ʻUALAPUʻE, MOLOKAʻI

Oral Histories from the East End

Volume I

Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

June 1991

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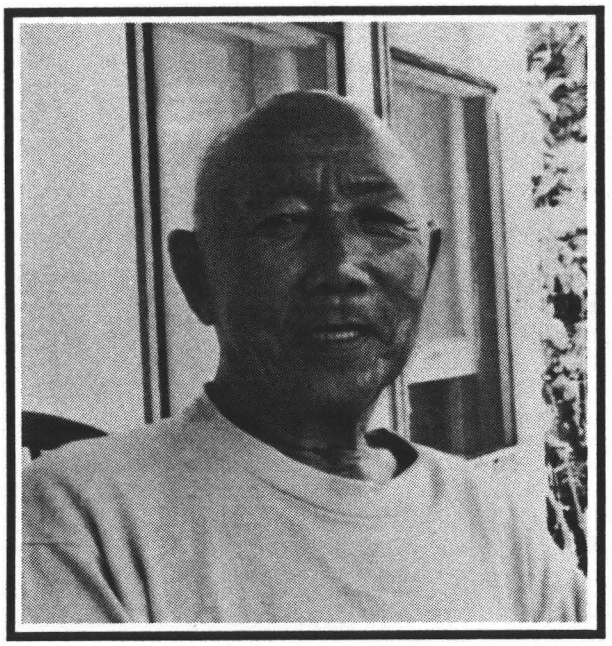
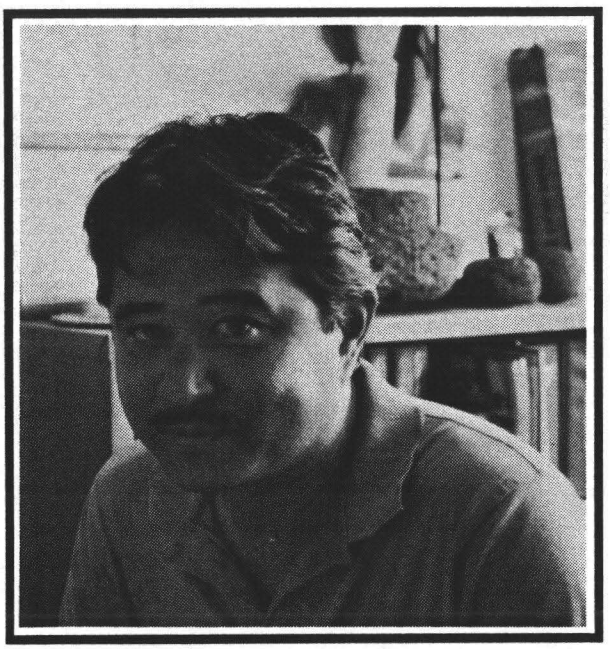
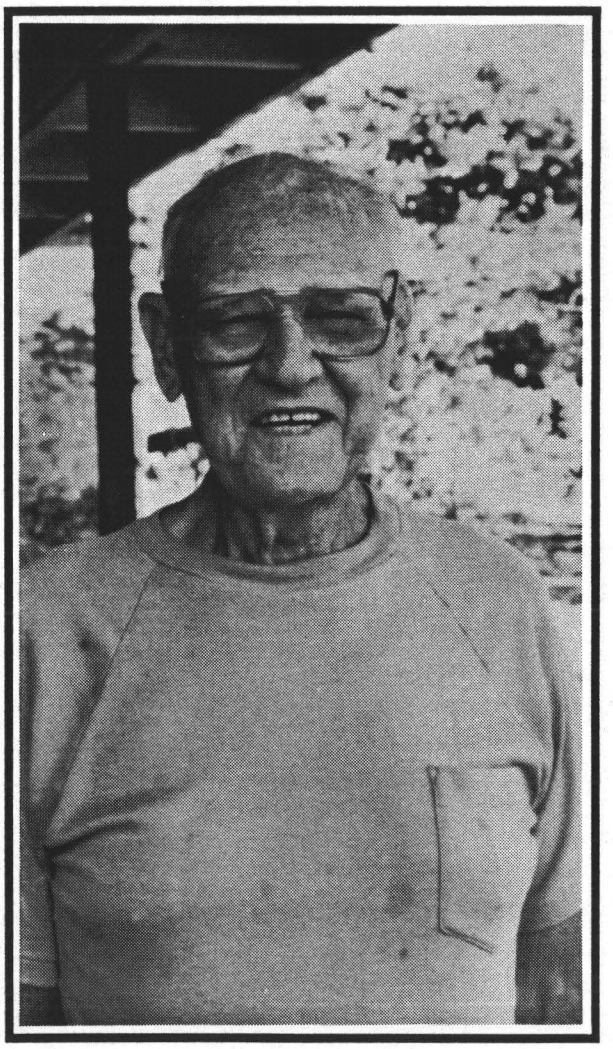
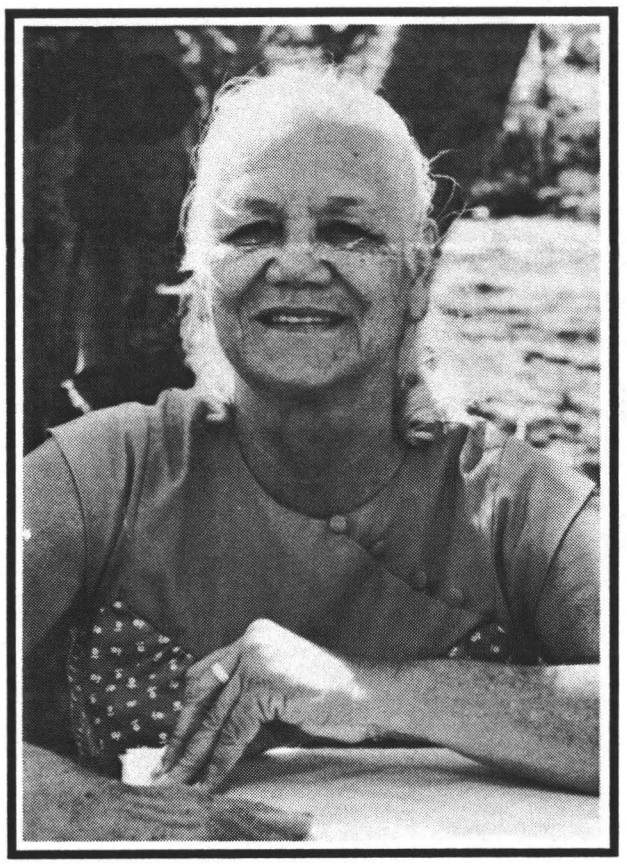
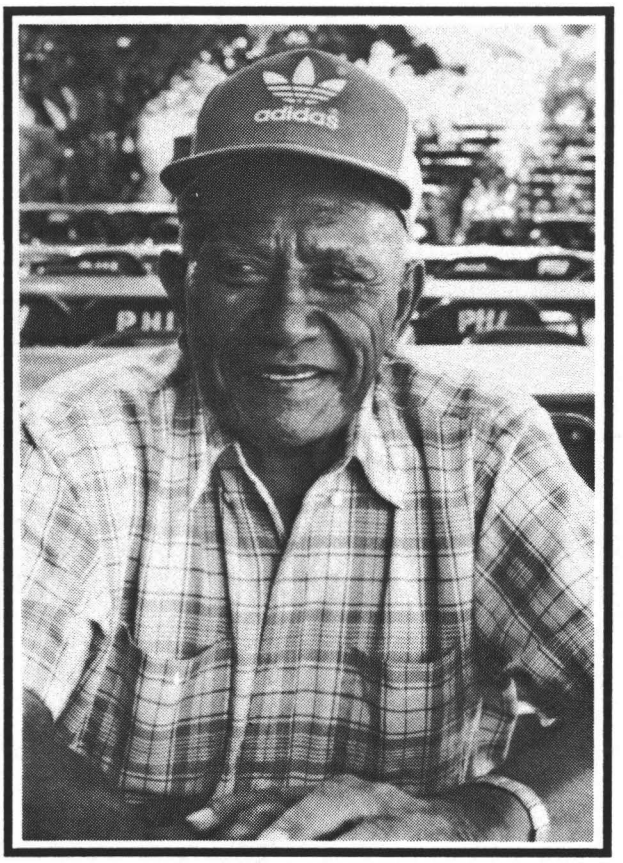




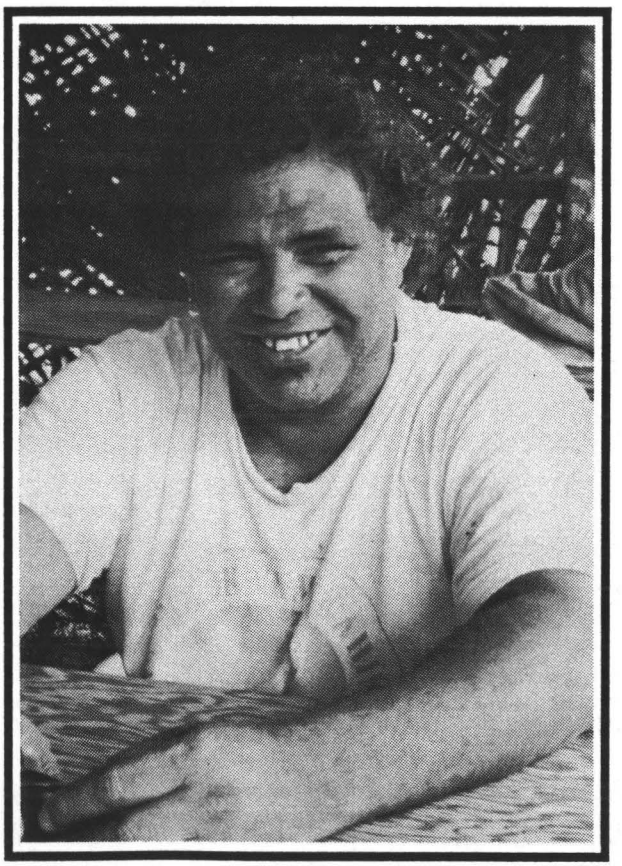


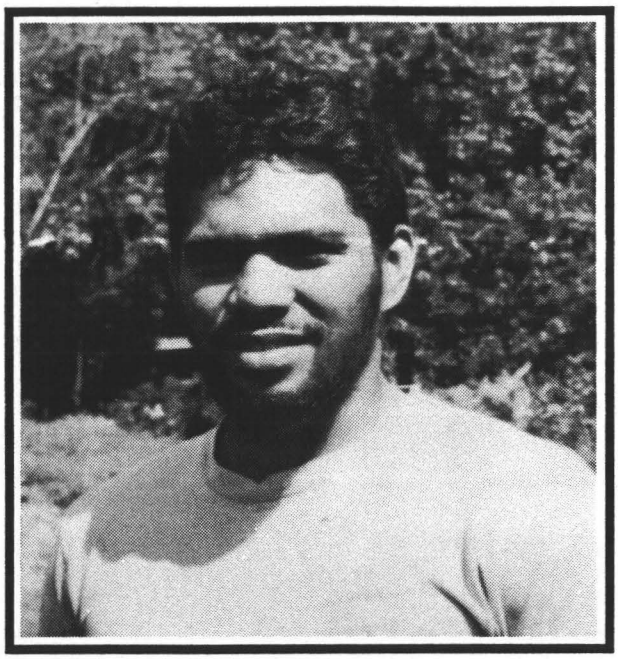
Top left, Joseph Ah Hong Ah Ping.
Top right, Katharine Akutagawa.
Above, William M. Akutagawa, Jr.
Right, Henry K. Duvauchelle.



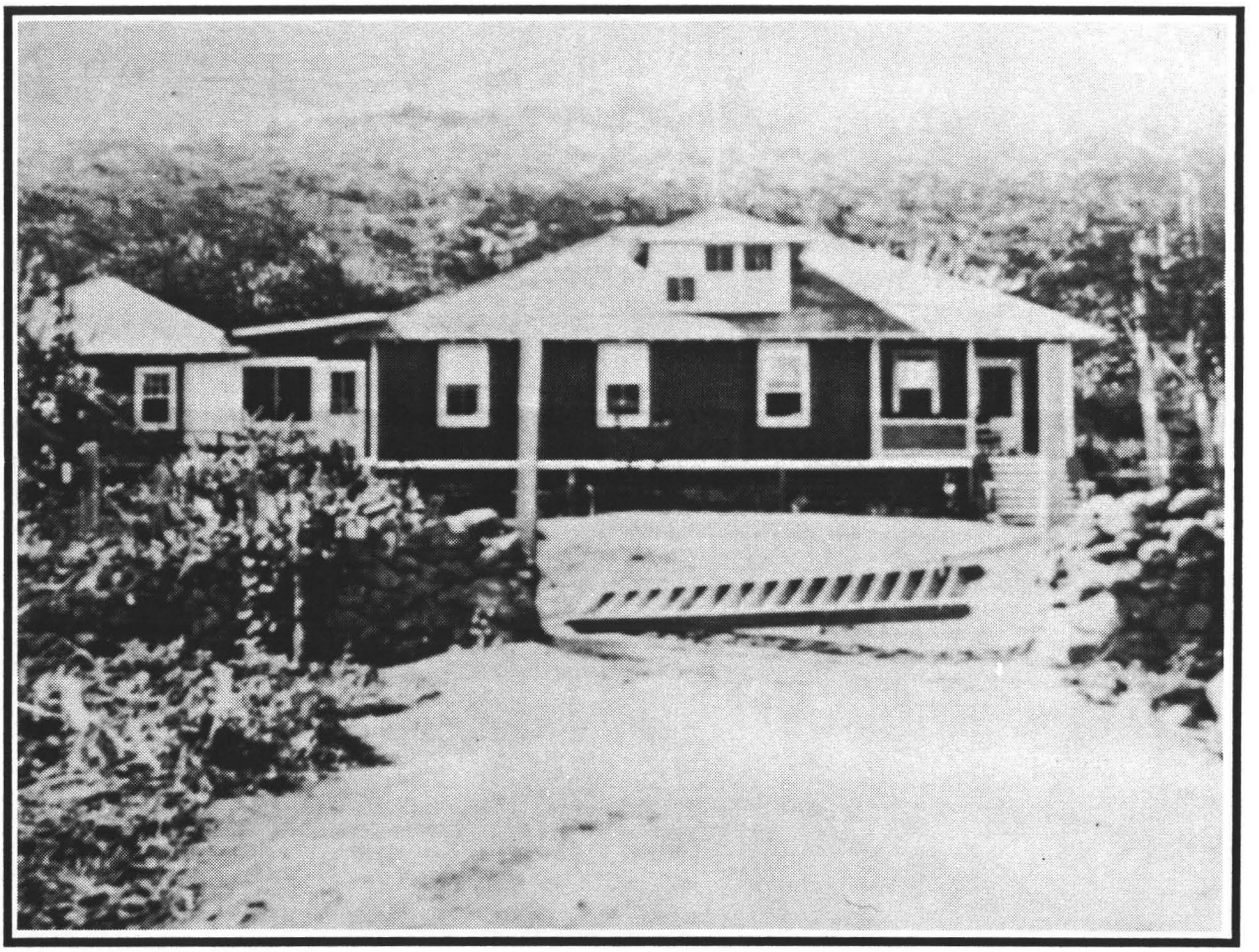


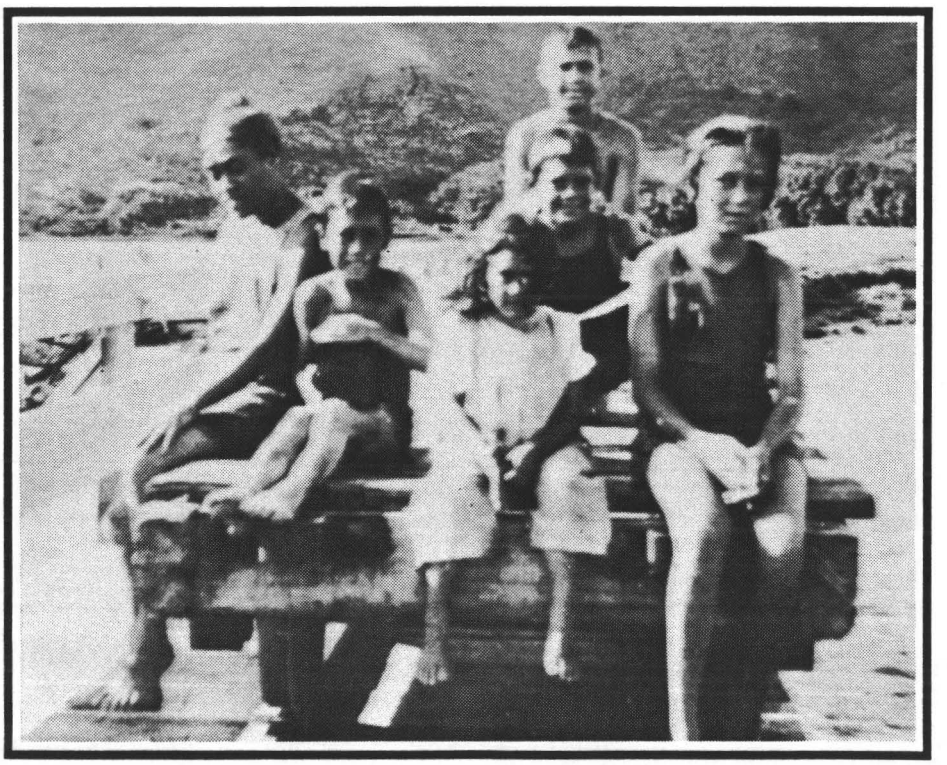
Above left, Anna D. Goodhue.
Above right, John K. Iaea, Sr.
Below left, Shizue Johnson.
Right, William "Billy" Kalipi, Sr.





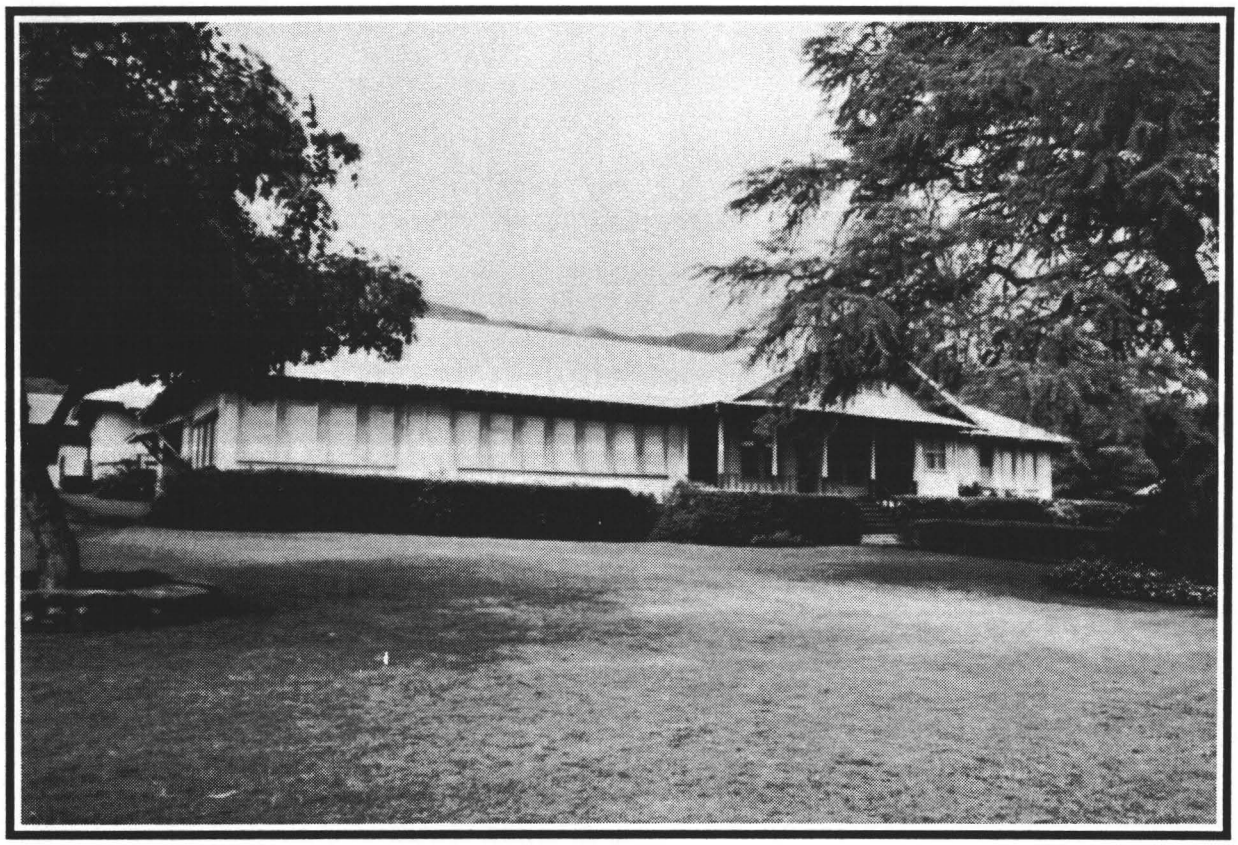
Top left, William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr.
Top right, Lani Lopez Kapuni.
Middle Left, Cecilia Kaupu.
Left, Laura Smith.
Above, Carol Wyban.



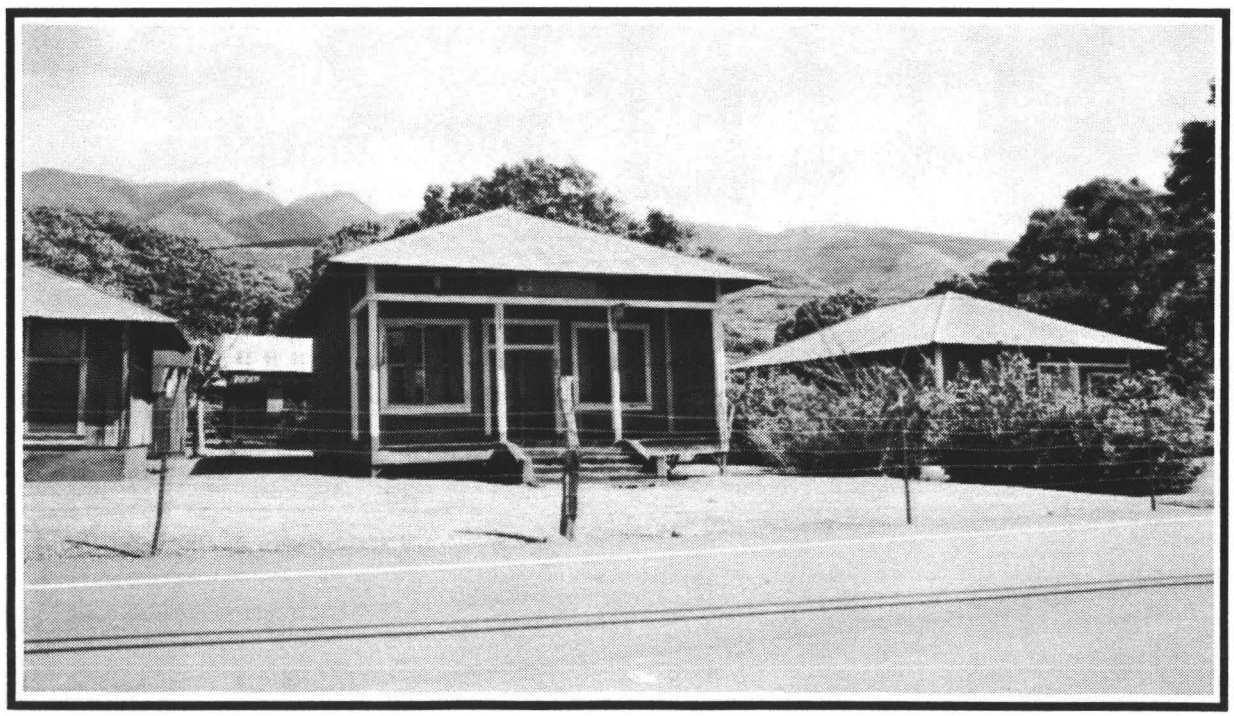


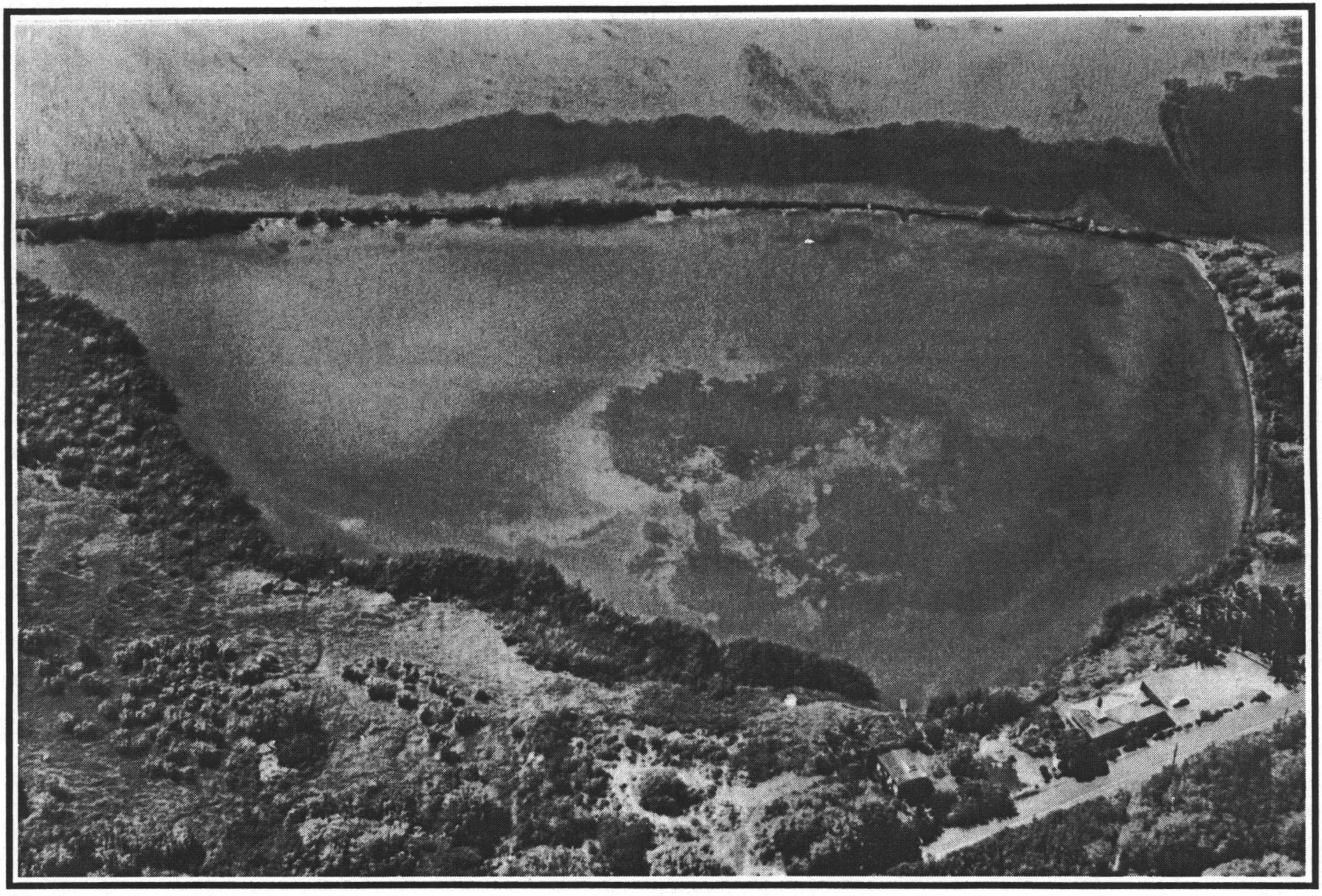
Above, Duvauchelle home in Pūko'o, ca. 1920s. (photo courtesy Laura Smith.)

Left, Duvauchelle children on Pūko'o Wharf, ca. 1920s. Interviewee Laura Smith is sitting on the right. (photo courtesy Laura Smith.)

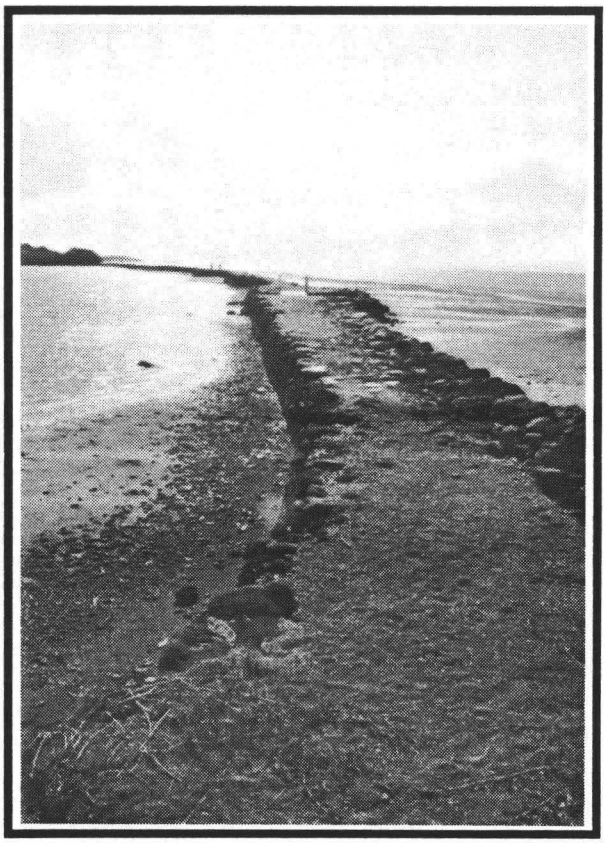


Above, Kilohana School, 1990.
Below, Ah Ping Store, 1991.





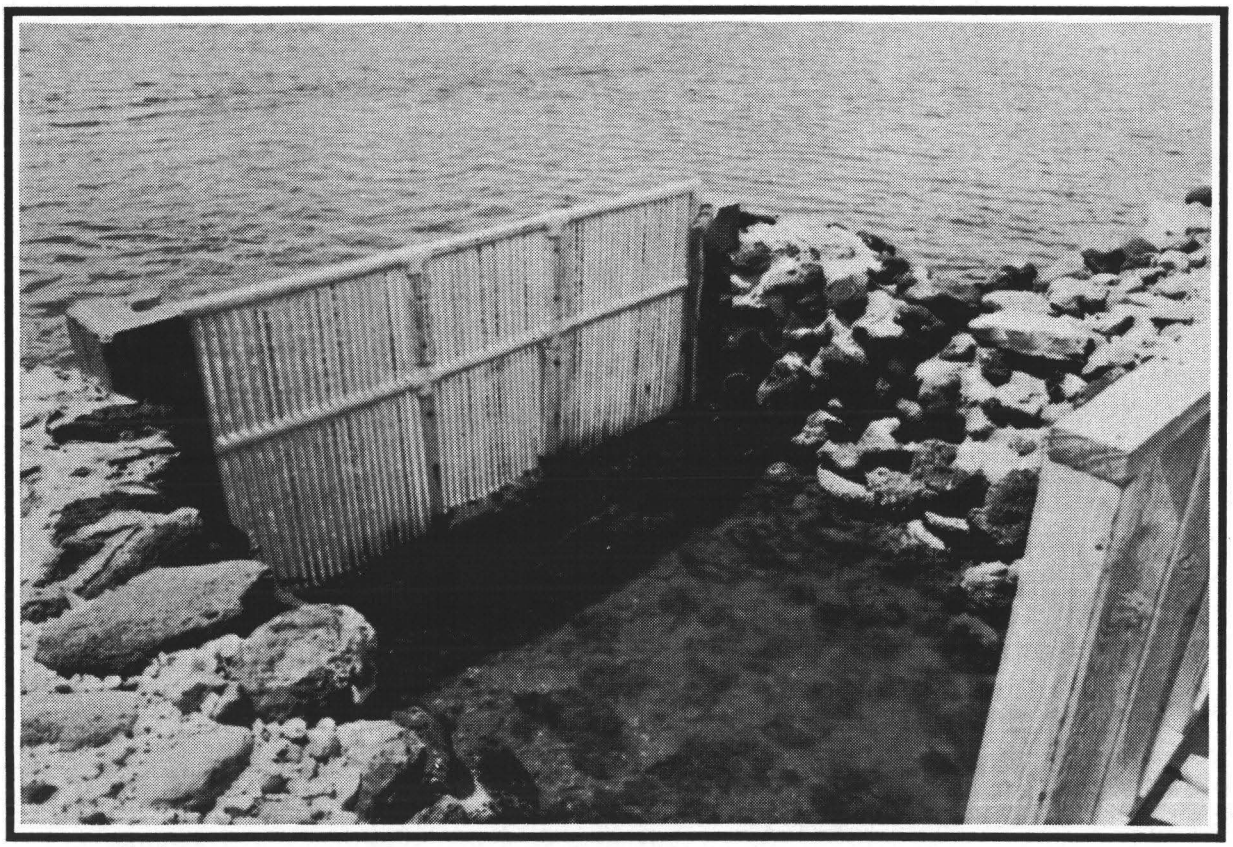
'Ualapu'e Fishpond, 1988. (Reprinted by permission of Marine Option Program, University of Hawai'i. Photograph by Keith Bigelow.)

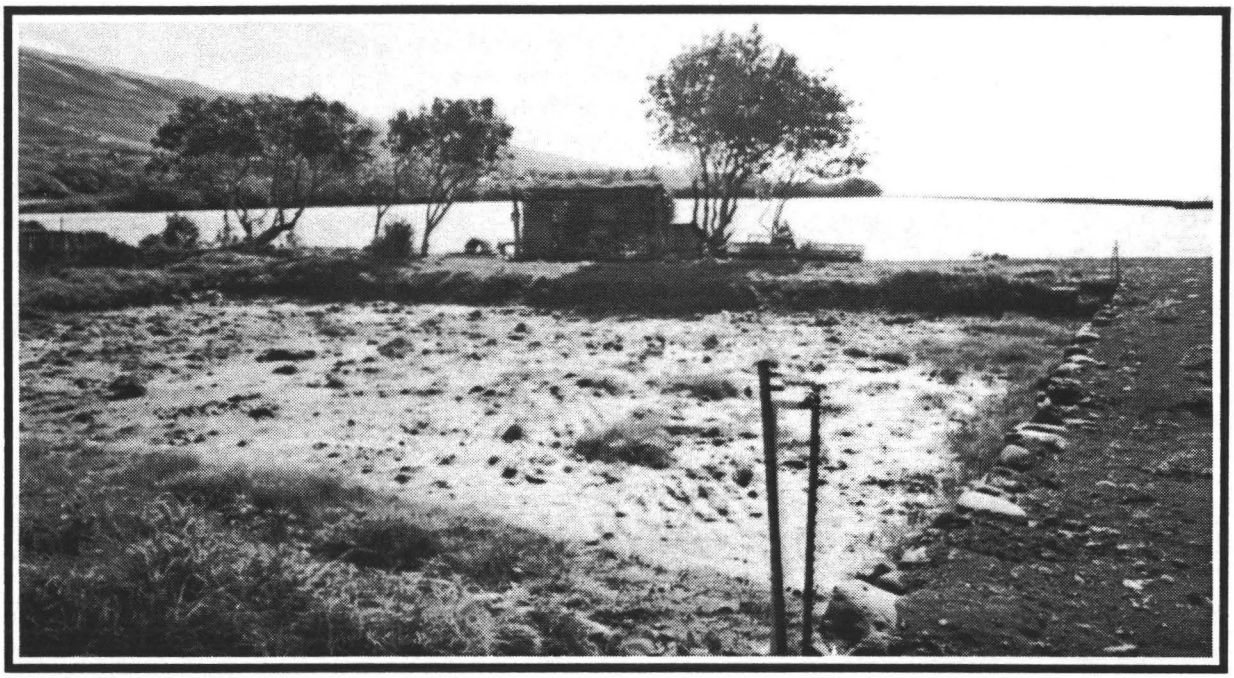


Above, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond wall prior to repair, 1990.

Right, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond wall after restoration, 1991.

Below, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond mākāhā [sluice gate], 1991.





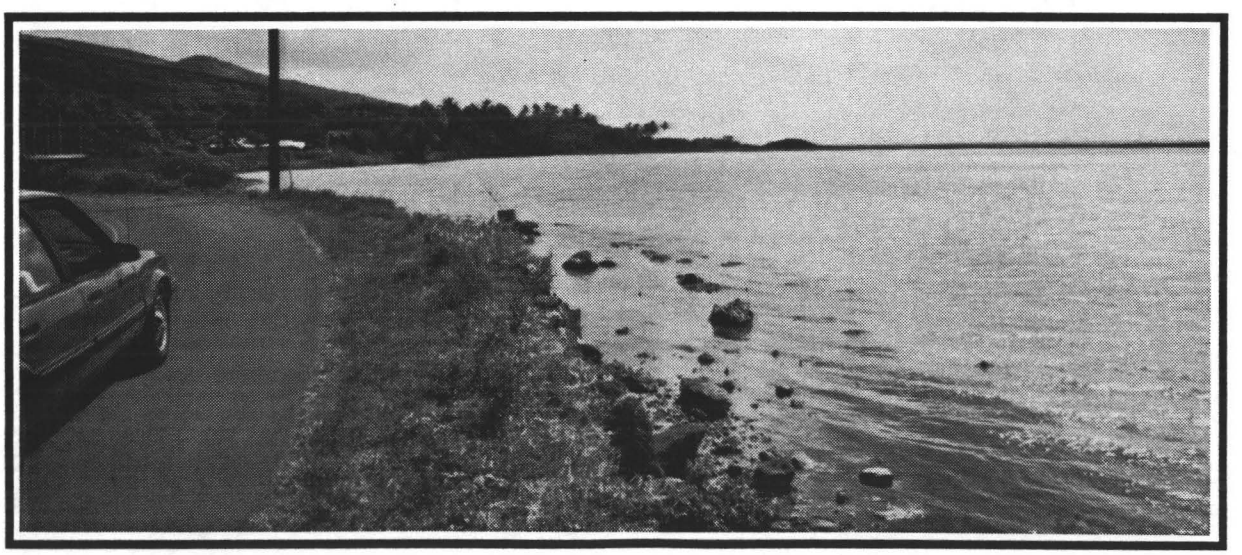
Top, Past and future taro patch site at 'Ualapu'e Fishpond, 1991. Fishpond work station in center background.

Below, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond with reconstructed wall, 1991.

Left, ʻUalapuʻe Fishpond wall, 1991. Halemahana Fishpond in left background.

Below, Nīʻaupala Fishpond, 1991.

Bottom, Kūpeke Fishpond, 1991.



INTRODUCTION

'Ualapu'e Fishpond is one of many ancient Hawaiian ponds on the East End of Moloka'i. Today it is one of only four or five ponds which, when restored, have the capability of commercially producing large quantities of food to help elevate the island's depressed economy. Presently owned by the state of Hawai'i, the eighteen-acre fish pond is being restored by Hui o Kuapā, a non-profit organization consisting of Moloka'i residents, and the state of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBED). In addition to its potential to stimulate economic development for Moloka'i and its people, the pond is valued for its cultural and historical significance. In 1966, it was declared a National Historic Site.

These volumes contain transcripts of interviews with thirteen individuals who possess knowledge of the area's past or who are actively involved in the restoration of the pond. This oral history project was conducted under a contract between the Center for Oral History (COH) of the University of Hawai'i, and DBED for the purposes of: 1) documenting first-hand historical information on 'Ualapu'e Fishpond and the surrounding community to both preserve the cultural integrity of the pond as restoration takes place and to provide educational materials relating to fish pond culture and East End, Moloka'i community history; 2) making this information available to those planning to restore other ponds in the future, as well as to researchers, students and the general public needing information on Moloka'i's social and cultural history; and 3) obtaining from community residents input and reactions regarding the pond's restoration.

Background

'Ualapu'e Fishpond is located in 'Ualapu'e, an East End rural area approximately thirteen miles east of Moloka'i's main town, Kaunakakai, and eleven miles west of Hālawa. It is one of the larger and, historically, one of the most productive of about fifty-eight shore ponds once utilized on the southern coast of the island (Summers 1964, 1). In the nineteenth century, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond was noted for the "fatness" of its mullet, and in 1959, a report noted that it was "one of the best fish ponds on Moloka'i because there are several freshwater springs in the pond which seem to benefit the raising of mullet and clams" (Summers 1971, 123). In 1960, it was one of only four fish ponds on the island still being used commercially. Other ponds were Ka'opeaHina Fishpond, Keawa Nui Fishpond, and Kūpeke Fishpond (Summers 1964, 12).

Like the majority of Moloka'i's ponds, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond is a *loko kuapā,* or walled pond, built in ancient times by commoners for the benefit of the *ali'i,* or royalty. The wall of basalt rock and coral runs from two places on the shoreline to form a semicircular enclosure (Summers 1964, 3). Built into the wall are *mākāhā,* or sluice gates, leading to the open ocean. The *mākāhā,* usually one to three, regulate water circulation and serve as areas to stock and harvest fish (Bigelow 1989, 86). The fish best suited for Moloka'i's *loko kuapā* are mullet and *awa* (milkfish). These fish, which feed primarily on algae thriving in brackish water, benefit from streams leading into the pond from underground springs and nearby taro patches.

'Ualapu'e Fishpond has suffered from many years of neglect and exposure to the elements, such as the 1960 tidal wave which damaged part of the wall and *mākāhā* (Summers 1971, 123). The encroachment of bulrushes and mangrove, introduced to Moloka'i from New Zealand, has become so severe that the pond's useable acreage has decreased significantly (Summers 1971, 121). The wall was also damaged by a previous lessee who broke down a portion of it to gain easier access to the open ocean.

Once the property of *ali'i,* who relied on commoners to build the ponds, and the *konohiki,* or

land steward, to watch over and maintain the pond, fish ponds after the Great Mahele of 1850 became private property. No longer community property, most ponds fell into disrepair as many private owners lacked the knowledge and motivation required for fish pond maintenance and cultivation. The concept which encouraged communities of Hawaiians to share resources and take care of the land and water from the mountains to the sea was abandoned in favor of a system emphasizing individual land and water rights (Wyban 1990, 25).

'Ualapu'e Fishpond was unique in that it eventually came to be owned by the territory and state of Hawai'i. The pond was maintained and cultivated by individual lessees, who often hired caretakers to oversee day-to-day duties (e.g., maintaining the wall, keeping poachers away, and giving permission to residents who wanted to gather clams, *limu,* and fish, etc.). Edward Kekuhi Duvauchelle, a prominent Pūko'o resident, leased 'Ualapu'e Fishpond in the 1920s. An avid fisherman himself, Duvauchelle hired a Japanese man named Sakanashi as the pond's caretaker. The pond's lease was later taken over by another Moloka'i resident, Harry Apo, who managed the pond up until the 1960s. Duvauchelle, Sakanashi, and Apo are the three individuals remembered well by interviewees.

The town of 'Ualapu'e was once the major municipal center of Moloka'i. The hospital ('Ualapu'e County Hospital), courthouse and tax office were located where Kilohana School stands today across the road from 'Ualapu'e Fishpond. In 1935, the hospital, courthouse and tax office were moved to Kaunakakai. Kalua'aha School in nearby Kalua'aha, together with Hālawa School, served East End children until it was moved to 'Ualapu'e and became Kilohana School. The post office was located in nearby Pūko'o.

'Ualapu'e was home to fishermen, farmers, county workers, homemakers, and others, mostly Native Hawaiians, who grew up on *kuleana* lands owned by their ancestors for generations. Many fished the open waters of the East End; many also remember the East End fish ponds where they gathered clams and *limu,* and fished for mullet, *awa, 'ō'io, 'ōpae,* and crab. Many also remember the freshwater streams that fed into 'Ualapu'e Fishpond. One of these streams, Lo'ipūnāwai, has been the subject of legends.

As a state-owned pond, 'Ualapu'e was selected by DBED to be a model aquaculture project. While profit and economic development utilizing modern aquaculture techniques are major long-term goals, equally important goals are the revitalization of traditional Hawaiian fish pond practices and the preservation of the history, culture, and values associated with 'Ualapu'e.

Methodology

In December 1988, DBED-Moloka'i coordinator Walter Ritte, Jr. contacted COH director Warren Nishimoto about the possibility of conducting an oral history project documenting the history of 'Ualapu'e Fishpond and the surrounding communities. Nishimoto then met with Ritte and the board of directors of Hui o Kuapā, the private non-profit group of Moloka'i residents formed to plan and implement the pond restoration. They discussed the urgent need to conduct interviews with longtime East End residents which would: 1) provide first-hand information on how 'Ualapu'e Fishpond was used in the past and the pond's environmental, social, economic and spiritual relationship to the community; 2) document day-to-day life in 'Ualapu'e, Kalua'aha, Pūko'o and other communities; and 3) help to ensure that the restoration conforms to the wishes of area residents.

After a contract between DBED and COH was drawn up, Nishimoto made several trips to Moloka'i to meet with potential interviewees. Untaped preliminary interviews were conducted with twenty-two individuals who were knowledgeable about East End life in general and the 'Ualapu'e Fishpond specifically. Of these, fifteen were selected for taping because of their knowledge, experience, willingness, and ability to articulate their life histories in taped interviews. Two of those

taped were unwilling or unable to release their transcripts after reviewing them prior to publication. Of the final list of thirteen interviewees, all but one are either present or former Moloka'i residents born and raised there or living there since early adulthood. The lone non-Moloka'i interviewee, technical advisor to Hui o Kuapā, Carol Araki Wyban, was interviewed for her expertise in fish farming.

Interviewees were asked what they remembered about 'Ualapu'e Fishpond: fishing practices and techniques; care and maintenance of the fish pond; legends and *kapu;* pond lessees and caretakers and their policies regarding public use of the pond; fish species and shellfish found in the pond; the effect vegetation (i.e., mangrove and bulrushes) and crops (i.e., taro) had on the pond; the pond's role in the ecosystem *vis-á-vis* mountains, streams, land, and ocean; and the effects of natural disasters (e.g., tidal waves, storms, etc.). Interviewees were also asked to compare 'Ualapu'e Fishpond with other ponds and were asked for their thoughts on pond restoration.

They were also asked in detail about their way of life on the East End—for example, their work, play, families, food, subsistence and commercial farming, fishing and hunting, housing, transportation, communication, utilities, schools, churches, and stores.

The interviews were conducted at the homes of interviewees on Moloka'i or Honolulu, or at other convenient places, such as the Mitchell Pauole Center in Kaunakakai. Each interviewee was taped in one or more ninety-minute sessions. Although no set questionnaire was used, the interviewer followed an outline of topics designed for whomever was being interviewed. Interviews were transcribed almost verbatim, and the transcripts reviewed against the audio tape. Then, after slight editing, the transcripts were given to each interviewee for their review and approval. Some interviewees made extensive changes, while others changed little or nothing at all. The interviewer then met with each interviewee to go over their transcript. After securing the required legal releases, the interviewees' changes were incorporated into the transcripts, and the transcripts again were edited and checked for accuracy. At each stage of the process, names and dates were verified.

Interviewees

Although information on 'Ualapu'e Fishpond was sought, only interviewees Henry K. Duvauchelle, William "Billy" Kalipi, Sr., William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr., and Carol Araki Wyban possessed technical knowledge concerning fish pond operation. Duvauchelle acquired his knowledge through his fishing experience, his father's lease on 'Ualapu'e, and his own experience managing Aha'ino Fishpond; the Kalipis through commercial fishing and their involvement with 'Ualapu'e Fishpond; and Wyban through past experience as a fish farmer. Other interviewees' knowledge of the fish pond was limited to their recollections of foraging for clams, crabs and *limu* for home use. These interviewees tended to provide varied and extensive recollections of daily life on the East End.

The following are brief descriptions of each interviewee, in the order that they appear in the volumes:

Henry K. Duvauchelle
The son of Edward Kekuhi Duvauchelle, a Pūko'o resident who leased 'Ualapu'e Fishpond from the territory of Hawai'i in the 1920s, Henry Duvauchelle possesses keen knowledge of Moloka'i's fish ponds, which he acquired by helping his father around the pond, often serving as the pond's watchman to prevent poachers from stealing fish near the *mākāhā.* He also learned a great deal about fishing both in the pond and out in the open ocean from his father and uncle. In his interview, Henry discusses these experiences and compares 'Ualapu'e Fishpond with other ponds in the area.

William M. Akutagawa, Jr.
As chairperson of the Hui o Kuapā board of directors and one of those actively involved in the fish pond project from its inception, William Akutagawa discusses the philosophy and goals of the project. Born and raised on the East End, William, who is one-quarter Hawaiian, has strong emotional ties to the area, and views the pond project in two ways: as a demonstration project for potential economic development and as a means to preserve the fish ponds which he considers "visual monuments to the Hawaiians' past."

Cecilia Makaena Kaupu
In a brief interview, Cecilia Kaupu recounts life growing up on Moloka'i's West End in Kualapu'u, Kīpū, and Ho'olehua before moving to the East End and living not far from the 'Ualapu'e Fishpond. She offers comparisons between West End and East End life and remembers foraging the pond for clams and crabs.

Lani Lopez Kapuni
An East End resident since 1931, Lani Kapuni recounts details of her Native Hawaiian lifestyle: gathering shellfish, picking vegetables and fruit for the table, doing laundry in nearby streams, and relying on native plants for medicine. Living next to 'Ualapu'e Fishpond, she came to know some of the fishing practices and *kapu* associated with the pond.

John K. Iaea, Sr.
Because his father, the Rev. Isaac Daniel Iaea, was a minister who traveled the circuit of churches on the East End, John Iaea grew up in Kalua'aha and 'Ualapu'e. Their home was next to Ah Ping Store, the only store in 'Ualapu'e. In his interview, he recalls some of his boyhood experiences playing in and around 'Ualapu'e Fishpond.

Joseph Ah Hong Ah Ping
The son of Chun Ah Ping, owner of Ah Ping Store in 'Ualapu'e, Joseph Ah Hong Ah Ping recounts his experiences as a boy who moved from Honolulu to Moloka'i in 1924 to help his father run the store. Ah Ping Store, an East End gathering place, sold canned goods, dry goods, poi, rice, feed, gasoline and other general merchandise. Located directly across from 'Ualapu'e Fishpond, Ah Ping Store was a landmark remembered well by interviewees.

Shizue Murakami Johnson
Shizue Johnson's mother, Kiju Murakami, a farmer in Mapulehu Valley, shipped tomatoes to O'ahu and peddled other vegetables around Moloka'i on a truck. In a brief interview, Shizue Johnson recalls farming in Mapulehu and gathering clams in 'Ualapu'e and other East End fish ponds. She also remembers many of the Hawaiian, Japanese, and Chinese families who once lived in Mapulehu and 'Ualapu'e.

Katharine "Kitty" Hagemann Akutagawa
Except for the years spent attending high school in Honolulu and working at Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Kitty Akutagawa has been a lifelong Moloka'i resident. Her family moved from Kaunakakai to 'Ualapu'e in 1927. Kitty fondly recalls her life as a child and adult in 'Ualapu'e: doing laundry in the mountain streams, and gathering clams and *limu* from 'Ualapu'e Fishpond to help feed the family.

Anna Duvauchelle Goodhue
Younger sister of Henry K. Duvauchelle and Laura Duvauchelle Smith, Anna Goodhue still lives on

family property in Pūko'o and is a community activist favoring the preservation of the East End environment and lifestyles. Her interview is particularly significant because she is able to comment on her past experiences in Pūko'o and 'Ualapu'e as well as current controversies concerning land use and public access on Moloka'i.

Carol Araki Wyban
Although never a Moloka'i resident, Carol Wyban was interviewed for this project because of her extensive hands-on knowledge of fish pond aquaculture in Hawai'i. She and her husband James made their living for five years farming Lokoea Fishpond, located near O'ahu's North Shore. Recently, they have been serving as technical advisors to Hui o Kuapā. Carol was commissioned to conduct research on fish ponds, prepare environmental reports, help secure the proper permits to begin the restoration of 'Ualapu'e Fishpond, and write the project's master plan. In her interview, she relates her experiences at Lokoea and explains how these experiences can be applied to 'Ualapu'e.

Laura Duvauchelle Smith
Laura Smith's remembrances center around family life in Pūko'o, where she grew up and spent the majority of her life. She talks about: her father, Edward Kekuhi Duvauchelle, a prominent East End citizen; the family's large home which served as a hotel for visitors to the island; the chores each family member performed; fishing and ranching; and other experiences. Although not about 'Ualapu'e specifically, her interview provides the reader with a detailed portrait of a well-known East End, Moloka'i family.

William "Billy" Kalipi, Sr.
Father of 'Ualapu'e Fishpond manager William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr., Billy is a longtime East End fisherman who has seen the business from both ends: as a fisherman making a living for his family, and as a co-op manager seeking and maintaining markets for other fishermen. In his interview, Billy relates his past experiences with the current effort to restore 'Ualapu'e Fishpond and offers his advice and opinion on how the project should be implemented.

William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr.
Despite being only twenty-four years old at the time of the interview, 'Ualapu'e Fishpond manager William "Tubz" Kalipi, Jr. brings many years of personal and family experience to the project. His exposure to fishing practices and the fishing industry was nurtured by his father, who was manager of the Moloka'i Fishermen's Association. In his interview, Tubz discusses his background in fishing and aquaculture, accomplishments at 'Ualapu'e, and his goals for the coming years. He also discusses the difficult challenge of combining traditional Hawaiian fish pond practices with modern aquaculture techniques to produce seafood for current and future markets.

How to Use the Transcripts

These volumes contain a glossary of all non-English and Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) words (which are italicized in the transcripts) and a detailed subject/name index. A biographical summary precedes each interviewee's transcript. These volumes also contain historical photographs and contemporary photographs of the interviewees, and a bibliography of written sources consulted.

All interviewees were encouraged to read their transcripts and make any deletions or additions they considered necessary before signing the following legal release:

In order to preserve and make available the history of Hawai'i for present and future generations, I hereby give and grant to the University of Hawai'i Center for Oral History as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Center Director shall determine, all my rights, title, and interest to the tapes and edited transcripts of interviews recorded on (date), biographical data sheet completed (date), and notes of untaped interviews (date).

The transcripts represent statements that interviewees wish to leave for the public record. The majority are almost verbatim from the actual taped interviews. Some interviewees made grammatical or syntactic changes in their transcripts. Others attached additions or explanations. Interviewee additions are in parentheses.

Minor editing for clarity was done by COH staff. The flavor and authenticity of interviews were not compromised by this editing. Staff additions are in brackets. A three-dot ellipsis indicates an interruption; a four-dot ellipsis indicates a trail-off by a speaker. Three dashes indicate false starts.

Audiotape and Transcript Availability

While these transcripts represent the primary documents for archival and research purposes, audio cassettes are available for listening at Hamilton Library's Hawaiian and Pacific Collection, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Researchers should use the tapes only as supplements to the transcripts, since interviewee and staff additions and deletions were not made on the tape.

The identification number, assigned to each audio cassette and transcript, indicates project number, cassette number, session number, and year of interview. For example, Tape No. 19-16-1-90 identifies project number 19, cassette number 16, recorded interview session 1, and the year, 1990.

'Ualapu'e, Moloka'i: Oral Histories from the East End and other COH publications are available at the following locations:

Hawai'i
Hawai'i Public Library (Hilo)
Hawai'i Community College Library
University of Hawai'i at Hilo
Library
Kealakekua Community Library

Kaua'i
Lihu'e Public Library
Kaua'i Community College Library

Lāna'i
Lāna'i Public and School Library

Maui
Maui Public Library (Wailuku)
Maui Community College Library

Moloka'i
Moloka'i Public Library

O'ahu
Bishop Museum Library
Hawai'i State Library
Kaimukī Public Library
Kāne'ohe Public Library
Pearl City Public Library
Honolulu Community College Library
Kapi'olani Community College Library
Leeward Community College Library
Windward Community College Library
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa:
Hamilton Library
Sinclair Library
Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
Ethnic Studies Program
Hawai'i State Archives
Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts
Hawai'i State Department of Land and Natural Resources