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KALAPANA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview: Virginia Kawehi Waipa Enos April 2, 1988

by Mary Miho Finley

at Kaimu in front of the site of the former Pai'ala Chapel

(NOTE: Tape recorder was on voice activated mode, so parts of questions and responses were not recorded.)

We have just finished visiting both places where the Waipa family used to live in Mokuhuli and Kaimu and trying to find Mawae and the other pond near it.

M: I was wondering at one time you said your father bought taro or bought poi. I was wondering where he bought -- did he buy from somebody?

K: from Lum Ho. From Puueo Poi Shop.

M: Oh, from in town. He didn't buy taro from here and go

K: No, he used to buy poi and then he used to buy taro, too. He used to buy from people in Pahoa. People that raised. It's cheaper you buy the taro and pound your own. After he gave up planting taro, he used to buy the taro. On his later years when he was in -- he used to buy [from Akima Ah Hee the taro make already] He'd bring the poi, not like the one you buy from the poi shop.

M: Not all soft? Still hard?

K: Yeah. After my brother sold this place. He built a brand new home on Komohana Street (in Hilo). [But they weren't too happy there.]

M: Oh, so they wanted to come back here?

K: They were used to here, but they were getting old and sick and it's hard for us to come down and take care....
[section about mother and father getting ill.]

M: When was it your father quit growing taro?

K: Up where Sam Kamelamela is....But then you see when the taro is not ready, you have to buy the poi, or buy the taro because it takes quite a while before the taro is ready. Taro to cook or buy the poi in the meantime. When the breadfruit is ready, you don't buy taro. Use breadfruit.

M: Is that summer time?

K: I really don't know. right now I have breadfruit in my place that's ready.

M: Maybe it's from now then? It's not all year, though?

K: My breadfruit tree, just like it give fruit twice a year. Later on this year it's gonna fruit again.

M: so maybe, two seasons?

K: Yeah. I never thought about it until now, I have breadfruit tree.

M: Were you aware of other people. At one time you said most people grew taro. Who were the people who weren't growing taro?

K: ...above the people up on this end (Mokuhuli). Way in the forest they go to plant. Must be the same with people up that end (Kaimu-Kalapana), but we don't find out if they grow taro or not. Only the people on this end (Mokuhuli).

M: They would have to go mauka, too? Too hot or not enough soil?

K: Like up is better, eh. That's up in the forest.

M: How did the people in the community: Kaimu, Kalapana, Kapa'ahu -- how did they get along? Were there rivalries or?

K: Well, when I was didn't have any. I remember because when come New Year's, they used to go...from here up Kalapana, go up Kapa'ahu, wherever have party, we were there and then come down this next party. I don't know (how) used to be, but at my mother's time, she said used to have fights between Kapa'ahu people and when they have parties. That I don't remember when I was growing up here. If somebody's making party here, everybody gets together. When Pe'a's used to make a party for something, we all come down, pound the poi, get the pig clean and used to _____ the workers and when come the party, everybody help. When whoever make the party, would make a shindig (?) for all the workers. Used to be real good. You didn't have to get invited before. When they have a baby party, everybody from here they go to the party. But then afterwards, everybody got _____, but when I was growing up and after I got married, they still had parties.

M: They had a lot of parties at Pe'a's?

K: Pe'a's and all the different people down there that have babies or getting married. Everybody get together in the hall and make parties. I know during the war time my mother and Kalapana folks had parties for the soldiers that were camped down there.

M: I was wondering about the two houses that you lived in. The Kaimu house was that one room?

K: That's one big room and in the back had the kitchen.

M: Was that (kitchen) a separate building? K: No

M: Separate room? K: Yeah.

M: so you had lauhala on the floor where you slept?

K: Yeah and on the other side in the kitchen is just that pebbles ('ili'ili).

M: Did everybody have their own lauhala mat or just one big mat?

K: One big mat that covered the whole area.

M: Did your mother make that?

K: [She didn't ever see her mother make this type of mat.] Because that type of mat is not the type of mat that you find now. They build up the edges on the _____

M: so it was thick?

K: Yeah.

M: They stuffed it with?

K: No, no I don't know how they weave it, but it's ...hard.

M: Thick on the edges?

K: Yeah, that's they type that I remember there.

M: And she didn't make that type?

K: I don't know if she made. I don't remember. But I know she taught us to do that and it's real hard. I used to hate that.

M: Maybe that was the type to go on 'ili'ili floor?

K: I guess so. You know nice and thick on the edges so _____

M: so at the Mokuhuli house?

K: It was boards so she put mats, lauhala mats.

M: How many rooms was that?

K: we have two bedrooms and then the parlor and then have a kitchen in the back.

M: so there was a kitchen in back? that was the upstairs?

K: Yeah. Then we have a cookhouse down on the side, where we cook the taro and cook our rice. Until we got the stove.

M: Then when you got the stove, that was upstairs?

K: Yeah, in the kitchen.

M: But still you had to go to the tank for water.

K: Umhmm, till my husband built the pipe running from there to up and in those big drums _____. The water would come into

the kitchen and had a sink to wash the dishes.

M: BEfore that you had to go out and down to the tank.

K: To get the water to come up and cook.

M: More work!

K: But the food used to taste good on the wood (fire). But then I have to go get the wood. come home from school, not enough wood. You have to go get the dry guava trees and bring in.

M: so that was one of the chores you did after school?

K: That. Until we got a stove. When you get the stove, then we did all the cooking up. so it wasn't that bad.

M: When did you get the kerosene stove?

K: [after she came back from Kam School, ~ 1932]

M: Was your father still working for that U.S.E.D. then? [1935-WPA
blacksmith]

K: No, he work only one year. the last job he had was in the County, working on the road.

M: so at that time when you got the kerosene stove, he was working for the county?

K: No, [he was retired already.] *pres. c. 1938 as later if worked for county after US ED*

M: That's right because you were the baby, they were quite a bit older when you were

K: Yeah, all my brothers were older. the youngest was 6 years older than I am. We're the only ones can't speak Hawai'ian.

M: All the others spoke Hawai'ian?

K: Real good. Because they have my grandparents and you have to learn how to speak Hawai'ian because they don't understand English. But I don't remember my grandparents. I don't remember them at all. All the rest, my other brothers they all can speak Hawai'ian, even my sister. ...felt embarassed when they talking to you and you can't. I understand, but I have to speak in broken English to make them understand what I'm trying to say. So they always tease me, "what kind Hawai'ian you?" I used to eat all raw fish, everything. After I got married with my husband and cooking and all, I couldn't eat raw fish anymore. I put in my mouth and I can't swallow, no matter. I would make for, my husband would eat the sashimi, but I can't eat it. Even crab after a while I couldn't. Now I can eat the crab, the opihi's, all the other stuff, but I can't eat ake. My husband eat ake; I don't. When we go to a party, has poi and rice, I'll take the rice. If has sweet potato, I'll take the sweet potato

if there's no rice. Or if kulolo, I take the kulolo and don't take the poi. If there's nothing of that, then I'll take poi. Poi is gassy to me.

M: Even the sour poi?

K: I don't eat. That's what they always tease me, "What kind of Hawai'ian you?" I say, "Haole." That's what I always tell them "Haole."

M: But your husband ate those things?

K: Yeah, he loved that ake, that raw liver.

M: Is that a beef liver?

K: Beef. I can't eat it. I look at that ughff. I'll eat cooked liver.

M: How did they fix that raw liver, chop it up like poke?

K: Umhm and then they mix it up. And some people know how to make it real tender so it will melt in your mouth. They put some limu and inamona.

M: Oh, and mix that in?

K: Yeah. But I won't eat it. My husband loved that.

M: I was wondering if we could do a geneology of your mother's side. Her mother was Purdy, right?

K: I think so. It should have been, is my grandmother was Ka'anana, she should have been Ka'anana instead of Purdy because my grandma married after she was born. Purdy in Waimea is her Half brother. What's left from that family two brothers: one James Purdy in California someplace and John Purdy.

M: they had a different father than your mother? Your mother's mother's last name was Ka'anana, that was her married name, that was her maiden name?

K: Yeah.

M: So she married Purdy and these other boys, James and John, she had before your mom?

K: My mom was the first....She was single when she had my mom. Then she married Purdy and then she had James, John and she had quite a bit of daughters.

M: and one was Kamau?

K: No, that's her sister. that's my grandma's sister.

M: Oh. K: She had (a sister married) Kamau

M: Nahiwa?

K: (A sister married)Nahiwa....that's the first husband...I don't know who she ...again. (A sister married) Makuakane.

M: from Ka'u?

K: No, I don't think so. From Pahoa. The one just died lately....that's son was Tom Makuakane and the other sister from my Grandma.

M: Your mother Rose just ;have 2 brothers, no sisters?

K: (She had quite a few sisters.) One is married to Lindsey. (Section left out about Kahaipo to Waipa name change, 2 brothers with last names Kaipo and Kaawaloa.) My brothers and sister all had different names (registered with the Board of Health) than they were going by. My parents call them Kamoku and actually it's a different name in there, Robert. (Section on name mix-up with Board of Health, haole names registered versus Hawai'ian names called at home.)

M: I was wondering about the time when you told your mother, "Well, it that's the Devil, then I'm the Devil" -- I was wondering how old you were then you told her that?

K: ...around 20.

M: so you were quite grown up.

K: Yeah, I was old.... that's why she wasn't well-liked down there.

M: Who was she talking to?

K: Talking to the neighbors, up Mokuhuli there.

M: What did she say to you?

K: she tell me that I was sassy.

M: what sorts of other things did she tell other people that got them aggravated?

K: ...she liked to correct them. Everything is God. Not everybody want to hear that. Correct them and tell them "Not nice." She's real.... You can tell people, but don't go straight and tell them that it's wrong or something. That's their own business. that's the way I feel.... Most of the people liked my Dad and not her. She means well, but she doesn't put it in a nice way.

M: getting together for parties, about how often did you have

these parties?

K: It's usually on holidays. Holidays or mostly baby parties or marriage, then they would have the parties.

M: How about the churches, did the churches have get-togethers certain times of the year?

K: _____ but when the priest used to be, Father Evarist used to have movies. They would be at the hall to see the movies.... That's the only entertainment we have.

M: Was that sunday night, you would have movies?

K: Yeah. We used to enjoy.

M: How long was Father Evarist there? _____ So from the time you came back from Kam School (~1932) all the way up until you were married (1940) he was here? [After he left, no one brought the movies?]

K: No, then had movies in Pahoa, so people used to go up there.

M: So more people had cars then and how long would it take to go from here to Pahoa then?

K: ...like now, because the road was good, even though it's da kind (curvey), about the same time.... (there was another movie house in Pahoa, too, besides the Akebono)

M: When you got married, you were 22, was that considered

K: Old.

M: Most people got married about 19 or 20?

K: My mother got married when she was 16, my dad was 18.... My Dad told my husband I wasn't ready for marriage.

M: At 22!

(hearty laughter) He didn't want you to get married?

K: He told him I wasn't ready. I was the only one at home.

M: Oh, they didn't want you to leave.
None of your kids were raised by your parents?

K: My kids I left them one time with my parents. I wanted my mother to give them Hawai'ian medicine. But my third cried. My mother was real angry. Crying. But she called me to come back and get. She wanted to give them Hawai'ian medicine. That's the only time they stayed. My mother wanted to adopt my second daughter, but my husband wouldn't. Somebody else in Kea'au had three sons. She wanted to adopt my second daughter [but her husband said no].

(Section left out about hanai. All Pe'a children that were hanai'd went to family except for Kini.)

SIDE B

M: Everybody in Kalapana all speak same (kind) Hawai'ian and you couldn't tell what they were saying?

K: I know. I understand, but I can't make conversation. I can say yes or no or maybe and that, but I cannot converse. But I understand. when they talkin', I know what they talkin' about. That I understand. so my kids don't understand. So sometimes when my mom is talking to them in Hawai'ian, they just look at her. then my father tells them in English what she says.
[Kawehi wants to learn Japanese and Hawai'ian.]

K: Because they have the bad habit...when we together in the (Fitness) Club over there going at it in Japanese. that's why I wanna learn, when they talkin' about me, I can give it back to them.

M: I was wondering about fishing.... Once you got out in the water, did every area have their own fishing spot?

K: No, they just go anyplace. so when we live up Mokuuli we can see the canoe on this end down here, so we know the canoe is out, so we'll come down.

M: so that's how you knew it was from here because you could see it from here. would Kalapana go the other way? (South)

K: No, Kalapana would come on this side, too. You could see. They wouldn't come this far, but they have their spot over there. You could see, too, from my place. It's up so you could see the canoe on that end or this end (of Kaimu Bay).

M: Would you come down when the Kalapana canoe was out, too?

K: Once in a while. we'd go more when this one (Kaimu) here. Used to live over here, too, the Hawai'ian
[lost section and section on Pai-ala Chapel. Kawehi thought that it was moved to where the present Protestant Church is now. F. Evarist painted Mt. View as well as Kalapana Churches.]

M: Do you remember before your parents became Catholic? do you remember going to the Protestant Church?

K: Yeah. So I know most all the songs so when I go to a Protestant church.... When Gabriel Pe'a died, they have in Haili (Church). I went there and I could sing the songs because we used to sing them.... I was up to 6 years old. I was baptized as a Catholic when I was 6 years old, but I remember all the songs.

[section left out. Kawehi didn't know about bonfires on the beach on dark nights to guide canoes that were out night fishing]

M: Did your parents ever collect salt?

K: (there was a place where her ^father could get salt, but) as far as I remember we buy our salt. Only sometimes my father ~~g~~ot it from down here....All the cooking was done with that table salt (from the store). (She wasn't aware you could get alae salt in Kalapana, thought it came from Kaua'i. How to make enenui poke.)

K: They cut it and put the limu, limu kohu, I think. They make it more on the dry, not wet.

M: They put chili pepper, too?

K: Yeah. Not how they make the poke now, not that wet. It's just with salt and _____

M: do you have to cut the skin, off?

K: They cut the skin off because it's tough, eh. to make poke they cut the skin. I don't make ~~p~~oke because they eat. I don't.

May 31, 1989

Virginia Enos asked me to correct
the info. on the floor of the old house -
behind James' place.

Part of the floor ^{inside} was a platform
for sleeping. The mat was ili'ili
stones covered with lauhala mats.

(Mary Finley)