

Interview 2 with Louis Pau by Russell Rapoza 4/10/90
(Revised with help from Becky Pau, Sp. 2010)

RR: First of all, I would like to say that I finished typing out the last interview. And my teacher and I have a few questions that we'd like to get more specific about. First of all, how did you meet your wife?

LP: Well, to tell you the truth, TV.

RR: Television?

LP: yeah.

RR: How do you mean by that?

LP: In 1960, I got wiped out in the tidal wave in Hilo. So I was divorced six years. And I had custody of the children.

RR: So you were married before? And this is your second marriage?

LP: Yeah, right. So after that I moved to Volcano. Somebody gave me a house to stay in. We lost everything completely. Only clothes we had were the clothes on our back.

RR: This was what year?

LP: 1960 tidal wave.

RR: 1960 tidal wave?

LP: Yeah. We used to live in Kimiville. So we was up Volcano. And this funny thing. I was watching TV and this wahine was singing this Japanese song on the TV. The Lani Wong's show in Honolulu. But Lani Wong is from Keaau. I said to myself, "He, I go to meet that broad!" And the funny thing, she used to come up here weekly, Lani Wong's troop. I used to pick up the check from the office, and that night I gave it to Lani Wong and it never bothered me. And before that, I used to go down to Kalapana, and as I told you, I used to pass the house and see them playing basketball on the 'ulu tree on the dirt road. And they used to call, "Hey, Sergeant Pau." and that was quite a coincidence.

RR: So what year did you get married?

LP: 1961.

RR: We had a question about the song you were telling me about the outhouse on the crack, and they just press.

LP: Oh, that was by Ledward Kaapana. It's not a song. They used it on "I Kona," the group get that record and it mentioned how you just press the newspaper on the okole. You listen to the record, that slack key part, he goes "Just press."

When you go to Kalapana—you've been to Queen's Bath before, right?—just before Queen's Bath, there was a big mango tree and a couple of junk cars, and this old house, not painted.

RR: Yeah, I think I remember that.

LP: Well, you can't miss it. As the first house when you come back Kalapana from Queen's Bath. This would be on your left. You can't miss it. It's been there from when Bob Lee guy6s was small kids down there. Well, anyways, they had an outhouse. As George and Tina Kaapana, that's the parents of Ledward. So they [have an] outhouse in the back. They no more running water in Kalapana, so they use outhouses. So, TV guide or catalog. You know, you stay inside there, you read the catalog because there is nothing else to do, then you tear off one page and you wipe your okole.

RR: You know, after you got married, did you move to Kalapana with you wife's family?

LP: No, well she moved to KMC. My wife moved, and then from there we moved Colorado. I was stationed three years in Colorado. Then I retired.

RR: What year was this?

LP: Let's see, we got married in 1961. I went to Korea for the third time in 1963, latter part of 1962 I think. Then I came back and was assigned to Colorado Springs, Fort Carson, Colorado in 1963. I stayed there until 1963, until I retired from the Army. Then we moved back to Kalapana.

RR: Kapaahu area?

LP: Yeah. So in 1966 I moved back.

RR: Were you close to her family, her father and mother?

LP: What do you mean close?

RR: Did you used to go over a lot and help them out?

LP: You mean before we got married?

RR: Yeah, before you got married.

LP: Hell, no.

RR: What about after you got married?

LP: Oh yeah. My father-in-law raised sweet potato on the land. We used to burn the brush, like that. We used to burn em. Then he make potato hill.

RR: What was the date that you first visited Kapaahu?

LP: Oh shit, 1940s. The first date? Well, when I was a kid.

RR: You used to go down there when you was a kid.

LP: Yeah, Kaimu and stuff like that. I was born and raised in Hilo. but as far as with KMC, which was once a week, that was in 1947 or 48.

[section omitted]

RR: Another thing which we are interested in, the Pavaos, the Kaawaloas, who lived there? Did they move away and come back? or did they get married and decide to live there? Where did they work?

LP: Well, I'd says the Pavaos, was only they and their kids. And as the kids grow older, they move out and they come back. And the Kaawaloas, same thing. They scattered all over Puna.

RR: And when they came back, did they move back into the parents' house, or on their own piece of land?

LP: Well, they usually come back to the parents' house, but not for an extended period of time.

RR: Just until they can get set up?

LP: Yeah. You know, they move elsewhere and rent a house, or buy some property and prepare to build next door. See, lot of the land is undivided, and that's why it's so bad. In my wife's family, Roberts and all of them together, they get over 50 acres of land. You get this share, and so my mother-in-law guys get this part of the land, and the other respected it. And they could build on another part of the land. It isn't down on paper or anything. But they all go to pay their share of the taxes.

RR: You were saying earlier that, I forgot the name, used to work for the Branco family in Hilo.

LP: That was my father-in-law.

RR: Did any of the Kaawaloas work outside?

LP: Lot of them worked outside. In fact, had to go outside.

RR: About what date this was—in the forties?

LP: Oh yeah, in the forties. Some worked for county and some worked contracting.

RR: See, we are trying to get what specific family worked where.

LP: Well, Kaawaloas, Sam used to go all the way Ka`u go work, contractors. And my brother-in-law guys all moved to Honolulu after they graduated high school for jobs.

RR: So most of them in the late forties and fifties had outside jobs, as well as working the land.

LP: Yeah, yeah. Mostly the old people work the land. The others had outside work. They always come home, like that.

RR: And most of them were labor, day labor?

LP: Yeah. In other words, my father-in-law guys used to plant taro. They went ‘Opihikao to harvest the taro, and that’s how they made their money. Besides the regular fishing and hunting.

RR: I got a few names here, I’d like to see if you recognize, and if you could tell me something about them. Oulu Konanui.

LP: Tutu Oulu was the one I told you about, the goat wrap around his leg. That’s the one that Bishop Museum get a picture of him walking Girly Boy. That’s what he called his horse. He used to walk his horse with no rope, and my dog used to walk with him. And they walk on the side of the road, the cars pass, and the horse just no move.

RR: The horse followed him?

LP: Yeah, he just put his arm around the horse’s neck and walk. The horse would walk with him. And that horse, he love his mango and his papaya.

RR: Anything else you can tell me about Oulu Konanui?

LP: Well, he worked for the county before, many, many years. But he was a cowboy.

RR: Do you know what he did for the county?

LP: He was on the road crew, I believe. And of course, lot of people used to go to him—the National Park used to go to him for stories, and the Bishop Museum. And all them used to come down to listen to his stories.

RR: Good storyteller then.

LP: Yeah, and good memory. Like I told you about the Niheu footprint and the pao'o hole. In about thirty years, he hasn't seen the pao'o hole, and he was about thirty feet from where we found it. The footprint, I knew where it was. The footprint is covered, but the pao'o hole, I believe is still there, hasn't been covered by lava yet.

RR: What about the Kaapana family?

LP: Well, Oulu's daughter is Tina Kaapana. George and Tina are well known for their music. And George used to work for the National Park. Until he fell off the scaffolding and hit his head, went into a coma and never regained consciousness. That was George Kaapana, the father of Ledward.

RR: How about Mrs. Johansen?

LP: I didn't know her too well, but I did know her when she was living. That is family of my wife again.

RR: What about Jack Poha?

LP: He would be related to Pavao. I might have seen him, but I can't recall. I think he died in the early fifties or late forties. I don't recall him too much.

RR: How about Lim Tim Lee?

LP: Yeah, I know him. He's still alive. He lives in Waimea.

RR: And what did he do?

LP: Well, Lim Tim Lee was always with ranching. Bob Lee was like the gofer in the family and the brains, you know what I mean, control land, and the manipulator.

RR: What else can you tell me about Lim Tim?

LP: Well, he was always a rancher. I believe his son has a ranch in Waimea now. Hawaiian Homes.

RR: How did the Hawaiians feel about Robert Lee?

LP: He took them for all they were worth. Let me put it that way, he's a manipulator.

RR: I know you were working for the Park. What was the date that you started for the Park?

LP: I got assigned to KMC in 1945. Retired from the military 1966. I started for the National park in 1970. And I worked there until January 1976, at Waha'ula.

RR: What did you do?

LP: I was a maintenance. Well, in the beginning, we did maintenance and interpretation, all that together.

RR: Working for the Park, what did you feel was the Park's attitude to the people down in the Kalapana area?

LP: There was a few individuals at the Park was concerned about the people in Kalapana. However, the majority I would say no.

RR: What was the attitude of the people in Kapaahu area toward the Park?

LP: Well, I'd say that certain people they respected, they was down to earth and their heart was in it when the talk to the people. The other people was just, "Hell with you."

RR: How about after the World War 2, lot of the people either got laid off, or hired full time? Could you tell me about that?

LP: Well, they didn't have too many workers. Lee Hong was a policeman, Ahia was plantation, Kini Pea them was in the service. His brother Gabriel was a Kalapana farmer and fisherman, and Sam Kaawaloa was mostly construction. The other Kaawaloas was mechanic and drive bus. Erdman was the same thing. I think was not fulltime in anything. They all used to do farming, but of course the farming they do is on weekends and after work.

RR: Any other things you want to tell me about?

LP: Well, like the story I told you about the stones at Harry K. Brown Park. The caretaker at the park was old man Kaaukai. And Mrs. Young, every Thursday to the KMC people. And they used to [sell] the lauhala goods to the KMC people. which was quite a few people—the Lee Hongs, Kaawaloas, the Kaaukais. In fact the Kupahua and the Kaimu side used to go, and from the Kapaahu side was my mother-in-law, and Kaipo Roberts' mother, and Pai.

RR: They used to go down to the pavilion, right? to sell the goods.

LP: Yeah. And at Kupahu'a, that's when Mrs. Young used to have the 'awa factory on the hill next to where the Kaawaloas live. Mrs. Young used to get that. Now I believe Fox and Wolf was going to build a hotel there, but Peter Hauanio had share in that land and stopped that. In the 60s I believe. Overlooking the ocean in the Kupahu'a area near to the Kalapana Gardens.