MAULI KEAUKAHA:
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION
IN THE KEAUKAHA COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

Here in Hawai‘i, there is a concern as to whether or not students of Hawaiian ancestry understand their own potential as humans who can operate productively in a society that has been built in a capitalist, Westernized format. Do Hawaiian children understand what it means to be “Hawaiian” as well as understand the values and morals that are unique to them as Hawaiians within various settings including their home, their community, and their school? Do they understand their duty to their heritage, lineage, and land? By fostering such an understanding of cultural identity and cultural self-awareness as tied to students’ experiences of genealogy, history, traditional practices, language, and place, a foundation of learning can be established that is directly linked to the hana (work) of our kūpuna (ancestors). This unique teaching and learning is the “heartbeat” and “spirit” of knowledge; this is “Mauli.”

This dissertation takes a look at historical and contemporary educational systems within the Hawaiian community of Keaukaha and aims to find ways to decrease the dissonance of learning between home/community and the school through indigenous ways of knowing unique to the Keaukaha community or Mauli Keaukaha. This study captures the thoughts of ‘ike kūpuna (traditional knowledge and practices) as well as reflections on education in the Hawaiian community of Keaukaha through oral history interviews with nine (9) prominent kūpuna (elders) within the Keaukaha community. The study further examines if and how this traditional knowledge can be transmitted amongst generations and integrated into the community’s current-day public schools through pedagogical practices where learning is purposeful, meaningful, and experiential-based. The study concludes by considering how the foundational knowledge (‘ike mauli) that exists in the Mauli Keaukaha can link the Keaukaha community and homes with
Keaukaha schools so that rituals and routines of Hawaiian traditions and practices are honored and daily student experiences are validated in contemporary school settings.

Keywords: Keaukaha, education, oral history
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Chapter 1

Introduction: Ku‘u Home I Keaukaha

_Noho ana i ka malu o uka_
_'O uka, ua pa‘a ka mole o ka hau_
_Hao mai ke kanilehua a pa‘a mau e_
_Ua mau ke ola o nā kūpuna o ke au i hala_
_'O Keaukaha, ‘āina ho‘opulapula o ka ‘iewe_
_Naue ke kanaka i ke ao ē_
_Ua ao, ua ao, ua ao ē_

- Veincent, 2004

Under the shelter of the uplands
Of the uplands, the root of the hau holds firm
The rain of Hilo rushes and still it remains standing
Such is the continuing lives of the ancestors of those times past
Of Keaukaha, the land of our common ancestors
It is the lineage, it is secured, it is protected, it causes one to move
Descendants move towards enlightenment
Be aware, be knowledgeable, be conscious of all that is around you.
- Veincent, 2004

The _oli_ (chant) above was composed for use by members of the Keaukaha community to pay respect to our ancestors and to what has been given to us. It pays homage to our lineal linkage to both genealogy and history tied to a specific land. It calls forth the descendants to move progressively forward while holding on tightly to the knowledge of our _kūpuna_ (elders/ancestors) or risk being lost to a non-indigenous system of disconnection. The metaphoric use of “_ao_” in this _oli_ goes beyond just “dawn” as it also suggests a system of knowledge that is ongoing and with each morning brings forth new learning and new ways of understanding.

We are all connected to a community - this is a place that we feel the most a part of. I have been fortunate to be connected to two different communities. One is Pana‘ewa where I put my head down in the evening. The other is Keaukaha where I have worked as a teacher and
principal for a total of 20 years. It is also the place where I “breathe” the best and the place that I feel the most connected with, surely because of my lineal linkages of both my parents to this Hawaiian community. When I see the faces of the children of Keaukaha at the school where I once served as a teacher and principal, or at the ocean frolicking in the coolness of the high tide, I see the souls of those who have passed in this community and also a beacon of light for its future. When I look to the future of Keaukaha, I believe that the future well-being of this particular Hawaiian community is closely tied to the continuance of our unique way of living—our Mālu Keaukaha.

The term mālu refers to the “life” and “heart” that is imbedded deep within a person or a place, which sets the person or place apart from another (Pūku'i and Elbert, 1983). Mālu is the uniqueness of a person or place that cannot be found anywhere else. Thus, Mālu Keaukaha is the uniqueness of this ocean-based, Hawaiian community.

This dissertation celebrates the voices of our kūpuna of Keaukaha as their voices speak of the mālu—or the “life” and “heart”—of our beloved community. Throughout this document the word kūpuna refers to the elders of a specific place. Where the kahakō (macron) appears over the first “ū” in kūpuna it refers to elders in its plural form; otherwise it is singular.

By listening closely to the words and the wisdom of our kūpuna, I seek an indigenous solution to the challenges that are currently facing our Hawaiian community of Keaukaha, particularly the feelings of cultural disconnection that are being experienced by Hawaiian youth in our public schools. I look to the traditional knowledge of our kūpuna as a source of guidance and empowerment for the Keaukaha community as we ponder how to best educate our children for the future while securing their identity to their families, their community, and their land. Through a series of oral history interviews with prominent kūpuna of Keaukaha, I aim to identify
the foundational knowledge or 'ike mauni that are components of the Mauli Keaukaha of this community and which can provide our Keaukaha students with a connection to learning that is purposeful and meaningful.

**Challenges Facing Native Hawaiian Students in Hawai‘i’s Public Schools**

A look at the educational stance of Native Hawaiians was published in *Ka Huaka‘i 2014: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment* by the Kamehameha Schools. The assessment outlined the numerous challenges that Native Hawaiian children continue to face in the current educational system. While the Hawaiian educational community has seen approximately 30 years of Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs and the creation of Hawaiian cultural-based charter schools beginning in 2000, these schools account for only a small percentage of Native Hawaiian students. The large majority of Native Hawaiian students continue to struggle in traditional classrooms in Hawai‘i’s public schools.

According to *Ka Huaka‘i 2014: Native Hawaiian Educational Assessment*, the test scores of Native Hawaiian children lag behind statewide averages by 8 to 13 percentile points in reading and math, and the achievement gap widens as students progress to higher grades. Hawaiians are overrepresented in Special Education with 15.4 percent of Native Hawaiian students enrolled in special education compared with 9.7 percent of non-Hawaiians. Native Hawaiian students experience pronounced absenteeism and are the least likely of the major ethnic groups to graduate from high school within four years with 72.2 percent versus 79.6 percent statewide. Lastly, college enrollment among Native Hawaiians is 25.7 percent compared with the statewide average of 35.7 percent. As the study suggests, these academic disparities are more pronounced in rural regions with high concentrations of Native Hawaiians. The educational challenges facing students in our Keaukaha community are even more severe (Kamehameha Schools, 2014).
Defining the Problem and Potential Solutions

Hawaiian students have been recognized as socially, cognitively, and developmentally delayed within a system meant for the “majority.” Research suggests that the challenges that indigenous students face in U.S. schools are due to the fact that the current educational system maintains a cultural dissonance between indigenous home cultures on the one side and the American school culture on the other (Castagano & Brayboy, 2008). As Geneva Gay (2004, p. 34) suggested, “students who come from education environments that encourage active participatory learning will not be intellectually stimulated by passive instruction that involves lecturing and completing worksheets.” Furthermore, unfamiliar language and the disconnection of the classroom from the child’s home life play a key role in the continuing dissonance between the home and school.

Research in the area of cultural compatibility suggests that students tend to succeed when their home culture is congruent with that of their school culture (Ladson-Billings, 2001). One proposed solution to cultural incompatibility for Native Hawaiian students has been to create Hawaiian educational settings in which the curriculum and pedagogy are consistent with Hawaiian cultural knowledge and Hawaiian ways of learning. Thus far, much of the work in this area has been informed by the Native Hawaiian Education Council’s Kumu Honua Maoli Ola (2002, 2014) and Manu Meyer’s (2003) work in Hawaiian epistemology. Through extensive interviews with twenty Native Hawaiian educators and cultural leaders from O'ahu and Hawaiʻi Island, Meyer has helped to define Hawaiian ways of knowing and understanding, and has challenged Hawaiians to “redefine the priorities of what Kānaka ʻŌiwi believe are best educational practices for us as a group” (Meyer, 2003, p. 191).
Similarly, the *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola*, established by the Native Hawaiian Education Council in partnership with Ka Haka ʻUla o Keʻelikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo, promotes the importance of learning and practicing the Hawaiian language and culture in the nurturing of culturally healthy and responsive citizens. These general guidelines provide an avenue through which individual communities will be able to identify more specific ways of knowing that exist as a direct result of their community’s particular genealogical, historical, and environmental reality.

Building upon the work of *Kumu Honua Mauli Ola*, this study takes up Meyer’s challenge with a specific focus on educational practices that are best for the Hawaiian community of Keaukaha. This work is premised upon the understanding that educational programs that work for Hawaiian students in other communities may not work for Hawaiian students in Keaukaha, and vice versa. Building upon recent research in the area of place-based education, this study makes a case for increasingly localized solutions to the educational challenges facing our respective communities. Furthermore, this study lends its way towards defining or redefining the *mauli*, or uniqueness, of the Keaukaha community along with the unique foundational knowledge or *ʻike mauli* that is integral to teaching and learning within this community. It asks 1) What knowledge or *ʻike mauli* was historically taught to the children of Keaukaha?, 2) How was this knowledge acquired, exchanged, and valued by generations of this community?, and 3) How can this knowledge inform contemporary practices in Keaukaha schools today?

The underlying premise of this study is that when indigenous people clearly understand the *hana* (work) of the *kūpuna* in the historical past of their particular community, only then are we able to move confidently forward into the future with continued appreciation for who we are as a
people and respect for what our ancestors have imbedded deep within ourselves and our community.

**Defining ‘Ike Mauli**

Kawena Pūku‘i, a Hawaiian scholar of traditional and contemporary knowledge, defines the Hawaiian word ‘ike as to see, know, feel, recognize, perceive, experience, be aware, understand, comprehend. According to Pūku‘i, there are many forms of ‘ike. For instance:

- ‘ike hana lima – craftsmanship
- ‘ike hāmau – instinct, birth knowledge
- ‘ike kūhohonu – deep knowledge or insight
- ‘ike loa – knowledgeable, versed, wise
- ‘ike pāpālua – supernatural knowledge; extrasensory perception (Pūku‘i & Elbert, 1986)

Additionally, I believe that ways of knowing are inextricably linked to one’s genealogy, one’s history, and one’s place for this is where knowledge begins. Thus, in order for meaningful connections to occur in the process of learning, we, as educators, must understand the foundational knowledge that sets us, as learners unique to a specific place, apart from other individuals of different places. I term this foundational knowledge: ‘ike mauli.

‘Ike mauli is the foundational knowledge that is passed from one generation to another within a community as a way of securing one’s own identity to family, community, and land. ‘Ike mauli sets forth traditional knowledge that provides the needed connection to new knowledge introduced. Communities and educators alike must be cognizant of the ‘ike mauli when working with our children. In the creation of curriculum, we must continue to look for those connections to who our students are and where they come from so that learning of concepts and skills are enhanced.
Research Setting

Keaukaha is the place of setting for this study. Keaukaha is one of the first two Hawaiian Home Lands established by the Hawaiian Home Lands Act of 1921 by Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole. Keaukaha lies within the district of Waiākea, about two miles from the town of Hilo on the island of Hawaiʻi. The Hawaiian Home Land community of Keaukaha consists of 2,000 acres with currently 440+ households. The traditional uniqueness of this Hawaiian community of Keaukaha is partly due to its geographical components. It is isolated from the suburban community of Hilo nearby with a single road that brings one into the community. It is also the same road that one leaves the community on. Moreover, Keaukaha is an ocean community with traditional ways of knowing unlike any other Hawaiian community.

For those of us who were raised in Keaukaha, the ocean was our “backyard.” It was a place that we knew the best. We knew the ideal swimming places and the best places to hoʻokau ʻupena (set net), kiloi ʻupena (throw net), and mākoi (pole fish). We knew where the most momona (plump) wana (sea urchin) were and where ʻopihi (limpet) were most abundant. More importantly, we also knew how much to take and what to put back or leave alone to allow the sea life to replenish. These were just some of the many learnings and practices that were passed down informally from generation to generation in our community.

Additionally, within this small Hawaiian community there are many formal educational institutions that are different in their approach to education but are similar in their commitment and dedication to the community. Keaukaha School is a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school in the piko (center) of the community. It has been in existence for over 80 years. Many community members have walked through the buildings of this school as students.
In 1987, one of the first two Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs opened at Keaukaha School. As a kindergarten through sixth grade site, the program sought and was awarded public charter school status. Today, the program continues to remain on the Keaukaha School campus through an agreement with the Hawai‘i State Department of Education.

In 2001, a third public school opened its doors in Keaukaha. Ke Ana La‘ahana Public Charter School is a seventh through twelfth grade school in Keaukaha. Since 2001, the school has graduated 57 seniors, many of whom have continued their education in the postsecondary arena.

**Methodology**

This study seeks to define the ‘ike mauli of Keaukaha. It aims to shed light on traditional practices and ways of knowing of this community with the intention of informing current practices within Keaukaha’s public schools. The research method that was used for this dissertation research is oral history. In defining Mauli Keaukaha, oral history is a method that allows for the gathering and preserving of historical information and cultural knowledge of the community of Keaukaha that has never been documented. Furthermore, it provides a bridge between traditional practices and present ways of knowing for future generations to continue to inherit, practice, adopt, adapt and, more importantly, embrace, as it is a common foundation of uniqueness for all from this place of setting of Keaukaha.

For this study 9 oral history interviews were conducted with kūpuna members who are currently living or have lived in Keaukaha and who have insight into education in the Keaukaha community. In order to capture a historical understanding of traditional practices in the area, the age of the participants are 65 years or older, with the oldest being 89 years. Three participants were in their eighties, five in their seventies, and one in her sixties. These individuals are
kūpuna, cultural practitioners, and educators whose insights will help to define further Mauli Keaukaha.

Preliminary meetings were scheduled with each of the kūpuna. At the preliminary meetings, a biographical data sheet was completed for each of the interviewees to ensure that quality information could be acquired from the interviews. A questionnaire outline was then developed from the biographical data sheets. The questionnaire outline included the following interview questions:

A. Family Background

1. Share with me about your family and growing up in Keaukaha.
2. What did you learn from your family or other family and/or community members?
   (e.g., traditional practices, values, beliefs)

B. Educational Experiences – Learning in Hawai‘i

1. Could you share your educational experiences in elementary? Intermediate? High School?
2. How was education valued by your family?
3. What did you learn from your family members?
4. What learning that took place at home was also looked upon in the school?

C. Working Experiences

1. Please share your work experience.
2. Why did you choose to do what you do?
3. How has your work impacted the education of the community of Keaukaha?

D. Keaukaha – A Place of Setting

1. List three words that describe the community of Keaukaha.
2. How do you define the “culture” of Keaukaha?

3. Describe the children of Keaukaha today in relation to social and educational aspects.

4. Explain what you currently see in the current educational system in Keaukaha.

5. Keaukaha School is 78 years old. In your own words and what you are able to provide, describe Keaukaha School as it was in the past and/or as it is today. (PAST/PRESENT)

6. Describe education in Keaukaha in the future. What do you hope to see?

7. Do you have any other comments or thoughts about education and culture in Keaukaha?

Interviews were audio- and/or videotaped and each interview was transcribed. Seven of the nine interviews were sent electronically to ABS Language Services where they assisted in transcribing the interview. When I received the transcriptions from ABS Language Services, I manually reviewed and transcribed what they could not transcribe, such as words and phrases in the Hawaiian Language and local contextual conversation. Once the transcriptions were complete, they were delivered physically to each kupuna for his or her review. Each kupuna had the opportunity to review, correct, and/or add other thoughts to the transcription. Copies of the final, edited transcriptions were given to each kupuna.

The interview transcripts were then analyzed for historical information including traditional practices, educational beliefs, family and communal values, and rituals and routines unique to the area of Keaukaha. Common, interwoven themes were identified from the interviews.

The 9 kūpuna interviewed for this research paper have earned their title of kupuna. Handy and Pūku‘i (1998, p. 44-45) explain that the term kūpuna refers to

Grandparents and all relatives of the grandparent’s generation; and is also the term for known forbears and related folk who have died, or distant forbears in genealogy or legend. It is a contraction of “kupu ana” meaning “process of growing.”
The term *kupuna* is an endearing Hawaiian term used to acknowledge the age of an individual in Hawai‘i within the hierarchy of a familial structure. Specifically, for these nine *kūpuna* who are part of this paper, I have had the honor to have known them for a number of years as our foundational community that we share is Keaukaha. As *kūpuna* they have taught and guided me and many others within the Keaukaha community. They have been visible over the past decades as community leaders in the field of education, politics, music, church, fishing, gardening, and the many facets of land stewardship. Since I am at the age of 50 myself, over the years I have used the term ‘Uncle’ and ‘Aunty’ in addressing these nine individuals who continue to inspire me with their wisdom, aloha, and thoughts and actions of what is *pono*. Therefore, throughout the rest of this paper, I address them as “Uncle” and “Aunty,” embracing the same level and energy of respect and aloha as with the title of *kupuna*.
Chapter 2

Kupuna Noelani Ioane-Kapuni

My interview with Kupuna Noelani Ioane-Kapuni was held at her home in Keaukaha. Kupuna Noelani Ioane-Kapuni was born on November 2, 1926 in Hilo, Hawai‘i. Her genealogical and historical ties are in Ka‘ū, Puna, and Hilo, more specifically in Keaukaha where she continues to live today. Her parents were Edith Akui and William Ioane. She was one of six children in the family with her being the eldest. She is a favorite cousin of my mother and an individual whom I have adored for years. Throughout this account I will refer to her as Aunty Noe — the name that I have affectionately called her for as far back as I can remember.

Aunty Noe’s mother and my grandmother, Margaret Akui, were sisters. Aunty Noe’s father and my grandfather, Kahuwila Kanaka‘ole, were brothers. As Keaukaha is not a large Hawaiian community in an already small city such as Hilo, perhaps such marriage linkages are not as unusual as some may think. Another unique point that I will mention is that, within this interview, as I transcribed the voice of this kupuna, her daughter, Johnette Toy Len Keonaona Kapuni-Reynolds, is heard in the background. Towards the end of the interview, Aunty Noe and her daughter often engaged in discussion resulting from my questions; perhaps seeking validation of each other’s responses. In 2010, Aunty Noe’s daughter, my cousin, passed away. The interview is a tender reminder of the close knit relationship that Aunty Noe had with her daughter.

As I consider Aunty Noe’s oral history account, common themes revealed were strong parent-child relationships, multiple activities that strengthened community ties, and high expectations for education and learning. I will speak to each of these themes in turn and consider their implications for educational programs within the Keaukaha school community.
Parent-Child Relationship

Aunty Noe recounts being raised by her parents and the value of education that was instilled within the children of the family. She remembers how hard her parents worked in all aspects of their living: “My father mostly home...mostly home type. Mostly in the yard and he always make furniture for Mom because she was teaching nursery school. Mom was teaching nursery school with Mrs. Hohu and Mrs. Ahn during that time. They had a nursery down here...at Keaukaha...right down here, Kawai'ananako Hall. Dad use to make all her furniture. He cleaned yard. He good with handwork you know. Very good with handwork. He was a very patient, very, very patient man. That’s why we love him.”

Aunty Noe’s father taught his children skills that were not found in many Hawaiian homes. They often found themselves helping in tasks that would typically be done by men such as building homes. Aunty Noe remembers the children of the family helping to build a neighbor’s house: “And we were the ones that helped him build the house. He would tell us what to do. I mean, you know, like cement work and all of that.” She remembers family members offering their assistance and skills in the building of the homes. She recounts one uncle who was the main constructor and another uncle who put the electricity in. Throughout her childhood Aunty Noe was always surrounded by family members and their work was an integral part of their relationship building.

Hawaiian language was prevalently heard in Aunty Noe’s family. Both her parents spoke fluently. Hawaiian language was often heard growing up in their family; however, the speaking of Hawaiian was reserved for her parents: “And then you know...you know when they want to go out go someplace and didn’t want us to know...they talk all in Hawaiian.” Although she doesn’t speak Hawaiian, Aunty Noe understood what her parents were speaking about.
Learning Hawaiian language through the conversations of her parents was different from how it was taught in the public school during her day. Aunty Noe explained how Hawaiian language in the public schools was taught by prominent Hawaiian teachers who lived in the Keaukaha community: “It was not like (Hawaiian Language) immersion, but Mrs. Kelso was the Hawaiian teacher down there and Mrs. Godoy and Aunty Edith Kanaka‘ole.”

Multiple Activities Strengthened Community Ties

Aunty Noe recollects the numerous activities that members of Keaukaha used to participate in. There was no reason to sit idle. Throughout the community, she found many community members involved in or leading various activities and events. Sports were a popular activity when Aunty Noe was growing up. She recalls, “They had basketball, and they had volleyball, and they had baseball. They had football. Mr. Nahale-a was the coach.” Mr. Nahale-a was much respected within the community because of his involvement with church and with sports. A prolific song writer, he wrote a number of Keaukaha songs that can still be heard today.

Aunty Noe also remembers fondly the music that was heard throughout the neighborhood: “Eva Kahauolopua was an entertainer. Hale Loke...all those guys. And I remember this lady Louise Haena...oh she had a beautiful voice. Use to have music, and lū‘au weekends.” Aunty Noe spoke about the music that could be heard within Keaukaha often and the number of entertainers that came from the Keaukaha community.

Being an ocean community, time was spent down at the beach by many community members. As much of her responsibility was at home, she rarely went down to the beach herself; however, she recollects her brothers spending much of their time at the beach: “My brothers
they go throw net and go fishing and all that. Use to be nice down the beach before. Ever since
the tidal wave took over. Keaukaha use to be real nice place. Keaukaha was beautiful.”

**Education and Learning Were Expectations**

As Aunty Noe’s mother was an educator, her mother’s work in the community permeated
their home: “Education was real important. You know my mother. She was a teacher. She was a
school teacher. Education is real important to her as well as to us. I remember I use to work with
my mother down at Kawananakoa Hall. She was in charge of the summer school program. She
was working with Mr. Nahale-a and Tommy Brown and all them during that time.” Regarding
her own schooling, Aunty Noe and her siblings had to make sure that their school work was
completed thoroughly. Her mother was a strict disciplinarian who saw to it that her children
completed their homework. She knew when her children had homework: “She would come
often to check on our homework. And if we didn’t do our homework we would get disciplined.”

Aunty Noe recalls her mother’s passion in teaching her own children: “My mother was
real strict. I learned how to cook from her you know. Because every time when she needed
help, she always called me, so I help her. I did a lot of things. And sewing....She was real good
in sewing.” After assuring that her children learned the skills that she had taught them correctly,
Aunty Noe’s mother directed them to do their best with the skills given to them and if they did
not, they were disciplined: “And you know when you did certain stuff and you don’t like it,
she’s going come there and make you start over. And she said, ‘You do it...you do it all over
again and you stay there until it’s done.’” Her mother even taught her granddaughters many of
the same skills that she had taught her own children.

Respecting the elders of the community was very important to Aunty Noe’s family. She
was reminded constantly of this by her mother: “Well the first thing she would always told,
‘You have to respect your elders. Don’t forget that you respect your elders.’ She said, ‘I don’t care how old they are, I don’t care if they walking on you. The first thing you do, you respect your elders and you make sure you do respect your elders.’ That’s her concern.”

Aunty Noe and her siblings attended St. Joseph School, a Catholic school in Hilo town. Their mode of transportation was the community sampan bus, a small windowless vehicle often seen in Hilo: “We use to catch those sampans to go to school and come home from school. We had a lot of good drivers though. We had Mrs. Godoy. She was one of the drivers. Mabel Godoy. She was one of the bus drivers. She was a good bus driver.”

There was a good deal of communication between the school and home. Often if a child was reprimanded for something inappropriate at school, the family was immediately notified. Aunty Noe recalls a certain incident that happened at school with one of her siblings and by the afternoon when the children returned home, their mother was already notified and was waiting at home with further discipline. Education was seamless between the school and home.

Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

Towards the end of the interview, Aunty Noe was asked to think about what has changed over the years in Keaukaha. Although she says that Keaukaha is much different than how it was when she growing up in Keaukaha, with ‘different nationalities’ within the community, she is happy to see that respect is very much evident in Keaukaha: “Nowadays – but one thing with these kids …they really respect the kūpuna, they really respect elderly people. You know sometimes when I am in the yard, they would greet me always, ‘Hello, Aunty.’”

Aunty Noe attributes her family’s success, which is evident in her personal life and in the lives of her children and grandchildren, to their family’s the value of education. She explains that with the value of education also comes the discipline to succeed. Aunty Noe understands
the value of culture in the learning process to make learning interesting and fun for children. She embraces her Hawaiian culture and is pleased to see many of the cultural practices alive in the Keaukaha schools and the community today. She especially enjoys being a part of the many cultural traditions that were practiced by her grandchildren who attended the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program that began in Keaukaha in 1987. She explains, “I enjoy my Hawaiian culture. We never had the kind like how they have today culture, Hawaiian stuff, and all that.” She was thrilled when her grandchildren would come home from school and share with her the cultural activities that they did at school: “When they came home and they talk to me, ‘Oh grandma, you know we did this, we made mats, and we did...you know grandma, the Hawaiian culture is very interesting.’” She was filled with pride each time her grandchildren would share their day with her. She sees the extension of this love for learning in her grandchildren who have gone on to post-secondary institutions to further their education.

Aunty Noe supports the local public schools within the Keaukaha Community. Her children and grandchildren attended Keaukaha School because her husband didn’t want their children to attend any other school but Keaukaha. Through the years, her family has been involved in many activities held at the school, and over the years, she has seen substantial improvements in facilities and programs. One of the most significant educational accomplishments that Aunty Noe has witnessed in the Keaukaha community was the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program where her granddaughter was one of the first students in the Kindergarten-Grade 1 combined class at Keaukaha School in which Hawaiian Language was the prevailing language of instruction.

When posed with the question, “What would you hope for education for our children in Keaukaha in the future?” Aunty responded, “I hope they make names for themselves and be
more educated. Go to college and go to school more often. College or UH. At least be somebody.”
Chapter 3
Kupuna Rhea Akoi

Kupuna Rhea Kalaniʻōpuʻu Poʻohunaikeaopolohiwa Enos Akoi was born on June 20, 1927 in Hilo, Hawaiʻi. I had the opportunity to sit with Aunty Rhea Akoi at her home on Todd Avenue on November 10, 2010. She spoke fondly of her family and shared the names of family members that are an integral part of her family’s identity: “We had 5 in our family. My eldest, my oldest sister, Ethel Kapualokeokalani Enos Borges. She passed away in 1994. My brother, Clyde, is two years younger than I. And under him is Wendall and then William K. Enos, Jr. Both my younger brothers, Wendall and William, whom we call ‘Junior,’ are still living. Clyde died when he was 25, after the Korean War. He was in there. The other two brothers were in Vietnam....the war.”

Aunty Rhea is of Hawaiian, which is dominant, Chinese, and Portuguese descent: “My father comes from a great-grandfather who came from Portugal. His mother is pure Hawaiian from Kauaʻi. So by the time it came to Papa’s father, the Portuguese kind of dwindled down to more Hawaiian. So Papa is 75% Hawaiian.” Aunty Rhea also traced her mother’s genealogy. She explained that her mother, Sarah Kanuha, was a “quarter Pākē (Chinese)” with the rest being Hawaiian ancestry.

In 1989, Aunty Rhea published, Kuʻu Home i Keaukaha, a historical collection of stories and oral histories of individuals of the Hawaiian community of Keaukaha including the story of Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole who established, through the United States Congress, the Hawaiian Homestead Act of 1921. From this congressional act was the establishment of the first two Hawaiian Home Land areas in Hawaiʻi: Hoʻolehua on the Island of Molokaʻi and Keaukaha on the Island of Hawaiʻi (Akoi, 1989, p. 3). It is somewhat daunting to carry forth this oral
history project as a continuation of what Aunty Rhea had accomplished 25 years ago with members of the Keaukaha community. Just as Aunty Rhea unleashed the voices of our Keaukaha ancestors in her earlier publication, it is with the same aloha and respect that I carry forth her story.

As I reviewed Aunty Rhea’s responses in her oral history, common themes revealed were the importance of education to a family, educating an entire community, and the ocean as a classroom for family knowledge. I will speak to each of these themes and then identify their implications for educational programs within the Keaukaha school community.

The Importance of Education to a Family

In Hawaiian, the terms *kaikua‘ana* and *kaikana* define older and younger siblings of the same sex, respectively (Pūku‘i, 1986). Aunty Rhea speaks fondly of her older kaikua‘ana, Ethel Kapualokeokalani Enos Borges. One word that she used to describe her sister was “teacher.” Aunty Rhea proudly talks about her elder sister’s career as a teacher: “She was a teacher at Hilo Union School having gone back to Mānoa after having her fourth child. They were still very young and she decided that she wanted to go...she wanted to be a cafeteria manager. And when she was taking classes, the professors told her, ‘Don’t go that way. You need to be a teacher.’ And she is a teacher. Always has always been one to me. You know...and so she went down that route. After her graduation, she taught at Hilo Union until she retired.” Aunty Rhea’s sister extended her gift of song to many people within the community and in the education setting: “She also was a song counselor for our Hawaiian...our Keaukaha young people at Hilo High.”

Both Aunty Rhea and her sister attended school in Honolulu on the Island of O‘ahu: “My sister and I lived with my aunty in Honolulu. She sent us to St. Patrick’s School. I was
Kindergarten and First grade there. And when mama wanted us to come home we went to Keaukaha for my 2nd grade. And then papa wanted us to go to St. Joseph’s.”

Aunty Rhea remained at St. Joseph School from the 3rd to 6th grade. After this she went to live with the same aunty on O‘ahu: “She sent me to St. Anthony’s. This was in Kalihi. That was my intermediate school. I went there for my 7th, 8th, and part of my 9th grade...because the war began in 1941. Now when I was going to St. Anthony’s... I caught the bus in the morning to go to school, and after school there were a lot of students who walked home to Damon Track. That was about a 3 mile walk. And so it was quite expensive for the bus...for me to come home on the bus, so I walked home with the rest of the students from Damon Track as they were going to St. Anthony. We had a lot of fun because we took our time...it didn’t matter what time I got home. Aunty worked at the cannery. And so we walked home with the rest of the children and there were fishermen on the railroad that were fishing down Moanalua area you know. And they were a lot of streams and bridges that we had to cross and we would stop and watch them fish for crab and talk and throw rocks and what not. Aunty lived in Damon Track just where Hawaiian Airlines is now. And that’s where I lived. And then the War began and it was too dangerous for us to walk home. So Aunty...we had to look for a school where Aunty and Uncle were working. So we had to look for a school...they didn’t have to worry about me. And the school that had transportation to and from was Aiea. So the last half of my 9th grade year I spent it at ‘Aiea when the war began. And mama wanted me home because it was too dangerous where we were. And then I attended and graduated from Hilo High. I never went to college.”

Aunty Rhea recounts that while attending Hilo High she was instilled with the value of work: “Every Friday at Hilo High, we, as students, use to go work in the plantation.” Aunty Rhea graduated from Hilo High School in 1945.
Soon after graduation, Aunty Rhea began her work as a telephone operator: “At that time an operator’s job was kind of a pretty...almost like professional. You were looked up to you know because it was a good paying job at that time and we were only making $.27...at the plantation we were making $.27 an hour, but the people that I worked with were wonderful and they all, practically all of them, came from St. Joseph’s. They graduated from St. Joseph’s.”

Aunty Rhea was working as a telephone operator when she married Robert Akoi in 1948 and they had three children in 1949, 1950, and 1951. During this time she also relieved her grandmother who was a PBX operator at the AmFac company. She began working fulltime at AmFac after her children began going to school and her grandmother retired.

**Educating a Community**

Along with her sister, Aunty Rhea herself was an educator. Her passion is in teaching children. She began her career in education at Keaukaha School where she explains, “parents were very close” and “everybody’s children were our children.” Over the years there were additional programs at the school that enhanced not only the academics but also the cultural learnings that are unique to the Hawaiian community and its children.

In 1967 Keaukaha School was looking for Educational Assistants and, because of Aunty’s background in music, she was interviewed by the school’s principal, Mr. Hirano: “I had musical background from my church. I taught music in our church and we were schooled by people who came from Brigham BYU to learn music. I was interviewed at Keaukaha School by Mr. Hirano who was the principal. He asked me what my background was and I told him that I taught young people in the primary grades in our religious education classes and I also taught them music, and so he hired me.” For the first two years, Aunty Rhea served as an Educational Assistant helping in each class of the school: “Then I was put in the third...in the fourth grade
for Hawaiian classes and soon after the Hawaiian Act IV began giving us money, so then I taught music only in all grades at Keaukaha School.”

Aunty Rhea said, “With Act IV, we had all of our kumu who came in to help with the Hawaiian Language...we had Aunty Edith (Kanaka‘ole) who first had her beginning at Keaukaha School and then she expanded her calling and had other kupuna that came in to teach our people...all of us she taught us Hawaiian...and I never went further than that to speak fluently.”

Aunty Rhea handled the May Day every year in the 70s and 80s until she retired in 1989. She was put in charge of the study center and the music at Keaukaha School as well. Her dedication and commitment was evident throughout the community and the school. However, her endeavors in education did not stop here. In 1978, Keaukaha School was going to have Special Education classes, and Aunty Rhea wanted to be part of that program.

At this particular time, then Keaukaha Principal Ruth Walker asked her to switch over to Special Education as the Act IV funds were coming to an end: “I loved my position as a music person and as a study center aid, but the Special Education aide, I think, was my most enjoyable, most rewarding one. I think because we saw how the children progressed; how they first came to us and when they left us. We had mostly autistic. We began with three autistic children. I learned a lot from them and the teachers at that time.”

Aunty Rhea remembers fondly a severely handicapped child who came to the school when Aunty Rhea was working as a Special Education aide: “She could only move around on her back. She could not sit up. And I had a lot of scars and things. She threw food at me. She cried, and she had the (curse) words to use. The second year she was with us it was the first time she ever sat – we cried the first time she ever sat down. The class was so rewarding.”
Aunty Rhea also recalled a young boy that was in the class who had a difficult time in speech: "The last year I was there, we had a boy that had been with us for all of his beginning years, and he was beginning to enunciate. I was there giving him phonics and helping him with that and enunciation, and he was so frustrated and you know how frustrated they can get...we didn’t know how bright he was until one day he was on the computer and he was typing the titles of the programs he was watching (on TV)." Aunty Rhea smiles when she recounts that one year after she left Keaukaha School, the young boy was going to leave the school as well: "He made a tape for me....Mssssss. Aaaaakkkkoi...ttttthankkkkk yyyouuuuu fffoooooorr teeeeaching mmmeeeee."  

Aunty Rhea also spoke of her work at the Keaukaha Study Center and her continued work with Hawaiian children: "At that time, in the early-seventies and the mid-seventies, our Hawaiian children were stereotyped, especially our Keaukaha children." When Aunty Rhea asked her students, "Where are you from?" their responses indicated that the students weren’t proud to come from Keaukaha. This led Aunty Rhea to establish Hawaiian programs that involved the Hawaiian children in communal and cultural activities. She insisted that the children of Keaukaha had to know their past: "I use to ask my group (of students), ‘Do you folks know how Keaukaha first started, first began?’ ‘No.’"  

She spoke to them about the work that the Keaukaha people did. "Did you know they had to be in the yard planting so that they could eat? They had to be down at the beach fishing so they could eat? What time did they have to work? How could they go work 8 hours of day, then go fishing, and then plant taro, or the ‘ulu, or the onion...?’" She described how the people of Keaukaha didn’t have bulldozers but instead had to make do with picks and shovels, and how
they had to raise pigs and chickens to eat, and how they had to look for tires to plant their potatoes in, and then how they were raising children at the same time.

She would reassure the children, “Do not listen to anybody that tells you that Hawaiians were lazy; they were not lazy! You must know that they were working people trying to feed their families.” After she shared this information with them, she noticed that the young people began to feel better about themselves: “I was so grateful because I prayed. I prayed so hard for our programs, ‘What can we do to make these young people feel better?’ That’s why we started the painting programs. That’s why we started the ‘ukulele and guitar classes. And that’s why we started the [oral history] interviews...the interviews were the last.”

The Ocean as a Classroom for Family Knowledge

Aunty Rhea remembers fondly the time that she and her siblings would spend at the beach as children. As her parents were busy with work, the children were able to take care of themselves: “We would cook the pot of rice at home and the Portuguese sausage or whatever there was. Put it in the pot. Take the pot in the dish towel, take it down to the ocean with the *kini* (tin) plates. Take it to the ocean put the pot in the grass, and never had ants...and when the sun came straight up and down, we would swim all morning.”

Aunty Rhea recounts visiting two special beach areas of Keaukaha – Puhi Bay and Kulapae. The children were very well equipped when they travelled down to the ocean: “We would take needles with us. After we take the rice out and everything...go get *pipi pi* and the *kupe’e* (ocean snails)...and Kulapae had the biggest *pipi pi*...you know. They had the biggest *pipi pi* and *kupe’e*. *Limu ‘ele ‘ele* (seaweed) underneath the hau tree at Puhi Bay. Because there were those little rivers, now it’s all covered up. All under there was *limu ‘ele ‘ele* during that time. But we would take that. Clean the pot rice up...put *pipi pi* inside...take the match...make
fire between two rocks, put the pot on...with the pipipi.” She demonstrated the use of the needle
to ‘ū, or extract, the meat from the pipipi shell.

Aunty Rhea and her siblings also knew when to go home. As Keaukaha community is
located near the Hilo Airport, the airplane that flew over Keaukaha each day at 3:00p.m. was a
clear indication for the children to return home as their mother would be home from work at
4:00p.m.

Aunty Rhea and her family would also make trips to the ocean with their church group:
“When we had church outings, the women would go out by Four Miles and that’s where they
would be catching ‘oama (fish). We would take buckets, put pebbles inside and rocks inside into
the buckets. The ladies would hook the ‘oama, put in the buckets with rocks and our job was to
stir the buckets with the ‘oama inside and the rock would take out all the (fish) scales.”

While the mothers fished for ‘oama, the men went out to spearfish. The men would
come back from getting wana (sea urchin), and the children would watch as they put the wana in
a burlap bag and rolled the bags over a rock to take the needles out of the sea urchins.

At home each person had two or three ‘oama with poi: “That was our education down at
the beach. We could eat as much poi as we wanted, but you bit that fish to last you...poi was
very cheap those days.” (Aunty remembers getting the poi from the AhHee poi shop in town
which wasn’t very far from the White Star Laundry where her mother worked. Her aunty would
show how to sew underwear with the poi bags once the bags were emptied.)

Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

The work that Aunty Rhea has done for the Keaukaha community is seen in the lives of
many community members who are now parents and grandparents. Her love for children and
families was evident. Her love for God and church was strong: “Respect was number one.
Respect of God. We could tell most of the families went to one religious denomination where love of God was taught, where families came first. Family comes first before any other distraction. Parents need to spend time with their children.” She further explained, “We did not have too much when we were growing up. No more access to libraries, books, and things. Today, I believe we need to read to our children no matter how old. You can also play ‘ukulele and sing with them. Sing lullabies, sing the nursery rhymes or you know singing things like that.”

As with her own education, Aunty Rhea would love to see our Keaukaha students continue their education beyond high school: “Science is going so fast now, technology is going so fast that you cannot get that in the home. You’ve got to get it elsewhere. You are going to have to go to an institution that will teach that. The world is going too fast with network and things like that and...how to get into different programs and that can only be taught if you went to a school that can give you that kind of knowledge. I would like to see young people thinking ahead to go that way in order to have higher paying jobs so that their families can be taken care of when they have them.”

In her book, Ku‘u Home i Keaukaha, Aunty Rhea recognizes the work of Hawaiian prince, Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole. She would expect our students to know who he was, to be proud of the work that he has done in creating Hawaiian Home Lands, and to show gratitude for this gift that he has given to Hawaiian people. She hopes that students today understand and appreciate “how he (Prince Jonah Kūhiō) struggled so that we can get land...And the need to study so that somebody else cannot take that away.” But most of all, she hopes that students are “grateful that we can live on our land that we only need to pay a dollar.”

Identity as a community is also very important to Aunty Rhea. As a musician, she emphasizes the importance of song to members of the Keaukaha community: “One thing that
I've thought brought up the pride in our school was singing the Keaukaha song. When we see the children, just their faces when they are singing, I said they are proud. They were singing and their faces portrayed their proudness. Now I want everybody, every child...anytime the first thing they learn at Keaukaha School is the Keaukaha song.”

This community pride is important to Aunty Rhea. She recounts that as the music teacher she would often receive compliments by observers of her students: “When people tell me, ‘Your children portray happiness and pride’...I tell my children...I use to stand on the cafeteria bench and all of them are sitting down and I would stand and tell them how proud they look when they sing and how people think of them.”
Kupuna Kamaile Mauhili was born on May 4, 1934 in Ola’a at the Ola’a hospital. She was the second of sixteen children of her mother, Agnes Kela, and her father, Henry Auwae. She explains, “You know, a lot people think 16 of us was living under one roof at one time. You know. ‘A‘ole...the first 5, when we left, the next 5. We grew up. We got married, go military. We never had 16 of us at one time in the house.”

Aunty Maile was brought up “old school” by her parents: “And there’s three things that we were brought up especially with our Tutu. Tutu Malia Kela. You know there are three things that she taught us: Respect, Love, and Pule.”

Her Tutu Lady, Kaipo Kauhane, inherited the land in Keaukaha from her cousin. The house that she grew up in is still there on the main street of Kalaniana‘ole in Keaukaha: “So Tutu Lady was the successor and she turned the place over to Mama because they lived in Kapoho because Daddy was working plantation at the time...Puna Plantation at that time and we moved to Hilo because Daddy got a job working airport...the Hilo airport...building the airport runway. So 1938 we moved to Keaukaha.”

Aunty Maile, over the years, has dedicated much of her time to the academic and cultural well-being of the children and people of Keaukaha. She helped to start up educational programs such as the tutorial center in Keaukaha for high school students in the 1990s. As a former Vice Principal of Hilo High School in 2002, I have witnessed firsthand Aunty Maile’s aloha for children. Her wisdom and the tone of her voice as a security officer for 34 years at Hilo High School provided guidance and aloha to the students she came across. She is much respected by all.
As I consider Aunty Mauhili’s responses in her oral history, the common themes were the house as a function of sustainability, the ocean as the backyard, and overcoming stereotypes in school.

The House as a Function of Sustainability

Aunty Maile remembers fondly her house in Keaukaha. She remembers how functional everything was inside and outside of the house. Everything had a purpose in sustaining such a large family as Aunty Maile’s: “You know the homes...we lived like in one cracker box. You know what I mean, and those homes were built by our father, like daddy folks, the brothers-in-law and all that. There was one house...Tutu Kaipo, that was her house and Daddy extended it, can make one more room here, one more room here. But the good part about that living for us when we were young, we had like the living quarters one house...one hale, one more little place was for the hale kuke (kitchen)...was for cook...separate from the house. But you get the roof just walk to the kitchen. It wasn’t in the house connected. That’s how we lived. You had the place to sleep. Because the kitchen was like a regular kitchen you know but bigger than the kitchen, like a house. Tutu Lady had a place for her poi, pound poi. The back door, right there, on the side, this big pōhaku...flat pōhaku where Tutu used to pound on that rock.”

Everything was accessible at the house. They raised animals and grew their food on their land: “Everything, everything. Raised chickens, raised pigs. ‘Ulu (breadfruit) trees all over.... ‘Ulu tree right in the chicken coop. Raised to eat.... the eggs, and all that. And you know in those days, everything is planted. Tutu Lady always said the soil is ‘ono. That’s the word she always used. Everything was there.”

Aunty Maile remembers the ‘ulu tree inside the pig pen that helped to feed the pigs automatically: “You get one ‘ulu tree right there right inside the pen - it’s not only one pig pen -
it’s one pig enclosure. And this ‘ulu tree - and we still get the ‘ulu trees - and in the chicken coop. So when the ‘ulu fall down, the animals get food. Those days...our Tūtūs...I wish we had that kind manaʻo like them.” She remembers the taro, beans, egg-plant, and tomatoes that they had growing in their yard.

The house that Aunty Maile lived in was located right across the street from the Keonekahakaha beach ocean. When travelling down in Keaukaha it is recognized by the number of fishponds that line the shoreline and road on both sides. Aunty Maile remembers the fishpond on their land: “Tūtū Lady would go to Onekahakaha beach. There is this pond. She would go early in the morning, I guess time for the mullet. They spawn and she wait you know how many months and she go. She caught, she bring home, she raise them in the pond.”

As there was no indoor plumbing, she remembers the outhouse, but it never affected the land or pond. She explains, “The pond was always clean. We would wash clothes in the pond on this big stone.” Aunty Maile’s Tūtū Lady would also use the pond to plant whatever she could that the family could eat: “The pond, one small little area, she made watercress...watercress patch.” In speaking of the pond, Aunty Maile remembers the frogs that her Tūtū Lady raised for Sunsun Lau, a local Hilo Chinese Restaurant. Her Tūtū Lady taught her how to catch the frogs: “Tūtū Lady she taught us how to catch...put the string, red cloth on the diaper pin...just drop in...and they go for the red...the bull frogs...and then paʻa (caught). But Tūtū Lady chose - if the frog was too small, it would go back in the pond.”

Aunty Maile’s Tūtū Lady and her parents knew lāʻau lapaʻau, Hawaiian medicine. She and her siblings were taught by her Tūtū Lady. She recounts a time when her mother was ill and what was readily available on the land was to be used as medicine: “Mama was ill. She was ill, but she held on. And you know the thing everyday, I go down, I always go down to the
house….mama’s medicine was lā‘ī (ti-leaf), you know the middle part of the lā‘ī? There was this glass of water on her side and, I can still picture it, on the side of that was charcoal. She would nibble on the stem of the lā‘ī, ti-leaf. She would dab, dab little bit charcoal on top of the stem, nibble, put back in the water. For Mama, that was her medicine. For everything, that was the only thing she took that was her medicine, as long as get lā‘ī, ti-leaf. And in the house four corners in her room, four corners, there was lā‘ī.”

**Ocean as the Backyard – Take What You Need**

Aunty Maile also spoke about going down to Keonekahakaha and Holokai to fish. It was done often as they lived right across from these beach areas: “And in between Holokai and (Ke)Onekahakaha get this pond. When the ocean water comes in, you would find in the pond mullet…Oh I’m telling you we use to go swim and to catch them with our hands…big kind.”

Throw net, set net, and cross net were the different styles used by Keaukaha people in catching fish along the shorelines: “Daddy used to cross net down Onekahakaha between Onekahakaha and Keokea. I’m telling you early in the morning we go pa‘ipa‘i and just go slap, slap, slap the water…plenty…do you know what we catch? Menpachi. Plenty! The net was red. So he would take all the small fish and throw them back - all that go back.”

Her father would make a wall-like structure with a small opening facing the ocean so when the tide comes up all the fish would enter: “When the tide slowly goes down, they are already down there and they just with the net they just pani (close) that opening with the net and then the fish would go inside.” They would often pa‘ipa‘i, and chase the fish towards the net: “And I tell you, that little place, full with any kind fish, any kind.”

When Aunty Maile and her ‘ohana went to the beach it was an all-day affair. They would begin early in the morning and much of the work was done at the ocean: “We would clean the
fish and dry the fish down on the beach. And then Tūtū Lady go make 'ōpīhi, hā'uke'uke like that...that’s a day like they always say, prepare to eat.” Aunty Maile further explains, “I know we use to go like once a week...weekends and gather. And then maybe the next month no go down because we already get enough...leave for somebody else.”

One activity that Aunty Maile’s name is synonymous with is canoe paddling. In fact the annual Moku o Keawe Regatta is named after Aunty Maile Mauhili. Her connection to the ocean and canoe paddling continues to this day: “I got into paddling in 1946 before the tidal wave. We used to come summer school down here at Kawānanākōa Hall with Uncle Albert Nahale-a, and we use to go camp on Coconut Island. But no more bridge - you had to go on the row boat. You know, so most of us swim across, and they bring all of our clothes in the bag, put on the boat with Uncle Albert. On Coconut Island there used to be a couple of canoes. The caretaker for that island was the Keli‘ipio Family. They were the ones that took care of that island. So the first time we went summer school camping on that island we were on a canoe. The canoe was not long like what we have today. It was koa - all wooden no fiberglass. So we would go riding and they take us go riding in the bay over there by Baker’s beach. So we took interest. And I was 11 years old at that time.”

The 1946 tsunami caused much damage to Hilo and the connected areas, and stalled Aunty Maile’s participation in canoe paddling. It wasn’t until 1948 when there was a resurgence of canoe paddling once again: “That’s when we started at Reed’s Bay, Kamehameha Canoe Club. Māmalahoa, the Order of Kamehameha, was made up of our parents, the males, all of our uncles...only the males belonged to the Order of Kamehameha. So they were like the sponsors, they were the ones that went into canoe paddling because of Uncle Ike Keli‘ipio, and Uncle Ike was one of the members of Kamehameha Lodge, Order of Kamehameha. So the parents down
here, all the fathers, they are the ones that wanted canoe paddling. So that name Kamehameha Canoe Club was from the 40s all the way to today.”

For further historical context on the canoe club in Keaukaha, Aunty Maile clarified the change in names: “You see Keaukaha Canoe Club was named at first, Kamehameha. Because in the 60s when we left, canoeing dissolved and that was that. So Kamehameha Canoe was the last with all us from Keaukaha because it was here in Keaukaha.”

Aunty Maile has coached canoe paddling for decades. When asked why she still coaches canoe paddling, she responded, “The reason for that is the love, the love. What we learned, what we know, we share. That’s the big thing for me. And the kamali’i (children) always came first. We got to put them…no matter who they are, where they come from, you know, the families and all. We put them before us. Because the guidance, too, the guidance. Get them to be whoever they are, whatever their personality, maybe we can share, that’s my big thing.”

**Overcoming Stereotypes in School**

Like many Keaukaha families, education was very important for Aunty Maile’s ‘ohana. She started at Kawananakoa Hall, the community’s gym and multi-purpose center, when she was four and five. She attended St. Joseph’s School beginning in kindergarten through third grade. In the fourth grade, her parents enrolled her in the community school of Keaukaha.

Aunty Maile remembers her teachers at Keaukaha speaking Hawaiian. It was not much different from what she heard at home: “In our household it was all Hawaiian. When we were young, we spoke. We had to talk in Hawaiian.” This was during the time when the Hawaiian language was rapidly declining as the medium of instruction in schools throughout Hawai‘i. However, Aunty Maile never remembered the teachers stopping them from speaking Hawaiian: “Half of the time we spoke. Half of the time our Hawaiian words were coming out. I going tell
you something, we never stopped. We were answered by the teachers.” She never witnessed anyone being punished for speaking Hawaiian at Keaukaha School. It was acknowledged, accepted, and practiced by all.

Aunty Maile describes her childhood at school and in the Keaukaha community as being “sheltered.” She explains, “We were taken care of not only by our parents when we were outside our home, but our people. They see us doing naughty things, they scold us or so.” She remembers going to school with students of multiple ethnicities, or multiple nationalities, and felt it was important for students from Keaukaha to let others know who they were and where they came from: “At times we may have felt condemned that we come from this community of Keaukaha. And when I’m asked, ‘Why I always say sheltered?’ I say because, we are protected by everybody, not only, of course, by ‘ohana but everybody around us. They took care of us. They guided us. If we naughty they would tell us. Respect. We always respected. Our parents the way how they brought us up to respect.”

**Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community**

Aunty Maile has high hopes for the children of Keaukaha. As described above, she believes that it is important for Keaukaha children to have pride in themselves and where they come from. She further explains, “I just hope they continue their lives, in a loving way. In a way that they can share their mana‘o. No shame. You know some of them are shy, like they don’t want to open up. Number one thing I would let them know – don’t be afraid, don’t be afraid. Express yourselves. Let people know who you are, where you come from. Let people know, just stand on the tallest mountain and let everybody know – that’s my thing. ‘A’ole hilahila. No shame, no shame. We as kūpuna, we as kumu. This is where we got to let them know it’s okay.”
Similar to her recounting the events in her personal life, Aunty Maile believes that it is just as important that community members also know who they are: “For me, for all of our children, they need to learn about themselves.”

In her concluding remarks, Aunty Maile returned back to what her Tūtū Lady taught her: Respect, Love, and Pule. She insists that there will come a time to forgive. In forgiveness there is respect for others. She loved her Tūtū Lady: “Tūtū had share of herself bringing us up. And you know when I look back at those days, I aloha Tūtū Lady; I really do. And you know that’s the way how I bring up my children.”

She concludes, “The pule (prayer) part is when we need of help. You know especially how small we are...when we go swim down ‘Auwili like that, something happen... ‘Oh God, help us.’ Pule came to us natural because of what Tūtū Lady always told us. Tutu told us, ‘You don’t only pule when you need things - you pule for everything.’ When you are in need of help what you do? You pule. We have to make our kamali‘i aware of what is around us in spirit.”
Kupuna Leinani Luella Ahuna Aina was born on December 26, 1939 in Keaukaha, Hilo. She lived on 256 Todd Avenue. Her mom was Ida Edna Spencer and her father was Wallace Ahuna.

Known throughout Keaukaha, Aunty Luella has been an avid supporter of athletes and athletic sports. As a gym director for many years, she was instrumental in initiating the work that led to the construction of a much needed gymnasium for Keaukaha. Throughout her childhood, Aunty Luella was fortunate to have been “raised” by various members of the Keaukaha community. This has inspired her, in turn, to serve as a mentor to many Keaukaha children.

As I review Aunty Luella’s responses in her oral history, the common themes identified were Mālama i ke keiki – doing for children, community leaders who taught, and building the importance of education within each individual.

Mālama i Ke Keiki - Doing for Children

Aunty Luella attended Keaukaha School until Grade 6 and attended Waiakea Kai from grade 7 through 9. One adult who had played an important role in raising Aunty Luella during her younger years was her grandmother, Caroline Spencer, whom she loved dearly: “We used to catch the Sampan bus and then go movies with her. Hilo or Mamo or wherever she wanted to go, we use to go with her. She used to have fun taking us to the movies. And she made us eat first before we go movies. You know, we learned how to catch the bus because when I was in high school we had to catch the Sampan bus.”
Aunty Luella graduated from Hilo High School in 1957: “At that time my brother Robert was with me in the same grade. Because he was ill, he graduated late. Yeah, so my mom...she tell us the story about Robert. I think he was nine or ten. He stayed in the old Pu‘umaile home. You know what was sad, we couldn’t go to him. He stayed by the window and he’s waving to us. We couldn’t go see him. My mom guys always cried. Then he got released and came to school. And he went to Honolulu for a Boy Scout thing and then he started bleeding again. And he had to go right back to the hospital.” Aunty Luella remembers that her brother was so ill that her mom took him up to the mountains and gave him medicine. The family believed in Hawaiian medicine. She also took him to Laupāhoehoe to be healed.

Aunty Luella’s parents taught their children skills that were important in sustaining their lives. For instance, the lessons from her mother began as soon as the children woke up in the morning: “She taught us so many things. When we get up in the morning we had to make our beds. We cannot sit down on the bed. Before you got to make your bed, you cannot sit.” Aunty Luella recalls many other lessons that she learned from her parents as well. For instance, one day when their family was travelling down to the ocean in Keaukaha, her mother asked their brother to carry the ‘opihi bag. It wasn’t until they reached home that they realized that the ‘opihi bag was left on the side by the ocean. The brother was sent back to fetch the ‘opihi bag and, in his fetching, he got washed out to sea and had to be rescued by their other brother. “You don’t throw things away,” she remembers her mother saying. “Take care the ocean…and we learned.”

The ocean was a big part of Aunty Luella’s ‘ohana. It was also the setting for many lessons that were taught to the children in the family: “My father used to take us from Kings Landing all the way back to Break Water. My brothers were all fisherman because they had to
learn how to be fisherman. We all learned how to sew net. We learned how to sew net because my dad taught us. Taught us how to make lead. Before we had to get the hau branches for floaters and we had to get the hau from BBP (ocean area in Keaukaha)...we called it ‘shit island.’”

Aunty Luella continued to explain that her father used to make them swim across the pond, cut the hau, strip down the neck and dry them: “We used them for the net...for the cross net. We use to use the hau for the rope...you know, like the raffia...Mom and Dad used to teach us how to weave them so that they could use them for rope. Yeah, my dad was good.”

Like many families in Keaukaha, Aunty Luella and her brothers were taught how to kāpeku or pa‘ipa‘i, or “slap the water”. When a net was set in place off shore from one particular point to another facing inland, families would then enter the water from the shore and kāpeku or pa‘ipa‘i chasing the fish in front of them into the net off shore. Aunty Luella’s father would take them down to Kings Landing and all the way to Break Water to kāpeku. Whatever they caught they would sell to make money. As she and her siblings grew up, the children continued these practices independently: “I use to go fishing with my brother and I was their line-man. I was in the inner tube when they went fishing. We use to fish from Breakwall all the way down to Doc Hill. My brother, Walter, we called him the he‘e (octopus) man. He was the one that caught all the he‘e.”

Community Leaders Who Taught

Aunty Luella remembers many community members who guided her throughout the years in Keaukaha. It was through their support and aloha that Aunty Luella extended her interest in sports: “I remembered much from community people such as Mr. Nahale-a. He coached us. So I nīele (asked questions), I went to find out this and that. And my, you know, he
was a good man, Mr. Nahale-a, and I played for him long time."

Another person that trained Aunty Luella in the work that prepared her for her career as a gym director was Mr. Robert Kaʻupu. "Mr. Kaʻupu, he was my coach. And Robert Kaʻupu used to take me with him. When I applied for the job I only had two years experience...I was supposed to have 4 years. But when they give me the test, I passed all the test. I learned how to keep score. He told me how far the pitcher’s mound for the women and the men. Softball, basketball, volleyball. Softball was my sport and Mr. Nahale-a and Robert Kaʻupu taught me. And Volleyball...Ann Leialoha. Basketball...Kenny Haina he taught us. And guys like to play with us. The older guys used to play."

Aunty Luella also remembers many cultural learning opportunities that were afforded to the people of Keaukaha when she was growing up: "I learned how to do lauhala by Aunty Edith Kanakaʻole. I learned how to paint from Aunty Pua Borges. I painted and my sons Daniel and Dukie painted. Keaukaha School had Title IV program so I learned how to paint. I learned from copying and just from wanting to learn."

Music in Keaukaha was also important and, although she participated in music through various venues in the Keaukaha community, Aunty Luella left the music to her sons: "Aunty Rhea Akoi taught music to Daniel and Dukie. They also had their own band."

Aunty Luella recalled how her parents and other members of the Keaukaha community gave of themselves for the well-being of the community and she credits the lessons that she learned from her coaches and other community members for her passing her gym director job placement test: "I never learned that in school. It was all practical ability. If I wasn't brought up like that it would have been harder."
Building the Importance of Education Within Each Individual

Aunty Luella’s family was very much involved in education within the community of Keaukaha. She fondly remembers Mrs. Josephine Todd, one of Keaukaha’s first educators at the community school of Keaukaha: “Mrs. Todd...she used to have her classroom under my mother’s house (in Keaukaha). There weren’t too many classrooms at Keaukaha School, and they used part of Kawānanāko Hall gym’s upstairs. Well, there was a classroom that was underneath my mother’s house.”

Aunty Luella’s mom was very close to the teachers of Keaukaha School. She was especially close to Mrs. Todd, who eventually hired Aunty Luella as an educational assistant: “She hired me down at Keaukaha School. When I started there, my kids...were students at Keaukaha School. I was the first Educational Assistant in 1965 hired by Mrs. Josephine Todd at Keaukaha School.”

Aunty Luella recalls the conventional educational system that existed at Keaukaha School when she was attending as a student: “At that time we had the basics...reading, math, I don’t remember having too much science, but English...I remembered they pushed the Standard English.” Although educated in an English-standard school system, Aunty Luella is also very proud of her pidgin English. It was the language that she grew up with and built relationships with at home, at school, and at work. Years later she reflected on the importance of her formal education as well as the importance of the informal lessons that she learned while growing up in Keaukaha, which were equally important to her: “I never like lose my pidgin. I cherish that pidgin because I can speak Standard English because we can understand any kind pidgin like Filipino pidgin, Chinese pidgin, Hawaiian pidgin.” While Aunty Luella recalls having a difficult time when she first entered college, with resilience and perseverance she was able to succeed at
the collegiate level and earned herself an Associate’s Degree.

**Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community**

When it comes to sports and athletics, Aunty Luella continues to be an important role model for many athletes in Keaukaha. Throughout her years as a gym director for Keaukaha gym, Andrews gym in Waiākea and Shipman’s gym in Kea’au, she was unwavering in her support of the athletes and sporting events. For instance, when she became the gym director of Keaukaha gym in 1990, she realized that the community gym was not up to par as a major gathering place for members from Keaukaha and within the island community at large: “They were still going upstairs to lift weights, but the floor was all popopo (rotted).”

As with her mentors, Aunty Luella became a voice that would advocate for change. Her lobbying efforts for a new Kawananakoa Hall gym began in the 1990s and gradually gained support from others in the community: “When I started to lobby, I use to get scolding from my bosses. I started to talk to kūpuna. I wrote down things. I travelled to Honolulu to continue my research on the place.”

Aunty Luella praises the supportive efforts of another community kūpuna, Aunty Abbie Napeahi: “You know she was really instrumental. Highly political. When it came to the gym, she changed the minds of many political figures.” Aunty Abbie helped to push for quicker action from county politicians during challenging times for Aunty Luella in her pursuit of a new community gym. She remembers what Aunty Abbie told her, “She said, ‘Girl, I no like die and you guys bring up the gym.’ We built the gym, the next year she died.”

Aunty Luella, firmly believes in putting people in the right place and position to support grass-roots, community program efforts. She believes the success of the building of the Keaukaha community’s Kawananakoa Hall gym and Hualani athletic complex, which is now one
of the most widely used facilities in the State of Hawai‘i, is an example of what can be accomplished by the grass-roots efforts of the many members of the Keaukaha community working together.

Just as she was taken under the wing of many coaches and community leaders, Aunty Luella continues to pay attention to the athletic talent that exists in the Keaukaha community. When she recognizes such talent, she makes it a point to speak to the child’s parents to encourage families not to just recognize the talent that their child currently has but their athletic potential and the possibilities for what he or she may become, which may open portals of opportunities for them past high school.

Aunty Luella recounts an opportunity that was presented to one of Keaukaha’s graduating seniors. There was a talent search opportunity held on O‘ahu for football. Since Aunty Luella was close to the family of a particularly talented football player, she was able to encourage the family to have the player participate. As result of the athlete’s participation in the football talent search on O‘ahu, the Keaukaha graduating senior was recognized as number 2 ranked out of about 500 participants. Upon graduation, this Keaukaha graduate became a well-sought after athlete. Aunty Luella recalls the athlete later acknowledging the impact that the O‘ahu talent search had on his future success, “He told me, ‘Aunty, if I never went to the combine they wouldn’t have seen me.’”

Well-respected as a coach, Aunty Luella continues to watch other community coaches in the various sports that are played throughout Keaukaha. She continues to mentor and provides input whether or not it’s solicited. She believes that the children of Keaukaha need to be involved productively in the many programs that the Keaukaha community has to offer, and that the coaches and leaders of these programs should always be looking out for the best interests of
the children: “You take care of Keaukaha kids. No matter where they come from or how poor they are, you take care of them.”

Many of the lessons that Aunty Luella has learned from her parents about the ocean continue to live on in her sons and other family members. For instance, she recognizes a grand-nephew who, like her brother, his grandfather, is particularly skillful at catching he'e (octopus). As she explains, “He learned plenty from his roots.”

What Aunty Luella hopes for our children of Keaukaha community is that they will learn more about their own culture and become prominent people. She emphasizes that when she and her siblings were young, they made things: “You know how they get their own floaters now? They buy Styrofoam. We use to make with the hau. My father use to make us hand drill. We use to make our own net too, but now you can buy at the store. All these kinds we learned. Now the kids don’t like to learn these things.”
Chapter 6

Kupuna Luana Kawelu

Kupuna Luana Kawelu was born in Keaukaha on September 1, 1940. She was raised by her grandparents in Keaukaha: “We lived down on Kalanianaʻole Avenue a little past the Seaside Restaurant. It was my grandma, my grandpa, my auntie, my father’s twin sister and myself who lived there.” Her family’s home was in an area adjacent to the Hawaiian Home Lands community called Lokowaka named for the woman, Waka, who upset the goddess Pele and fled into the community of Keaukaha where she dove into the loko (pond) to seek refuge. Although much of the Lokowaka area is now owned by private landowners and consists largely of private homes and condominiums, Aunty Luana is still considered a Keaukaha community member.

Family has always been important to Aunty Luana. Being raised by her grandparents instilled in her the value of ‘ohana, which includes not only her biological ‘ohana, but other ‘ohana in the Keaukaha community as well. She has worked for the families of Keaukaha for over 45 years as a social worker at the Queen Liliʻuokalani Children’s Center. Over the many years in which she has served her community, she has provided support and guidance in education, children’s programs, summer school, community gatherings, and sports. Aunty Luana explains, “When I first started Keaukaha my area of work. Because I was from there, because that was a community of Hawaiians and that is our mission, to serve Hawaiian children, and they assigned me to Keaukaha. When I first work there, because education was important to me, I wanted that to be important because I thought that as a gateway for Hawaiian children.” Aunty Luana has been recognized for her educational programs that have embraced the whole child. Her programs have contributed to bringing awareness of health and culture to the
Keaukaha community as her programs view the Keaukaha community and its natural environment as valuable resources for its community members.

As I consider Aunty Luana’s responses in her oral history, the common themes identified were Lawe hānai – Being raised by grandparents, using the ocean to take what one needs, and the value of education to a family and community.

Lawe Hānai – Being Raised by Grandparents

Aunty Luana remembers fondly her grandparents. Her grandparents were not afraid of hard work and were well-respected business people in the Hilo community: “My grandmother was a retired school teacher. She taught at Waiakea Kai School. My grandfather worked at Bank of Hawai‘i. He came over with his parents when he was 6 years old and his parents worked for Mr. Kennedy, who was a very prominent businessman in Hilo, and Mr. Kennedy took my grandfather under his wing. He worked at the Bank of Hawai‘i in Hilo. He started at the bottom and when the war broke out, he was assistant manager of Bank of Hawai‘i.”

The Kennedys owned a house in Hilo. Her great-grandparents took care of the Kennedy’s home and grounds for the family. When her great-grandparents left Hawai‘i to return to Japan, her grandfather decided to remain in Hawai‘i.

In addition to valuing hard work, both her grandfather and grandmother valued education: “My father had seven siblings, eight in the family. All seven went to college except one who decided to travel around the world with my grandmother since my grandmother had a shop. My grandmother took her around, buying stuffs from around the world for her shop. But the rest went to college. My oldest auntie went to an art school in San Francisco, and the rest went to Mānoa.” She explains further that because so many of them went to Mānoa, her grandmother just rented a home instead of putting them in boarding because it was cheaper.
Aunty Luana’s grandparents worked diligently to make sure that their children continued and completed their education.

Aunty Luana spoke of two businesses that her grandparents owned and worked hard to keep open: “There was a Saiki Shop that was down Front Street (in Hilo town). It had a lot of nice stuff. My grandfather, besides working at the Bank of Hawai‘i, owned Hilo Rice Mill.” Many of the Hawai‘i Island residents frequented the Hilo Rice Mill for food and household items.

It wasn’t until the 1960 tsunami that ravaged Hilo town that Aunty Luana was asked to help out at the family shop: “In 1960 the tidal wave devastated the downtown of Hilo, a portion of it. I was going to college at that time, because I graduated in 1958. I went away and when I came back, a tidal wave hit and so I quit college to help the family because the whole business was taken away, devastated. So to help the family, I left school and worked there for seven years and then went back to school. Hilo Rice Mill...then was right across Mo‘oheau Park, if you are going up to Hawai‘i there are two service stations: one Shell on the right side if you are going up, and the left side was a Chevron, it was right next to that Chevron station. There was a railroad track in between Hilo Rice Mill and the service stations going ma uka. The big building, the warehouse was there and they had about four offices. A building with four offices in the front, maybe three or four with doctors and they owned all of that, and that was just wiped out.”

Aunty Luana remembers the time she spent with her grandmother: “My grandma’s house was down in Keaukaha. She wanted her family to be together at least once a week and we all look forward to it--playing with our cousins, and the adults look forward to talking stories about what was going on in Hilo town, with politics, with business. Not only my grandpa’s side, but my grandma’s made it a point that every one of her children on this island, which everybody
moved back here, would meet down at her house every single Sunday.” Upon the death of her
grandfather in 1967, the house that they gathered often at was sold as her grandmother was
going older and the three story house was too much to take care of. Aunty Luana says with a
sigh, “I wish they had kept it.”

The Ocean as a Backyard – Taking What One Needs

She remembers their house not far from the ocean. They frequented the ocean often.
Aunty Luana recounts, “I remember the amount of limu (seaweed). That’s one thing that speaks
out of my mind. There were all kinds of limu down there that I don’t find anymore. Not too
many people knew. Läläkea had limu ‘ele’ele. Plenty limu ‘ele’ele in there. Down the road,
down by the bathroom area in Lelewi side, plenty limu ‘ele’ele. I remember going outside of
Richardson’s used to have plenty Wäwae‘iole...plenty, plenty...they used to be a pest, we used
to fly it at each other. And now no more...ah...shame on me.”

She remembers her dad going down to the ocean a lot. Whatever they caught, it was to
eat: “My dad use to throw net a lot. He never liked being inside too much. He used to pound
‘opihi, and he loved ‘opihi in that area. A lot of people from the Keaukaha homestead area used
to come down and fish down there. And it...used to be mostly Hawaiians. We used to have a lot
of fish and limu stuff because Hawaiians only took what they need, so we always had enough
and we would go down if we needed some more.”

She explains how the limu and fish have been dramatically depleted as now the beaches
and fishing spots of Keaukaha are often visited by people outside of Keaukaha who may not
know the appropriate gathering practices. For example, when gathering limu it was appropriate
to cut the seaweed at the base to allow the roots to regrow. What is happening now is that limu
are being pulled with its roots detached from its ocean location, whether it be the reef or seafloor.
Value of Education to a Family and Community

For Aunty Luana, education was not a choice. It was an expectation. Education was valued by Aunty Luana’s family. This value was transferred to many community members in Keaukaha through Aunty Luana’s work with Queen Liliʻuokalani Children’s Center. The expectation is that you did what you were told: “Your parents expected you to do what your teachers told you to do. There were no questions why you couldn’t do it...just do it.”

Aunty Luana attended Kamehameha Schools beginning grade 9. She remembers the schools for boys and girls were separate. It was a difficult transition for Aunty Luana moving from a close knit family and community to a large city and school. Aunty Luana describes her time at Kamehameha Schools: “The first year was an adjustment, but I enjoyed my time at Kamehameha Schools. You became family. You lived together every day. Every single day you got the other’s back. You were family. Now as I don’t see much of my classmates that graduated with me, after 55 years, I still have best friends that I know I could pick up the phone and call and they would be there.”

It was a disciplined institution, and students were required to dress and act in a specific way: “You had to use shoes, and Oxfords were in at that time, the black and white shoes.” She recalls how once she wore her Oxfords without socks and ended up in detention: “So most of my junior year, I was in detention. Everybody could go out at 8:30 am. I was scrubbing toilets or scrubbing the halls to work off my hours of detention before I could.”

Aunty Luana attended Dominican College in San Rafael, California upon graduation from high school in 1958. Her grandmother was instrumental in making sure that she was able to attend a post-secondary institution. As Aunty Luana mentioned, she returned home in 1960
when the tidal wave hit Hilo, and continued her education at Hilo Vocational College. Her grandmother continued to push her along to continue her post-secondary studies.

One of the most devastating times that occurred in her life was the passing of her grandmother in 1970. She recounts, “My grandmother took me from birth, the rest went with my mom and dad. She was my rock.”

Aunty Luana continued with her education and earned her degree in psychology. She credits her grandmother for pushing her to continue her education. This opened up many opportunities for Aunty Luana. One of those opportunities was a position at the Queen Liliʻuokalani Children’s Center working with orphans and destitute children and their families. Moreover, the position would be responsible for the families in the Hawaiian community of Keaukaha.

As a social worker for the Queen Liliʻuokalani Children’s Center, Aunty Luana made education a primary focus. She recollects the number of talented individuals in the Keaukaha community - in art, in music, and in sports. She was interested in ensuring that these students were recognized for their strengths and talents and also advised on how to use their talents as a catalyst for future success. She explains, “They were natural athletes, but if we put the academics with the athletic ability, they could go places. So I kind of wanted to build up the interest in academics because they concentrated more on being good athletes. In working with families, I did a lot of work with individual families in my early years and, in working with them, most of the families were so thrilled if their child just graduated from high school, because there were so many drop outs at the time. To see that change now to where children aspire to go to college, it’s just wonderful. I am so thrilled that it has evolved and that it has become a priority down in Keaukaha now. Before, they saved up their money to give their child that
graduation lū’au (party)...that was so important. But now parents are beginning to talk to them about college.”

She recounts in her early years when she brought up college to children of the Keaukaha community: “I had to talk to children about going to college, and they thought I was making fun of them. One of them told me that I was making fun of him, but he was very bright. I would track the kids; I would go to school and find them. Afterwards, he did go to college, and he is a teacher now. Later he told me, ‘I thought you were making fun of me when you are talking to me about going to college.’ I think that all of the Hawaiians felt that hard work was enough. That hard work will let you take care of your family, and their priority was taking care of their family - putting a roof over their head, putting food in their mouths. A lot of them were construction workers, and they did very well in construction, and they made good money. A lot of them are stevedores. Construction and stevedores made good money. They felt they were taking care of their families. I think they did not think of college as another avenue.” Over the existence of the Keaukaha community, it has seen a number of successful professional individuals as well. There have been doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Aunty Luana further explains, “Keaukaha people – they are not afraid to work. I think it started form the late eighties where people were more serious about going into college.”

**Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community**

What Aunty Luana hopes to see continue is a seamless bridge between all members of the Keaukaha community, especially where the children and young adults of Keaukaha would be able to seek out other community adults who would serve as mentors similar to what she experienced growing up in the community. Aunty Luana was fortunate to have had some of the best mentors that Keaukaha could offer who kept her focused and continued to guide her in all
aspects of her life. She lists fondly some of her mentors and teachers, "My mentors, of course, were my grandmother and grandfather, Mary Forbes Saiki and Ronald Saiki. Aunty Rhea (Akoi), she's awesome. Mr. (Raymond) Rowe...he was a teacher. He ran that playground in Keaukaha. The playground was a big part of Keaukaha life. And he ran that with an iron fist, and so you learned the rules and you better abide it, otherwise watch out, you were in trouble with him and your parents. There was Ms. Chun-Akana from Hilo Intermediate School. She was my 8th Grade Math Teacher. She was good Math teacher. Boy, she was strict but she was good. The best teachers I had were strict teachers, and they were good teachers. But I think, most of the education came from home and your community. The guidance of the school wasn't the only place you learn. It was a big part of it, but the community and your home were big supporters of what you got out of education. Aunty Rhea Akoi gave up her self. Aunty Edith (Kanaka’ole) was another one. She was an awesome teacher. They gave up themselves for the children. They were at Keaukaha School. They were there teaching these children language, art, music, caring, discipline. They were strict...you don’t mess around with those kūpuna....but you learned.”

She would like to see kūpuna of the area connecting up with the younger generation, bridging the generational gap to ensure that the young people of the community are supported. She feels that there is still a stereotypical attitude towards Keaukaha people that has existed for decades. She explains, “People of Keaukaha were always talked about. They are not that smart. We come from reservations. When someone goes down in Keaukaha and sees cars piled up in the front yard it gives an impression that they don’t care, they have no pride. But for many Keaukaha residents they do not have the money to go to the auto shop to buy brand new car. So they keep the junk car for spare parts. So don’t look down your nose on our families who cannot afford to go in and buy brand new brakes or whatever you need when you have a car which the
parts are still good and you condemn me because you see I am kapulu because my yard is full of cars.”

In Keaukaha, family took care of family. Like Aunty Luana, children were often raised by their grandparents. However, Aunty Luana finds that things are different with families nowadays. She explains, “When you were born somebody took care of you, your parents take care of you or your grandparents were at home at that time. Now...grandparents are still working because the economy is so bad. Before you would have the luxury of having the grandma or grandpa at home who kind of watched them when the children got little bigger, 4 or 5 years old, and another baby came, they were taught to change the baby’s diaper--that was your responsibility. Also before everybody was family from Keaukaha, so if you saw one neighbor’s child doing wrong you have the right to scold that child with permission of the parent of that child doing wrong. Nowadays, you cannot do that.”

Keaukaha was a safe haven for all who lived there. Everyone knew each other and provided whatever support they could for the children of the families: “Kids before in Keaukaha, they would run away. They would fight with their parents and they would run away right next door because was safe. Everybody took care of each other. That’s the way Keaukaha before, very caring.”

Aunty Luana reiterates, “Keaukaha is caring because everybody cared for each other. I think get small pilikia, hakakā here and there, but that’s like a family that’s between us over in Keaukaha. We took care of each other.”

Aunty Luana over the past five years continues to support the annual Keaukaha Hoʻolauleʻa. It’s a time when the entire community in Keaukaha joins in unison to celebrate their existence as a community. Held in the 1970s and then cancelled due to shifts of services
within the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, Aunty Luana with the support of the community was able to bring it back five years ago. The Ho‘olaule‘a was a time when learning occurred as well. She describes the Ho‘olaule‘a: “The Ho‘olaule‘a started in the early ’70s. Back then the whole community became involved as far as the food and stuff. We had concessions where we sold haupia, ‘inamona (Hawaiian relish), the men down Puhi Bay would go kāpeku and make…or they go diving and get manini and kole the kind fish that the kūpuna in the community couldn’t get but they would come down to our Ho‘olaule‘a to get it. With kalua pig, ake and everything, the children that I worked with did it themselves. Like the kālua pig, Papa Henry Auwae was the one who taught them how to go get the rocks for the imu. How to get the banana stumps. They had to get ti-leaf and burlap bags. They learned how to light the imu. How long to put it in. They had to put it in, take it out, do everything themselves. Children had to do it.”

She remembers going with children down to the area of Puna to gather koko‘olau leaves for tea. They would dry it and sell it. They would take the children down to Kalapana on the black sand beach and pick up coconut for the haupia and kūlolo.” Everyone participated. Everyone had a function. With the Ho‘olaule‘a being back as an annual community event, she hopes that all Keaukaha community members will be part of the event and contribute in celebrating the community’s existence: “Our kids don’t know anymore. This is education in itself, right there.”
Chapter 7
Kupuna Alberta Andaya

Kupuna Alberta Nani Nahale-a Andaya was born on January 23, 1941 in Hilo, Hawai‘i. Immediately after we began our conversation, Aunty Alberta spoke of her family, whom she adores. One could see that genealogy is an important part of who she is: “My mother was Harriet Nahaku Brown, who was Hawaiian/English and was born in Hilo and my father was Albert Po’ai Nahale-a, Sr., who was born in Watertown known as Hickam Base. His parents were from Kohala and Waimea and moved to O‘ahu. His parents returned to Hawai‘i Island and he grew up in Kawaihae and Waimea. My grandparents sent him to Hilo High School... and he stayed in at the Hilo boarding school which was a Catholic run place at that time, and he attended Hilo high school and then he went to University of Hawai‘i on O‘ahu. And he lived with the... the ‘ohana...the Stevens ‘ohana from Waimea...you know, Napua and all them. I have an older sister, Lana Anuhea Nahale-a Bray, and I had a brother, Albert Po’ai Nahale-a, Jr., and a baby sister, Analani Kelajeen Nahale-a Kimi.”

Aunty Alberta married Richard Andaya from Honoka‘a in 1964. Her husband was part of the plantation time period. He was born to a Portuguese mother and a Filipino-Spanish father. They met each other while working together at a local company in Hilo. She recalls, “We both worked at Miko (meat factory). He was a meat cutter and I worked in the office, and we knew each other because we worked in a plant where I had to do and help out. We eventually became buddies and friends.”

Aunty Alberta’s family moved into Keaukaha in the 1940s right around the time of the tsunami of 1946. She recounts, “We moved up to Lyman Avenue because we were living on Kalaniana‘ole Street, and our house caught on fire, and we moved to our grandparents on Lyman
until our house was finished on Lyman. I'm number 6th generation. Now we have 7th and 8th and now 9th generations are here."

Music was an important part of her growing up. Her father, Albert Nahale-a Sr., was a prolific composer who wrote music in both Hawaiian and English. He wrote "Ku‘u Home I Keaukaha" and "Keaukaha Smiles," which are songs that members of the Keaukaha community still sing in celebration of their history and uniqueness as a Hawaiian community. She remembers the words that her father spoke, "My father would say, 'If you enjoy the song, enjoy. Why write the song if only you can sing it?'"

As I review Aunty Alberta’s responses in her oral history, the common themes identified here were Church first, the value of education, and respect for siblings and kūpuna.

**Church First**

Aunty Alberta’s father, Albert Nahale-a, went to Kaua‘i to work on the Makaweli plantation in 1938. He was in charge of human resources for the Makaweli plantation. During that time she recalls that her sister, Lana, was born but passed away eight months later. She explains, “I’m not sure what she passed away from. My grandma raised her until she passed away.” Her sister, Anuhea, was born in 1940 in Kaua‘i. Her father attended Makaweli church where Hawaiian was spoken. He was responsible for the music for the community, the church, the people in the plantation, and for sports. Aunty Alberta explained, “Everything that we learned in Keaukaha growing up is what he did when he was on Kaua‘i. So when he came home to Keaukaha, he continued that work.”

When they returned back to the Island of Hawai‘i and to Keaukaha, Aunty Alberta’s father became a part of Haili Church. He became a devoted Hailian along with her mother even though he was a Mormon. He loved that church family so much. Aunty Alberta remembers that
when she asked her father about his religious affiliation, he responded by explaining, “The Lord blessed me with my talents. He gave me the talent for music...The Lord blessed me with your mother’s family. With what I learned and the blessings I had, I had the people to work with so they can share in the community.”

Aunty Alberta remembers one of the churches in Keaukaha. Kūhiō (church) is a branch of Haili church: “Although the pastors, of course, have changed, we still have ‘ohana gatherings.” She recalls her genealogical ties to Haili Church: “The original Brown was a captain of a whaling ship and married a pure Hawaiian ...and then he had two sons, Benjamin and John, who were part of Haili Church, too.”

She explains, “Being that we were raised with a family that was always together, our lifestyle was church first. My father says ‘Church first’ and then you can go play. No church, no play.” For Aunty Alberta, church was at least two to three times a week: “As you get older you have programs for the children. They had different choirs for the age brackets. They had a primary school, which started when they were about five or six years old, as long as they could sing and they were old enough to learn the music; that was their category. As we grew up we would go into the second choir which we had to learn both English and Hawaiian songs. Always used to have Hawaiian songs. There was the men’s and women’s choirs, which was an older group which comprised of our parents, and then the senior choir was a combination of both, and when you reached at that level, you knew you made it.”

Learning the choir music was a task for many of the members. She says, “We would put the music on sheets of paper, and we had to help color. If we made mistake with the pencil, like putting a dark note where there was not supposed to be dark note, then we would get scoldings. We had to erase nicely. If we made a on the sheet, we would get konked on the head. My father
would put the sheets up on the wall. He taught Haili choir all on the wall at church. And we followed. That’s how we learned our music. He would teach the notes all on sheets and after we finished he would roll them up and take them. Until today, the church still has those sheets.”

Aunty Alberta spoke fondly of her father not only as a gifted artist, but as person who gave of himself to others. She says, “My father loved music, and my grandma did the same. My father taught himself. Because we entertained to make money for the church, we went into the communities. We sang at Kūlani Prison, Hawaiian Village at Keaukaha, Puna churches, and other Hilo churches. We use to go to the Kīlauea Military Camp. They would call the different groups up to perform. When we were pau, we always look forward to go eat after. You can eat anything you want inside the mess hall including ice cream.”

For Aunty Alberta, everything was church: “You first learned about God and then you have your choir music.” Haili Church choir and people with other churches in the community got together at certain times and shared their music. Concerts were held to help make money for the church and choir. It was a time for them to share their music and faith with the community. She emphasizes, “We cared for the premises of the church. We helped to clean the church and yard. Church first.”

Aunty Alberta raised her children the same way. She took her children and grandchildren to church. Even today, she reminds her children of the importance of church. She would say to them, “You folks have to make time to pray. You grew up at home with ‘ohana pray time before you folks go sleep. Remember? I told you folks how we were raised. I tried to raise you folks the same way.” She remembers holding ‘ohana pray time with her father, “Before you sleep, or you go out and you don’t come home until late, whoever is at home, we have to pray with my
father. If we all know we are going to go out we have ‘ohana with my father first. Whoever goes out we would pray for them. Church first.”

**Importance of Education: Good and Industrious**

Like many of our Hawaiian families in Keaukaha, education was important to Aunty Alberta and her family. Aunty Alberta attended Keaukaha School and left at sixth grade to attend Kamehameha Schools for Girls. She remembers attending Keaukaha School and what she learned while attending there. She recounts, “When we came to Keaukaha, my mom and dad worked in the Hawaiian Homes office. We attended Keaukaha School nearby. Being in Keaukaha School, our kumu were very strict. We learned our normal math, but we also had to learn some Hawaiian….Hawaiian words and music. I don’t remember learning too many English songs but I remember Hawaiian songs. We had kumu that were music teachers that spoke Hawaiian. Mrs. Ludloft, Mrs. Ewaliko, and Mrs. Ahuna helped us with our Hawaiian. We also learned some of our Hawaiian crafts from them.”

In seventh grade, she was accepted and enrolled at Kamehameha Schools at Kapalama on the Island of O‘ahu. She explains, “I went to Kamehameha Schools. At that time there was no Hawaiian language spoken. It was only learning the culture. Whatever we learned in the Hawaiian language was ‘aloha’ and commonly heard sentences. The Bishop Museum was part of my classes and learning. At the Bishop Museum we learned about our Hawaiian lifestyle, what happened before, and the ali‘i. We learned different cultures and things like that. The year I graduated it was the year that we became a state. Nineteen fifty-nine.” She recounts, “When we entered statehood, our class was asked to participate in a program where we had to march from ‘Iolani Palace to Kawaiaha‘o. I remember Governor King at that time sitting on the loft as we marched.”
Aunty Alberta’s transition into Kamehameha Schools was not an easy one. She remembers the protocols, procedures, and expectations that were placed upon the students. As a boarder at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, she found that the rules were very strict. She recalls, “You had to eat certain way. They taught you how to eat properly. You had to wait on tables. They taught you how to cook certain things. Your lifestyle was all by the bell. You go sleep certain time. You get up certain time. You had certain time to do certain things. You had to wear shoes at all times and socks. Everybody was the same. That was our life on campus. The older ones were like our guides to do certain things. As you grow up, you learn from the older ones how to do things the way the school wanted you to be...how to be proper. On campus we tried not to speak Pidgin. Everyone spoke good English.”

Strictness was not something new to Aunty Alberta as she learned from established discipline systems both at home and at school. She says, “The teachers were very strict but very nice. We had a mixture of teachers from the mainland. In some ways I feel it was worth that only because of what we had to learn for the future. I was thankful my parents raised us strict. So when I was up there I only cried for my parents, but once I got there I was fine. I could adjust. There were a lot of students that had a hard time adjusting because they weren’t exposed to what I was exposed to. There were some students that were well to do. There were students that had things and some that didn’t. Still when you were on campus you became sisters. We had to take care of each other. We had to depend on each other. We all had to live in the same dorms. We all had to live and take care of our laundry. We had learn how to wash clothes. We had to do all of this by schedules. We had to go to the kitchen and help cook.” Aunty Alberta is a proud graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and feels that the education that she
received was good and helped her beyond graduation. She says, “It was a privilege going there. We learned how to be ‘good and industrious men and women.’ It prepared us for the future.”

**Respect for Siblings and Kupuna**

Respect was an important part of growing up in Keaukaha. There were many family and community members that she remembers who taught her and helped to raise her. In a family, if you were the oldest siblings there were responsibilities that you were expected to fulfill. Aunty Alberta spoke fondly of her older sister, Anuhea. While attending Kamehameha Schools Kapālama, Aunty Alberta would often cry, missing her parents each time she would leave the Island of Hawai‘i to travel to O‘ahu. Her sister, Anuhea, was always there at the airport to see her off. She recounts, “I was a cry baby. I missed my parents every time I left. My sister, Anuhea, one time at the airport told me, ‘Don’t you think it’s time for you to stop crying, since you’re going to be a senior next year and it’s embarrassing?’ I would look at her and knew she was right. She was the older sister and she was always there for us. Whenever she saw something that wasn’t right she would question us. She always took care of us even after we graduated. She would call to check up on us, ‘How you folks doing?’ It was nice to have an older sister.”

She remembers many of the kūpuna who lived in Keaukaha at that time. In her mind, she could travel each street and see the people living there. She speaks of the kūpuna and the children that lived on each street who became friends of hers. She says, “I learned from the kūpuna, in order for you to be heard or respected you got to give back first.” Families took care of other families’ children as well. The children were very careful because if a kupuna was given permission from their parents and the children didn’t listen, the kupuna disciplined the child. Additionally, when a child went home after being disciplined by a community member,
there would be further punishments as it brought shame upon the family of the child. Aunty Alberta reveals, "In growing up I had to be careful. My parents were always in the community. If a kupuna or teacher said, 'No!' then it's 'No!' If they said, 'Stop it!,' then you would stop it. So we had to behave."

Aunty Alberta describes that the respect that the members of the community had towards each other was very important. In the same way that adult community members would discipline other children in the community, the children of the community cared for one another as well. The older children of the community took care of the younger children. Aunty Alberta explained, "We grew up together. We had to take care of the younger ones. We would, of course, have the younger ones with us when we were playing together out in the community. Even now when I see them, the younger ones in the community, I would call them my 'baby sister.' Whenever they saw me, they would call me, 'Eh, sister!' I was close to them. I had a lot of aloha for them. We helped each other in Keaukaha to do things. If people needed help to do certain things at their homes, we would help. They also helped make things available for us if they had. Those who had the farm lots would share their crops. Even today they still do. But I'll never forget that generation, because what I am today I try to share with my children 'cause I know the generation is different now."

Aunty Alberta had many mentors in her life growing up in Keaukaha whether it was playing on the streets or in sports. She spoke with much aloha about those who helped her to become the person she is now. "They were my mentors. They had good hearts. If they grumbled, it wasn't with us younger ones because the younger ones followed the older ones. I was fortunate. Until today when we see each other, we always hug each other."
Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

Aunty Alberta’s classroom of learning was the entire Keaukaha community. Aunty Alberta Andaya was raised by an entire community. She learned from kūpuna, other children, and other adults. She was inspired by her own family – her father, her mother, her sister. She was raised knowing who she was and where she came from. She was raised in loving the Lord and felt that everything else fell into place when you have the “Lord in your heart.” Reflecting on her father’s words she explains, “You have to share who you are with the Man yourself. In other words, if you’re by yourself, there’s nobody else to talk to or to help you. What do you do? My father says to turn to the Man upstairs. I always say the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And I thank the Lord for the Holy Spirit because that’s the One sometimes who would stay with you on earth. It will help you a lot. And know who we are as individuals. I thank the Lord that I can still be Tutu, sister and Aunty, not only to my own ‘ohana in my household, but in the community….Keaukaha.”

When I asked Aunty Alberta about what she would hope for our children of Keaukaha, she replied, “I just pray that, first of all, the kids learn to be human first and learn to grow up with Aloha first; no matter what the situation is. When you make a mistake, knowing that it didn’t make you feel stupid or something not worth anything. If you make a mistake, you make mistake. We all learn by our mistakes. No matter how old, we are still learning.”

Aunty Alberta talked about the distractions that our children have nowadays; distractions that they didn’t have when she was younger. She explains, “It’s not easy for our young people because there’s so many things in the world they are exposed to. They don’t know which is first. They just want to get there because they know they can make money or they want to get there because that’s what they want. Our children need to learn how to be pono, how to make
themselves feel good about themselves first and not be better than the next guy. Be what you can be for who you are and learn as you go along and share what you feel you have to offer. For me I always walk with the man upstairs.”

Aunty Alberta values her culture and her language. Her house is always open to her children and grandchildren, similar to how she was raised when she was younger. She is very proud of the accomplishments of her grandchildren who attend the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program at Keaukaha. She hopes that her grandchildren will carry on with the culture and language. She often speaks to her grandchildren and lets them know of her wishes: “Tutu’s going to ask you to continue on after you pau school. You folks do what you folks can with the Hawaiian program out in the world. You can share that with the world.” In the end, she explains, “What’s in their heart is important.”
Chapter 8

KUPUNA DONALD PAKELE

Uncle Donald Pakele was born on September 9, 1944 in Hilo. He is of Hawaiian, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese ancestry. He explains, “My great-grandfather was one of the first lessees here in Keaukaha, down in Pāpa‘i.” This was in 1925. Uncle Donald attended St. Joseph’s school from elementary through high school, graduating in 1962. He furthered his education at St. Martin’s University right outside of Olympia, Washington in the suburb of Lacey.

In this interview held at the Keaukaha Resource Center, Uncle Donald shared much about his growing up in Keaukaha and what he learned from the various people of the community. His stories always focused on specific places in Keaukaha and the extended historical connections that existed between himself, the land, the stories, and the activities that he described throughout his oral history.

As I review Uncle Donald’s responses in his oral history, the common themes identified were wahi pana (place names), commitment to learning and education, and commitment to Hawaiian Home Lands.

Wahi Pana: Importance of Significant Places in Keaukaha

Mary Kawena Pūku‘i defines “wahi pana” as a “legendary place.” If we were to look at these words separately, “wahi” would be defined as “place” and “pana” defined as a “beat” or “pulse”; which suggests a clear importance and connection of a particular place to a community or individual (Pūku‘i, 1986, p. 377). Uncle Donald’s gift to me throughout our interview was his knowledge of specific places in Keaukaha. He not only spoke of the places by name but also
established memories or stories related to each place through which he and I traveled in his recollection of these particular areas of Keaukaha.

The first place that we journeyed to in Uncle Donald’s interview was the Hawaiian Village located about a half mile into Keaukaha community along the shoreline. Hawaiian Village was a huge gathering place near the ocean front in Keaukaha. An open pavilion served as a venue for weddings, birthday parties, and a weekly open market. During the open market many Keaukaha residents sold and shared their hand made products including lei and necklaces.

Uncle Donald recalls the work that his father put into the establishment of the Hawaiian Village in Keaukaha: “My great grandfather was Peter Pakele. My grandfather was Jr. and he was Sr. One of first things I can recall, when my grandfather was here from 1950 to 1960, he was one of the ones responsible for the building of the Hawaiian Village. He got a lot of people to come in and support the building like Robert Yamada, Bob Fujimoto, the older Isemoto. All of these people donated a lot of stuffs. But he was instrumental in getting the Hawaiian Village going and have the tourist come down.”

Economically, Hawaiian Village was very beneficial to many residents living in Keaukaha. The coordination with the tourists staying at the local hotels about one mile towards Hilo from Hawaiian Village proved to be profitable. Uncle Donald remembers, “You got the Sampan drivers to come down pick up people from the hotels and bring them down. And then at first it was two nights a week, but then I believe at the end it was one night a week.”

Many who lived in Keaukaha during that time remembered the music and hula that were performed on stage at the Hawaiian Village: “Families had to come down and perform. It wasn’t a question if you wanted to, you just went. Different families performed - the Browns, the Kalimas. It eventually came under the jurisdiction of the Keaukaha Community Association.”
The Hawaiian Village stood for decades from the 1950s through most of the 1970s and served the community of Keaukaha and its residents well. It became the center of communal and familial activities. The Hawaiian Village provided economic and financial opportunities for members of the Keaukaha community. Beginning in the late 1970s many of the activities at the Hawaiian Village slowly declined and eventually ceased to exist. Uncle Donald recalls, “When I came back in 1982, the only thing that was left down there was a skeleton area for the bathroom and the hale ‘aina. The Marine Corp came down and knocked it down. We needed to get it down.”

The ocean was also an important place to Uncle Donald and his family when he was growing up. The entire family was skilled in fishing including cross net, throw net, and diving. He remembers going down to several ocean places in Keaukaha with his family, especially his grandfather and his father. He continued to fish well into his adult life in the same areas that he frequented as a child. As a married man, Uncle Donald recounts, “My wife use to drop me off. Started at Palekai (at the beginning of Keaukaha community) in the morning and she’d come pick me up at 6…7 o’clock in the evening down Pu’umaile (at the end of the road in the Keaukaha community). I use to walk the whole area and throw net. There were some areas where I knew where my father would show us where the fresh water springs and we would bag up the fish and leave it in those ponds and when we finished fishing we would come back and pick it up.” Throw net was usually a one-man activity; however, if Uncle Donald was cross netting, he would include his son, his wife, brother, nephews and nieces.

Uncle Donald’s father also taught him how to catch ‘a‘ama (small black crab), which during those days was plentiful on the ocean rocks of Keauaha and was a delicacy for its residents. He recalls that there were two basic instruments used in catching ‘a‘ama crab – a
light source and your hand. He would usually get requests for ‘a’ama from other Keaukaha residents. He remembers receiving one request for 10 pounds of ‘a’ama crab by a Keaukaha resident by the end of the week: “So I use to come down, start at Palekai and go all the way down to Onekahakaha Beach and come back. My grandfather use to teach us how to use the bamboo but that kind of takes time...if you do it by hand you can grab a lot faster. Once you shine the light on them they cannot see you. Make sure you cover and approach it from the back. You grab them from the back. I would come down every morning about 1...2 o’clock in the morning.”

Well-versed in the places of Keaukaha, Uncle Donald also brought attention to areas that were known and best shared only with families of the area. This is what he was taught by his great grandfather. He recounts, “A lot of the history of the area is what my grandfather gave me. He gave me a lot of information like where the heiau was and what certain caves were used for that kept different things. He also cautioned me, ‘You share only with the family. It does not go outside.’”

**Commitment to Learning and Education**

Learning and education has always been an essential part of Uncle Donald’s life. In his life, he has been afforded many opportunities to work in a number of educational programs for and with some of the most prominent people in Hilo who have influenced him to work hard and to take care of those around him. During our time together, he recalled several individuals who have served as his mentors. Uncle Donald remembers, “One of the first experiences that I can recall was...with Aunty Dottie Thompson and working the summer fun program. I was with that program for three years, every summer. It was great. You know Aunty Dottie was very stern. She *aloha* you in one way, but she was very stern. She was the only director that used to get
busses every Friday to take kids on excursions because we use to have the number of children at Lincoln Park.”

Later, Uncle Donald moved to the mainland for school and eventually returned back to Hilo: “I never had any intentions of staying on the mainland. I always wanted to come home. My first job was working for Hukilau Hotel for two months, and then the Department of Education had an opening.” Uncle Donald served as an intermediate teacher at Waiākea Intermediate School in Hilo. After one year at Waiākea Intermediate School, Uncle Donald served as a teacher at Hilo High School in the Alternative Learning Program. He recalls, “We had the alternative students over there. Those students didn’t fit into the normal classroom. We had 30 students and 2 teachers, fifteen students to each of us. We had to hustle because at that time the principal didn’t want us to teach on campus. We got the YWCA in the downstairs area and then we coordinated with Haili Church. We used the gym for PE activities. We were in the downtown area. This gave us the flexibility to work this kind of alternative school. The kids use to walk around to the different stores and businesses and get prices and come back and figure out a budget and what to do.” Uncle Donald taught his students topics and issues that were relevant and hands-on. The traditional and conventional way of teaching was not the appropriate avenue to for educating these students. He also introduced Hawaiian practices and art into his teaching: “We started music and hula. We use to perform once a week, Friday, at the Hukilau Seaside Hotel.”

In the 2000s, Uncle Donald continued to share his knowledge of land with students. He worked with Alu Like, Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, and Salvation Army for five years. The kids who learned and worked with him were mostly from the area of Pāpa‘i where his family was raised at the end of Keaukaha road and at the cusp of the districts of Hilo and Puna.
He explained his educational plan during those years: “We’d spend one week researching up at
the Hawaiian section of the library at the University of Hawai‘i, and then we spent five weeks
down in the area of Pāpa‘i. The kids who actually spent the 6 weeks with me, they would get a
full year high school credit in social studies that could be applied towards their graduation from
high school. I had 20 kids each summer down in Pāpa‘i.” This historical area of Pāpa‘i was the
site where the “Law of the Splintered Paddle” was declared by Kamehameha, who deemed life
was important and abolished the sacrificing of humans after his own life was spared by
fishermen who he was chasing as sacrifices. When Kamehameha’s foot was lodged in a crevice
during the chase and he became an easy target for death, Kamehameha’s life was spared by the
fishermen. In this “Kānāwai Māmalahoe,” Kamehameha announced,

“Ke Kānāwai Māmalahoe...e hele ka ‘elemakule a me ka luahine, a me ke keiki, a moe i ke ala, ‘a‘ole ia e po‘ino. The Law of the Splintered Paddle...let the old men, the old
women, and the children lie down by the wayside, and harm them not!” (Sanborn, 1982,
p. 148)

Of all the places he spoke about, Uncle Donald fondly reflects on this area of Pāpa‘i:

“Just before I had my stroke, going down to Papa‘i there was a sense of serenity for me. A lot of
people would say that it’s rough getting there. And yes it is, but the bay and where the Law of
the Splintered Paddle took place was an area of serenity that helped me to deal with the stroke
that I had.” He recalls one day while working with the students down in Pāpa‘i and cleaning the
area, he sat down on a rock and looked around and realized that the area they were cleaning was
the house site of his grandfather.

Commitment to Hawaiian Home Lands

Many in Hilo, especially those who lived on Hawaiian Home Lands, remember how
Uncle Donald served as the Homestead Project Supervisor. The scope of his position was to
manage the well-being of the Hawaiian Homesteads on Hawai‘i Island. He recalls, “When Ed
Kanahele left Hawaiian Homes there became an opening. I came to Hawaiian Homes in 1982. I stayed there for 14 years. Then in 1996, I had my stroke. If I didn’t have my stroke, I’ll still be working there today. I really enjoyed the job. I liked the job.”

He worked with the community members in the particular homestead areas. For Keaukaha, he worked to open up the beach areas and create beach parks. “One of the first things that I noticed was that our people always went to the beach for the summer. I thought that was very important because, you know, having our families going to the beach, that’s where a lot of interactions happened --- when you sit down and talk stories, that kind stuff…that was important to start.”

Uncle Donald also felt it was important that the beneficiaries of Hawaiian Homes knew the rich history that went along with the establishment of Hawaiian Home Lands for the rehabilitation of Native Hawaiians and getting them back onto the land as well as how the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands operated and what they do for Hawaiian people: “I had to go out and explain it. If you take the opportunity to sit and explain to the person why you cannot do certain things, instead of saying, ‘No can or cannot.’ I had to sit down, explain whatever the situation was.”

One example that Uncle Donald remembered was explaining how individuals were awarded Hawaiian Home Land leases: “We had three different lists. If you are Native Hawaiian, you always got first choice. If you were 50% with a successor you got 2nd choice. If you were 50% without a successor you got third choice. One would be placed in an area listing because you choose certain areas. If you came in and applied for Keaukaha, but Pana’ewa opened up, you would get first choice because that’s the area that opened up. We still kept those people in numerical order until we exhausted. A lot of people didn’t understand that.”
Uncle Donald spoke of the need to maintain the sense of belonging to the area and community. Uncle Donald speaks of genealogy as a means to establish and reestablish connection to Keaukaha. He explains, “A lot our kids don’t connect up to that sense of belonging. We’ve always kept that connection in one way or another, whether it was through my great grandfather or my grandfather, the times that he spent and what he did and my dad in terms of giving back. When my grandfather was here he gave back, and just the connection and all, it’s important for, at least for me, that I see that somebody from our family remembers and retains this information.”

Uncle Donald remembered when Keaukaha community and area was to be turned into an industrial area that would displace many Native Hawaiians who have resided in the area for generations. Uncle Donald recounts, “It was important for Keaukaha to survive because at one time they were really going to relocate everything in Keaukaha. I think because we stood up and asked to be counted and be accounted for, we slowed down the process. If you looked back in the forties, fifties and sixties, they were going to relocate all of Keaukaha, and if it weren’t for the older kupuna, like Kwai Wah Lee, fighting for that, we would have been a thing of the past if we didn’t. And I think it is important for those of us that remain today, we need to remind our children that Keaukaha is a special place. It’s surviving because of what other kupuna did previous to save this place.”

Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

Uncle Donald remembers how close Keaukaha community members were. He explains, “Keaukaha was one of the better places as far as I’m concerned that you can live and work in because everybody knows everybody and that comradery, you don’t find comradery in other
areas. Seeing how people work with each other is something you can’t find in a lot of other places.”

Uncle Donald says that it is important to know who you are and where you come from. He believes that there are many distractions that draw the children of Keaukaha from their own families and the uniqueness that the community of Keaukaha has to offer. For many of our kupuna and parents, much of the learning occurred at home and amongst community members. Working with many of the younger generations of Keaukaha children over the years, Uncle Donald has seen the chasm that now exists between the children of Keaukaha and their own community and what their own community is able to offer. Uncle Donald explains, “When I look at our kids and all they get side tracked, because of today’s society, into going a certain way and not realizing that there’s so much that they can grasp on because of where they coming from and their family. They get too preoccupied in just doing what they want to do as opposed to just looking at things that they should be doing to retain the knowledge of their families and the ‘āina, and sometimes I feel that I’m taking extra time to talk about Keaukaha because many of the kids that come to me they are not thinking of their family, not of where they coming from, not of Keaukaha as a community. It’s important to have them think about Keaukaha, as a place that they can be proud of, as a place they can be saying that, ‘We are from Keaukaha.’ And I think that if we don’t do more and more of that talking about the area, eventually we’re going to lose it. My fear is that other things become high priority for them and they don’t really look at the base of where they’re coming from.”

In further reflection on the children of Keaukaha, Uncle Donald points out the value of an education for the generations of children now and in the future. He also supports education beyond high school in order for our children to prepare themselves for the challenges that exists
within society – locally, nationally, and globally. Uncle Donald explains that there is more financial support and opportunities afforded to students who pursue their post-secondary education. He says, “You can survive on a high school education, but more and more today you got to go to college; not necessary a four-year college, but a two year college or a trade school. I remember in our days ... when money was not available and that’s back as far as the 50s and 60s at that time. It wasn’t available for our kids and I think what is important for us as a community is to keep that idea of education within the structure of our community. I think it is important that we as adults, as kūpuna, begin to show our kids that there is a way that each kid can succeed in life.”

As Uncle Donald suggests, learning exists in a community. It is important that children of a particular community know and understand the issues and concerns that exist within their community. This connectedness and relevance to the children provides further learning that is purposeful and meaningful. Uncle Donald’s experience in certain ocean areas of the community of Keaukaha, such as the area of Pāpa‘i and, more recently, a heiau near the entrance to the community in an area called “Baker’s Beach,” allowed him to extend his teachings to the children of Keaukaha. The children’s participation in the educational programs that Uncle Donald created provided them with a clear understanding of their connection to these places—politically, environmentally, spiritually, and socially. Once where there was no connection for the children, meaning and purpose was established.

Uncle Donald concludes, “It’s important to adapt and look at both sides of an issue. It’s really important. We need to show our kids that you can have a certain lifestyle but then you got to also be able to adapt and look at different things in different ways, different situations. And I think what we are doing here in Keaukaha is trying to show them that there is an alternative ways
to looking at your education. It's like a balancing act...you got to do a little bit of both. Yes you can be against something, but then also you can think about the results of the positive and negative of it. And I think once the kids see that, I think that will push a lot of them forward.”
Chapter 9

Kupuna Patrick Kahawaiola’a

Kupuna Patrick Kahawaiola’a was born in Keaukaha on May 10, 1945. His mother and her family came from Maui and his father and his family from Kaua‘i. His brothers were born on O‘ahu prior to the entire family relocating to Keaukaha on Hawai‘i Island when his mother received the lease on Keaukaha homestead in 1939. Being the only child in the family born in Keaukaha, he is proud to announce that he is the first generation in Keaukaha. Serving as Keaukaha Community Association’s president for a number of years, he is known throughout the community as Uncle Pat. He ends his emails and community letters with “Unco Pat” and with his signature sentence, “Keaukaha smiles on you,” a phrase from one of Keaukaha’s community songs, K-E-A-U-K-A-H-A, I Love You.

According to Uncle Pat, all of the adults in the community of Keaukaha were his teachers. He lost his mother at the age of five, and thus was raised by various aunties and uncles in the community, each who had special skills and knowledge and shared their knowledge with Uncle Pat when he stayed with them. He explains, “Because I lost my mom... a lot of families had a lot of influence on my life...I went to one uncle and he taught about going holoholo to the beach, how to kalua pig, what you need to do, how to sew net. That’s one uncle. You went to another uncle’s house...” Over the course of our two-hour interview, Uncle Patrick named numerous adults in the community and the lessons that they taught him.

In recounting Uncle Pat’s oral history, I will summarize a few of the many lessons that I learned through my interview with Uncle Pat. Three of the themes that emerged from Uncle Patrick’s interview were learning for a purpose, the importance of experts with specialized skills and knowledge, and learning through kaona (hidden meaning). I will discuss each of these
themes in turn and will then explain possible implication or applications of these themes for educational programs within the Keaukaha community.

**Learning for a Purpose**

Uncle Pat explains that no matter which uncle or aunty he was with, everything that he learned “was for a purpose.” For instance, he outlines in great detail all the lessons that he learned for the purpose of preparing a lū‘au. Uncle Pat explains that the “creation of the Hawaiian lū‘au is a tremendous, tremendous work. It is not ‘let’s just have a lū‘au’ and do it.”

He then goes on to explain all the work involved and all the lessons that he learned while helping prepare for lū‘au, including how to poke/salt the ‘opihi in the days prior to the lū‘au. Uncle Pat recollects, “You have to understand, now, that’s before freezers. So you got to do it couple of days, two days, before...you no can make one month and freeze.” “...Put plenty pa‘akai (salt)...because you can wash it off, soak it off. But if you no put (salt)...then pīlau (spoiled). No good. Taste no good.” He also learned about preparing the imu (underground oven) and killing and cleaning the pig, including pulling out the toenails and cleaning the na‘au (intestines).

In outlining the lessons that he learned in preparing for lū‘au, Uncle explained that not everyone was suited for every job. Sometimes, certain individuals were selected for a particular job because they were particularly well-suited for that job. For instance, he explained that not everyone can make kūlolo (taro dessert). The crystals from the raw taro can make some people very itchy, so Uncle Pat was tested by his uncle before being selected to do this job. After the raw kalo was grated, Uncle Patrick explains, “I didn’t realize it then but he...my uncle was testing the kūlolo.” He would direct me, “Come here stick your hand inside the pākinī (pan or
wash basin). Put your hand in the *pākini.*” And then he would wait maybe a minute. “Itchy?”
“No.” “You the one going make (the *kūlolo.*”

Over the years, Uncle Pat learned how to do things on his own: “I learned how to cook, iron, everything. So when people came, I automatically made the food, you know feed the people because that’s what my father...first my mother...then my father imprinted on me.”

These learnings were transferable learnings that strengthened relationships amongst family and community members. He learned how to serve those that visited his home. He explains, “One of the biggest things he did was...when I say, ‘Uncle you like something to drink?’ my father would say, ‘No, boy. You take it to them.’ You don’t ask them if they like to drink. But those were the kinds of values that were instilled. When I reflect now, that it doesn’t matter how we got treated it’s how we treat our people and mostly our kupuna.”

**The Importance of Experts With Specialized Skills and Knowledge**

The idea of certain individuals having specialized skill or knowledge extended to teachers as well. In story after story Uncle Patrick talks about various people in the community who had specialized knowledge—from his neighbors, Abraham and Elizabeth Waipa, who were excellent *lauhala* (pandanus) weavers, to Uncle Bill, who knew exactly where to cross a fishnet in order to catch a particular variety of fish.

Uncle Patrick reflected on Mrs. Waipa, “She was an excellent weaver. The house was a two-story house. And somehow, they decided to fix the bottom so we get rooms downstairs...not a room...but one big open space with the big poles in the middle. And I remember going in there because they had one long picnic table....two long picnic benches that’s your dinette right there....that’s how you sit down. Long tables. But everything....the mayonnaise jar was covered with *lauhala.* The placemats were *lauhala.* These poles that we all
had in our house....the ones at my house, if you ran your fingers down you get splinters. Hers was all covered with lauhala.”

Gathering *lauhala* was a learning experience for Uncle Patrick as it was related to place, time, and season: “To go gather, to go make...was more of an adventure for me because the Waipas had like their own little place in Kaimu. So we would go down there and I thought I was in the forest. But it was not too far from Kaimu. They had their own little kuleana to go inside and pick. And *lauhala* is *lauhala*...right? But no...they knew.... ‘Oh no. No boy, don’t go that side...pick from this one...this over here...this is this month. Not summer time yet. Bumbye we go pick over there.’ So obviously they knew.”

He further explained how the Waipas, made white *lauhala*, an unusual item for an ocean area such as Keaukaha: “The process I knew...we boiled the green leaves. They had a little thing out in the back. You had to chop the wood, burn this wood, make the fire, and boil them. Had a big, long porcelain tub that we boiled it in. But then he had drying boxes. He dried with sulfur fumes. How we got sulfur? We went to Kīlauea, shoveled sulfur into barrels, brought it home and he burnt it in the cracks in the ground. He was my neighbor...so you could always smell the sulfur.”

As Uncle Patrick explains it, in those days, knowledge of fishing was also very specialized. If you wanted to serve a particular fish at a party, skilled fishermen would know exactly where to lay their net to catch that kind of fish. As Uncle explains it, fishing in those days was deliberate: “It wasn’t just go cross the net and try see what we can catch. It was ok... ‘What we need today?’ Well maybe we going make the party...nenue. Ok...we like more nenue...So we would go lay the net in the particular spot where that type of fish was known to run.”
Similarly, he explained that if you were making a throw net, and you needed a lead, you
didn’t just go to the store and buy the lead, you needed to know which uncle to go to help you
make the lead. And as he explains it, the process for making lead was “intense.” You had to
build a wood fire, chop wood and so on. As he says, “If you wanted to make lead Saturday, you
gotta prepare last week Wednesday...so that you get everything.”

Uncle Patrick recalled many individuals who influenced him when he was growing up
and many he called “teachers.” They taught him how to provide for his family. Uncle
concludes, “That’s the experience teaching me that there’s hard work...you got to continue to do
if you like to do things Hawaiian. It’s not something you can go to the store, open the door and
tell now let’s see what we going do Hawaiian.”

Many of the cultural practices were passed from one generation to another generation
especially as related to Keaukaha being an ocean community. I believe that these experiences
also speak to the need to continue to train others in these areas of specialized knowledge. Uncle
Pat reiterates the responsibility, the *kuleana*, of ensuring that practices are shared within families
and amongst community members especially in our current technological age: “A child who
lives in Keaukaha, who is Hawaiian, who’s now maybe starting their third year of going to
school, so in the 3rd grade. Being 8 years old, for 8 years of his life, he has been surrounded here
in this community, and you show them at that early age what came before you. How you should
treat those that came before you. Or here’s the story, here’s the mo‘olelo (story) of what
happened here. So things that are ‘Hawaiian’ from when we were, there is a continuum.”

**Learning Through Kaona**

While Uncle Patrick expresses his appreciation for all that he was taught by elders in the
community, he explains that none of this was taught in a direct, “sit down and let me teach you
something” fashion. Instead, he explains that he learned in an apprenticeship fashion, working and learning alongside his elders. Much of the learning came from watching and doing.

Patience was indeed a cultural characteristic in growing up in Keaukaha. To be observant was necessary as being overly inquisitive would be viewed as rude and disrespectful. Uncle Patrick remembers the talents of an elderly Keaukaha Hawaiian woman named Mrs. Wiggins who could catch panunu (baby ‘uhu, or parrotfish) with a bamboo pole. He recalls watching for a number of years how she would go about catching these delicacies of the ocean: “Auwili (beach) was our backyard. So we go down and sit beyond the point. We see her (Mrs. Wiggins) coming across the street carrying her bucket. ‘Eh, we go look Mrs. Wiggins over there.’ Never take too long, one panunu, two...I mean I talking five, six, seven. You know...was nice size...baby ‘uhu. But you know the bait had to be the secret.” Although Uncle Patrick remembers inquiring what the bait was that Mrs. Wiggins used, the response given to him was, “You guys like know what the bait? Why?” Uncle Patrick and the boys that he hung out with watched and payed close attention to how Mrs. Wiggins caught her catch on each visit to the ocean. Finally, Uncle Patrick was in the right place at the right time when Mrs. Wiggins ran out of bait. She directed Uncle Patrick to “go down there” pointing to the ocean, “Go down and get me five hāʻukeʻuke (purple sea urchin).” “Now we had the bait,” recalled Uncle Patrick.

He concludes, “I will never get too old to appreciate the fact that kūpuna that came before me took time even though we never think...what they were doing was teaching us. Because you needed to know Hawaiian kaona. There was a way behind, a kaona behind what they were doing. Because they never...I never saw kūpuna come tell me, ‘Sit down.’ It was truly you know ‘Paʻa ka waha, hana ka lima.’ (The mouth is shut, the hands work) You know, that’s how you learn that’s how practical things was done – learning, learning, learning.”
Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

The duality of education was important to Uncle Pat. His education was balanced between a westernized approach to learning in a formal institutional educational setting and the knowledge imparted upon Uncle Pat at home and within the community. Uncle Pat explains, "So you had education...formal...if that's the right word...your regular schooling kind of education...reading, writing, arithmetic. And then when you came home you had your education that taught you what you need to know...because we are Hawaiians."

The education that he received from members within the Keaukaha community was invaluable. The kupuna of Keaukaha not only imparted knowledge to Uncle Pat and his friends, they also modeled appropriate behavior towards younger siblings in the community. Uncle Pat explains, "We had respect for kupuna. We did what they said. And then our job was to make sure that we mālama (take care) those younger ones behind us. Those kupuna, for me, that's why I was truly blessed. I lost my mother, the wahine figure was gone but Lucille (Kahauolopua), Aunty Rose Haena, Aunty Mary Kenoi, Aunty Hannah Kahee, Mrs. Umuiwi; they become our mothers."

When Uncle Patrick was growing up, there was not much choice in the selection of schools that a child would attend. Keaukaha Elementary School, established in 1930, was a kindergarten through Grade 6 public school. Traditionally, once a student completed grade 6, students travel 4 miles upland within Hilo town to attend Hilo Intermediate School and then Hilo High School right across the Waianuenue Street. There was, however, another opportunity afforded to the families of Keaukaha and that was St. Mary’s and St. Joseph’s Schools located about 3 miles up into Hilo town. These were the only Catholic private schools on the island, and they later converged to one single catholic school – St. Joseph’s School. Uncle Pat attended St.
Mary’s School while many of his friends attended Keaukaha Elementary School. Still the community defined who he was and not the educational institution. Uncle Pat and his family continued to participate in every Keaukaha function, and he continued to learn from the numerous community members who carried out their work outdoors where children of the community could observe and partake in the work if invited or if inquired of.

A major implication of Uncle Pat’s interview is the importance of respecting one’s kupuna. Uncle Pat reiterates, “If you know enough to do that with your own kupuna, then that’s how you treat everybody along the line.” “If you don’t have the respect for your kupuna, your adults; then how can you expect people to respect you?” Furthermore, through one’s actions, there is an acknowledgment or dismissal of one’s kupuna and their ancestral knowledge. Uncle Pat states, “You do honor to your kupuna, when you do good work.”

Uncle Patrick’s early learning experiences suggest the importance of education that comes in “many different fashions.” Uncle Pat believes that it is equally important to receive a formal education as well as learn about one’s own culture and community: “Be proud of your culture--this is what you do. We have this and nobody can take that from us.”
Chapter 10

Kupuna Lilinoe Keli‘ipio-Young

Kupuna Lilinoe Keli‘ipio-Young was born on June 9, 1951. At that time her family lived in Wai‘akea on the tiny Island of Mokuola. Mokuola Island sits in Hilo Bay about a half mile from Keaukaha homestead. Many residents of the island still refer this island as Coconut Island. She says, “Living on the island was heaven for me. I felt it was like living in my own world. We were in touch with the ocean and it was nice because the community that surrounded us was there all the time, so I was able to interact with all of the people growing up in and living in Waiakea. So, it was a wonderful place to grow up.”

Even after Aunty Lilinoe’s marriage to Clarence Young of Waiohinu, Ka‘ū in 1971, who she met when he was working on the bridge that connected Hilo to Mokuola Island, they continued to live in Keaukaha where they raised three children. All three of their children attended Keaukaha School, which was located diagonally across from her home. One of her children became a member of the first graduating class taught primarily in the Hawaiian language in the Hawaiian Language Immersion program that began at Keaukaha School. Her grandchildren now attend Keaukaha School. Keaukaha has been an integral part of Aunty Lilinoe’s life and the lives of her children and grandchildren.

As I consider Aunty Lilinoe’s responses in her oral history, the common themes identified are: Knowledge from other places and settings, importance of education, and living Hawaiian language through one’s children.

Settling in Keaukaha: Knowledge From Other Places and Settings

Aunty Lilinoe was born to Paul Keli‘ipio and Grace Uailihau Keli‘ipio. She was the oldest of five children: “Mama is from Moloka‘i and Daddy is the youngest of 13 kids who were
As it was a familial responsibility, her father became the caretaker of the island beginning in 1947 until 1960: "He started in 1947 and our physical connection to the island ended on May 23, 1960. After that Daddy went to work with the Parks and Recreation at NSA Pool, following in the footsteps of many of his siblings who were swimming instructors and lifeguards there."

It wasn’t until the tsunami of 1960 that Aunty Lilinoe’s family moved away from Mokuola Island and relocated permanently to their home on Hawaiian Home Lands in Keaukaha. She recounts, "After the tsunami we moved to Keaukaha, where my father’s siblings, seven of them, had homestead here, along with my grandmother. My grandmother was among the first wave of awardees in Keaukaha, and she lived on the front street, Kalanianaʻole. And the rest of my father’s siblings were sprinkled throughout Keaukaha. We acquired our lot on Desha Avenue in 1962, and we have been there ever since."

Aunty Lilinoe credits much of her traditional and cultural learnings to her parents. Her mother was born and raised on the east side of the Island of Molokaʻi. Her mother was the third of eleven children. Her mother’s father was a ranch hand at Molokaʻi Ranch. She recalls frequently leaving Keaukaha to visit her family on Molokaʻi: "We went back every year to visit. And my grandmother actually took a younger sibling of mine and raised her on Molokaʻi; so it was perfect for us to go back there and visit all the time. But living out in the east, and because of my grandfather's connection to the ranch, living was hard so we lived off the land a lot. The girls gathered their food from the ocean. My mother became very adept in gathering heʻe (octopus) and limu (seaweed) and other things that were needed to sustain the family. They lived alongside a stream in a home that had a dirt floor, no running water, outhouse, kukui helepō (lantern). I guess for us the mahiʻai part came from Molokaʻi. So when we went back to visit,
Tūtū had a 'āina (land) with a lo‘i (wetland garden) on it so we were able to go and experience
that and learn how to plant the kalo and huki (pull) and kuʻi paʻiʻai (pound taro) and all those
things. My mother brought that learning with her when she came to Keaukaha.”

While being raised on the Island of Mokuola, Aunty Lilinoe was exposed to fishing and
the utility of the ocean by her father. With Mauna Kea serving as a backdrop, she was exposed
to the protocols of living on the island, including knowing specific names of particular places
related to Mokuola Island. She recounts, “My father’s father was Isaac Keliʻipio Sr. My father
had the ocean to help sustain our family while we lived on Mokuola. My father’s family was of
the ocean. They could dive. They could swim. Our ‘aumakua (family god) was the manā. So
we were very skilled in that area of lawai‘a (fishing). Daddy would also go hunting and he
would help with farming. I guess I had the best of both worlds. I had traditional stuff through
my mom, and I had the experience of fishing from my father. So for me reflecting now on that,
that was most valuable to me because I had a balance of both worlds. Here in Hilo the culture
was modernizing so to speak, but when we went to Molokaʻi it was like travelling back into the
days of old. For it me it was valuable because I experienced a lot of things that I wouldn’t
experience.”

The Way to Succeed is to be Educated

During the time of the tsunami of 1960, which demolished most of Hilo town and all of
Waiākea, Aunty Lilinoe and her family lived on Mokuola Island. She recalls that it was a very
chaotic time for the city of Hilo: “Summer was coming up. There were a lot of people that lost
their homes. They were temporarily housed elsewhere. Their children went to school wherever.
At that time, Waiākea Elementary was not yet built, so it was either Hilo Union School or
Kapiʻolani Elementary School. There were very few elementary schools in Hilo.”
It wasn’t much later that the family decided to move to Keaukaha and Aunty Lilinoe was enrolled as a student at Keaukaha Elementary School. As the Tsunami hit on May 23, 1960, she still remembers enrolling at Keaukaha School with only two and half-weeks left of school. She recollects, “I was placed in Mrs. Josephine Todd’s class, which was nice for me because she was a familiar face. Mrs. Todd was our neighbor at Mokuola. She lived in my Tutū’s old mainland house where the parking lot of the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel is. They built the mainland house because back in the days when they resided on Mokuola Island, during the winter, the waves would wash over the island because there was no breakwater wall. So during the winter she would live in the mainland house overlooking the island and bay area. When dad took over as caretaker, Tutū’s house became vacant and Mr. and Mrs. Todd resided there. I knew she was a teacher at Keaukaha. I never expected that when I came to Keaukaha School at the end of May that she would be my teacher.”

Education was everything to Aunty Lilinoe and her family. This value was instilled in them by their father. It was also important that they knew that they were representatives of a specific family. Aunty Lilinoe recalls the words that her father spoke: “Daddy always said the way to succeed is to be educated. And you know because of his position as a public servant, he knew so many people. He did swim classes at Hilo High School. He knew all the teachers up there. He was a very public figure, and so one of the things that he always told all of us, ‘Wherever you go, you have to carry yourself, because you come from a family that's well known.’ In other words, don’t shame the name. And so in the back of my mind that was always with me, you know. When I went to school I was on my best behavior because everybody knew daddy. That’s how we grew up!”

Aunty Lilinoe’s work in education started when she lived in the district of Ka‘ū. As a
new parent, she got involved with parent projects within the community. This allowed her to get
to know the area of Ka‘ū especially the areas of Nā‘ālehu and Waiohinu. She began to work in
the Head Start program in Ka‘ū, providing workshops in parenting skills. Her work in Ka‘ū in
the Head Start program continued when they moved back to Hilo. She says, “One thing I liked
about the program was that it not only sharpened by parenting skills, but it taught me a lot about
childhood and development. It empowered parents. I was attracted to the program because I
discovered that 90% of their teachers and their staff were former parents. I started with them on
that path and ultimately got hired by them to be one of their home visitors in Puna. I was with
them for eight years from 1981 up to 1990. It was a wonderful experience because I was working
with young parents who really needed help in parenting.”

Her success in the Head Start program was due in large part to the fact that she could
relate to the challenges that many of these parents were experiencing as they tried their best to
become successful and loving parents to their young children: “One of the things in reflecting on
my time with Head Start, I discovered that about 90% of the clients that I served eventually got
off welfare and either went back to school or entered some sort of job training program. They
made a life for themselves outside of just being comfortable with welfare. It helped to support
the growth in parenting. Its family-based concept really worked well in Hawai‘i because through
that experience I discovered that our culture is family-based and learning is all family-based.”

After her work with the Head Start program, Aunty Lilinoe was invited to work as a
member of the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo. This Hawaiian language-based program, which began in 1983,
led to the establishment of Hawaiian Language preschools throughout the State of Hawai‘i as a
means to increase speakers of the Hawaiian Language, which previously was on the verge of
extinction. As graduates of the Punana Leo preschool program reached the elementary school
When the first Hawaiian Immersion Program opened at Keaukaha School in 1987, it was something new that no one knew about. Aunty Lilinoe first learned about the program from a community friend whose child was attending the Pūnana Leo Preschool. She, along with her parents, also remembered a year earlier hearing a preschool child speaking to his grandparents in Hawaiian. They were in awe of this child and began discussions of the topic in their own home. Aunty Lilinoe recounts, “I remember asking myself, ‘What if Kalimahana could speak like that?’ And that planted the seed. When I heard the Hawaiian Language Immersion program was coming to Keaukaha, I thought we would give it a try.”

The transition into the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program when her son was starting first grade was not an easy one: “He cried the whole seven months. Everyday my mama would take him to school and he would say, ‘I don’t want to go there. The teacher doesn’t speak English. She doesn’t understand me. I don’t understand her. She doesn’t even know the word for milk!’” Aunty Lilinoe remembers her parents using Hawaiian words with them, but it wasn’t a fluent language in the house. Even when Aunty Lilinoe’s Tūtū flew over from Moloka‘i and
spoke to others in the home or with people who came to visit, it was not a language that Aunty Lilinoe or her siblings latched on to in any kind of conversation.

With her son, Kalimahana, enrolled in the first Hawaiian Language Immersion Program, Aunty Lilinoe received varying degrees of criticism: “My parents were supportive, but my siblings were telling me, ‘Are you nuts? How is he going to survive in an English world?’” This became the main thrust of the negative criticism towards the program. Still, Aunty Lilinoe was certain about continuing her son’s enrollment in the program. She recalls, “Even though I had my doubts, one thing Dad always told us, that you do it all the way or don’t go at all. So I thought if I jump into this thing, I got to go all the way.”

Even though he cried every day he went to school, Kalimahana continued in the program. It was in May that things began to change. Aunty Lilinoe recounts, “In May, my husband said, ‘Poor thing this boy every day cry. Maybe we should pull him out?’ So we came to the conclusion that at the end of the school year he would finish up and we would put him back in the English Language side. Then an amazing thing happened that changed everything. It was Mother’s Day 1988. As with every year, whenever we called Tūtū on Moloka‘i, we passed the phone around the house and everybody had a chance to talk to her. At the end of the particular call, she insisted on speaking to Kalimahana. Her directions were clear that he needed to go in my bedroom. Kalimahana was six at that time. So he went into the bedroom and he’s on the phone maybe about 20 minutes, and then he comes out and he says, ‘Tūtū wants to talk to you, Mom.’ On the other end Tūtū was crying. When I asked her what was wrong, she said, ‘That little boy just made my dream come true.’ I had forgotten about 15 years earlier on her birthday she took the time to say, ‘I’m going to tell you my birthday wishes.’ After she blew out her candles, she said, ‘I wish to live long enough to hear my seed speak my mother’s tongue.’
said he made that wish come true.” Aunty Lilinoe relayed to her Tutu that they were thinking of pulling him out the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program because he was unhappy. Her Tutu told her, “You go talk to him again.”

At the end of the school year, Aunty Lilinoe remembers asking Kalimahana, “At the end of the school year, you are going to go back to English? He said, ‘No.’ ‘What?’ ‘No, I’m going to stay.’ ‘Are you sure? You are not going to cry anymore?’ And he said, ‘No.’ That morning my mother took him to school, and he told my mother that she didn’t have to walk with him across the street anymore and to stop at the corner. For the rest of the school year he walked alone and never cried about going back to English again.” Her Tutu got to converse with him for a few more years. If they were not able to travel to Moloka‘i, they would send for her to visit them in Keaukaha: “She would visit us two to three times a year. Every time she’d come that’s all they would speak, Hawaiian, and when she passed away in 1992, we all went for the funeral and Kalimahana said a few words in the eulogy in Hawaiian about his Tutu.”

As a result of her son being in the Hawaiian Language Immersion program, Aunty Lilinoe continued to learn Hawaiian language and eventually became fluent. Her commitment and dedication to the Hawaiian language, the Hawaiian Language Immersion program and the ‘Aha Pūnana Leo was a result of the bridge that the Hawaiian language built between generations within her family from Aunty Lilinoe’s Tutu, to her mother, to herself, and down to her son, Kalimahana.
Implications for Educational Programs Within the Keaukaha School Community

When I asked Aunty Lilinoe about her definition of culture as related to the stories she spoke about in her interviews, she said, “I don’t think the word culture was even used. I think culture became a buzz word once immersion started and during the Hawaiian Renaissance that everybody started to look at culture. It was just a natural state of living through these values, beliefs and practices. I don’t think we identified culture – it was what we did in everyday life. At Keaukaha School, Mrs. Ahia taught the Hawaiian Language to the students. They did planting. Almost everything they do today at Keaukaha School we did back then and maybe a little more. We did everything Hawaiian that we possibly could.” She further extended the definition of culture, “Culture means many things to me. When I look at culture I think about, not just the Hawaiian culture, but some of the values and the habits of other nationalities, especially around the Pacific Rim, that even mirror our own traditions and values and practices as Hawaiians.”

As with many kūpuna interviewed, Aunty Lilinoe spoke of the importance of ‘ohana and respect. This understanding of respect was displayed in everything that people in the community did when she was growing up. Respect to their kūpuna, to each other, to their children, to their land. Aunty Lilinoe further explained, “I think it’s a feeling of ‘ohana and respect that guided us as we grew up because not only were we expected to be respectful to our parents, but towards each other, other family members, and anyone who was older than us including teachers, aunts and uncles. I think that is the value that was most practiced in my family, and that’s what I see myself applying when it comes to my own children and grandchildren. I use to watch my mother do a lot of those things and for her it wasn’t a video. You stood up there and watched her. As she’s doing, you’re watching. The next time she calls you, you come in and you do it. And if it’s not right, then you have to do it again because repetition and practice makes perfect. We learned
by doing. We learned by repetition and by practice we mastered it.” Aunty Lilinoe spoke of food preparation and how she used to watch her mother: “I use to watch my mom make akupalu and I never touched the thing. But now that she’s gone, I remember how she did it so I can do it, too.” The passing on of knowledge from parent to child was important. Speaking of her own children, Aunty Lilinoe says, “If they see me do it and when I’m gone and they miss it, they will know how to do it too.”

When I asked Lilinoe where she would like to see education in our community in the next ten to twenty years, she responded, “I would hope that in the next ten to twenty years it would continue to remain this way…that our staff, our teachers, our administration understand that Keaukaha School is a community school. It’s a school that’s made up of all the families of the children in the community. And we do all that we can to support the learning that needs to happen with our kids especially when it comes to integrating who we are as Hawaiians and as a community into the curriculum. We had a lot of music. We had a lot of dancing.” It is also important to Aunty Lilinoe that educators keep up with the current educational trends, activities, and curricula so that the children are constantly being challenged: “If the kid is misbehaving that’s because your work is boring, and if they already mastered it you have to find something else to make him want to further his learning.”

Learning to speak the Hawaiian language has strengthened Aunty Lilinoe’s identity as a Hawaiian. She says, “Hawaiian language changed my whole attitude about being Hawaiian. Within myself I felt more pa‘a…I felt more firm in who I was. I can speak and understand the Hawaiian language, and whenever I go back to the old periodicals and stories in Hawaiian I can understand what the kūpuna were trying to convey through their words because I am able to speak it.”
Regarding education in Keaukaha, Aunty Lilinoe has seen and been part of many different educational programs in Keaukaha from Head Start, to public schools, private preschools, Hawaiian Language Immersion Programs, and even charter schools. She says that the plethora of educational programs provided educational options for the children in Keaukaha. However, she believes that the incorporation of ancestral and traditional knowledge is important in extending the learning opportunities for all, especially on Hawaiian Home Lands such as Keaukaha: “Language belongs here, our traditional practices belong here. Everything in our community, we should be practicing. It should be on-going.”

Reflecting on the Keaukaha community, she believes there is increased unity and pride amongst the Keaukaha community: “There’s a sense of family. When I first came to Keaukaha it didn’t appear like people wanted anyone to know they were from Keaukaha. Now I can confidently say that there’s pride. Our families were like-minded. Through good times and through bad times the community stood with you. There’s always a sense of belonging. We could roam all over Keaukaha and nobody would do us any harm, but with the next generation I was fearful of that, that something would happen to my girls in my own community. It’s a family, traditional thing. However, I’m grateful because my neighbors are the best security anywhere that I could have. And that’s what I say about lōkahi, unity, because everybody looks out for each other.”
Chapter 11
Mauli Keaukaha: Findings and Implications

In Hawaiian perspective, it is an honor for an individual to continue to be attached to the land on which that person’s family has lived, worked, struggled, and celebrated for generations (Kana‘iaupuni & Malone, 2006). We are of place, and place is of us. We are intimately tied to our place, from which skills, stories, life lessons, values and beliefs are shared, taught, and embedded to allow us to face the challenges and opportunities of the larger society in which we live. As Manu Meyer (1998) explains, “the environment played a central role in how Hawaiians lived, survived, and made sense of their experiences” (p. 32). With the stance that we take upon our own foundation of place, we gain a wider worldview of all that is around us.

In an educational system where standardized tests are the measurements of student success and progress, the general education establishment continues to ignore the essence of a child’s unique place. Current educational practices disconnect learning from place, and thus create a wider dissonance between students and their unique place of setting. Values and beliefs of the home and community are replaced with regimented ways of rote learning with concepts and skills taught in isolation with no application or understanding of how knowledge is used and thus valued. Within our educational system, the general education establishment continues to “teach to the test” while denying students and teachers opportunities to experience critical or place-based education (Grueneweld, 2003). We continue to ignore the social context of living within the student’s own ecological setting, which is necessary to ensure the continuation of familial and communal livelihood. Generally, the education that currently exists puts in place reformations and initiatives that support only the increase of student performance on standardized testing. With such focus, we sever the learning that occurs in one’s family and
community life, where learning first takes place and is first fostered. Sumida and Meyer (2006, p. 438) assert that “a dominant, mainstream school curriculum is important but not sufficient because it provides only one view of the world.” Curriculum that is rooted solely in the dominant, mainstream perspective further alienates Hawaiian students from our traditional culture and devalues the students’ genealogy and history as tied to family and community.

In Western educational theory, place-based education is closely connected to theories of experiential learning, contextual learning, problem-based learning, constructivism, outdoor education, indigenous education, environmental and ecological education, bioregional education, democratic education, multicultural education, community-based education, critical pedagogy ...[and] other approaches that are concerned with context and the value of learning from and nurturing specific places, communities, or regions. (Grueneweld, 2003, p. 3)

As Hawaiians, we find that mo’okū‘auhau (genealogy), mō‘aukala (history), and ‘ike hana (traditional practices) as well as the nohona (place) of our kupuna (ancestors) are the sinews upon which we thrive as a lāhui Hawai‘i, people of Hawai‘i. Through the experiences and lives of nine elders of the Keaukaha community, the stories shared here define the ‘ike mauli or traditional knowledge that is unique to this Hawaiian community of Keaukaha. This uniqueness of Keaukaha, mauli Keaukaha, is unlike any other community, Hawaiian or otherwise, as ‘ike mauli is tied to family and land.

‘Ike Mauli o Keaukaha

A search for common themes across the nine oral histories suggested five foundational knowledges that are interwoven throughout the stories. These five knowledge components define the ‘ike mauli of the mauli Keaukaha: genealogical connections, Hawaiian Language, history, fishing and the ocean, and respect. By no means are the knowledges listed in any priority fashion. The knowledges are equally important and together comprise the foundation of the mauli Keaukaha.
Knowledge of Genealogical Connections

Within such a close knit community, family matters. Across the nine oral histories, it became clear that, in Keaukaha, there are two kinds of "families." The immediate, biological family was typically the initial source for teaching or passing on the 'ike mauli to many of our kūpuna. In addition to this, other adults within Keaukaha often assisted in raising children of the community and thereby added to the foundational base of knowledge. In interview after interview, the kūpuna reaffirmed the importance of the genealogical connections that link our personal selves to our family. Because the actions of an individual reflect the entire family, the kūpuna were continually aware of how their work and actions would bring "pride" or "shame" to their family; to those that have passed on, those that are living, and those that are yet to come.

The kūpuna recalled fondly particular family members who had a lasting impact on their upbringing. Aunty Rhea Akoi shared her love for her older sister, Aunty Pua Borges, who has always been a "teacher" to her. As Aunty Rhea explained, "Siblings learned from and supported each other." Aunty Rhea and her sister both became educators who shared their love for the Keaukaha community by teaching the children art, music, and academics. Similarly, Aunty Alberta Andaya spoke of her elder sister, Anuhea, who was always there to guide her younger siblings. As Aunty Alberta recalls, "She was the older sister and she was always there for us. Whenever she saw something that wasn't right she would question us."

Other kūpuna expressed the significant role that their grandparents played in their upbringing. To be raised by a grandparent was not an unusual practice in many Hawaiian communities. Likewise, in Keaukaha, for many of our kūpuna when they were young, their grandparents were a formidable influence throughout their childhoods. Aunty Maile Mauhili continues to live by three words that her grandmother, Malia Kela, imposed upon her while
growing up, “respect, love, and pule.” When she was younger, these three words guided Aunty Maile’s daily life and practices such as fishing and healing. As she grew older, Aunty Maile continued to live by these three words as they guided her interactions with her children, her grandchildren, and other community groups, such as the canoe paddling teams that she had coached.

Similarly, Aunty Luana Kawelu’s grandparents taught her the value of hard work. Raised by her grandparents, Aunty Luana’s responsibility as a member of the family was to work in the family stores. Through her grandparents, she was also taught the value of education as a means of personal stability. Aunty Luana credits her grandmother for being her “rock,” and explains that it was because of her grandmother’s love and support that she continued with her education and eventually earned a degree in psychology. As a community member who is involved in many community and state events, such as the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival, Aunty Luana’s work ethic and sense of kuleana, or family roles and responsibilities, have clearly been passed down to her children and grandchildren who are now instrumental in the production of the annual Merrie Monarch Hula Festival. As Uncle Donald Pakele explains, genealogy is “a means to establish and reestablish connection to Keaukaha” so that future generations will continue to “give back to a thriving community.”

Knowledge of History

We are unable to move out of a stagnant present if we are not clear of our own history. The answers to questions of how we should proceed lie in the events of our ancestors of the past. Guided by our ancestral history, we move carefully, knowingly, and preparedly forward. The kūpuna interviewed here reflected on significant historical events that not only impacted their personal lives but also influenced their future career paths. It became clear throughout the
interviews that, while events such as tsunamis and world wars disturbed the livelihoods of many people, they also strengthened communal and familial ties. Aunty Rhea Akoi remembered attending school on O‘ahu during World War II. She recalled moving to various different schools during that time period because of the dangers associated with the war. She also explained that during the war time, students were encouraged to work in addition to attending school. Aunty Rhea found herself working in the plantation and later as a telephone operator. She spoke fondly of the relationships that she made during that time.

Aunty Rhea also recalled with great detail the history of Keaukaha School where she began teaching in 1967. Motivated by her love for the children of Keaukaha, she taught lessons in art, music, and academics. This love has remained with her over the years and the betterment of our Hawaiian children of Keaukaha continues to be her passion. In 1989 Aunty Rhea Akoi published “Ku‘u Home I Keaukaha,” a collection of oral histories from individuals that she recognized as *kupuna* in the 1970s and 1980s. Aunty Rhea’s collection of oral histories helped to foster the identity of the Keaukaha community at that time, and it is my intention to add to and build upon Aunty Rhea’s seminal work through this dissertation research.

The 1960 Tsunami devastated the city of Hilo and disrupted the lives of many who lived during this time. For Aunty Luana Kawelu, the tsunami disrupted her education when she was asked to move back from O‘ahu to Hilo to help in the family store. For Aunty Luana, this move was more than just a responsibility but a duty to family. Like Aunty Luana, the 1960 tsunami also changed the lives of Aunty Lilinoe Keli‘ipio Young and her family when they were forced to leave the solitude of Mokuola Island and relocate to the Keaukaha community.

In the personal histories of these individuals there were family and community members who had a significant impact on their lives and the lives of others in the community. Aunty
Noelani Ioane-Kapuni remembers Mr. Albert Nahale-a and his impact on church, music, and sports. Aunty Luella ‘Aina remembers Mr. Robert Ka‘upu as a coach who instilled in her the aspects of athletics that allowed her to serve as a sports director for decades. Aunty Maile Mauhili recalls her grandmother’s skill in the art of healing. Finally, Uncle Patrick Kahawaiola’a remembers the Waipa family, who practiced the art of dying and weaving lauhala, as well as the many fishermen, including women, of Keaukaha who taught Uncle Patrick to fish.

**Knowledge of Fishing and the Ocean**

Manu Meyer (1998) explains that “the environment played a central role in how Hawaiians lived, survived, and made sense of their experiences” (p. 32). We are of place, and place is of us. We are intimately tied to our place, from which skills, stories, life lessons, values and beliefs are shared, taught, and embedded to allow us to face the challenges and opportunities of the larger society in which we live. As I mentioned in the Introduction, Keaukaha is an isolated, ocean community with a single road that leads into and out of the community. For our kūpuna, the ocean was an integral part of their existence in Keaukaha. It was the backyard where they both played and sustained themselves with the delicacies of the ocean. For many kūpuna the practice of going “down the beach” connected them with fellow community members and reminded them of their common bond as a single Hawaiian community of Keaukaha.

Aunty Rhea recalled memories of specific areas of Puhi Bay and Kulapae. “The ocean became our restaurant,” she explained, where they would often gather pipipi (limpets), kūpe‘e (shell fish), limu ‘ele‘ele (seaweed), and sea urchins. Aunty Rhea visited the ocean often, with her family as well as her church group.

A few hundred yards east from where Aunty Rhea spent much of her time, Aunty Maile reflected on her time at Onekahakaha and Holokai beaches. Aunty Maile and her family used
various methods of catching fish from throw net to set net and cross net, to even catching 'anae (mullet) fish with their hands when the tide was high. Aunty Maile and her family would prepare their fish as soon as it was caught. They would clean and dry the fish down on the beach.

As Aunty Luella recalls, in Keauhakaha, “Everyone fished.” The community members made their own fishing nets, using branches from the hau tree for floaters and making their own leads, which was a tedious task. Uncle Donald and Uncle Patrick spoke of the importance of knowing the place and the type of fish you wanted, which determined the style of fishing that you would proceed with. The fishermen of Keaukaha knew where to lay their nets and where to best optimize their catch for the day. Many of the youngsters of Keaukaha were taught to help in gathering fish, sometimes by helping to pa'ipai'i or chase the fish towards the net by slapping the surface of the water while moving towards the net. The shoreline of Keaukaha was well known by its community. It was also well respected. Aunty Luana explains that, “whatever was caught, was to eat. Take home what was needed and go back if you needed more.” She describes a similar approach to gathering limu (seaweed), “Limu was cut and not pulled, allowing it to replenish itself.” These practices allowed for the necessary sustaining of the ocean’s resources.

Our Keaukaha elders and their families were skilled in the art of lawai’a (fishing). They knew all parts of the ocean from the kahakai (shoreline), to the kāheka (ponds), to the laupapa (reefs) and to the kai uli (deep ocean). They were knowledgeable of the seasons and the specific times of day (or night) when certain kinds of fish including crab, lobster, and seaweed could be gathered in moderation. In my conversations with the elders, their love for the ocean of Keaukaha was clear. It was also clear that certain families had particularly strong connections to specific beach areas. This love for the ocean is rooted in the kupuna’s respect for the resources
that the ocean provided their families for generations - a level of respect that they have passed on to their children and grandchildren and other members of the Hawaiian community.

**Knowledge of the Hawaiian Language**

Many of the elders who were interviewed grew up in a time where Hawaiian Language speakers in and out of the home still existed in Keaukaha. Aunty Noelani grew up in a family where both her parents spoke Hawaiian. Aunty Maile’s family also spoke Hawaiian and she attended the local elementary school where their teachers spoke to them in Hawaiian as well. As long as they were spoken to in Hawaiian, these youngsters responded in Hawaiian. Hawaiian was acknowledged, accepted, and practiced throughout Keaukaha until the 1940s during the time of World War II when standard English schools were making a place for themselves in the formal education system in the Hawaiian Islands. In addition to conversational Hawaiian, the Hawaiian Language was also embraced through Hawaiian music. Aunty Alberta values her Hawaiian language and culture and remembers the Hawaiian songs that her father composed and sang.

In a community where Hawaiian was a prominent language of its members, it is not surprising that Keaukaha was one of two sites in the State of Hawai‘i where a Hawaiian Language Immersion Program was first established in 1987. (This is where I first started my career as an educator.) Because of their love of the Hawaiian Language, many of our kupuna have children and grandchildren who have been part of the Hawaiian Language Immersion Program. In my interview with Aunty Alberta, she expressed her hope that these children will be able to “share the experience of language with the rest of the world.”

Aunty Lilinoe’s son was in the first Hawaiian Immersion class as a first grader in 1987 and graduated from the program upon completing Grade 12 in 1999. Aunty Lilinoe reflected on
the importance of the Hawaiian Language in fulfilling the lifelong wish of an elder within her own family. She recalled her grandmother’s wish: “I wish to live long enough to hear my seed speak my mother’s tongue.” This wish was fulfilled when Aunty Lilinoe’s son entered the Hawaiian Immersion Program. As Aunty Lilinoe suggests, learning to speak the Hawaiian Language strengthens one’s own identity as a Hawaiian. By familiarizing ourselves with stories in Hawaiian we can bring forth the life of the words of our kūpuna. Our language belongs here, our traditional practices belong here. They should be practiced, and it should be on-going.

Respect

Respect was a word that was interwoven throughout the stories shared by our kūpuna. Respect for self, respect for family, respect for elders, respect for community members, respect for land --- this ever-present value of respect regulated the many activities that our kūpuna and members of the Keaukaha community participated in.

From a young age, our kūpuna were taught to respect the elders of the community. Aunty Noelani recalls that this was the first lesson that she was taught as a child. Similarly, Aunty Maile explained that “Parents brought their children up with respect.” She was taught by her grandmother to “respect, love, and pule.” -- values that she continues to share with her children and grandchildren. Uncle Pat recalls, “We had respect for kupuna. We did what they said. If you don’t have respect for your kupuna, your adults, then how can you expect people to respect you? You do honor to your kupuna, when you do good work.”

Respect was an embedded value within the Keaukaha community because of its relatively small size and isolated location. As Aunty Lilinoe explains, “Everybody looked out for everybody.” Consequently, as Aunty Alberta suggests, “Respect towards each other was important.” Because kūpuna disciplined other people’s children, the kūpuna were respected
throughout the community. Similarly, because the older children had additional responsibilities, such as taking care of the younger children, the older children were respected by the younger children. As Aunty Lilinoe explains, “Respect to kupuna, to each other, to their children, to their land. I think that is the value that was most practiced in my family.”

**Pedagogical Practices**

The themes that emerged from these oral histories have implications for our understanding of how knowledge is experienced and received, and how education is viewed, in our Keaukaha community. When taken together, the interviews provide insight into the ‘ike mauli (foundational knowledge) that is unique to the community of Keaukaha. Through this ‘ike mauli the values and beliefs of Keaukaha families and the Keaukaha community are carried, creating a determination for learning. Thus students become representatives of not only themselves but also of their family, their community, and their land.

As a school principal, I aim to base my decision-making for the education of my specific school site upon my understanding of the unique setting of the school while likewise honoring familial and communal insights extended from experiences of the area. I believe that this understanding is essential to effective teaching. I work with the educators at my school to seek opportunities to optimize learning by providing our students with learning experiences that are engaging, relevant, challenging, purposeful, and meaningful, and that will ultimately lead to student success. We create classrooms and areas of learning where we are able to apply learning from the classroom within the immediate environment and community. Conversely, we also embrace the teachings that are derived from our environment and our community, and recognize and value the unique knowledge that our children are surrounded by daily. Consequently, our students know that they are supported in their learning and feel safe to take risks.
Gregory Smith (2002) writes that “valuable knowledge for most children is knowledge that is directly related to their own social reality, knowledge that will allow them to engage in activities that are of service to and valued by those they love and respect” (p. 586). Furthermore, learning is contextualized when it is connected to the values, beliefs, and concerns of the students, their families, and the communities to which they are most closely attached (Tharp & Dalton, 2007).

The stories shared by the elders in these oral history interviews have led me to identify three pedagogical practices that can assist us, as educators, in acknowledging and building upon the “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) that exist in the community of Keaukaha. These pedagogical practices can be utilized to develop effective strategies to maximize learning for Keaukaha students and strengthen their beliefs in their own capacities to succeed. The first pedagogical practice is involving community members as teachers and mentors; the second is creating a bridge between school, family, and community; and the third is recognizing and validating the importance of land as a source of connection and living.

Community Members as Teachers and Mentors

When I asked our kūpuna, “Who were your teachers?” the “teachers” named spanned the gamut of the community, from the beginning of the road in the community to the end, from the ocean to the community’s backside. Aunty Noelani credits her father for teaching her patience and the importance of family in tasks such as helping to build a house. She also acknowledges her mother, who was a well-known school teacher in Keaukaha and taught Aunty Noelani the importance of discipline. Aunty Rhea fondly recalls learning from her older sister as the two worked side by side teaching the children of Keaukaha in academics and the arts. Aunty Luella credits her many successful years of participating and working in sports and athletics to lessons
learned from iconic sports figures of the Keaukaha community, such as Mr. Albert Nahale-a, Mr. Robert Ka‘upu, and Mrs. Ann Leialoha.

Uncle Patrick acknowledged that all of the adults of the community of Keaukaha were his teachers. After losing his mother at the age of five, Uncle Patrick stayed with various aunties and uncles in the community. Each of them had special skills and knowledge, which they shared with Uncle Pat. He recalls how he went to one uncle’s house and learned “about going holoholo...how to kālua pig...how to sew net.” He then went to another relative’s house and learned to gather and weave lauhala or how and where to cross a fishnet in order to catch a particular type of fish.

Uncle Patrick, like most all of the kupuna interviewed, explained that he learned by working alongside his elders, “watching and doing.” As Aunty Lilinoe explained, “We watched and did. The next time you are asked to do the same thing – you need to do it.”

These stories remind us, as educators, of the wealth of knowledge that is held by the kupuna of our community and encourages us to seek out these experts in the community so that our students might learn from them as teachers and mentors. Moreover, these interviews suggest that our kupuna are more than willing to share their knowledge with the young people of Keaukaha. For instance, Aunty Luella continues to assist students of Keaukaha who have a keen interest in sports. Likewise, Aunty Luana, continues to help Keaukaha students get ahead in academics through her work as a social worker.

As Aunty Maile expressed, “We learned from our elders and what we know - we share. Our kamali‘i (children) come first.”

**Connecting School, Community, and Home**
For our kupuna, education and learning existed in many family and community activities that took place outside of the conventional school setting. It is here that our elders learned practical and sustainable ways of living and knowing that supported the uniqueness of the Keaukaha community. At the same time, conventional education and educators were greatly valued as there was a seamless existence between school, community, and home. As our kupuna suggest, Keaukaha families and community members were closely involved in school activities. Likewise, Keaukaha School was closely involved in the community. Because children’s families were involved in the activities of the school and vice versa, the transition of children’s learning between home and school was bridged. Students were able to make concrete connections between school-based knowledge and their experiences at home and within the community, which instilled pride and validation of their existence in and out of school (Becket, 2003).

For instance, Aunty Rhea remembers fondly the closeness that members of the community had with Keaukaha School where she and her sister worked as teachers. “Parents were very close and everybody’s children were our children,” she explained. Music and programs such as May Day served as a source of pride amongst members of the Keaukaha community. As a former Principal of Keaukaha School from 2006 to 2012, I can attest that the annual May Day celebration brought more than 1,000 family and community members to the school campus each year. For generations, the school May Day celebration has become a community expectation. While changes within the state educational system have put a damper upon such cultural festivities at other school sites in order to make room for extra classes in reading and math, Keaukaha School has upheld the importance of community involvement through multiple programs including May Day. Dance and music that is learned in the
community become part of the repertoire of the school programs while dance and music that is learned in school is likewise extended into the community and homes.

Many of our elders were raised during a time when the value of a Western education was greatly emphasized. As Aunty Luana describes, “Education was the gateway for Hawaiian children. Education was an important. It was not a choice.” Similarly, Aunty Lilinoe explains, “Education was everything to me and my family. The value of education was instilled by my father. The way to succeed was to be educated.”

At the same time that Keaukaha children were instilled with the value of a western education, however, they were also surrounded by a heritage rich in cultural practices as there were many community resources who were still very present in the Keaukaha community. Community and family presence was also evident in the local schools as many community members served as school assistants, teachers, cooks, cafeteria aides, and custodians. As Aunty Alberta explains, “The entire Keaukaha community was a classroom of learning. We were raised by an entire community.” In my position as a school administrator, I continually work at building and reinforcing these essential bridges between schools, families and communities.

**Land is Culture; Culture is Land**

*He ali‘i ka ʻāina, he kaua ke kanaka.* Land is chief, man is servant (Pūkuʻi, 1983). This ʻōlelo noʻeau, or Hawaiian proverb, describes the relationship that traditionally existed between Hawaiians and their lands. Over the years, this proverb has become a motto towards sustainability. It acknowledges that land and kānaka cannot continue existing without the other, and reminds us of our duty to treat the ʻāina with care so that there continues to exist a level of sustenance for future generations.
Our connection with our land is reciprocal (Meyer, 1998, p. 42). When one takes care of the land, the land in turn takes care of us. Moreover, the nature of our relationship with the ‘āina is unique to the particular place in which our family and community exist. Kana‘iaupuni and Malone (2006) note that this relationship with the ‘āina is key in Native Hawaiian identity. They explain that “Living off the natural resources of the land was fundamental to the social identities of Native Hawaiians, specific to the island or region where they lived” (p. 296).

The land of Keaukaha has provided sustenance for its members for generations. Aunty Maile recalls how the land served her and her family and how she, in turn, was taught to care for the ‘āina and understand the utility of what existed on the land. Her family raised pigs and chickens, and grew ‘ulu (breadfruit) to feed the animals. They also had a fishpond where they caught frogs for local businesses. Aunty Luella’s family also benefitted from the sustenance of the ‘āina. Like Aunty Maile, Aunty Luella emphasized the importance of being intimately familiar with one’s place and understanding what it has to offer, including knowing exactly where to catch a particular type fish or gather a particular type of limu (seaweed).

The place that looms large in Uncle Donald’s memory was Hawaiian Village, which was located near the ocean. Hawaiian Village was the center of the Keaukaha community where economic and financial opportunities existed. It is here that people shared their arts and crafts and also provided assistance to each other when needed. Thinking back on the memories of Hawaiian Village, Uncle Donald affirms, “It is important to remind children of Keaukaha that this is a special place. Important to know who you are and where you come from. Think of Keaukaha of a place that they can be proud of, as a place they can be saying – we are from Keaukaha.”
As educators, we can help our students understand the unique challenges that our particular places are currently experiencing, and provide them with opportunities to work towards practical solutions. Relevant practicum experiences could enable students to apply their classroom learning in community-based settings. Moreover, these experiences could encourage students to closely engage with their particular places while fulfilling their duty to mālama ʻāina (care for the land) and “conserve, share and restore” our shared environment for future generations (Grueneweld, 2003, p. 5).

Conclusion

This lessons learned from this collection of oral histories encourage school leaders in Hawaiian and other indigenous communities to move towards a more harmonic education that acknowledges kupuna experiences and insights rather than imposed beliefs and values of a disconnected educational system that is imposed from the outside. The acknowledgment of our kūpuna as teachers and individuals of wisdom is by nature indigenous as there needs to be a foundation from which other knowledge arises. The attainment of educational success of indigenous students begins with community empowerment and the recognition of indigenous beliefs and values that have already been in existence in indigenous communities but have recently and previously been ignored and overshadowed by externally imposed educational reform models and bureaucratic initiatives.

I am hopeful that this research may inspire other Hawaiian communities to seek ways of knowing that are specific to their own communities so that we can begin to challenge the standardization of values, norms, and practices of Hawaiians across the islands while strengthening the roots of our existence as unique places of setting defined by our mauli. Grueneweld (2003) emphasizes the importance of creating public spaces where individual
communities can “analyze, envision, and construct the meaning of development for themselves” (p. 5). This study suggests that a collaborative educational effort between school, families and communities could provide an ideal setting for envisioning and constructing a community’s unique understanding their particular goals for their children’s educational development.

As Native Hawaiians, it is our kuleana to mālama ʻāina (take care of the land). This includes knowing the multiple facets of familial and communal living – stories, place names, songs, chants, plants, and animals. The more intimately we are tied to our place, the greater is our sense of duty to ensure for generational continuity and perpetuity. We are the land from which we have come. It is an interdependent relationship. Bronfenbrenner (1977) suggests that in order for us to understand the relation between a person and his or her environment, “try to budge one, and see what happens to the other” (p. 518). With specific genealogy, history, and practices tied to the environment and those who inhabit a place, any disruption to the kanaka-ʻāina relationship jeopardizes the connection of future generations to who they are and where they come from. As our kupuna suggest, there need to be avenues for the teaching and acquisition of such knowledge in order to strengthen and enhance the community’s on-going relationships with their environment. Stories need to be retold, traditional practices need to be modeled, and lessons on mālama ʻāina need to be consistent and constant. These cultural practices strengthen the Native Hawaiian heritage in our communities where other cultural and ethnic practices might also be displayed. Lest our indigenous culture and unique practices be lost amongst other cultures or exist only as a “pageantry” culture, we must continue to seek opportunities where we are able to practice what has been taught within our communities for generations. Meyer (1998) describes the difference between a culture of “show” and a culture.
that is "embedded." An embedded culture creates the social contexts of our lives; an embedded culture that is tied to land fosters an ecological context for future generations (p. 88).

There has recently been a shift in academia that encourages the use of culture and land as key foundational components in learning. The inclusion of culture and land in curriculum development and instruction provides for a rich, integrated approach to knowledge. Such an approach will encourage active participation within communities as well as provide businesses access to a pool of skilled workers who are well-versed in problem-solving the issues and challenges that exist within their particular communities.

This is not a plea to abandon the current ways of teaching and learning within our Hawaiian classrooms; it is however a plea to seek the integration of knowledge and experiences that students are most familiar with into the curriculum. Sobel (2004) suggests that place-based education that is embedded into an academic discipline has positively increased the level of student performance on standardized testing. Scores in reading, math, social studies, and science improve, and students are able to quickly make connections and transfer knowledge from “familiar to unfamiliar contexts” (p. 28). Because place-based education connects schools with families and communities, school and classroom discipline problems also decline.

When planned accordingly and carefully, understanding fully the community in which an educational institution exists, there could be multiple efforts of place-base education that will instill skills and learnings that will continue beyond the years of formal education. Captivating students in projects such as school recycling, habitat restoration, energy conservation, and invasive species control invigorates their learning. In addition, community art days, participation in community meetings, business internships, and participating in community evacuation drills become a significant part of living within one’s own community.
In place-based education there is a seamless movement of learning between the classroom and the community, where the enhancement of knowledge is directly related to the individual students and their families. Through direct experiences within their unique communities, students will be engaged in knowing more about their own place. They will learn about the problems or challenges that exist in their community, develop potential solutions to these challenges, and participate in carrying out these solutions through actions that are meaningful and purposeful. Students will be given the opportunity to think and reflect on who they are and where they come from. They will be able to serve as true stewards of their particular lands, ensuring that the lands will be maintained for future generations. Finally, after understanding and asserting their unique role within their particular community, students will be able to more confidently view their role and place in the larger society and world.

**Next Steps and Recommendations**

For classroom teachers:

- Know intimately their school community.
- Integrate knowledge and experiences that students are most familiar with into the curriculum.
- Understand challenges and problems that exist in their community, develop potential solutions to these challenges, and participate in carrying out these solutions through actions that are meaningful and purposeful. Through direct experiences within their unique communities, students will be engaged in knowing more about their place.
- Understand place-based education and impact on student performance, student discipline, student success.
For school administrators:

- Know intimately their school community.
- Create professional development opportunities for school teachers to know more about their school community.
- Acknowledge kūpuna as teachers and individuals of wisdom that established the ‘ike mauli of a specific place.
- Provide opportunities for kupuna and other community members to share on a consistent and constant basis thoughts and ideas that could have impact on student learning and success.

For parents and community groups:

- Be a presence in their local school as an avid participant in bridging traditional and contemporary knowledges.
- Know the multiple facets of familial and communal living – stories, place names, songs, chants, plants, and animals.
- Create venues for the teaching and acquisition of such knowledge in order to strengthen and enhance the community’s on-going relationships with their environment.

For policy makers:

- Understand that “many sizes, fits many”.
- Review current educational models that include Hawaiian cultural-based education. Let the ‘ike mauli define further the culture of a specific area.
- Seek multiple avenues to measure student performance and success beyond the standardized tests, i.e. community service, student art projects, habitat restoration, energy conservation.
• Seek policy to promote learning beyond the four classroom wall.

For researchers:

• Seek ways of knowing that are specific to their own communities so that we can begin to challenge the standardization of values, norms, and practices of Hawaiians across the islands while strengthening the roots of our own existence as unique places of setting defined by our mauli.

• Be clear of intent when conducting research in a Hawaiian community.
References


