Iʻi/Brown Family: Oral Histories

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

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These are slightly edited transcriptions of interviews conducted by the Center for Oral History, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The reader should be aware that an oral history document portrays information as recalled by the interviewee. Because of the spontaneous nature of this kind of document, it may contain statements and impressions which are not factual.

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PROJECT STAFF

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Below left, George P'i Brown III. (COH photo)  
Below right, Irene Brown (photo courtesy Irene Brown)  
Bottom left, Kenneth Francis Brown. (Photo courtesy Kenneth Brown)  
Bottom right, Zadoc Brown, Jr. (COH photo)
Above, C.A. Brown (far right) and Benjamin F. Dillingham (third from right) at lū'au, Brown residence, Waipi'o, O'ahu, ca. 1890. (Photo courtesy Bishop Museum)

Below, Queen Liliʻuokalani (center) and entourage at the home of Charles Augustus and Irene Iʻi Brown, Waipi'o, O'ahu, January 1891. David Kawānanakoa, Irene Iʻi Brown, and Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole stand behind the queen; Col. Sam Parker, George Iʻi Brown (child), and John Cummins are in front. (Photo by Theo P. Severin, Bishop Museum)
Right, the George Brown family at their home, Waipi'o, 1961. Standing, Judy (Mrs. George Brown), Julia, George, Jr. Seated, George III, Irene and Debbie. (Photo courtesy DeSoto Brown)

Below, the George Brown children at their home, Waipi'o, 1956. Left to right, Irene, Debbie, George III, and Julia. (Photo courtesy DeSoto Brown)

Julia Brown (front, fourth from left) and her family at her home, ‘Āinamalu, O‘ahu, Christmas 1964. The families of her three sons, in order of their ages, are: a) George, Jr., standing, third from right; Judy (Mrs. George Brown, Jr.), standing, fourth from right; George, III, standing, second from right; Irene, seated, far right; Julia, seated, far left; Debbie, seated, third from left; b) Zadoc, standing, far left; Virginia (Mrs. Zadoc Brown), standing, center; Zadoc, Jr., standing, second from left; Alan, standing, far right; Cynthia, seated, fifth from left; Lawrence, seated, second from right; DeSoto, seated, fourth from right; and c) Kenny, standing, third from left; Joan (Mrs. Kenny Brown), standing, fourth from left; Laura, seated, third from right; Frances, seated, second from left; Bernice, (held by her father). (Photo courtesy DeSoto Brown)
Clockwise from left. Front/side of main house; another view of the front/side of main house; front of main house; also front of main house; garage; and closer view of front of main house; all at Waipi'o, 1998. (COH photos)
Above, Pool and pool house at Waipi‘o, 1998. (COH photo)

Left, caretaker’s house at Waipi‘o, 1998. (COH photo)

Below, closer view of caretaker’s house, Waipi‘o, 1998. (COH photo)

Above, Coconut palm tree grove at Waipi‘o, 1998. (COH photo)

Right, Coconut palm tree grove at Waipi‘o, 1998. (COH photo)
INTRODUCTION

The Center for Oral History (COH), a unit of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, was established in 1976. The only state-supported center of its kind in the islands, COH’s major function is to research, conduct, transcribe, edit, and disseminate oral history interviews with persons possessing knowledge about Hawai‘i’s past. COH seeks to provide present and future researchers with first-person, primary-source documents with which to write history from a diversity of perspectives. Since its inception, COH has disseminated to state and University of Hawai‘i libraries oral history interviews with approximately 500 interviewees, resulting in over 25,000 pages of transcripts.

COH also produces and provides educational materials and services (books, articles, brochures, lectures, etc.) based on the interviews, conducts classes and workshops on oral history methodology for individuals and community/educational groups, and serves as a clearinghouse for oral history research relating to Hawai‘i.

Background and Methodology

Near the base of Waipi‘o Peninsula, in ‘Ewa, O‘ahu, there is an odd-shaped, 13.2-acre parcel of land, which since the early 1940s was the site of the George I‘i Brown, Jr. family home. The land is part of the Waipi‘o ahupua‘a awarded to John Papa I‘i. The former residential property is the current site of the proposed senior care village to be developed by The Queen Emma Foundation.

In 1997, at the request of the foundation, Center for Oral History director Warren Nishimoto met with Robert Oshiro and Richard Paglinawan of The Queen Emma Foundation to discuss the possibility of conducting an oral history project on several of the I‘i/Brown family members. A proposal was drawn up outlining the procedure, time frame and cost of such a project. In March 1998, Richard Paglinawan, Edwin S. Ohta, the foundation vice-president, Warren Nishimoto, and COH researcher Holly Yamada met to discuss the scope and focus of the project. Nishimoto, Paglinawan, and Yamada went on a site visit three weeks later to tour and photograph some of the remaining structures on the former George I‘i Brown family property at Waipi‘o.

Untaped preliminary interviews were conducted with Kenneth F. Brown, DeSoto Brown, George Brown III, Deborah Brown, Irene Brown, Zadoc Brown, Jr. and Nancy Kimura. Following the preliminary interviews, taped interviews with Kenneth F. Brown, Zadoc Brown, Jr., George Brown III, Irene Brown and DeSoto Brown were conducted by Holly Yamada at either the COH office, or interviewee’s office or interviewee’s home.

The interviewees were asked about their early childhood, schooling, family relationships, ethnic identity, work history, daily life, activities and possible social/historical/cultural changes experienced at the family property at Waipi‘o. Because interviewees were asked to comment on experiences and incidents oftentimes specific to their own lives, no set questionnaire was followed.

The interviews were transcribed almost verbatim by COH-trained student transcribers. The transcripts were then audio-reviewed to correct omissions and mistranscriptions. They were edited slightly for clarity and historical accuracy.

The transcripts were then sent to the interviewees for their review and approval. Interviewees were
asked to make any deletions or additions they considered necessary, to verify names and dates, and to clarify statements where necessary. COH incorporated the interviewees' changes into the final version.

Prior to publication, the interviewees read and signed a legal document allowing the University of Hawai'i Center for Oral History and the general public scholarly and educational use of the transcripts.

**Historical Background**

John Papa I'i (1800–1870), at ten years of age, joined the royal court of Kamehameha I under the supervision of his namesake uncle, Papa I'i, who was an attendant to the king and overseer of Waipio. John I'i was a converted Christian who later became the general superintendent of O'ahu schools. In 1842 King Kamehameha III appointed him to the Treasury Board. In 1845 he was appointed to the Board of Land Commissioners, and in 1852 he represented the House of Nobles in drafting the Constitution. From 1846 to 1864 he served as an associate justice of the Superior Court. He was awarded the entire *ahupua'a* of Waipio, a small portion of which includes the current site for The Queen Emma Foundation senior center, the former site of the George I'i Brown family home. Many of John Papa I'i’s writings originally printed in the Hawaiian-language newspaper *Ka Nāpua Kūʻokoʻa* around 1860 were later compiled and published as *Fragments of Hawaiian History* in 1959. This text is acknowledged as one of the most significant primary sources of Hawaiian history.

Irene Haalou Kahalelaukoa I'i Brown Holloway (1869–1922), the only child of John Papa I'i and his fourth wife, Maria Keawe, was the beneficiary of the ancestral lands. Her first husband, Charles Augustus Brown, was originally from Massachusetts and guided the John I'i Estate in a capitalist direction in the late nineteenth century. Their two sons, George I'i Brown (1887–1946) and Francis Hyde I'i Brown (1892–1976), subsequently became the managers of the estate. George I'i Brown’s three sons, George I'i Brown, Jr. (1915–1993), Zadoc White Brown, and Kenneth Francis Brown had little involvement in the estate’s management until it was sold in 1950 to Hawaiian Pineapple Company, a subsidiary of Castle & Cooke, Inc. George I'i Brown, Jr. retained about ten acres and later purchased another three acres on Waipio Peninsula where he and his wife, Julia Jones Brown, raised their four children, George, Irene, Julia, and Deborah. The last family member to reside there was George I'i Brown IV. The family sold the property to The Queen Emma Foundation in 1989, but retained a half acre with the main house and other structures until 1995.

The family property was long surrounded by sugarcane from the nearby O'ahu Sugar Company, which began development of the plantation in the Waipahu area in 1897. Since the 1960s, however, it has been surrounded by single family dwellings.

In the 1930s the U.S. military increased its build-up of installations in the Pearl Harbor area. During World War II the Waipio Peninsula, then belonging to the John I'i Estate, was condemned by the U.S. Navy. (This did not include the Brown family homesite and other property later sold to Castle & Cooke, Inc.) At that time the remains of John Papa I'i, his daughter Irene, and other family members originally buried at the peninsula, were relocated to O'ahu Cemetery.

**Transcript Usage**

This set of transcripts includes a glossary of all non-English and Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) words (which are italicized in the transcripts) and a detailed subject/name index.
There is a series of numbers at the beginning of each transcript. This series includes, in order, a project number, audio cassette number, session number, and year the interview was conducted. For example, 30-6-1-98 identifies COH project number 30, cassette number 6, recorded interview session 1, and the year, 1998.

The interviewees read their transcripts and were asked to make any deletions or additions they considered necessary before releasing them for publication. Interviewee additions/changes are in parentheses ( ). Minor editing for clarification and historical accuracy was done by COH. Every attempt was made to not alter the flavor and authenticity of the interviews while editing. COH additions are noted by brackets [ ]. A three-dot ellipsis indicates an interruption; a four-dot ellipsis indicates a trail-off by a speaker; three dashes indicate a false start.

These transcripts represent statements the interviewees wish to leave for the public record. After reviewing and approving publication of the transcripts, the interviewees signed the following agreement:

In order to preserve and make available the history of Hawai‘i for present and future generations, I hereby give and grant to the University of Hawai‘i Center for Oral History as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Center Director shall determine, all my rights, title, and interest to the tapes and edited transcripts of interviews.

Transcript Availability
These transcripts are the primary documents presently available for research purposes. The audio cassettes are in storage and not available for use, unless written permission is obtained from the Center for Oral History. Copies of this transcript volume are available at the following locations:

Hawai‘i
Hawai‘i Public Library (Hilo)
Kailua-Kona Public Library
Kealakekua Community Library
University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Library

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

Lāna‘i
Lāna‘i Public and School Library

Maui
Maui Public Library (Wailuku)
Maui Community College Library

Moloka‘i
Moloka‘i Public Library

O‘ahu
Bishop Museum Library
Hawai‘i State Library
Kaimuki Public Library
Kāne‘ohe Public Library
Pearl City Public Library
Honolulu Community College Library
Kapi‘olani Community College Library
Leeward Community College Library
Windward Community College Library
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Center for Oral History
Ethnic Studies Program
Hamilton Library
University of Hawai‘i-West O‘ahu Library
Hawai‘i State Archives
COH publications include:

**Transcript collection**
- *Waialua and Hale'iwa: The People Tell Their Story* (1977)
- *Life Histories of Native Hawaiians* (1978)
- *Waipi'o: Māno Wai (Source of Life)* (1978)
- *The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kaua'i* (1979)
- *Women Workers in Hawai'i's Pineapple Industry* (1979)
- *Stores and Storekeepers of Pā'ia and Pu'unēnē, Maui* (1980)
- *Perspectives on Hawai'i's Statehood* (1986)
- *'Ualapu'e, Moloka'i: Oral Histories from the East End* (1991)
- *Hawai'i Political History Documentation Project* (1996)
- *Presidents of the University of Hawai'i: Fujio Matsuda* (1998)
- *Presidents of the University of Hawai'i: Harlan Cleveland* (1998)

**Books**
- *Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawai'i*. Published in cooperation with the United Okinawan Association (1981)

**Finding Aids**
- *Catalog of Oral History Collections in Hawai'i* (1981)

**Other Publications**
- *Oral History Recorder* newsletter (1984–)

The staff of the Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, believes that researching, recording, and disseminating the experiences of Hawai'i's people will stimulate further research and foster a better understanding of our islands' history. COH is responsible for any errors in representing or interpreting the statements of the interviewee.

Honolulu, Hawai'i
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