

Side A

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Side B

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Int. #2

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Interview 2 with Kaipe Roberts, by Charlene Sumarnap, Spring 1988

untranscribed sections about Catholic church:

name of church? Kalapana Catholic church

--Father Everest was priest for many years, only one he remembers. At least up to when K.R. was 15 yrs. old, Father Everest was very active (sponsored girls' volleyball team)

--he didn't go to church very often; mass the same as now (he thinks--he's Mormon now): priest prays, people repeat, all in Latin: "we didn't understand a word he said"

--went to catechism right after school

--volleyball games: they played Pahoa, Hilo team used to come down

Mormons--not sure when they came in to Kalapana; he joined 1965 (baptized in a Kalapana pond, now covered up; others in ocean back of SOTS church). They used to have services in homes (incl. Ah Hec's in Pahoa), till chapel built at Orchidland about '81.

Fishing

"in back of our house, there was an old canoe landing"--not used in his young days, but used in his older days; go down the pali, but not a steep pali, stretched out:

--from the place where the canoes were stored, about 15 ft. down to the water, but 60-70 ft. out

--canoe ramp made with ohia runners (logs), with holes in the rocks (made) to lash them to, with cross pieces lashed to runners; a separate bottom piece of ramp lashed to last pieces of log and goes into the water;

"It would go up, float with the water, down with the swells.

And they would have to time themselves to see when the swells were comin in, when the swells would go out, you know. And they would pick up the right wave to go out on, or otherwise they get swamped. And that was tricky business. In fact, I went out with them, but I was much older then.

C: How old?

K: Oh, I was married already. Probably about twenty-five.

Mostly I remember...Kini Aki, Jack Hauani?, Pelciholani. We used to go out. And of course Kalapana side, in back of the Catholic church, there was another canoe landing down there. But that was. It had the same kind of landing, like Kapa`ahu, uh, ohia logs, but...That was a tricky landing too. You have to know the swells. Otherwise you get swamped too. That's all I remember, two canoe landings. I understand Kamoamo had one too, but I didn't see that in operation.

C: Who had canoes in Kapa`ahu?

K: Kini Aki had. Hauanio had. I think Pelciholani had too. I'm not too sure about that. But Pelc wsn't too often, he used to go out in canoe. When we fish on the ocean, he would come. Cause. Down Kalapana, most of the time there big swells, so...

C: What happened to the old canoes?

K: I don't know. When I used to go out with Charles Warren. he used to come down. ___go out canoe and ___sell em. Sometimes

we'd get lucky. We'd get one big catch. Sometimes not too much. But...when we'd go out, the people would come down, what they call hapai wa'a. They help, because _____. And they'd get their share of fish. Each one would get some of the fishes. Even if you just go hold the boat, they'd get their share. That's the Hawaiian style. Give everybody fish. That was right in the back of our house. Was on our property.

C: And the canoe shed was...

K: Yeah, the canoe shed was...just a stone wall, long stone wall, and some ohia posts, cross-pieces and _____ that's all.

C: And everybody stored their canoes over there?

K: Well, when I used to go, was only one canoe. And down Kalapana...I don't think I seen more than one canoe down there too. Maybe in my younger days they had. I don't remember that. But when we used to go out from our place, Kalapana used to go out too. John Hauanio them used to go out.

C: How you catch `opelu, with nets?

(16) K: Umhm, yeah. Net with lead weight in a circle. They drop the net way down first. Then they throw palu, bait. They wrap it all up. Cause what they have to do...the fish is way down, they have to lure it up. So they drop the palu, just above the net. And the fish come around, and they drop it higher and higher. And meantime the net coming up, coming up. They feed em all at one place. So. And when they have a whole lot of em, and they have the net only about six feet down in the water, then they put the palu down and the fishes all go inside. Then they pull, the string. You know, when they pull the string it whistles--whew, whew, whew! The fishes get scared, they all dive down, right down into the net. That's how they catch em. They smart.

C: How'd they make their palu?

K: Oh, they'd get...those days used to use, was red `opace. Down by our house there was a pond over there. There was a lot of those red `opace. I understand in Kona they used to use pumpkin and _____. But we had the real way, you know.

C: But they mix it...

(a) K: Yeah, I'm tryin, I think they used taro before. But actually you didn't need too much. I know we didn't need too much, because... You know Kini Aki was our, uh, fisherman. He knew the ko`as. The ko`as where the fishes stay. Go there, you know just about where they are, and you start feedin em over there. (c) [But, when I first saw that I couldn't get over it, how they'd. When they say huki, means pull you know, we'd pull. Three of us we'd pull at the same time. You could hear the cord, making that whishing sound. Boy, the fishes would just dive right down, right into the net. Pull the net up. Just dump em in our hull, in the boat.]

C: How many in one catch?

K: Oh, sometime we get plenty--oh, maybe couple a ka`au. A ka`au is forty. There's forty fishes in one ka`au. So sometime we get about ten ka`au, that's 400 fishes. `Opelu, now, they are just about this long. Sometime we get less than that though, you know. Not all the time we get a whole lot. Sometime we get lucky, sometime not the right time. The fishes not feeding.]

C: `Opelu is seasonal?

K: No, it's all year round.

C: How did you dry the fish?

K: Well. What we would use, we had a fish box, you know, made out a screen. But a lotta people what they do, they just dry it out on the pahoehoe. By the beach there, where it's clean. Cause, you know, the pahoehoe is clean, the waves wash away [the dirt]. But they have to watch it, cause mongoose would come and steal em. That's one thing. You get the problem with mongoose, plenty mongoose around there. I had a regular screen box that I used. I didn't have to worry about that.

But then, if you had plenty, Charlie Warren used to take em to Hilo and sell em.

C: What about turtles?

K: No, not Kapa`ahu side. I don't know about Kalapana side. But I know the Halape side used to have turtles.

C: The nets you folks used for `opelu, that was the cord net?

K: Yeah, the cord net. [`olona?]

C: Did you make nets?

K: Me? No. I never did make. But most of those people, they all make up those, they make their nets, patch up nets. That's one thing I've never learned to do, is make. I wasn't interested.

C: Did they patch the canoe?

K: Well, we've never had anything go wrong. But I believe, I think I seen somebody patching canoe. In fact, some of the canoes, you could see a patch. What would they seal it up with, I don know.

C: What other kinds of fish Kapa`ahu side?

K: We go poling. You know, we used to go poling, used to be a lotta popa`a's down there. That was the easiest fish to catch, cause we had plenty. _____ and they were good, big size too, them popa`a's. In fact, you don't need a pole, all you need to do is drop a line, in the rocks you know, shallow area. You'd come up with a popa`a. Get plenty of em down there. Those were good-eatin fishes too, those popa`a's.]

C: How did you guys cook em?

K: Just boil em. Boil em with onion, you know, salt. [That's the easiest fish to catch, but I know my uncle used to go up for moi.] He was a moi fisherman. He'd go polin for moi and they'd just go catch about three, four, five, whatever they need. They'd stop, they'd go home. They never catch more than what they need.

[Charlene talks about her husband using throw-net.]

Down Kapa`ahu had a few places where you could throw-net. I remember Kini Aki, he used to do that too, he used to go throw net.

C: In Kapa`ahu?

K: Yeah. There's, like mostly all pali, but there's a few, what they call poho's, where the fishes are. You go throw-net. But, like I said, they just go, get what they need to eat. They don't take more than what they need to eat. When they're pickin `opihi, they just pick what they wanted. They don't just overpick. So we always had a supply of `opihi down there, and we

Shaved the Koho acc. Pukai
Lipekete?

always had limu, we always had fish.
 C: What kind limu they had down there?
 K: Oh, we had limu koho, likeke`c (?). Lipoa was down at Kaimu. That's about the kind limu that we had. And like`cke`c, we mixed it up with the `opihi. That was good.
 C: Did you folks ever dry the limu? It was always fresh?
 K: No. Always fresh. Of course, you can't get the limu [just] any time. The ocean gotta be calm. And then, the limu koho is, something funny you know. The ocean can be calm, you go pick limu koho, the ocean gets rough.
 C: Oh.
 K: So what the people generally do, they just. When the ocean is calm, nobody touch the limu. They go pick the `opihi and do whatever. Then, the last, they go pick up limu koho. Then, after that, the ocean changes. Get rough again.
 C: They have a story for that?
 K: I don't think so. I haven't heard.
 C: What about loli?
 K: Yeah. I don't know. I have eaten loli. I don't know. Momma never used to make. But I know the Japanese used to go get, namaka, a delicacy. I tasted it, it's fine. Tough, but the taste is good. But the other type of loli I've never eaten. When we pick `opihi, used to pick up pupu also. Plenty pupu's out there. That you just boil em.
 C: What about wana?
 K: (Sighs) Yeah, they used to go out, dive for wana. Not all the time. I mean...wana was good, but...I never did. I wasn't much of a fisherman. I didn't go out spear-fishin like that, like the other people did. But I used to go pick up `opihi and limu. Wana, mostly down, around Kaimu area. That's where you get more wana, because not too deep.

Side B

K(contd.) Yeah, we'd go ___ we'd go catch `a`ama, that we used to do, growing up there. Get these little he`c palu's too, you know these small little squids. They come out at night. We catch these he`c palu's. But mostly `a`ama. `A`ama is good. Catch em ___, clean em up. Salt em up. That last for a while, you get em salted up. The `a`ama and poi, yeah...`ono.
 [portion omitted]
 C: What color was the poi you folks made? Mostly gray?
 K: Mostly gray color, yeah. Mostly all of our poi was gray. Sometimes we'd have lehua... get the poi a little more strawberry color ___.
 C: What kind of taro was this?
 K: Lehua was...that would get some different-colored poi. And a...we had mana. But mana would get eaten by the ___. They eat as `ai pa`a, you eat as it is, you know. Some people would make poi out of mana taro, but that was hard poundin' cause that stuff was kinda rubbery-like. But good eatin' taro. I don know...I've forgotten all the names of the different kinds a taro.
 [bit omitted]
 C: You used to pound poi? How did you pound poi?
 K: Yeah. How?

Palu

(C)

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We had a regular poi board and we have a regular stone. Just pound em up. You have to use the right amount of water, you know. You pound a little at a time. You can't pound too much at a time. Otherwise it'll spread all over the place. [bit omitted]

C: How long were you pounding poi. When did you stop?

K: Oh! I still pound poi yet. I have my `ulu tree in the back yard. I pound 'ulu now. I don't pound any taro, but I pound 'ulu poi.

C: You had 'ulu poi in Kapa`ahu?

K: Yeah, we had 'ulu trees. 'Ulu season we'd pound 'ulu poi.

C: You did this every day?

K: Oh, no. When you pound poi, you make a batch big enough to last you four or five days. Until, you know, when it gets too sour. But we didn't waste. Whatever we pound, we eat. Can mix it up _____. But, we eat a lotta poi. _____ We used to get our own salt, from down the beach.

C: Oh, how'd you do that?

K: Oh, when the ocean was rough, it splashed the water way up on shore. And you get this little holes where the water would settle. And eventually the sun evaporates all the water, and leaves this salt. But down at `Apua side, over there had plenty poho's. `Apua and Kahuc. That's about ten miles away from Kapa`ahu. That's where we'd go get. About September, generally, the ocean's very rough, and the waves big, the swells. Take the water way in shore. Then it gets calm and the water evaporates. You go down there, you can pick up forty or fifty pounds salt.

C: Would you walk down?

K: No, we go on horseback. And down there, you could throw-net. This is not when I was small, this is after I was married. We'd go down there and get salt, go throw-net, pick `opihi. Lotta `opihi.

C: So this was in the 40's, 50's?

K: In the 40's, 50's.

C: You remember World War Two in Kapa`ahu?

K: When it was start, I was overseas working. 40, I went overseas, 42 I was down Johnson Island. But came back after that.

C: Was your mom still down at Kapa`ahu?

K: Yeah, mama was down there. And when I came back I worked for the engineers. USED. (laughs) Workin in Hilo. Then I got transferred to Honolulu for a while, you know, USED. Then I got transferred back to Hilo.

C: During the 40's too?

K: Yeah, it was during the war.

C: What did you do for USED?

K: We were on the engineer force for military office installations. _____ We were settin up sites. At that time we had one small little house down there at Kapa`ahu. Work at USED, then I went work stevedore, down the bay [Hilo Bay]. That's how I got the lumber to build our home down there. We had a four-bedroom home down Kapa`ahu. That's the one that was taken this last December. _____ That's our first house, and we build another home further up the road. That's the one we rent to

_____. It was 86, when the first flow hit Kapa`ahu. Ours is November 86, when it hit my cousins's house _____. And this last December [87], it took our other house, our real house, that Buddy was living that one.

C: How big was your property down at Kapa`ahu?

K: We had 52 acres I think. Cause we had a block from the road, the main highway, down to the beach. I believe it was _____ estate.

C: Yeah, that was interesting, in the first interview.

K: I been down there a couple of weeks ago. Ohhh. Feel so sad. To see it all covered up with lava now. Sopme areas filled with the lava about 20 or 30 feet high. It was all covered except one portion, where John Pai's house is. Cause that's part of our estate too. [Later in the year this area was also covered by a new flow. CL.] Cause that's part of our family estate too. That's the only house that's left. And the area where my beach house, where my grandparents are buried, it's still not covered up. But up where our other house was, close to the road, I believe Becky Pau's grandparents is buried over there. And the first flow, well it went around the grave, it didn't cover up the grave. See the grave was dug down in the bround a little bit. Because it was up high. But now it's all covered up.

C: What's gonna happen to it?

K: Not unless the state would give us an exchange, equal acreage. It's all solid rock. You can't do nothin with it. If you did improve it, that'd cost a lotta money.

C: How did your family recieve that land?

K: From King Kamchmcha the fourth. He deeded to my GGGgrandfather Wa`aiki.

C: Was he some kinda...?

K: According to deed, to my faithful servant Wa`aiki. I don't know what my GGgrandfather woulda been.

C: That's a lotta land though.

K: Oh, that's not all. Outside Royal Garden, up in Royal Garden, that whole area in the middle of Royal Garden, we got 25 acres up there. And below Royal Garden, on the flat before you start going up the road, we had 144 acres over there. And that 144 acres over there used to run from the ocean up to before you get up to Royal Gardens. And the state condemned 115 acres for the national park extension, which they turned over to the national park. We had quite a few acres over there. But. (sighs) That Poupou, that Royal Garden area, that darn thing is all covered up too. That land that went under condemnation, that's all covered up. All that land, all gone.

C: Did you folks farm the taro, on your land?

K: Up in the middle of Royal Garden, that 26 acre, ych. That thing is high. That's about a thousand feet elevation, you see. It's higher. That's where it's cooler, up there. That's where you really grow taro. But the lower portion you couldn raise taro. It's too hot down there, too dry.

C: How much of the area was taro?

K: Oh, small area, about a quarter of an acre. It's only for home use. Cause we didn't plant a whole lot, to sell, just for home use. [It's not clear who "we" is here.] We raised taro and

Handwritten note: he + his wife...

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sweet potatoes. That's about it.

C: How do you plant dry-land taro?

K: Just...you dig a hole. _____ because there's always moisture. At night is always moist in the ground. That's how it grows. But the makai side, on the beach side, it's dry there.

C: How big was the `oha?

K: Oh, you mean we plant the taro's by with? Oh, what we did was with this `o`o, put in the `o`o, soften up, and put the thing inside. We didn't have to _____. Up there is solid, there's rocks, soil, rocks.

C: When did you stop planting taro up there?

K: It's when, uh, like modern transportation came in. And then we just buy our poi.

C: How old were you about.

K: 8, 10, 12, somewhere around there.

C: How much was the poi?

K: I was tryin' to think. It musta been cheap, because we didn't have any money those days. So, at least we could buy the poi, so it musta been pretty darn cheap. I can't recall.

C: What about rice?

K: Oh, we used to eat rice. But our main staple was poi then. Poi, potato. Those were our main staple. Some time we eating rice. We'd eat a lotta sweet potatoes too, and taro. Poi is always on the table. And there's only momma and myself, so...we didn't eat too much.

C: How did you cook your sweet potato?

K: Just boil em. Sometimes they'd put it in a imu, when they have a imu going. But that was not too often. Most time we just boil em. Sometime we'd roast em.

C: This was done outside? Did you have an inside kitchen?

K: Yeah. Well, mostly the imu'd be outside, but if we'd put it in the fire, would be inside. We had a shed outside of our house, that's where we'd keep our wood always. Woodstove--that was just an outside grill, that's all it was. Till I got older, then we had this regular woodstove. But when I was young, we didn't have that.

It's such a long time ago, and really, I don't think about it too often. Very seldom. Now, when you're here, slowly, it kinda drifts back in.

C: When did you get married?

K: In 1943. I been 45 years married now.

C: So went to the CCC camp.

K: Yeah, in 193...about 36, I think, 37.

C: How did you meet your wife?

K: Oh, one _____ week before USED, she _____. Actually my wife was born and raised up in the mainland. But her parents are from Maui. They went up to _____.

[bit omitted]

That's how I met my wife. She was in Honolulu. She came down to be with her relatives. She stayed that way _____ and we got married.

C: So you raised your family all down in Kapa`ahu?

K: Yeah. All of our children raised down at Kapa`ahu, that home that we built. My wife and I figured all this damaged

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lumber where I was workin stevedore, we got all this damaged lumber, we _____ could use that to build our place.

C: You used to drive out to Hilo every day?

K: Yeah. But those days we never did, we didn work every day. Only when the ship came in we'd work. So as far as work stevedore, no more work, we'd be home. _____ somethin like that.

C: Do you remember when electricity came down Kapa`ahu?

K: Kapa`ahu? Never had, electricity. Up to now. It went as far as Kalapana, but we never had electricity down there. Telephone, yeah, we had telephone down there. _____

_____ in the early 80's, Kapa`ahu had telephone.

C: So your kids were all raised without electricity?

K: Yeah. But we had gas light, gas stove, and we had our lights run with gas. It was better than this kerosene lights, much better. Cause, we didn want to change _____. We got gas company to come refill our tanks.

C: And they were bussed in to school?

K: Yeah, they just go out on the road. But that was when they were going to high-school. But when they were going to Kalapana school...Yeah they caught the bus. Go to school carly though, because the bus would pick them up, drop them off at Kalapana school and go up to Pahoa. Yeah, that's right.

I had two of my girls went to Kalapana school for a while. That was Momi and Haunani. That's right. Until they closed the school up.

C: When did they close the school up?

K: Gee, I don't recall. Yeah, did Bud? I'm not sure.

C: Is it possible to get your genealogy?

K: I don't remember my grandfather and grandmother.

C: You can just write it out.