BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: ELIZABETH ELLIS, teacher

Elizabeth Ellis was born March 20, 1904, in Hamakua, Hawaii. She was the child of a pure Hawaiian mother and a Caucasian-Hawaiian father and was hanaied by her maternal grandparents. Her grandparents raised her Hawaiian-style, apprising her of many customs and cultural traditions. At the time of her grandmother's death when Elizabeth was 12, she returned to live with her parents in Pauhou and later, in Olaa. Her father was an engineer with the plantation and her parents had assumed haole ways which caused cultural conflicts within Elizabeth.

She graduated from Olaa High School and went to Normal School to become a teacher in 1921. She returned to the Big Island and taught in Honokaa, then on Kauai where she met her husband. They married the following year, in 1927 and moved to Hilo. She continued teaching and had a son and a daughter.

The family moved to Honolulu in 1940 so their daughter could attend Kamehameha School and because Mr. Ellis had been offered a job at Pearl Harbor. The Ellis' are both retired and active in church, Hawaiian, and other community projects.
Tape No. 2-7-1-77
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Elizabeth Ellis (EE)
April 17, 1977
Alewa Heights, Oahu, Hawaii
BY: June Gutmanis (JG)

JG: First thing I'd like to know is how much Hawaiian are you?
EE: I'm half-Hawaiian.

JG: Your mother was Hawaiian?
EE: My mother was Hawaiian. No, I would be more Hawaiian 'cause my father was half-white. And my mother was pure Hawaiian.

JG: So that's three-quarters?
EE: Yeah, three-quarters.

JG: What is your full name? Your Christian name, your Hawaiian name, your family name and your married name?

EE: Now my name is Elizabeth Nalani McMillan Ellis. I'd like to tell you how the name McMillan came into my family. My father was born the son of Henry Mersberg. But he was adopted by an aunt, Mrs. Spencer. And later on...

JG: Thomas Spencer?
EE: I don't know what Spencer. But anyway, this Spencer died and Daddy took the name of Spencer when he went to school. Then she married and this Mrs. Spencer lost her husband and she married McMillan. And that's the name I took. You see, that's how I became McMillan. So Daddy had really his own father and two hanai fathers. Grandpa had no children by this woman he married and so when he wanted to educate one of my father's children, I was it. So I took the name...

JG: The "Nalani."
EE: Nalani was the name given to me by my grandmother.

JG: Why was it given to you, do you know?
EE: I really don't know. To me, now that I am beginning to delve into the language, Nalani is really the ending of a name. It must have been another part to the name. But Nalani was the only part that I remember. And it
is only recently that I have used the name Nalani because I thought I had no Hawaiian name. But in my consciousness I kept saying, "Gee, I think that's my name." And sure enough, when I went to get the birth certificate, it's there, Nalani. The name Nalani.

JG: So you're now using it?

EE: I'm using it more now than I ever did before.

JG: Now I understand that you were hanaied by your grandmother.

EE: My maternal grandmother.

JG: Can you tell me why or how, or some of the aspects of being hanaied?

EE: In those early days, the mothers of the daughters who had children felt lonely because the children had grown up and left the home. That was one reason why they wanted to bring the children back to the home. The moopunas. And another was that they wanted to help their daughters so they would not be too held down with the children. That was another reason. And of course they love to have children. Old folks always love to have the young ones around. They were not a bother. To them, we were not called by our names. It was always "baby."

JG: Where were you born?

EE: I was born in Paauhau, Hamakua, Hawaii.

JG: And was that where you were raised?

EE: Well, part of the time I went to Paauhau because my father and mother were on the plantation. The other part of my life, most of the time, I lived at Kaapahu.

JG: What's the name again?

EE: Kaapahu. That is in Hamakua, too. But we call it the bush, because it was in the upper part of, you know, the country.

(Laughter)

EE: So, we always went home to the bush. That means Kaapahu. Hardly any families live there. Just a few families here and there. Scattered, you know.

JG: Were both of your grandparents alive at that time?

EE: Oh, yes.

JG: What did your grandfather do?

EE: He was retired. He wasn't doing anything.
JG: Had he worked on the plantation?
EE: No. Never did.
JG: Was he a seaman, or...
EE: No. You see, they lived on the land, and that was what he did.
JG: He was a farmer.
EE: That's right. Everything that we ate came from the land. He grew our taro, potatoes, bananas, passion fruit, yams, peaches, pineapple, everything came from the land. But my mother sent things for us that came from the store, from the plantation. Like sugar, cracker. Once in a while...
JG: Saloon Pilots?
EE: The Saloon Pilots, uh huh. They come pretty often. Some butter, the salt, those things came from the plantation. Once a month my mother would send us a supply that would last us all month. But we ate from the land.
JG: Then certain staples were brought to you from the plantation store?
EE: Uh huh.
JG: What's your earliest memory of the house that you lived in, what it was like?
EE: It was a house, just like my house now. It had three bedrooms, living room and parlor, and a nice little lanai. Kitchen, dining room.
JG: Did your grandmother cook in the house or outside?
EE: She cooked in the house. But my mother used to tell me that before we lived in this house when I was younger. I don't remember that. We had a house that didn't have a kitchen. And it was a two-story house. The upper story was used for sleeping and sometimes eating. And to go up into that upper story, we had to come from an outside stairs. The lower part was used for cooking and different things, you know. Storing of wood, and her lauhala, because Grandma was always weaving. Things of that sort. And they had a little cook place, where the food was broiled.
JG: Charcoal?
EE: Yes, with wood, you know. They would build up their charcoal. I have a faint memory of Grandma broiling breadfruit on this charcoal when it was matured. Oh, delicious.
JG: You cut it in half and put in on...
EE: No, the whole thing was placed on the coals and she would watch it and she would turn it over; turn it this way, turn it that way until the whole outside was black.

JG: What did she use to turn it with? Her hands, or a stick?

EE: With a little stick, or a little paddle. You know, I remember her hitting it that way, and then turning it over. Got too hot, well, she had something to keep her hands from burning. She also cooked taro leaves. You know, people these days don't cook it that way. She would make a bed of ti leaves and put the taro leaves and made it flat after it was heating. And then wrapped it all up and stuffed wood, pins to hold it, you know, like we would with the turkey, and that went on the coals. And was turned over and...

JG: Did they go directly on the coals, or was there a rack over the coals?

EE: Directly on the coals. It was hot. And over and over, because the stick, you see. Sticking up. So that by the time the outside parts was all burnt, the in part was cooked. And then they opened it and it came out in a sheet like you do a pie. And then it was cut in little strips. Delicious! I have never tasted that since, you know---that, we cook indoors, 'cause it's done outdoors.

JG: What about cooking meat out like that?

EE: When it was meat, she used a pot. Iron pot, those iron pots. She used for cooking.

JG: She didn't lawalu?

EE: Not the meat. The fish, yes.

JG: Now did she wrap that in ti leaves, or what?

EE: In ti leaves.

JG: Lots of layers?

EE: Lots of layers and back and forth until it was done. No frying. I didn't see her use a frying pan. Always broiled or boiled or steamed. Like for example, we ate the tops of the popolo. And that was picked, washed clean and put 'em in a pot. No water. But she heated these cooking stones, especially for cooking. And she threw those in, covered that, left it there for a few minutes, and when the leaves wilted, it's done.

JG: What kind of stones were these? Were they like luau rocks, only smaller?

EE: Only smaller, uh huh, smooth rocks. They weren't...

JG: They weren't the porous ones?
EE: They weren't the porous ones; they were smooth rocks. Let's see, oh, about that size.

JG: The grey ones.

EE: Uh huh.

JG: You say that size would be about, oh, an inch and a half, two inches?

EE: Yeah, two inches by maybe four inches.

JG: Where did you get them?

EE: From the rivers.

JG: What about the cooking in the house? Did you bake, or...

EE: Later on, yes. I remember when we had that big house with the kitchen in it, there was no baking. Grandma didn't know how to bake.

JG: You didn't use any breads at all?

EE: Breads we got from our Portuguese neighbor.

JG: Did they do this commercially?

EE: No.

JG: They just shared.

EE: They shared, because we didn't have any bread and we had something they liked, so we just gave them what they wanted and they gave us bread. And that's what we wanted most of all.

(Laughter)

JG: Did they have one of those stone ovens, or did they bake in the house?

EE: I don't know. I never saw a stone oven in that area where I grew up as a child. It was after my grandmother died and I moved back home with my mother that she used to go to the Portuguese camp to bake our bread in those great big stone ovens.

JG: Oh, she used their ovens?

EE: She used their ovens, because, you know, the ovens of the wood stoves were too small. And she usually baked quite a bit for us for the week. She baked once a week.

JG: You remember how they built up the heat of the oven and built the fire of the Portuguese ovens?

EE: Yes. They took firewood and put it in there. Because it just had a little
hole, enough for the bread to go in. And they had a kind of screen-like thing--flat--and that's how they place the dough on and stick it in.

JG: Kind of a big spatula?

EE: That's right, and the dough was placed on banana leaves and all went into the oven, see.

JG: You mean the spatula was placed on the banana leaves?

EE: The banana leaves were placed on the spatula-like thing and the dough. Then they put it in. But before they did that, like you say, the oven was heated by burning wood in there. And after the oven was heated, then they raked away all of the coals. But it already was heated. Then they put the bread in it and they had a cover (for the door or opening).

JG: How many loaves of bread could you put in there at a time?

EE: Quite a number. I would say six or eight. And they were not small loaves. They were these great big round loaves. Portuguese loaves.

JG: And that one heat would keep it hot enough for the entire...

EE: For the entire baking. Sometimes, when mother went to the camp to bake, she was not the only one who baked on the same day. Her friend, too. Sometimes three. So that the heat continued for the three people.

JG: Was the crust real crunchy or was it real soft?

EE: Oh, it was crunchy; it was beautiful. It was just delicious. And we kids sat around and waited for the bread to come out, you know, and they had us sitting at a long table and everybody with a bowl of milk, sugar and butter. And when the hot bread came out, oh boy, that was our delight.

JG: That was your treat. Was there a certain day of the week that your mother baked?

EE: Yeah. It was during the weekend, because there's no school, you see, so we all went along every Saturday.

JG: Was this kind of a formal thing, or was this sort of an informal thing where she traded with the neighbors for the bread?

EE: Informal.

JG: You didn't deliver them so much milk or something?

EE: No, no.

JG: What about dairy animals? Did your grandfather and grandmother keep any kind...
EE: No, we had no cows. In my childhood, I had very little milk. And it's a wonder that I still have my teeth.

(Laughter)

JG: Well, you probably had a lot of poi and other high calcium...

EE: Yes, we had poi and I even helped Grand-daddy--Tutu, as we called him--pound poi. I used to love it. He had this long board and he placed a small one right beside it for me. Because I love that, you know, the rhythm, when all of the taro had been all mashed and a little water put in. And then, it was a kind of a dough. I loved to do this kind of a thing.

JG: How did he cook his taro?

EE: In great big cans. Cans and big pans that we had, you know, those, what do you call those pans? Big tubs, I think we call them today. Sometimes in great big kerosine cans that had been cleaned out. And the taro was so big, not like the taro that we buy in the stores today. Why, sometimes just four taro would fill up the pan. He had to cut it down, 'cause it's big. The taro's just big.

JG: Do you remember any of the names of the taro that he grew?

EE: One particular one only. And this was grown just for eating, not for pounding. It was yellow in color, yellow. It was called mana. And Grand-ma raised it just for eating.

JG: You just steamed that and what, fry it?

EE: No, we boiled it the same way we do any other taro. And eat it hard.

JG: Just sliced.

EE: That's right.

JG: How long did that pounding last? How often did you pound taro?

EE: Once a week.

JG: Was that a certain day, or just kind of...

EE: Any time when Grandpa thought this was the day to pound when we needed more poi.

JG: What about fishing?

EE: Yeah, that was interesting to me, too. He (Tutu) was always working about his farm, you know, working in the field weeding his taro and weeding the pineapple or some of the things of that sort. He would mend his nets.
And certain mornings he would get up and he would gather all these things. And of course, we weren't supposed to ask him, "Where are you going?" If he's ready to go and we came by and say, "Where are you going to go," he just threw it down and that's it. And when we asked, "What is the matter?" And he says, "Never ask me when I'm going fishing, 'cause that's bad luck already. I can't catch fish. So what's the use of going. I might as well stay home." So whenever we saw him getting ready, we kept quiet. We wouldn't ask him where he was going. Now another thing that impressed me—well, of course at that time I used to think it was superstition. He would look out on the horizon, because we lived, as I told you, out in the bush, way far away from the sea and he had to walk quite a distance to the ocean. And he'd say, "Ah, that's where I'm going next time I'm going because if I want eels I can see them and can get eels." Another fish, he'd say the same. And I'd say, "How do you know that's where you can catch the eel fish?" He'd say, "Can't you see these marks on the horizon?" And to me, it was just nothing, you know. But everytime he went, he always had it. In that particular place there, eels. He wanted another kind of fish, where he had pointed out, that's where he got it.

JG: Did he ever take you fishing?

EE: No, no. I was too young.

JG: Was it because you were too young, not because you were a girl?

EE: No, because I was young.

JG: What about dried fish, did you help do that, or...

EE: No. They did all of that.

JG: Do you remember how they went about drying it?

EE: Yes, they salted it, and then dried it. They made their...

JG: In a crock?

EE: In a crock. And then washed it off the next day and put it out.

JG: They left it soak over night in the brine?

EE: In the brine. And then they would always put it in a screen. Because, you see, the flies would gather around it. It was nicely done. My grandmother was very particular about the preparation of food. Now, our neighbors were tutus, too. They were not as particular. Take for example, the poi. Whenever Grandma mixed her poi, it was always strained. The other people didn't strain theirs.

JG: How did she strain it?

EE: In a poi strainer. We had a poi strainer. The type that we use today.
They had it then.

JG: Could you describe that?

EE: Well, first you get your poi all mixed, where it's soft enough consistency that you can eat. Then when it's all done, then she laid the strainer in another bowl. And you poured all of this into that strainer. And you held and you just twist it.

JG: It was a light-weight muslin?

EE: Almost like cheesecloth. You know, porous enough so that the holes are big enough. And then when it's all out, you will find that there are little things in there. And those were the things that Grandma didn't want in her poi. And so, of course, some of the Hawaiians used to say, "Oh, she is trying to impress people." But no, that was the way she always...she had a saying, "Hana ino ka lima, ai ino kou waha," which means, "If you prepare things in a way that is not clean, you gonna eat dirty." You see, that's the meaning of that. "Hana ino ka lima, ai ino kou waha." But if you do it clean, you gonna have clean things. That was Grandma's saying.

Another thing, when Grandma taught me how to mix poi when I was a young girl, she always said, "Don't put too much water when you're mixing your poi. Just a few drops of water." It took longer, but when the poi was all mixed, it could draw. Now poi that falls in a lump, like when you're making pancakes, that's not good. That means too much water has been added into that. You must add just a few drops. Do it that way. Do it that way and it tastes better. I remember when Betty (EE's daughter) was a year old and we gave a luau for her. And the poi came from my uncle. By that time, we were buying our poi. But they were still pounding theirs. And he said, "I'll bring the poi." And he mixed it. Hawaiians that came to the party said, "Oh, this poi is so delicious. Did you mix it?" I said, "No." "Who did?" I said, "Uncle." "We thought so. Only a Hawaiian can mix like this." You know, those kind of things. So I thought of my grandmother telling me how to mix poi. She always says a housewife who is careful, who wants to eat good poi, will take time in mixing her poi. But a lazy housewife will put a lot of water and ruin her poi. And I still mix poi that way.

JG: A few drops at a time?

EE: Uh huh. Few drops at a time.

JG: Even with the commercially made poi, it makes a difference?

EE: Yes.

JG: What would you say was a typical breakfast? What kind of foods did you have in the morning?

EE: We'd have our poi, and tea, kookoolau tea.
JG: Oh, you had kookoolau?

EE: That was our tea. Oh, I used to hate it. I just hated it. I don't know why. Because, you know, as a little child as I was growing up, we wanted to be different. At that time we were made to feel a little ashamed that we were Hawaiians. And we wanted to be haoles. We wanted to be a haole.

JG: Was this because of the way you were treated in school?

EE: No, not so much in school as the---I think the plantations had a lot to do with that. They were segregating people. According to your ethnic background; Japanese, Filipino, Hawaiian and so forth. But because my father was a skilled laborer--he was assistant engineer on the plantation--we lived in the haole section. And we were accorded that kind of respect, because of his position. But to us, we still felt that they treated us as though we were Hawaiians, not quite their equal. You see, not quite the equal of the white man.

JG: Do you remember how that showed up? Was it maybe, who they invited to parties...

EE: That's right, in their social lives, their social things.

JG: It had more to do with the day to day life than on his working there?

EE: Right. After Grandma died and I went home to live with my mother on the plantation, I was 12. I became more and more aware of that kind of thing.

JG: When you lived with your grandmother, it was a little less obvious?

EE: That's right, exactly. I became more aware of it and I think that was the reason why I began to say everything. I wanted to live the way the haoles do. That's the way the haoles do it. We want this kind of dishes, because that's the way the haoles eat, on those dishes. Even when Grandma was raising me, many a time I would say to her, "Let's eat at the table." "No, no, no, we eat on the floor." I'd say, "But you know, I'm haole." I would say to her, "I'm haole." (Laughs) And she would shake her head.

JG: Where did you go to school? When you were living with your grandmother?

EE: We went to a little school called Kaapahu School. And only the children from around there came to that school. I walked to school, or sometimes I rode horseback.

JG: Was that mostly Hawaiian children, or...

EE: No. Hawaiians, Portuguese, Japanese. We were not plantation workers. They were folks that lived on the homestead.

JG: Even the Orientals?

EE: Even the Orientals. The Orientals at Kaapahu, the Oriental children, their
parents worked for someone else. This is what they did. They took the land of the people and worked on the land on contract. You see, when the cane is grown and is harvested, then they would share in the profits. That's the way they did it.

JG: Kind of sharecropping?

EE: That's right. And their children were the ones that went to school.

JG: How many grades were there in that school?

EE: Up to the fourth or fifth grade, I believe.

JG: What were the teachers?

EE: My teacher was Portuguese.

JG: Local Portuguese?

EE: Yeah. Educated here at the Normal School in Honolulu. The principal was Portuguese. There were only two teachers there.

JG: Did they make a distinction in the children because of their ethnic background?

EE: No, they never did, never did.

JG: So your community was pretty much all Hawaiian, Portuguese, Oriental, but not much in the way of haoles?

EE: No. There were no haoles. It was when I left Kaapahu School to live with my mother again, after Grandmother died. Then we came in contact with all...

JG: You went to visit your mother and father...

EE: All during the summer. At vacations.

JG: So you were picking up on these differences when you were with them in the summer time?

EE: That's right.

JG: I'm leading up to a story you told us before, that's why I'm asking these questions. To set where in your mind these things came from. You told us out in Waianae one day about eating on the floor and the care of the mat. I wonder if you'd repeat...

EE: Okay. Now as I said, Grandma always wanted to eat on the floor. She was more comfortable on the floor, I guess, being raised that way. So she had a mat that was specially woven for a table mat. And it was two
and a half to three feet wide, to about six feet long. And this was always rolled up, then put on the floor and all our food went on it. And then when we were all through eating and everything else was put away, we'd wipe it and dry it out a little bit and brought it in and rolled it all up again and put it away until it was time to eat again. Then out came the mat. It was our table cloth.

JG: When you ate on the floor, first of all, did you wear shoes in the house or did you leave your shoes outdoors or...

EE: We went barefoot. All the time. Hardly wore shoes.

JG: On this floor mat, would you just describe a typical place setting, or, I mean, how it would be set, what dishes...

EE: In those days, Grandma had learned from her daughter--my mother--and because Mother had gone to school, and had taught her that it was not sanitary for everybody to eat from one big bowl of poi. So we got into the habit of having our poi dished out in the individual bowls. We all had our individual bowls, and we had our plates. We had no forks or knives, but we had spoons, so we ate with a spoon and a dish.

Say we had stew. Okay, that was put in the middle. And then we served ourselves from it into our little individual dishes. We never ate like some other folks did around us. Just this big bowl of poi and the stew, maybe in two big containers. 'Cause we were taught that was not sanitary.

JG: When they had the big bowl of stew, did everybody eat out of the bowl? You know, the other families?

EE: Well, they would just, you know, everybody take your share, and the next one come. They all ate from this one plate. It was neat.

JG: But each one had their own spoon and they just dipped in...

EE: That's right.
JG: Instead of dishing out of their own dish?

EE: Yeah. And same thing with the poi. And we still have some relatives who ate that way even when my children were born. And so once a month, I would say to the children, "We're gonna eat tutu style." And they would say, "What is the tutu style?" I say, "Just wait and see." I didn't have a mat, so I put a table cloth on the floor, and had one big bowl of poi. But I gave them individual plates for their stew or fish or whatever they were gonna have. I say, "Okay, you put your fish in your own bowl, dish. So we're all gonna eat from the same bowl of poi." I say, "Have to do so, because someday we're gonna go to their house. And when they ask us to eat, and if you put up your nose and you say, 'No, where's my little bowl of poi,' you're going to offend them. So you're gonna learn to eat that way. Okay?" They would say, "Okay." So we'd all start. They loved it. I forgot when the next month rolled around, "When are we gonna eat the tutu style?"

(Laughter)

JG: Did you eat your poi with your fingers or with a spoon?

EE: With a spoon.

JG: At your house, what kind of poi bowls did you have?

EE: The regular---they were white...

JG: China?

EE: Yeah. Porcelain, I guess you would say.

JG: You were also telling us that time in Waianae about how you sat down and how you used your fingers and...
EE: That's very important. I used to sit this way all the time, kind of...

JG: Sort of like the Orientals with your feet...

EE: That's right.

JG: ...tucked under you.

EE: And my sisters whenever they visited, when she taught us, all of us, she would always sit this way. Oh, second sister and the next one.

JG: Cross-legged.

EE: Yeah, the way we did when we were sitting there. (Referring to herself and the interviewer who were sitting on the floor cross-legged.) And I always felt uncomfortable sitting that way, so I was more comfortable sitting the other way and she would just say, "Why don't you sit the way your sister's sitting? And watch the way she's eating. She's eating so gracefully. You're just eating in a hurry and picking here and picking there." And I said, "Well, I'm not her. I'm just doing it my way." So Grandma would say, "You know, if you'd lived in the olden days where the aliis would be going around, they wouldn't even give you a second glance. But they would at your sister, because look at the way she's sitting. Graceful like a woman should." So I say to her, "Oh, I don't care what those ugly looking kings are." Or ali or whatever you call them. 'Cause I didn't know.

I had seen their pictures, because Grandma, in our living room had a picture of all the kings and queens and all their relatives. I don't know where she got these, but she had them. And she would point them out to me. "This is so and so." But there were two pictures that impressed me a lot and one was Princess Kaiulani. And the other was Princess Ruth. She thought Princess Ruth was the most beautiful and I thought otherwise.
EE: Another thing that she was always getting after me about was eating too fast. And that was why I was not building up. I was so thin. And my sisters were slow eaters and they were more relaxed. And so naturally they had a better build. And she would say, "Oh my, you'd never be chosen by any of the men of high birth, because look at the way you eat. You're so thin. Look at your sisters and how nice they look and everything else, you know." And I say, "I don't care. 'Cause I'm a haole."

JG: You had an answer for things.

EE: Oh, it was terrible. I was always that way. Terrible. Saying those things. But you see, I don't know what gave me this idea that I wanted to be a haole. I think it was because when I went to live with mama on the plantation, the most beautiful houses and yards were occupied by the white man. And all these people who were living in the camp, they were just houses in a row. You know, they were just houses. They were not homes. And the others were. And my mother had a beautiful home. She had a man who came and did their yard and everything else, because that was due my father because of his position. So I guess that was why. When I think of it now.

JG: I want to ask more about the food thing and then I want to ask more about how your grandmother kept developing these ideas in you. Were there any other kinds of food etiquette that you were taught with your grandmother, especially as it would relate to eating on a mat?

EE: Yes, now this is one particular thing that sometimes I would say, "Umm, something in this food." And she say, "Don't say that." She'd say, "In the early days when you were eating and you found something in your plate, that would disgust the rest of the people who were eating. You are not supposed to say anything. You are supposed to just push it on the side and continue eating as though nothing was found in your plate." And of course, I would say, "My, I think I'd stop eating." You know. She'd say, "And then you wouldn't have lasted very long had there been an alii there that may have caused your death." "How?" "Because you're not supposed to say anything like that. You're supposed to be very quiet. Only the alii can talk. We, the people of low birth, are supposed to keep quiet. Not say very much."

JG: Were there any particular seating arrangements that were considered proper?

EE: Yeah, Grandma always sat at one end of the mat and Grandpa sat at the other, and then we sat in between. And even with my father and mother we always sat that way. Eating together. That's one of the things I miss these days. With big families, where you have a father and mother at the head of the table and then the children in-between.

JG: We already asked you about breakfast. What about lunch and dinner? What were typical meals that...
EE: Usually poi and whatever went with that.

JG: With poi. You had a light lunch, or a heavy lunch, or...

EE: Usually light.

JG: You were talking about stew. How did you make your stew at that time?

EE: It was usually cooked the Hawaiian way, you know. They call it Hawaiian stew. They took the meat and they cut it and boiled it. And afterwards they thickened it with poi. That was their thickening. That was their stew, poi stew.

JG: Did you put any other vegetables into it?

EE: Once in a while, yes. Sometimes they added to their stew, they added the luau. They still cook it that way today. Other times they used the haha, that's the stem part, the stalk. We didn't have carrots. We didn't have beans. I didn't know what those vegetables were in my childhood.

(Laughter)

JG: What kind of vegetables? I know that you said that (you) ate the popolo.

EE: We ate the young shoots of the potato, the leaves. And we had all the parts of the taro, the leaves and stalk and the flower.

JG: And the flower?

EE: And the flower. Those were the only type of vegetables I remember eating.

JG: You didn't eat any other greens? You didn't have sweets and things like that?

EE: Uh huh, hardly. When we came home from school, Grandma always had a pot of lima beans. We used to have those growing right along the side of the river. Great big pots, all cooked. And that was our candy. We ran around playing with these things in our hands. And mangoes, or peaches or banana.

JG: Now what kind of peaches? Canned, fresh?

EE: No, fresh peaches. They grew there. See them now and then. They're white peaches. They're small. They weren't very big. About this size. (Indicates just over 1½ inches)

JG: Little ones.

EE: Those were the only things we ate. Hard to get candy. Oh, my, that was
the biggest treat there was in our life. And we would only have it, maybe once a month when my mother sent the staples from the store.

JG: Did you grandparents ever go shopping at a store?
EE: Never did.

JG: Were there ever peddlers or anything that brought food things around?
EE: Yes, there were peddlers. And these peddlers were usually Chinese men. They made candy. And they would come around with it, and Grandpa and Grandma had no money to pay for these things. But we had lime trees and they liked those. So they would exchange these limes and then get the candy for us.

JG: What kind of candy? Do you remember how it was made?
EE: It was made like---you know how we have the peanut brittle? Something like that.

JG: What about clothing and things like that?
EE: Our clothing all came from my mother. She was a very good seamstress and she made our clothes.

JG: She did all the shopping for the fabrics and things?
EE: Uh huh. Our clothes were always beautiful.

JG: What kind of clothes did you wear to school? You know, skirts, long dresses, short dresses...
EE: Short dresses. And skirts. Those days children, we didn't have polo shirts in those days. Dresses, like...

JG: Did any of the children wear long muumus or anything like that?
EE: There were no muumus.

JG: Your grandmother didn't even wear muumuu?
EE: No, she wore a muumuu around the house, yes, but when she went out, it was always what we would call a holomuu today. Kind of with a slight train. What we call a tutu muu. But around the house it was just this thing I remember with a hole for your head and, you know, a hole for the two arms to come through. That's it.

JG: Just fold over the fabric...
EE: That's right. That's exactly...

JG: Without sleeves, or with sleeves? Did she make the kind like this with
the sleeves?

EE: That's right. That's right. That's the kind she made. Grandma always wore those, but when she went out, she always wore tutu muu.

JG: What about a hat?

EE: And a hat. Lauhala hat. But she didn't weave hats. I don't know how she got her hats. She did mat weaving. Always. My mother's house and my grandma's house, our floors were always covered with lauhala mats. She made. And quilting. She did quilting all the time. There was always a quilt on the sticks. When one came off, the next one went on.

JG: Now what did she do with her quilts?

EE: They were for us. For the different moopunas, and then my mother and father.

JG: Did she put them away to use some day, or...

EE: Yeah, she put them away, but this is what happened. When Grandma died, the quilts were still in the house, and Grandpa was up there by himself. And the house burnt. All those things burnt. Everything. Leaving Mother with just a few that she had in her house.

JG: Did your grandmother design her own quilts?

EE: They shared. Most of the tutus were always making these, so they shared. But most of her quilts, the ones that she made everyday were the patchwork...

JG: Oh, patchwork. She didn't do the Hawaiian...

EE: She did that, too. But she had enough of the patch things going on. She was always doing something with her hands. My grandmother was never lazy. She was a short little old lady, but always doing something. So she kept us busy, too. Here's one thing about her, when we got up in the morning the first thing she always said, "Wash your face. Brush your teeth. Get yourself all cleaned before you do anything else." Because our neighbors, the tutus' grandchildren, they would sit around in their nightgown with their hair hanging and play the ukulele. And she'd say, "I don't want to see any of my grandchildren sitting around, still dirty, playing the ukulele."

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JG: Did she tell you stories in Hawaiian, or legends or history? I know you said she told you about the ali'i wouldn't look at you because you didn't eat properly.
EE: Not of legends as we think of today. Like were written here. Just little things, like this part, you know how children are in the evening. A nice evening, sometimes we'd like to run outside and play in the yard. It was dark and she wanted us up in the house. She'd call and say, "If you don't come in, the mu gonna get you."

JG: The mu?

EE: The mu. And we'd hurry and get inside, because we didn't know what the mu was, but when she explained, "in the early days whenever a heiau was being built or they were looking for someone to be sacrificed, then the mu would go around and catch these people." So that would frighten us no end and we'd go in the house. That part I remember. When you tell people that these days, I don't know whether they believe it or not. And she used to have an ukele, you know what the ukele is.

JG: That is the little string instrument you hold up to your mouth. Do you know how many strings she had on hers? Four?

EE: I guess so. Yeah, there were four, because she used to play them at night. And, oh, I used to love to hear her play it because it had kind of a (Imitates ukele sound). Because your mouth became the sound box. And she used to say that in the early days whenever a boy was courting a girl, he would just look at her and maybe give her a slight sign and he would disappear. And then shortly afterward, the lady would disappear.

(Laughter)

EE: Oh, here's another thing that she used to tell us. That in the early days when, as little as we were, that's kind of talking sex, isn't it? She'd say, for example, when you sat around the table and a particular man and woman were eating, they were not obvious in their way of signaling and say "Oh, we going out. Come on, hurry up and go." Hawaiians were not like that. They were very subtle and he would just look at her and maybe give her a slight sign and he would disappear. And then shortly afterward, the lady would disappear.

(Laughter)

EE: Then they put two and two together. Because, you see, today, we say, "Come on, dear, hurry up. We have to go." You know, not in those days, that I remember. Now let's see, there's so many things that are coming back little by little.

JG: Were you told stories about maybe the heroes in your own area?

EE: Yeah, we were told about the kings. She always told us about the different kings and what they accomplished, especially King Kamehameha. Here's another thing that she would say. The kids around us, you know, our age would say, "Oh, we're alii." They'd say, "We're alii." And I'd say, "What's that thing there?" "Oh, you know. We come from this king. We
are descendants." And they say, "How about you?" I say, "I don't know, my grandma hasn't said. I'll ask her." So I went home and I ask her, and she'd say to me, "Don't talk about that. People who really don't come from any kind of a line, they will just brag about it. But people who do, they keep those things quiet. So don't say things." Then we'd say, "Are we ali'i?" And she would say, "You don't have to know that." You see, where we are, that was the only kind of answer we got.

JG: You were saying that at night, she told you about the mu. Were there other...

EE: Yes, there were the huakais. The night marchers. She would tell us about that, too. And she said once a relative of ours was out in the evening some place and he could hear people talking and what-not. And he went down, 'cause you're supposed to go down on your face, prostrate on the ground. And he heard people saying in this night marcher thing, "Don't kill him. Don't kill him. Just let him go." And I said, "Why didn't they kill him?" I was always asking. So she said, "Because he has some relative in that group, and that's the reason why. If he hadn't had some relatives, he would have been killed on the spot." And of course, I didn't believe that. I was always in those days thinking things were superstition. But I remember this particular thing about her. You know, we were always in the morning and night, before every morning and every night before I went to school in the morning, we all sat like this. With the Bible. Great big family Bible. And she would read verses and I'd repeat. But I always sat and watched her feel this thing coming. And after some time, I don't know how long it was before I said to her, "I want to do my own reading." And she (said), "Can you read?" I said, "Sure, I can." All in Hawaiian now. And she said, "All right, go ahead and read." I started reading. She said, "My, that's very good. Maikai, Maikai." Grandma said, "Maikai. Akamai. You're real smart. That's fine." But my brother and sister--'cause there were three of us living with Grandma--they were always read to. And then we go to school. Have our breakfast and go to school. At night, before we went to bed, same thing. Right after dinner. Ohana. If we wanted to sit around and talk or play, that's all right. Our ohana we call it, was all done. That's how I started reading.

JG: Did your family, grandmother have other Hawaiian language books in the house?

EE: That was the only one.

JG: What about newspaper, did they subscribe to a paper or magazine?

EE: I don't remember seeing a paper. Magazines, there were no such things in those days. Newspapers were coming out. But they had what they call the Hoaloha, that's a Hawaiian bulletin, in which the Sunday school lessons were written. They had that. That's it.

JG: And you practiced on that, too?
EE: Yes, that's right. Every three months we had rallies. And they went from one church to a different church in the different areas. And we were supposed to study verses and songs and so forth, what not. The children and the adults. Well, whenever the adults practicing theirs, I would be right there with them. All in Hawaiian. Same thing with the Hawaiian verse. And adults, you know, takes them much longer to memorize. Children can hear it and I would memorize all of their verses and when the adults found out, I would prompt this adult, then the next one.

(Laughter)

EE: I remember this particular time we went up to this rally and they said, "Put the little granddaughter right in front of us. In case we falter, she will prompt us."

JG: What church were you attending at that time?

EE: That was the Congregational Church at Kaapahu.

JG: How did you get to church?

EE: We walked, because church was in the middle of all the different places. Not too far, I would say about half a mile. And our church didn't have a bell, it was such a small church; but it had a conch shell. So the family that lived nearest that church would blow it very early in the morning. And Grandma would say, "Hurry up everybody. Do you hear the conch shell blowing?" And we'd listen and then we'd say, "They're calling us to church. Now, you better hurry up." And here's another thing, on Sunday we never ate lunch, because we went to church in the morning from ten o'clock, Sunday school for an hour or two, then church started. And after church they had C.E. all day, and...

JG: What was C.E.?

EE: C.E. was Christian Endeavor (i.e. Sunday lessons, discussions, etc.). And we were supposed to stay there all that time up to three or four o'clock without eating. Nearby was this river that flowed through that area. And we'd say, "Oh, we want to go out." And the Sunday school teacher was always sitting back of us, seeing that we kept quiet and didn't squirm and what not. And we said, "We want to go out. We want to go out and come right back." And we'd go to the river and swim and be there some time. (Laughs) And then when we got back to the church, Grandma said, "Wait till we get home."

(Laughter)

JG: How did she discipline you?

EE: Oh, when we needed a whipping, she gave it to us.
JG: She whacked you?

EE: She always had a stick and we got it. When she got that stick out, we were going to get it. Which was very seldom, but when we got it, we got it.

(Laughter)

JG: When they had these conferences or rallies, as you call them, how far did you go to those?

EE: Oh, those were quite a distance. Sometimes Mother had to send a hack from the (Paauhau) plantation to get us to take us to...

JG: Was that their wagon or carriage?

EE: It was hired. She would send a hack for us. One particular time I remember when the hack came, it had rained and our roads were muddy. The roads weren't paved in those days, and the wheels got stuck in the mud. We all had to get out of this hack and help to push. And we got out of that puddle. Then we got on again and went on to church.

JG: Were your church services in Hawaiian or English or both?


JG: Most of the people who attended church then were Hawaiian?

EE: In those days, we were mostly Hawaiian. Lucky if you find other people.

JG: When you went to the rallies, you said that they were held at three or four different churches?

EE: Uh huh, during the year.

JG: Three a year, four a year?

EE: Three or four a year.

JG: And how long did you stay wherever they were? Did you go stay overnight...

EE: No, just for the day. We left very early in the morning and had all these different ones put on their hoike, as they call it. The show, hoike, the show. And then we had a luau, always together a big luau. And then after that, everybody went home.

JG: If they were having it at your church, who did the food preparation?

EE: We did. People of our church.

JG: What things did the men do and what things did the women do in preparing
those...

EE: The usual way, like the men would do the poi. They all had taro, so they would pound it and so forth. Kalua the pig. The women cleaned the fish, you see, and prepare the salmon. There was no such thing as long rice, so they cooked their chicken just plain, or with luau, that way.

JG: Did you have any cakes and things as part of that, or...

EE: I don't remember. If there were cakes, they came from the store.

JG: From the bakery?

EE: Yeah, from the bakery. That's right.

JG: I want to ask you something. I've noticed this as a growing thing in going to meetings. Now I can remember 20 or 25 years ago going to meetings and it never happened. Were people always holding hands, you know, like when they sing Hawaii Aloha? Was that a old, ancient Hawaiian thing or was that out of the Congregational Church?

EE: I don't remember.

JG: Did they do that in your church? Because it seems, you know, I'm just...

EE: Hawaii Aloha, I don't remember Hawaii Aloha being sung all the time in the churches.

JG: But what about this thing of holding hands? Everybody in...

EE: Like when they sing Aloha Oe?

JG: Did they do that then? I've been quite curious if that's a revival of something or something new, or...

EE: I don't remember. I don't remember. They used to hold dances, you know, in the country, that was their social way of getting together. Towards the end and everybody was standing in a circle and they would sing Aloha Oe with holding hands. As far as I can remember that's the only time I have seen...

JG: At the dances?

EE: Uh huh.

JG: What about any other kind of social functions? You don't recall?

EE: I don't recall.

JG: Something else I wanted, do you recall anyone practicing hooponopono when you were a child?
EE: Yes. I had meant to say that. My grandmother, this particular time, I remember her. She got up early in the morning and she said to us, "We're going over to see this tutu, because she's sick." And we said, "How do you know?" She said, "I know she's sick, I had a dream." So, we went to this place and when we got there, the tutu was sick. So, Grandmother said, "I knew you were sick. That's why I came." She says, "How do you know?" She said, "Well, I had a dream last night. And I think it is because of something you have said. You have said this, that you were not going to allow this, but you have allowed it. And you know what I'm talking about." And I was sitting right there. Instead of taking all the children away, no, we all sat right by our tutus.

JG: And then did she tell the woman what it was that she had said?

EE: Yeah. So she said, "You have said..." At that time her granddaughter was old enough to have a boyfriend. This granddaughter one night came home with her boyfriend and invited him to stay in the house. She had said before that, "My house will never have any kind of doing of that kind. It is supposed to be wrong." But she allowed it when the time came. Grandmother didn't know if she'd allowed it or not, but she just kind of said it. Grandma said, "It's something that you have said, but you have not carried it out." Then she broke down and she said, "Yes." She told Grandmother this. My grandmother says, "Okay, you were wrong. The thing for you to do is to ask the Lord to forgive you. Your mouth said one thing and you didn't carry it out." So they prayed. All Saturday everybody prayed, and Grandma went home. That was it.

Now, another thing, towards the end when Grandmother was very ill, before she died, and people were coming to see her and to hooponopono, and she said to them "No, you can't do anything for me. I'm going this time." So she told us, "This time, I'm really going." And I said, "No, Tutu, you're not going yet." "I'm going." I says, "How do you know?" She says, "Well, all my life I've always had somebody help me, come in and tell me what is wrong and what can be done and so forth. But he hasn't come." Who she meant by "he" I don't know. And she died soon after that.

JG: How would you describe hooponopono? Then I have another question.

EE: Hooponopono to me would be, like, for example, if you're not feeling well, and I'm my grandmother, I would come to you like she did to this woman. And would go in and talk to her, enlighten her. Perhaps there's something that she has done. Perhaps it's in her mind. Perhaps it's something else that's troubling her. She must think and to forgive. And if she has a feeling towards another person, she must go and ask this person to forgive her. That would clear her of what they call the obstacles that may be in the way.

Now here's a fair example. I was sick in 1953. I was in the hospital for over three months. And I wasn't getting better, so my relatives in Hilo--some of my cousins--told my sister, "You better go down to see your sister. She's not feeling well. What she has is all haole sickness." There was Hawaiian sickness, too, you know. You've heard that. And so sister came down to see me and she said what this cousin had said. And I said, "Well,
I don't know." She says, "Well, I'm going home." And she says, "We're going to see this ho'oponopono, because..." So sister went and this woman said, "Yes, there has been a great deal of enviousness right in the family." See, 'cause in my family, I'm the oldest and I have done the most for myself, whereby the others have not been too ambitious, and they look with enviousness to the one who has done the best. And so, (she) says, "You folks have to get together, all of you folks, forgive, forget. And take this all out of your body so you will be one again." So when she came back, and I said, "Well, I excuse all of you." On my sick bed, I would say, "If you have that feeling towards me, I didn't owe it to you. So, you were wrong in feeling that way towards me." You see, I began talking that way. But, "That's all right. You're all excused. And you're all going to be okay again." And I stayed on in the hospital until I came home. That's the only time that my sister has come to go to someone to ho'oponopono, you see. Ho'oponopono is really setting straight. All of these ways that are not too good.

JG: Did your grandmother ever use that within the family?

EE: Always.

JG: And how would that---you know, a typical example within the family?

EE: Like if one of the children was not feeling well, she would call the family together and say, "Now, we've gone to the doctor. The doctor has done all he can. There must be something else. So let's all get together and..." It's always forgiveness, asking each other to forgive one another, because sometime during our lives when we are well and strong, we say things to each other not meaning to in time of anger. And if you forgive all of these things, you clear the air, and then we pray.

JG: Okay, now did she ask questions to start working it out, or did people just sit around...

EE: They just sat around and they talked, because she say, "Look here's your brother, here's your sister who is not feeling too well. Maybe we all contributed to this illness. And you think, maybe there's a time in your life that you may have said something..." and so forth. And sometimes we cry, "Yeah, I said this." And, "I said that." "Okay, now you're excused. Now we ask God to forgive all of us." And they pray. Then they open the Bible, that's one other thing they used to do. Grandma opened the Bible and read. They would say, they'd just open it and then they say, "Oh, I have opened it to the Book of so and so, so many, chapter so and so on this side. What side do you want me to read from? How many verses?" And they would read. And to them the verses would give them the clue as to where the trouble was. And they would pray.

JG: Now your grandmother sort of acted as, well, master of ceremonies?

EE: I guess so.

JG: She was the one that would call people together?
EE: That's right. Always.

JG: What about hana aloha? Did you ever hear about that when you were a little girl?

EE: Yes, I heard about that.

JG: Did you know of anybody who was using anything, or was there anybody in your neighborhood who people would go to...

EE: No, never did. We were all young children. Most of us were of that age and the older people.

JG: You didn't hear them talk?

EE: No. But we did hear there was such a thing as hana aloha.

JG: Now what about people who were trying to get somebody to do something that they wanted to do? Was there someone that they went to see about that?

EE: You mean about harming?

JG: Well, either harming or just getting someone to do something they wanted or to maybe have good luck, or have better weather. No one was practicing anything like that?

EE: Not that I know of. 'Cause Grandma was more on the Christian side. I think those things were forgotten. She was more on this side, because everything was prayer and the Bible. And she didn't allow drinking in the house. Mother and Daddy did. And that was one of the things that hurt her very much.

(Laughter)

JG: What about awa? Did the old people use any awa, your grandparents?

EE: No. No.

JG: Did anyone in that neighborhood that you knew of use it?

EE: Uh uh.

JG: What about Hawaiian medicines and things?

EE: Yeah, we used.

JG: What kind of things were you using at that time?

EE: Well, popolo we'd use on children. A newborn baby.
JG: How would you do that?

EE: They would take the young leaves and they used it. They chew and gave it to her. They used to chew it, mama, and give it to the child. Or another thing when the child was still having that soft spot, they would pound all the young leaves and tape it on the top of that soft spot. So that the baby would be all cleansed inside. And the baby would suck it.

JG: Now I've heard about using that for closing. Have you ever heard of anybody deliberately trying to keep that soft spot from closing up?

EE: Most of them wanted to close.

JG: Yeah, well, I had heard and I was asking to find out if anyone else has heard of that. Did you ever use mamaki or...

EE: No, there was no mamaki. Popolo was the main thing we used. We were well children, so there was really no need for that.

JG: I don't suppose anybody in your neighborhood was having small children, babies, so that you didn't get in on...

EE: They were really all our age. We were the children of...

JG: It was the older people and the younger people (i.e. community of grandparents and grandchildren)...

EE: Yeah, that's right. And they (older people) themselves were well and even towards the end (death)...we used kookoolau first as a tea and second because it had medicinal value.

JG: Did you use any other teas besides kookoolau?

EE: Yeah, there was a tea. Nehenehe tea.

JG: Which nehe was that? There's several plants that have that name.

EE: I think it was the kind that grew on the roadside.

JG: Is that the one that had the kind of thick leaf or the thin leaf?

EE: Thin leaf.

JG: Had a little yellow flower?

EE: Yeah, that's right.

JG: How did you make tea out of that?

EE: Same thing like you boil the hot water and you drop the leaves...
JG: Just dry the leaves...

EE: Uh huh. And then drop it in. Sometimes green. Just drop it in. kookoolau is the same way. Sometimes green, and that's why I hated it. Ooh. Now I have some I don't mind, but I boil it to death, because there's no taste, so to bring it out.

JG: Did you dry and save the leaves?

EE: Yes, whenever we went for kookoolau, it was kookoolau time, they'd have big bags full of tea, dried and put in these bags. And they hung it on the wall.

JG: Where did you go? Up into the mountains?

EE: Up into the mountains.

JG: And what was that, an all day...


JG: Then he'd come back with these big bags...

EE: Yeah, that's right. I never saw a kookoolau tree. I don't know what the tree looks like today. 'Cause I never saw one. Grandpa would go up into the mountain and get the thing. And he also went for hoio. You know, that's the mountain fern? We used it as food. Either raw or cooked.

JG: The young shoots or the stalk?

EE: The young shoots. They used to cut them about that, you know. (Indicates about six to eight inches with hands.) Well, the one that didn't have very many leaves, like this, Grandma would get hot water ready--boiling water with salt--and she would just drop this in for a little while; maybe six or seven minutes. And bring it out. Then she'd take this little end and she'd split it. And the thing would split right in half.

JG: Half this way or half longwise?

EE: Half longwise. Go all the way up. You just go like this and the whole thing will go that way and it will split. Then she'd cut it into little sections and put it in a bowl. To it she added a little bit of salt and kukui nuts in the morning. And that was a vegetable.

JG: Sounds good.

EE: Uh huh. Oh, it was good.

(Laughter)

EE: If we ate it raw, we would cut it up into sections after you had peeled,
like you do, Iom i it. And we could add salmon to it. Or we sometimes added mountain opae, raw. And my son to this day, he always says, "Oh, if you could only get that opae and bring me." He lives on the Mainland. Of all the things, that's what he likes best.

JG: What about homework and things like that when you went to school? Did you have a lot of homework?

EE: Well, I came back with a little homework, but Grandma and Grandpa couldn't help me at all. 'Cause they didn't know the language.

JG: They spoke only Hawaiian?

EE: That's right.

JG: In school, were you allowed any use of Hawaiian at all?

EE: No,

JG: Was this just simply because the teachers didn't speak Hawaiian or did they make some effort to keep you from speaking Hawaiian?

EE: I think it was that (i.e. they made an effort to keep students from speaking Hawaiian).

JG: What about Hawaiian history and...

EE: We were taught history in school.

JG: About Hawaii?

EE: Uh huh. The history of the islands. The discoverer of the islands. Captain Cook and all of the haole things brought here and who came here and discover these islands, and who ruled. All of that was taught in school.

JG: Did they teach you anything about the ancient history before the haoles came?

EE: Yes, little bit of that.

JG: What about music? Did you sing any Hawaiian songs in school?

EE: Some, not very much. We did sing some. And some of the songs that they taught about Hawaii were music composed into English words. You know songs. (Sings the following) "Gus pounds the poi. When he pounds the poi, he will make some for every girl and boy. Pounding, pounding, pounding, pounding poi." Now they would do it song-fashion like that.

JG: What about your grandmother and grandfather, did they sing or play any kind of musical instruments?

EE: They sang. But to Grandma it was a frivolous thing. Because I had a
grandaunt that was my grandfather's sister, who used to be a hula person, hula instructor and dancer. And she said in her youth she used to dance from Hawaii all the way to Kauai and back. So when we were growing up, she asked my Grandmother if she could teach us the different hula that she knew. I can hear her exact words, because she said, "In the future, this is how many people are going to earn their living, by teaching hula." And how true. But Grandma said, "No. I don't want my grandchildren to learn how to hula." Because she was already whitewashed. That was not the thing. You know, the missionary idea was that was a waste of time. Even the ukulele. That's why we very seldom went to where they give talks. Because, "Do all of your chores first. Get everything all set. Then you can go ahead and get those instruments." By that time we were so tired.

JG: She played the ukeke. Did she also play the bamboo, the nose flute?

EE: No, we didn't have one. No.

JG: What about any of the other Hawaiian families in the neighborhood? Did they use any of the Hawaiian instruments?

EE: Not even this grandaunt of mine who used to be a hula person. Not even the ipu or anything. Not in this little neighborhood (Kaapahu) that I grew up in. When I think of it, I can count the houses. One, two, three, four, five, six. There were only six Hawaiian families. And they were all grandmothers. Only one family had a house of father, mother and all the children. But the rest were all grandmothers.

JG: In other words, five of the six were grandmothers with grandchildren?

EE: With grandchildren. And they were so set in their ways, they were all missionaries, and so that's (ancient hula) a sin.

JG: No Hawaiian musical instruments, then? None of them composed music?

EE: No.

JG: Now this aunt of yours who taught hula, where did she live?

EE: You mean the grandaunt? She lived in the community, too.

JG: Did you spend some time with her?

EE: No, very little. Very little. And yet, she raised one of my sisters. The youngest sister, she raised.

JG: Did that sister learn to dance?

EE: No. Didn't even teach her. That's the funniest thing. She came to my grandmother to ask her if she could teach the grandchildren. And here was this girl under her nose day and night. She didn't teach her a thing. Gee, that's most unusual.
JG: All the old people there spoke Hawaiian in those families?
EE: Uh huh.
JG: And most of the kids learned it just by...
EE: That was the language they spoke in the home.
JG: What about you kids when you played together. Did you speak Hawaiian...
EE: Hawaiian and English. Because we had Portuguese, too. There were some in the neighborhood.
JG: Did you sometimes use the Hawaiian to sort of, you know, if you wanted to talk about something in front of the other kids and they couldn't understand.
EE: No, no. Never did.
JG: Did they speak Portuguese in their family, the Portuguese kids?
EE: Yes, they did.
JG: So they were bilingual also.
EE: That's right. It was mainly in the school that we learned our English.
JG: And they were pretty strict about you speaking...
EE: Very strict.
JG: Do you recall if any of the teachers were sort of building up the idea of being haole or the haole education, or was it just pretty much you were going to school and that was it?
EE: Just going to school, because after we left Kaapahu there were these two teachers--Portuguese--and I went to Paauhau where my parents were. The principal was Portuguese and he had Hawaiian, Portuguese, Japanese teachers. They were all good teachers but, this principal, he was also a teaching principal. You know now days you just have a walking principal, we call it, out of classroom. He was a very good teacher, but you know in those days, if you miss a spelling word, go pick bugs off the cabbage.
JG: Oh, really?
EE: Or else put your hand out.
END OF INTERVIEW.
Tape No. 2-10-2-77
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
with
Elizabeth Ellis (EE)
April 22, 1977
Alewa Heights, Hon., Hi.
BY: June Gutmanis (JG)

JG: We will be taping in her home in Alewa Heights. Couple of things that, in reviewing the tape, I'd like to ask you that I either forgot or thought would add to it. First of all, I didn't ask you when you were born.

EE: Oh, you wanted the date? March 20, 1904.

JG: You're Pisces.

EE: That's right, I'm a Pisces.

JG: What was the name of the plantation that your father worked on?

EE: Paauhau (Big Island).

JG: Now, he was the assistant engineer?

EE: He was a night engineer. There were two engineers. One day engineer and one night engineer.

JG: Where did he get his training as an engineer?

EE: He had no training, it was a talent.

JG: That was a talent. Had he learned it at that plantation, or...

EE: Gee, I don't know whether he learned it there or not, but I know when we were children growing up, Daddy was a night engineer. And he went out to work every night, you know, took care of the mill, and we stayed home with Mama. That was after I came home, you know, to live with them. (Until she was 12, EE lived with her maternal grandmother) And he was engineer all the time. After he left that plantation, he went to work for Olaa Plantation; he was still engineer.

JG: Do you know if he worked for some other plantation before that?

EE: No. No, that was the first one. I think it was a innate talent, because even my brother who grew up with very little education that way, was very good with engines and stuff like that. So that he even came across a
man who was a professor of engineering and when he asked my brother, "Where did you get your training?" And he said, "From the hard knocks." And he (professor) said, "Why you would be just as good as any person who had been trained in engineering. You know in the work of repairing, putting in new parts, and taking out new parts, running things on the lathe."

JG: What about your mother? You had said something about your mother, when she went away, when she went to school, she told your grandmother about not letting everybody eat out of the same bowl.

EE: Yes.

JG: Where was she going to school?

EE: Well, they had, you know, these little schools in Hamakua. So she didn't leave Hamakua at all. She met my father in Hamakua. I believe the school that she went to must have been Kaapahu, too. The same one that I went to. Mother spoke English very well.

JG: She had American teachers, haole teachers from the Mainland?

EE: That's right. Because in those days, the first teachers were really haoles. Here's another thing, that Mother worked for a family. As a young girl she worked for a family, the--oh, gee, I can't think of the name right now--where she learned to keep house the American way, you know. So she brought that home to her living, so our home was always that kind of home, like this, you know. As though she had been brought up that way. But no, it was a thing that she learned, you see, while working for this family. And it was the same thing with her relative who became my grandfather's wife. You know his first wife died. I remember telling you that. And they didn't want to lose him because he's such a good man. He was Mr. (George) McMillan. So she said, "I'm going to get my young cousin to be his wife." And so she did, and this cousin was only 18 when she married Grandpa. (She was) from Kawaihae. Didn't know what, in those days, anybody that came from Kawaihae was called "Kawaihae Damn-fool."

(Laughter)

JG: Why, because it was so dry up there?

EE: No, it wasn't dry. They were backwards, and so forth. You know, the people who came from that area in those early days. But she really suffered because Grandpa was older and many women were casting their eyes about for him, but here he was held down with her. So she made up her mind that she was going to be the wife of a white man, who knew how to keep house as a white woman, who knew how to cook like a white woman because he was a luna on the plantation. Again on Paauhau Plantation. Auntie, we call her Auntie. She says, "Don't ever call me Grandma. I'm too young for that, besides, I'm your mother's relative. Call your Grand-
father Grandpa, but don't call me Grandma." She could cook and set a table like a white woman and better. She became a marvelous cook.

JG: Now this grandfather was your mother's father?

EE: No.

JG: It was your father's father?

EE: Adopted. (It was my father's) adopted father, like I told you. He was born Mersburg and then adopted by this man...

JG: And it was your mother who decided that she didn't want her father-in-law to leave?

EE: That's right. She really wanted to keep him in the family.

(Laughter)

JG: So she married him off to a cousin.

EE: To a cousin. A young cousin, only 18 and he was already in his fifties. (Laughs)

JG: That must have caused a lot of problems.

EE: Well, for her, because she was inexperienced and young, and coming from Kawaihae, and Kawaihae people were suppose to be very backward. But afterwards she made up her mind she was going to be just like any woman who grew up where there were more opportunities.

JG: Did she speak English when she married your grandfather?

EE: Some, but by the time she died--she died before he did, and young--her English was pretty good. If you had your back turned, you'd think a Englishwoman was speaking. She learned it the hard way, but she says, "I'm going to be that way." And she became that way. They had no children. That was sad. But I was her favorite.

JG: Now was she interested and aware of her Hawaiian heritage?

EE: Oh, yes. She was interested. But she didn't go too much into Hawaiian things. And I think the reason for that was this idea you have, it was, "I'm a white man's wife and this is a white man's world." In those days, everything was a haole. Everything was a haole way of doing things. That was the reason why many people in our generation didn't learn Hawaiian, because at that time, they were all aiming to be able to speak English well.

The same thing with Betty (EE's daughter) as Betty was growing up. And my son, I would say, "No, you must do everything. Keep the Hawaiian in you heart, you're always there. But, it will always be there, but learn
the English ways because that is the way you will score in the future." What I meant was that you go and learn, get a good education and can hold a good job and what-not. So Betty grew up not knowing her Hawaiian language and even very little of her heritage. But after she came back from college, then she became more aware of her Hawaiian heritage and so now Betty is considered an authority, but she really isn't. Whenever she wants anything, you know...

JG: She comes and asks Mama?

EE: Yeah. She calls and says, "How about this? How do you say this? Can I say it this way?" I say, "No, you can't, you must say it this way."

JG: What's her name, now that she's married?

EE: Jenkins.

EE: Kawohiokalani Betty Jenkins. Kawohiokalani was my mother's name. Now you know the Hawaiians talk about night names?

JG: Yes.

EE: You heard that? Inoa po. Well, Mother's name was kind of a inoa po because, when Grandma told this story to me, it was fairy tale. When my mother was born, they named her Mele, which is Mary in English. And soon after that, she was not very old, she became ill and the kind of illness that she had was she couldn't blink her eyes, she couldn't cry, just stare at you, wouldn't even eat, or anything. And after a while, her family, my grandmother and my grandfather became concerned, so they said, "Oh, we must go to Kohala to the family there and find out. Maybe they'll hooponopono. Must be something wrong with this child. We don't know what it is."

So they went to Kohala, and it was in Kohala, Grandma told me this story, and I've said it many times to the children and other people, Grandma had a dream. And in the dream they told her that she was going to be called to go to a pool, and she was to swim in this pool, turn around and come out of it and never look back. Because she would hear people whistling and everything, trying to get her attention. She was not to look any way, sideways or backwards. Always look ahead. And then when she would get back that would cure her child. Because the people of her side, her ancestors did not like the name. They felt that that was a name that came from an inferior side. Hawaiians were funny that way. And so the next morning when Grandma got up and called this child Kawohiokalani, take away the name and called her Kawohiokalani. So, the next morning she went to the bed where the child was and said, "Kawohiokalani kou inoa (Kawohiokalani is your name)."

JG: Your name.

EE: Uh huh. Her name. And the child responded. She became well. And that was the name Mama carried until she died.
JG: This was a dream? Nobody told her to do this?

EE: This was a dream.

JG: Where did she go in Kohala?

EE: It was to the family at Honomakau. The family home where her auntie lived. That was where my grandmother came from.

JG: Did that area have some noted kahunas or something that she wanted to go to, or was it just because she felt like being close to her family?

EE: I don't know whether there was a noted kahuna or not, because during Grandma's time she did not believe in kahunas. She was so Christianized that she did not believe in that kind of thing, but she believe in these dreams that she had. You see, so it was because she came from that area.

JG: Do you remember any other time that a dream gave her a message or something?

EE: Now I'll tell you about that woman, you know, that tutu that she went to.

JG: Yes.

EE: And now this one I'm telling you. There may have been other dreams, but I can't think of them right now. As I remember she always had these dreams, and maybe they weren't important enough for her to talk about. This particular one about my mother, yes. And then here's another thing. When Mother had her children, every son that she had has inoa po.

JG: A night name?

EE: Every one, because when the first son was born, they called him by a certain name and he only lived six months. And he died. And after this little boy died, and when we used to go to his grave, I can see it right now, Paauhau. Finally she said, "Oh, you know why I lost this brother of yours? It's because I did not pay attention to his night name. I should have called him by this name." I can't think of the name right now. "But I didn't. That's why he's gone. But I must be very careful from now on. If I have children, I'm going to be very careful to pay attention to these inoa po." Well, when my next brother was born, he was given the name.

JG: What was his name?

EE: His name was Kealiikookuokalani. Koaku. Kealiikookuokalani. So that became his Hawaiian name. He wasn't called any other name after that. Then my next brother was born, and he was called Keaniniulaokalani; all night names. And my third brother, Kalanipaia. Now the name Paiea, when you see it in writing, that's Kamehameha's other name.

JG: Right.
EE: Kalani is Paiea. So that was his name, Kalanipaiea from inoa po.
And then came my last brother, and his name is Kinolau.

JG: "Multitudinous body."

EE: Yeah. And so she said, she said to us, "This is going to be my last child." And that's right. And that was her last child, my brother Kinolau.

JG: What about your sisters, what were they names?

EE: No, none of us had night names. None of us.

JG: How strange.

EE: So if, I guess it turned the other way. She had a night name. And then the next generation came, the boys came. But with us, now that I've had my children, none of them, I've never had that kind of an experience.

JG: How did you name your children?

EE: I named Betty, Kawohiokalani, after her grandmother, so that's the name she bears now. When my son came along, I wanted to call him after my mother's cousin. That was her only cousin--a man--and so I went to my aunt and I said to her, "You know, now that I have a boy, I'd like to call him after Uncle, because he's the only first cousin that Mama has on her father's side." And she said, "No, don't choose that name. That name will not make him well. It's not a name for him. Call him after his father." And that's what, my son is called after his father, Kaliko. So we have three Kalikos now. My husband is Kaliko one, my son is Kaliko two, and his son is Kaliko three.

JG: How is your daughter and son naming their children?

EE: Betty chose, oh, she has a peculiar way of calling her children. She called her boy, Kimo, after the father. You know, his name is James, Jack James, so she called him Kimo. When the second boy is born, she said to me, "You know, I want to keep it all K's." And I said, "Oh, my goodness. What shall we call him, then? I don't know." So, finally I said, "How about Kaipo?" You know, Kaipo is "the loved one." And she said, "That sounds nice and short." So that's how he is called Kaipo. Then when her daughter was born--that's little NaTani in the picture over there--she was a matron of Lei Aloha, Eastern Star Chapter. So she said, "You know what? I want to call Nalani after the chapter and you." So she said, "Okay." I said, "Okay. Well, then let's call her." And the name of the chapter is Lei Aloha, so I said, "O.K. Let's call her Kaleialohaonalani, 'the lovely wreath descended of Nalani' ."

JG: How nice.

EE: Uh huh, so that's her name now. And her English name is from two ladies,
Marnice. Now Margaret (Erbs), we're very fond of, because she had asked Richmond (EE's husband) to be patron the year before, and another lady by the name of Bernice (Snow), who helped Betty (daughter) with all of her corsages and stuff, so Betty said, "I'm gonna call her Marnice." Mar, you know, M-A-R for Margaret, and -nice, from Bernice. So her other name is Marnice. And of course her haole grandma, Velma. So she says, "I am Velma Marnice Kaleialohaonalani Jenkins." (Laughs)

JG: She honors everyone. What about your son? How did he name his children?

EE: His first son is Kaliko, same name, Richmond Kaliko Ellis the third. And the daughter is Nalani, too. After me. So I have Nalani one and Nalani two. Only this Nalani two, her name is attached to the other one.

JG: Do either one of them use Nalani, or do they...

EE: This is the only one. The other only uses it occasionally, you know. She lives on the Mainland, I guess. But Kaliko has always used his (Hawaiian name), wherever he went. They used to call him Klick, Klick, Klick. (Laughs) On the Mainland, you know.

JG: What about your husband's family? How did they name their children?

EE: They all had Hawaiian names, like for example, this brother of his that we are very close with, Pohaku, that's Christian.

JG: What's that?

EE: Pohaku.

JG: Pohaku? Rock?

EE: Rock, that's his name. And the other one that's still living in Kauai, that's Pukini. Pukini. And, let's see, how many brothers still living now. Pukini, Pohaku, Richmond. Let's see, who's the other brother that's still living? Gee, I think just the three of them now, a big family. And the girls, I don't know whether they're named after relatives.

JG: Any of them get their names by dreams?

EE: You know, I have never heard Richmond explain those names at all. Nothing.

JG: What about other dreams that your grandmother or your mother might have had, or Auntie Julia, the lady that married your step-grandfather.

EE: Uh huh, Auntie Julia.

JG: Did anyone use dreams for...

EE: For information, to help? No. Never.

JG: Did any of them do any kind of dream interpretation?
EE: None that I know of.

JG: Didn't have any?

EE: Only Grandma.

JG: When you talk about your grandmother, was her lifestyle when you were living with her, was that unique, or were other Hawaiians living like her?

EE: In that neighborhood it was unique. Because the others were very backwards yet, living in, knowing the Hawaiian way. Their children were not able to supply them with these other things. My father and mother were able to. Because he was earning and lived on the plantation, he was able to give them the other things that gave them more of an advanced, shall we call it, the American way of living. The others didn't.

JG: Had your grandparents lived in that area, or had they moved to that area? Was that their ancestral home?

EE: That must have been their home when they first came from Kohala.

JG: They were Kohala people?

EE: They were Kohala people.

JG: Why did they move down to that area? Do you know?

EE: I really don't know. I don't know. That part, I don't know.

JG: Was that when they were first married or something?

EE: That part of their lives, I don't know. The only part I know is when I was growing up with them.

JG: No, I thought maybe they had talked about why they had moved.

EE: No, not at all, but one thing we always did every year, Christmas season, we all went to Kohala.

JG: Where did you go up in Kohala?

EE: To my grand-aunt who had a home up on the hill facing Hono Makau School. She had a great big home. In the beginning, it was a small home and they enlarged it. And it had 12 bedrooms.

JG: Is that near Hawi?

EE: That's close to Hawi.

JG: Is it up towards Mahukona, or down south?
EE: It's not towards Mahukona. Going the other way, going the other di­
rection. Going the Upolu way. It's exactly opposite Hono Makau School,
but up on the...

JG: Can't place the school.

EE: It's, well, it's a high school, too. It started as elementary and be­
came high school.

JG: Where is it from the Kohala Police Station? Would it be...

EE: Oh, quite a distance away. It would be closer to Hawi than it would be
to the police station. The police station is closer to where the (Kame­
hameha I) statue is. We always went every Christmas and spent the whole
week there, that's my mother, father. By that time, my grandmother and
grandfather had died, but Mother and her family always went.

JG: Did your grandmother, when she was alive, did she go back to Kohala on
the holidays?

EE: Yes, now and then, we would go. This particular time that I'm thinking
about, oh, several times, was with my mother. And we would go and stay
with this grand-aunt of ours--that's my grandmother's sister. And she
had these 12 bedrooms for her children, because she had a big family.
So one room was always reserved for my mother and her family. And, oh,
I'm telling you, it was a ball, because every son, or daughter, had five
or six, or four children. And when we ate in the morning, it was like
a banquet. And the table was spread down the hall; in the living and
dining room was one close room, you know. Oh, we had such wonderful
times, as children. And then when evening came we'd all sit and play
ukulele, guitar. Because my grand-aunt encouraged that kind of thing
with her children and grandchildren. So they grew up knowing how to
play the guitar and the ukulele. And to sing, but we just sang along
with them, you know. But when it came to playing the instruments, we
couldn't, because it was so, you know, attention...

JG: Takes a lot of practice.

EE: Yeah, that's right. Beautiful. And then people would come and serenade
in the evening.

JG: What kind of songs would you be singing?

EE: All Hawaiian songs, these old songs that you know. But there was one
particular song that Grandma didn't favor. And that song, "Halu ka moena,
moe kaua la" meant "Spread a mat and sleep". One day we were singing it
at home thinking, oh, we were smart. And she said, "Don't let me hear
you sing that song again." We didn't know any better. And she said,
"That's not for children to sing." And so, as I grew up, I began to won­
der why, and of course, now that I know the language, it was not a nice
song for little children to sing.
(Laughter)

EE: But the melody was lovely and all that.

JG: Was that a very popular song at that time?

EE: Oh, yes, it was. Very popular. Oh, boy, we had lovely times. I can still see that. You see, now, my cousin, the Cazimero boys, Mrs. Cazimero and I are second cousins. Our mothers are first cousins. And our grandmothers are sisters. You see, that comes from that same family. All musical, 'cause they were allowed to go into that kind of thing, but we weren't.

JG: Can you recall any other songs that were really popular about that time?

EE: Well, of course we always had "Aloha Oe," and we had "Imi Au Oe" and "Puna Paia Aala" (EE sings). That one, that was a very popular one, and that's lovely, because it tells about a beautiful flowers of Puna and the fragrance of the hala and all of that. That was lovely. Anything that had to do with that was okay. Grandma consented to that. (Laughs)

JG: What about Christmas carols? Did you have Christmas carols that you sang?

EE: Not very many when I think of it now. When they came to serenade, it was usually the Hawaiian songs.

JG: What about decorations and Christmas trees and presents and stuff, did you do that kind of thing at Christmas?

EE: Not in Grandmother's house, because we all went down to the (Paahau) plantation to be with Mother. Yeah, that was a big doing. A week before that, the house had to be cleaned and scrubbed from ceiling down, and new curtains, and everything, the food prepared. And here was one especially nice thing, after we had prepared for everything and we all went to bed--they put us to bed early--because the serenaders would be coming, they always had food ready, because they would invite the serenaders in. And there would be music.

JG: Would you get up when the serenaders came?

EE: Oh, yes, they woke us up. The serenaders were there and it was time to greet them and to hear the music and eat, because things had been prepared, see. And same thing with New Year's. But it's New Year's, then the pig would be put in the imu. At nine o'clock at night, or maybe earlier. And they would wait until maybe about eleven o'clock, then the pig would be brought out and kept warm in the kitchen. Wait for twelve o'clock. And when the plantation blew the whistle, then everybody was up and the table's all set already. Then the food was---after our ohana. Always ohana. And after the ohana then we all sat down and really feasted. Oh, even today, whenever I think of that, I just feel lonely.
JG: You must feel very good about it.

EE: Uh huh.

JG: What about, did you go to church?

EE: No, there was no church thing in those days. Like they do now. This is a new thing, doing now-days. No, they didn't. It was done right at home. Every ohana prayed if they wanted to, and if you invite another family in, they came in and joined you. But it was just a wonderful time. I can almost smell the food. (Laughs)

JG: What else would you have besides kalua pig?

EE: Turkey, chicken.

JG: Cooked in the imu?

EE: No, never had imu turkey. Always in the oven.

JG: Stuffed?

EE: Uh huh. Daddy loved to cook. My father was a good cook. And so was Mother, you know. In those days we didn't know better. Everything they cooked was good. But I especially like her biscuits. Her biscuits were, oh, so light and fluffy, because she added butter to 'em, and milk and everything, you know. Oh, those golden biscuits. And baked in a wood stove. Was not this kind of stove. And the taste was so different. You know, when you bake it in a wood stove.

JG: Oh, talking about dreams, I meant to ask you, were you as a child aware of your family aumakua? Did anyone ever talk about that?

EE: Yeah, yes. To us, the shark was our aumakua, the owl and the lizard. If we found a lizard's egg and it was in the way, we carried it carefully and took it out and put it in a tree, or among rocks, so that no harm would come to the egg. And same thing with the owl. If the owl hooted at night in front of our house, or nearby, Grandma always said that that was a sign of either some news that we were gonna hear, and we always waited whether it was good news or bad news. But if she said it might be bad news, was bad news. And, as to the shark, I think that was our main aumakua. We were not supposed to eat the meat of the shark or to see it when they were catching it.

I remember this story about my grand-aunt's son. They said that in those early days, the Japanese used to go shark fishing, and then they would build fires in the camps. And I don't know what they would do with them, make fishcake, I believe it was. Because it have nice white meat. Well this particular day, this uncle of mine, we would, according to haoles, call him cousin, was coming through the camp and they were cooking it. And this fire hit him, you know, not the fire, but the smoke. Passed, touched his cheek, this side. By the time he got home, his face was
pulled up on one side, just pulled up. And his hands were already that way. Immediately, my family said, "What did you do? Where have you been?" And he said, well, the only thing he remembered is coming through the smoke. So they immediately called some of the family in, hooponopono, I guess. That part, I don't know what they did, because it was only told me as a youngster. And they prayed and everything else. And it took a little while before his face came back to the way I remember him before he died. Uncle Pinehaka, his name was. So that impressed me, I mean that story impressed me very, very much. So that, as I grew up, we were very careful when we went to the ocean and even Grandma said, "You are safe in the ocean with the shark. Because he's your aumakua. He will not harm you." They always say that to us, you know.

Now, speaking of that, this man used to be a friend of ours, who was at the sugar boiler at the Hakalau Plantation. He was almost all haole, but he was very Hawaiian in one thing. And that concerned the shark. He became very fond of us after he met us, and he lived every weekend with us. He would leave, the mill would close at Friday night. Saturday, he'd be all day with us, Saturday night, leave Sunday night to go back to work. And he always carried a flask of whiskey in his inside pocket. And whenever we went riding along the beach, he would say, "Oh, let's get off over here. I want to go to the beach." I would see him pour this liquor into a little glass, and mumble something to himself and put his finger in, and do this, you know. (Flicks finger) And I would say, "Uncle John, what are you doing that for?" We called him Uncle John. And he said, "Oh, all over here." I say, "Who?" He says, "The sharks. They'll take good care of you then, they'll take care. I'm talking to them." And I would say, "Oh!" I said, "Why are you doing that? That's superstitious." He says, "No." And he believed that the shark, that was his aumakua, too. And I thought of my people, that shark was our aumakua. So, he say, "You will always be safe in the ocean." I said, "I have heard my grandmother and other people talk about the shark as our aumakua, too." He says, "Oh, very good, very good." He'd go that way, you know. So there you are again. But he always did it. Now if you saw this man you would have thought he was pure haole. Had very little Hawaiian, but he still remembered his aumakua.

JG: Where did you get the idea that, you know, for a kid to be saying this is superstitious?

EE: I think I got that from association with other races. Other ethnic groups.

JG: In school, or socially?

EE: I mean in school.

JG: Do you remember if the school teachers--either when you were a real little kid or when you went to live back with your parents--if they told you that this was superstitious, or not?

EE: Well, as we grew older, I think that came about through religion, you see.
But at that particular time, I don't know, I really don't know.

JG: You went back to live with your parents when you were what, about 12?
EE: Twelve. Uh huh.
JG: (Because) your grandmother died?
EE: That's right.
JG: What did your grandfather do?
EE: He still lived on the homestead, and he came to visit us whenever he felt like it. We had a horse and he always rode back and forth. I understand during the days when my mother was living up there when she was young, they had many horses. So that was their means of transportation. But by the time we came into the picture, I only remember two horses. Then one died, and then this particular one that Grandpa had.
JG: Did he ride horseback, or did he have a buggy, or what?
EE: He rode horseback.
JG: Most of the people did?
EE: Most of the people did. Those days, the only time we rode a buggy was when the Sunday school time came around, with the rallies, when my mother sent the buggy for us, and, oh, we thought we were quite in style. (Laughs)
JG: Another thing you were saying about your grandmother was that people in the neighborhood were bragging about being alii.
EE: Uh huh.
JG: How much were you aware of that they were alii...
EE: I wasn't too aware of that. Grandma always had these pictures that she pointed out they were people that we looked up to. I wasn't impressed that we have to be just so in their presence, that we were less important than they were. That wasn't made, that wasn't impressed upon me. It was later when people started. I didn't know my family, I come from this line, I come from that line. That's when I began to say, "My golly, these people are alii. What about us? Are we commoners?" So, today I laugh about it, when I hear people say, "I come from this alii." I say, "Oh, everybody was alii in those days. Who wasn't? Who were the commoners?" (Laughs)
JG: When you went to live at (EE's parents') home, what was the biggest contrast? The change...
EE: It was a big change, that I must say. Mother was not as, shall I say, religious as her mother was. Sunday was not a day where you go to church, all day like Grandma, in Grandma's time. I was most unhappy.

JG: I imagine that at first you were.

EE: Yeah, I was most unhappy in the beginning. And when I'd say, "Why are we doing this? Grandma used to do this, and this and this." And they'd say, "Grandma's gone, we do it..." And so I'd say, "Oh, when I grow up, I'm gonna be like Grandma. I'm gonna do things like Grandma." I would keep saying that, you know. And of course that irritated my mother many times. She would say, "Grandma's not here, you have to do it the way we do it." You see, it was a change. A big change. And they had a social life that Grandma did not have. They socialize and, like, Saturday came around they had dances. And they served drinks and stuff like that.

JG: Did they have dances at home?

EE: You mean in the home?

JG: At your parents' home? Or did you go to a dance...

EE: We went to a dance place they had for the skilled people of the plantation. They were the only ones. Nobody else. All the others were outside. So we were in because of his (father's) position. But not the others. And that's one of the things that my mother always went on the other side of the track--that's what I call it now--over to the camps, because some of her relatives lived in the camp. Her friends, some of her friends that she had always known lived in the camp. But now here she lived all the way on the other side. (Laughs) Must have been quite hard for her, too. But her friends never felt that they were left out, because she went to see them, you know.

JG: Now was this rule that only the skilled people could go to these social functions? Was that a plantation rule?

EE: Plantation rule.

JG: It was spelled out that you can't do this?

EE: Oh, yes. They could not come in, unless they were invited, but they were never invited. It was only for us. Whenever they had those socials, it was only for these people. See, and when they had these birthday parties for the children, it was only for the children of the skilled laborers. And so I had a rascal brother and Mother always used to tell him, "When you go over there, you behave this way and don't just talk the way you do here and so forth." (Laughs) He wouldn't care, you know how boys are.

JG: When she was telling him don't talk like that, was that because of his
rascal talk, or because he was speaking Hawaiian or what?

EE: Rascal talk. We didn't speak Hawaiian with Mama. In her home, it was always English.

JG: So that was a change, then?

EE: That was a big change. That's when the change really came. Even though she was Hawaiian and she did many things Hawaiian, yet she was going more the other way. You see. When I say the other way, I mean the new...

JG: New way. Did you have much of an accent? Did you have problems speaking English?

EE: No.

JG: What was the biggest problem, contrast?

EE: To me, the contrast was this, the religious part of it, where she was not as consistent as Grandmother was. That part bothered me a great deal. And I did tell her, I said, "You know, when I grow up, my home, my children, I'm going to teach them to be like this. And I don't like this social life where these people are always serving alcoholic things. My home, we won't have that." I said, "I'm gonna marry a man who doesn't drink." And that's true. And when I grew up, I had many boyfriends and the minute I knew they were drinkers I said, "No, I'm not interested in you any more." "Oh, I can..." "No." I was really a straight-nosed girl. Stupid thing, I figure, at that time. So when Richmond came along, he was not that kind of a boy. I said, "Oh, this is the kind I want, because I'm not going to have liquor served in my home where my children will see this kind of living." Very funny, like Grandma.

JG: How often did they have parties? Every week, or...

EE: Sometimes every week. Now, they have friends, and this friend would have a party at her house, they would go to that house. And the next time, the next house. That kind of thing, you know.

JG: Could you describe a typical party? You know the preparations and what happened at them?

EE: Well, at some of these parties that Mother went to, Daddy, on the other side of the track, they would have the liquor going. And they'd have poi, and they'd have all the, you know, but there would be liquor going and singing and laughing and that kind of thing. And I didn't like that. When they came to our house and they did that, and Mother would say, "Go into the kitchen and have something served to these friends." And I would give her a cross look. So Mother would call me back and say, "Don't you look that way." And I'd say, "I don't like these people."

(Laughter)
EE: And she'd say, "Well, they're my friends." And I'd say, "But these are not the kind of people that I would be friendly with."

(Laughter)

EE: And then, I'd say, "When I grow up, I'm not going to have friends like this in my house." I would say that, you know, to her. It was a bit hard on my mother, too. And she says, "It's my house, so you just go along and do what I'm telling you to do." So I would, you see.

JG: When they came to your mother's house, how would a party go? What sort of food would you prepare? What time of day would they come?

EE: They usually came in the evening, like a Saturday evening. The work had stopped, it was a weekend, and they would come. They brought their drinks and then Mama and Daddy had theirs, and they would always have their poi. That's for sure. And whatever it was, chicken or meat, or stew, or whatever, you know, like the Hawaiians do.

JG: You'd sit down to dinner, then?

EE: Uh huh. Sit down to eat and then when we were through and they would sit down and enjoy themselves, and we would go to our bedrooms and go sleep. They would say, "Now, all right, you folks are excused. You go." We could hear them laughing and singing and playing their guitar and ukulele, and ooh, that used to bother me. And it wasn't my home, it was my parents' home. They could do as they pleased. But, you see, I was still thinking of the way Grandma had brought me up. No more of that kind of thing. Was quiet, and go to sleep early. Next day is church day, and we would spend all day at church. Oh, dear, how we ever stood that, I don't know. (Laughs)

JG: What was school like? You went to a very country school when you were living with your grandparents?

EE: That's right.

JG: Two teachers.

EE: That's right. But the school where I went to at Paauhau which was a plantation, well, it was a public school, but where all the plantation children went to school. It was very good. There were more teachers. It was really good. Especially this man, Mr. Parão, who was principal. He was a very progressive principal, so that our education there was just as good as any other public school, even in the city. Had everything.

JG: What things do you remember about that school, and about the way you lived or it affected your life?

EE: Well, one thing, the regularity. He was very strict. He was a very strict principal. He wanted his pupils to excel, and he always used a
stick as a means of making you remember or learn. You know, it wasn't like this where you teach, or try another method. No, he'd say, "All right, you have ten words to study tonight." And then the next day we are tested. You miss one word, you either got the stick or you went into that garden.

JG: Just for one word?

EE: Always. Everything with him, he wanted perfection.

JG: When you went to work in the garden, how long did you have to work in the garden?

EE: Well, it was a garden day, maybe you worked one or two hours. But if you missed that one word, then you went to pick the bugs off the cabbage. So that the cabbage would grow without these bugs. At first, I couldn't touch then, you know.

Tape interruption.

JG: What do you remember of haole, Hawaiian differences? Were there more or less Hawaiians down at Olaa?

EE: No, I think there were less Hawaiians. There were less Hawaiians, but I was growing up, and being less aware of the differences.

JG: You were less aware of them at Olaa?

EE: Uh huh, yeah. Of the differences between the ethnic groups, you see, the white and the Hawaiian and the Japanese and what-not.

JG: At that time it was mostly Japanese that were doing the plantation work? Chinese and Japanese.

EE: Uh, Japanese, Portuguese, quite a number of Portuguese then. Hardly any Chinese. See, the Chinese left the plantations as soon as their contracts were up, and began moving to the cities. But the Japanese remained.

JG: How did you feel about the high school when you got into high school? What kind of teachers did you have?

EE: Most of our teachers were from the Mainland, because we didn't have enough teachers, you know. They were still coming from the Mainland. And that was why they encouraged all the young people of our generation to go into teaching.

JG: You were aware of them encouraging you in high school to go into teaching?

EE: Yes.

JG: Did you graduate from high school, or did you go to Normal School before
you got out of high school?

EE: I was in high school for two years when it was rumored that if we didn't leave high school and come to Normal right away you would have to go two more years beyond the Normal. And I needed to get out and work. So we left, several of us left high school, Hilo High School and other high schools, and we came to the Normal.

JG: Why did you feel you had to get out and work?

EE: Why, I had to support myself. I figured I wanted to be on my own. See, I wanted to be independent already.

JG: You were very independent from the little kid times?

EE: Yeah. I could have been a spoiled brat, but Grandma didn't spoil me. You know, she petted us and everything else, but she never spoiled us.

JG: When you were in high school, did they have any Hawaiian subjects, like Hawaiian history or geography?

EE: No.

JG: Did they ever talk about...

EE: It was taught in elementary. That was it, as part of history and that was all.

JG: In either Hamakua or down at Olaa or at Hilo, did they have any celebrations like Kamehameha Day that were especially Hawaiian celebrations?

EE: Not that I remember. Only celebrations that these places used to have would be Fourth of July. The Fourth of July celebrations were always held. But when it came to Kamehameha Day and Kuhio Day, there was no such thing.

JG: When can you first remember anybody really beginning to celebrate Kamehameha Day?

EE: Gee, I think it was when we moved to Honolulu. That was 1941.

JG: What about canoe races and stuff like that? Were they having anything like that?

EE: They did have a few races in Hilo. These like Heali'i and these other canoe clubs. They used to have races occasionally, but other than that, I don't know of any.

JG: Did you kids ever go watch them?

EE: Never did.
JG: So you were second year in high school when you decided to go to Normal School?

EE: Uh huh. No, I had always wanted to be a teacher, because my first grade teacher, up at Kaapahu, had encouraged me because there were several of us in her class, three of us girls that she thought should go on and be teachers, because the other girls were bigger and they weren't interested. And we used to be, like they said, "Okay, you help this group. 'Lisabeth, you help this group. Mary you help this one. Eliza you help this one." And we used to think it was the smallest, the youngest, and here we were the ones helping these great grown-up girls. And they used to make fun of us, you know. Well, anyway, they used to tease us outdoors. They'd say, "Teacher pet, teacher pet." And we used to come in crying, "They're calling us 'teacher pet'." And she would say, "Never mind, just go ahead and do your work, and someday you're gonna be teachers." She would say that to us, and the three of us became teachers.

JG: She built up your expectation?

EE: Uh huh, yeah. She did.

JG: Now what year did you come to Normal School in Honolulu?

EE: In 1921.

JG: What kind of memories do you have of the first World War? You must have been old enough to remember...

EE: Yes. Yes. The one that I remember the most was that peanut butter sandwich.

JG: What was that?

EE: Oh, every day peanut butter sandwich until I couldn't eat peanut butter for many years after that.

JG: What was the reason for getting peanut butter sandwiches?

EE: I guess it's because things were getting hard to get, you know, so we were always given peanut butter sandwiches. Just peanut butter sandwiches day in and day out. And I won't eat peanut butter again all of my life. 'Course now I'm beginning to eat it again. It took me many years before I started eating it again.

JG: What did they give you before?

EE: Butter, jelly, and a filled sandwich now and then, you know, like fish. But other than that, during the War it was that. And another thing about the World War--that was World War I--we knew there was a war going on, and of course it was impressed upon us that the Germans were causing that war and so forth and what-not. And of course it kind of built up a kind of
hate feeling inside. But it was so far away and we were still children, so we didn't...

JG: What about the Germans that were on the plantations? Did people feel animosity towards them?

EE: Not that I know of. I didn't see anything like that.

JG: Did any of your uncles go, brothers?

EE: I had an uncle who went. That's this uncle that I wanted to name my son after, you know. Because this is my mother's first cousin. We call him uncle. He went, and came back. Oh, when I saw him going, I thought, oh, he's gonna die now. Because I was very fond of him. And I cried and thought oh, uncle will never come back again. And the War ended and he came back and he was all right. (Laughs)

JG: But mostly the only thing you remember about changing your life was that you got lots of peanut butter?

EE: That's right. We had peanut butter.

JG: When you came up here to go to Normal School, where did you stay?

EE: I stayed at Kaiulani Home. Now this Kaiulani Home is the building right next to the Hawaiian Mission Building. And it was their home for school girls.

JG: Who maintained that?

EE: Gee, I don't know. I know Miss Flood was our house mother. Took care of us. When was that? Now I know that that area belongs to Kamehameha, the Bishop Estate, but at that time I didn't know whether it belonged to Kamehameha Estate or not. I'm quite sure it did then. But, my only knowledge was that Miss Flood was in charge of the girls.

JG: Did you pay rent there, or...

EE: Yes, we paid board, $21 a month if you didn't help in any way but just took care of your room and your laundry. But if you helped, then the fee was smaller. But when I came to school, Grandpa didn't want me to work; he wanted me to spend all my time studying. So I paid the $21. But as it was, they were giving scholarships at the Normal School for any girl could maintain a B average. So I went in for that, and I was able to get ten dollars a month, so all Grandpa had to pay was $11, because the ten dollars went in to take care of the other part of the board and lodging.

JG: What all did you get? You got a room. A private room?

EE: Two to a room.
JG: And three meals a day?

EE: Two meals a day. They gave us a nickel to eat lunch at Normal School. Five cents in those days. Can't imagine that. (Laughs)

JG: What did you get for your five cents?

EE: Exactly what we are getting now-days. Milk, we had hot lunch and a sandwich.

JG: What kind of food was the hot lunch?

EE: Usually a stew or spaghetti, things of that sort, you know, that they usually serve in cafeterias. But very good. Nourishing.

JG: Now what about at Normal School, I mean at the boarding house, at Princess Kaiulani Home? What did you have, say, for breakfast?

EE: We usually had a cereal, milk...

JG: Cooked?

EE: Cooked cereal. And milk, or whatever else we wanted. If we wanted tea, they gave it to us, too. And toast. Sometimes cornbread. Oh, I just loved the cornbread. And biscuits other times. And on Saturday, then we had lunch at home. Then we had a salad and as usual the bread to go with it. Or if we had poi, then we had fish or whatever it was they had cooked to go with that poi. And we always had good dinners. Every night we had dessert.

JG: Did you have to be in at any particular time? Was there kind of a curfew?

EE: Always, we couldn't go out. Couldn't go out at all, whether you were a senior or not.

JG: When you got up in the morning, and you had breakfast and you went to school, how did you get to school?

EE: We walked. Walked all the way up.

JG: About what time, was there a curfew when you had to be back?

EE: No, if Miss Flood knew your schedule, and she expected you there at three (p.m.), you were there at three. And if she expected you at four (p.m.), you better get there at four o'clock. But during the weekend, we could go out to town. And we could go to a movie or have lunch downtown and be back at a certain time.

JG: But she said when you had to be back?

EE: Oh, yes. Everything. We had to sign in. And there were two of them there, Mrs. Warren and Miss Flood. When we got in, we had to go to the
office, sign in. So they'll know it. And they go down the list and the time you get in.

JG: What did they do if you didn't make it on time, or if you stayed out extra late?

EE: Well, then you had your little session with them. And the next time, you better get in earlier. And none of the girls were expelled during my time. We were obedient girls. Because most of us came from the country. But let me tell you this funny thing that happened. During those days, they used to have streetcars. And they ran on the cable. Well, this particular day I thought gee, I better walk to town. I'm with a friend; I want to know how to get to town and then find out how to get back. So we walked down King Street all the way down to town. Fort Street, went to the show and everything else. So, it was time to go home, and I said to her, "Why don't we ride the trolley home?" She said, "Okay." I said, "We have to remember to give them the signal at the right place, because if we don't, they're going to carry us beyond Kaiulani Home." Well, when we came by, we got excited, I suppose. We gave them the signal, got out, and we found out it was too soon. It was almost in front of the King Kamehameha statue (by King and Punchbowl Street). So, anyway, as we walked, there was the trolley running along and we were walking along. (Laughs) I never felt so embarrassed in all my life. Oh, dear.

JG: What was the most severe punishment you ever heard of any girl getting for getting in late?

EE: Just talking to.

JG: Were you ever talked to?

EE: Never.

JG: So you don't know what kind of things they said to the girls?

EE: No. Never. In all my life, from the time I went to school until I got out, I gave my teachers no trouble at all. Their word was law. When they said this, it's this. When someone say, "Oh, let's go do this." Said, "No, it's too late now. The teacher said we mustn't do this. We mustn't do that." It's always that way, even when I went out to teach. I remember in Hilo, this principal always gave us a deadline for our long-range plans. They had to be in at a certain time. And she gave the date and everything, of course. But there was one teacher there--she was not of my class--she came later, and we told her, "Are you ready with your long-range plan, because it's got to be in in a few days?" She said, "I'm not ready." I said, "You better get it ready." And she said, "Oh, I'll think about it." Well you better think fast." Well, anyway the day came, the principal sent a note around with a child and all the long-range plans had to go in. She didn't have hers. I thought to myself, "You're going to get into trouble." Sure enough, the principal called her in and said, "What happened to your...?" She said, "Oh, I forgot it at home." And she (the principal) says, "Okay, I will take your class. You go home.
and get it." She didn't have it.

JG: She was trying to get away with a story.

EE: Right. So, the next year, she says, "I'm not going to recommend you. When I say I want a thing in at a certain time, it must be in at that time." So, Vera was out. And in those days, teachers can stay on forever, you know. But she didn't. In the first place, she lied. Now why didn't she say in the first place it's not ready? But Miss Wakefield is one of the best principals that I have worked under. I learned quite a bit from her, because she was that type of a person. Once she has confidence in you, she will leave things in your hand, you know. I remember once her telling me, "You know, I want you to keep on doing the way you are doing." There was one particular teacher there they were talking about. So she called me into the office to ask me if the story was true, that this teacher was traveling with another teacher of the same school, and that they were meeting in a building during the weekends. So I said, "To me, it's just a rumor. I don't know. I really don't know." And I thought, gee, she's trying to pin it on me, not pin it on me, but me be the one to tell her we knew. But I said, "I don't know. You'll have to ask her or ask him." So she left me alone. She never ask me after that. She found out later that it was true, but it was not for us to go and tell her. Let her do her own watching. But she was a good principal in many ways, other than this particular time. I remember I used to be such a bad tempered in those---when I say bad tempered, I must have learned this from the old school of...

JG: Whacking their hands?

EE: Yeah, whacking their hands. And I whacked this child and it happened that I was in the shop. I was shop teacher that year, and when I picked up that stick to whack his hand there was a little nail thing sticking out. And when I hit the child, the child went back and I hit.

JG: Drawing blood?

EE: Yeah. So, oh, I was scared. I took the child to her and I told her what had happened. And she said to me, "Oh, dear. When are you going to learn to curb your temper?" I said, "Yeah. I'm sorry." So we attended to it and there was nothing. After that, that's when I hands off. From then on I said I will never do this again because it might give me trouble, you see.

JG: You said you were teaching shop. What kind of things were you teaching in shop?

EE: Oh, we'd make bird cages, we'd make stands, we'd make waste baskets, and things of that sort.

JG: But did you learn this in Normal School, or was this just based on what you'd learned...
EE: I had to do it. There was no shop teacher, so I had to get a book and read up. (Laughs)

JG: Were your students mostly boys or girls?

EE: Boys and girls. Both took shop. And then when you go out to garden, boys and girls. So that's fair.

JG: When you were in Normal School, what was the racial mixture in Normal School?

EE: It was a big mixture of—there were many Hawaiian girls, in those days. And Portuguese girls. And the Chinese and the Japanese were just coming in, beginning to be teachers.

JG: What was your first school that you taught?

EE: Honokaa. Honokaa.

JG: How did you get chosen for that school or did you choose?

EE: Well, usually, they want you to go home, to wherever you come from. And I chose Honokaa. I didn't want Kaapahu. It was so far off the way. And Paauilo was the same way. And I liked Honokaa. They had cottages for the teachers, in those days. So I went back to Honokaa.

JG: Were you still single?

EE: Oh, yes, still single. And I taught there for three years.

JG: What were the cottages like?

EE: They were like homes. Three, let's see, one, two, three, four bedrooms; living and dining; and kitchen; and two baths.

JG: Did each teacher have one, or did the single teachers share?

EE: Every teacher had her own room.

JG: So four shared a cottage?

EE: That's right. Four teachers to a cottage. And you know, they had divided it this way, so that one week two teachers, maybe, did the preparation of the meals. And the others ate. And then the next two, and the next two. Went that way. And the cleaning of the house.

JG: How did you manage the food? Did you put so much money in the kitty, or did this come from the school, or what?

EE: No, that was ourselves. We divided at the end of the month.
JG: Do you remember about what it was costing you for...

EE: Well, in our case, in our cottage, this is the way we did it. There were two Mainland girls, a Chinese and myself. And those days, the girls had not been exposed to our kind of food, Chinese, Japanese, and so they preferred eating with the girls in the next cottage. So they went over and ate with them. But Jenny and I did our own cooking, so we had Chinese food and Hawaiian food, and everything else, you know. Japanese food. And we divided. Not very much. In those days, lucky if it came up to twenty dollars per teacher.

JG: And you didn't have to pay for the cottages at all?

EE: It was free. Everything was free. All we did was come in with your beddings and your linen, towels. The rest was supplied.

JG: Now what kind of things did you do socially when you were living...

EE: Well, that's good. That's a good question, because, Honokaa is very close to Honokaa Plantation. We always went, every Thursday there was a tea at the plantation. And at these teas we played cards. So, soon as school was over, bang! Towards the door. Run home and change, and down to the plantation to play cards.

JG: Who was giving these...

EE: Different ladies. Now one time a lady would have it at her house. And all the ladies came there to play and she furnished the refreshments. The next time it was another lady. It was a great thing. Oh, they put out their best linen and silver and china and what-not. And we had prizes for those who won first prize and...

JG: I presume that you played bridge.

EE: We played bridge. It was wonderful. But when it came then at first, well, I kind of enjoy it and everything else until this friend came to teach, this Alice Franklin. In my second year of teaching she appeared on the scene from Seattle. And we went to the teas, but she is a girl who is widely read, widely traveled, had always had lived on a plantation where her people once upon a time owned slaves.

JG: Oh, my gosh!

EE: But she was the most humble of any girl I've ever seen. So she said to me, "Elizabeth, when it is our turn to entertain, let's not play cards, let's do something else." I said, "What shall we do?" She said, "I'll tell you. We'll give a dance at the Lyceum." They used to have this Lyceum in Honokaa. It isn't there any more, because the high school's there now. Where all the social functions took place. "And we'll have music, we'll dance, we'll invite the men of all the plantations around here." And I said, "What are we going to feed them?" She said, "Coffee and cake."
"Who is going to bake? You know, I'm not a good baker." She says, "I'll do all the baking." And she says, "But your part is to go get the music." That's me. And I said, "My goodness, how am I going to get this music?" She said, "Well, you have a brother who plays, who has an orchestra." And I said, "Yeah, that's right." She says, "You tell your brother if he can bring his boys to play, we'll give them all the cake they can eat." (laughs) I said, "Well, I'll see if he'll give it to us for nothing." And I went to ask my brother and he said, "Surely, we'll play for your girls for nothing. Just give us plenty of cake. The boys like cake." And I said, "Okay." So I said, "Alice, you have to bake special cakes for the boys." "Okay." The wives and their husbands came. They said, "This is the best of all the social functions we've ever had in Honokaa. To think that you two girls should think about this and think about us instead of you just playing cards all the time." So that was how we entertained that time.

JG: When you played cards, it was just the women?

EE: Just the women, just the women.

JG: What kind of music did they play for that?

EE: The regular orchestra, you know.

JG: Was it Hawaiian, or haole, or...

EE: Hawaiian. With saxophone, guitar, ukulele and...

JG: Violin?

EE: Uh huh, all that. Was beautiful. And Brother had this gang. Oh, dear.

JG: He obviously was playing for dances and things. Was this all he did, or did he have a job as well?

EE: Oh, that was just for fun. And whenever they could pick up a few dollars, they did, but they gave it to us gratis. So we had lots of fun. And Alice made it, and oh, each one had a cake of his own. (laughs) Oh they ate and drank, and coffee was what we served. And dance, oh, it was lovely.

JG: What else did they do socially?

EE: Socially, the teachers? Well, other than that they had very little social life. The plantation was their social life if they got in it. Oh, let me come to one thing that used to, when I first went to live in the cottage, I cleaned up all the cottage, expecting girls from the Mainland, because they usually had it clean, but not clean enough for those who were coming in at the last minute. And got it all ready so when these girls arrived from the Mainland, we were ready to receive them. And when I say 'we' I mean this local girl from Honolulu who had come out to teach. But, this is one of the things that hurt us. After the girls had come and we had treated them so nicely and prepared a meal for them and everything,
well, we could see that, well, we weren't good enough to be their friend. You know what I mean.

JG: Yeah.

EE: And so I said to Jenny, "What's the matter with the group now? Aren't we good enough, after trying our best and introducing them here and there. Now that they're with the plantation crowd, we're not good enough." And she said, "That's all right, that's okay.

So the next year, when next crop of girls came, I made up my mind I was going to be real mean. And I've been ashamed of that for a long, long time. Here I was taking it off on innocent girls. So when they came in, we were just about ready to finish our dinner, so we said, "There are your rooms there." The rooms weren't clean. Nothing looked nice. And I said, "And we're going to leave. We're going to Kawaihae." Kawaihae is, oh, just about an hour's drive in those days overland, and "There's the kitchen." And I said, "And I'm very happy you're here." Off we went. And that was such, and one of the girls—that's the one that became my very good friend—noticed that I especially was not pleased at seeing them, so it puzzled her, because she had read so much about Hawaii. And I was a Hawaiian girl, the other one was Chinese, and I should be the one to show that kind of an attitude. But anyway, she went along and I don't know how they spent their evening, until later on I found this out. When we came home, which was very late at night, the next day was Sunday, 'cause they had arrived on a Saturday, they asked us about, what about this. I said, "Here is this and here is this. I said, "Here is this and here is this." And that's it. We just gave them the answers to their questions and we weren't cordial at all. Well, one of them, oh, shall I say few weeks later, we'd say, "Well, you know the other girls came last year, they didn't want to cook with us 'cause we don't know how to cook the American way. So they went across to eat with the other girls. So if you want to do that, you may." But this Alice, she said, "No, I'd rather eat with you girls, because I love all kinds of foods. I've been to China and I lived on Chinese food when I was in China, so I'd like to be with you girls." We said, "Okay, then the three of us."

So, but we still kept that attitude of, you know, "Now we're gonna be away from you." So one night, I was in my room reading. I closed my door after dinner. This knock came on the door. And so I opened the door and I said, "Oh, it's you, Alice." She said, "Yes, I want to come in and talk with you." And she sat on my bed and she gave a heavy sigh. And I said, "Is anything bothering you?" She said, "Yes. You know, before I came to Hawaii I read so much about Hawaii, that the people here were kind and hospitable and gracious, and I'm finding it just the other way around." It was like a saw that went through my heart. And I said, "Oh, I'm sorry that we had to treat you this way. Someone else had hurt us and we weren't gonna be hurt by another white girl." She said, "I thought so. I knew something was wrong." So I said, "All right, for the evening, I'm gonna call my brother to bring his group of boys with their instruments and we'll go for a ride and they can play and we can listen." She said, "That would be fun." So we went out. I called my brother and he said, "Sure, I'll
bring two boys and myself, because you're bringing your friend." And they brought their instruments, the instruments came, and we went the other way to Paauilo, which is about ten or fifteen miles a ways. And these boys played and they sang, (going) both ways.

JG: What kind of a car were you driving?

EE: A small Ford. It was my brother's car. So when we got off the car and we thanked them, we went into the house she turned around to me and she said, "Elizabeth, you have made me very happy. This is what I had expected Hawaii to be like." And so we talked and I told her what had happened, she said, "I won't blame you." She said, "I can tell you a few things about these girls right now. They're white girls, but they haven't been anywhere in the world. They're narrow. They come from these little places where when they see someone else a little different from them they just look down on this person, not good enough for snuff. But I've been everywhere," she said. "I've lived in China, been around the world," she says, "I've had a Mammy to bring me up and all of that, but that doesn't make me any better than the other. I like to know other people and why they're different and so forth. And yet we're the same." She and I became the best of friends. We did everything together that one year. And we're still friends to this day.

JG: She stayed here, then?

EE: No, she lives in Seattle still. She's in her eighties. This last time when we talked on the phone, I could see she's kind of fading, you know. And I learned so much from her, because I used to tell her, "Alice, you must remember, I'm Hawaiian. My friends are not only haoles. They're not only white people. I have Japanese friends, have Chinese friends, I have all kinds. I have Filipino and what not." And so she said, "You try me, Elizabeth, you try me." So we lived in Honokaa. Like you say, whenever the drummer's drumming--you call them the drummers. They're the salespeople.

JG: Yeah, right.

EE: The salesmen came by and they all knew me, because I grew up in the area. And they would stop by and they would call from where the telephone central, and they'd say, "We're in town. We're going to Waimea. Do you want to go?" And I would say, "No, no. But I have a friend here that I'd like to take." "Okay." So, we would all go. So I told her, "This drummer is Japanese. He's going to take us to Waimea. Okay? He might take us to a Japanese restaurant. We're going to eat Japanese food." She says, "That's all right." So we go.

JG: What were these people selling at that time?

EE: Different things to the stores. You know, they'd go to the stores to sell, to pick up orders that they would need.

JG: They weren't going house to house?
EE: No, no, no, no, no. They were dealing with the business houses. But they would always stay overnight in Honokaa. You see. And of course, they would take the teachers out wherever they wanted to go. That's part of our social life.

(Laughter)

EE: And so he took us to this restaurant where they served sashimi. And you know, I was born and raised in Hawaii, ate raw fish the Hawaiian way, but I wouldn't eat the Japanese way. Isn't that something? So, when we were served this Japanese dinner, we sat down and I looked at the raw fish and I told her, "Don't eat that. That's not good. That's not prepared the way we do it." But she asked him, "How do you eat this raw fish?" He says, "You dip it into your (shoyu sauce) saucer and eat it." She says, "Delicious!" She says, "Elizabeth, try yours." I said, "No, I don't care for it." When I got home, she says, "Just think you were born and raised here and you don't even eat that." And I thought, "My goodness, why should I let her beat me?" You see, I'm always challenging. So I started. Alice taught me that. Well, it took a haole girl to teach me that, you see? So many other little things.

And then she was always devising ways of enjoying ourselves. Our social life was so limited. When Easter came, she said, "Show me around the island, and hike." I said, "Hike!? Are you off your mind to go hiking around this island? My goodness, you know, we couldn't make it in one day." "But maybe we could." I said, "I'll tell you. I'll tell you a way. I'll speak to Bob who is in charge of the central office of the telephone company. When the drummers are coming by, if he knows of any drummer who's going onto Kona, we could hike a ride with that drummer. And then dump us in Kana and we'll go stay with our friends, at cottages over there, teachers. Then while we're in Kona having fun, we'll look around for another drummer to bring us to Hilo. (Laughs) And so we did. And this drummer took us all the way to Kona. And I had already called my friends we were coming, so there we were. So we spent two nights with her. And I said, "Let's go to the stores, because that's where the drummers are. Otherwise, we'll have to hike, to pay for our ride to Hilo."

And when we walked into this store, and I asked the Japanese man who owned it if he knew of any drummers who were coming by. And he said, "Yes, there is a drummer who is here, you know, selling." "Oh." And he looked at me and he said, "I think I know you." And I looked at him and I said, "I don't think so." "Oh, yes. Did you go to school at Paauhau?" I was already a grown woman. And I said, "Yes." And he said, "Yeah, you were the little freckled girl. 'Cause you were the only freckled child among all those children." And I gave him my name. He says, "That's right." He says, "I remember you. You were the only girl and you were a cute looking little Hawaiian girl."

JG: Did he go to school with you?

EE: No, he was a Japanese school teacher. And we used their school house as part of Paauhau School when it expanded I guess.
JG: And he had gone into merchandising?

EE: He had gone into merchandising. But he remembered. Can you beat that? And I said, "Oh, for goodness sakes. I am so happy to meet you again. For two reasons. First, we're renewing our acquaintance, and, secondly, we need a ride to Hilo. Are you going to Hilo?" He said, "Yes, I'm going to Hilo tomorrow." And so I said, "Will you take us to Hilo, then?" He said, "I will, but you'll have to come over here to the store. I can't go over, go back, because I'm in this area and I have to go all the way back." We said, "All right." So we got ready that day to come, and he brought us to Hilo. And we stayed at YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association), you know, for the night. Then I said to Alice, "From now, Alice, let's go home on the train." 'Cause the train would come from Paauilo to Hilo and then back and forth, you see, in those days. The other train that I was speaking to you about would go to Pahoa and then Hilo, back and forth.

JG: The Paauilo one went up Hamakua side?

EE: That's right. So we came home on the Hamakua side, on the train. And on the train was Mrs. Giacommetti. Now, Mrs. Giacommetti was supervising principal then of the Hilo elementary schools. So we talked and what-not. And she was so impressed with Alice, this friend. Then we got off at Paauilo and there was Mr. (William) Nobriga, who ran a taxi service there. We got in his car and came home. The whole week was a wonderful experience, all through this Alice's suggestion. That was one of the things we did.

JG: What about summer vacations?

EE: I always came to Honolulu to summer school.

JG: Every year?

EE: Uh huh. I used to like the country. I wanted to look to the city.

(Laughter)

JG: When you were older, where did you stay, then? When you came to Honolulu?

EE: You mean, to school?

JG: Yeah.

EE: With my aunt, Mrs. Ching Shai.

JG: Oh, Martha Hohu?

EE: Martha Hohu's mother-in-law. Now, you see, she's also my cousin. Her mother and my mother are cousins. That's the same Cazimero family. 'Course part of my life at the Normal, I stayed with her, too. The second year. The first year, I stayed at Kaiulani Home; the second year, she wanted me to stay with her and I did.
JG: How nice.

EE: A wonderful year with Auntie. I'll never forget that year. Precious.

JG: I think we're about done...

END OF INTERVIEW
Tape No. 2-15-3-77

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Elizabeth Ellis (EE)

June 9, 1977

Alewa Heights, Hon., Hi.

BY: June Gutmanis (JG)

JG: I'm going to turn it on if you're going to talk about leprosy.

EE: Go ahead. And whenever Mother went down to this place, there was an old lady there and her face was always red. And of course I studied about leprosy in school and I would say to my mother, "I think that lady has leprosy." She says, "Oh, no, she doesn't. That's just her coloring, you know." And I don't know whether she came down with it or not, or was just...

JG: Just her coloring.

EE: Yeah. Because my aunt was taken to Molokai, you know. She's my mother's only sister. There were only two of them. And Mother told us that when she was growing up she was the kind of girl--you know how some of these teenagers are, they just want to go to their friends and what-not, and she must have picked it up from people that she went to stay with, you know. To visit. And of course when she came down with it, she was taken to Molokai.

JG: How old was she when she went to Molokai?

EE: She was a grown woman.

JG: You remember, then, when she went?

EE: I remember. I remember that I was just a little girl. I was, oh, about eight or nine. Because after she got to Molokai, she and I used to write letters all the time. And the thing that used to surprise me was the envelopes were always cut at the ends--opened, you know. And I used to say, "Why are these envelopes cut like that?" And so Mother said, "Well, I think those are all fumigated, and so that when the letters come, it's safe for us to use." I said, "Oh, that's how it is." And I wrote her letters all the time. When finally she married somebody.

JG: On Molokai?

EE: Yes, a leper, too. And she had two sons by this person, and in those days, they were allowed to marry, but if they had children, the children were
brought to the police station. They had a station here where these children were taken away from their parents. And kept there. And at that time, I was attending the Normal (School), you know, training. And because of this communication that I had between myself and my aunt, I went to see the boys; they were little boys.

JG: Who was taking care of them at the station?

EE: It was under the State. In those days, Territory.

JG: Were they nurses, or...

EE: It was like a nursing place. It was where they kept children. But they called it Kalihi station in those days. And so finally when I got out of school, I thought, gee, when I'm older, when I can work at Honolulu, I'm going to pick up the boys and see what I can, you know, keep up with them. But after that, I lost the boys. Until this year we don't know where they are. They're grown men.

JG: Do you know what their family name is?

EE: Yes, the family name is Soares.

JG: They'd be about forty or so now.

EE: All of that, yeah. They would be all of that.

JG: How long did they stay in the hospital?

EE: Usually they keep them there until they're of age.

JG: You mean like 18 or 20 years old?

EE: Yes. Uh huh.

JG: Were they allowed to go out in the community? And go to school?

EE: Yes, they were. They were allowed, because they were not lepers, because the children of lepers don't inherit leprosy. It's not a hereditary disease.

JG: Were all children kept there, or were some of them sent to relatives, or something?

EE: I think they were all sent there until relatives picked them up, but that's all I remember. But I lost track of those boys, and I've been real sorry. Maybe the only way I could do it now is to trace back through the health department.

JG: They may even make periodic checks, follow-ups...

EE: Yeah, could be.
JG: What was the general attitude of people about leprosy when you were small?

EE: Well, when I think of it in our own family, we didn't want to have, to associate with them, because we were afraid that we could pick up the germs. But in such a way so that the people who have lepers in their family would not notice it, because this was the attitude that some of them had.

(Tape noise)

EE: Let me see, how should I put it? Oh, you don't have it, but someday you'll have it, so when people go there and they say, "Oh, you may not have it now, but you may have it yet." That kind of attitude, you see. I remember going to the ship in Hilo to see lepers boarding a ship. They were being brought from Hilo to Honolulu here, to be taken to Kalaupapa. I remember that faintly, now that you and I are talking. I remember that so faintly. They were not as bad as—-you know, they hadn't yet lost their noses and their ears, but already the doctors had said that they had leprosy. And, oh, there was a great deal of weeping and crying and everything else by the families. But some were not careful. They were careless. And that's what spread infections.

JG: Do you think that people were more afraid of certain ethnic groups or do you recall any kind of...

EE: Uh uh.

JG: They didn't say that Hawaiians got it more, or Chinese got it more...

EE: No, no. No, no. Not that. To me, as I grew up and I began to think about it—-because while I was at the Normal I wrote a paper. I did research and wrote a paper on leprosy because my aunt was, you know, on Molokai. And I began to realize that leprosy could be controlled. It didn't make me feel as though, oh, I mustn't be associating with this family because they had a leper in their family. No, it wasn't like that, and they didn't feel that way toward us either. But it was never that kind of feeling. It was only the Hawaiians. But they always say the Chinese brought it here. That's why they call leprosy mai pake, you see.

JG: The only people you knew that had it were Hawaiians, then?

EE: Were Hawaiians. I don't know of any other race.

JG: Did you ever go out to Molokai to see your aunt?

EE: Never did. In those days we weren't allowed.

JG: Oh, really?

EE: Yeah. We weren't allowed to go. Because I have read few things about the Queen going to visit and other people. That was special.

JG: But not everybody else.
EE: No. Like Robert Louis Stevenson went there, you know. I was reading an account of how he went there and met (Father) Damien and all of that. But not people. So that's why when I went to the group when Siloama (Protestant Church at Kalaupapa) was rebuilt and we all went, I asked among the people. They had their graves there. And so I asked any of the older ones—the people who were lepers once upon a time—do they remember a person by the name of Christina Soares. They didn't know. I guess they came later. At that time I was already going into my sixties, you see.

JG: Oh, that's quite a while ago, then?

EE: Uh huh.

JG: I'd like to go back and ask you some questions to kind of pick up on some things that we missed in the other interviews. When you were living with your grandmother, how many houses were in that community?

EE: Let me see now. One, two, three, four, six, seven. There were seven houses, including ours.

JG: Were there any schools, churches, stores or other buildings besides the seven houses?

EE: There was one church. Just one church. And that was our church. The Protestant Church. The Catholic Church was further down Paauau, makai. We were at Paauau uka. There was just our church. And one family was a Portuguese family and they were Catholics, so they didn't come to our church. So the only people that came to our church were the Hawaiians.

JG: They were all Hawaiian?

EE: All Hawaiians, including my grandmother.

JG: When you moved back to the Paauhau plantation, what size of a community was that?

EE: Oh, it was quite a big plantation. That was when they had Japanese camp and Chinese camp, Filipino camp, Portuguese camp and Hawaiian camp. And of course all the—as I call it—the skilled laborers' area.

JG: Your father lived in the skilled labor area?

EE: Uh huh.

JG: Just about how many houses were there?

EE: Let's see, there was the manager, assistant manager, the head luna, the engineers, the bookkeeper. Oh, I'd say a dozen.

JG: How far was that from the nearest camp?
EE: It would be about from here to Liliha.

JG: Maybe like half a mile, something like that?

EE: Even closer.

JG: Were the other camps like about that far apart, too?

EE: No. They were all close.

JG: Would this be like right next to each other?

EE: Right next to each other. Uh huh.

JG: How did you know when you were walking around, or riding around that you moved from one camp to another? Was there any distinguishing...

EE: Well, by the people. Most of the people in this area were Japanese. And you move along and there would be Hawaiians. And you go along and they'd be Chinese.

JG: Was there anything you could see, other than the faces of the people that would say this is Japanese camp, Chinese camp, Hawaiian camp?

EE: Yeah, the Hawaiians always beautified their surroundings. Same thing with the Portuguese, with plants. They always had flowers. And the Japanese had vegetables, they always grew vegetables. The Hawaiians always had flowers. The Portuguese had flowers and vegetables, and always pretty, you know. Like if you passed the Portuguese yard, they always had little curtains, you can tell, and everything was scrubbed so clean, you know. That's the way they were. Now the Hawaiians were not too much that way, you see. They kept their places all right. Also like our Hawaiians now keep it in the country. But not the Portuguese. You could always tell. They had crocheted curtains. And their porches were scrubbed until you could almost eat off their floor. That's the way they were. The Chinese, they had their vegetable gardens, because my mother's cousin—her former husband was a Chinese and she had divorced from him, but this Chinese man worked on the plantation and my cousin lived with him. He had the boys. She took the girls. They had five children. She took the two girls and left the three boys with him. Well, whenever we needed certain kind of cabbage and onions and everything, my mother would say, "Go off to the camp to Uncle Muhu and tell him we want some of this kind of cabbage and this onion."

(Laughter)

EE: We'd go up. And we loved to go up there, because Uncle Muhu, in those days he still wore the long queue and he always had it rolled up on top of his head with a little cap on top of it. And that used to intrigue us all the time.

(Laughter)
JG: Did your aunt keep in touch with her ex-husband after they divorced?
EE: No, she didn't.
JG: They each went their own way?
EE: That's right.
JG: How did the people in the community take that? Pretty casual?
EE: Uh huh. That way the life is, I guess. Because that happened in every family more or less, you know. Not too much in those days as in these days, but, we didn't think much of it, you know. Mother didn't speak of it as being this and that. Now-days, you hear the children talking about these things, but not in those days.
JG: We're pretty casual.
EE: That's right.
JG: When you left the plantation, you came to Normal School, right?
EE: When I left the plantation, we moved from that plantation. We went to Olaa.
JG: Oh, I remember it, yeah.
EE: You see, my family moved to another plantation, because Daddy took another position.
JG: Where did you live at Olaa?
EE: Same thing, as skilled, right in Olaa. In the skilled laborers' area again. You see, there's that camp business again. On the other side of the track were the other folks. (Laughs)
JG: Otherwise it was pretty much the same as...
EE: As any other plantation.
JG: Now at that time, there was also a store in both of these camps? Grocery store...
EE: Yeah. They have grocery store, and this grocery store, well, one store was usually the plantation store. On every plantation they usually have a store. And then, some of the Japanese started up their little stores. And the Chinese...
JG: Oh, they let them do that...
EE: Yes, yes, little stores, and they had little barber shops, bakeries that
they started. They were allowed to have their stores then.

JG: Could they carry the same things in their store that the plantation store did, or did they have to...

EE: They carried the same things from a smaller capacity. Just a few little things, like crackers, sugar and cookies, and candy, things of that sort. And bread in the bakeries. In those days they didn't have the type of bakeries we have. The Chinese were the bakers.

JG: What kind of things were they baking?

EE: They baked pies, bread. Those were the main things. And then the Chinese cookies. Oh, those are great things when we could go to the bakery! (Laughs) And they get their bread.

JG: What did they do, a hard white bread? Or brown bread or sweet bread?

EE: Just the hard white bread. Uh huh. But it tasted good to us.

JG: It was from Olaa that you came up to Honolulu to the Normal School?

EE: Oh, from Olaa, yes, uh huh.

JG: Now the first school you had was where? It was up on the Hamakua coast?

EE: That's right, in Paauau.

JG: That was where your grandmother lived?

EE: That's right. And at that school, in the beginning there were two teachers, and later on, when I came out to teach (1923), it had grown to four teachers, you see. But at that time, only two teachers. And one was a teacher; Miss (Annie) Soares was the lady who instilled the teaching in me. I loved her so much. She was such a wonderful teacher that I thought I'm going to be like Miss Soares and be a teacher when I grow up, you know. That kind of thing.

JG: Had she retired by the time you came back to teach?

EE: No.

JG: She was still teaching?

EE: Still teaching and she was principal down here at Lanakila. She retired and I went to her retirement. I was teaching over here at another school. Isn't that something?

JG: That's amazing.

EE: Wonderful.
JG: After you taught there, what was the next school that you went to?
EE: You mean, to teach?
JG: Yeah.
EE: Well, when I first went off to teach, as I say, I went to Honokaa, not at Paauau.
JG: That's where you met the haole lady?
EE: That's right. That's where I met Alice (Franklin, EE's good friend).
JG: And then you went to...
EE: Then I went to Kauai. To teach, yes, uh huh.
JG: How long did you teach on Kauai?
EE: One year.
JG: Where was that?
EE: At Hanamaulu.
JG: That was a plantation town, then?
EE: Plantation town.
JG: Small?
EE: Small. It's still there.
JG: Yeah. Then you came back to the Big Island.
EE: Then I came back to the Big Island and I taught in Hilo. I went to teach in Hilo at Waiakea-Kai. Right there near where the airport is in that area. I taught there until we moved to Honolulu.
JG: Now when were you married?
EE: I was married in 1927.
JG: Let's go back one more step again. How many brothers and sisters did you have?
EE: Four brothers and four sisters, eight of us.
JG: And when you were living with your grandmother, it was you and your sister?
EE: And my brother.
JG: And one brother.

EE: That's right.

JG: And when you went to Normal School, were your parents able to help you, or did you have to work your way through?

EE: No, when I came to the Normal it was my haole grandfather--that was Daddy's adopted father--who sent me to school. He didn't have any children, you see. Well, that's a story and a half. If you hear our story, it's laughable. You want to hear that, too? Well, when Daddy was born a Mersburg, and he was taken and adopted by an aunt, Mrs. (Mary Kawahiokalani) Spencer. So he grew up. When he was half grown, his adopted mother married McMillan. I don't know what happened to that Spencer, whether he died or there was a divorce...

JG: Now your father's mother was Hawaiian?

EE: My father's mother was Hawaiian.

JG: And what was his real father?

EE: His real father was half-German and half-Hawaiian.

JG: With the name Mersburg?

EE: Mersberg. And then this lady who adopted him was an aunt, Mrs. Spencer. And she became Mrs. McMillan. So when this Mrs. McMillan died, my grandfather was free, this second one, you know. The haole, McMillan. And they didn't want to lose him because he was such a good haole. Kind, and they just loved him. So my mother who was then married to my father said, "I have a cousin who lives at Kawaihae. I'm going to get her to be my father-in-law's wife." Young cousin, only 18. And Grandpa was already in his fifties. Well, anyway, they were married, but I don't know whether I told you this before or not.

JG: I believe you did. I'm beginning to recall that he did marry the 18 year old girl.

EE: That's right and she just made up her mind that she was going to be just as good as any English woman on the plantation and she did. She was very fond of me, so when I grew up and it was time to send a child to school, she chose me. My grandfather was fond of my youngest, next sister, but she wasn't crazy about going to school, so I had a chance. And that's how I came to school, but with the stipulation that I was to carry his name. So that's how I went under McMillan.

JG: Oh, I see.

EE: Uh huh. Took Grandpa's name. And before I retired I had it legally changed.
JG: To McMillan?

EE: Uh huh. So I'm legally a McMillan now. So I had told him, "Oh, Grandpa it's a shame I'm a girl, because when I marry I won't be able to carry your name, but I'll carry your name proudly for you, so that you won't regret it. You know." He was the one that educated me. He and my auntie. I call her Auntie. She really should be "Grandmother," but she would never let us. She says, "Don't call me Grandmother, because I am your auntie. I'm just married to your grandfather. Call him your grandfather, but I'm Auntie." (Laughs)

JG: Well, if she was that young, she probably didn't want to be...

(Laughter)

EE: No.

JG: That's not an awful lot older than you girls were, was she?

EE: Gee, when I went to teach, I was 19. She was just getting into her forties, over forty. See, she was young.

JG: She was still quite young then.

EE: Yeah.

JG: Where did you meet your husband?

EE: On Kauai, when I was teaching there.

JG: Oh, was he working on the plantation, or...

EE: No, he was working in the garage with his brother.

JG: They had one outside the plantation?

EE: Yeah, because you see Hanamaulu is very close to Lihue, and we always came up to Lihue to do our buying and--you know, things of that sort--and when they had socials. And I went to church at Lihue Church. And Richmond worked there. But you know how I met Richmond? When I went to Kauai, my friend, my classmate who lived at Kapaa said to me, "Elizabeth, why don't you come up and spend a weekend with me?" I was living at Hanamaulu in a cottage. And I said, "Sure, I'd be glad to." So when we got up there, she said, "You know, they're having a dance at Lihue tonight. Would you like to go?" And I said, "Any boys? Who's going to take us to the dance?" And she says, "We'll find the boys there."

(Laughter)

EE: So we went to the dance. And, of course, when we went there
were all these young boys. Richmond and many others. We sat there, and I said, "Let me look. Now which one shall I choose?" So, I said, "That's the boy I want to dance with. That's the one I want, that one." She says, "That's Richmond Ellis." I said, "That's the boy I want to meet. Do you know him?" "Yeah."

(Laughter)

JG: You picked him out?
EE: Yeah.

JG: You were married during that year on Kauai?
EE: No. The following year we were married. I came back to Hawaii and we were married here.

JG: He followed you back?
EE: Yeah.

JG: Was it difficult to talk him into coming back to the Big Island?
EE: No. Wasn't at all.

JG: What did he do when he got on the Big Island?
EE: He went to a garage. He worked for a garage there. And worked all along while we were in Hilo until the paper mill opened, and he went to work in the paper mill. You know, they were using the bagasse and turning it into this paper that they laid out in the field. And that's where he worked. Until we moved to Honolulu in was it 1940 or 1941? The war started in 1941, didn't it? 1940, 1940.

JG: Why did you choose to come to Honolulu?
EE: Well, that's another little story. Now, when we were living in Hilo, opposite us was this (Mariant) McGregor girl who had married a Hawaii boy. Mrs. Lee Loy she became. And her mother was visiting her from Honolulu, Mrs. McGregor. And this Mrs. McGregor, well, we took her around, showed her around and so finally Mrs. McGregor said, "You know, I'm having friends coming up from Honolulu, Commander Martin, and we're going to entertain them here at my daughter's place. We'd like to have you folks come over." But it was lunch time, so the men were working. So, I said, "Well, I'll come across." So I went across and I met Commander Martin and his wife. And he had a little girl. Lovely people. I just enjoyed them. Here was a man very high in the Navy, just as common as we are. So I said to him, "What are you and your wife returning to Honolulu next week?" And I said, "Well, you know, we are planning to go to Honolulu to take our daughter to Kamehameha School." That's Betty. "She had passed her test and we were going to bring her down." And, "We are having a little party. We are having a little luau, so
"we'd love to have you come." They were staying at the military camp at Kilauea. "On your way down, come over to our house. Bring all of your bags and everything and stay with us. Then we'll have the party and we'll take you to the boat." In those days, they didn't have the planes yet. Only had those ships that went between the islands. He said they'd love that.

So I invited that whole gang over, and we had such a good time. He met Richmond. So he said to Richmond, "Haven't you ever thought of going to work in Pearl Harbor?" And Richmond said, "No, 'cause I haven't had the opportunity to." He says, "I'm inviting you. Why don't you come and work to Pearl Harbor for me?" And we looked, and we smiled. We thought sometimes people just say that to be nice. And Mrs. Martin said to me, "Mrs. Ellis, when my husband invites anyone, he means it. Your husband would be very foolish not to take him up on that." So I said, "Well, I'll have to talk to him." When the party was over and everything and we drove them to the boat and we got them some sugar cane and he said, "Well, all right, next week when you folks come to Honolulu, I want to entertain you down at my place at Ford Island." With the McGregors, all this family, 'cause they were all friends. Oh, he was so nice.

He made a great, lovely party for us, outdoors. And it was the first time I saw these, you know porches outside and everything, and these great big steaks, everything. Oh, it was just so lovely. And so he said, "You're coming?" To Richmond. Also to the son-in-law of Mrs. McGregor. And so I said to these two men, "You two are foolish if you don't come. Face it. Why don't you go ahead? Leave those jobs behind." Then, 'cause he told my husband, "You folks are just working for nothing. You're not earning anything here. They're using your strength and giving you nothing in return for that." So when they came out, we went home, Richmond came down to work. I stayed on back with the children. With my little boy, 'cause Betty was at Kamehameha then. See, that was the reason for coming, to put her in school. Well, I thought, now I'm stuck in Hilo by myself. Richmond is down here for a year. (laughs)

And so I went to my principal after he left, and told her, I said, I'm putting in my request for transfer to Honolulu in June, because Richmond has gone to Honolulu to work." "Oh, I see. Gee, that's too bad it's the middle of the year." I said, "That's all right, I understand that." I took it; there it was. Well, at that time, Mrs. (Luigi) Giacommetti of Hilo was our supervising principal. And she and I were on the board of the YWCA. Evidently my principal must have told her that I had made this request. Just about three weeks after Richmond had left, she drives up into my yard and she calls, "Elizabeth!" I said, "Yes?" I came out. I was housecleaning. "You're going to Honolulu to teach." I said, "What?" She said, "I just came back from Honolulu. I got a position for you. You're going." I didn't know what to do. And in those days the bank closed, they worked all day, they didn't half a day like they do now on Saturdays. So I said, "Oh, thank you for coming early enough." So I went down and got money for my tickets and I had a feeling that somehow or other I might get to Honolulu early. I had gone to the bank and borrowed money and paid off all my debts, everything, so that in case I could come in a hurry, I had nothing to worry about. Sure enough, I just packed my clothes and went to my sister and said, "You folks move down to our house. I'm going to Honolulu. I got a position down there."
(Laughs)

JG: Was this a house (at Waiakea, Hilo) that you folks owned? Or were you renting it?

EE: No, we owned it. We owned it. So my sister came to live in my house. And I said, "You rent your house and you come live in my house." Because she had a little house and had children growing up and they were crowded. So I said, "Come and live in my house." I had a big house in Hilo. So they lived there for many years until we sold the house. The children were half grown.

JG: When you got over to Honolulu and your husband was working at Pearl Harbor, were you very aware that the international situation was becoming kind of...

EE: No, no I wasn't aware at all. I thought everything was all right. Till that morning. You know. We knew that there were buildings that were coming up at Pearl Harbor, but I guess I wasn't paying too much attention to that. I was, well, I was a little naive or something. I don't know. Until...

JG: How did you feel about the Japanese people here after the bombing?

EE: I didn't have any feeling of resentment against them. Because I felt it wasn't their doing. This, to me, the Japanese have always been one of us. We were born and raised together, so there was no feeling of that kind. No, never did have any resentment towards. They were always our friends.

JG: Things are changing today. How do you feel about things like Kahoolawe and that?

EE: Well, I think now, see, this Kahoolawe problem has come about because we are aware of our heritage now. I think that's why. I haven't thought very deeply about it. I have sympathy for our Hawaiians. I know that this is the feeling I have, not only about Kahoolawe, but as a whole, that today many Hawaiians would still have what they owned originally had everything been done right in the beginning when the Mahele took place. When that (Great) Mahele took place, if the ali'i who was in, who was reigning then had gone beyond giving in the land, but had said, "They cannot sell the land. They cannot do this to the land because this is theirs," they would still have it. That wasn't done. Another thing, at that time I didn't think much of the land then, until I realized that when this Mahele took place, even though the Hawaiians had been given a long, long time to make claims, you know, come in and say that they are this and they live on this island. No one came to them; especially the Hawaiians who lived in the valleys and far away from the source. Nobody went to them and said this is this and explained things to them. And what happened when it was closed? This is what happened. More foreigners owned land than the Hawaiians themselves. Now who's to be blamed for that? I feel the Hawaiian government is to
be blamed for that. Maybe that's why we weren't able to get our share. Because my people were from the country, way back in the sticks where communication was nil in those days. You see?
So, I feel, that's why, when these boys (members of the Kahoolawe Ohana) are doing what they are doing, I really, I feel sorry for them. They're doing what we, our ancestors didn't do, because they didn't know any better.

JG: What do you think specifically should be done with Kahoolawe?

EE: Well, the other night, I had a glimpse of land here and there on Kahoolawe. There were shrubs and grass here and there, and I thought, in the early days, Kahoolawe had enough. It was able to support a population of, I don't know how many hundred people. Not very many people, because of the water situation. But there were people living there, and if they had not placed goats and all of that, today Kahoolawe would still be habitable. People could still make a living on that island, I'm quite sure. And they're close enough to Maui where they could get help back and forth. Even the water. They could catch their water.
I don't know whether it rains, see. I haven't studied enough about the climate to know whether Kahoolawe has its rainy season or not.

JG: It's a bit like Makaha and Kaena Point...

EE: Uh huh, I see.

JG: You have some seasonal rains. There's brackish springs in two or three locations which if you drilled a little further back, you might get fresh water.

EE: Yeah. Well, there you are. Look at the population at Makaha now. The same could have been done there for Kahoolawe. On a smaller scale, maybe.

JG: What about areas like Makua? On the other side of Makaha, when you're going up towards Kaena Point? It's a big, broad valley.

EE: Yes. Oh, there are people who are still living in that...

JG: Down at the mouth along the ocean, there's a kind of a shanty town.

EE: Uh huh.

JG: But the valley itself, half of it is McCandless land and half of it is like state land on lease to the United States government. And they are using it for military maneuvers.

EE: Do you think the military needs---I don't know whether the military needs land for their maneuvering.

JG: Well, I have some questions, my own positive thinking is that at least when they hold on to it, it's not being overdeveloped. And maybe (in) the future this may be a very decided asset.
EE: Uh huh. Uh huh.

JG: How far you think groups of people, regardless of what their background is, should go toward trying to get land like Kahoolawe turned back?

EE: It would be a good thing to have it turned back, because there are many people who'd like to live there if they had the chance, I'm quite sure. And if they could, with the transportation the way it is today, our communication is so close, something could be made.

JG: What are your feelings about the status of Hawaiian Homestead land right now?

EE: I think it's improving since (Commissioner Billie) Beamer took hold. I was so happy when I read that part where she is digging into these lands that have been leased. Where's the money? Well, you know some years back, when this young girl, Hansen...

JG: Diana Hansen.

EE: Yeah, when she was running (for U.S. Representative), she was invited to come to our Queen Emma one evening, Hawaiian Civic Club, to speak. And she spoke of this thing, and she said, "You folks have lots of land that is being used by somebody else." And she cited a case of some people on Molokai, a Hawaiian family that wanted this particular piece of land, but to get to the land they had to build a road. So they did make some kind of a road to get into it and they planted and things just grew there, whatever they planted. And so finally the Commission and somebody else said, "Okay, now." They came around and they saw how good the land was, wherever these people were, and said, "But you must come down to the tax office or something and make claims in the morning." So the people went down there. When they got there they looked about. They said, "Be there at this hour." And then finally they appeared, the folks who were supposed to get this thing all in order. "Oh, you're too late. It's already done." The other people got it. And they were out. They had to go out. She (Hansen) was telling us that. Oh, I'm telling you, it made me so cross. Well, she was telling us all this at the meeting. Well, the rest of the Hawaiians, most of the people were from Papakolea, and they sat and they listened and it was something just to listen to and nothing more was done about it. And she started telling us more about, she says, "You have lot of land that these people are using. People who have money, that are using your land and not paying you for it. And they're benefiting from your lands. You people must wake up and do something about it." No one did. Well, for one thing, they were mostly older people. That's why I'm so happy that we have somebody in there that has the gumption to dig down into our lands. So you see, the Hawaiian Homes lands, we have some good lands. We really do, but what has happened? Somebody else has scooped up all these good lands for them, and left these lands that are worthless for people to live on.

JG: Parker Ranch has hundreds of acres on lease. Mayor (Elmer) Cravalho has hundreds of acres on lease.
EE: You see? Well, why should they when they have their own lands? Leave this to the Hawaiians. And Hawaiians have asked and asked and asked in the name of—no lands, no. Not only that, there were no funds. I remember Keaukaha when Keaukaha first started. We applied. We had our property then. We had built on our own land, fee simple. Then I said, "Gee, wouldn't it be nice if we could have another piece of land near the beach at Keaukaha?" So we put our name in. "You can't. You own land." So out we went. So okay.

So when we came to this island, we said, "Well, we don't have property here. We still have property on the other island. Well, it's not doing us any good. So, let's apply here." Again they said, "No, you're not eligible because you own property. You see?" And this was at Waimanalo. How wonderful the land down there is, because we've gone to visit some of our friends and the things that they have growing and their houses are lovely, you know. They built houses so they're comfortable. So I'm very happy that Beamer is doing something about it.

JG: What factors have re-excited your interest in your Hawaiian background and the interest of people around you?

EE: Well, I've always been, from the time when I began to teach (1923), that's when I became aware. When my grandfather made me proud to feel that I had Hawaiian and I was educated and could hold my own against—you know, here's a haole, and he says, "I'm a haole and you're Hawaiian, and you can stand and face me now straight and not dull and look up." I became more aware of what we can do as Hawaiians if we went ahead and educated ourselves but don't forget that we're still Hawaiians. But learn this thing that makes it possible for us to push...

JG: What do you think has gotten some of these other Hawaiians, particularly some of the younger ones, going?

EE: I don't...

JG: Well, you were turned on by your grandfather. Now what do you think got some of these other younger Hawaiians doing things that you said a few minutes ago something about the fact that they're doing something that the Hawaiians should have done years ago? What do you think has made them aware?

EE: I think it was there all the time from their parents. Maybe they have heard their parents talking about these things and so forth, and when they grew up and became educated they banded together. Maybe their organizations, getting together, speaking as Hawaiians, you know. Perhaps that was a push for them.

JG: If a young Hawaiian came to you and asked you your advice as to what Hawaiian things should be held onto and how to hold onto them, what would you tell them?

EE: I would say you hold onto your language. Learn your language. And learn because your language will give you the background. If you don't
know your language, you will not be able to. And teach your children.

Have time to.

The music, we know, that is possible. Through music, that's the easiest way. Through music. Like I'm doing with my daughter. When she went away to school, I wanted her to learn this, learn this, learn this, learn this, and oh, she wasn't interested. She gets over there, and they say, "You come from Hawaii? Why don't you dance?" "Yes." "Can you dance?" "Yes." "Well, how about putting on a program? How about giving us a talk on this?" She wasn't prepared. So she writes home. "I want something on this and this." So I sent all this material. She comes home now and she is so full of Hawaiian that everything is Hawaiian now. Sometimes just going away and knowing, oh, that "I have a background, too."

Because so many years our background was so—we were made to be ashamed that we were Hawaiians. Somehow, the things we did were not so, well, not cultural. You see, the way we lived, you know, and the beliefs, this kahuna. They all say, "Oh, they believe in kahunas." And all that. To us, even to the young Hawaiians, they see a kahuna, they always thinking of a sorcerer. They're not thinking of a kahuna as a professor of this and of that, you know, medicine, and house-building and so forth. When we want to build a house, we go and get a contractor. We don't build it ourself, because we don't know how. Or an architect, he plans it. Well, all right, the Hawaiians had that, too.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO.

EE: You mean, to keep the Hawaiians...

JG: Well, obviously as time goes on, all people change, and when two groups of people get together there are some things in each way of doing things that are much more valuable than others. And we will change. We can't stay in the past. So what things do you think in your Hawaiian background, in your experience, are most important for Hawaiians to hold onto?

EE: Well, their language. And if they have their own land, they better hold onto that, too. Because that's all they have. The land is really where they came from. See, they must hold onto their land and not be like our ancestors who were too easy. They didn't realize, they weren't taught the importance of holding onto what was theirs.

JG: And how would you recommend a person go about these two things?

EE: Well, right now, you see, the language is being taught here and there, but it's not systematic. Just a little group learning here, little group learning there. It should be taught, maybe, in the school, by the university or high school. Start with there. And even right in the homes, parents who can speak it—well, of course there are parents who can't speak it. So that's the trouble, too. But perhaps start it and maybe control it out of the Department of Education. And even if the teachers are not "degreed" people—because that's one of the things
that many of them are saying, "Oh, but they are not degreed. They don't know how to teach. They speak it, but they don't know how to teach it." But how are they going to be able to impart these things, and have people interested to say, "Now I'm going out to really study and so I will have a degree and teach it?" You see.

And with the land, hold onto their land. And work with the powers that be. Like they say, some people are saying, "This land belongs to me, and because of this, the leases, well, we lost it." Well, they won't be able to get that land back, it's too far gone, but we may get it through this thing that's going in Congress now.

JG: Reparation.

EE: That's right. We may get it that way. And once it gets back, don't all say, "I want my share now." No. Keep it in a pool, so that we can help our youngsters to realize that they're Hawaiians. But it starts in the home. The churches could help. The schools could help. But they have to start it in their homes. To be, to have this pride in their hearts. Not this foolish pride, but the pride that, "I'm Hawaiian. We were this way. And we can still be that way." See? I don't know if I'm putting it...

JG: I think you're doing very well.

EE: Like, for example, the way we do it, the way I'm doing it. You see, my daughter's married to a haole, naturally, but Jack (Jenkins) is a very fine person. He wants the children to learn all this. And he comes along, too. Sometimes we hear him speaking Hawaiian, it's really laughable, you know, but he's trying to show his children that he's interested in their culture, see. And this is one thing also that Betty said, that a few years back, Jack took the whole family back to meet his mother and his brothers and sisters and uncles and what-not. And they were there for the whole month, visiting the family. On the East Coast, North Carolina and Virginia, all along there. When they got back, Betty asked the boys, "Well, what do you think about your cousins? And about you?" And one of the boys, the older one, said, he says, "They're fine, but I'm glad I'm Hawaiian."

(Laughter)

JG: What about your son? Is his family doing anything along that line?

EE: No, it's sad. That's what I'm very sad about. You see, when Sonny (Richard Kaliko Ellis) left here, he went into the Marine Corps right after graduation. He was just 17. Graduated from high school and went to the Marine Corps. And then he married this girl from New York. And there isn't anything Hawaiian about him any more. Maybe we're wrong, but Betty and I are always talking about that.

JG: Where's he living?

EE: He's living in San Clemente (California) now. That's near, his base is...
JG: He's still in the military?

EE: In military. He'll be retired at the end, the first of August.

JG: Where does he intend to live then?

EE: Right there. In San Clemente. They have already purchased---their home was already built when we got there. And he has a business there now. Only the little boy, he's a big man now, he'll be 20 this year. He lived one year with us when he was nine years old. And he still remembers many of the things this time and we talk, and he says, "Yeah, I remember this. I remember that. Didn't this happen? Didn't this?" You know, telling me a little bit about the history. So I felt very happy about that. And I said, "What about your ukulele? Aren't you keeping it up?" "Oh, no, because nobody..."

JG: Nobody to play with.

EE: Nobody plays, and he (grandson) and my son play beautifully. He (son) can play on the organ, he can sing, has a nice voice and everything, but he's too, I would say, too haole. (Laughs) And yet, he (son) has a soft way about him, you know, he's still Hawaiian in his way. But he doesn't do things Hawaiian. He still loves his Hawaiian food.

(Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW
Life Histories of Native Hawaiians

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