MINERVA KALAMA, kindergarten teacher, housewife

Minerva Kalama, Hawaiian-Caucasian, was born December 24, 1883 at Sunnyside, Maui near Paia. She was hanaied by an aunt who lived in Honolulu. When her aunt moved to the Mainland, Minerva's mother insisted that she be returned to Maui.

She attended Maunaolu School and graduated from the eighth grade. After graduation, she went to work as a teacher in the Alexander House (a settlement house nursery school) in Wailuku, Maui.

She has lived in Makawao on her husband's family lands since her marriage at the age of 24 to Sam Kalama. He became Maui County Chairman in 1913.

Community and church work kept her active and busy until she suffered a stroke in 1976.
Family

Minerva Kalama, Hawaiian-haole, was born in Sunnyside, Maui near Paia in 1882. Her haole father came from Vermont. He was a seaman. Her mother was part-Hawaiian.

Kiliwehi was the Hawaiian family name given to her at birth. She was never told what it meant. She had two sisters, one deceased; the other sister, who is almost 90, lives in Kaimuki.

An aunt in Honolulu raised Minerva for a time. She attended a private school in Honolulu. Later, she attended a co-educational public school on Fort Street, which went up to the eighth grade. Disciplinary methods in the school included making a student sit in a corner with a dunce cap on for a "couple hours." Although Minerva's aunt spoke Hawaiian, use of the language was not encouraged at all.

When Minerva was 12, her aunty moved to the Mainland. Minerva's mother said, "No, you are not going. You come back (to Maui)."

School

Minerva returned to Maui and was enrolled at Maunaolu School as a boarding student. In about 1900, the school had about a 100 students, four teachers, and one principal. The teachers were missionaries from the American Board. They received $100 a month for teaching and were provided with separate rooms in the girls' dormitories.

There were no day students according to Minerva and students were permitted to go home for Christmas and summer vacations only. As many as 20 girls lived in a dormitory. Beds were lined up in rows. Clothes were hung in a wardrobe with hooks covered by muslin. Shoes were kept in an attic trunk and the door locked. "You don't see your shoes till Sunday morning to go to church." Students went barefoot all week.
On Sundays, they went to church wearing white dresses with sleeves, black stockings and shoes. Sometimes "[your] feet has grown bigger and bigger and it pinches, yeah? And some of the shoes squeaks. So they soak their shoes in water so it won't squeak--have everybody staring at you."

"Some of them hurts, you know. Not wearing shoes whole week. As long as you pass the church corner; those who have those shoes with the buttons, you know. Quick, rip, go in fast and pick it up because you can't hold up the line. We'll get punished. Two teachers in the front and in the back. And we used to wonder, well, she have to buy ribbons, now."

For riding horses, girls wore dresses and later, riding skirts which were sort of like big-legged pajamas made of khaki. Minerva wore riding skirts at about the age of 16.

Laundry was done in wooden tubs. Water was heated on the stove and carried to the tubs and dumped in. Ivory soap cakes could be purchased from the store right in the school which also carried toothbrushes, toothpaste, and crochet thread on paste board cores. Candy and cookies were forbidden.

Regarding commencement of menses, "you have to figure it out on your own and get it [information] from the other girls. We had to use cloth in those days."

The girls helped the matron with the cooking and with the making of soap from ashes and lard which were used for washing dishes. Some girls even paid for school by helping with the cooking or their teachers' laundry.

Rising time was 7 a.m. "First thing early in the morning you have to get up. The younger ones sweep the yard. Niau they had. Those that brought niau from home. Grass is so cold, no slipper. Ooh. Sometimes we took the stalks from the Pride of India. And gather up a bunch and tie it up and that's the broom." The cleaning took about half an hour.

If a student did not keep her bed neat, she could be punished. Such punishment was often in the form of having to go to bed before the other girls.

"I had to clean the chimneys. Was hard clean all the lamps." Cleaning was done after breakfast, which was served in a dining room with long tables. The students said grace before eating and of the meal, Minerva said, "I remember they always had milk because I don't like milk. Milk and some rolls. That's all."

The next time they ate was at noon when a lunch of poi and salmon was served. Dinner was often a stew made from beef that was raised in the area, hard palai, mixed poi, and vegetables. The older girls helped with the slaughtering of the cattle, and the hides of the cows were later sold. A poi wagon brought up poi every week, and the vegetables were grown at the school. Prior to the 6 o'clock dinner, students had some free time. "After school, some study. Some play baseball in the yard." There was also some
time after dinner, as well. "There's a big tub to go and wash your feet. Bring your slippers, wash your feet then wipe it. Put on the Chinese slippers. Covered in the front, the front part is covered. They were good slippers. After you play you can sit around and crochet and when the bell rings, well, that's study hour. We go to study for maybe one hour, two hours, depends how the teacher feels. And then go bed."

Studying took place in the classroom at old-fashioned desks with hooked-on seats. A big kerosene light in the center of the room provided the light, and each class had student monitors who kept the classrooms clean.

The girls were also allowed to socialize with boys on Saturday during the day. A girl and a boy could sit in the sitting room without a chaperone. However, no parties were allowed. Parents could also visit every Saturday, and they would often come at holiday time on horseback.

Once a year the school held a sale. "We make cakes and things in the school kitchen." Minerva learned to make guava, fig, and grape jelly from the fruit that grew at Maunaolu. The yardman picked the fruit and "milked the cows to make our own butter. The girls made the butter. We had a stomping kind of churn."

Royalty

Minerva's family learned of Queen Liliuokalani's overthrow through the newspaper. The family did not talk much about the revolution. Once, Minerva was presented to the Queen at a party in Hilo. When the host of the house introduced them, she curtseyed to her and said, "Aloha."

Tapawrapped gifts for the Queen were given before she left to Her Majesty's lady-in-waiting, along with yellow and red lehua leis. Minerva remembers that when the Queen left Hilo, someone chanted.

When she was about 16, Minerva recalls that the Baldwins had a luau on Maui for the Queen. Pau riders, dressed in the different colors of the sections of the island, greeted her after she arrived by train. The luau was held on western-style tables and benches.

Adult life

When Minerva Kalama graduated from Maunaolu's eighth grade, she went to work at Alexander House, a sort of settlement house kindergarten in Wailuku, Maui. She taught there for two or three years, and worked with two older teachers from the Mainland, Mrs. Summerville and Nancy Cummings. She taught the five-year-old students dancing, ("just hop around") and games. The children were not allowed to speak Hawaiian.

Minerva met her husband-to-be at a wedding. She went for horseback rides with him and to dance in Paia. People played Hawaiian music, using
accordians like concertinas, guitars, violins, and ukuleles. She married quietly at the age of 24.

At parties sometimes, they had wine or panini brandy. They danced the waltz to Hawaiian music.

Home/Community

Minerva lived in Kula since about 1920. There were only a few houses, a post office, and a school then. She moved into a house that a Japanese carpenter helped build on her husband's family ranch lands.

Because of a lack of water, not very much cattle could be kept on the land, and they used cisterns and gutters of the house to catch rain water. The Kalamas did not have electricity until fairly recently because their house was so far up on a hillside. They did have an indoor kitchen and a kerosene heater. They made their own charcoal in a pit, fired it up, covered this with dirt, and then left the charcoal like this for several days.

Medicinal herbs

Minerva does not recall names and used of specific herbs although she said that some were used for medicinal purposes. One that she did mention was the popolo which was used for sore throats. Minerva does not remember praying to Hawaiian gods in times of illness.
NOTES FROM AN INTERVIEW

with

Minerva Kalama

March 21, 1977

Kula, Maui

BY: June Gutmanis

Maunaolu School

During her school days, Minerva attended Pookela Church, a Congregational church of which she is still a member. In the early days, there were two ministers; one week a Hawaiian minister would conduct Sunday services, and the next week a haole minister from Makawao Union Church would do so. Students walked to the 2 o'clock service in wet shoes that pinched, and as they marched through the guava trees, they often recited Bible verses in English.

The school had an activity known as CE or Christian Endeavor. "There was a song, then a prayer by the minister, song again, then he starts his service." In those days there were no hoikis or church conferences. The women had a Ladies' Aid organization which collected clothes to give to the poor. They met every week to sew and once a year they held a bazaar to raise money for the church's upkeep and the janitor's salary.

Hooponopono

Although Minerva herself was never involved with hooponopono, she is aware that others--like a Reverend Kukahiku--were. The Reverend's way was "to take the Bible, make you open it, and choose a verse. From this verse, he find out what's wrong. The answer is there. He asks you all the questions. Up to you to own up. Then they pule. Mihi and all that. Mihi is to ask for forgiveness in front of him. Then he says a prayer. One person or mother and father might be involved."

As far as Minerva knows, hooponopono was not used at Maunaolu School.

Travel

Minerva came to Maui from Honolulu on the Claudine at the age of 12. "There wasn't much inter-island travel," she said. The ship was captained by a Mr. Parker. In the boat's cabins, "there were two bunks and a sofa-like on the side. Three people could share a room. It (the journey) took all night."
You could leave (Honolulu) at 8 p.m. and get here (Maui) at 7 a.m. Sometimes
they had boat parties, give leis, like that."

To get from the house to the dock, Minerva took a buggy which cost $7
then (1895).

Carnation leis with ferns were 25 cents a piece. Other flowers used in
making leis were tube roses and crown flowers. After they were given to
the travellers, the leis were put away for the night and then worn ashore the
next morning. Sometimes the wearer would give them to his greeters.

Minerva recalls that the train in Maui which went from Paia to Wailuku
had one passenger car. The back sections of the train were for freight--poi,
fruits, vegetables, and livestock. It cost more than a dollar for round-trip
train fare, and about two hours for the complete trip.

"When you got to Wailuku, you walk around, up Market Street to see a
dentist; no dentist up here (Kula) or to see the doctor."

**Clothing**

"You made clothes yourself. There were no dressmakers those days.
Patterns were same like today. Could buy different kinds of material."

"In the olden days, to make quilts, people group together, come to your
house, quilt your kapa. Then when pau go the next house, keep a-going like
that. Four or five ladies might take one to two weeks. They don't work
on it everyday. Set it up in one room." Although Minerva never made quilts
herself, she recalls that people "use to have those lacy curtains, and they'd
copy that [for patterns]. And then they'd name it themselves."

**Makawao**

There were two stores and the only groceries they sold were canned goods,
flour, and rice. "Matsue's was the one owned by three Pakes: Tam Yao, Tam
Sing, and Tam Chun." According to Minerva, there were a lot of Chinese living
in Makawao when she was a girl, and on Chinese New Year's, they had kaukau and
firecrackers going. The men would eat fruit Chinese style.

**Christmas Holiday**

Around the early 1900's, each family celebrated Christmas in their own
way. Someone would give Minerva's family a traditional Christmas tree and they
would decorate it with flowers, candles, and store-bought glass trinkets.

"We didn't burn the candles because it might burn the tree. We had just
the family for dinner. Hawaiian boys from all over would go around and
serenade on horseback. They had a guitar, ukulele, accordian, violin. We open the door, let them sing, and sometimes go out and pay them a few dollars. Sometimes we invite them to eat. They tie their horses up and walk up to the front and sing." The serenading would continue until morning. "They would do this sometimes on New Year's, and the Fourth of July. Just Hawaiian songs usually. They didn't know carols then."

Historical Events

Minerva Kalama does not remember Prince Kuhio's term as a representative in the U.S. Congress, and does not think Maui had Homestead Lands until later. She recalls that one area in Rice's old home was leased for pipi.

During World War I, Minerva was a member of a women's group which made much-needed clothes. About 20 ladies, including Mrs. H.B. Baldwin, worked at knitting wool sweaters and sewing pre-cut flannel pajamas. Occasionally the women were allowed to finish their sewing at home, but most of the time they spent only the afternoons working at a set place.

During World War II, the churches were closed. The newspaper from Honolulu came only once a week by boat, and the Maui paper was mostly comprised of island news.

After the second World War, prices went up. Minerva also recalls boarding a ship to the outer islands from McGregor's landing. "You had to go out [to the ship offshore] on small boat. It was scary. It would come up to the wharf. You'd jump in, then the men would help. They kind of lift you up onto the bigger boat. It was the same at Lahaina."

Minerva was a poor sailor and got seasick. Once when she went to Kauai with family members, she was unable to join in the fun because she felt so ill. On that Kauai trip they left Maui at 7 a.m., went to Oahu, stayed over, and then left for Kauai the next day. They arrived at Nawiliwili Harbor.

Afterward, they went to Kapaa by car and visited the sheriff. One Sunday, there was a big luau for Minerva and her family after the church services.

Hawaiian customs

Mrs. Santanella, a part-Hawaiian woman, taught lauhala weaving at Maunaolu School. Weaving did not appeal to Minerva, and her work never came out straight. When she used to say, "My mother didn't send me here for this," the teacher told her to leave the class.

The school forbade hula dancing and if a girl did it anyway, she had to go to bed right after dinner for a month. Although the school had a piano, guitars and ukuleles were not permitted. Sometimes the girls would sing Hawaiian songs by themselves without musical accompaniment.
When she became an adult, Minerva did not join the Kāhūmanu Society because she lacked transportation to the meetings which were held in Wailuku. However, she did attend some of the Society's activities, and vaguely recalls that in the 1920's there were some memorial services that included a sermon and some songs. The Society also held services on Kuhio Day, and Reverend Abraham Akaka has conducted some of them.

She does not remember there being either a Kamehameha Day parade or canoe races when she was younger although there are canoe races now.

Recreation/Community activities

Minerva did not go to the Wailuku horse races. At one time, her grandfather was involved in the horse races that were held in Kahului.

Minerva attended the Maui Fair which was first held in 1916. At that first fair, she was in charge of the crochet, quilt, and embroidery stalls. The goods were draped for showing and quality work was awarded such prizes as plants and fruit trees. The fair also included displays of pigeons, ducks, cows, baked goods, and preserves. Judges for the shows were from the Mainland.

As far as she knows, there were neither baseball teams nor rodeo in the areas in the early days. They did have circuses sometimes.

In order to go visiting, Minerva did quite a bit of riding. The family had a surrey and a two-seater buggy, which she drove.

Supplies

Minerva ordered household goods through the Sears and Roebuck mail order system. It took about a month for the items to arrive. She bought "things for the house like towels, sheets. It was much cheaper. Never ordered dishes; I was afraid they might be all smashed up."

Because it was cheaper than hiring an architect, she ordered her house plans from a magazine. This was in 1923 when there was no electricity (although there was a generator that provided lighting) and the nearest telephone was at the neighborhood stores.

Haleakalā

Minerva first went to Haleakalā crater about 1943. She recalls starting out in the afternoon on horseback with coffee and sandwiches, gathering firewood, and then reaching a cave where they spent the night. It took several hours to reach the cave from the point where they started. From there, she and her companions walked up to the top of the crater in the cold air.

"Wore sweaters and heavy clothes because cold. Only took a blanket; no
For the ride to the crater she wore a riding skirt that she made of serge instead of khaki because she disliked having to iron khaki. Of this same skirt she said, "It had to be enlarged because Mayor (Neal) Blaisdell's mother wanted to use it." (The Blaisdell boys were family friends, and stayed during the summers with the Kalamas.)

Food

Minerva learned how to dry fish by first salting it, rinsing it, and then putting in a dryer. The length of time this took depended on the weather.

Among the food she eats today is boiled ulu. She also likes banana sliced and fried in a little butter. For fruit, she either picks guavas or used the mangoes from her own tree.