

Teresa Waipa: Interview # 5

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~~Remembered~~ some additions

Interview 5<sup>1</sup>, Teresa Waipa. April 21, 1988

by Charles Langlas

Only portions of the interview are transcribed. Much of the interview is merely paraphrased. A portion of the interview was inadvertently unrecorded and has been reconstructed from memory.

Tapc 1, Side 1

--dating the marriage of Teresa's parents: Her oldest sibling Henry would be 75 or 76 [This seems wrong: cf Int. 6] if still alive, so her parents must have been married before 1912. Her mother was married young, at 16.

[Earlier Teresa said her mother died c. 1942 at age 52, which would date her marriage at 1906.]

T: Cause myu mother was 16 years old.

C: When she was married?

T: Umhm. She was sold to my dad, yeah? for \$700. Her aunt sold her for \$700

--Her father was earlier married to a Kaheiki daughter and they lived in Kalapana. They had a son who was sent to China. (Teresa never saw him.)

C: Your father I know was older.

T: Yeah, my father was a lot older I think. He was married before to a Hawaiian lady, and his wife, she died. And he had one son.

C: Did you know him?

T: No. They sent it to China.

C: Do you know when he married that Hawaiian lady, where they were living?

T: In Kalapana. I don't know how they went there. She's from there.

C: Do you know her name?

T: her last name I know. Kaheiki. [This seems wrong: cf Int.6:1]

--Her father and uncle lived in the mountains. They moved down to the beach before the marriage to her mother and ran a little store in Kalapana. Her father's place in the mountains was at Kenawai, in mauka Kupahu'a. (She now has 3 acres in Kupahua from her dad, but a different place from Kenawai.)

C: When he lived up there, you think there were lots of people up there?

T: Umhm. They say lots of people. That's where the people used to live, the Kalapana people, in the mountains and not over by the ocean. So they gradually moved down the ocean. Because that's where they can raise things and...

--The "first time" the volcano came, it almost hit the Kenawai ranch [69-70 flow?]. Her father (alone, not with her uncle) bought about 30 acres when he lived up there, which is now the

ranch.

--She thinks her father came first, and then her uncle after. Maybe they came as stowaways. But they didn't ever work for the plantation. There was also a third brother, Huk Sin Lee, who married and lived in Honolulu. She knew him.

C: Your father and your mother, early on, lived up in the mountains?

T: No, [only] my dad lived up there, and his brother.

C: When your father and uncle lived up there, did they buy any land?

T: That is the Kenawai place that he bought. He bought I think was 30 acres.

C: Did they buy it together?

T: No.

C: Just him.

T: Yeah, because I think my dad came first. xxx I don't know how they came, because they were stowaway, or I don't know. There three brothers you know, came. The youngest one got married too, but he died. xxx I remember him.

C: Did he live with you folks too?

T: No, he lived in Honolulu.

C: What was his name?

T: Huk Sin, Huk Sin Lee.

C: They didn't work for the plantation or anything, huh?

T: No, I don't think they ever did work in a plantation. I don't know how they came, and you know when I went to China to visit the family, I said, where did this people ever get to Hawaii. You know, so far away. But there were Chinese in Hawaii, that's why.

C: When he lived up Kenawai, how do you think he got by?

T: As my uncle said, no matter where my father goes, he always maintains a job. He makes beautiful biscuits. Those days\_\_\_\_\_. And how he make his oven, with a kerosene can. He bakes biscuits and sell to the Hawaiians. That's how he made a living up there.

C: And they gave him food in return?

T: Umhm. Food and money and stuff. And then my uncle drives the, well they had a horse and wagon, eh? My uncle drives it to town, and bring home the goods.

C: So there must have been a road up to Kenawai.

T: Yeah, there was a trail.

C: Is it still there?

T: Yeah. Now the trucks go up there, my brother's truck go up to the ranch. Now it's a ranch and they planted grass and all kinds of fruit trees. They have lots and lots of bread-fruit trees.

(Robert ran the ranch until recently, is now retired. The ranch is now rented out to her nephew Peter, the son of Lim Tim. Her brother Francis though still lives at the ranch.)

C: Did your father and uncle grow food up there themselves in those early days?

T: Yeah, they do. My father makes garden like that, and then I

think he have a lichee tree and dragon-cyc. I don't know how they got those things. Maybe they brought the seeds along. But you know the lichee tree never bloomed and so is the dragon-cyc, until today. Funny, ch?

- C: Do you think that they were selling tomatoes or anything in town?
- T: Umhm. Yeah, they were.
- C: Were they raising pigs or anything?
- T: Afterwards they raise pigs. When they moved to Kalapana, yeah, they raise a lot of pigs. And cattle, my father had cattle.
- C: Okay, let's move on to after they went to Kalapana then. Both of them together were raising pigs?
- T: Well, my father did most of the work, because my uncle always went to town. I think he do errands for other people, yeah? [He get them] bag of flour, or bag of rice. Because not everybody has a car. Most of those Hawaiians down there, they don't drive.

--Helen Lee Hong's father-in-law was an "interesting man" too.  
--Teresa's uncle did the same delivery work earlier with horse and wagon.

--Charley Kaina had a car too, but mostly picked up the mail. (Teresa was unsure if he was paid by people.) Gabriel Pe'a did same as her uncle, took people to town and ran errand for them for pay.

- C: So all of the stuff like the store and the pigs and cattle, that was your father's business? Was your uncle involved in that at all?
- T: He goes to town.
- C: But I guess when you needed canned goods for the store, then your uncle would have done that?
- T: Yeah, yeah.
- C: And he didn't charge your father I guess.
- T: No, no. Well, they were partners, ch? They had a meat-market in Pahoa, ch? He would go to town and my father would come home. He would come home [from Pahoa] before my father. My father comes home through the mountains, ch? He would bring home bananas and things like that. I don't know where he got the bananas from. (laughs)
- C: By horse?
- T: By horse. My uncle reach home and my father didn't reach home yet. My uncle goes to Hilo and comes back [by car] and my father isn't home yet. And then late, maybe [just] before dark he's coming home, bringing home oranges and bananas and things like that. Huge oranges. And they were sweet those days, wasn't navel oranges. Cause I think when olden days, they used to live up there, and people used to raise oranges up there. Now there's subdivision there, Kalapana Black Sands?
- C: Back to the meat-market, did your father get cattle from the Kalapana area?

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T: Umhm.

C: Did he slaughter them in Kalapana?

T: No. In Pahoa. I think they had land up there by the Black Sands Subdivision up there, too. They leased em. That's where they get the cattle from.

C: So he kept stock up there?

T: Umhm. And then sometimes he buy, from Mr. Green and...from Pahoa, he has a lot of cattle. And then my husband used to go catch for them when he was a little boy, 15, 16 years he used to. He pays them \$20 for one head of cattle that he catches. Like if Mr. Green was to sell, he hires my husband to go catch em. That time I didn't know him yet.

C: The pigs he was raising, where was that at?

T: Over the house, the old house.

C: Did they run around wild?

T: Some. They had fences though, they fenced it in and some they put it in a pen.

C: Sounds like your dad was doing different from the Hawaiians.

T: Different, yeah. He doesn't let em run on the road. He has fence. And he has another special place, that Kalapana Garden? He used to own at Kalapana Gardens too, and he had fences all around, stone wall, and he raised pigs there too. But we feed em once a day. Some come home, some doesn't. Because it's a big area, about 30, 40 acres, eh? And then we have a waterpump, yeah? We pump water almost every day for the pigs too.

C: Did you have to go feed the pigs? pump water?

T: We pump water. I follow them, my brothers and my cousin. We sing, always we sing, the boys all did, and we follow them.

C: But it's mostly the boys' job?

T: Yeah.

C: How did he sell the pigs?

T: People buy, come over to buy. And then sometime he slaughters and bring em to town.

C: You always had a woodstove?

T: Yeah. First we had, I don know my father or my mother made the stove, yeah? They made, was cement, and then put the rod over it and then we cooked rice in a wok. And then we put wood inside and when the rice boil, that's it. Don't put no more wood. And the rice turn out okay. And then my mother made an oven. She made the oven, you know. And she makes pies. No thermometer or anything. And she make bread. My mother makes good bread. And then she bakes cakes and all. That's what she sell--we had a store in Kalapana too.

[We draw a map of the family houseplot, with the store and house.]  
 --Their lot was across the LDS church. Was about 5 acres, running from the road to the cliff.

T: I don't know who owns that lot [in back of the LDS church]. Still, nobody took. Cause we have a lot in back of that too [when she was young].

--The store was next to the road and the house about halfway

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back. There was a big gate in the stone wall and a drive back to the house.

Tapc 1, Side 2

The store was about 20 feet square, it's walls lined with shelves. Towards the back wall was a table where her mother made bread.

--When Teresa was 4 or 5, Ah Ko took over the store, because her father was not well.

T: That time when I was about maybe four or five, somebody else took over the store already, because my dad wasn't well. Chinese man.

C: Ah Ko?

T: Ah Ko. But I remember my dad used to go buy biscuit every morning over there. And we used to follow him, help him to eat it. They were real famous for biscuits those days. You know they make from scratch.

C: Were they like saloon pilots?

T: No. It's just like the one that Kentucky Fried Chicken [makes], but it's more drop biscuits. They make it separate, but this one they put it all together. When you take it out it's stuck together. They were delicious.

C: It's a baking powder biscuit?

T: Yeah, baking powder, eggs and butter and stuff.

(The following portion was unrecorded.)

--Teresa's uncle married a woman from China. Teresa knew only her last name, Wong. They married before Teresa was born. They had four children, (1) Chun Lee (now 72), (2) Aiyao, (3) Ah Choy, (4) Ah Nit [or Anitte] (born a year before Teresa, 1919).

--The joint household: They all lived in a big house with two wings (shown in the following diagram). They all ate together on the back porch, at a big table which sat 20. Both wives cooked--her aunty cooked the rice and her mother cooked the other stuff. Her aunt gardened and cared for the pigs--she fed them once a day, cleaned up and used the mess in the garden. She grew yard-long beans, wintermelon, segua squash, sometimes kai choy. Only her mother baked and ran the store. Both did laundry (but not in the ponds the Hawaiians used.)

--The cookhouse was in back, attached to the (double) garage. There was only one car, the rest of the garage being filled with saddles and stuff. Also in back was a watertank. Farther back on their lot was a pond and a heiau (within the stone wall). They pumped up water from a dug well (it filled up with the tide) for stock, laundry, and to bring in for dishes.

--Outside the stone wall, next to the cliff in back, was the pond Kikoa. There Kaina's and Kamelamela's came to do laundry. The pond would get all soapy, but it was cleared out by the tide. They caught o`opu in the pond. During the tidal wave, they sat

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on the stone wall and watched the wave come in. The Ka'awaloa boys swam in the tidal wave. They caught fish afterward (mullet, etc.) that were left in the pond after the tidal wave went out.

--After her father died, her mother managed the business (not her uncle). Chun Lee and Lim Tim ranched at Kenawai. They're the ones who planted it with grass, koa, \_\_\_bean. Henry left for Honolulu. Ah Ko committed suicide after a couple of years and then the store was closed. Afterward it was only used to store feed and `awa. They processed `awa that grew at Kenawai.

(From here on the interview was recorded.)

[c. 1930] When Teresa was in 5th or 6th grade, her uncle and aunty returned to China, along with their son Ah Choy, daughter Ah Nit, and Teresa's brother Robert. Her uncle died there and the aunty stayed in China. The boys came home right before the Japanese invasion of China. Ah Nit stayed one year longer and returned not too long before WW2. When they returned her mother "wasn't feeling well, but she was still alright."

C: Do you remember when your aunty left and went back to China?

T: Yeah, I think I was sixth grade. My uncle went home, and my aunty went home, my brother Robert Lee went, and one of their sons went, Ah Choy Lee, and their daughter. They came home right before the Japanese war started, like that. My uncle did before they came back, and my aunty stayed there. She's from China anyway. Then my brother and my cousin, Ah Choy Lee, came back.

C: They came back about the time you left Kalapana?

T: No, before I left. I stayed there until, I think Robert Lee almost graduate highschool. Then I came. Just before the second world war, then Robert Lee came home to Kalapana to take over the ranch.

[c. 1937-1941] Teresa stayed in Kalapana until Robert Lee almost graduated high-school, just before WW2. She left to care for her sick mother in Hilo, and then Robert Lee came back to take over the ranch. Her mother lived about three years in Hilo, and Teresa married, before she died. (Her husband was in Honolulu when her mother died.)

T: Because I know my husband was in Honolulu when they bombed Pearl Harbor. He was in Red Hill. He was watching them, he said it was funny, he said, they didn't know it was war. He says, ohh, they was watching, he even saw they bombed the Arizona, and they didn't know. Afterwards they found out, ch? He was working underground. They sent them all down underground.

And my brother was in Pearl Harbor, you know, Francis? and my brother-in-law, they stayed there couple of days and then they got home.

C: Were they visiting?

T: No. My brother was working in Pearl Harbor at that time. They were working and then they had to stay there. I think three days they stayed before they got home.

C: At that time [after she and her mother had moved to Hilo] your brother was running the ranch, Robert?

T: Umhm.

C: What about Lim Tim? was he?

T: Yeah, Lim Tim was there too. But he lived up the mountain on the ranch, eh? They had a little house there. He was married, see?

C: Was there more than one ranch?

T: Yeah, there's more than one. Well, they had this land see? at Kenawai, yeah? further down, in Kupahua, yeah? There's a hill and then go down and there's a water trough, and then they have a pump there to pump water. And they have cattle there. They rented the place from Kaina I think, Charley Kaina. And then they had the lease too, of the Campbell Estate, no? My other brother Henry leased it.

C: He had come back from Honolulu?

T: Yeah.

C: So, were all three of them ranching at that time?

T: Yeah, but see my brother has his own place too, the oldest one, up where I`ilewa is, yeah? He had a ranch there. But he stayed down. He didn't have a house that time. Then afterwards he built a house there. And then, when the war came on, the army took over his house [at I`ilewa] as a radar station, yeah?

C: Was Henry's operation separate then from Robert?

T: Umhm.

C: Was Robert's separate from Lim Tim's?

T: No. They were together. That's the family ranch, yeah?

C: They were working the Kenawai ranch and the place they rented from Kaina together?

T: Yeah. And they had the other place too. Moloa. My brother had the lease. No, he bought the land from the Kama's. That was Leilani's mother's first husband's family. So my brother bought almost the whole thing from them. And they ran that ranch there.

C: Which brother?

T: Robert and \_\_\_\_\_. But he put it under Chun Lee, eh? Because Ah Chun was workin in the ranch at Kalapana, so. You know, we had our share of land from my dad at Kenawai, eh? So he put Kamas' ranch, Moloa eh?, under Ah Chun Lee. So now Ah Chun Lee owns that place. You know he was a butcher, see, at Hilo Meat, so he quits his job and went home and ran the ranch. And he made a go. And he sold the ranch, you know. Back to Leilani. You know Leilani Ching? Well, he sold it back to them. She bought em for \$300,000. From him. Now the Chings own em now.

(This land lies close behind the Black Sands Drive Inn that Chings run. Ching is planting orchids there now, dendrobiums.)

On the Roman Catholic church:

C: Do you remember ever having the Catholic Church somewhere else?

T: Yeah, it was near my house, the old house. There's a lot there owned by Harry Brown. It was over there. And they

took it off and they put it across Robert Lee's house, near the dome-house, further down. It was over there. So they took it off again. That was, the dome-house is like Kalapana Gardens, yeah? So that [Kalapana Gardens] was our property.

C: How far is that from where your house was?

T: The first church? There's an empty lot next to my house that's owned by Harry K. Brown. And then the church was next to that lot. It was owned by, I think, the Harry K. too. So my brother bought the Harry K. property see? They sold em after that. Mr. Brown passed away see? Bought that place, and he had horses and stuff in there. I don't know if the church was old, or what, or they feel they didn't own the property, so they move. So they moved across the street near the dome-house farther down. And then after that, Father Evarcest, I don't know why they moved away. Maybe they didn't own the place, so they moved down to the sea.

C: Do you remember how old you were when the SOTS church was built?

T: I was in the 5th, 6th grade. And then Father Evarcest was painting. I remember going there every evening, watching him paint.

C: Did it take very long to build?

T: No.

C: Fast. And then the painting maybe took longer.

T: Yeah, took long time. But he was good, Father Evarcest.

C: When he first came to Kalapana, he was going to the other, older church?

T: Yeah. I remember he taught us catechism. And I was teaching catechism. Well, I went to school in town see? Catholic school. When I came back he made me teach catechism. (laughs) They think you go to Catholic school you know everything, eh?

(We are looking at the tax map of Kalapana.)

--Their old place (Stack) has been bought and resold.

--The old church was at the little lot between present R. Lee lot and Swieczey lot.

C: You say later it moved over to this side, you don't know whose land?

T: Was across Swieczey's house, so we thought the old man used to own em, Swieczey's uh...

C: Kalchuloa.

T: Not Kahiki? I know his first name, we call him Kanoc.

C: So when you were little, then you were going to the one next door I guess.

T: No. I was going to the one across Swieczey's.

Tape 2, Side A

C: Do you think that Father Evarcest lived in Kalapana when you were young?

T: Uhuh. He did. He lived in Kalapana, he lived in Pahoa.

C: He moved between the two places?  
T: Yeah. But he lived in Kalapana most of the time.  
C: Did he have a house there?  
T: Yeah, he had a house. When he built the second, last church he had a house.  
C: But what about before that, where did he live?  
T: In Pahoa.  
C: So he just came down to Kalapana on Sundays at tht time?  
T: Yeah. On sundays. But he built a gym, a hall, ch?  
The children played, volleyball. And he made a skating rink. Amazing. They all loved him. He's really good. And then he's not the kind that, ah, make money, raise money. You don't know where the money came from. Because, I don't know, maybe his family, or...I never heard of them raising money like now, laulau and so on. We never did such thing. I don't know where he got the money to build the church and so on.  
C: Did peopl,c build it, or did he have carpenter come in?  
T: People. And him. He work hard. Day and nite he work at the church. And then he goes to the little store. They call it Young Wai store. She feeds him. He brings canned goods and stuff, but she cooks rice and makes his dinner. Every night he goes there for dinner. She makes juice for him and send to him. And they were not Catholics, you know.  
C: They were what? They were still Buddhists?  
T: Yeah, Buddhists. She has that big thing, you know that Buddhist thing?  
C: Shrine.  
T: No, not the shrine, just the picture. And then she burns this Chinese punks, ch? Every day. And he's over there. I wonder [if] he never did preach to her about being a Catholic.  
C: What about your folke?  
T: No, we were Catholics.  
C: Your folke too?  
T: But not my mom. But we all were Catholics. I don't know how, but we used to, my sister and all. Only my oldest brother didn't go to church. But I heard he was baptized. Before he died he was in St. Francis Hospital. They baptized him. So some of the people that remembered, they said he was baptized already. We don't know, cause we were young that time.  
C: Your folke, did they encourage you to go, or they didn't care?  
T: They didn't care. We just go. It didn't matter to them.  
C: Did they ever say anything to you about Buddhism?  
T: No. The only time I see my mother. Well, my mother is an island girl, see? She was born and raised in Hilo. So the only time she burns these incense is at the New Year's. And Moon Festival or something. That's the only time. Even my uncle them. They never do. I guess she's not religious.  
Well, they left China when they were very young, 15, like that, yeah?

- C: Was your youngest brother named for Father Everest?
- T: Umhm. That's why, he was in Honolulu for a while you know. And every time when he goes on a trip he comes back, he calls up Everest, you know, wants to go over, see him.
- C: Oh, they were close.
- T: Well, in the end he was very close to Robert and Everest. Because when he came back they asked him to repaint the church. But he wasn't in Kalapana, he was in Maui, see?
- (untranscribed: Robert loaned him a house and car while he repainted the church, in the 70's just before Fr. Everest died.)
- C: Do you know when he left Kalapana, left for Maui?
- T: Gee, I don't know. I was in Hilo then.
- C: Did you used to play volleyball and stuff? down there?
- T: Yeah. Used to play volleyball. He had so much patience, I tell you. He would come down and teach catechism, I think was Wednesdays, every Wednesday. Everybody look forward for Father Everest to come. We have Catechism. After catechism we play ball. Played and played. And he takes everybody home. All the way to Kapa`ahu. And then he goes back to Pahoehoe. Or came back and stay in Kalapana. But he usually go back I think to Pahoehoe. And Sunday all day long that hall was open, to anybody, Catholic or not.
- C: Must have a house in Pahoehoe too then.
- T: Yeah. They have. But he stayed in Kalapana quite a while too.
- C: Was there more of the Catholic people down there from Kapa`ahu than the other parts?
- T: Yeah. Kapa`ahu I think had the most Catholic people. The other side, like Kalapana, they had lotta Protestants, like the Kaina family. They were Protestant. When Mary married Alama Kahilihiwa she was still a Protestant. In the end she became a Catholic. When she lived near the Catholic church yeah? she used to go the Catholic church.
- (untranscribed: In Kaimu the Lee Hong's and Pe`a's were Protestant; the Wai`au's and Kelihoomalua's were Catholic. Louise Kelihoomalua's husband changed to Protestant after they married.)
- C: After Akamu and his wife left, they left a lot of their children back here, yeah?
- T: No. Only Ah Chun. Cause the second boy was in Honolulu.
- C: So Ah Chun was the only one that you folks took care of that time?
- T: That's what they willed their ranch to him, uh? And today he's a rich man, uh?
- C: Your older sister, was she still staying home?
- T: No. My older sister was in Honolulu. And second sister was in Honolulu. And my third sister was in Hilo. When we moved to Hilo they were.
- C: They were already gone. So I guess after your auntie left, then you had to do a lot of the housework probably.
- T: Yeah. There's so much to do. I have to cook, and I had to clean house. No end. Cause it's a ranch, yeah? My brothers. Wash clothes. And then go school. My mother wasn't...she always was sick, ch?

- But I went to school those days in Hilo too, for a while, St. Joe's school.
- C: I guess it would have been after you came back that you were doing the work.
- T: Umhm. And then before too.
- C: Lucky your mother let you go.
- T: In the end she didn't let me go. Because she was getting kind of sick, and all only boys are home, yeah? They don't know how to take care of her.
- C: One time you mentioned an older Chinese who had a store name Ah Au. Can you tell me where that store was?
- T: Oh...you know where the Protestant church is. It's behind of that someplace. A little house, old house, upstairs and downstairs.
- C: You don't know whose land that was on?
- T: I think it's Kini Aki, eh? Around there. I think was Kini. Could be that they rented the house, the land to them.
- C: Kini Aki was still living there?
- T: No, no. That time they wasn't living there. I don't know where he lived that man, and then afterwards they came there and built a home.
- C: I know I saw the lot here somewhere here [looking at the tax-map].
- T: Either that or the Hauani'o house. One or the other.  
(bit omitted)
- C: Did he die then, Ah Au?
- T: Yeah, the two of them died.
- C: There was two of them?
- T: Forgot the other man's name. Was two old man.
- C: How old do you think you were when they died?
- T: About 6 or 7. No, I think they died before my father [who died when she was 6 or 7].  
(bit omitted)
- C: But you think Kini Aki didn't have a house here at that time?
- T: No, I don't think so. I think was a new house that they built. Because Mr. Aki knows how to build houses.  
(untranscribed: Teresa doesn't recognize the name Chow Sec.)
- T: Because the Catholic church was owned by a Chinese man too. What's his name now? He has one son.
- C: Chun Fat?
- T: Chun Fat is in Pahoa.
- C: Wah Yet?
- T: Yeah, Wah Yet. He used to own the Catholic church property.
- C: And he had store there too?
- T: No. He had a house there though. And they said he had a wife, but I know he had only a son. Maybe the wife died.
- C: In the 30's, after you went to school in Hilo, you remember only the Young Wai store?
- T: Yeah, yeah. Before I went already.
- C: Do you remember Young Wai having a canoe?
- T: Yeah.
- C: Did he fish on it himself?

T: Well, he went out with some folks. He's a fisherman. He catches turtle, and he \_\_\_\_\_ the raw fish, and stuff like that. He goes fishing every \_\_\_\_\_.

(bit omitted)

C: [Speaking of Wah Yet.] Did he have a canoe also?

T: Yeah, I think he did. Only my dad didn't have any canoe.

C: And you think Wah Yet went out on his canoe?

T: Yeah. He goes out with the Hawaiian people.