house, where we have a fence for the calves only. Then go school. Then when we come back, well, we get the milk in the house, but they usually, our parents need to boil the milk eh? Cause we don't have refrigerator, so when we come back and then they have

the sweet potato all cooked, so, you know, light refreshment after school, cause we don't have lunch when we go school, don't take a lunch. Or unless we go out and during mango season, well, \_\_\_\_\_ Kalapana time, well we go, get something to eat for lunch.

C: What kind of breakfast would you eat before you went to school?

J: Well, we have a lot of milk and sweet potato, sometime get the cracker, or taro, or fry pancake.

C: Big breakfast?

J: Yes, big breakfast. And then if want to eat poi, and then dry fish, and all that. Hoo, they have plenty. We have plenty. Or fried fish, all that.

C: What about when you were home during the day, like, on the weekend, did you just eat mainly 2 meals or?

J: Oh we have 3 meals. But usually light, cause we have all the papayas you want, and then if mango season get all the mangos, if avocado, just cracker and avocado.

C: For lunch.

J: For lunch?

C: Lunch was a light meal?

J: Yeah, lunch was a light, we used to have light. Mostly weekdays /during school vaction/ if you do all the work, by after lunch already it's fun already. They tell, oh, if you folks like go swim, go, play, go. My father, my grandparents all say, oh, you folks can go swimming.

C: On the weekends?

J: Yeah, Saturdays. But Sundays we were strict, living down there. So my grandparents, my father, oh they don't want us go fishing on Sunday. Some other families too, they don't go on Sunday fishing.

C: You weren't supposed to do any kind of work on Sunday? Could you play?

J: Not even play. Cannot. Not supposed to play. Go church, come back, just stay home. Just feed the animals, that's all. But we usually sneak out, and we know my grandparents coming home, my father them, sometime they had church business meeting. Well, we can play and then go home.

C: So you play around the church?

J: No, no, we play in the Kaimu, eh? Get church in at Kalapana, so almost one mile away.

C: Oh, ok, where they couldn't see you.

J: Yeah, play and go. They, mostly what they do, Sunday afternoon, all the grownups they all get one place, like, Kaimu that, across Pe'a house, they go there, sit down, chew the fat and all that, talk stories.

C: That'd be after the church meeting.

J: Yeah, after the church meeting. They get home, change into their regular clothes, and then they come out.

C: So you kids, what would you do when they came over to Pe'a's house?

J: Well, we just stayed there, behave. Couldn't play no more, just sit down.

I was sorry those days, my father doesn't approve, my grandfather doesn't approve of playing instruments, and all that. They don't like us to play. But my father's brother, oh he can play instruments. He's good. My father was, oh was old, and then after that he learn how to play ukulele.



- C. When he got to be retired?
- J: No, before that. Then he used to play ukulele, he get his own ukulele. But for us he always tell, don't play. As for lazy man, that. Just sit down and play ukulele.
- C: So what'd he say about your uncle?
- J: I don' know. Well, he just go his way, eh? Nobody can stop him.
- C: Your father never talked aginst him for that?
- J: Well, I think they talked, but nothing. Go in l ear, go out the other. He's happy-go-lucky, eh? Yeh, I think every family all different.
- C: Were both your mother and your father strict with you?
- J: Yeah, they were strict to us, all of us.
- C: And your grandparents also, your grandmother?
- J: Yeah, they were strict with us.
- C: You didn't feel like anybody was...easier?
- J: Fairly easy? Yeah, no. They were strict. All the same. Only my other third brother, he wax more taken care of by my mother's parents, so he's different.
- C: That was Jarrett?
- J: Jarrett, yeah.
- C: Were they easier? Well, yeah, they were a little bit eaiser. Cause I lived with them, weekends and all that.
- C: Do you remember any times when your parents or your grandparents got angry with you? Cause you did something wrong or...
- J: Oh, yes. Plenty.
- C: What kind of things would you do wrong?
- J: Oh, sometimes we do something, taking something that we not supposed to take, and all that.
- C: Like, ~~what~~...
- J: Or maybe setting fire and all that. We figure, oh, I going burn this rubbish here. Not thinking that it's near to the house and near to the plant and all big flame and all that. In the garden lidat we figure, oh the bigger the flame the better, but, you know especially when you put coconut leaf on, oh, that thing has big           . You get the sweet potato or the onion plant nearby, so it's gonna burn. "no, why you make big fire? Don't you see the onion there and the sweet potato? The next day you look, all brown, eh? the leaves.
- C: You didn't ever almost set the house on fire did you?
- J: No, kinda far away.  
Or sometimes we use the cane knife and all that, we not supposed to use, eh?
- C: Oh, they didn'want you to use the cane knife?
- J: Well, we a little bit too small that time, eh? They were particular.
- C: How old would you have been when they let you use the cane knife?
- J: Um, I don't know. I remember my father and my mother used to tell me, say when I was small boy, when I was about 10--8, 10 years--I was good on that knife, cane knife, cutting guavas and all that.  
I used to make my own diving goggles.

- C: What'd you make them with?
- J?: I used to from plumeria trees. You know, you cut the whole branches, get big hole already, so you, with a knife, you. You put glasses in. The glass, well as that we use is wax, so just put a lot of wax. Lot of honey hive we have around there.
- C: So you maek...
- J: Well you get the band, uh? Well those days you got all tube, eh? car tube, eh?
- C: Innertube.
- J: Innertube. And go practice to go dive and all that. Oh, leak, not good. Oh, gotta cut, or just put em in the water and then and then see. And then behind ear for fitting.
- C: So, just the plumeria would fit up against...
- J: Well, at least the hole is big already so can make for fitting the glass outside, is the hardest.
- C: And then you...
- J: And then make hole, go between here /makes motion between eyes and between eyes and ears/ and all that, and then just get a cord, ribbon, and tie the innertube, eh?
- C: So over your nose the rubber would go too?
- J: No, no, inside you gotta put the cord between you know--string or rope between, eh? and then main thing is the fit inside. We used to do all our own.
- C: Sound kinda hard.
- J: No. Getta wire to drill the hole, put em in the fire, couple times, right through, and then the side.
- C: So the rubber part was just to make it tight in the back.
- J: Yeah, tight in back.
- C: And the cord would go..
- J: And the cord only just from here (ear to eye) and in between here (eye to eye) so that this will putt right in. Yeah, my days I used to be good in diving.
- C: You folks, when you went diving, you were spear-fishing or what?
- J: Yeah, well spear-fishing, or diving for lobsters.
- C: Anything else you dove fore?
- J: Spearing I did a little bit on that, when I was getting bigger, before went up Mt. View. Before went up already, I was more on net, throwing net already. So, didn't use diving much. For, used to, diving was for wana. You heard? (C: Yeah.) So I used the goggles there. That we used a lot of there. But if the tide is good, just about knee high you could see the wana there, scoop em with a wire.
- C: So, how old do you think you were when you started doing throw-net?
- J: About 10, 12 years old I think.
- C: Just before you left, then. Did somebody teach you or...?
- J?: Yeah, my father. Well, I used to fool around too, my father's net. Oh, my father, ever since I remember used to get throw-net. My uncle, yeah, used to be good on net. They patch, they own, they make they own. I think I made two net during my lifetime. Complete. Lead and everything.
- C: Uh-huh. When you were older or when you were young?
- J: Um, when I was older, living Mt. View. When I was living here



I made, 1953-54, complete one net. Then after that, so busy, cheaper to buy so. Pay \$110, \$120.

He had a net stolen from his grage here./

C: What about diving, how old were you when you started that?

J: Oh, diving I think was about 8, 7, 8 years old we was doing already. Cause that time, before, Kalapana used to get lot of goldfishes, all kind of. So we used to dive for it.

C: Those were in the ocean?

J: No, in the pond.

C: In Wai-a-kolea?

J: Wai-a-kolea and Wai-'opae, the other ponds, all had plenty goldfishes. All kine, and sometimes go get 3 tail. I don know how they got that in there.

C: Oh, you mean liek regular goldfish, like in the tanks?

J: Yeah, regular goldfish, yeah, in the tanks. And then they had, what?, even koi they had. But they had the black one.

C: So you folks ate those fish or...?

J: Yeah, we used to eat that.

And then put em in the bucket. Oh, this one junk, throw em back, this one nice, pick em, put em in the bowl. But oh, leave em too long, they die, eh? Cause no more that air.

C: Oh, you had bowls then?

J: Yeah, we had bolws.

C: But sometimes you ate em too?

J: Ah, no, they all small kind, eh? Too small to eat. Yeah, the koi was alright. Big, big koi used to have

C: And those you ate.

J: Yeah, that we ate.

C: Do you feel like you were treated any different because you were the oldest child? If more was expected of you or...?

J: Well, to tell you the truth, I think, well, from my grandfather I think I was treated a little bit different.

F: He was Grandpa's pet because he was name after grandpa.

J: Yeah, I was name after him. And in his will, he had left everything to me, see, me and my cousin. So, you know, just thinking of that, well, you know, I'm...special.

C: Did he favor you in other ways?

J: No, other ways, not. In food and everything we're about the same. All that. But I think just because I am his namesake.

C: Do you think maybe he expected more from you than from other brothers?

J: Well, my father used to say what he wanted was for send me to stay at Boarding School /Hilo Boarding School/, he wanted me to be a carpenter. And then, oh, my grandfather wanted me to take up, you know, Hawaiian wrestling, lua, so my grandfather wanted me to be in there, my father wanted my brother Bill, so he went to the teacher.. you know the one, the instructor, and he said, "Oh, this boy cannot be, he has a mean temper."

C: Who, you?

J: No, my brother. That's the one that my father wanted. But my grandfather wanted me. So. That's the end of that see, for me.

F: How come you didn't train?

J: Well, my father didn't want me to be, eh? My grandfather wanted me. My father wanted my brother Bill.

C: The instructor was where, Kalapana?  
 J: No, Pahoa. A Hawaiian man, call em the lua, you know Hawaiian wrestling. Hawaiian art.  
 F: What was his name?  
 J: Ka'anohi. I think he was the last one on Puna side. He's good on that.  
 F: He must be able to just see the person and know whether he's suitable for training or not.  
 C: So then, none of you folks...  
 J: So none of us were.  
 F: That would be outlawed today, lua.  
 C: Is it?  
 J: Yeah, it's outlaw.  
 C:\* You think anybody knows it still?  
 J: I don't think so, no. Oh that one can be 1 small old man and you one big man, you go there and boy he just roll you like a marble.  
 C: Did you see it?  
 J: No, I didn't see. I heard about. Didn't see. Only thing is, see, in that Hawaiian way, see, you take out your malo and all that, you make him kiss your rear. You know, if it's a real enemy to you, they do it. And then when that they do that, said, I don't know how, but some heeby-jeeby stuff I think. But he say if you the instructor and all, you know how to do that, say when the people come in \_\_\_\_\_ you back get warm, hot. So what you do you go in the corner of the party or something like that, that's where you stay.  
 F: In the corner of the house.  
 C: Why do you go in the corner?  
 J: Well, you here in the lu'au here and all that, you go by the corner. Cause anybody come in the front of you and you just tackle, jujitsu or what, you can put the person away. But if you stand in the center or something like that, somebody can come from behind of you, so your art is nothing.

Tape 2, Side 1

C: Some people say that in the old time, the older brother bossed the other brothers around, they had to give him respect. Did you feel like that was...?  
 J: No, I don't think that way.  
 C: That wasn't part of your family?  
 J: My father was, I think we were all equal. To me we was all equal. Only thing like when my brothers grew up, they went they own way, eh?  
 C: How do you mean?  
 J: Well, they get married, they went out, and then before that they were thinking of going away and all that. So, when they get married, well...they left home, eh?  
 C: But you didn't.  
 J: No, I didn't.  
 C: And was that because you were the oldest, you should stay?  
 J: Well, when I was growing up, you know, I think of, more the Christian way, no? Honor thy father and thy mother. So I always think of that, see? Respect.



- F: He was working plantation and his dad was working plantation, so the two, you know (J. Two of us were.) remained on the plantation. When we first got married we stayed with his folks, and then we, later on, moved to a little plantation house and then, after a while, a year or two, his father got (J: Before the war, second world war) was sick, so, he got injured, fell from a horse, on the job. After that he got different illnesses and he didn't go back to work. They moved to Hilo with, to stay in Hilo at his brother-in-law's house /Akana's/, where his mother was live. So James and I moved back into his parents' home.
- J: So during that time, what, we had only 3, e children, no? Junior, David and Nelson. Then he passed away, eh? It's hard.
- F: He died so young tho.
- J: Put that down. 58. (James' father died at 58 in 1948. His mother at 87 in 1983.)
- C: You said the horse fell on him?
- J: No, the horse slipped, slide down. That time was cement, pavement road. Just before WW2.
- F: Yeah, when Dec. 7, he was in the hospital already.
- J: Then he came back and then he start working, eh? He used to get chauffeur, had his own car, and then he has the chauffeur. They supply, plantation. I think gas was plantation. They had ration, I think he get 16 gallon a month. Plus they own 16, so get 32 gallon, eh? He got Model A, well you can get lotta mileage, get
- ~~F: After that different health problems came up, so he had to quit.~~
- ~~J: With pension~~
- eh? It's over 30 miles to a gallon.
- F: \* After that different health problems came up so he had to quit.
- J: With pension.
- C: How did you get along with your brother's and your sister? Were you closer to any of them than others?
- F: Annie was the baby in the family so she was everybody's pet.
- J: Pet, yeah.
- F: Jarrett was raised by the grandparents on the Elderts' side.
- J: My mother's side.
- C: He wasn't actually hanai'd by them?
- J: No, no. Just. Legally it wasn't adopted, see, but they took care of him, I think from only small I think.
- F: How old was he when he went with them?
- J: Oh, must be, oh, was baby I think, something like that. Cause he didn't go school with us and all that. He was down in Kapoho all the time.
- C: So he was always with them...you don't call that hanai?
- J: Well, that's hanai, yeah, but not legal yeah?
- F: Oh, the Hawaiian way, hanai is not legal.
- J: Yeah, he was hanai. /portion reserved/
- Then he was there from, what, 1917 he was born...17...27...think he was, what, 16 years.../portion reserved/-/James' father had a plantation lawyer get his son back from the grandparents/
- Say, okay, it's not legal adopted, it's your son, so you can have him. Cause I think after that, he was living down there, he just roamin around, wasn't working...down at Kapoho. So...father tell em, well, you folks accept employees of 16 years? He tell yeah.

So...came, stayed with us and then go work plantation. ...

C: So, somehow your father could control him and the grandparents couldn't?

J: Oh yeah, they couldn't control him. Came, stay with us, on the plantation. Still yet, he was on his own. Too much freedom.

F: Well, I think, when you hanai like that, you know, come back to the family, his habits were different, and you have to change. And there wasn't that closeness as the rest of the family, I think.

J: Yeah, I could see it. Then he went, join the National Guard and all that, so...go out and gambling and all that.

F: Well, he just went out into the world, where you stayed in the protected plantation camp, you never went anywhere.

J: Well, that's the best place for us.

C: Can you think about your grandparents a little bit, your grandfather and your two grandmothers, and tell me what kind of people they were, if you compare them to other people?

J: Well, to me, on my father's side, I think my grandmother them's more educated, on my father's side. They more broad-minded.

C: More educated than other people in the community?

J: No, but comparing between my father's side and my mother's side, I thknk my father's side is more broad-minded.

C: You mean more aware of the world?

J: Yeah, the world and all that.

C: That grandfather, your FF, do you know how he came to Kaimu?

J: Oh my FF? Well, he came from Kohala and attended Boarding School, and I think he went down Kalapana side and all that and then met my grandmother Annie. I didn't know /the details of/ that. /bit omitted/

C: What did they teach at Hilo Boarding Schoo, I wonder.

J: Uh, more vocation. And I think academic too.

F: Was your grandfather 'akamai?

J: Oh yeah, he was smart. GF was smart. Oh, for adding and all that, oho, he just read the figures down, all that, one time, the answer come right out. My grandfather was smart.

F: What about his speaking?

J: Oh, speaking was good. (F: His English was good?) His English was good and he always go the church convention and all that. And he's not afraid. He's well-educated tho'. ↙

F: Compare your grandpa and tutu Wiki (James' FB) in conversation. How does your grandfather speak, better than your uncle?

J: Oh yeah. He's more---oh, when he speak English, oh boy, he's godd.

C: How come you call your uncle tutu Wiki?

J: Oh, because my kids call. I call him uncle but...because of that.

F: Oh, he has a...they called their grandpa a funny name, I don know why. What?

J: Taita. (F: Tutu Itaita.) Strong.

C: How come you called him that?

J: Because he's strong in the mouth, eh? What he says gotta be done, eh? (laughs) He's strong boy, what he says gotta be done.



F: His word is law.  
 J: His word is law. So we respect that, so call em Tutu Taita.  
 C: Did you call him that to his face too?  
 J: Yeah, to his face. (bit omitted)  
 C: So I guess your grandfather was a strong church man?  
 J: Oh yeah, he's strong. (Shows me names on list of church members.)  
 Here---J.L. Ahia, that's my grandfather, and then my grandmother  
 Hina Ahia and then this was Mala'o, Auihi. (bit omitted)  
 C: Were your grandparents married in church?  
 J: I don't know. In those days married in the church or not? Mostly  
 home, no? I know when my uncle Willie Elderts, Minnie's father and  
 mother, got married, was in the home.  
 C: If they got married in the home, was there a service?  
 J: Well, just, yeah "I pronounce you husband and wife."  
 F: Was that the minister?  
 J: Yeah, ministers were there. (bit omitted)  
 C: Oh, so you know that your mother's father and mother were married  
 that way, is that what you said, the Elderts?  
 J: The Elderts I don know, whether it's home or what. Maybe I  
 think. I think they usually get married where the lu'au is.  
 Where everybody is there.  
 F: Well, they pick a place they gonna have the wedding, and then the  
 party is made there also. (bit omitted)  
 C: What about your GGF, do you know anything about him?  
 J: No, only I know he's a good fisherman and that's the one I say  
 about the shark and all that, no? That's all that I know about  
 him. And then when you look, I think you don't see that name  
 Mala'o. /We discuss the name M. Kalaemakani which I found  
 for the Mala'o Kaimu lot. James doesn't recognize it as his  
 FFF's name. Says he needs to look at his deed. /  
 And then you can see, maybe, cause he has another property too, way  
 up, up Kalewa. That's back about 3 miles from Kaimu.  
 F: Who owns that property?  
 J: As one \_\_\_\_\_ and a l that.  
 F: Your father's property, eh?  
 J: Well, after that, but I mean the old deed.  
 C: What about your grandmothers, how did they get along?  
 J: Oh, I don know. Cause I know the other one, the real one, stayed  
 with him in Kaimu, Annie, and the other one went with the daughter  
 in Hilo, taking care all the children. So Annie stayed until she  
 got sick and then she went Hilo, stayed at the house, with the two  
 of them there, two sisters, and then she went to the hospital and  
 died. So was down there all the time, helping my grandfather.  
 I used to take care of her.  
 C: When she died, did they bring her back to Kaimu for the funeral?  
 J: Yeah, but I think they had the funeral service right at Matayoshi  
 hospital, they had pastor Desha, cause I still remember. This  
 was 1925. Then from there we brought on down with Dodo's hearse  
 down to Kalapana. Then she was buried at Kalapana, but church  
 service was all at Matayoshi hospital.  
 F: The people went there for the service?  
 J: Was only few. Only few, for the family. So when took em down,  
 all that, said "not going get funeral service?" "No, no, it's  
 pau already." So--the hearse just took em straight up.

- C: Was that like a family grave site?
- J: No, community. On the lava.
- C: Whereabouts is that cemetery?
- J: As when you leave Kaimu, coming to Kapoho side, going up there, on that lava flow. On the mauka side, get a lotta graves there. S& my grandmother Annie, and then my grandfather below.
- C:\* In the same cemetery?
- J: Same place, yeah, but different area.
- C: So when your grandmother died, did you come up to Hilo before she died?
- J: Well, that time, my father was living at Keauu that time, Olaa. And I was down with my grandfather, staying there.
- C: Did you know that she was going to die and go up to see her?
- J: Well, I know she was sick, gotta carry her and bedpan and all that. She was pretty sick.
- C: But then, when she died, you came up for the funeral?
- J: Well, I was living Hilo, eh? Me and my father, I was there by the bedside. Only thing was, I scold my father, why you no let me know? When they were all by the bedside, they knew she was gonna go, eh? But they didn't let us know, so...just slept. And in the morning they say, oh Grandma gone.
- C: You father was there tho?
- J: Yeah, my father was there and grandfather, but not the kids. Had all the arrangements already made with Dodo and all that, so...Not this Richard Dodo, the father, his father.
- C: What about when your grandfather died?
- J: Oh, my grandfather died at the house, Kalapana, his house. He was sick too, and we used to go down and come back. ]
- C: Were you there when he died?
- J: When he died, yeah. But when he went down, that time, they called my father and us, we was working that day, and says, oh he's getting low. So we went down and he was still breathing and the minute we all get there, and after that he...pau. We all say look like he was waiting for us. All the family was there, and friends, all that. ]
- C: Did he say anything to you before he died?
- J: No, he was in a coma already.
- C: Were you able to grieve when he died?
- J: Oh yeah. I did. The only thing was, got so mad about, was our real GM Awihi and my uncle, cause my grandfather always keep record, everything and he has all in his trunk what he has. And he was good on Hawaiian herbs. He believe in Hawaiian herbs. And I've seen, my cousin fall down from the mango tree and all that. Alright, he told em, no, bring em down. So just by Hawaiian herbs and all that, just rubbing and, oh, oh, my cousin used to scream. So we used to go, I used to go pick the herbs and then say, oh you get this, and that. Just from that and then came straight. So my cousins's father he say, oh take em to the doctor. My GF said no, he say I'll take care. It came all right.
- C: He didn't tie it up with the herbs, just rub em?
- J: Just rub. But when he rub, oh, somebody gotta go hold the hand



like this--to hold the hand, pull and all that, and then he rub, eh? /demonstrates pulling the arm out/ and each time he rub, you pull. Really surprising, no? That's the first time I wen see lidat.

F: So all those information that he had recorded got burned?

J: Yes.

## Side 2

//James told how his grandfather's land was willed to James and his cousin, /

C: Oh, not to your father, just went directly to you?

J: Yeah, and my cousin.

F: How old were you when you signed it over to your father?

J: I think over 20. 23 I think or 24.

F: Why did you sign it back to your father?

J: Well, he way for sign em and give em to him, eh? Well, I could see, cause if not would lose the whole thing, eh? Cause my cousin, what? Tai Leong, what he does. Gamble and all that. If not, wouldn't be in the family, the property now.

C: Oh, so it went to both you and your cousin jointly?

J: Yeah, that property, see? So when we growing up and all that, so my father say, oh more better sign. We had to turn his paper and all that, so we signed to him, eh?

F: This cousin and James were the pet, grandpa's pet.

C: What cousin was that?

J: Tai Leong, Thomas Chang Akana.

C: You told me at one time that you were caretaker of Pai'ala Chapel.

J: Yeah, 50¢ a month. I don't know how much members was attending at that time, but about 15, about 10 or 20 people. Not regular, eh? Sometime get two coming.

C: Those would have been only the Kaimu folks?

J: Yeah, Kaimu folks and up Mokuhulu and all that. Kelihoomalua's used to come. Same thing they having at Haili, they have morning service.

F: And from there you walk all the way to Kalapana?

J: Yeah.

C: So how early would that service have been?

J: Oh, they start about 7<sup>15</sup>, 6:30 or 7. One hour service, and then go home, eat, and then go over to Kalapana. So Kalapana be about 9:00 or 10.

C: Did you usually have a kahu at Kalapana church?

J: Yeah, Kalapana, that's where you get the kahu, there.

C: But not at the chapel?

J: No, not at chapel, that mostly the licentiate or the deacons come over. Or sometime you get the kahu come over too. Special Sunday, I think one a month or something lidat he comes over and then, plus in Kalapana.

C: Actually, I should ask you first of all, in the Hawaiian churches, what's the position of the deacons and the licentiates that you're talking about? What do they do?

F: Kahu is the minister. They can perform weddings and communion. Licentiate preacher is below the kahu. Does he perform communion?

J: No, he cannot.

~~J: And then the deacons, licentiates, they are recognized by the~~

- F: And then the deacons...
- J: Deacons are like the licentiate, they are recognized by the conference, uh?
- F: Yeah, by Hawaiian Evangelical Association at that time. They can do preaching but they cannot perform weddings and...
- J: Funeral they can.
- F: And then the deacons, they help with serving of the communion and
- J: To chair.
- F: I guess when there's hō preacher, nobody but the deacons...
- J: Take over the service. That's how we do here.
- C: Ok, ok. So I know at one point your grandfather is shown as in charge of the Kalapana church--1925 I think. So he would have been a deacon?
- J: Yeah, my grandfather is a deacon. I think he's a deacon and licentiate. Cause he always represent the church at the conference, eh? /portion omitted/
- J: /Today/ they don't have licentiate. They got away with that.
- C: You think there's no more licentiate?
- J: No. I don't think so. I'm not sure on that.
- C: So there must have been a period of time when there was no kahu at Kalapana Church.
- F: Oh, they off and on. J: Off and on, yeah.
- C: So maybe that's why your grandfather was listed as in charge, cause he was a deacon. Would there only be 1 deacon?
- J: No, deacon get plenty I think, get plenty of them was, plenty deacons was there. I thknk my grandfather was licentiate. They call em ha'i 'ōlelo, eh?
- F: Preacher, lecturer.  
(bit omitted)
- C: So when you were the caretaker of that chapel, what did that involve doing?
- J: Well, open the door. And then Saturday go sweep inside, or sometime Sunday, well mostly Saturday I go there, clean up and all that, mop inside. And then put flower, whatever can find around you know.
- F: I'ts walking distance, eh?
- J: And then my cousin go make fun. Oh, you gotta watch or Haleola would be there. Anyway, she pass away, down in the week and all that. One of the members. Try to scare me. (F: the ghost.)
- C: So how old were you when you did that?
- J: Was maybe 8,9 years old I think.
- C:  $\frac{3}{4}$  And then all the way till 13?
- J: Yeah, 13 (when he moved to Mt. View)
- C: Was that usual for a kid to do that?
- J: Well, I just do it for love and just to help, eh? It's nothing that.
- C: Was that carried away by a tidal wave or something?
- J: No, no, just when you move away, and then my grandfather died, and, just nobody went back there.
- F: The chapel was still there after we were married.
- J: Yeah, but...
- F: Who bought the lumber?



J: Oh was Kini Aki, eh? They were under Kalapana Mauna Kea Church, so they just dismantled.

C: They used the lumber for the Mauna Kea Church?

J: No, no. Carpenter and those who helped tear down. That was shame, eh? to let that thing just... Cause when they build that church it was so narrow, so small. So my grandfather say, he say, well ok, I give part of the land, for as long as the church stand can use my property. So when tear down the church and all that, went back to the family.

(part of the interview untranscribed--discussion of families and places in Kaimu while looking at tax-map,)

Untranscribed notes/first portion also unrecorded:

Lot 33(now Akana's)--first house platform Donna photographed, where James' father was born

FA: Was your family lot an ahupua'a?

JA: I'm not sure.

James also unsure how the two lots owned by his family(34,33) were acquired, whether they were both Mala'o land or not.

The Kaimu-Makena Houselots area (farther mauka) was sold later. No one lived there in James' time at Kaimu. His family got 4 1/2 acres there in 3 lots--GF Ahia bought 1, his F bought 2; (26--subdivied into 96,97 also owned by B Jarrett; 27--subdivided into 98,99 also now sold, formerly owned by B Abe; 89 owned by S Annie)

(former)

Lot 35(now county)--was once Keliihoomalu land; no Keliihoomalu lived there in James' time. But was an old house there; later (after 1946 tidal wave) the red cross built a house there for /Harry/ Keliihoomalu whose house was destroyed by wave; then state condemned the land for roadway

Several Keliihoomalu families in area during his time--

Harry Keliihoomalu (Lot 41, by BlackSands drive-in)

William ' ' (HF of Louise Keliihoomalu)

Henry ' ' (Robert's F, good guitar player) } at Mokuhulu

Lot 28(now a subdivision)--Charles Will house, big house by beach; a Hilo contractor, haole, came down for weekends, let folks go thru his lot to beach

Lot 31(now Kalapana Shores subdivision)-Keahi place (James never saw the Keahi's, gone, but place referred to as their land); Kaneapua lived there, later moved to Lot 27, then Korean people lived at Lot 31

no more lived in that direction

Lot 36 --Desha's house (2 story, foundation still there);  
Kauwila, the song-leader, used to live there; had heiau by  
the corner. Kauwila put the body of his dead daughter on  
top, to let the flesh rot off:

J: "So my grandfather went to the Board of Health. They had to  
take em away." (This was before James time) "But still get  
the rock all piled up."

F: Wasn't that the old way? or they put in caves?

J: They put in cave, but some they put em out, eh? Save the  
bone, eh?

Lot 37

J: Yeah, next to Pe'a I don't know who, they used to be, what?,  
oh, friends with they family too, they call em, oh, Keola,  
they related to the Deshas. Helen (Lee Hong) would know.

(I mention that the name on the grant is John Ulumahipua Pe'a  
and that Kini says he took his wife Kauwila's name)

J: So all this used to be owned by Kauwila then?

C: Maybe

J: /John Ulumahipua Pe's? Yeah, I think that's Gabriel's  
brother. Then plus he sold em to, what, Yamada I think was.  
John Ulumahipua. And I think he went on, asking the brother  
if he like the land, they don't say nothing, so he just turned  
around and sold em to Yamada. Oh, they were big fuss with  
him. So he wanted the money badly, so, brother went way  
no, so when he found out, too late, he sold em to Yamada.

refers to  
different  
piece (see  
Interview #5)

Lot 38--was Pe'a's. Gave 1 acre lot to Tom Okino for acting as lawyer--  
"doing paperwork"

Lot 39 (now Esther Souza)--was Kealoha's

Lot 40 (now mostly Peter Lee Hong, Pauline Wright)--was Wai'au's

Lot 41 Keliihoomalu's

Lot 42 now Jimmy Kealoha--former Lt. governor



Interview 3 (contd.): James Ahia

- F: From here used to have cracks, you know, hole you know.
- J: Down here? [at Kalapana Shores Subdivision]
- F: Used to call it Mawae. Mawae is an opening. James folks used to swim in that and my kids too, they did, yeah? Until they started subdividing, then, the mawae was filled up.
- J: Mawae. They go fishing, and then just go inside there and rinse off. And then used to wash clothes there, for all the people from way up there, from Mokuhulu they come all down there.
- F: To Mawae? but I thought was only for swimming.
- C: You know, Virginia Enos was saying that Kaimu folks did their laundry in a separate pond and Kalapana folks did their laundry in a separate pond.
- J: Yeah, separate pond, yeah. Kaimu side all go there [Mawae] and then used to go the other place, Lonowai, another place.
- C: So you did laundry in Lonowai too?
- J: Yeah, we do there. Mawae we used to go also. Both sides.
- C: But you wouldn't go...
- J: Not Wai a kolea, not Harry K. Brown park. Another \_\_\_\_ go there.
- C: Kalapana folks maybe went there.
- J: Oh, Kalapana go Wai a kolea, or just right around. They had plenty place to go. Then Kapa'ahu place they used to go up Queen's bath, behind Fidelia's place.
- F: Mawae it's a cleft, fissure, crack...in rocks. [J: It's a nice crack.] A fissure like, yeah. The water comes up with the tides. So sometimes it's deep enough the kids can just...
- J: Dive right through.
- C: How big the?
- J: Oh, I think about eight, ten feet wide and twenty feet long.
- C: So kinda like Punaluu used to be?
- J: Yeah, something like. But I think Punaluu is wider.
- f: That's so near the ocean, but the water in Mawae is brackish. Not as salty as the ocean.
- J: That's funny no? Just couple feet away, fifty feet away and that, oh makes a difference, eh? I wonder why. Cause the rocks, or what? Or the fresh water comin down?
- C: Maybe a spring there.]
- J: Cause I know then, the pond, if you go out in the ocean there, I go throw-net, oh the water is diferent, cold. And then, if you go little bit outside, no, in the ocean no, the water is warm. I think there's more salt, eh?
- F: Well maybe there's a spring water there.
- J: Yeah, spring underneath, well that's why get that pond there.
- F: It's sad all those little springs that people [depended] on, they all [gone].
- J: Then, uh, Wai palama used to get, right across by Pe'a's place. Yeah, around here [points to map] used to get one

pond too. It's all covered by the ocean. Place they used to wash clothes. Used to wash clothes there. Then used to get one other pond here, where the pigs used to come all here. This is upside the road and then where another pond downside the road is where pigs used to go swim inside. Roll in the pond.

C: Does that have a name too?

J: I don' know, they, just Palama, as all we call the whole thibng, eh?

C: Oh. Both ponds.

J: Yeah, both ponds but. Then they call the other one, well, Wai pu'a, for the pigs, cause get sand, yeah? And then the cows all come down for drink water, used to come all down through there.

C: So, did you folks call it Wai pu'a

J: We juost call em for the pu'a that pond, eh? for the pigs that go in there. But the cows used to go all in Palama.

F: Where you wash clothes?

J: Wash clothes.

C: Did they get inside?

J: Oh, well sure. Onlyu about three feet deep--two, three feet.

C: That probably wasn't big enough to bathe in.

J: That one no. But just for rinsing, yeah. Can get a bucket. Just rinse...

C: How big was Lonowai?

J: Oh, Lono was big. Oh.

F: It's still there.

J: Yeah, but it's covered, the road \_\_\_\_\_ and all that. Oh, not now. Before no coconut trees, all clean, nice place. Used to go in the ocean, go there, rinse ourself, and then...

F: a training pool for children, no?

J: Yeah, was training pool. Some place I think about four or five feet deep. When high tide I think about four feet deep.

C: Did you folks bathe at other times besides when you were coming out of the ocean?

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J: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

C: With soap you used, or...?

J: Yeah, soap. Sometime get the stone wall, we just put our soap there. (F: or hide it in the stone wall) Hide in stone wall. Or then, somebody, they know us, so, oh I go use this soap.

F: At least those days never had too much rats to eat the soap. Today, they gnaw on the soap.