BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:  

CHERYL PETERSON, 26, artist, taro leaf picker and taro harvester

Cheryl Lynne Peterson, Caucasian, was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1952. She graduated from an LA high school in 1970 and from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1974.

Her varied work experiences in LA include employment as an architectural librarian, a German-English translator, a picture framer, an artists' model, a commercial illustrator, and a graphic artist.

Cheryl moved from LA to Waipio with Lance Gravett in March 1976. Since moving to Waipio she has made several trips back to the Mainland to sell her art work. She also supports herself by picking taro leaves and harvesting taro for Waipio farmers. Cheryl enjoys reading and sewing.
BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:    LANCE GRAVETT, 33, artist and taro harvester

Lance Woody Gravett, Caucasian, was born in 1945 in Santa Ana, California. From age three he grew up in Los Angeles. He has a Bachelor's and a Master's in Fine Arts from the University of California at Los Angeles. In 1974 he lived briefly in Florence, Italy. He has held a wide range of jobs from Chicken Delight employee to house painter to architectural model maker.

Lance visited Hawaii for a month in 1974. Nine months later he moved from California to Waipio more permanently, although he makes extended visits back to LA. On one of his extended Mainland visits, Lance met Cheryl Peterson and the two of them returned to Waipio.

Lance paints, as well as harvests taro for a living. He enjoys swimming and playing harmonica. He is a memeber of the "Waipio Whompers," a Waipio basketball team.
This is an interview with Cheryl Peterson and Lance Gravett. Today is June 27, 1978. We're at their home in Waipio Valley. Okay. Can you first tell us your full names?

Cheryl: Middle name? I'm Cheryl Lynne Peterson.

Lance: I'm Lance Woody Gravett.

VL: When and where were you born?

Cheryl: In 1952, in Los Angeles, on the west side.


Cheryl: Highway child.

Lance: Santa Ana on the birth certificate. I remember the fog.

VL: Can you tell us about the circumstances surrounding your first visit to Waipio?

Cheryl: I met Lance in Los Angeles, and we lived together for two months. And he was coming back to Hawaii, after having been back in Los Angeles from Hawaii for three months. So I came back.

VL: And what were your first impressions?

Cheryl: I came down in the dark. It was really dark. And I woke up here in the morning. I didn't think too much about it. We went down to the beach and came back and it started to rain. And it didn't stop for a whole month. That's what I remember the most.
VL: Where were you living, when you first came down?

Cheryl: Right here. We've always lived here. This is the only place I've lived anywhere in the islands. And have not been on any of the other islands except this.

VL: How did you find this place to live in?

Cheryl: Lance had it already. That's Lance's story.

VL: Okay, Lance?

Lance: Well, I came because I saw a surf movie and I said, "Hawaii. Boy, would I like to go there."

And this friend I was with said, "Oh, I know somebody who lives there."

So I said, "Write 'em a letter. Maybe he'd like some company."

So about two weeks later, she called me up and said, "When do you want to go?"

And I said, "Well, I don't know. How about two or three weeks from now or something?" And it turned out to be Tom Schreiber. So we got off the plane, went over to Tom's in the moonlight. Lucky she brought a candle because it was pitch black in the forest.

Cheryl: Oh, you came down in the dark too?

Lance: No, we came down in the light. But by the time we got over to there....I had to jump in the ocean, first thing. That was nice.

VL: What had you been doing, and where were you, just prior to coming here?

Lance: I guess I was....where was I? Wait a minute.

Cheryl: You were still a grad student?

Lance: I'd been out of school for a year and a half or something. Had a studio in Los Angeles. Just working for a living. Painting houses, apartments. I was working for a contractor and I was his only painter. And would drive 40, 50 miles on the freeway everyday and...."Oh, Pasadena. Wonderful."

So anyway, stayed here for a month, went back. Took a lot of pictures. So then I went up to see my sister and brother-in-law. They lived up north in California. And showed them the
pictures. And I was so tired of telling Hawaii stories by that time. Been back a month or something. So I said, "Ah, look at the pictures. If you got any questions."

So then, at the end of looking at the pictures they said, "Well, when do we leave?" So they came over here first. We were supposed to leave in three months. They left in four months and it tooked me about nine or something.

So Steve [Lance's brother-in-law] talked to Bill Jardine and arranged to build this house for him. And they were staying at Tom Araki's [hotel]. And Steve's a painter so he was painting down in the [hotel] kitchens. My sister doesn't like the smell of paint so he says, "Hey Tom, can I use the poi factory over there to paint?" [poi factory is non-functioning]

And Tom, "Eh, go ahead."

They kept writing me, "When are you coming?"

So I said, "Sometime."

YY: Lori is your sister?

Lance: Yeah. So, I don't know. I mean, I kept trying to leave. And everytime I got ready to leave, then something would happen. I got a show, parking tickets, etc. You know, this and that. So I kept having to stay longer and longer, and make more money. Because I was spending all this money. So anyway, I finally wound up here. And Steve had arranged for me to stay here. I already had a bed. That was real nice. It was on a piece plywood, though, at that time.

VL: What year was that?

Lance: I guess, what three years ago or something. Probably. I forget.


VL: And Cheryl, how long have you been here?

Cheryl: I came here 2-1/2 years ago. About.

VL: How do you support yourself now?

Cheryl: We get food stamps. And to buy the food stamps, we pull taro for William [Kanekoa]. And then whatever small money comes in. We always have things coming in from LA. And, particularly, I go back and forth. So far it's been once or twice a year sometimes. And sell drawings. And Lance sells paintings. And that's how we do it.
Lance: We pull taro for William.

Cheryl: Yeah, we do.

VL: How did you get that job with William?

Lance: Let's see. I ran out of money. All the money I had made and saved. Which didn't last too long. So I just figured I needed to do some work. And everybody down here pulled taro to make money. So I just, I knew "Canoe" Dave. And this guy Uno, he used to live down here. So I ran into him one day and I said, "Hey, you know any taro pulling work around?"

And he said, "Come out and work."

So I just showed up. Late. They were already done practically. Just finishing up. So I went out in the patch. And the first time I saw William, he was over on the bank. "Canoe" David had taken his [taro] boat in. So William's out there. "Who's that guy?" I mean, now I know that's what he said. But he was kind of looking over at me real hard.

So I had figured I got it made, about $30 today, all the work I did. Afterwards, I said, "Hey, how much do you think I made?"

And they said, "Oh, probably $2."

"You got to be kidding." I really thought they were kidding. They weren't.

VL: That was about one bag that you pulled then?

Lance: It seemed like about 9,000 pounds to me.

VL: How did you like the work?

Lance: It was neat being out in the water. All the neat plants and...it was kind of fun. I always liked physical labor. If I have to. But I guess I've grown to enjoy it, actually. It's always....unless it's raining too hard.

VL: How often do you pull now?

Lance: Two days a week. Sometimes more.

VL: How many hours each time?

Lance: Five or six, probably.

Cheryl: No, not that much. Three or four.
Lance: You leave early.

Cheryl: Yeah. We finish early, though.

VL: How many bags are you up to pulling in the day?

Lance: Probably seven or eight. Five. It all depends you know. Because there's only so much order and we divide it up into, okay, five bags, six bags, seven bags. Or whatever. Split 'em up. Whoever's hung over gets five bags. Whoever feels pretty good that day...it's the truth. Dave needed our help today, I'll tell you.

VL: When you first came down, how were you received by the local people?

Cheryl: Well, I didn't see hardly anyone. There were fewer people living here then. And most of the people that we knew were haoles. Steve and Lori sort of were our interpreters. Especially me, for the first several months. I stayed here for eight months, the first time I was here. Then I went back to Los Angeles. And didn't know that I was going to come back again. And the first eight months were sort of...things were...Steve and Lori don't drink beer, for one thing. So they don't associate with the same people. And we sort of were channeled by them, into certain kind of social relationships. And mostly with the haoles. Everyone was friendly, it was fine.

And one day, I guess it was the first time we had to pay rent. Lance handed me $20 and said, "You go pay the rent. Go take it over to Tom." Okay. And I went over. And Tom and Lynn [Uchigakuchi--a hired hand] were in the kitchen having lunch. They'd just finished picking [taro] leaf.

So I came to the door and Tom waved me in. So I came in and I handed him the rent. And he says, "Would you like a glass of wine?"

And I said, "Sure." He had never known, up until that time, that any of us were drinkers at all. So I sat down. And Lynn and Tom and I sat around. And so pretty soon, we finished up the bottle of wine. We were feeling pretty good. So Tom went over to the cabinet and he picked up a bottle of whiskey and brought it back to the table. And pretty soon, we finished off the bottle of whiskey. And I sort of went into the bathroom. And I laid down on the floor for a while. I don't know how Lynn ever got home.

And then I guess he sent Lynn in the bathroom looking for me. So they got me out. But they were very worried about me. And since then, we've all been really good friends. And that
sort of, that was the turning point for who we socialized with, and how. Down here. And especially, pulling taro has done that.

Lance: Cheryl's been accepted very well.

VL: I don't understand what you changed. You changed from what to what?

Cheryl: Mostly, we associated with the few haoles that were down here. I think there was Rainbow and Karen, and a little bit with Tom Schreiber if you wanted to go all the way over there. And Joe Oxspring. And Lynn.

Lance: Brad.

Cheryl: But Brad was already gone when I got here. And that was about it. We didn't really see anybody. And we didn't really socialize with Tom too much. Tom Araki. And there were couple other people. "Pink" Jerry was here. Patty Zygutis had just arrived, when I first did....she and her kids were wandering from place to place. And Ted Kaaekuahiwi was someone we waved at. Didn't know too well. And he was the one, he was friendly. Would give us rides and stuff. And at that time, he was just about the only local person we knew by sight. That we spoke with too. The other person that you knew by sight was Kelly Loo. And that was about it.

Then pretty soon after that, Mr. Rice bought the last house on the top [Kukuihaele]. And everybody was sort of scared of him. There were a few other people that we'd seen. Oh, there was "Drunk" Dave and Keith, and "Cowboy" Dave. And that was about it.

Lance: Yeah, like the first year I lived here, it was like I felt like a tourist. Because I didn't work. I had saved $1,000. And after the first year, bon voyage. Get a job. So then I started working with William. Being out in the patch is kind of fun because you just tell stories and have fun. And work hard. It's pretty nice.

VL: And so after this turning point, then you associated with whom?

Cheryl: Well, the first turning point was getting to know Tom better. That sort of changed things a little bit for us. Because we could sort of relate to people more on our own terms. And once Lance started pulling taro, and then last summer when I started pulling taro, and sort of found out that I enjoyed it. You started socializing, we started socializing with people, even the haoles, on a different level. Like "Canoe" Dave and
Akala, we got to know really well because we pulled with them. And you get out and there's sort of a slapstick humor. It gets really silly sometimes, and it's really fun.

And we met William. He was really sweet. And he knows a lot of people. I think the people here, the local people really respect hard work when they see it. They may think we're stupid for taking so little money for it. I think some of them do. But they still respect you to a certain degree. So we associated with locals more, through William, and gradually now, we're knowing almost everyone. At least by sight. I've learned to sort of respect them in a way that I didn't either. And maybe that shows in my manner. I think it has something to do with it. I don't expect people to give me rides and I don't....I've never lived in a rural kind of situation before. And I feel it's a very different culture. To begin with, it's rural. And I'm definitely from the city. And it's been really different.

Lance: Like when we started working, that was a big change. I mean, that was the biggest change for me. Because all of a sudden, I sort of became a local in some way. "Hey, how's it going?" People would wave at me as they went by. It gets better and better somehow.

VL: Now, do you pull too?

Cheryl: Uh huh.

Yeah. I pulled a couple of times while Lance was gone, back on the Mainland. I'm so proud of myself. I went out to the patch. I'd been pulling with him, and we were getting pretty good. We pulled, like, up to 10 bags. I think the most we ever pulled was 10 or 11, together on one day. And Lance is usually ahead of me. So I decided that I'd go to work while Lance was gone. So I went to the patch and I wound up pulling five bags both days that I went. Which is, I felt really proud of myself. And it was really neat. So I like it. It feels good.

VL: How about the mud?

Cheryl: Oh, the mud's great. If you cut your hands and stuff, you cut your hands on snails or you scrape 'em. There're all kinds of little things that happen. But the mud is really, it's soothing. The sensation is very soothing and you don't....it's different from being in a leaf patch. Because like when it rains, the leaf patch is agony. You itch and oh, God. And there's not mud but there's the taro and the itch. And it's really somehow terrible. But being in the taro patch, I'd rather be bending over than reaching up for the leaves and
carrying the sack on my neck. And spiders don't run over me like they do in the taro patch. But the taro patch, I like it. There's something neat about it.

Lance: Hey, when it comes rain, I'll pick the leaves, okay? You can go pull the taro.

Cheryl: Right, yeah.

VL: So how often are you pulling leaf now?

Cheryl: Every other week.

VL: Once?

Cheryl: Once, every other week.

VL: Can you describe what it involves?

Cheryl: I go over early in the morning. I usually start about 7:00 or 7:30. And Tom has, usually, if it's a usual size order, Tom's already picked a bunch of leaf from the day before. And he has it in his little shack with the water going [to rinse the leaves]. So I go over and I start stacking the leaf and scaling it (weighing it). And then making it into the bags for the orders. And that generally takes about...sometimes I don't even go in the patch at all. Sometimes I'll spend the whole day just doing that. And we usually would be out there for four or five hours. And if I get ahead of myself on bagging it, and there's still more leaf to be picked, I go out. I start out with rubber boots anyway. I'll go out and get...we have an apron to keep the water off, and I wear gloves to protect my hands. Because the leaf stains won't come out, for one thing. Also, the sickles are sharp, and when you're picking the leaf, you have to take the stem. Tom likes it if you take the stem as close as the leaf as you can. So there's a real danger of cutting yourself. And I wear thick rubber gloves...I would have cut myself innumerable times if I hadn't. Really bad. Sherry cut herself real bad one time.

And you have a little burlap sack that has two loops in it. One you put over your neck and the other, you either hold on one arm or shoulder, or put over your neck and go out. And it's really beautiful out there. The patches all run one direction. You find a path between the plants. And they're grown so tall now. Especially Tom, once he goes in it, you used to be able to tell where he was. The leaves would shake. Now you can't even see where he is. And I know now, I disappear in there too. And I'm a lot taller than he is. And the leaves are usually over my head and they're really thick. But the good ones, most of leaves out there, unless they're spotty,
are good. If he was to sell them to someone who's making laulau, he wouldn't have to pick really special leaves. But most of his order, up until recently, has been for Kona supermarkets. So you have to pick the best leaves and the biggest.

And the thing that's the nicest about picking leaf is that it's so beautiful. You go out there and you can tell the best leaf by looking at it. But you should feel it, because you can just crumple it up. It's just like velvet. And compared to the other leaves, it's this beautiful silvery green. It's just, oh God, it's gorgeous.

So you go out, crumple it up and cut it. You fold it in half and stick it in your bag. Because Tom's very— you could crumple it, it wouldn't matter if you crumpled 'em. But he likes 'em folded and stuck in your bag neatly.

Lance: Particular.

Cheryl: Yeah. It takes about 40 minutes, for me to get a bag full. And I think my bags are probably 15 pounds of leaf. And I think Tom probably brings in—Tom might bring in as much as 20 sometimes. And it takes him a little less time. And he doesn't like it if I come in too fast. Because that means I'm not careful enough. So it's a great job because he pays by the hour. But you wander through and cut off the leaf right as close to the base as possible.

VL: So how many pounds are you picking on that one day?

Cheryl: Usually, if it's a fairly good sized order, I won't have to go in the leaf patch more than once to three times. Sometimes more. But it's real tiresome, because of the strap. I don't know how Tom can take it. The strap around your neck, and... it's just a real tiring job. But Tom's the one who does almost all the picking.

VL: And you're doing the scaling (weighing).

Cheryl: The stacking and scaling. Yeah. And then his wife will help. When she's around, she'll help with the stacking and scaling.

VL: Lance, have you been doing leaf, picking leaf?

Lance: I did it once. I guess Tom wasn't impressed. He didn't hire me again. He needed help bad, nobody showed up. "Lance, come here help me."

"Okay, what do you do?"

VL: Oh yeah, did he train you?
Cheryl: No, he didn't. Lynn did. And Lynn sort of trained me the way she thought it should be done. And Mrs. Araki was scaling the leaf that week. So I got away with it that week. The next week, Tom was scaling leaf for a while. And he threw out a whole bag of my leaf. "Too small. Too small."

And then, after that, I started going out and picking nice, big leaves. So two weeks later, I come back. And I come out of the patch and I had gone really fast and found all these really big leaves. They were just, God, they were wonderful. And I had my pack, it was bursting. I had probably a 17-pound load. I came back, and I went out again. I was coming out of the patch and here was Tom throwing out all of my leaves. Looking at this one, throwing it out, looking at this one, throwing it out. And he didn't say anything. Yeah, I guess Mrs. Araki wasn't there that day. And I was out in the patch again. And Tom comes out on the bank and said, "Too tough the leaf. Your leaves are too tough. Pick only the soft kind."

So he showed me. I was trying to pick judging by what I thought his looked like in the shack. Because it seemed to be like "do as I say and not as I do." So ever since then, I've come back with really perfect leaves.

But he's told me after that that he had figured he shouldn't shout at me that day. It happened like a few weeks after I started. Because I was picking the leaves that I thought I should pick. And I figured, well, if Tom gets any complaint from his customers, he'll tell me. So I'd worked for him two more times, I guess, before he threw out that one big load of leaf. Then at lunch that afternoon, it all came out. Where customers had been complaining for weeks now and stuff like...he hadn't told me, right. He'd just gone on. Which is, in some respects, is his way. If he feels like blowing up he will. And if he doesn't, for whatever reason, he won't. He'll just take it. He'll take a loss, or whatever. He didn't show any anger. He didn't display any anger, although I knew he was really angry with me that one day. I was pissed off at him too. But I'm glad he didn't yell at me.

VL: So now your leaves are good?

Cheryl: Ono.

(Laughter)

VL: Did you have similar experiences in learning how to pull taro? Like, were you trained by William to do that?

Cheryl: No. There's really...Lance would sort of tell me what he knew about it. And then every now and then, even now, I think what happens is that William and Akala will be planting seed. And they'll know who cut what. By wherever our stacks are
or.... For a while there, I cut most of our seed, Lance's and mine. They'll know who cut what. So every now and then, Akala will say to me, "Cut your seed a little thinner." "Cut your seed a little thicker." William will have said something in passing to Akala, and Akala knows the significance of it. So he'll tell me. Because William's never told me. Ordinarily, he won't tell people things directly. He'll let it be known. And whether or not he expects the message to get through, I'm not sure.

Lance: He expects it to get through, Cheryl. (Laughs)

Cheryl: Well, it does. I guess it does. But he's never told me. He told me once, I think, how to cut seed. And maybe once that my seed was too thick. And lately, Akala's told me it was too thin.

Lance: You've got to pow-wow with William someday.

VL: So Lance's pulling, and your pulling, and your leaf picking is enough to support you both?

Cheryl: Not really.

Lance: We'll sell a painting or a drawing. Real now and then, actually.

VL: How much do you get to paint and draw?

Cheryl: The last year, I have a studio in Los Angeles that I convert into a gallery space. It's a good location. And I sublet it when I'm in Hawaii, which is like upwards of a year sometimes. And I'll give myself shows. This year, I'll have given myself three shows or something. So I start, my prices start at $125 for a drawing. So that was sort of loosely based on what plane fare was at the time. And I sell. So it's nice.

Lance: Plane fare's gone up.

Cheryl: I know it has.

Lance: But you're getting better, Cheryl.

VL: Why do you live here?

Cheryl: In a way, I still live both here and in Los Angeles. Because I'm still too much of a city person to be able to find everything here. And it's a real different culture. When I'm here and when I'm there. They're very different places. And what I like about living---I feel this is my home base, however. This is my home, as opposed to Los Angeles. Now, finally. Because it took a long time to get used to it. I used to be really claustrophobic here. In Waipio, particularly. It took
me a long time to figure out that that was what it was. But it's quiet, usually. Lately, we've been partying it up a lot. And people will come and...I mean, Akala slept on our couch for six nights in a row. Snoring every night last week. But it's quiet. And if we only pull two days a week, we have five days, plus the two half days, to do whatever we want. And as opposed to living in Los Angeles, I can stay at home everyday if I want to. I don't have to go anywhere. And there's really not that far to go.

You know, in Los Angeles, the life I was used to before, always working somehow. Scrambling around to make things work. Involved, not being able to stay at home very much. And I really like being able to, I have a garden for the first time. I have a kitchen, that Lance just built. And it's really nice. And it's really...I've been here two and a half years. And all of a sudden, it's starting to blossom. That's why it feels like home. I can see the improvements that we've made. And it took us two years just to make the garden work. Because this used to be river bottom. And I'd go and dig, and you couldn't get the shovel two inches in the ground, for the rocks.

Lance: "Can you help me take out this rock?"

(Laughter)

Cheryl: These huge, bench-sized rocks.

Lance: If it was five pounds heavier, I wouldn't even be able to move it.

VL: What do you usually end up doing with the other five days?

Cheryl: Tom just gave us a book to read.

(Lance laughs)

Cheryl: So for a while now, we're going to be reading that book. And, ordinarily, though, my main occupation is drawing. And I like to sew, and I like to sew by hand. And Hawaii is the only place I have time to do that. And I love to read. And the [Hilo] library is really good. So it's wonderful. They don't charge me overdue fees or anything.

VL: Do you find some special sort of creative inspiration in Waipio?

Cheryl: It's almost the opposite. I think this might change over a period of time. Marsha's [Morrison] offered us a show next year. I guess they're going to start showing more different
kinds of things at Volcano Art Center. But that's sort of an invitation to start really making the work Hawaiian. But my work is still very much...it comes really a lot out of my background. Even though it's something I've only started doing. The particular thing I'm doing now, I've only started doing since I've been here and since I've been with Lance. But it really comes out of the kind of aesthetic that I was schooled into. And ideas that I share with a lot of my friends in Los Angeles who are artists and who are doing things that are really...it's a real Mainland kind of stuff.

YY: Is it urban?

Cheryl: Very urban. I think. It's even literate, maybe. It isn't anything like what my picture of the culture here is at all. People here who see it really like it. The work I do is very realistic, and I do a lot of portraiture too. So people can really relate to the imagery, which I like. But hopefully, it should function on three or four different levels beyond that. And there are very few people that can really pick up on all of that, if at all. So it's still really urban.

Lance: It transcends cultural lines.

Cheryl: I hope it does. Well, in that respect it does. But I find that I have to, so far I've had to keep returning to urban situations and urban ideas to get energy. But I find it easy to work here. I really like it. I find it easy to work there too. Either place.

VL: Is this permanent home?

Cheryl: As far as I'm concerned, for now, yeah. It's a funny thing because Tom can't give us a lease. Because the property is owned, he already passed the property on to his children so they wouldn't have to go through probate. So he can't give us a lease. And therefore, I don't know what's going to happen. But what little, you know, money we've invested in the place, paint and a lot of time...that doesn't bother me at all. And I really like it.

Lance: It bothers me.

Cheryl: Well, you're doing most of it.

Lance: Cement, I never did cement before.

VL: Lance, do you feel the same way about...

Lance: Not at all.

VL: ...the future?
Lance: Me, I'm going to be a cat burgler on the Riviera or something.

VL: Why do you live here?

Lance: Because I can't be a cat burgler on the Riviera. Oh well, it's quiet. There's plenty of time to do everything, even though I never do it. I don't know, it's like a dream come true, actually.

I never thought I'd be here. When I came here the first time and stayed at Tom's [Schreiber]. For, I guess, we stayed two weeks. Went away for a week, went around the island, came back here. When we left, Tom says, "Why do you want to leave here for? This is the best place on the island."

I said, "We don't know that. We'll see you, hopefully, some time, soon."

A week later, we were back. Because we had an extra week to go.

I guess I was just walking from his house. I'd wake up. We'd sleep out in the yard or something. So I'd wake up just as it was getting light, grab my fins, go down to the beach and swim for a couple hours. Come out. Well, maybe 45 minutes. Come out and rest a little bit and go out again. So I was going down there one morning. The sun had just come out over the cliffs. I could hear the sound of the waves. Then I'd get up, go out to the beach. With all the rocks and climb up. So I had the whole view of the whole bay here. All of a sudden this feeling came over me and I just..."God, this is the best I've felt since I was 18, or something. Whew. I like this." So I...I don't know, some sort of, saw the errors in my ways and saw all this stuff. It was the first time in a long time that I had sort of transcended my usual mode of thought, and all of a sudden, life was just different for me.

So then I went back to LA, thinking that I'd set everything straight. So that never happened. I got closer as far as that life went. But after a while, Steve and Lori kept writing, saying, "Come over here, we got a place for you. This place factory. Hundred feet by 200 feet. It's perfect." They lied.

But I just kept remembering that feeling, that I really felt good here. So the time came. I just said that's the way I should feel. That's where I'm going. And then it took me a year to settle in. Stop shaking or whatever.

VL: How often, now days, do you leave the valley?

Lance: Well, I get Cheryl to go up mostly. Maybe once every two weeks or something. For either a day or a couple days. Maybe we'll go over to the dry side and do some painting.
Cheryl: Once every three months.

Lance: Go to Hilo, go to Volcano. And do some paintings. It's fun to travel around.

VL: Don't you play basketball [in Kukuihaele]?

Lance: Well so far I've just sat on the bench. I'm the only member of the team to take a shower before the game. (Laughs) You should have seen last night. Our own team member shot a basket in their basket.

(Laughter)

VL: In terms of the future of the valley itself, do you have any ideas on what you would like to see, or not like to see?

Cheryl: It's kind of hard to talk about the future of anything that way. Where it's been changed since we've been here because there're different people moving in. Since there's no camping on the beach anymore, there aren't so many sort of transient people. There's still a lot, but maybe not quite so many as there were, transient people. And couples are starting to settle in. And people are forming couples that are starting to be lasting somehow. And Be was even having a school in her house. And Tom and Colleen are going to have a kid. And they've had teaching experience and they were thinking about a school. And other people have been thinking about, well... "Somebody down here ought to sell beer."

You know, stuff like that. And I sort of have a feeling for where it might go. And it feels kind of nice. Where there might start being a few more people. I don't think too many, until land starts. I don't think much land is going to sell real quick. It's hard to say. Where it's still going to be dominated by whoever owns it. And is absent mostly.

And I would like to see taro farming go on. Someone on the radio mentioned another use for taro starch. That there's someone who just discovered a possible way of using taro starch to make plastic products. So, it would be neat. I'd like to see taro continue.

And basically, I'd like to see as little physical change as possible. I can't think of anybody else down here who thinks very much differently.

VL: How about more young haoles moving in?

Cheryl: I'd like to see more haoles and more locals too. Because we've hung around Ahualoa a little bit, because Steve and Lori are living up there now. And I kind of like, I like
living around the locals at least as much as I like living around the haoles. I like the haoles down here, and I like the locals who come around. And I like the mixing of the culture. Like, I wouldn't want to live just where there are haoles and nobody else. Because I really enjoy it. It's so different. It feels really....the culture is so different, it's really different and I think it's just...


Cheryl: Oh yeah. That's right. Well, we were going to be going away to work for like a month or something. So it just so happened to coincide with William and Fannie's three-week vacation to the Orient. So they said, "We're going to have a little get together. Why don't you come up to our house and we'll have a little party." So, we had some friends here from the Mainland. We weren't even sure it was going to happen. So we went up top. William gave us a ride up and we sort or went around the house for a little while. And nothing too much was happening. And our friends from the Mainland left because they were going to stay in Kona before all the hotel rooms were taken. And they couldn't be persuaded to stay, unfortunately, so they left.

And in a little while, all of a sudden, Fannie started putting out food. And everybody sat down. And some other people showed up. Craig [William's son] was there. He had left earlier to go off and play music with some friends of his. Well, he came back and brought them and they brought all their guitars. And they started playing music and singing. And Fannie whipped out her ukulele and started playing music and singing. And then Ted Angelo's wife came over and she started singing. And we were up nearly all night. It was incredible, because I love Hawaiian music. It's really nice. And they're all so good. God, it was neat.

Lance: It's one of the best nights I've ever spent here.

Cheryl: It was so wonderful, it was so nice.

VL: Can you compare that with Lance's recent birthday party?

Cheryl: (Laughs) That was a typical valley affair.

VL: Can you describe it?

Cheryl: It was really funny. The parties down here are also based on food and liquor and sometimes music. Usually provided by "Guitar" Dave. And Lance was playing harmonica and they got into harmonica duels and it was really nice. And there were some drunken arguments. And Peter and Millie [Kaaekuahiwi] came
to the party, which was really nice. It was really different, because there were so many people here and everybody was looking around and saying, "Do we all live here?" "There are this many people that live down here?" And there were people from Laupahoehoe-iki came over, and Waimanu and stuff. And everybody brought food and beer and liquor. And everybody was getting really drunk. The difference between this and the party at William's house was that everybody was drunk here and everybody was drunk there. But it was much more intimate there. And we were really happy. Everybody there, we were all really locked into each other, in a way I'd never experienced with any of them before. Everybody got drunk and happy. There was music, everybody was singing and it was intimate. And it was real... we were in on a Hawaiian family night. It was really a privilege.

And the party at our place was another drunken party. We had a great time.

Lance: I didn't have to break up four fights.

Cheryl: No, for a change there were no fights. It was really...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

Cheryl: I've talked about it with a few other people, mostly women I guess, and sort of found out that their feelings about it were a little similar. Just that when I came here, I came here sort of cold turkey from Los Angeles. Straight to Waipio. And I've never lived anyplace else in the islands. And we've done very little visiting. And almost no---very rarely camping, very rarely visiting any place else. And we leave here rarely. And the first time I was here was for eight months. And I left really thinking I wouldn't come back. I wasn't in love with it at all. And when I got back to LA, I cursed it out. I had no intention of coming back. Because it was wet and it's smelly. Dirty. And the life is just so totally different; it was really difficult to get used to. Psychologically, because of the real strong feeling of claustrophobia. From the valley walls. Being closed in. We still don't have a car. And I've found out recently how to make myself more mobile. I'm not afraid of walking out of the valley and hitchhiking if I need to.

And we know so many more people. That's another thing about the socializing, is that I know a lot of people. Even if I don't know the names, they'll know my face enough to give me a ride. I mean, I guess we all don't look alike. They'll give
me a ride. And I'm not afraid of anyone. And it's easier to get around. But it was very hard.

VL: Was it extra difficult because you're a woman? Or, what did being a woman have to do with your feelings about the place?

Cheryl: Well, most of the women that I talk with anyway, and the way I think women deal with things is that all of it's tied together. You don't separate out any particular element from any others. When Lance and I first came here together, we were starting out in a new relationship. We barely knew each other. And I'm not sure how much better we knew each other, after eight months of having a real difficult time communicating and sort of, neither one of us is real outward anyway. And we'd rather things would just go smoothly on their own. And somehow they didn't. And we were able to internalize it for almost a year. And, I think, we went through an immense amount of difficulty. And I think the pressure we put on each other was sort of magnified by the pressure I felt by being contained. Psychically and physically. And I still can't separate that out. And if I feel depressed or closed or tight, or if there's a block on my work, it still feels, for me, really tightly woven up with my environment.

I'm used to being in a place. In Los Angeles, I had hundreds of friends. And the moment you step out your door, you can go anywhere you want to go. And you can indulge in any activity, you can do anything to change your mood in any direction. And here, that's simply not possible. At least not to me yet. I think that there might be a time when I learn how to choose a direction. Say, if I want to feel a certain way, I'll go to the back of the valley and if I want to feel a certain way, I'll go to the front of the valley. Or go to someone. I visit more people now. too. I'll go back and visit Karen or across and visit Helge. Or maybe I'll start visiting Robert [Kahele], I want to do a portrait of Robert. Maybe I'll go visit Robert. There're more possibilities for me now since I know more people. And also, since I realized what my problems were, psychologically, when I came here...and Karen and Be and Helge and other women talk about similar things. And every now and then, you'll trap a man saying something like that too. (Laughs) Where they'll externalize their feelings about it. Because everyone was giving me a hard time for having a hard time adjusting. And then, a couple years later, I learned that it took everybody else a lot longer than it took me. But it seems like each person has to deal with this environment.

Waipio is the most uncompromising environment I've ever experienced, psychologically and physically. And it seems to me, from talking to people and from my own experiences, that everyone who's here, especially someone who's come from a different culture and different kind of space. The space is an example.
Everytime I go up the hill, I only have to go to Kukuihaele and be looking out over the ocean below, to have an incredible feeling of expansiveness. And living down here sort of closed, you don't see the sunrise or the sunset. It's really hard to deal with.

So I think that each person who lives here has to find his own way of living in this space all by himself. And you'll find out later that maybe people have had similar troubles or similar joys from it. But everyone I've encountered seems to have had problems and had to deal with them somehow.

VL: Do you think that everyone that lives down here in the valley now has some characteristic in common?

Cheryl: That has to be inevitable. The place is so strong. I've thought about that before and I can't quite say what it would be. Because the people down here are really quite different, one from another. So I have such a strong feeling about the place that I know there has to be. If you talk to Tom about it, Tom will say that he knows that if you come down here....I mean, people will come down here and they'll be just overtaken by the beauty of the place. But they can't handle staying here.

VL: Schreiber?

Cheryl: Araki. We almost never talk to Tom Schreiber because he's a mile away. But it must take a certain kind of person to want to stay down here. And we live in an easier place. It's a nice, solid house. And almost never do you get caught by high water here. And this is an easier place than most places down here, to live.

And another thing is dealing with the local people. And learning to have....the thing that changed me about living here the most, socially, was sort of after having come out of an age of protest and real sort of political distrustfulness and outrage and all kinds of things. Coming here to a slower environment, and dealing with older people who have different political ideas if any at all. I'm talking about politics in a larger sense. I had a different sense of how to deal with people here, particularly the local people. And the most important thing to them seems to be respect. If you show them respect. And they show you the same. There's no sense in getting angry at someone who refuses to give you a ride, for example. There's no sense in expecting them to give you rides, simply because you exist.

And it taught me to calm down a whole lot. And take things much slower. And to be a whole lot more tolerant of people.
And that's made me enjoy life a lot more. I think I like it, it's neat.

VL: How are you affected, when you go back to Los Angeles? What, if anything, do you carry with you?

Cheryl: Well, this is always a place to escape to. I used to think about that disdainfully, but I don't now. It's real funny because I don't think many of our friends could be persuaded to try out living in a place like this. Of course, most of them are more bound to their places, where our work doesn't require us to stay in one place. And most of them, for one reason, one's a video artist and one's an English professor. Things like that. They can't really, they don't have that much freedom. But to most of them, the idea of really living here is very distasteful. Mostly because of the mud, and the problem of getting around. And the lack of our kind of culture.

I like going back and forth. It seems like there's a whole lot to be had in both places. And I like having the option of having lived in a very different kind of place and knowing that I can.

VL: How do you feel about being here, Lance?

Lance: I feel real lucky being here. It's a real pleasure. Never felt better in my life, actually.

END OF INTERVIEW