

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: John K. Iaea, Sr.

*"My family enjoyed eating fish a lot. The ['Ualapu'e] Pond I think was one of the essential part of the community. That's where some people earned their livelihood. But I guess the old people who were responsible for keeping that pond in good shape had plenty of fish. The credit should go to them. They were really terrific. That's why I asked a lot of questions to these Hawaiian fishermen, and listened to what they said. Some of these guys were about eighty to ninety years old. They talked all in Hawaiian and I knew what they were talking about. . . . So you could not beat these guys because they were akamai. I wish I was born at that time, you know. I was just a kid yet, you know."*

John K. Iaea, Sr., the second of eight children, was born July 25, 1912 in Kawela, Moloka'i. His father, Rev. Isaac Daniel Iaea, was a Congregational minister who traveled to different churches on the island. His mother, Ha'ahea Iaea, was born and raised in Kawela. At the age of three, John moved to Kalua'aha where his family resided in the parsonage of the Kalua'aha Church. When John was eleven, the family moved to 'Ualapu'e and lived next to Ah Ping Store.

John attended Kalua'aha School until the ninth grade, when he left the island to board at Maui's Lahainaluna School. He graduated from Lahainaluna in 1932. John attended the University of Hawai'i where he was a Health and Physical Education major.

Upon returning to Moloka'i, John worked as a recreation specialist at Kaunakakai Gym for Maui County. Until recently, he was a course marshal at Kalua Koi golf resort.

John and his wife, Stella Shito Iaea, live in Kaunakakai. They raised two children.

Tape No. 19-19-1-90

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

John K. Iaea, Sr. (JI)

July 18, 1990

Kaunakakai, Moloka'i

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with John Iaea on July 18, 1990 in Kaunakakai, Moloka'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Mr. Iaea, why don't we start by—why don't you tell me where you were born and when you were born?

JI: I was born July 25, 1912, at Kawela, Moloka'i.

WN: And what did your parents do?

JI: My dad was a traveling minister (and) he traveled to different churches on the islands (of Maui and Moloka'i). Lāna'i. My mother was a housewife.

WN: What was your father's name?

JI: Isaac Daniel Iaea.

WN: And your mother?

JI: My mother was Elizabeth (Ha'aha'a Lukela Iaea).

WN: And then your father folks, you folks all lived in Kawela?

JI: We lived in Kawela (until I was) three or four (years old, and then we) moved to Kalua'aha. Later, we moved to 'Ualapu'e.

WN: Do you know why you folks had to move around like that?

JI: (My father was a traveling minister so we had to move to wherever my dad was assigned and we lived in the church) parsonage.

WN: Oh, I see. When you folks moved to Kalua'aha, you folks moved near the Kalua'aha Church?

JI: Right. You see, the (parsonage was located less than one-fourth of a mile from the church). My dad was the minister of that church. (Before this assignment, my dad) preached (in Makawao, Maui and at the Congregational churches of Kala'iakamanu Hou, Waialua and Hālawā). Then he was called to (Kohala, Hawai'i). He was supposed to move over there to Kohala, but my mother didn't want to move away from Moloka'i.

WN: Your mother was Moloka'i girl?

JI: Yeah.

WN: Where is she from?

JI: (She was born and raised at Kawela, Moloka'i.)

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: And then your father is a Moloka'i boy?

JI: My father (was) from 'Ewa, O'ahu.

WN: What is his background?

JI: (He was married and his first wife died in Honolulu. He had a large family, so I had a lot of half brothers and half sisters. According to my mother, he had various kinds of jobs on O'ahu before becoming a minister.)

WN: And then he came to Moloka'i?

JI: Then he came to Moloka'i. He was called to help preach the gospel. So that's why he took in the ministry work. But he didn't go to ministry school. He just had practical training (under another minister with the Hawaiian Evangelical Association).

WN: Where, on O'ahu?

JI: Honolulu, O'ahu.

WN: And he's Protestant?

JI: Protestant, yeah, Congregational.

WN: So what was it like living in the, you know, at the [parsonage] in Kalua'aha?

JI: Oh, good. We enjoyed the place. We had a big home (and a) big yard. We could play around and do everything, you know. We raised animals, too. We raised pigs, (cows), chickens, turkeys, (and) horses too. We planted vegetables (like corn, pumpkin, squash, sweet potato, peas, and watermelon).

WN: So when you folks moved to 'Ualapu'e, you were about how old?

- JI: When we moved to 'Ualapu'e, I was about eleven years old.
- WN: And where did you live in 'Ualapu'e?
- JI: You know where Ah Ping Store is?
- WN: Yeah, yeah.
- JI: Yeah, right next door.
- WN: On the east side or the west side of Ah Ping?
- JI: East side of Ah Ping. One big lot, big area. We lived there. Then from there, I went to Kalua'aha School. I graduated from the [eighth grade] in 1929. After graduation, I went to Lahainaluna School. I entered Lahainaluna in 1930.
- WN: Now, when you folks moved to 'Ualapu'e, your father was still pastor at the Kalua'aha Church?
- JI: At Kalua'aha and Waialua Churches.
- WN: But you folks didn't live in the [parsonage] anymore?
- JI: No, no. We had our home [in 'Ualapu'e].
- WN: Did your father buy the land?
- JI: Yeah, we bought it from the state [i.e., territory]. It was an old homestead land.
- WN: Oh, I see. So how was living over there compared to living in the [parsonage]?
- JI: Oh it was good. I enjoyed it better there, you know. We liked it there. The store was close. Ah Ping Store was very close. (Laughs)
- WN: What kind of things did Ah Ping Store have?
- JI: Oh, dry goods and perishables. They (sold) all kinds (of things). Not bad. (It) was a good store. They had everything in there. They (sold) gasoline, (*crack seed* from China, cans of corned beef, sardines, Vienna sausage. Also dried fish, salt salmon, butterfish, and even *laahp cheung*). They made poi, too. You know, they (used to) grind (the taro in the) machine (to make poi. The machine was operated by gasoline using the pulley system.) People were fortunate to get the store (in 'Ualapu'e). They (didn't) have to (go) all the way to Kaunakakai because the store (was) centralized.
- WN: You know, as you were a young boy growing up in 'Ualapu'e, what kinds of things did you do to keep yourself busy and have fun?
- JI: Oh, I used to go (and) catch frogs (from the taro patch and) sell it to the Chinese (workers at

Ah Ping Store). I used to catch the frogs with a red cloth (tied) around the hook. (I had to shake the cloth so) the frog (would) go for the hook. (Then) I (could) catch 'em. Hook 'em up in the mouth (and) put 'em all in the bucket.

WN: You just used red . . .

JI: Yeah.

WN: . . . cloth for bait?

JI: Yeah, with the hook. I put the cloth right (around) the small hook. (Then I) put the (hook) on a long string (tied to a bamboo pole) and then tapped it up and down, and the frog grabbed (the hook).

WN: With the mouth?

JI: Yeah. I used to make, maybe twenty-five cents one bucket.

(Laughter)

JI: And even the shell, you know the kind of shells in the taro patch?

WN: What, snail?

JI: Something like snail, but eatable. Yeah, we used to catch (those snails) too. Quarter one bucket. Used to sell that.

WN: How much in one bucket? How many frogs?

JI: Frog?

WN: Yeah.

JI: (My friend and I didn't) count, though. All we (did was) just throw (the frogs) inside, that's all, then take 'em down to the store. Then sometimes we exchanged the frogs for some commodity, or some goods, (or food to eat).

WN: So you sold to Ah Ping? The frog.

JI: Yeah. Because Ah Ping had some Chinese people living with them. About two or three Chinese men. They cooked their own, you know. Gee, sometime when they got the frogs, they dressed the frogs up and when they were ready (to) eat, they (would) ask us if we (wanted to) eat. Ooh. (Chuckles)

WN: Hawaiians no eat frog? (Chuckles)

JI: Nah, but it smelled good, the way they prepare. But, you know, we no care (to) eat frog. All we (did was) catch 'em and give to them.

WN: How did they prepare frog?

JI: I don't know (how) they prepared it. But when I looked, the meat (was) not bad though, just like chicken. (These) Chinese (guys were) terrific (cooks). Then *bumbai* we go in the pond (to dig) clams. Big clams. I used to sell 'em to the Chinese (workers) by the bucket, fifty cents a bucket.

WN: Oh, yeah? This is 'Ualapu'e Pond?

JI: 'Ualapu'e Pond. Oh, we used to clean up, boy. Those days, fifty cents, that's money, eh. (Laughs)

WN: Where were the clams? On the west side of the pond or the . . .

JI: East side of the pond.

WN: East side of the pond.

JI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, had an area there, just loaded, though. But you see, you gotta dig 'em. They (were deep) inside the sand. Oh, but they (were) big ones, though. In no time, your bucket filled up (quickly). I don't know how they got in there, though. We have no history (of) how those clams got in there.

WN: Henry Duvauchelle told me that this (man) from Honolulu named [Bob] Lilys helped stock the pond with clams . . .

JI: Oh, with that clams?

WN: Yeah.

JI: Maybe. Could be. Yeah, yeah, could be.

WN: You sold the clams to Ah Ping, too?

JI: (Sold) 'em to Ah Ping (for fifty cents a bucket). This Chinese man prepared the (clams by) cleaning 'em up (then) frying (them) with eggs. You know, the way (this Chinese man cooked them) with eggs, boy, that (was sure) tasty.

(Laughter)

JI: Boy, really good eating.

WN: You take the clam out of the shell and fry 'em with scrambled egg?

JI: (Before cooking, you must let) the clams sit in the (pan of water so that the sand inside of the shells will slowly) ooze out. After so many hours, then (you can) take the meat out (and then) fry 'em with (scrambled) eggs. Oh, (it was) delicious.

(Laughter)

WN: So besides clams, what else did you get in the pond?

JI: (My friend, Samuel Kaaui, and I) used to go fishing for mullet. Big-sized mullet. They (liked to hide in the tall green weeds in the pond. There were lots of thick weeds where the mullet could hide.)

WN: Oh, the bulrush?

JI: Bulrush, yeah, right. We used to go on a small (skiff that was about six- by four-feet wide and take a light gill net so we could surround the school of fish as they came out from the bulrushes. The water was so clear in the pond that you could see the mullet easily. If the mullet did not take the bait, we would shoot an arrow that was made out of a strong, medium-sized guava branch, with the tip sharpened to catch the fish. Sometimes we would pound a nail into the thick part of the tip, and then file the flat end of the nail, so we would have a sharp point on the arrow). Then we shoot (at) the mullet. At that time (there were a lot of fish, but they didn't) stir up any dirt and you (could) see 'em playing. (I would) draw that (bow and shoot several) arrows (one after the other). That's what we (did). (We stayed) all day (and had a lot of fun).

WN: You used to make your own bow?

JI: Yeah. Used to make our own bow and own arrow. (Also used the *aho* as the string for the bow.)

WN: What kind wood you used to use?

JI: We used to use *hau*. You know *hau*, eh?

WN: Yeah.

JI: We made the bow (from *hau*). Eh, that thing was good, though. (Laughs)

WN: So you used to just shoot into the school or you used to aim for one?

JI: Just aim for one. Sometimes if you aim for the school, you might hit either one or two with (the arrow). Eh, that (mullet jumped a lot) you know. We used to get (plenty of fish).

WN: Only mullet you used to catch?

JI: (No.) We used to catch (mullet and whatever fish came into the net).

WN: What about barracuda?

JI: (The) barracuda (got) so big (so) we (didn't) fool around with the barracuda.

(Laughter)



JI: We liked [eating] the barracuda. But we (didn't) fool around (with them). Boy, when you see (them) slide into the water so quietly and all of a sudden, they (just took) off, just like a bullet. We (just didn't) fool around (with them). Those days, maybe if we had rifles, maybe we (would) take a chance and shoot 'em.

(Laughter)

WN: Yeah, they said barracuda dangerous 'cause they jump, huh?

JI: Oh, yeah. You gotta watch 'em.

WN: Get the sharp . . .

JI: Point, yeah. Big, eh. So you gotta watch 'em. Because those guys (were) real dangerous. That's why (I didn't) fool around (with the) barracuda. Eh, some of those buggers (got) so big, boy. Big!

WN: About what, foot and a half?

JI: Probably a foot and a half (to over five feet). Big body (too). I (saw) couple (of barracudas) in there. But I (was) surprised, you know, (that they would) come way up to the shallow water. Generally, they stay in (the) deep water, but this one (came) way in the shallow water in the pond. I look at that, I say gee, what the heck kind of fish is this? So one day, we (told) an old Hawaiian man (who's) a fisherman. "Eh, we see these two big fish inside." You know what he (told) us? That's barracuda. Oh, big monsters, though. But they swim (and) glide through (the) shallow water. (They looked terrific.)

WN: The barracuda come in through the *mākāhā*?

JI: Must be. Could be, come through the *mākāhā*, yeah.

WN: How did you folks used to eat mullet?

JI: (We used to eat it in several different ways. We boiled it and seasoned it with salt, fried it in the frying pan, wrapped the fresh fish in ti leaves and put it over the charcoal fire to steam (*lāwalu*), chopped the fish into small pieces and ate it raw. Sometimes we dried the mullet for a day and a half and then would *pūlehu* it over the charcoal fire. It was so 'ono!)

WN: Had *weke* inside [the fish pond]?

JI: Yeah.

WN: What about *awa*?

JI: Get *awa*. Plenty bone, eh? (Chuckles)

WN: What about, had 'ō'io?



JI: 'Ō'io, too. All those (kinds of fish were in the pond). Funny, I don't know how they (got) all that darn fish, though. I don't know who (was) filling the pond up with the fish. But every time I looked, (had) all kinds (of) fish. *Bumbai* the Hawaiian fisherman tells you what kind (of) fish (and) he point it (out) to you. So we remembered the color, the size and (the habits of all) the fish(es). Then we (could) tell whether it's 'ō'io, (*pāpio*, 'ulua, or) *weke*. But we knew *weke*. He gave us good information on all the different types of fish.

WN: Was mostly mullet, though?

JI: Mostly mullet, yeah. (Had some *moi*, too.)

WN: When you were growing up near the pond, who took care of the pond?

JI: When I was growing up, Harry Apo, (was) in charge of the pond.

WN: You remember anybody else?

JI: I don't know. When I left [in 1930] (to go) to school, I came back, Apo was still in charge of the pond. Then later on, I think somebody else took over. I don't (remember) who the person (was). I know Harry gave up.

WN: Did you go by the *mākāhā* to get fish, too?

JI: Yeah. I used to go over there with a scoop net.

WN: So the fish used to get trapped in the *mākāhā*?

JI: Sometimes they get trapped inside.

WN: Because had two gates?

JI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. When they get trapped, that's when you gotta go watch 'em. You catch 'em over there. Sometimes they (get) stuck in there, (and) block up the opening. But that's the best time to get the fish, in the morning hours. Had one old Japanese man, I forgot his name. I don't remember. Japanese . . .

WN: Not Sakanashi?

JI: Yeah, yeah. That's the one. (Chuckles) You know, yeah?

WN: Sakanashi.

JI: Yeah, (this old man was good because he didn't bother us. If you wanted something in the pond, he (would) let you go in there. But he always (said), "You keep the pond clean, eh?"

WN: So every time you used the pond, did you folks have to ask permission from Harry Apo or Sakanashi?

JI: Yeah. But we tell 'em, "Eh, we going so-and-so time." Oh, they say okay. They (would just write) down inside (their) book (our name, the date and the time).

WN: Oh, yeah? Oh.

JI: He [Apo] (didn't) want too many guys (in the pond at one time. People were supposed to ask permission, but some guys didn't ask, so only the people with permission had their names in the record book.)

WN: So even when you go in with bow and arrow, you folks ask?

JI: Oh, yeah, we (did) ask. But we (told) 'em we (were) not going (to) shoot the fish. We just (told) 'em (that) we (were going to) look under the bulrush.

(Laughter)

WN: Why, shooting fish was no good?

JI: No, no, no. *Bumbai* he stop us, (because) he (didn't) want us to go, *bumbai* we get hurt, (because) we (liked to) shoot arrows, you know. (Chuckles) So we (say), "We going."

"Oh, where you going?"

"We going (to) look for crab, you know, the black crab." But no more black crab in there. But we just tell 'em. But those two, Sakanashi and Harry Apo, (were) really good (guys). They were right on.

WN: So they let anybody go in?

JI: Well, they [ask] you first, you know, your purpose of going. People he (knew) well, he (was) not too, *da kine* strict on 'em. The people he (didn't) know too well, then he (got) after (them). He (didn't) care for people to be down there (without any reason). The pond flourished, though. (There were) plenty of fish in there. I think, once or twice a year, they (would) drag net (in the pond), but they never (caught) the big swordfish.

WN: Oh, had one swordfish in there?

JI: Had one, they said, but I don't know. That's what they (told) us, but I think, the bugger (dug) down in the tunnel.

WN: How did the drag net work?

JI: (The length of the net determined the amount of people needed to drag the net. You used the net to surround the fishes and you keep pulling both ends of the net until the space between the net became smaller and smaller. The fishes had no place to run and would end up in the net bag.)

WN: So, the net covers one end of the pond to the other and you walk along . . .

JI: No, no. The pond is big, so maybe they want to drag twice or three times or more. They drag (one) side first. *Bumbai*, later on, they go to the other side. They're smart and they just know where the fish hang around. So they just trap 'em (and) catch 'em.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: And then, how often would they drag net?

JI: About twice a year, I think. They just (knew) what time to drag the pond. If they (were) going to drag (during the) month (of) July, they (were) going (to) make sure they (would do) about two or three drags (in) different areas. When they dragged again the next year, they (knew) what side to approach, where the fish (was) plentiful. They (were) smart (and) they just (knew what to do). (A lot of) people (helped) out (and) they (didn't) charge for their time, you know. They (just) prorated the fish (among all the helpers and the people liked that arrangement). That pond (was a) rich pond (in the sense that it had plenty of seafood in it). The *kūpuna* used to tell us about the pond, you know. They used to (have) a lot of (huge) shrimp in there. I (did not) see (any) shrimp. They said, well, somebody spoiled that, (so) that's why the shrimp (didn't) come around, (and didn't) grow.

WN: You think maybe the fish ate 'em?

JI: Nah, something went wrong someplace. They wouldn't tell you, though, but the old-timers (knew). At that time, (I think), nobody was in charge (of the pond). I was talking to the old fisherman, (and) he said that during his time, they had big shrimps (and it was) just loaded in the pond. (He and others) used to live on the shrimp. You know, they said (they didn't) have to worry (about food. They could also) live on the crab, you know the *kūhonu* crab, the white one. Oh, they said, ey, those crabs (were) good, though. They said it was really delicious and fat.

WN: *Kūhonu* crab?

JI: Mmm.

WN: What about your time? Had crab?

JI: My time (also) had *kūhonu* crab. (When I went) in the pond, (and started) digging, some (crabs would) come around (by my) leg (and) the bugger nip you. (Chuckles)

WN: Yeah? How big was the crab?

JI: Oh, the bugger (was) regular standard size, (about four to six inches across). They (just came) out and nip you (by the) leg. Ho, (those white crabs were) fat, though. All over (the) place used to get crabs. Inside (and) outside (of) the pond. Ho, plentiful. So, that's why the people (in) those days that lived around that area (got most) of their food from the pond than from the outside of the pond. I think they got everything from the pond.

WN: Was the fish better in the pond than outside?

JI: Well, to me, they (didn't) run too much [in the fish pond]. You know, like you talk about cattle, eh. They stock 'em up in the stockyard (so) they don't move around too much, they eat and they get fat. But you get cattle and you let 'em run around too much . . .

WN: Tough.

JI: Tough, you know.

(Laughter)

JI: They lose all the fat (and) they all get muscles. The same like the fish, you know. So outside (of the pond), the fish just run. But, according to this old-timer, (he) said the fish out there sometimes (tasted better) than the ones in the pond (because they ate a lot of different) kinds of seaweed. But the inside of the pond (had) seaweed, too.

WN: So the fish inside the pond was more fat?

JI: They (were) really fat (and) oily. You cut 'em up, nothing but fat inside. I know (because I) used to catch plenty (of fish) with the arrow. (Chuckles) But only us know this. I no tell nobody. Nobody knows this trick.

(Laughter)

JI: (After shooting the fishes, I took them) home. Oh, that (was) good, though. I (would) dry 'em up mostly (and) preserve (with salt). Those days, we had a hard time (because we didn't have any ice). So we (had to) dry 'em (quickly). When we cooked, we (would) either fry, (or) boil immediately. Then we gotta eat 'em. We (couldn't) keep it too long because (there was) no refrigerator. And then what else now, (did) we (do)? Oh, yeah. (We dried the fish so it would) last longer (and would not) spoil, provided you put enough salt (to) preserve the meat. (When we dried the fish it became hard, so to soften the fish), you put 'em in the water (to) get the salt out. Then you can put 'em on the charcoal. Oh, good, yeah. (Chuckles) Ah, me, I no forget.

WN: How often you eat fish?

JI: Oh, I (ate fish) every day. (There was) so much, so you (could not) waste (any). My family and I) enjoyed (eating fish a lot). The pond, I think, (was) one of the essential parts of the community. That's where (some people earned) their livelihood. But I guess the old people who were responsible for keeping that pond in good shape (had) plenty of fish. (The) credit should go to them. They (were) really terrific. That's why I asked a lot of (questions to) these Hawaiian fishermen (and listened to what they said). Some of these guys (were) about eighty to ninety years old. They talked all in Hawaiian and I (knew) what they (were) talking about. Terrific, boy, those guys. They (didn't) depend on any other people. If they needed help, (people would *kōkua*). They (gave out) information (about their) knowledge (of) the pond, how they restored this pond, (and) how they (got) all the different kinds of fish in there. So you (could not) beat (these) guys (because they were *akamai*). I wish I was (born) at that time, you know. (Laughs) I was just a kid yet, you know. Young yet, yeah?

WN: Was Harry Apo good at fishing . . .

JI: Apo was good. He was good. He (would) get his gang (and) they (would all) go catch fish (and) he (would sell the fish). He (got) his money's worth. I don't know how much he was paying for the pond lease, but he made some money. If he didn't make money, (then) he couldn't buy booze. (He enjoyed what he was doing. Sometimes we would) go down (to his) house (by) the [pond] wall, where they stored (the) net and (other equipment. He slept in the house and) nobody (bothered) him (and) he (didn't) bother you, (either).

WN: Is that where he lived?

JI: Yeah, he used to live over there. [Others say Apo lived elsewhere.]

WN: That was his house [i.e., *hale mākāhā*]?

JI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He (drank), but he (didn't) look for trouble. (He was a good man.)

WN: Were there some people who tried to steal fish from the pond?

JI: Oh, yeah, plenty (of) people. But when they (saw) him, they just (took) off, yeah. (Chuckles) But Harry was (a) good man. Good soul.

WN: What did he do to take care of the pond? How did he take care, you know, clean it and so forth?

JI: Well, I don't know how he (took) care (of) the pond, but there must (have been) some ways that he did, without us knowing how he (did it). (At) that time, when we (were) young, we (didn't) care how they (took) care (of) the pond.

(Laughter)

WN: Yeah, that's true.

JI: You know. Because that (was) not our concern. (We were) concerned (about) the fish in there (and how) we (were going to) catch 'em. But his concern (was taking) care and cleaning the pond. I don't know how he (did) it. If we (were) around, he (didn't) show us what he (was) doing. We (thought) he (was) going (to) catch fish, but he (was) doing something else (while riding around in his small boat). I think he was cleaning the place.

WN: How many *mākāhā* you remember in 'Ualapu'e Pond?

JI: Let's see, get one, two. I think two *mākāhā*. You know when the tide comes in, the fish (goes) through the *mākāhā* (and) into the pond. So, Harry Apo and (the) old Hawaiian fishermen (told) him (to) put (a small) net outside (of the *mākāhā*.) So when the tide (went) down, (some of the fish would swim out and get trapped in the net).

WN: Inside the *mākāhā*, you mean?

JI: No, outside.

WN: Oh, outside.

JI: You put the net outside so they go through the *makaha*, (and as) the water receded, (the fish would swim out to the ocean and get stuck on the net).

WN: Oh, yeah, I see.

JI: Ho, get plenty (of) fish, boy. (Chuckles)

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: Now, what about mangroves, were there mangroves there when you were young?

JI: No mangroves there. [Only] lately, I think. (The area of Kalama'ula) had (mangroves, too). Only that weed (was in the pond at that time).

WN: Bulrush?

JI: Bulrush.

WN: Yeah.

JI: That (was) the only (thing), but no mangroves. (The mangroves came later.) I don't know who brought that thing here. They said it (was supposed to) hold the (sand from eroding, but it became a mess when they didn't control the growth of the mangroves).

WN: I was wondering, when you were growing up, what did you folks—was there a name for the pond? You just called it 'Ualapu'e Pond?

JI: That's what we called it, 'Ualapu'e Pond, because (it was located in the 'Ualapu'e area). I think there (was) another name to the pond. Only the pond, though. But I don't remember if there's another name.

WN: Well, you know, like Kūpeke Fishpond was known as . . .

JI: Buchanan [Fishpond].

WN: Buchanan, yeah. Because he owned the pond.

JI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: And then there was Jones [a.k.a., Nī'aupala Fishpond].



JI: Jones one, too, I remember that one. But that pond [Jones] (was) not so good (because of the) sandy bottom. But I know Kūpeke Pond (had) plenty (of) fish in there. And fat kind of fish, too, mullet and all kinds. The Hitchcock Pond [Ka'opeaHina Pond], (*makai* of) Kalua'aha Church, the Jones Pond and the 'Ualapu'e Pond (were the familiar) ponds (that people knew).

WN: Yeah.

JI: One, two, three, four ponds, yeah.

WN: Jones, Hitchcock, 'Ualapu'e and what's the fourth?

JI: Buchanan (Pond).

WN: Oh, Buchanan, oh, I see.

JI: You know, they (were) really good ponds.

WN: Did you go fish in those ponds, too?

JI: I went to Buchanan's Pond (and the) Jones Pond, but I didn't go in the Hitchcock Pond. I just went on the side (by) the wall. I didn't go inside (to) fish. The other guys went in (to) fish. I did go in to ('Ualapu'e Pond) with the guys (to) pull net. Sometimes, the old-timers (didn't) care (to have) too many small guys, kids like us, (to help pull the net). They said, "Get on shore," they tell you, get on to the. . . . (Chuckles) You just in the way. (Chuckles) You know, those guys, they (didn't) fool around, boy. When they worked, they (wanted) everybody (to) work together. They said, "No, you just stay up (on) shore."

WN: So like the drag net, where did they keep it, in that shed where Harry Apo used to sleep?

JI: Yeah. All in there. Some guys (brought) their (own) nets, too, on (their) boats. (They would) leave 'em out there and (then attach the nets) together (to) make (a) long, long net. That's why Apo (had) a lot of net, and (the) other guys had a lot of net, (too).

WN: Did your parents or anybody tell you about some of the legends or stories associated with the pond?

JI: They never said (anything). I don't think they (knew) too much, because they (didn't) associate too closely (with the) ponds. I don't think they (knew) the history because they (didn't tell) us anything about 'Ualapu'e Pond. (Whatever we learned was) from the old (Hawaiian) guys (who were) fishermen that (lived) around (that area).

WN: Do you remember any of the stories?

JI: Well, they (told) us that the fish pond had a lot of shrimps, 'ō'io, (and) mullet. They (were) plentiful, and fat, but the buggers (tended to hide in the deep water among the bulrush). (If you used) diving tank, you (could) go inside there, (and) catch all the fish (hiding) in the bulrush.



WN: Oh, yeah?

JI: (The bulrushes grew about three or four feet above the water and) that's where the mullet (liked to) live all the time.

WN: So when they made drag net, they couldn't go bulrush side, yeah?

JI: No, they (would) go out there (and) make noise. They (would) get (a) can (and hit it). Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. They (also used a small paddle or their hands to) whack the water (and the fish would get scared and run in the water, sometimes jumping out of the water and making a big splash).

WN: Then the mullet comes out of the bulrush . . .

JI: Yeah, (the boat goes among the bulrushes and then the fisherman would whack) the water (and) the (mullet would) all come out. That's where all the fishes (were hiding. The fisherman would place the gill net at the edge of the bulrushes and, because the fishes were scared, they would run right into the gill net. Oh, used to catch plenty of fish this way. The fisherman would use this method only when they didn't catch a lot of fish by dragging net.)

WN: Oh.

JI: Yeah. They (had) 'ō'io, (and another) kind (of) fish. Oh, one more other (bony) fish. I forgot the name of that fish.

WN: Oh, yeah? And what, taste—good-eating?

JI: Yeah, that was good-eating, like 'ō'io, but bony eh.

WN: How you folks ate 'ō'io? You made fish cake or . . .

JI: No, no. We learned something from this old Japanese man. (He would slit the two sides of the 'ō'io up to the gills and) then he (would) roll the bottle (from the head to the tail to) get all the meat out. Eh, plenty meat (came) out. Ho. The Hawaiians (ate it raw by mixing) chili pepper, (leaf onion and kukui 'inamona. It was) tasty!

(Laughter)

JI: Eh, some good, though. I really enjoyed (eating 'ō'io that way).

WN: What about *pāpio*? Had *pāpio*?

JI: Not too much *pāpio*.

WN: Did you ever fish with hook and line?

JI: (I had better luck catching *pāpio* with the hand line outside of the pond than inside. It was harder inside because the *pāpio* wouldn't take the bait, probably because it had) too much

*kaukau* (to eat in the pond).

WN: That's true, yeah.

JI: When they get plenty food in there, they (don't) care (to eat) something else.

(Laughter)

WN: Where did the fresh water for the pond come in?

JI: They had (several) springs (among the bulrushes. The water came from the mountains and was cold. The fish seemed to like that cold water.)

WN: So like now you drive by and get one sign says Lo'ipūnāwai, yeah?

JI: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: That's . . .

JI: (Lo'ipūnāwai means spring water for the taro patch.) They (had) spring water over there. You know how we found out? (We saw a lot of) mountain ferns (growing inside of the pond among) the bulrushes.

WN: Yeah.

JI: (A lot of the kids would walk inside of the pond and we could feel that) the water (was) different. Cold (and) icy. So then we (kept walking until we sank into deeper water and then we saw) the (water bubbling) up.

WN: Yeah?

JI: (The old Hawaiian guys knew about the pool but didn't tell us anything and just kept it to themselves. We were nosy so we investigated on our own. It was) funny (because) when we started off (the water was) warm (and) everybody (would) look at each other. (Then we would keep on walking and) the water temperature (changed to) cold. Gee, all of a sudden, we started sinking. So that's why we knew then (that there was a spring there because) we (saw the) water bubbling up.

WN: This was right outside Ah Ping Store?

JI: (Almost.)

WN: About the middle of the pond?

JI: (More towards the northeastern part of the pond where the bulrushes were dense.) The spring water (would) bubble up (and) that's how we knew (it) was really fresh water. That's where the fresh water (was) coming (from to) supply (the) pond (and taro patches close by. There were other places in the pond that also had sources of spring water.) We had good fun,

though, (going) through the bulrush (and swimming) around, you know. Boy, you (could) see all the water bubbling up.

WN: Gee, I wonder if it's still there, the spring?

JI: (I'm not sure, since it's been a long time since I've been in the pond.) I know (of one small spring on the northwest side of the pond). Small spring. You could hear that (sound), foop, foop, foop, foop, (as) the water (came to the surface). We (could) see the bubble (rise) up (and) hear the poomp, poomp, poomp (sound, just like a pump). Terrific!

WN: Yeah.

JI: I guess that's how the fish survived. They (liked it) over there because (of the) spring water.

WN: Brackish.

JI: Yeah.

WN: What kind *limu* was over there in the pond?

JI: They (had) *limu 'ele'ele* (and) some other (*limu*). (I'm not sure about the Hawaiian) terminology (but) maybe *huluhulu waena* (was the name of the other *limu*).

WN: *Huluhulu*?

JI: Yeah, *waena*.

WN: *Waena*?

JI: Yeah, yeah. That's the only two (kinds of *limu* that I knew that was growing in the pond).

WN: Did you folks use to take out the *limu* for eat?

JI: Ah, we (took) the green *limu*. Sometimes we (didn't) pick the green *limu* (because it was not) good. (It was) exposed to the sun (and changed) color. But (*limu*) submerged in the water (was good).

WN: Did Harry Apo say don't take *limu* because, you know . . .

JI: No.

WN: . . . the mullet eat the *limu*?

JI: No, he (didn't) say. He (knew that there was) plenty (of) food in there, but not too much *limu*.

WN: What about—had any kind agriculture around the pond, like had *lo'i* around there or . . .

- JI: Oh (lots of) taro land. We (had) our own taro land right next to the pond.
- WN: Yeah?
- JI: Yeah. We raised (plenty of) taro (in our *lo'i*). All that area in front (of) Ah Ping Store used to be taro land, all the way down to Lo'ipūnāwai.
- WN: You mean between the road and the pond?
- JI: Yeah. Plenty (of) taro (land). That's where we (caught) the frogs. (Chuckles)
- WN: Oh, in that taro patch?
- JI: Yeah. (We also leased our *lo'i* to) somebody else and they (would) go plant (taro).
- WN: You folks did it for your own use?
- JI: Yeah, (for our own) consumption. Everybody (ate) their own taro. (Sometimes we sold the taro because of) oversupply. Every week, I used to (pound) poi. (Chuckles)
- WN: Oh, yeah.
- JI: I used to go down (to) the (*lo'i*), pull the taro, strip 'em up, put 'em in the bag (and) haul 'em home, you know. Then, cook it (and pound into poi. Ho, we used to get a lot of fun, though. (Chuckles) All the kids (worked) in the taro patch. (Those days they raised good taro.)
- WN: That was one of your jobs?
- JI: Yes.
- WN: Anything else besides taro around there?
- JI: (A small amount of sugarcane.)
- WN: When you were a young boy growing up over there, what were some of your chores?
- JI: My chores? Home?
- WN: Yeah.
- JI: Home or . . .
- WN: Home.
- JI: Oh, I used to take care (of) all the pigs, milking cows, chickens; (pulled, cooked and pounded) poi. I didn't have to buy too much pig feed because I (used the cooked taro peels and cut up any extra cooked taro into small pieces for) the pig (to eat).

WN: The leaf, too?

JI: Yeah. (Boiled the leaves real good.) We used to work like hell, though.

(Laughter)

JI: Oh, in those days, (we had) nothing else to do so we (had to) do something, eh.

WN: Yeah. So I guess your father was busy . . .

JI: Oh, yeah, yeah. We were assigned (jobs by my mother). My other brothers had their assignments to do (also). Everybody did their share (and didn't) grumble. We (didn't) interfere (with each other's jobs). (Chuckles) (You just had to) stick to your job. We used to kill (a) pig (and *kālua* it for special occasions like Christmas or someone's birthday). (Chuckles) That's one of the (other) duties I (had) at home. Everybody supposed to (help in any way they could).

WN: To what, *kālua* pig?

JI: *Kālua* pig, (and taking care of) the cow, horse (and other animals).

WN: What did your mother do?

JI: Oh, my mother just supervised (us at home. She took) care (of) the house (and) the cooking. (She was) the chief cook.

(When we were older, we also helped her pick the dry *hala* leaves from the tree and ground and bundled the leaves together to bring home. She would take the *kūkū* off from the leaves and use a damp cloth to wipe the leaves clean. Then she would wrap the leaf clockwise around her left hand, tightly, to soften it. Then she would unwind the leaf and roll it tightly on to the right hand. She did this several times to soften the leaf. After several leaves were softened, she would roll one leaf tightly and then add more leaves until the roll was eighteen inches in diameter. There were people from off-island who bought from her.)

WN: How big was your house?

JI: My house (had) three bedrooms, small parlor, kitchen, (and) dining room, yeah. Not bad.

WN: For how many of you?

JI: Five of us.

WN: What, three children, and two parents.

JI: Yeah. (We) had enough space (for our family). We (also) had (a) doghouse, too. We (kept big) dogs, too, (but I don't remember the breed).

WN: Getting tired, yeah?

- JI: No, no.
- WN: No, you not getting tired?
- JI: No, no, you doing all the questioning.
- WN: You doing all the talking, though. (Chuckles)
- JI: No, it's all right.
- WN: You were talking about *kālua* pig, you know when they had holidays like that. When did you folks *kālua* pig?
- JI: Family birthdays, Christmas and New Year's. Everybody (had) their own celebration (for) Christmas and New Year's. We (didn't) worry, (because we had plenty of pigs). We raised the pig, killed our own, dressed 'em, (and) then put (the pig) in the *imu*. All the young kids (learned how to prepare the pig from my dad). (Laughs) (He would give us step by step instructions.)
- WN: Did you folks have things to do with the church, you know, like get-togethers?
- JI: Oh, yeah. We (had) our own Sunday-school meetings and Sunday evening meetings. (It was) normal procedure (for us). Sometimes, we (had) church celebrations (for) fundraising. Those days, people (had a) lot of money. I don't know where they got the money. (It seemed like they had a lot of) gold (coins). You know, I had one good (old) Hawaiian friend (who told) me, "If you like gold money, get plenty gold money."
- WN: Where?
- JI: (Chuckles) The dead people. You know when the Hawaiians (died), the gold (coins went with them to the grave). And I believed that man. I (did) see plenty (of) gold (coins). In the olden days, (the Hawaiians had a) lot of gold money.
- WN: I didn't know Hawaiians did that.
- JI: Oh, yeah. They (kept) all the gold money. I was wondering (about those) guys, boy, rich, (because of) all (that) gold.
- WN: How did they used to dress the bodies? How did they, you know, get the body ready for bury?
- JI: (I think) the Hawaiians had some kind of way of keeping the body from deteriorating. I don't (really) know. They said they (had) some kind of (sap from some kind of) a tree. They (would) rub (it) on the body (to) preserve it, but (that's what I heard from some of the *kūpuna*).
- WN: I thought maybe they use plenty salt.

JI: Oh, yeah, (I think they also used) salt (to) preserve, (too). Gee, too bad we didn't learn (how they preserved bodies in the olden days). Otherwise, we (would) be undertakers, today.

(Laughter)

WN: And you be rich.

(Laughter)

JI: Be rich.

(Laughter)

JI: I get all the gold money.

WN: Plus, everybody needs undertakers.

JI: Yeah, yeah.

WN: As a kid growing up, what kind games you folks used to play?

JI: I used to play baseball, (but not with) the hard skin ball like now days, eh. We (made the) ball out of rags. We wrapped (many layers of) rags (until it was thick and round, then tied it with a rubber band or *aho* string, which was strong). We used to make plenty (of) balls. Everybody (would) bring cloth, (and) we wrapped 'em up. If they (had a) rubber ball, (then) we used (that) rubber ball, too.

WN: Yeah.

JI: You know, the kids (also played with jacks). We (played) touch football, baseball, basketball and volleyball.

WN: Where did you folks play all this?

JI: Right where (the Kalua'aha Estate subdivision is now located). Yeah. All that area over there (had a large park with lots of space). That's (where the games were played). Yeah, I played baseball (in) the senior league, (too).

WN: When you were small boy, had that park over there? Had a park over there?

JI: Oh, yeah. Had the park over there.

WN: Had blacktop or what? You know, for basketball?

JI: No.

WN: Oh, was just . . .



JI: Just grass. (When) you bounced the ball, the ball (would) bounce (in different directions because the ground was so uneven).

(Laughter)

JI: That's why when we played there, we (agreed that we could not) bounce (or) dribble. (It was) pass, run, catch, pass, run, and then shoot the ball at the basket. You (couldn't) dribble (because of the uneven ground). (Chuckles)

WN: Had any organized league or teams?

JI: Yeah, we (had) organized (teams for baseball, volleyball and even croquet). Croquet, you know that?

WN: Yeah.

JI: We used to (play with marbles, carved our own tops from the thick guava branch and put a nail in so it could spin. It made a loud humming sound. We used to challenge each other with our tops.) Some of the kids (would) buy brand-new tops, (but it didn't seem to work as well as our homemade tops. The tip was about two inches long. When I challenged another person, I had to spin it hard and) hit that other top. (If you) hit 'em square, sometimes your nail (got stuck in their top).

(Laughter)

JI: Eh, we (had a) lot of fun, though. (Chuckles) That's the best. As soon as (everyone saw) that long nail top, they (did not want to challenge me).

(Laughter)

JI: We had one Hawaiian craftsman (who was) smart (and could) make any kinds (of things) out of guava, *kiawe* wood, (and other types of wood. He was also a very) good artist. Boy, he (really made) good stuff from guava. (He) even (made) the baseball bat from guava.

WN: Yeah?

JI: Oh, (he used the guava branch and shaped it into a bat. He was well-organized and just knew how to do it.)

WN: Who organized the leagues and the teams and everything?

JI: (These) Hawaiian guys (who) played football (and) baseball, (who) talked (mostly) in Hawaiian. (They were good organizers, so) that's why we (had a lot of different activities including) boxing (and wrestling).

WN: Boxing?

JI: Yeah. Those days, the kids (were) tough. (We had) any kind (of) rough-and-tumble games.

WN: You folks used to challenge West End?

JJ: We used to challenge (teams from Kamalō, Kaunakakai, and Ho'olehua). Then we competed (in the) regional (playoffs among the champions from each district of Moloka'i. We played at different parks on the island.) We had all kinds (of) sports (which were) organized mostly (by the) old-timers, (who had) been through all these various sports. Those guys (were) good (organizers). We (didn't) know (how). So the guys (would) teach us how to (set up all these games). Oh, we (also had) a lot of fun (at the) track meets (and) wrestling. Good fun! Those (were some of) the most active sports (that) we (had). Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

# **‘UALAPU‘E, MOLOKA‘I**

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