

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Katherine "Nina" Kālaiwa'a, 70, farmer

"The Hawaiians used to have [land] that way. Mountain to sea. Of course, we no own the whole place, but we get mountain place, we go mahi'ai kalo. We get the middle place, we get 'aina kope, coffee land. And then we get down the beach for take a rest, rest or go fishing, and come home, and stay there. That's what we did have before."

Katherine "Nina" Kālaiwa'a, Hawaiian, was born on July 28, 1910 in Ke'ei, South Kona, Hawaii. Her parents were Victor Kukua Kalua and Veronica Keawe. After attending Napoopoo School, Nina held a variety of jobs. She worked as a housekeeper, baby sitter, plantation worker, castor bean picker, coffee farmer, and lau hala weaver.

While living in Honolulu between 1932 and 1948, Nina was employed as a waitress and pineapple cannery worker.

Today, a resident of Honokōhau, North Kona, Nina is active in various Hawaiian clubs and senior citizens' groups.

Tape No. 9-44-1-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Nina Kālaiwa'a (NK)

January 15, 1981

Honokōhau, North Kona, Hawai'i

BY: Larry L. Kimura (LK) and Ray Kalā Enos (RE)

LK: This is an interview with Nina Kālaiwa'a by Larry Kimura at her home in Honokōhau, North Kona, Hawai'i. Today's date is January 15, 1981.

Okay, Nina, can you tell us about your style of living in Kona? Because you mentioned that you folks had three different areas where you lived. Three homes. Three houses.

NK: Three place to stay. Okay. We stay middle house--we get Ke'ei, middle; down the beach, Ke'ei; and way up Ke'ei.

LK: That's up ma uka?

NK: Ma uka--mountain.

LK: So, let's talk about your home up ma uka.

NK: Wailapa.

LK: Wailapa. Now, about how many miles was that from the main Māmalahoa Highway?

NK: Ma kai is Māmalahoa Highway, going up, I think, seven miles.

LK: About seven miles? And what kind of house did you folks have up there? Well, actually, I should ask you why did you have a house up there?

NK: We get house for stay.

LK: Why did you have a place up there, though?

NK: For plant taro. That's only place can plant taro--way up there. We plant taro up there, and then . . .

LK: And your house, can you describe your house that you folks had up

Wailapa for planting in your farming area?

NK: We don't have lumbers, though, yeah? No more lumbers, no iron roof, no post. What we do is to cut all the hāpu'u trees and lay 'em down on the ground. That's just like our bed, like.

LK: That's for your flooring?

NK: Floor, yeah.

LK: This is the hāpu'u tree fern stump . . .

NK: Hāpu'u tree fern, yeah. And pile 'em up, and pile up about two feet high.

LK: Yeah, because those things are pretty thick.

NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then . . .

LK: What did you do for your walls?

NK: Before we do our wall, we put down first the floor.

LK: Right, the hāpu'u.

NK: Hāpu'u, and then we put the hāpu'u leaf--not the hāpu'u leaf, the 'ama'u leaf.

LK: On to the. . . .

NK: On the hāpu'u. The tree.

LK: This 'ama'u, I'm just going to explain what is 'ama'u. That's the fern, yeah?

NK: Fern.

LK: Some kind of a fern leaf, right, that you put over the hāpu'u stumps?

NK: Uh huh [yes], uh huh.

LK: And then, you. . . .

NK: Then, we make the siding.

LK: But you also mentioned, you covered that with the lau hala mat?

NK: After. We get all pau with the floor, and we cover the side, everything pau, then we make the on top. You know, the tj leaf.

LK: What was your walls?

- NK: The walls, we put ti leaf. We cut ti leaf, the tree, as the poles like. And make 'em right around. And then, we put the ('ama'u fern leaves)--stand the ('ama'u) up. Right between, we make two stick, and you stick the ('ama'u) inside.
- LK: You use the ti leaf stick or the ti leaf stalk as . . .
- NK: Yeah, ti leaf stick. Those straight ones, you know? Get some straight kind.
- LK: You'd use that as a rafter?
- NK: Rafter. I think so.
- LK: And then, you put 'ama'u?
- NK: 'Ama'u leaf. Yeah. For the siding.
- LK: For the walls?
- NK: Walls, yeah. Then, the on top, would cut . . .
- LK: You had to do that pretty thick, then, for the walls?
- NK: The siding? Well, we get. . . . What do you call? You know, the two sticks?
- LK: Yeah, the ti leaf sticks, right?
- NK: Yeah. We put 'em right between. Yeah, we make about three leaf, and you make. That's thick enough, you know.
- LK: That was thick? And the wind and rain wouldn't come in?
- NK: No, no, no, no. Just like that, we make. And then, bumbai, we make 'em high up and tie with da kine. . . . My father used to pick all this kind sisal. You know the sisal? And you'd make 'em all rope like, and he tied 'em with that. Because only for temporary, see? For the family to stay inside when we go home. Especially us kids, we go up there sleep, eh?
- LK: And what did you have for your roof?
- NK: Ti leaf under, and then, we put 'ama'u on top [of the ti leaf].
- LK: Yeah, you still used the ti leaf stalk, the sticks, for your rafters, yeah?
- NK: Yeah, yeah. We put flat, yeah? The green leaf.
- LK: The ti leaf?

NK: Yeah. Green kind. And then, we put the banana leaf.

LK: Was that the same way like I've seen them use, you know, the lau hala? They fold it over. This is the stick, and they fold it over, like this. Is that how you do the ti leaf?

NK: No, no, no, no.

LK: Oh, you just lay it on?

NK: Just lay it on and cut--you know, on the big side--and cut. Thick, eh? Get thick, on the back . . .

LK: Right, right. Oh, you talking about what they call the bone?

NK: The bone, yeah. In the center. And you just cut . . .

LK: So, you cut that bone, maybe, half way?

NK: No. Just about quarter of it. As long you can stick inside the tree. You know, the stick, when you stick 'em all on house. You gotta put stick right up on the house. I mean, down, like that.

LK: In other words, you would lay it down this way?

NK: Yeah. And then, you stick one ti leaf from up---maybe you come from down first.

LK: No, I know what. You mentioned earlier that the rafters you'd use for the roof were 'ōhi'a branches?

NK: Yeah, yeah. That's what I mean. Then, you put the ti leaf inside.

LK: Right. Then, you put the ti leaf on. Then, on the ti leaf, you. . . .

NK: Put the banana leaf. All the green leaf, though. Yeah. While it's flat. Then, you cover up [with] sticks.

LK: Oh, then cover that banana leaf with sticks over it to hold the . . .

NK: Yeah, hold the wind, and like that.

LK: How long did that kind of house last?

NK: Oh, maybe, that house, about a year. But we don't stay up there all the time. Only weekends.

LK: That was just a temporary shelter?

NK: Yeah, yeah.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

- LK: About how big was this farming shelter that you folks had? How many people could sleep inside?
- NK: I think about six.
- LK: Six people? And just one big room?
- NK: Yeah, one big room. Because only weekends, we go home up there.
- LK: Can you tell us how you folks farmed your taro?
- NK: We have to grow on a . . . I don't know how you talk that in English, but kīhāpai, yeah?
- LK: Yeah, maybe, plots? Farming plots?
- NK: Plots, I think so. Yeah, we go by plots and clean about half acre.
- LK: Uh huh, as one kīhāpai?
- NK: One kīhāpai. Then, you plant the taro and let the taro grow. And every time, we gotta clean, hō hana, hō hana, till seven month. Then, we have to really clean 'em good. And then, cover up with 'ama'u inside there.
- LK: You put 'ama'u fern around the taro as a . . .
- NK: Yeah. That's to keep away the grass.
- LK: Keep the weeds from growing?
- NK: Yeah, yeah. Keep the weeds from growing.
- LK: It's not good, then, to hō hana when it's about seven months' old?
- NK: No, no good. Yeah, the taro root will cut, and then taro no good for poi. They come all spoil. So, that's why, we were saying, seven month, leave the taro like that, cover all up. And we no work no more.
- LK: You just let it go?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: How long you have to wait till you can harvest?
- NK: About one year or year and a half. Some, two years.
- LK: Why is it such difference?
- NK: Well, the taro is not ready. Some taros are early, some taros are late.

LK: Oh, depend on the variety of taro?

NK: Variety. I think so, yeah. That's what they say.

LK: How were you folks able to have taro all year 'round?

NK: By cleaning another place.

LK: Another kīhāpai?

NK: Kīhāpai. And if this taro is all ready, then we plant another kīhāpai another place, where we can plant all the hulis in there.

LK: Huli is the planting slip? The new slip, you going to plant?

NK: Yeah.

LK: It's like rotating?

NK: Rotating, I think so.

LK: While you pulling this side, this kīhāpai, the other one is getting ready?

NK: Ready. Uh huh [yes].

LK: So, when you pau this side, you go on the other side and pull?

NK: That's right.

LK: How often did you folks pull the taro?

NK: About every week, we make 'em.

LK: And you were mentioning earlier, when you folks pulled the taro. . . . Because we know that when the taro grows, there's the parent taro in the middle, yeah? And all the babies on the side that the Hawaiians call the 'ohā. So, when you pull the taro, you just pull the parent one? The big one first?

NK: First one. And the bigger 'ohā.

LK: And the bigger babies?

NK: Babies.

LK: The rest you leave to grow bigger?

NK: Yeah.

LK: So, that way, you have a lot of taro?

NK: Yeah, yeah. Because the baby going come. Get inside there, plenty, eh? Maybe about three or four pukas. You know, the pukas when you plant the taro. Maybe you take about four puka place. Where you plant all the taros? What you call that?

LK: Mākālua [hole for planting]?

NK: Mākālua. Yeah, mākālua. Then, you take four. If they all big already, that's 'nough.

LK: That's one bag?

NK: One bag. Yeah. And then, the next time, maybe some place, 'i'o--you know, get meat--and some place, no more, you see.

LK: So, all depends.

NK: All depends. Take, I think, a good four month on one kīhāpai.

LK: About how many acres did you folks have in taro?

NK: We used to get most, clean kind, two.

LK: About two acres?

NK: Two.

LK: That's a lot of land planted in taro.

NK: Yeah, yeah. Oh, we get about five acres up there, huh?

LK: Whose land was this?

NK: That's Bishop [Estate] land. We lease. And those days, the lease was cheap, eh? We pay only four dollars a year.

LK: Is that all?

NK: Taro place are cheaper than a coffee land. I don't know why, but. Because taro, we never make money out of that taro. Only for us for eat.

LK: And yet, that was what you folks . . .

NK: Live on . . .

LK: . . . ate every day, yeah? So, the taro you folks pull was used mostly to make poi?

NK: Most for make poi. And then, we make for palu. Palu--feed the fish.

- LK: Oh, for bait?
- NK: Bait, yeah.
- LK: For what kind of fishing was that?
- NK: That's 'ōpelu.
- LK: Oh, 'ōpelu fishing. What kind of varieties of taro did you folks grow?
- NK: Oh, we get all kinds. We get the mana. They get, what you call, pala'i'i, 'ohe, naioea . . .
- LK: Naioea?
- NK: Yeah, they had that huli. Kind of white. Little bit white and brown. Naioea.
- LK: Yeah, yeah. I heard that name.
- NK: Kind of brownish.
- LK: You were talking today to me about your taro outside here in your yard--the lau-loa?
- NK: The 'ula'ula. That's lau-loa, that. We no make much da kine for poi. Because they all come up, swell up, just like baking powder. When you make pancake, they all . . .
- LK: Oh, so, certain taro is not good for . . .
- NK: Yeah, yeah. Just like da kine green kind taro. I think, poi taro not green, but they purple. When you make poi, they say pala'i'i. Pala'i'i, some is real good, but some is not. They are lau-loa. Because the poi come all swell up.
- LK: You mean, get sour fast or. . . .
- NK: Well, they sour fast, but when you are mixing, maybe way down here. Bumbai, in the morning, you see, way up on the bowl.
- LK: Oh, it rises?
- NK: Rise up.
- LK: Lotta air like?
- NK: Just like you put baking powder inside, something like that.
- LK: Oh, like yeast or something?

- NK: Yeast, yeah. But da kine, the poi go out, eh? That's why, we no use.
- LK: Right. So, you don't use--you just eat the taro?
- NK: Yeah, just for eat. Sometimes, you cannot help. No 'nough poi--taro. We use that. We mix it together with other kind good kind taro.
- LK: But ordinarily, you use that as table taro?
- NK: Table taro, yeah.
- LK: Did you folks fertilize?
- NK: Uh uh [no]. They pull the weeds and put 'em around as a fertilizer.
- LK: As mulch for the taro?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: So, you never went without taro? You always had taro?
- NK: Yeah. Only the beginning, when we first open our place, like that. No more huli. We no more taro, because no more taro, huh? The taro come all make and hard. No more place to plant, so my father used to go buy from some Japanese. Because they stay ma uka all the time, they get.
- LK: So, Japanese also farmed taro?
- NK: Yeah, they do.
- LK: Did they eat their taro?
- NK: They eat, they eat. Only, they don't know how to make poi.
- LK: So, most, what did they raise the taro for?
- NK: They cook.
- LK: No, what did they raise the . . .
- NK: For sell.
- LK: Oh, to sell.
- NK: Other people . . .
- LK: How much . . .
- NK: Three dollars a bag. Those days, cheap, eh?

LK: But these Japanese farmers, were they living more on the farm?

NK: Yeah, they live just farm, that's all. They no go beach. They only go beach maybe once in a great while, they go beach. And then, that's why, they used to order [from] my father. If he get fish, come up and sell to them, see? That's how my father can get little bit more money.

LK: But the Hawaiian families, they have a place in the mountain to farm and a place down the beach, too? Most of them?

NK: Well, some of them don't have beach place. They just go down and go home. If they can lease a place down ma kai from the Bishop [Estate], then they stay ma kai. Some Hawaiians, they only stay ma kai. They no go taro patch. That's why, some Hawaiians [who] get taro patch, they go ma kai, they change fish and . . .

LK: You mean, they trade?

NK: Yeah, change. Trade the taro . . .

LK: For the fish?

NK: For the fish.

LK: And the fish for the taro?

NK: Yeah.

LK: They don't sell, then?

NK: No. Just trade.

LK: And how did you folks carry all that taro down? It's so heavy.

NK: We get donkey; we get horse, mule. My father get mule. That's why, my aunt, every time, gave canoe. Because we lent our mule to them, and they'd huki down, pull canoe down from the mountain till where the cars can pick 'em up.

LK: Up in your taro area, how did you folks water?

NK: Up mountain, they always get little bit rain.

LK: Oh, so was always damp enough?

NK: Yeah, yeah. 'Nough, 'nough. They always get rain over there. But not that much. Little bit. And kēhau in the morning.

LK: The dew?

NK: Yeah.

- LK: And when you folks cooked your taro to pound into poi, where did you do that?
- NK: Oh, we take 'em down the beach.
- LK: And how did you cook your taro?
- NK: You know, they used to sell before--da kine kerosene in a five-gallon can? Yeah, we keep all da kine can. My father cut 'em, and he cook taro all inside there. Maybe two tin.
- LK: You mean, you boiled it?
- NK: Yeah. Boiled that. Boil, and then [when it's] pau, we peel 'em.
- LK: Did you folks bake it in an imu?
- NK: We steam 'em in a imu.
- LK: But mostly, you boiled it in a . . .
- NK: Yeah, if we stay in the middle house, yeah, we boil 'em. If we get water--rain like that--we boil. Otherwise, we have to put in a imu and save our water for. . . .
- LK: Of course, in those days, when you made your poi, you had to do it all by hand.
- NK: Yeah, yeah. Pound 'em. My father pound the poi.
- LK: That's hard work, huh?
- NK: Yeah. My father, my uncle, eh?
- LK: After you cook it, then what? You peel?
- NK: Peel 'em with the 'opihi.
- LK: The shell of the 'opihi?
- NK: 'Opihi. The big kind. The big kind. Yeah, that's how. Today, they clean with spoon . . .
- LK: Knife.
- NK: . . . or knife. Hawaiians, they no do that.
- LK: You mean, before?
- NK: Yeah. They no do that. Because they always . . .
- LK: Just use the 'opihi shell?

- NK: Yeah. They no waste nothing.
- LK: What did they do with the peels?
- NK: We feed 'em to the pig.
- LK: Then, you pound the poi?
- NK: Pound the taro. Pound the taro. Pound the 'ulu [breadfruit].
- LK: What did you keep the poi in?
- NK: We used to get da kine, they say, kelemānia, you know.
- LK: What is that?
- NK: Crock, crock.
- LK: Oh, kelemānia, crock.
- NK: That's how we used to keep. And they used to have da kine board for barrel. Yeah, the small kind.
- LK: Wooden barrel?
- NK: Wooden barrel. We used to have that.
- LK: Gee, that's quite a bit of poi, then, you had to pound for your family. How many bag taro for one week?
- NK: One week, one bag.
- LK: And then, you go up again next week, pick another bag? Pull another bag taro?
- NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Every time, have to get poi inside da kine kelemānia, eh?
- LK: Of course, those days, there was no refrigeration?
- NK: No, no, nothing else.
- LK: No icebox to keep the poi?
- NK: No, no.
- LK: So, how did you eat your poi every day? Whatever you needed to eat, did you mix for that day or you mix all one time?
- NK: Oh, we mix half. You know, what you can eat, and if get leftover, you leave over. And those days, when get all on the side--you know, you clean on the side, but the side all come dry, yeah? When

dried, just like poi, eh? They keep that. And melt 'em up again, put in the water, and come poi. Yeah, they keep that.

LK: Oh. They don't waste anything.

NK: No.

LK: I also heard about mixing the taro poi with flour.

NK: Oh, yeah. We do that. To make it 'nough.

LK: Oh, to stretch it?

NK: To stretch. And not only that. You know, if you get flour inside, it's just like a poi would last more. And then, if only plain poi [i.e., without flour], just like--oh, I don't know, fudge or. . . . Just like, while you eating, quick pau, eh?

LK: Oh, oh, goes down fast?

NK: Yeah. I don't know why.

LK: But with the flour it lasts longer?

NK: With the flour, it lasts, yeah. I think the flour is heavy.

LK: So, sometimes, you folks had to do that? Stretch the poi?

NK: Yeah.

LK: Of course, you just mentioned, you folks also used 'ulu or breadfruit for poi, too?

NK: Well, you know, if we rest the taro, we use 'ulu.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

LK: So, you folks didn't have to earn so much money?

NK: We get money.

LK: I mean, well, I know you did earn money because. . . . Okay, let's go to your middle house. You folks had a house at Ke'ei Waena-- Middle Ke'ei? Why you had a house in the middle?

NK: For us, the kids, go school. And then, near for us to go home and stay--the middle house.

LK: Oh, so you could be close to school?

NK: Yeah, close to school. So, going up, my father and mama go up [to the ma uka lands], mahi'ai [farm], come home, when we go to school.

They go up, they come back. They go up, come back, every day.
Then, when we get like weekends, we go home up . . .

LK: To the farming?

NK: Yeah, farming taro.

LK: On the weekends?

NK: Weekends.

LK: When did you go down to the beach?

NK: Oh, well, when we pau mahi'ai.

LK: Oh, when you finish farming, you go back down the beach?

NK: Yeah. We go down the . . .

LK: That would be on weekends, too, then?

NK: Yeah, yeah. Well, if no more grass like that and we plant already
all the taro, we get nothing to do, then we go down the beach.

LK: When you folks went to school, most of the time, then, you stayed
in the middle house?

NK: Yeah, yeah.

LK: And you also said you had your coffee farm there?

NK: Yeah, in the middle house.

LK: And so, that was a lot of work, too.

NK: Yeah. My father folks cleaned the coffee, go up taro patch and
come home, clean coffee land . . .

LK: How many acres did you have in coffee land?

NK: Coffee land? We get six acres.

LK: That's a lot.

NK: Yeah.

LK: And what kind of house did you have there?

NK: Lumber.

LK: Lumber house? How many bags of coffee you folks could pick during
the season, a day?

NK: With the whole gang--with my whole family--we can make 15 bags, 10 bags. Sometimes, the kids, they play around, they no make that much.

(Laughter)

LK: How much was one bag?

NK: Two dollars.

LK: How many pounds was?

NK: A hundred pounds.

LK: Two dollar for a hundred-pound bag coffee?

NK: Yeah.

LK: Ho, boy.

NK: That's cheap.

LK: Well, when you got your money, how did you spend your money? How did your father folks spend your money?

NK: What we don't have, then we spend.

LK: You buy? Like what did you buy?

NK: Oh, sometimes, we get no more flour or, sometimes, we no more rice. We buy rice, flour. Of course, those days, was cheap, you know. I think [rice was] about three dollars a bag.

LK: What kind of items did you folks buy from the store besides flour, rice? What other things did you buy?

NK: Sugar. Cracker. Well, like soap and da kine, we gotta buy for washing. And, charcoal, we make our own, sometime, you know, with the guava wood.

LK: Didn't you folks have bread?

NK: Once in a while. Not all the time.

LK: How come?

NK: We make pancake, yeah? Get flour, eh? We make pancake. Nobody make bread. Only once in a while, the Pākē, they bake, eh? Then, we can get.

We pick coffee. You know, the parch[ment] coffee, the one fall down from the tree, the bird eat the coffee and all helele'i.

LK: All fall, yeah.

NK: Then, we pick all da kine parch. Then, we sell to Pākē, eight dollar, one bag.

LK: Why is it more money?

NK: Parch one.

LK: What does that mean?

NK: That's the kind you just clean the coffee [i.e., remove the pulp and outer skin], and then bumbai, you can grind.

LK: You cook it first, though?

NK: Well, you [can] roast 'em, eh? [NK means that the parchment coffee they sold was ready for roasting.] And then, no need clean the skin.

LK: Oh, the skin is all off?

NK: All pau. You no need clean the skin. Because we pick all the parch from the ground, eh? Da kine, that's why they call it what?

LK: Parch coffee?

NK: 'Aki'aki'ia. That's da kine 'aki'aki'ia. You remember, the man was talking? Yeah, that's da kine coffee, that one.

LK: So you sold that to the Chinese?

NK: Yeah, we'd sell 'em to the Chinese people.

LK: Who were the Chinese stores in Ke'ei that you remember?

NK: Get. . . . I forget.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

LK: What were the names of those places?

NK: Lee Duck. Akaka. Akaka, the one make bakery. Yeah, bake bread, like that--Akaka. And we used to call 'em Lee Duck, too, eh?

LK: (Chuckles) That's his nickname?

NK: Yeah, nickname. Lee Duck. And then, we have Āwā. He had the store. Āwā.

LK: This is all in Ke'ei?

NK: Ke'ei, yeah.

LK: What part of Ke'ei, the stores?

NK: Middle.

LK: Oh, Middle Ke'ei?

NK: Middle Ke'ei.

LK: What else? Did they have other pastries that they made, this Chinese?

NK: Yeah. Biscuit. They made pie, doughnuts.

LK: So, those are the kinds of things you folks bought from the Chinese stores when you needed the. . . .

NK: We [ex]change with the (coffee).

LK: What about your clothes? Where did you buy that?

NK: Oh, we ordered that from Sears Roebuck or Waterfield, I think, used to get, those days. Waterfield. The small kind book.

LK: Catalog?

NK: Catalog, yeah. We used to order.

LK: Your shoes, like that?

NK: Shoes. Clothes for go school.

LK: Did you wear shoes to go school?

NK: We no use for go school. We use for go church.

LK: Oh.

(Laughter)

LK: So, you hardly needed money?

NK: Yeah, we no need money, but that's why, when we go school, we no more lunch money, eh? Our daddy folks, they no give us money. Hoo, even we like buy candy, no can get money.

LK: So, what did you folks eat for lunch at school?

NK: Lunch, we gotta take poi. We gotta take poi and go school. Sometime, my mama make da kine doughnut.

LK: Doughnuts?

NK: Yeah. You know, da kine thick pot? Before, used to get da kine iron pot?

LK: Yeah, cast iron pot?

NK: Yeah. She put all da kine oil inside. And those days, they make their oil, you know, from the fat of the pig. Melt 'em all up. My father do all that. The fat of the pig, and then keep inside da kine can--Crisco can. Then, my mama made the doughnut. Oh, that's the best we wen like.

(Laughter)

LK: And when you go school and take poi, you just eat poi?

NK: Poi, we get fish. Poi and fish.

LK: What did the other kids have to eat?

NK: They get rice. You know, the Japanese, they bring rice with ume. Or daikon. That's only what, most, they get--daikon and ume.

(Laughter)

LK: And you folks have your poi and fish?

NK: Poi and fish. Sometime, we ask them, "You folks like eat poi?"

They say, "Yeah, we like eat poi."

"Okay, we change rice and poi."

(Laughter)

NK: But we say, "We no like eat the daikon, bumbai fut, fut."

(Laughter)

NK: Ping!

(Laughter)

NK: Really! They mad with us!

LK: How did you folks carry your lunch to school? You had a container?

NK: No, we bring 'em in a basket. I no see da kine basket today.

LK: Basket?

NK: Yeah. You know, da kine handbag?

LK: But what--the poi going all come out?

NK: No, we get tin lunch can.

LK: Oh, can? In the tin?

NK: Yeah. And put 'em in the basket.

LK: How did you like school?

NK: Oh, well, good. Was good. Oh, good.

LK: Did the children all get along or. . . .

NK: Oh, some. That's why, we always fighting, too.

LK: (Laughs) You used to fight in school?

NK: Yeah, no good. The kids. Ho, if you miss one lesson and if you make mistake, they call you, "Stupid, stupid."

(Laughter)

NK: Now, when you go spelling, you get spelling and you no can spell. You spell 'em wrong. Say, "Ooh, you stupid."

(Laughter)

NK: That's why, I get mad. I lick 'em.

(Laughter)

LK: You used to give them licking?

NK: Yeah. But afterwards, that's nothing.

LK: Friends again?

NK: Even today, they say, "Oh, good fun, huh, our days."

(Laughter)

NK: Yeah. They say, "Oh, our days, the best. Good fun. We get something to remember." We good friends, we fight, we fight, and then now, we all good friends.

LK: I guess, in those days, mostly everybody walked to school, yeah?

NK: Oh, walk. That's right. Just walk. Hoo, [from] Nāpo'opo'o [to] Ke'ei. Go Nāpo'opo'o and come home.

LK: Rain or shine?

NK: Nāpo'opo'o School, ho, yeah. But some days, we no go school. If we stay down the beach for come school, oh, we late for come up. And when we climb up the hill--you know, as you going down and go to the beach, when you go down the rock road and you down--we come up the hill, we look up Nāpo'opo'o School. The flag up. Ah! We no going school. We go back, we go swimming, swimming all day down there. Nobody catch us. Then, we come up, (chuckles) we look, the flag down, go home. We doing that all the time. Bumbai, the policeman come down.

(Laughter)

LK: What happened?

NK: Policeman on a horse and us gotta walk.

(Laughter)

LK: Your parents never found out?

NK: Then, when they wen find out, us get licking, boy.

(Laughter)

NK: Oh, that was fun.

LK: You folks play hooky?

NK: Yeah.

LK: So, while you folks stayed down the beach, then, your father would go fishing?

NK: Yeah, when taro, they all not ready. Like we rest, eh? We don't work. After seven months, we no need have to go up clean. Only him go up check how. . . .

LK: What did you rather do? Go up the farm or go fishing, stay down the beach?

NK: Both side.

LK: You like both sides? So, you didn't mind working in the taro?

NK: I like. Because I like ride horse, that's why, back and forth.

(Laughter)

LK: Did you have saddle on the horse?

- NK: Yeah, we get. We get saddle. Only when we go look for the horse in the patch, like that. No more saddle, ride 'em, come home.
- LK: You were mentioning earlier that you folks had donkeys from somebody for pull the log? The koa log?
- NK: No, mule. Mule.
- LK: Oh, mule?
- NK: Mule, for go up mountain, huki da kine koa tree for make canoe.
- LK: And your father made canoe?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: For himself?
- NK: Yeah. Oh, and some people was order. Then, my father make for them, too. Yeah. We even help my father dig, dig inside the canoe.
- LK: The log? Carve?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: How did he do that?
- NK: Oh, he had plenty tools. That's what we used to think. You know, those days, when you lend people, they no come back, you know, the tools. That's why, minamina my father tools. He get iron kind, he get the stone kind. And some, they get wood kind for dig.
- LK: Wooden. . . .
- NK: Yeah. Stick. Just like hau, yeah?
- LK: Can cut?
- NK: Ooh, yeah. Bend, then cut.
- LK: That's a ko'i , yeah?
- NK: Ko'i, yeah. For dig.
- LK: The adze?
- NK: Yeah. For dig. We used to do that with my father. Help him.
- RE: That was made out of what kind of wood?
- NK: The wood? The one for dig? I don't know.

LK: So, he made how many canoe for himself?

NK: So far I know is three.

LK: Three. For fishing?

NK: Yeah.

LK: So, what kind of fishing did he do?

NK: Go 'ūpāpalu, 'ū'ū, 'āweoweo. All da kine.

LK: On the canoe?

NK: On the canoe.

LK: That's nightttime, yeah?

NK: Yeah. Daytime, he go kā'ili.

LK: Kā'ili is a hand line?

NK: Hand line, daytime. And then, he catch the 'ula'ula, and kalekale, and pō'ou.

LK: What about 'ōpelu?

NK: Well, when 'ōpelu season.

LK: Season? Oh, yeah.

NK: He go 'ōpelu season.

LK: Did they make their 'ōpelu nets?

NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They make their own net. Because I seen my father, they make their own net, eh?

LK: So, you folks always had fish to eat?

NK: Always had fish. Sometime, get pig, yeah? We kill the pig, salt 'em up with salt, put inside the big kind kelemānia.

LK: The kelemānia crock?

NK: Kelemānia. Yeah. They preserve in there. When the time like, just go get, cook.

LK: What would be your usual food you would eat every day? Like breakfast, lunch, dinner?

NK: Well, I know, in the morning, we used to get coffee and. . . .

Well, anyway, I forget to say that, before, used to get cow, baby cow, with the mama. We get milk all the time. That's what my father used to do, see? He take care for the ranch, the ranch give cow too. That's what he like cow for milk. Even my auntie from up there, she give us cow, too.

LK: Which auntie?

NK: Mrs. Johnson. Maggie Johnson.

LK: She had a ranch?

NK: Yeah. They had big ranch from up mountain to down Kainaliu Beach. And they still have Kainaliu Beach, yet. Yeah, I asked some of the boys--the Hooper boys. They said yeah, they still yet go down to the beach. Because my mama used to stay with them at the beach, too. Go fishing palu.

LK: Oh, to catch those, that's a special secret, yeah?

NK: Yeah, yeah. The kole, maiko, mā'i'i'i.

LK: Yeah, those are the kinds of fish you can catch.

NK: To hook.

LK: Did you think it was a hard life or did you think you folks were . . .

NK: Well, of course, in a way, was kind of hard for us. Because us no can get money for go buy any kind what we like. Like plenty candies and like that. Eat ice cream. You know what? When we like eat ice cream, they order the ice and this kind big ice cream mixer. You have to grind, grind, grind. Put ice inside, salt inside. Of course, inside, get da kine can container inside. Put milk, eggs. My sister folks put that sugar. And salt. Then, they start to grind, grind, grind, grind until the thing come hard. That's what we used to eat ice cream before. Make our own.

LK: I guess you didn't have too many candies and things like we have nowadays?

NK: Only store. Yeah, yeah. Not like now. Those days, only few in the stores, eh?

LK: But hard to get the money?

NK: Yeah, hard to get the money. Five cents, we no can get. Oh, when I can get five cents, ten cents, oh, we run, go store, buy candy.

LK: You know, one important thing, I bet, in those days too--even today--in Kona, is water. How did you folks get your water? Like

up ma uka, well, you only stayed there temporary in your farming area. But what about your middle house and especially down the beach?

NK: Well, down the beach, we take by gallon, like that, just for drinking water. We use the brackish most for everything, work.

LK: The brackish water . . .

NK: Brackish water for cooking, washing. The brackish water. And the drinking water, we only use that for drinking, or cook coffee or tea, like that. But the middle house, we had two big kind of iron barrel just for water.

LK: Rain water?

NK: Rain water. And we have tank water, too, but tank, when hot, they crack, eh? So, water run away. We haul water from the mountain.

LK: How do you haul the water?

NK: With the donkey. Everybody get donkey. They lend you. Say, "If you going haul water, well, we lend you two, three donkeys." And maybe about 15, over 15 donkeys, we haul water.

LK: You carried the water in what? Barrels?

NK: They had da kine round barrel. Long one. Just right over the donkey.

LK: And so, where did you get this water from?

NK: From the pond water up Wailapa. Wailapa pond water.

LK: Wailapa is the spring?

NK: Spring, yeah, yeah.

LK: That was where your farm was, too?

NK: Yeah, yeah.

LK: So, the water was good water?

NK: Good, yeah. Fresh water.

LK: So, you folks did that when you didn't have water?

NK: Yeah. We'll go and haul the water.

LK: I wonder if those springs are still there today?

- NK: I think they bulldoze 'em. Most every place, now, they bulldoze, eh?
- LK: What happened up there?
- NK: Well, everybody, they don't know, eh? The other guys?
- LK: You mean, they made road or subdivision or something?
- NK: No, they just bulldozer to clean the place up. Before, they hand work the place. They never da kine bulldozer . . .
- LK: Equipment, yeah.
- NK: Equipment. So, today, they have the bulldozer. They figure it's easier to clean one big place, eh? So, they push. So, the place, that thing all cover up. Nobody tell them where this is.
- LK: The spring?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: Are they small springs?
- NK: Oh, quite big.
- LK: Oh, yeah, maybe about three feet in diameter.
- NK: Down. Three feet down. About that high. Even no matter how much you take all the water--take how many donkey water you get--still the same.
- LK: It never goes down?
- NK: No.
- LK: Must be underground.
- NK: No, spring.
- LK: Spring, yeah. You also mentioned earlier there were other springs that had names like . . .
- NK: 'Ālanapō, Waikia'i. Of course, Wailapa, that's. . . . And way down Mahione.
- LK: Where is Mahione? In what part? In Ke'ei, too?
- NK: Yeah. That's right up Ke'ei. It's the last on this side of kahauloa. That's the one close to Kahauloa.
- LK: Closer to Kahauloa? And then, Wailapa is Ke'ei?

NK: Wailapa, way over the other side. About Hōnaunau School. And then, the middle one, that's 'Ālanapō.

LK: 'Ālanapō is in between?

NK: Yeah.

LK: And where is Waikia'i?

NK: It's between, too. I don't know, I think two miles apart or three miles apart, then get the other pond water like.

LK: So, most people knew about these springs?

NK: All the Hawaiians know. But I don't know, the new people who come in like that. Now, all new people up there. Most all the haoles up there now.

LK: So, you folks used to haul the water on the donkeys?

NK: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, go down, 10, 15 donkeys go down with all da kine. Pour all in a barrel.

LK: Shee, a donkey was a handy animal.

NK: Yeah, they are. And the donkeys, they know where to go, huh? They go up, they go home. They know where to go straight home. You no need lead. Get them going on the road, they know where to go.

LK: Did you folks eat donkey?

NK: Eat? I no eat donkey. My father never used to eat donkey. Even my family hardly eat donkey. Only my sister, older one, eat the donkey. Well, we don't know, see, because she stay down the other side.

LK: But some people ate the donkey.

NK: Well, she got the donkey from the people. She dry 'em up, all that. It's good. Then, my father go down there . . .

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape Nos. 9-44A-2-81 and 9-45-2-81

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Nina Kālaiwa'a (NK)

January 17, 1981

Honokōhau, North Kona, Hawai'i

BY: Larry L. Kimura (LK) and Ray Kalā Enos (RE)

LK: Today is January 17, 1981, and we are at the home of Nina Kālaiwa'a at Honokōhau, North Kona, continuing our interview with her.

So, Nina, can you recall some of the old-time families--Hawaiian families--that were living in your area of Ke'ei, Kona? Maybe you can start with middle Ke'ei. Some of the old families that you remember, especially Hawaiian families.

NK: We get the Kalā family, Kanuhas. We have Kanuha family, Kalā family, Kumuko'a. Joe Pa'akaua.

LK: What about down the beach at Ke'ei?

NK: Ke'ei--Kaua Pānuī. Harry Pelio. Lono, Nāihe Kukui. Nāihe Kukui. But they come down the beach sometimes, not all the time. But they have place down there, Ke'ei. The Machado family. And David Baker. And Apoleki.

LK: Apoleki? This all Hawaiian families?

NK: Yeah.

LK: Was there mostly Hawaiians down at Ke'ei Beach?

NK: Yes, before, before. Most Hawaiian.

LK: Seems like there were more people living at Ke'ei Beach than up middle Ke'ei, huh? Or what?

NK: Yeah. Uh huh. They most down the beach. They live down there all the time because they no more coffee land ma uka. Only they go ma uka when the people need them pick coffee. They go up, pick coffee for somebody else like that. Only people who have their own coffee land, they stay ma uka. And then, when they like go fishing, they go ma kai. Down the beach. Us, we have place down the beach, so we stay down the beach.

LK: Did you folks have any stores or things like that--besides homes--down at Ke'ei Beach?

NK: No. Never had store Ke'ei Beach.

LK: Just homes?

NK: Just homes. Even the Hailis used to be Ke'ei Beach.

LK: Oh, I thought they were from Hōnaunau?

NK: No, no. John Haili, Abraham Haili used to live down Ke'ei Beach. Nīpoa. Lived down Ke'ei Beach. Ah Nee family.

LK: This Lincoln, what? That's just a new family?

NK: They no live down the beach. They stay ma uka Ke'ei. On the highway. Us, we live in the middle of Ke'ei.

LK: And what did most of those people do for a living? Just like your family? Fishing, and planting taro, and all that?

NK: Well, some, they get taro patch. Some, no have, see? They only stay down the beach. They only go up mahi'ai. They get mahi'ai place. From down the beach, they go mahi'ai, and then they stay down the beach. Some of them, they just stay down the beach. They don't have place ma uka.

LK: When you get sick or when, say, the mothers have to give birth to their children, did they come to the hospital?

NK: No. My mama never believe go doctor or anything. She doctor her own self, her own family. She take care.

LK: So, all of you were given birth to at home?

NK: Home. Yeah. Even the most of my---like my sister folks, they hānau home, too. They give birth home.

LK: What about when you get sick?

NK: Well, they never go doctor. They just call the doctor and the doctor come to the house.

LK: Who was the doctor then? Do you remember?

NK: Dr. Jeffers. That's our first doctor--Dr. Jeffers. And I forget this other doctor. . . . Dixon. Of course, Dr. Hayashi.

LK: Did you folks have your own Hawaiian medicine, too?

NK: Yeah, my mama always have Hawaiian medicine. For babies and for

us. That's why, she never believe going doctor. Even when she was about 80. Anyway, she was kinda sick, so we thought we call doctor come see her, eh? No, she no like. Well, we cannot help. We don't know how to take care of her, so we call the doctor come down the house. When doctor came down the house, oh, she was so mad. She no like take the doctor pills.

LK: How old was she when she died?

NK: Eighty-four. Well, anyway, she said, if she not going to do nothing as she used to be like before, she no can live longer.

LK: Is that what she said?

NK: She said that. Because she no do hard work. No more outside pull grass, like that.

LK: But you were saying she worked at the tobacco farm?

NK: Well, that's when she was not too old. She was around 50-something.

LK: Did you work at that tobacco farm, too?

NK: Uh uh, no. I was small girl, that time.

LK: But you remember?

NK: I remember because I take my mama and my sister over there on a horse, and . . .

LK: How come you had to take them?

NK: I take the horse, that's why. They no more place to put the horse when they go working time.

LK: Like you drop them off?

NK: Yeah, I drop them off and I take the horse. If I have to go down the beach, I leave down some of my family--Kelekolio place.

LK: How many horses?

NK: I take two.

LK: Oh. So, you ride one . . .

NK: I ride one, I lead one. I leave down by my auntie house.

LK: But when you folks go to the tobacco farm, your mother rides one horse?

NK: I ride with my mama, and my sister ride one.

LK: Just double on one horse?

NK: Yeah. Yeah, me and mama.

LK: With the saddle?

NK: Yeah. No, well, she sit down saddle, but behind, eh? I sit behind.

LK: Uh huh, in the back. Oh, so, that's the way you travel?

NK: Yeah, that's the only way we was traveling down the beach, [and] up taro patch.

LK: When your mother was working at the tobacco farm, she went to work every day?

NK: Every day. Every day, they go work to Saturday. Ho'omaha, rest.

LK: What kind of work did she do?

NK: Well, they get da kine big kind basket. You know, the leaf of the tobacco, flat 'em all down for dry. And then, that's only [thing] they do. The men folks bring all the leafs inside the house, they call. That's a tobacco house. And then, they dry 'em. Put all in a bag, and then they put 'em all in a shelf, like. Put shelf. I don't know how many shelf high, that place.

LK: How many tobacco buildings they had? Just one?

NK: Hmm. No, I think we had two in Hōnaunau. And one bigger one, that's the important one, at Keokea. That's where the boss stay, yeah? The boss stay Keokea, and then when they . . .

LK: Who was the boss?

NK: I don't know. I don't know what the boss. . . .

LK: Well, you were young then.

NK: Oh, yeah. Yeah. About seven years, like that. Seven going to ten.

LK: Did you folks also weave lau hala hats?

NK: Well, that's our living. My mama go work outside, come home, and then that's when we start to helping her. When she come back, I bring 'em home, and we weave hat nighttime.

LK: With the kerosene lantern?

NK: Kerosene lamp, lantern. And then, we have to make by dozen. Sometime, seven, six dozen, or eight dozen. Then, I deliver the

hat to the store and change with food.

LK: Do you remember what store that was?

NK: Machado.

LK: Oh, this store up. . . . Machado Store?

NK: Machado, yeah. Machado is a old store, that. That's a old building. Oh, I never remember before, but I think about, oh, I was small.

LK: That store is in Kahauloa, yeah?

NK: Yeah, down Kahauloa.

LK: Everybody says Hōnaunau, but . . .

NK: No, no, no. That's Kahauloa. Because gotta pass Ke'ei to go Hōnaunau.

LK: Nowadays, everybody is saying different names.

NK: Yeah.

LK: Or they omitting the names. I bet, before, you folks used to call the places by their right names?

NK: That's right. Yeah.

LK: Do you remember some of the names? Like, between Kealakekua and, say, Hōnaunau? Get plenty names, I bet.

NK: Well, ma uka here, I don't remember much. But when we stay down the beach, you know, I remember some, but not all. And just short distance, yeah? Just like Keōpū, down here, where I am. That's Keōpū.

LK: You mean, right here, where you living?

NK: No, no. This is Kealakehe Height.

LK: Oh, I thought this was Honokōhau?

NK: Honokōhau, right next. Taniguchi.

LK: Oh, we've been saying Honokōhau. But this is really Kealakehe?

NK: Yeah. We live Kealakehe. But not far. Right down here by Taniguchi. Honokōhau, down to the school. And then, from the school down, I don't know. But that is Honokōhau over there.

LK: Like Ka'awaloa, was Ka'awaloa up ma uka, too?

NK: Yeah. That used to go all the way up ma uka, but they call the ma uka of Ka'awaloa as Kealakekua . . .

LK: Captain Cook?

NK: . . . and Captain Cook.

LK: Kealakekua?

NK: Yeah. But that's Ka'awaloa. That's what the Hawaiians before, eh? All the way up. Just like Lili'uokalani, I understand. I think, over here, I remember, only Lili'uokalani. From beach to mountain is, you know . . .

LK: One ahupua'a?

NK: Ahupua'a? I never heard, but I remember only Honokōhau, all up the mountain. That's all belong Lili'uokalani.

LK: From the mountain to the ocean, yeah, the way the land goes . . .

NK: The Hawaiians used to have [land] that way. Mountain to sea. That's why, like the Hawaiians used to stay on Ke'ei side. That's why, we get place from mountain to sea. Of course, we no own the whole place, but we get mountain place, we go mahi'ai kalo [farm taro]. We get the middle place, we get 'aina kope, coffee land. And then, we get down the beach for take a rest, rest or go fishing, and come home, and stay there. That's what we did have before. But not everybody. People who get place down, they stay down. Some people no more place down, they stay ma uka. But they go down, they stay up.

LK: But you folks own your property in Ke'ei Beach?

NK: Yeah, Ke'ei Beach, that's our own place.

LK: How did that come down? Through your father or your mother?

NK: No, no. My papa. My father. Well, his tūtū. From his tūtū. And the 'aina, from the ali'i give to my tūtū.

LK: To your tūtū?

NK: Yeah. So, this tūtū, hānai my father.

LK: Took care of your father?

NK: Yeah. Took care of my father. So, that's why, he had the land, so when he die, he said that's his land. So, when he died, my father was--I don't know how old he was--but he never. . . . He know, he heard the tūtū tell he own the land. But he don't know. After that, he came big boy and he never think about land. So,

Kalokuokamahele . . .

LK: Kalokuokamahele? Who was that?

NK: That's one Hawaiian man from Nāpo'opo'o. He's the one that came, and. . . . Of course, he take da kine Hawaiian paper--newspaper. And then, he tell my father, "Nāu kēia 'āina. Ka 'āina kēia a kou tūtū. Nāu kēia 'āina." [This land is for you. This is the land of your grandfather.]

My papa said, "'Ae. Maopopo nō wau. Wala'au 'ia na'u kēia 'āina, but 'a'ole wau maopopo because 'a'ole a'u pepa." [Yes. I know. I was told this land is for me, but I don't really know because I don't have the deed.]

LK: So, did they get the deed?

NK: No, Kaloku. Kaloku told him, "Go Honolulu and get the paper."

He [NK's father] said, "He mau kālā nō kēlā." He said that's money for him to spend. He had to go and pay. You know, he don't know how much he had to pay. And when he first paid his tax, was cost three dollars only.

LK: A year?

NK: A year, yeah. Three dollars a year.

LK: That's little bit.

NK: Really. Even the 'āina right next, of course, that one next to my father, where the hāole house next to us and the Machado, that's the tūtū brothers. Three brothers . . .

LK: Own that?

NK: Own that place. And then, what I understand what my mama told us before, that 'āina--that's three acres--belong to him through that tūtū. But three brothers, was divided between them three. But those days, before, Bishop [Estate] lease the land to the ranchers. Like Paris used to own down there. And then, have some Hawaiian people down there, the Lono family, take care, down ma kai, the pipis [cattle] for the ranch for Paris.

Like our place, in the front there--you know, the pā [fence] in the front and where you go outside the alanui [road]? Our pā supposed to go straight down to the alanui, and then come all inside one 'āina. All the same. But when this Hawaiian people, the Lono family stayed down there. . . . Us, we hardly stay down the beach, see? Because get mahi'ai place, get coffee land. That's why, my father folks, no can go in beach all the time. So, that's why. Only when we go beach sometimes, when we like go holoholo down the

beach, we go. That's when he go fishing.

I don't know what happened--what da kine did at that time. So, this Hawaiian people down there broke the fence and fence another small fence way outside by the roadside, pili to the road, and come up. And then, they say, oh, they let go caif inside there, cow. Because they used to keep mama cow; and the baby cow, they put inside there. That's why, us, we don't know. We stay ma uka. Then, when you go down, you see the fence.

My father asked them--the Lono family, because they stay down the beach all the time--he say, "Oh, how come you folks wen fence this fence over here?"

"Oh, for us, for put cow--you know, baby cow--inside."

"Oh, why you folks no put inside the Paris place? No put my place."

They say, "Ah, that's for us, that baby cow. That's why we thought we leave over there." See, they was going to make own of the place, these other people, the other Hawaiians.

You know, my papa don't know what to do. So, he never fight again for the place. He just let go that. That's why, that little piece was taken away by the Bishop, you see. Because Paris wen lease all the land. This Hawaiians, they go broke 'em, and they put this. So, they figure, well, Bishop own the land. Well, which is that land.

We used to pay tax all the way. You know, when you go exempt. Before, we never used to pay tax on the land. We only exempt, exempt, see? Then, the land was to the road. That's for us. Bumbai, afterward, oh, the fence came way inside. We gotta follow the fence.

LK: You mean, the fence by the gate?

NK: By the gate, yeah. Going right over. Supposed to be ma kai. You see the corner fence right in the front? That's all our place.

LK: There's a kind of a crooked . . .

NK: Yeah, yeah, crooked. It is. But, today, that was too long [ago] already.

LK: They cannot?

NK: Cannot. Because 1946, I think, they went survey. And here, we were living down there. But the place wen broke 'ia all down. We no see. We never see. Because we stay ma uka, had the fence over there. Bumbai, when we wen go home down the beach, all clear. No

more rock, no more nothing. All broke 'ia. Even the behind, on the side--you know where the small house?--we have. Go all the way back. Get stone wall all the way back. Get three acres. And my mama used to say, get tamarind tree way behind there, and over there get da kine iwi, eh? Pu'u. That's the boundary. And have, until today. But no more the fence. How you going to tell that's your place? Because Bishop own. So, we no can . . .

LK: But you folks lucky you still have your property?

NK: Yeah, well, that's why, we no fight. Hawaiians no more money. They no more can fight. That's why, my papa never go Honolulu, go get the land. He say, "I no more money. I no can go get." So, Kaloku, the one went Honolulu.

LK: Oh, Kaloku went to Honolulu?

NK: Yeah, himself wen go get the deed.

LK: This man, Kaloku, he must have really watched out for all the Hawaiians . . .

NK: No, but he knows my grandfather.

LK: Oh, he knew your grandfather?

NK: Yeah. And my grandfather talk story with him. And tell him, "If I make, kēia 'āina hele i ku'u mo'opuna, Kukua." [This land goes to my grandchild, Kukua.] That's why, Kaloku, he know that.

LK: So, he helped your father?

NK: Yeah, he was the one that helped my father. That's how get that beach land. But this Lono family tell they own the whole place. From where they living, the next one and the next one. You know, Machado's place, they used to claim they own that place and the next one. And our place, they was trying to own, you know, all. So, my father had the deed, although never put on his name, but the deed is from my tūtū. That's his deed, so he gave over to him.

LK: Oh, so, Kaloku got the deed?

NK: Yeah. Kaloku got the deed, Kaloku wen bring 'em back. And all my father did is to pay three dollars to Kaloku. Just to pay the deed, yeah? That's why we had to pay.

LK: Kaloku, was he educated?

NK: He must. Because my mama said he's a smart man. He used to go, I think, teacher for Hawaiian school. They used to have one school in Nāpo'opo'o for Hawaiian people.

- LK: His name, I see in the old Hawaiian newspapers. He used to write a lot. He used to write in stories and things.
- NK: Yeah, yeah.
- LK: Because, those days, there were a lot of Hawaiian newspapers.
- NK: Yeah, yeah. That's how my mama folks used to get newspaper, they read. And then, that's why they wen believe Kaloku. That's why, my papa said, "Okay. Nāu e ki'i i ka 'āina, you go get the deed and you bring . . ."
- LK: So, he did that for your father?
- NK: But the thing is, never sign over to my father's name at that time. Only my grandfather, well, Kaloku went as a witness that my grandfather had told him, "The land is for the boy Kukua."
- LK: The grandson?
- NK: Yeah. Kukua.
- LK: Is your mother from Ke'ei?
- NK: Hōnaunau, I think.
- LK: Oh, your father is from Ke'ei?
- NK: My father from Ke'ei or Hōnaunau, too. They from Hōnaunau.
- LK: But you said that your mother was working for one of the Kamehamehas?
- NK: Oh, yeah. Fifth.
- LK: Kamehameha the Fifth?
- NK: Yeah. That's when my papa was staying in Honolulu, the time they was working. He was working . . .
- LK: Oh, your father worked, too?
- NK: In Honolulu.
- LK: But not for the king?
- NK: No, no, no. He was working for the county, that time.
- LK: Did your mother tell you what kind of work she did for the king?
- NK: She said she's da kine. The people come in, they like visit the king. They gotta get pass from him, and she tell to the king's-- what you call that? Lawelawe?

- LK: Servants or . . .
- NK: Servants, yeah. Servants. I forget his name. You know, take to see the king, the king likes. That's my mama. And she used to be kāhili, you know.
- LK: Oh, hold the kāhili? Hold the kāhili for the king?
- NK: Uh huh [yes].
- LK: Is that why you say that she knew how to chant?
- NK: Uh uh. No, she knew that from way before. Her tūtū--tūtū mama--tūtū used to teach them.
- LK: How to chant?
- NK: Yeah.
- LK: But your father didn't know?
- NK: No, no. He no like that. He never like that.
- LK: But how did you folks like it when you heard your mother chant?
- NK: I seen her do that. I seen, but we were small. But to us, ooh, you get funny kine creeps like, yeah?
- LK: (Laughs) Was kinda spooky?
- NK: Really spooky.
- LK: Why?
- NK: Oh, the way she go, just like crying, and, you know. Oh, she would go way down; bumbai, go back, way behind. Oh, to us . . .
- LK: Oh, you mean, her body would go from side to side?
- NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. We feel funny kine.
- LK: And your father didn't like that?
- NK: Yeah, my father never like that. That's why, she never keep up. But she used to do that, she said, when no more people entertain the . . .
- LK: The king?
- NK: . . . king. When people come in, like that, only her there because all the other people, they go out; they do this; they do that; and then, not time. When this people come and when the king sit down

and talk with the other people, they drink. So, she entertain them. She oli and she chant at the same time. Sometime, she only oli. Oli in Hawaiian, ooh, the. . . . Too bad we never learn. Anyway, our sisters, not interested.

LK: Yeah, you folks just weren't interested?

NK: Never.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

LK: So, now, about your coffee farming business. Well, actually, you started in coffee work when you were young? I mean, picking coffee and all that. Can you tell us about that? About your work experience with coffee?

NK: Before, we used to pick coffee--our own coffee. We pick, fill up one bag, take down the road with the mule. My papa put 'em on top the mule, and then I haul 'em down the road. And then, somebody down there help me unload.

LK: Where did you folks sell your coffee to?

NK: Masuhara get mill. Coffee mill.

LK: This is at . . .

NK: Ke'ei.

LK: Oh, Masuhara?

NK: Yeah, yeah. We take to him.

LK: That was, you said, three dollars a bag? Two dollars a bag?

NK: Was from two dollars, then went up again, three dollars, four dollars. That's the last I know how much the coffee.

LK: And nowadays, how much you get now, today? When you sell your coffee today?

NK: Today, about \$45 to \$50 a bag. Hundred pound.

LK: Really?

NK: Of course, you know, when they take off expense--the hauling, the milling, and all that--then come down to \$30-something. Thirty-seven, 35 [dollars]. That's right.

LK: Of course, you folks had six acres planted in coffee at your middle Ke'ei . . .

NK: Yeah, those days, when we were in Ke'ei, yeah.

LK: Who planted those trees?

NK: My father folks. My tūtū them, I think, because the place was from my tūtū folks, and then . . .

LK: That's Bishop [Estate], though?

NK: Bishop, yeah. Lease years and years to Bishop. So, they [grandparents] work until they died, and then, my father took care. Those days, the lease was not too bad. Only five dollars an acre, coffee land. Five dollar, one acre. So, wasn't too bad. But afterward, the lease came more up high, high.

LK: They had different kinds of coffee plants?

NK: Before, they only get Hawaiian coffee. You know, da kine Hawaiian coffee, one year you get coffee; one year, you no more coffee; one year you get coffee. Well, even like now, the coffee, one year, the season, big season you have. And next year, little bit. But today kind coffee, this is California coffee, some. But that, that's Hawaiian coffee. California coffee, all year around, you can get. All year around. But not as much as every other year.

LK: So, those are the variety nowadays? You have California . . .

NK: Yeah. Nowadays, you have this kind variety. That's most people keep. Because they rather have more coffee than less. But taking care, about the same. But before, they never used to fertilize the coffee. All they do is to clean all the grass. Hō hana-- or pull the grass. Leave 'em inside the field, like that, dry. And sometime, you have to hulihuli the grass so [it will] dry. If you just going to leave like that, they going grow up again. Even today, you do the same thing. If you pull the grass, you just leave like that, they going grow up again. So, if you go, you hulihuli around there and dry [up the grass].

LK: What about cutting the coffee trees? You folks prune the . . .

NK: Cut the coffee trees when all pau pick the coffee.

LK: The beans? You folks did that before?

NK: Never used to trim like today. Those days, they minamina, I think. If you cut the branch, no more coffee. Yeah, but today, if you . . .

LK: So, the trees grow big?

NK: More, really big. We have to climb on the tree for pick the coffee. Yeah, the kids climb on the tree; the parents, they stay down. But those days, they get da kine ladder, eh--stick ladder--when they

go. So, we pick on the ladder, pick under. What can pick, you pick. Some kids, they like climb on the tree.

LK: Did you work at the [coffee] mill?

NK: I did.

LK: Which mill did you work at?

NK: Kudo's, Hōnaunau. We go sort coffee, eh?

LK: Sort the coffee. What did that mean?

NK: The clean coffee. You know, after they grind the parch? Parch coffee, they'd grind 'em, hemo all the shell, and inside get the meat. So, we sort the good kind, the no-good kind. You take away the bad kind and good kind.

LK: How could you tell what's good and what's bad?

NK: Black. Some, you can see junk.

LK: Black?

NK: Black and mimino.

LK: Wrinkled.

NK: Some, you look, they green, you know, when they grow. That's good coffee. So, they sell by grade. They grade the coffee. Even like today, they grade the coffee, even the cherry we send. Your cherry small, you get small pay. Your cherry all big, oh, that's good price, that. You no can tell you going get \$30 one bag or \$40 one bag. Because they going send 'em down the mill, and then they going check up what kind of coffee you get, big or small.

LK: And you can trust them?

NK: Well, what we going do? We cannot do nothing. We not there, they just take the bag and. . . . If we take our own coffee bag and take 'em down the mill; you pour your own coffee, or you scale 'em, pau, and you pour your own coffee; then you can tell what and what.

LK: But you can more or less tell, because you can see the coffee you picked. . . .

NK: Yeah. Well, that's why, sometime, you check. You just have to. . . .

LK: So [that] they don't cheat you. So, when did you start planting your own coffee on--well, I guess it's right on this land here where you living now that you folks started to grow your own coffee?

- NK: No. I learn when I was staying with my parents. That's when we start to planting our own coffee, of course. But they dig the puka. All we do, we plant. And then . . .
- LK: Were there many Hawaiian families growing coffee back then?
- NK: Not too much.
- LK: What about Japanese families?
- NK: Yeah. Most, the Japanese. Well, when they see coffee was good and coffee was the one that made the money, after that, the Japanese really made the money. Hawaiians, they only take care when they need, and they never care much for money. Really, our days, the Hawaiians, they no think, "Oh, sell and make money. Sell, and we can make money." Even they fishing, they come up--'ū'ū, you know, they catch--they only sell 'em for 50 cents, how many 'ū'ū? The big size kind? Eight for 50 cents to the Japanese people. That's why, sometime, they buy the taro. See, like us, if we short of taro, we sell the Japanese--change taro and fish.
- LK: Oh, you buy the taro from them if you short of taro?
- NK: Yeah, buy the taro from them, and the amount of the fish, how much . . .
- LK: Oh, you pay them by fish?
- NK: By fish, yeah. Then, we get the taro. That's how those days was.
- LK: What other kind of crops were planted in Kona besides coffee? You know, to try to see if they could make money from that?
- NK: That's why I said. The Hawaiians never think, those days, what to do to make money. Because they don't know where to sell all what they going to make. Only they plant cabbage and all da kine for themself eat. Even like vegetable . . .
- LK: Just for the family?
- NK: Yeah. Only for the family for eat. And they never think of selling. But when the Japanese people came in, well, they find out. Well, they go out, they contact to other people where they can sell. Hawaiians, where they going contact? They don't know nobody in the Mainland, nobody in Japan. Like Japanese, they come Hawaii, they can write to their family. See? What they making here and all that. And then, contact, they send.
- LK: Do you remember pineapple being planted here?
- NK: No, no.

LK: What about sugarcane?

NK: Sugarcane, yeah. But when my parents was working in sugarcane, I don't know. Not too long, they said. They never work too much with sugarcane. Because most people come from outside to work in sugarcane.

LK: Well, I guess it didn't work out, because they don't have . . .

NK: No, they no like work out because if they going work out, they no can take care their family, plant taro, or do their own work, or go fishing, like that. That's, more or less, they said, well, if they have to go work for money, you gotta spend money for buying all other stuff. So that's why, they go mahi'ai, themself. Work their taro patch themself and go down the beach catch fish themself. And then, that much, they no need spend.

LK: You're still picking coffee and raising your own coffee?

NK: Yeah, I still have my own coffee land till now. You see, sometime ago--I think, about five, six years ago--we had get-together, you see, down the Hale Hālāwai. So, they pick up the old-timers in [coffee] farming. There's about four of us old-timers. I was the only Hawaiian. Of course, maybe had some other Hawaiians, but they never come. Then, they call them. You know, "Everybody meet at the Hale Hālāwai." Especially, like senior citizen. All the old people go down there. So, I approached that I been working over 40 years, farmer, ever since way before my days. Of course, I never was farmer all the way. If I was farmer all the way, I would be more than that. But I went to Honolulu and then come back again. So, that's what. Then, they give us some kind trophy--for so many years.

LK: Oh, that was nice. Who else got?

NK: Sakata. Some more other Japanese had. Japanese ladies. And some, with their husband. Some ladies, they get their husband, their husband go with them. Me, I was me. Only me and 'Ale.

LK: But 'Ale wasn't . . .

NK: 'Ale was not, but he's my husband. So, he took over the trophy.

LK: Oh, he was with you?

NK: Yeah.

LK: How long ago was this?

NK: That's why I say, I think about six years.

LK: Oh, while he was still living?

NK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

LK: What about the other nationalities like Portuguese and maybe Filipino? They didn't get into coffee, too?

NK: Filipinos, they was not too much interested, I think, in coffee land or what, because they was most as a cane field, eh? They have few Filipinos.

LK: And Portuguese, well, not too many?

NK: Portuguese, not too many. They had their own things to do.

LK: What happened to all these Chinese storekeepers? Now, it's all . . .

NK: Well, our place, we only had, I think, two Pākē store--Ke'ei.

LK: Because now, it's mostly all Japanese?

NK: All Japanese, yeah. Yeah, that's what I say. Today, I hardly see any Chinese.

LK: But before, there was . . .

NK: Before, most, Chinese. Before the Japanese came Hawaii, they had plenty Chinese.

LK: So, the Chinese were first?

NK: Yeah. I think firster than the Japanese.

LK: Yeah, way before.

NK: But they [Chinese] never try to improve like this, the coffee. The Japanese came in, [and] they found out coffee was making money, they stayed with the Hawaiians, some of them.

LK: Who?

NK: The Japanese people.

LK: Stayed? Lived with them?

NK: No, not live with the Hawaiians. But Hawaiian people like us, we had coffee land, eh? So, Japanese people came and ask my father, "Oh, can we lease your coffee land?"

So, my father said, "Okay. You folks like, you fella can at least pay me da kine."

LK: The lease?

NK: The lease.

LK: Oh, so, your father leased his land to Japanese people?

NK: Japanese, yeah, yeah.

LK: Do you know who they were?

NK: Yeah. Koki. That was a Japanese man. Koki, they get two daughters still living.

LK: Koki or Koike?

NK: No, Koki. They all make already. Only the two daughters living. They about my age, I think. Little bit older than me.

LK: You have the lease from Bishop Estate . . .

NK: From Bishop, and then you lease to somebody else. Yeah. Because if I get 20-years' lease, that's my place, eh? So, it's up to me to [pay] Bishop. If I not going pay, well, Bishop going huki from me. So, if I no work on the place, somebody else like, I can sell my lease to them. Not sell, but I can lease. Maybe, if I lease 20 years . . .

LK: Sublease to them, like?

NK: Yeah, sublease. Maybe if I lease 20 years from Bishop, I can lease 15 years to the other people, eh? Then, when pau them, and then [the land] come back, that's mine. Till pau and I lease over again. That's how, those days before, they can do that, you know. That's why, Hawaiians was lucky, not bad. Ma uka taro patch, we pay only four dollars an acre.

LK: Yeah, that was cheap.

NK: Down the beach, I don't know, because we no stay down the beach. The beach was our own kuleana.

LK: Did you folks have to go to church every Sunday?

NK: Yeah, have to, have to. My mother them no can stay home one Sunday. Gotta go. Even if we have to walk how many miles, we gotta go with lantern. Four o'clock, leave the house, walk Hōnaunau.

LK: In the morning?

NK: In the morning.

LK: And you go with lantern?

NK: Lantern. We go halfway, we hide the lantern. Daylight, eh? We go

way out and come home. Walk over, walk home.

LK: To go to Mass?

NK: Mass in the morning. Six-thirty or 7 o'clock Mass.

LK: Why did the Catholic church have to make it so hard on people to go to Mass so early? Why don't they make it later in the day?

NK: Well, because only one priest or two priests. And they have another place to go, see? Hōnaunau, maybe Keālia, Kealakekua, or way down Miloli'i.

LK: Who was your priest then?

NK: Oh, I don't know. Some long . . .

LK: Did they speak Hawaiian?

NK: Oh, they better than today priests. They smart, they smart.

LK: To speak in Hawaiian?

NK: Hawaiian. They smart. They get around with Hawaiians, you know, those days.

LK: And, of course, the Catholic church, then, didn't have Japanese or other . . .

NK: Go to church?

LK: Yeah.

NK: We had few Japanese.

LK: Catholic?

NK: Yeah, we have. Even they make, they bury in our cemetery and still there.

LK: But mostly, what? Other nationalities?

NK: Filipinos, Hawaiians, Portuguese.

LK: Then, what did you folks do after church on Sunday? Could you folks work on Sunday?

NK: No, no. That's the only day we no work. We gotta take care our clothes for school Monday.

(Laughter)

NK: Really. We gotta wash clothes, see if our clothes clean, get ready for school days.

LK: I thought you not supposed to do any work.

NK: Well, what my mama said, it's all right if we do as our home work. If we go out and work for somebody, well, that's not so good. You are using the Lord's day. So, you do for your own, I think, the Lord never. . . .

LK: Was your father Catholic, too?

NK: Yeah. My father and my mama is Catholic.

LK: So, Saint Benedict is your folks' . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

RE: This is a continuation of an interview with Nina Kālaiwa'a at her home in Honokōhau, North Kona, on January 17, 1981.

Nina, you said you worked coffee with your parents. What was your first job when you got on your own to work? What did you do when you got out on your own to work for yourself?

NK: That's when I was in Honolulu. I was working PX [post exchange], Schofield--then I came back. Then, I used to go working on my farm.

(Visitors arrive. Taping stops.)

END OF INTERVIEW

**A SOCIAL HISTORY
OF KONA**

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

**Ethnic Studies Program
University of Hawaii, Manoa**

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