

Part 1

Life Stories from Rotuma



Chapter 1

Men Born before 1900

(Age about 70)

I was the only son of my dear parents. I was brought up by my uncle and aunt. I called them this because I was not related to them; they were just my parents' friends and I was adopted by this couple, who were childless. As far back as I can remember, this uncle and aunt were very kind to me. They brought me up as if I were their own child. They always brought me whatever they knew would suit me. Never once did I cry for anything. My clothes and everything were always ready for me to use.

My auntie taught me how to act towards the elders in the villages, and what to do to become a real good man. She encouraged me to grow up to become a strong, brave man. Nevertheless, I was a very cheeky boy among my friends, and their parents hated to see me going with their children.

School was the last thing for me to think of. I told my uncle that I didn't feel like going to school, but since it was by force I had to go. At that time when a child reached Class 5, which I did, everybody said that he or she was an intelligent child. I had to leave school because that's as far as we could go in Rotuma, and I came home to work hard because we were growing up to become young men. I helped my uncle and whatever he told me to do, I always did. At that time we never saw a lorry or car or bicycle, and when we boys wished to roam around the island to other villages we had to go on horseback. I loved riding horses, so everywhere I went, even to the bush, I rode horseback.

One day I told my uncle about a girl I met and loved but wondered if she would love me in return. I wanted her to be my wife but hadn't gotten a chance to meet her. My uncle then went to the girl's parents, and since he was a man of good reputation the girl's parents gave their consent. I felt very excited and it was so different to think of married life, which was soon upon me. I waited and then my dream came true. I got married to this girl and we lived in my home with my uncle and aunt. I worked very hard then because I knew I was going to have a big family and because I was living with my uncle and not my parents. He always told me to be kind to my wife and that I should treat her the way he had treated me.

After a few years my uncle died during a sudden sickness. I felt so sorry because I wished him to live longer so that I could have the chance to return to him his kindness to me, beginning from the time I was small until then. Since he had no children or any brother or sister he left all his things and his house to me. I was very lucky to get all these things. My wife and I have been together for many years and we had many children. I worked very hard and tried all possible ways to earn a living and send them to school. My oldest son studied hard and is now working in the agricultural department. Another is an assistant medical practitioner, and my four daughters are all married.

Now my wife and I are getting old. Only my daughters are helping me now, working in the plantations, cutting copra, and looking after the cows and pigs. Most days I have to stay in the house with only one of my daughters helping me. I feel sorry for her because she is a girl, and I wish I could be strong again like before so that I could look after all of us.

A few years ago I got seriously ill and was dreadfully worried about my daughter because she had to do all the work for me. When I got well

again I was as deaf as one could imagine. I couldn't hear the slightest sound, and I couldn't go anywhere without someone with me. When someone wished to speak to me he or she had to come and touch me so I would know someone wanted me.

Now I can hear again and it feels like I was dead and came back to life. It made me feel strange, but I began to work and help my daughter. I'm now old, but healthy and strong enough to work in my plantations and afford my family, with the help of my dear daughter, with whatever they need.

(Age about 65)

There were only two children in our family, my brother and I, and I was the younger. We lived with our parents in a native-style house, so we knew our parents were poor. I wasn't sure whether they were really poor or whether our father was a bit lazy. I can remember that when we were small my brother and I used to roam around the village. When we woke up in the morning we just went out, and many times we went without food, but our mother never looked for us. Sometimes we came back in the afternoon, had a little bit to eat, and then went off again, sometimes not coming back until late in the evening. Then we had our supper and went to sleep. Sometimes I pretended to be sleeping and overheard my parents quarrelling about us—that we roamed around too much. But my father would say that we could go anywhere we wanted and nothing would happen to us because we were boys. I knew my father took no notice of us, going anywhere he wanted without paying attention to us, so as soon as I awoke each day I went out looking for my friends to begin playing.

I acted this way until I reached school age, but in those days schools were not by force like nowadays, so most of the days in the week I stayed home. I didn't feel like going to school. I preferred to roam around with my friends. My parents never forced me to go to school, so when I was about twelve years old I stayed home for good and by then I began to go with my father and work on his plantations. I tried my best and hoped that I could learn to work hard, so that one day I might be able to supply our family with food so that my father could stay home and take a rest and do whatever he wished.

My dreams came true, and after two years my father left all his plantations to me since I was more trustworthy than my elder brother. My father stayed home and did as he wished, and I looked after our

plantations. Many people used to ask me why I was planting while my father was staying home like an old lady and I just answered that it was because I wanted him to have a rest. It was just because I hated school so much that I was determined to do my best on the plantations. At that time I realised that my parents really loved me. Whatever they got in the house they always put aside for me.

I went out every evening with my friends in the neighbourhood. We went from village to village seeking our own pleasure. Many nights we didn't come back home until the morning to sleep. During that time I happened to meet a young woman who lived in another district and we started to see each other, but I heard that her parents didn't like me. Then one night I went to her and brought her to my home. We got married and stayed in my home. Her relatives really hated the idea because of our different religions, but we didn't care. We stayed together for many years, until her death in 1952.

My mother died a few years after our wedding. My wife and I really loved her. She was a kind woman to everybody and I found out that she had lived a rough life with my father. After she was dead my father spoke about her and told us of his rough ways towards her—what a sad life she had had with such a rough husband.

We had several children and I felt a bit worried about them, because children are not easy to bring up. I worked very hard to earn money to supply them with their wants. I sent them to school, but they all left without reaching the higher classes. They all married except my youngest son, who is living with us and taking good care of us. My father is still living, and I wish my mother were still alive, too, so that I could look after them as best I can.

(Age about 64)

I was the second eldest in a family of four children. I had two brothers and one sister; my sister was the youngest of us. We lived with my parents in my mother's home. I can remember that my parents worked very hard to support us with all we needed. They used to tell us which things were good and which were bad. They would punish us if we did something that we already knew was wrong. But they were always kind to us and I remember that sometimes I was naughty but they just scolded me and that was all. But I also remember that I was the black sheep of the family and whatever happened in our home I got blamed for it.

My elder brother started going to school, and after two years I went with him. School seemed to be too hard for me and most of the time I just sat down doing nothing but making strange noises to attract the others' attention. I never found any pleasure in learning and it was very seldom that I ever spent a day in school without being punished for playing in class. My parents always told me not to disobey my teacher, but since they did not see me I did as I pleased. I acted this way until I was 16 years old when I was told to leave school, because I had only reached Class 4.

I came home and helped my father and brother work on their plantations. I tried my very best to help them and show them that I could be a good farmer, so that one day my father could stay at home and I would be able to support our family with food.

I began to make friends with the adolescent boys in our village and every evening we went out for walks to other villages looking for fun. We met many adolescent boys and girls and played together with them and usually didn't return home until late at night. Finally I met a woman who attracted my attention and after seeing her for quite some time I told my

parents about her. My father told me to wait for a while, but I was very eager to get married to her and didn't want to delay. This woman already had a daughter, but of all the girls I had met she was the only one that I loved, so I wanted her to be my wife. After six months my dreams came true—I got married to her and I went to live in her home. She was a kind woman, and after I had stayed for a week at her family's home I told her that I would like her to come with me to my parents, so she could look after my parents and me. She agreed and we went to my house, and my parents were very happy. They were so glad to see us they could hardly express their delight. My wife took good care of them, since they were old and couldn't do their work properly like they could when they were strong.

After we had had seven children my father died. How sad I felt to think of him. My mother had died somewhat before him, so I didn't have a parent left to look at. Then there were only us three brothers with our wives, and our sister with her husband, and our children, but our parents had died and we wouldn't ever see them again.

Then one time I was ordered to go to Makogai [a leper colony in Fiji] because of one of my toes. I had something like an abscess on one of my toes and the doctor advised me to go. I was on Makogai for about two years, and I can't express how glad I was to return home again. My children had been taking care of their mother and when I returned she told me all about how kind they had been to her.

I got back to work on my plantations and my eldest sons helped me. I was pleased to see them working hard and doing their very best to help me in every way they could. My eldest son went on a trip to Fiji for a while, but the rest stayed home. Soon after that my eldest daughter got married and went to live in her husband's home.

Then a great sorrow came into my life. Two of my sons were killed in the bomb explosion at Juju. No one can imagine the sadness that I felt, losing two sons at one time. I nearly lost my mind because of the great loss that befell me.

Now my wife and I are old and there is only one of my daughters and her children taking care of us. Most of the days I have to stay in bed, and only my grandsons are supplying us with food. I can see that they are doing their best, but it is so pitiful for me to watch them working so hard to supply our whole family with our needs.

I loved all my children, but I think my twin sons were the closest to me. One of them died when he was about six years old, and the other just died at the beginning of this year. I really felt very sad when he died because he was working very hard with my grandsons to help me, and I felt at ease when I stayed at home, because I knew I could trust him with his nephews in the bush.

Now I am very weak and in ill health, so that only my grandsons are left to supply our family with what we need.

(Age about 64)

There were many of us in our family but we had different fathers. I was the oldest, with a father of my own. I was brought up by my mother and stepfather who loved me very much. They used to tell me good and bad things that they wanted me to know and to do what was good and to stay away from bad things.

My parents sent me to school which I loved and studied hard and had good results every year. I was promoted each year until I had a chance to go to Fiji for further studies. Subjects were harder there and I could not get through the exams, so I came home.

Because I just came from Fiji, and being an adolescent boy, I thought every adolescent girl's eyes fixed on me whenever I walked on the road. I roamed and was looking for a young woman at the same time to be my wife. The day came and my dream came true when I met a nice young woman and got married to her. We stayed in her home for a few months and then came to my home where we stayed for many, many years.

I was later chosen to take over a whole district and the people all gave their agreement and I ruled over them. Older people were like children sometimes; they were so naughty that I had to speak to them like children. I made them do my work, like cutting copra or anything I would like them to do for me.

My wife and I had many children and when the older children had gone to school there were only three daughters staying with their mother at home. My wife did her very best and the women in the district all loved her and whatever she would call for, they were ready to help. But for my part, whenever I called my men to do my work, only a few came out of more than a hundred who belonged to my district. My people built me a house and cut copra for me and yet they were not satisfied with what I had

done for them. One day I got a letter from the government that I had to leave my position to another man. I felt so sorry because whenever I wanted hard work done for me they would come and finish it in a short while, but now I would have to do the work on my own. I can remember that many people were very glad when I was told to leave off ruling them.

A few years later my wife unluckily died, leaving all our children for me to care for. I felt so strange and very sad about her death because there wasn't anyone wiser to look after my children except my oldest daughter who had to leave school and stay home to do the work, like cleaning the yard and washing the clothes. I always thought of my wife when I saw my daughter taking her place at home. She cared for the tiny ones just like her mother used to do, and she knew very well how to cook their food and to give them what they wanted. I did my very best to support them and provide whatever they needed and tried to let them forget their mother, who seemed so dear to all of them. It took a long time for us to forget the sight of her.

Many years later I was called to a village in Fiji to be their catechist, so I went with the rest of my children who were not married yet. We spent three years among the Fijians and two of my daughters married Fijian men. When I came back to Rotuma I had to leave them in their husbands' homes. I came back with my youngest daughter to take care of me. She was soon married and went to live with her husband, so I was left lonely with the people in the neighbourhood to care for my home.

As I grew older I thought of getting married again and my dreams came true when I married a woman from another district. We lived in my house and unluckily I was told to retire from my situation—to leave my place and to find another place for me to live. My wife and I went over to my brother-in-law, but they didn't like us to live with them in the same

house, so we went to my wife's sons' land that they had bought. Maybe her sons didn't like me, and two of them went to Fiji, leaving the youngest son and daughter with us. I wondered why my second wife's relations didn't like me. I suppose I seemed cheeky in appearance to them. My wife and I have stayed together now for about eight years, but we haven't had a child because we are both old. I was often sick with headaches and the doctor told me it was my teeth that caused it. So he told me to take out all my teeth, which I did a few months ago, and I went to Fiji and had two sets of false teeth made and came back on the last boat.

Now I'm very old, with all white hair covering my head. I'm staying with my wife in her home and doing my best to care for her and her daughter. The son is out of school and is a big helper to me. He is doing what he can and I am pleasing myself, just doing what I wish to do every day.

(Age about 63)

There were only two children in our family, myself and my younger sister. I can remember that our parents always treated us kindly when we were young. They didn't lecture us all the time. Sometimes we went and played with the neighbouring children and sometimes they would come to our house. When they would come to our house, my mother would prepare things for us to play with.

They sent me to school when I reached the age of 6, but at that time school attendance was not compulsory so I stayed at home most of the time. When I did go to school I never paid any attention to the teacher. I wouldn't ever sit still and always made noises and did things to attract the others' attention in the class. I acted like that all the way through school, until I was promoted to Class 4. But I had advanced slowly and by then I was older than the rest of the children, and it was too late for me to start studying seriously. I left school when I was 14 years old, but I was still in the baby classes.

After that I began to help my father in his plantations. After coming back in the evening I would often talk with my friends about the work and the things I had been doing. My friends began to praise me and that caused me to work more eagerly. I wanted others to praise me, so I worked hard. Many times I took my friends up to my father's plantations and showed off my work.

My friends and I used to take evening strolls to other villages, looking for fun with the adolescent boys and girls of other places. It happened one time that I met a girl and we fell in love with each other, so I came home and told my parents. But because we were of different religions my parents did not want me to marry this girl. I was very

stubborn and wanted my wish to come true, so I forced my parents to give their agreement. They did and we got married.

We went to live in her home, and I found it hard to take care of such a big family. I wanted to be at my wife's side all the time and not have to work so hard. I spent most of my free time with my wife, but her relations seemed to hate me. Soon my wife had a baby daughter, but by that time I had had enough of her relatives, so I left my wife, without quarrelling, and went back home. People laughed at me and said that I ran away from my wife because I was too lazy, but I didn't care about what the people said—I just couldn't face my wife's relations any more, so I didn't go back to her.

I began to go out in the evening again, just like the adolescent boys, and I never thought again of my wife and baby. The youth in the district despised me, but whenever I knew they had gathered together somewhere I went to join them; most of the time I hadn't even taken a bath, but I went with them anyway.

After a few years I met a young woman whom I fell in love with, and I found every way I possibly could to see her. She loved me too, and she told me that it didn't make any difference what her parents would say—that she would marry me if I wanted her to. I came and told my father—by then my mother was dead—and he told me to find someone to go and speak with the girl's family. My uncle did so for me, and after I got a divorce I got married to my second wife.

I went to live at my wife's home, but for some reason the people of her village didn't seem to like me. My wife wanted me to enter religious life so I became a catechist in our Methodist church, and we moved from village to village, as is the custom with catechists in Rotuma. We would stay three years in a village and then transfer to another one.

My wife and I remained together and have had six children—five boys and one girl. We have done our best to give them everything they needed. I love all of them but I think both of us, my wife and I, love our daughter more than our five sons. That is because in our custom boys grow up and are able to take care of themselves, but when girls grow up they are unable to supply themselves with what they need because we have to cut copra to earn money for our living. Since she was our only daughter we have always done our best to give her whatever she would ask for.

A few years ago I came to this district with my wife and children and I don't know when I'll be moved to another locality. All of my children have finished school, but none of them have received any advanced education.

Now I am getting old—I'm more than 60 now—and my two youngest sons and my daughter are taking care of us. I can still work on the plantations and help them in light work, but not like before when I was strong and healthy.

(Age about 63)

There were only two of us in our family—myself and my older sister. Our parents were good people, but they were poor. They did their best to supply us with everything that we needed. I know they were kind, because whenever we wanted something, and they were unable to get it at the time, my mother would tell us to wait, and eventually my father would get it for us. Our parents never went anyplace without taking us along. We always heard kind words from them, and I remember my mother telling us to grow up to love each other and not to fight, especially since we would each have children of our own one day.

Their kindness and affection seemed to spoil us. Sometimes we were good, but sometimes we were naughty; in school I was lazy and never paid much attention to the teacher. I only wanted to do what was easy for me and found no pleasure in any labour. When I was about 10 years old, my parents seemed to get tired of the way I was behaving in school and sent me to a boarding school, where I was put under the care of a very strict master. He was harsh looking and I didn't like him. Every day he would stalk among us, and unless a lad chose to attend well to his book, he had no chance for a single quiet moment. This would never do for me, so one day I left school and went home to my dear parents. I told them that I would not return to the boarding school again. After that I never went to school again but stayed home and helped my father with his plantations. I spent day after day in the bush helping him and trying my very best, so that one day I would be able to work as well as my father did then.

With some of the boys from the neighbourhood I used to go out in the evening and roam around the village. We went to the shows and dances and enjoyed ourselves. After that we would come home to sleep. It happened one day that I met a nice-looking woman whom I wanted to

marry if my parents would agree to it. I knew that this woman had been married before, and that her husband had died. I tried different ways, but I couldn't have a chance to speak to this woman, and then I told my parents about it, but because we were of different religions, my parents told me to look forward to the future and I might meet a young woman who was of the same religion as myself. But I felt that I had to marry this woman. She might be kinder to me than a younger one. I waited, but my parents wouldn't change their mind, so I left them and went to this woman's home. We got married in her religion but later I went back to my old church. We had two sons and one belonged to my church while the other has the same religion as his mother. My parents didn't like this kind of family—having two religions with the sons divided, but as long as my wife agreed to it, that was enough.

My parents were old and soon they died, one after the other. I felt very sorry for them because I knew that they had had a rough time with me. Now that I had two children of my own, I knew how hard it was to raise children and manage a family. They always tried to find out what my sister and I needed. Now they are taking their long rest while it's my turn to take care of my two sons.

My sons grew up and became young men and afterwards got married. The elder son and his wife are living with me, and the younger one is living with his wife at his wife's home. Now my wife is weak and has to walk with the help of a stick, while unluckily I have become blind, and now both of us have to stay in the house waiting for our son and his wife to give us food and water and anything that we need. I feel pity for my son, being that I'm not very old and am a blind man and cannot give him any help. What a thing to happen! It would be better for me to die than to stay

like this, without any hope of seeing the glittering of the stars or the rays of the sun anymore.

(Age over 60)

When I was very young I asked my mother about our family and she told me that my father and two elder brothers had died in the epidemic of dysentery. There were just the two of us left living, and her brothers looked after us, giving us food and everything we needed. She was very kind to me and every time we were together she always told me to be a good son to her, and that when I grew up I should be good to all my friends, and especially to her.

At that time school attendance was not required like today, and so I have never seen the inside of a schoolhouse. When I was about 10 years old, my mother told me to go with my uncle to work on his plantations. I went every day and my uncle taught me how to plant food and he began to share with me from his own garden, but he still looked after my work until he knew I could supply my mother's needs. I always remembered my mother's words—not to be a bad boy or I might grow up to be a bad man. She was the only parent I had to bring me up and give me advice. So each time I came across a company of bad boys, I always went away from them.

My mother became very ill one day with pneumonia and died after a week. To tell the truth I couldn't resist crying aloud as if I were a woman. I had been trying my very best to work so that one day we might make a family of our own. I felt as if I wouldn't feel like working again. How sad to think of her and to picture the unhappy days when she was carrying me in her arms, and to think of her bringing me up without someone to help her, and the way she used to tell me to stay out of bad company and to try to grow up to be a kind person to my neighbours. Even if I were to fulfil all her wishes, she wouldn't be there to see it.

I was living with my uncle and one day I met an adolescent girl whom I thought I loved. I went and talked to her and after a short while

we became friends. My love for her began to touch my nerves so one day I told my uncle about it. He laughed at me and told me to wait for a while because I was only 17 and much too young to get married. I told my girlfriend and she didn't want to wait because she said I might change my mind and leave her. I told her to wait until my uncle thought it to be the right time for us to marry. But knowing that my uncle didn't like that girl, I went *fu'u* to her home and stayed with her. My uncle was very angry with me, but what could he do—I was already in the girl's home. I went one day to tell him I was sorry and he told me everything about that girl's family, but I loved the girl and couldn't leave her. He told me that one day I would change my mind and would run away from my wife. I never suspected his words to be true, but they did come true. We stayed together for two years and had only one daughter when I had a row with my wife's parents and I went back home to my uncle. I stayed with him and my five cousins for many years. After four of my cousins were married, I lived with the youngest one.

My daughter grew up to be a young woman and one time she got angry at her mother and came to me. My cousin and his wife and children had gone to Fiji and my daughter and I were left alone to manage the family. My daughter got married and had a daughter, but unluckily her husband died, leaving his child of only 3 years old, and now my daughter has another husband and we are living in the same house. Now I am over 60, but never once do I ever think of getting married again.

(Age about 60)

I was the eldest in a family of four children. There were two boys and two girls. The youngest of us was a brother who died, leaving myself with my two sisters. As far back as I can remember we were kindly treated by our parents, from the time we were small until we became adolescents. They were very kind and whatever we would ask for they always presented us. Mother always used kind words, and besides school subjects she loved to talk about politeness and customs whenever she had the chance to speak to us.

At that time there wasn't a school in our village, but Mother always talked to us and we were like children who went to school every day.

My parents were of a good family but very poor, and I know they had a hard time trying to get us everything we asked for from them. They worked hard to earn our living but since we were children we never noticed how difficult it was for our parents to meet our needs, and I thought it was very easy for them to work for us. I grew up and I began to help my father in his plantations. Then I began to notice that my father was a hard-working man. He perspired day after day to supply the family with food and cut copra to earn money for Mother and the children.

I became an adolescent and mixed with other boys. We began to wander every night to villages near our district. I met an adolescent girl whom I seemed to love most but when my parents knew about it they gave me a good scolding because they didn't like the girl, so I had to stay away from her. Then I met another one, but my parents didn't like her just the same. Words that came from these two girls' relations made them very angry. I loved these two girls because when we met each other and I knew I was the one who spoke to them first. I thought that we could make up a

good family, but my parents didn't like them so I had to find a way to stay away from them.

One evening my parents told me that they had found a young woman and already spoke to her parents about her becoming my wife. They told me her name and I was so glad to hear about her because she was one of the girls who hated me to come near her whenever the adolescent boys and girls mixed together. I loved her, of course, but never got a chance to get near her. We made our engagement and after a few months we got married. Everything was easy because of our parents. During the first week after our wedding this young woman still hated me and her parents had to speak to her. I tried my very best to speak to her too, and to show my kindness, and later on we stayed nicely together as if there wasn't anything that happened before. She began to do our work nicely and lead our family as she wished to.

We were staying in my wife's home, and after many years we had out first two children, a boy and a girl. The girl was younger. At that time there was a choice in the village for a new chief. To my surprise, I was elected chief, but how should I lead my people? I felt so strange and nervous to sit in front of so many people, old and young and children. How was I to speak to them? I knew that being the chief I was their servant at the same time. I took my place and my wife, being a nice woman, seemingly was liked by everybody. At the beginning my father was helping me know how I should act to make the people like me. Unluckily, my dear father died two years after my election, leaving me alone to lead my people.

My poor wife was then taken seriously ill and died and my children (five of them) only had me to look after them. How sad I was to lose two people at the same time. My mother was then old and feeble and couldn't

care for the children properly. For a whole year I was leading the people alone with my sister taking my wife's place.

I then got married again and how different I found the people that time. People seemed to hate my new wife and began to disobey my words. This woman was also hated by my own children and then I noticed that she was not as nice as my first wife; there was really a great difference.

Now we have stayed for many years without a child, but since she's my wife I love her, and although many times people told me she is not the chief, she is my wife and she may have something to say, too. I noticed that people really hated me because of my wife. Many of them grumbled and said that they should have someone new in my place because I wasn't doing the right thing sometimes, but none of them had the courage to let it be known in a district meeting. Sometimes I knew I was doing wrong because my wife liked to be that way, but the two of us were on the same side. My wife sometimes made my people hate me but I didn't care about them, I cared about my wife, the one who would take care of me.

I'm still a chief in our district and looking after my people, many of whom like me while many hate me because I am getting old and now not well fitted for this kind of work.

(Age about 60)

I was the third youngest in a family of seven children. We were living with our parents at home. When I came of age to realise it, I can remember that my elder brothers and sisters were helping our parents whenever they had time. My parents were of a high-status family in this district and we grew up with all the good advice they could give to us. My parents worked hard in order to afford us with whatever we needed.

They sent us to school, and out of the seven of us I was the only one who kept getting promoted. At that time the highest class in Rotuma was Class 5. I went up to Class 5 and was very proud of myself, and so were my parents. They sent me over to Fiji, hoping that I would get an overseas education, but since I was an adolescent boy of about 14 years of age I began to get lazy in my studies. So after two years in boarding school I left school and looked for a job to be able to supply my needs. I wanted to be a carpenter and I was fortunate enough to get a job as an apprentice.

When I knew a little bit of it, after practicing for a few years, I came back home. I found that my brothers and sisters had all married except for two of them, and had left home. One of my sisters had died after a short illness, while the youngest one was in nursing school, so I was left alone with my parents. Because I had just returned from Fiji, I dressed myself as a European, and this made me very proud of myself. I saw with my own eyes that most of the young ladies paid attention to me whenever I would parade up and down the road in the evenings. I made friends with other adolescent boys and went out in the evenings to other districts and found much pleasure among the adolescent boys and girls. People seemed to adore me. I couldn't tell whether it was because I was from a high-status family, or whether it was because I was just new, or maybe I was more

handsome than my friends. I took my chances with the young women and flattered many of them.

Finally I happened to meet a woman with a son of her own, and I was very much attracted to her. I told my parents that I would like her to be my wife. Instead of talking to her, I wrote a love letter that she answered, telling me that she loved me no matter what would happen later on. We took a chance and met each other every night we could and planned for our future. My elder brothers and sisters didn't want me to marry this woman, for they said that I was the only one left, and that I should look for an adolescent girl so that they could have a big wedding—calling all our relatives on the island to be present on my wedding day. But I wouldn't change my mind because I already loved this woman and had told her that I would take care of her and her child no matter what my parents would say.

My dreams came true and we did get married, but my relatives did not come to see my wife on that day. The words that my sisters said to my wife were not nice or kind to her, but I told her not to pay attention to them. I told her just to listen to me, for I would be the one who would take care of her. My dear wife had a rough time with my people in the beginning, but she took no notice of them. We had our first child, but still my sisters hated my wife. My relatives were also very angry with me, just because they didn't like the woman I had married. They all went to their homes and stayed there, leaving me and my wife to look after my parents. My wife was so nice and kind to my parents that after a few years they fully accepted her and we made a happy family.

It is so pitiful to think of my mother, who died after a sudden illness, leaving only my father, who was already weak, to stay in the house and play with his grandsons. We stayed for many years and had seven sons

without a daughter, before my wife died. I felt so bad when my wife died that I felt sick for a few days after the funeral. I was sad and miserable during that time. I did my best for my sons and sent them to Fiji for further education, but only the two youngest came out with good results. When they left school they received higher wages in their employment. Five of my sons have married, one has died, and the youngest of them is still roaming. I did my very best when they were young so that they would grow up kind-hearted and be nice to everybody—young or old—whomever they would meet.

Now I am old and whenever I feel sick I always think of my wife, because we haven't got a daughter, and in spite of her weakness in her later years, she always did her best to stay with me and she would sometimes massage the sore parts of my body. Now I'm staying home with my two sons and their wives. I'm unable to help them in any kind of work because I'm very old and feel sick very often, and because of that I stay in the house like an old woman.

Chapter 2

Women Born before 1900

(Age about 66)

When I was a small girl I lived together with my mother and father and brothers. My mother died when I was 8 years old. I thought of my mother for a whole year after she died. Every time I used to wash my father's and brothers' clothes or do other things she used to do, I would think of her. I never did those things when she was alive. My brothers and father were very good to me; they let me do whatever I liked because I was the only girl. I was really happy at that time. I really loved my brothers because they always gave me anything I wanted. They used to take me to every kind of thing they used to go to—dances, *makrotuam*, *tika* matches. They used to take me on the horse. There were no cars at that time.

One time, when I was an adolescent, I met a young man and he asked me to marry him. I told this to my brothers, and they told me that I should marry him because he really loved me and would make a good husband for me. I married him, but it only lasted for three years because his way was not good. He didn't treat me as well as my brothers did. I left my husband and went back to my father and brothers. My father told me that I should look for a man because one day my brothers would marry and he would die, and there would be no one to look after me. So I tried to look for another husband, and not long after I met my present husband, we got married.

Soon after I got married my father died, when I was about 30 years old. For four months after my father died I thought I was going to die too. I was always thinking of him, and no matter what my husband did to

make me happy I still felt sad. It wasn't until about two years after that that I started to forget it. Still I didn't like being married as much as when I was with my brothers and my father. After I had my first child sometimes my husband didn't act so good to me, and I would cry and think of the time when I was living with my father and brothers. It wasn't until after I had four children that I finally forgot all about my father and brothers; then I only thought about my children.

(Age about 64)

I was the only daughter in my family and never once was I ever parted from my parents when I was a young child. As far back as I can remember my parents were not very rich, but they had enough to afford me with whatever my mouth could whisper to them. Sometimes I overheard them saying that they should try their very best to give me whatever I wanted because I was their only child. I stayed with my mother every day, and when she would tell me to do some work for her I would usually do it, but if I was in a bad mood she could say a hundred things and I wouldn't do it. I became very cheeky and sometimes I noticed that they looked angry, but I wasn't frightened of them. At that time there wasn't any school and my parents used to teach me some of the manners which I should copy while growing up. They taught me how to be a real native woman, and it wasn't difficult to follow because all the neighbourhood children were so nice and polite in their manners, so my parents didn't object when I went and played with them. Children would sometimes come home to play with my toys and my *sina* [tiny little dolls made up of cloth]. I was lucky to have many children to play with me every day, because I was an only child.

One day, when I was already a teenager, my mother took me with her to a feast held in another village and we stayed with her sister for two days. I was a stranger there. There were many children around but I didn't know them, and of course, I didn't feel at home. I told my mother that I would like it better if we would return home, but she just said to wait until the feast was over. We came home that evening and I never thought of going back again to that place.

When I grew up and became an adolescent, I made friends with my neighbours, and whenever they wanted to go somewhere we always went together. That time all the adolescent girls were under the care of the

chief's sister. We had formed a club and practiced our native dances, and we went dancing around the island, competing with other clubs. My parents always told me to stay quiet when I joined the others to go any place. I met many people when we went dancing in different places and became familiar with the different ways of people, but both the old people and young people were as nice and polite as could be. They always gave us a warm welcome whenever we came to their places to dance.

It happened that I met an adolescent boy with whom I fell in love. He spoke to me, but I didn't want to take a chance, and I just told him that my parents were at home. He seemed to have the same feeling for me as I did for him, so his father came to my parents one night and they spoke about us. My parents were surprised because I never told them about that boy. They asked me about it and I just gave them my agreement and they sent words of contentment to the boy's parents, and after a few months we got married.

It made me feel strange and ashamed in the beginning, because I wasn't used to it—as though I had done something very wrong. We stayed in my home and looked after my parents, who had by that time become old and feeble. My husband was a kind man to us. Whenever I asked him to do things for my parents he did, but unluckily my dear father died a year after our wedding. I felt very sorry for him, and this caused me to stay for two whole days without food just because of my sadness. How could I return all the kindness he had shown to me? Only my dear mother was left, and this was not enough—I wished they were both alive.

I had two daughters and we have done our best so that they wouldn't cry for anything. They were our only daughters and my husband worked very hard and brought fruits and food—anything they would ask him for. We sent them to school, but I couldn't tell whether they had done

their best or not. Sometimes I helped my husband cut copra, because this was the only means to get money, and whatever my daughters wanted in the store we always had to get for them. I brought them up and taught them everything my parents had taught me when I was small. My elder daughter left school and got married to a young man in the village. They had only three children when my daughter died. You can imagine how sad I was. I fainted many times and I felt like I could lose my mind whenever my thoughts would turn to my daughter.

By now my younger daughter had a husband and I am living with them and my grandchildren (elder daughter's children). My son-in-law is a very kind man. He works very hard every day since my husband and I are very old and feeble and we are treated like children. But he takes good care of us—like we were his own parents. He does everything we want him to do for us. The only thing I can do now is to look after the children when they are asleep, but I am unable to do any hard work, just sleep and eat like other children do.

(Age about 64)

There were ten of us in our family and I was the youngest. We were all alive and brought up by our parents. The eight eldest were boys and the two youngest were girls. I can remember that nearly all the families in the district were my parents' friends. I don't know if it was because my parents were kind, or because they were richer than the rest of them. There were no schools at that time and only our parents taught us how to work and to behave ourselves. As each of us grew up we helped our mother and father, and when my elder brothers became young men, they all went to work in the bush so my father could have a rest, because his sons worked as well as he wished them to. The people from the village always spoke highly about my brothers because not very many of the youth worked as well as them. Most adolescent boys were hard to lead in the proper native customs but my brothers were not of that sort. My sister and I helped our mother, but I had a bad leg and was the pet of the family. I wasn't strong enough to help my mother properly and yet I did all my best to do what I could for her. My parents loved me as if I were a child and everything I would ask for was always given to me. My brothers got married one by one and all went to their wives' homes. Then my sister got married and went to her husband's place and only my parents and I were left at our home. They used to tell me that if their wishes were fulfilled they would live long enough to take care of me throughout my life, but unfortunately death comes upon everybody, no matter how poor or rich or weak or strong.

I was an adolescent when my mother died and I felt very sad because I knew that my father was older and very soon I would be alone. There was no other woman to be seen at home to be like my mother. How dear I was to her and how she always taught me to do this and that. For weeks and months tears always came down whenever I stayed idle and

thought of her, or whenever my father and I spoke and came upon her name. What a pity to see me, a lame person, taking care of my old father. Only a year passed and my dear father died and left me lonely and forlorn. How could anybody imagine the sadness which came upon me. I wondered if I could stay with any of my brothers or sisters. They did love me but everybody knows how a family is. It is so rare that both a husband and wife are of the same kind. This happened to me. My brothers loved me but their wives didn't want me. I met with all kinds of difficulties.

Now I am living with my sister's son. I am an old woman over 60 years of age—the fire-maker of our family. I cook day after day, but my nephew and his wife and children are always roaming around. If any of my other relations bring me something, they just come and take it away from me. I am really badly treated by my family but I just pray and ask for the strength to face all the bad things which I may meet with. Some of my other relations wanted me to come and live with them, but I just thanked them, for an old woman like myself should never go from home to any other places. No matter how ill-treated I am, I will stay with my nephew until I die. It's a good thing I never got married or had any children, because these people might not have taken care of us. I do think they just keep me to do their work and be in the house when they wish to go somewhere and stay overnight. I may always be seen in our sleeping-house or in the cooking-house.

(Age about 60)

I was the youngest of three children in our family. The first time I can remember, we were living with our parents on the island of Uea. There were only about three other families besides us living on the island. We got along well with the other families and I thought that we were far away from other countries in the world. Life seemed to be more pleasant than I ever thought because there weren't many people and I don't remember anyone ever quarrelling. I knew that my parents worked hard to support us with all that we needed.

My two brothers and I grew bigger but we only heard our parents' voices telling us that we should be kind to each other. They also told us what we should do if we wanted to grow up to be good men and women. Every day they would instruct us about the right way to act, but I never heard about schools, nor did I know that we were living on an island facing the mainland of Rotuma. Sometimes I saw strangers in our house or in the neighbours' houses, and sometimes our relatives came, but I wasn't used to seeing them so I was very shy and withdrawn. Whenever anyone new came, I would stay close to my mother and go wherever she went.

One day my eldest brother went with our uncle who came from Rotuma, and I thought that my brother had died because he was away for many days. I told my parents that I would like to go where my brother was. After a week my brother came home and I felt very glad. I asked him to tell me stories about the place to which he had gone, and he told me all about the crowd of people that he had seen for the first time in his life. Sometime later I overheard my parents talking about our leaving Uea and going to the mainland, and I was very eager to leave. The day finally came and we left the other families on Uea and came ashore on the island of

Rotuma. I was very surprised to see such a crowd and felt very shy to look at the people. We landed in Motusa and went on foot to another district where my father's relatives were expecting us. I met most of my relatives for the first time, and it was the first time most of them saw me. We began to know each other and after taking a rest I began to wander around the village. Many children of my age accompanied me and I told them about my home which I had come from on Uea. I was used to our quiet place and felt a bit uncomfortable with the strange noises of many people and the pounding of the waves on the beach. But I got used to the place and began to make friends with my neighbours. My brothers helped my father with his work in the bush, and I helped my mother. Later on both of my brothers got married, one after the other, and both went to live in their wives' homes, so I was left alone with my parents. They treated me so kindly that I never felt like leaving them some day. I obeyed them in whatever they told me to do, and never once did I go anywhere without my mother.

One day my parents told me that I was to get married to a young man who had come to them and asked them if he could marry me. I didn't want to dispute my father's wishes because I was a bit frightened of him, so I gave my agreement. I wondered how my parents could do it—have me get married to a man whom I had never known before. I didn't have any idea what kind of character he had. But I went through with it and we got married and he came to live with my parents. He was a kind man; he loved me and always did what I asked of him without a word. I guess that my father wanted me to marry this man because he was a hard worker and he helped my father a great deal. My mother and I didn't even have to do any fishing because my husband helped my father and they went fishing for us. What a good and kind husband I got!

Unfortunately, my father got seriously ill one day and died shortly afterwards. I felt so sad that I cried for many days. My husband felt the same way, too. My mother stayed with us after my father died and my husband treated her with great kindness. Whenever I knew of something that would be pleasing to her, all I had to do was tell my husband and he would bring it home for her. She became very old and after a few years she, too, died. I felt strange after she was gone because I didn't have a parent left to show me the right thing to do when it came to Rotuman customs. Who could I ask questions to when I did not know what should be done when something was called for?

My husband and I stayed together for many years and we had seven children: five sons and twin daughters. How lucky we were to have these children, making a large family. My husband worked very hard to support us with everything we needed, and he treated our children so kindly that it made me think of my parents who were always kind to me until they died. Each of my children entered school as they became of age.

Now we are both getting old and are weak in health. My youngest son and one of my twin daughters and her husband are taking care of us. The rest of my children have married and have gone away to Fiji. I wish they will all live happily with their respective families, like the time we were taking care of them.

One day, a few years ago, I was taken seriously ill and was taken to the hospital. I did worry about myself, but I was mostly concerned about my children, especially my youngest son who hadn't gotten married yet. But I got well and when I came home my husband sent me to Fiji for a holiday, and I spent three months there. Now we are living here with our daughter and youngest son. I am old and am unable to help my daughter very much with her children.

Chapter 3

Men Born in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century

(Age 56)

I lived together with my mother and father and brothers. As far back as I can remember, my mother and father were always very kind to us, so I lived together with my brothers without worrying about anything. My parents gave us everything that we wanted. I was very happy at that time.

When I was about 10 years old I went to school, but I was not good at school. I only went to school some of the time, but I didn't really learn anything. Most of the time I only played with my friends. I had a lot of fun between the ages of about 10 and 15 years old. I used to play with my friends at school, and when I came home I would play with my brothers. When I finally came out from school I didn't know anything, because I had played all the time instead of studying. But I didn't care much, because at that time there weren't many rules from the government, so we didn't worry much about breaking government rules.

Soon after I got out of school, I began making friends with the girls, and I found my life happier every day. Then I met a girl whose ways were very good to everyone. My parents liked this girl very much and they wanted me to marry her, but at that time I didn't want to get married. I wanted to stay with my friends and I knew that if I married her I would never be able to go out with my friends again. My parents kept trying to change my mind to make me love that girl, and finally I changed my mind and decided to marry her, because I loved my parents. I thought of their kindness to me, and I knew that if I followed their wishes they would do

whatever I wanted for my wedding. But deep in my heart I didn't want to get married.

I married this girl, but our marriage only lasted for three years, and then we separated. After I was married I found out that the way my parents had treated me when I was young had spoiled me. My wife accused me of being a lazy man, and I think she was right. I guess that's because when I was young I didn't have to do any work. My parents let me do whatever I wanted, so nearly every day I did nothing but play. When I got married I was so used to doing nothing that I didn't want to work. Also, I missed living with my parents and brothers. For nearly a whole week before I got married I cried when I thought of having to leave them and go to live in my wife's home.

After I separated from my wife I thought of the way my parents had treated me when I was a child, and I realized that it was very bad. I had gotten used to doing nothing and had become very lazy, and it was very hard for me to change my ways.

For nearly a whole year after my father and mother died I felt bad whenever I would think of them. Sometimes, if I would think of them too much, I would cry. The times I thought of them most was when I wanted something and couldn't get it. Then I would think of the time I was young and they were alive, and how they would always get me what I wanted.

I didn't get married again until I was nearly 40 years old. By that time I had finally become a man and worked every day. This time I was a good husband and did whatever my wife wanted.

I became a *fa 'es ho'aga*, but I don't like it, because I know now that a leader must be a kind man, so that the people will like him. It would be easier for a rich man, so he could buy the things his people needs. Sometimes, like during a feast when I am served the best foods and treated

with such concern, I remember my mother and father and the way they used to treat me. It was the same kind of thing. When I think of that, I feel pained inside.

By now I have gotten used to living with my wife and being a *fa ‘es ho‘aga* and am getting along fine, but to tell the truth the best time of my life was when I was young. I don’t really like married life as much as the time when I was living with my brothers and our parents.

(Age 55)

I lived with my father and mother. By the time I was old enough to know right from wrong, my brothers and sisters had already left home. My oldest brother stowed away on a boat. After my brothers and sisters had left, I lived very happily because I was the only child and I got whatever I asked for. This was the happiest time of my life, because my mother's brother was the district chief and the people acted very kindly to me.

When I was about 9 years old, my father and mother sent me to live at the Catholic school at Sumi. At this time I acted very cheeky to the other boys and girls, but I didn't care because if they did anything to me, my mother might get angry.

When I was 12, I fell in love with a girl and talked with her. I wanted to marry her, but my father didn't like it. He thought I was too young to marry, so he sent me to Fiji. I eventually sailed on a sailboat and learned that being a sailor is the happiest thing a man can do. I was chief engineer and got £12 a month.

While I was working as a sailor, I met and talked to the woman who was to be my wife. I got married in Suva at the age of 32. At this time my brother was the district chief, and when he heard I got married he came to Fiji to bring me back.

Married life was good for the first year, but after that I found out that married life is very hard. When I was young I could do anything I liked, but now it's different because I had to listen to anything she wanted to say. After a while, my wife's mother came to her and asked her to bring me to live on her lands in another district. So here I am.

After my children grew up, I felt very sorry to see them stay away from home, and I wish they were here with me.

One of my brothers died and for a whole year I kept thinking about him and feeling very sad. It was a year before I could forget about him.

(Age 55)

There were only two children in our family—both sons, and I was the eldest. Our parents were poor and they brought us up in poverty. Sometimes I think about them and wish they were still alive today so that I might have my chance to look after them. As far back as I can remember, it seems as though they were doing their very best and were doing everything they could for us. My brother and I sometimes roamed through the village with the other children and had nothing more than a piece of cloth around our waist, yet we were the only children in our family. I didn't know then why we were so poor—whether my parents were lazy, or whether that was all they could possibly do for us. But anyway, we had more than enough food for every meal and never went hungry.

When I reached the age of 7, I began to accompany my friends to school, but sometimes I had to stay home because my clothes were dirty. Many times I felt sorry for my mother because she seemed to be so worried about us whenever she looked at us. I didn't know whether we were that way because of her or our father. I do remember thinking that my father was to blame, because it was he who seemed to be taking everything so easy. After two years, my younger brother began to attend school with me, but things were still the same. Some days we went, but some days we had to stay back. We were punished in school for wearing dirty clothes, and when we came back and told our parents, I noticed the change that would come over my mother's face, and she sometimes cried. But my father seemed to take no notice of it. Sometimes we asked our mother why all the other children had so many clothes, while we just had one set each, but she didn't answer us.

We grew older and I was forced to stay at home and help my father work. I began to work very hard and my mother seemed to become

happier, compared to the time when I was small. I found out that we were poor because of our father's laziness. When my younger brother left school and helped us work, our family began to live more happily, like others did.

A couple of years after that my dear mother died, leaving my father and us without a woman to take care of us. How sad I was to think of her. I wished she were alive so that we could take care of all her needs and make up for the miserable life she had when we were young. I had seen her so often with a sad face, but she couldn't tell us why. But now she was dead, and who could we get to look after our things, since we were all men? A little while after she had died, I made up my mind to go to Fiji, and so I did, leaving my father and brother at home.

It was a great pleasure for me to arrive in Fiji—the land that I had hoped to see since I was a small boy. I managed to get a job as a carpenter. One time, when we went to the other side of the island to work, I met a girl and fell in love with her, so I left my work and stayed back in the girl's village and married her. The people (Fijians) all treated me as if I were their chief. I never had to work, but the girl's parents always kept a basin full of kava for me to drink and they encouraged me to talk about my home island. I told them some of the legends of Rotuma and how we lived, and they admired our customs, which were so different from theirs. The longer I stayed there, the more I realized how really different their customs were. These people didn't want me to work, so they made me feel much lazier than I should have been. My wife and I stayed together for many years and we had six children. I did have some difficulty earning money, though, so that I could provide my wife and children with all their needs.

I was getting old by then and had to work hard to be able to sell what we could get, for that was the only means by which we could earn

money in that village. I did my very best and, when my children were all grown up, I left them with their mother and returned to my home in Rotuma. I brought my youngest daughter and son with me, but since they were not used to the people and Rotuman ways, they returned home after two years, leaving me by myself. Now I'm old and weak and can't work properly, but there isn't anybody to look after me, so I have to do my best and do all my work everyday.

(Age 54)

I was the oldest in a family of three children. As far back as I can remember my parents were of a very good family but very poor, and I know they had a really hard time earning our living. We were two boys and our sister, who was the youngest, and we knew that we were deeply loved, but our parents didn't have time to give us constant attention because Daddy worked for Morris Hedstrom to earn money for our living while mother was doing her native work. When we got older, we were expected to share the work in our home.

In our free time we invented our own games, made our own playthings and were wonderfully happy. Many people said that our parents didn't love us because they always left us at home, but I said they were wrong. Our parents were giving us opportunities to learn self-reliance. Of course they always cooked our food before they went out and left us home.

At that time schools were not so good like today, but every evening our father gave us a lesson in politeness. I took no interest at all in learning, so every lesson given to me was like a vocabulary quiz. When I was about 15, I left school and stayed home to look after our family. My father kept on with his job, while I became a very good farmer for our family.

Being an adolescent boy, I began to make friends with other boys in the village and followed them everywhere they went every evening. A few years later I began to make girlfriends like the older boys. In the beginning I felt very shy to face my girlfriend when we happened to meet each other, but later I was said to be the worst boy ever towards the adolescent girls. I fell in love with many girls I met, but since my parents refused to accept them I had to leave them. At last I met a young woman

whom I really loved, and before telling my parents I brought her home. We were married without my parents' consent, but I didn't face them or else we might have had a big quarrel. I built a native hut for my wife, and I left my parents to manage on their own.

Life really changed. When I was single I went everywhere without asking somebody, but then I had to ask my wife's permission before I went out from our house. How I regretted getting married so young. A year after my marriage feast, my father got seriously ill and died. What a pity to think of him having left our dear mother to think of him whenever she was lonely in the house.

Two years passed and my mother got married again, and this time she was living with her husband in his home. My wife and I stayed together for many years and had many children. There were seven boys and four girls. We have done our very best to earn money for our living and sent them to school, and yet the oldest children came out without any success. They seemed to follow in my footsteps. What a pity to think of the money I had spent on them and not one had succeeded in school. The boys came home and helped me work in the plantations while the girls helped their mother take care of the house and the younger children.

In 1955 one of my relations who had a chiefly title died in another district and I was called to take the title. I left my home and went with my wife and all our children and moved to that district to take the *as togi* [chiefly title]. I was leading a *ho'aga* there. At first people loved us and they seemed to help us in everything we told them to do, but later my wife seemed to be harsh with them and the people hated us, up until now.

I was chosen to be the overseer in the plantations for the district's cooperative society. After two years, I got tired of the people and left my work and chose someone else to take my place.

I had a good time with my five young sons who left school by then and were helping me in the plantations. I just told them what to do and when I would come afterwards I would see that everything was done as they were told. Seeing that I did not have enough land to cut enough copra to support my family, I sent my boys one after another to Fiji and then their mother afterwards, but unluckily she was not in good health so came back to Rotuma with our eldest son.

A few months ago I was in the hospital. I had an operation on my leg, which made me stay in bed for about a month before I was allowed to walk around with my foot in a cast. I felt better about my situation before I was discharged knowing that my wife and oldest child had returned from Fiji. I knew my son would look after my plantations better than myself. When I came home I was so pleased to see that everything in my home was done as if I had done it myself.

Now I am the chairman of the cooperative society. It is so hard to speak to the older people, but because I was chosen I am trying my very best so that the people of the society would not hate me like those people from the *ho'aga* who still hate my wife. I am sending my children over to Fiji so that they can get good jobs and earn enough to help support us. Eventually I will leave this place, the people, and the chiefly title and go to Fiji using my own name, because I have already seen that being a leader here I'm a servant of the people. I think it is much better to stay without an *as togi* than to be a servant. Older people are very hard to lead.

(Age 53)

There were six in the family, but two of the children died young, leaving four of us. I am the second eldest, my sister being oldest. My younger brother and my youngest sister are still alive.

I lived at home with my mother and father and siblings. From the time I was five years on, my father was a catechist and was appointed to different villages so we moved around a lot. Finally in 1914 my father was sent to Davuilevu for religious training.

I started school in Rotuma the year before we left. It was only a village school—only one hour a day. The main subject during that time was memorizing the Bible, and simple addition. When we went to Fiji, I entered the primary school. The first thing I had to do was learn Fijian. I think I liked school at this time, especially the games. At first I found it strange being with Fijian boys, but only for a while. I stayed there for three years and learned to read and write in Fijian. I could read and write Fijian before I could do so in Rotuman.

After the three years were up, my father was appointed to teach at the Tia school back in Rotuma, since the missionary sister who had been teaching there left the island and there was no one to take her place. I went to the Tia school, and my father was my teacher. He was in charge of about 100 children. I was in the top class—Class 4—but since my father didn't know English, he only could teach other subjects, like history, arithmetic and religion. I stayed in this school for three years. Father was very good in arithmetic, and I learned it well, as well as some history and geography. I don't think I liked it very well having my father for a teacher because I always got the heaviest punishment if something happened in the class. He said he did that so that the children wouldn't feel he was showing favouritism. If he could do that to me, he could do it to the others.

After those three years, I was 13 years old, and my father sent me back to Davuilevu. I entered the primary school again—in Class 4. I lived in a boarding house. We had one house for the Rotuman boys and there were thirteen of us. It was a bit strange at first; I had to do everything for myself—wash my own clothes, iron, do my own cooking. Everything except English seemed too easy for me because I had been studying them in Rotuma for the past three years. In every subject except English I did very well. I stayed in Class 4 for two years because of my English, and in the third year went into Class 5. After a student finished Class 5, which was the highest grade in the primary school, he could sit for the exam to enter teacher's training. I took the exam and passed and went into teacher's training at Davuilevu. For three years I was in teacher's training and received my teacher's certificate. That was in 1926. I was appointed as an assistant teacher in the primary school at Davuilevu and stayed there for four years.

At the end of 1926, after getting my teaching certificate, I came back to Rotuma and got married. I had seen my wife in 1923 on a visit to Rotuma after I finished primary school. But my father arranged the whole thing while I was in Fiji. He just told me to come to Rotuma and get married and take my wife back to Fiji with me. I didn't mind, so I consented.

What actually happened is that while in Fiji I met a Rotuman nurse and wanted to marry her. She said if our parents agreed, she would agree, so I sent a letter to my father, but he told me no, that he would choose a wife for me, and he did.

I found marriage all right, maybe because my parents chose the right one. My wife seemed to be unhappy at the beginning, because it was the first time she left her people. I felt responsible for her and did

everything I could to make her happy. Whatever she wanted I tried my best to get it for her. After about a year she got fully adjusted. After about two years I sent her for a holiday to Rotuma to visit her family.

After my four years in Davuilevu, in 1931, I was sent to Rotuma to teach at the Motusa school. Rotuma didn't seem like it had changed much. The only thing that seemed hard was the school. I was in charge of 140 children, ranging from Class 1 to Class 5. After two years, I was sent to the Paptea school. I stayed in the Paptea school for two years, and then in 1935 I decided to go back to Davuilevu as a theological student to study for the ministry. I took the exam for entrance and passed and was accepted. I decided to go into the ministry mainly as the result of an incident with the D.O. [District Officer] at the time. I was teaching Sunday school in Motusa, but most of the students were going out to the golf course in Motusa to carry clubs and earn a few shillings. I decided to get tough on them and told them one time that if they missed next Sunday I would give them a good hiding. As a result, the D.O., Dr. Carew, who was an ardent golfer, didn't have anyone to carry his clubs that Sunday and he got angry and sent for me. He told me that I couldn't do that, because I wasn't a minister. So I decided to become one.

After studying for two years in Davuilevu, I was sent by the Church to Australia to do deputation work—encourage people in Australia to donate to the overseas missions. I left my wife and two children at Davuilevu. My first child had been born after five years of marriage. Australia was very strange to me—the language and the coolness. I was still very weak in English. I stayed in Australia for almost nine months. During that time I travelled a lot and sometimes stayed in two different homes in one week. Most of the time I spent visiting people's homes. I also visited schools and churches and preached on Sundays. After nine months

in a strange country, I was happy to come back to Fiji again. When I returned, they sent me to Rotuma and I was put in charge of the Noa‘tau circuit. I liked being a minister. I felt like I was helping the people. I spent two years as a minister in Noa‘tau, and then I answered a church advertisement for a native minister to work among the half-castes in Northern Australia. The Church accepted and I was appointed there in 1940. I spent five years in Northern Australia and a year in Sydney. I only spent one year with the half-castes; after that they evacuated the half-castes and our women and children south, because of the war. My wife and children were sent to Sydney and I transferred to native work—working with the Aborigines. It was very hard—the language was difficult. It wasn’t so much religious work that I did among them; it was mostly agricultural work. Every morning we took them to the field, planting sweet potatoes.

I joined my family again in Sydney at the end of 1945. I was happy to see them again. The youngest one was frightened of me because she didn’t remember me. We didn’t intend to stay in Sydney that long, but all the boats were booked up with returning wives of servicemen, etc., so we ended up staying for about a year. During that year they put me on deputation work again, so I stayed busy and did plenty of travelling.

I finally got back to Fiji in early 1947, and the Church appointed me as superintendent of the Rotuma circuit. I stayed as superintendent until last year, 1959. I retired because the Church wanted me to go to Fiji, but my wife was not in good enough health to go about and I thought it would be better to retire from the work rather than take her away from Rotuma. Now I am a supernumerary minister and I’m assisting as a teacher in the Malhaha school. I am not a registered teacher now, but because of the shortage of teachers, the D.O. and school committee

appointed me to help out. It's been a long while, and the method of teaching has changed, so it's a bit difficult, but I like it.

Now I have six children. The oldest daughter got married two years ago to a European minister in Australia and the next oldest girl is a school teacher in Motusa. My eldest son is at the Suva Grammar School; he's taking a special course, since he passed his university entrance (New Zealand) last year. My third oldest girl is at Adi Cakabau secondary school; she passed her senior Cambridge, but she's sitting for her university entrance this year. The two youngest children are here in the Malhaha school, both in Class 7.

(Age 52)

When I was a small boy we stayed inside the Upu [Catholic mission] fence. It was about 1912 and I was only 4 or 5 years old. I remember one time when the boys (school boarders) went to the bush. I went to the boys' house to look around and I saw a bottle of hair oil, only that wasn't hair oil—it was poison. I put some on my hand and wanted to put it on my hair, but it burned my hand and the side of my leg. It hurt very much. My mother took me to the Sisters and they bandaged me up.

I remember one time when I went to the bush with my father. He was working on his plantation. I was looking around and saw that there were some watermelons growing on the plantation next to ours so I went over and picked one and began to eat it. When I was finished I went back to where my father was working. He must have smelled the watermelon, because he asked me where I got the watermelon. I just pointed and said, "Over there." He got very angry at me—maybe because he knew it was the first time I stole something—and he wanted to frighten me. He told me he was going to kill me and told me to kneel down and say my last prayer. I kneeled down and prayed to myself. Then my father asked me if I had finished and I said yes. He asked me what God had said to me, and I answered, "God said please don't kill me." This was the first time I can remember that my father was angry at me. I was about 6 or 7 years old at the time.

When I was 6 years old ... it was Christmas Eve and my father killed a pig and told me to boil some water for cleaning the pig. I was supposed to put the pig in boiling water for a few minutes and then scrape the hair off, but some boys came by after I put the pig in the water and I went off to play with them. I stayed away too long and when I came back the pig had been in the water too long—it was just like cooked. I couldn't

take the hair off because the skin came right off with it. My father got angry at me and told me I would get no dinner that night.

I remember another time my father went to the bush and left me and my mother and my brother at home. My brother and I saw my father's stone for sharpening his knife and we wanted to try it. My brother turned the stone and I took one of my father's knives and put it against the stone. Only I was too young and didn't know how to do it. I put the point against the stone and it was no good. My father got very angry at me when he returned from the bush. He gave me and my brother a hiding.

There was another time with my mother. She wanted me, but I had gone away from the house. She got very wild with me and took a stick to come and find me. I was near the beach and when I saw her coming I climbed a tree to hide myself, but when she got close to me the branch broke and I fell down with the branch. When she caught me she picked me up, because I was still small—about 8 or 9 years old—and she turned my feet and hit me on the bottom of my foot. After that she took me home.

In about 1914 we moved to the Catholic mission place in another district. My father was the *fekau* [a layman appointed to look after the Catholics in a district]. I started school at about 6 years old at the village. I went for about two years, until I was about 8 years old, but I don't remember much about it.

One time all the people came to clean the mission grounds and fix the roof of the church. There were some young children there, too—boys and girls about 7 to 9 years old. I was 8 or 9 years old at the time. I was rolled up in a Rotuman mat with some other children and my mother must have heard my voice because she came and uncovered me. I think I was holding a little girl—maybe kissing or something. The girl was 7 or 8

years old. They never talked to me about it because I was too small, but they wanted to punish me.

We had two houses, but there was a long distance between them. One was inside the mission fence and the other was down by the beach—maybe 300 yards away. Every night we had supper about six or seven in the evening in the house by the beach. That night my father told me that I should sleep in this house alone to watch the food so no one would steal it. They didn't tell me I was being punished, and I thought that what he told me is right—that they wanted me to watch the food. But when I got older I knew they must have been punishing me. If it were true, they would have had my brother sleep there with me. I stayed there by myself for about three months. It was very dark and there were no houses nearby, only the cemetery. I wanted to run away but I was afraid. I was afraid of my father and afraid of the spirits, or ghosts, you know, the *atua* [souls of the dead].

Now I'll tell you about the first time I ate dog meat. My friend tricked me. He asked me if I wanted some *puak veo* [pork cooked in an earth oven] and I said yes. He gave me some meat and I ate it. Then he asked me, "Do you eat dog meat?" and I said no. Then he told me that the meat he gave me was dog meat, and I said that it tasted good. I was about 10 years old at that time.

Actually my childhood was a happy time. Sometimes we played cricket, sometimes we went for a swim. During Christmas time we sometimes took a horseback ride around the island ... we might stop at Fuli'u [in Lopta] for a swim. Sometimes we'd stop at one of my relative's houses and have dinner there. One old man who lived there had a bad leg. He said he loved us children but he had a bad leg and apologized for not being able to climb a coconut tree to get coconuts. ...

Then there was *manea hune'ele* [beach games played by the adolescent boys and girls during the Christmas season] ... we were too young to play but sometimes we went to the beach to watch the adolescent boys and girls.

When I was 12 years old, I went to stay at school in Sumi and boarded there. That was in 1921. Sister Elizabeth's grandfather was my teacher. He taught us the ABCs in Rotuman. That's when I became interested in girls and learned about making love. We used to return from school by the beach instead of the road ... the boys and girls together. Sometimes we would go for a swim in the water. Sometimes the boys learn from the girls, sometimes the girls from the boys. I learned from a girl. It was mostly kissing and things like that.

I can remember one Sunday after the last prayer I was supposed to beat the wooden drum, the kind like the Methodists use to call people to church—to call the angels. I was supposed to hit it three times, then three times, then three times. But this day it started to rain before I was finished so I ran away to get out of the rain. My father got angry at me and made me kneel by the drum in the rain.

One time when I was 14 or 15 years old, it was near Christmas time. I saw some girls going to swim. At that time not many people had short pants for swimming. My father had a new pair of *ha' la ne mose* [long-john pajamas]—very nice, with blue stripes. I saw the girls going to swim so I stole my father's pants and went after the girls. Some girls were married, but some not married, and one of my cousins was with them. The others I didn't know. When the girl I liked jumped into the water I jumped in right after her. She went right to the bottom of the water—maybe about two fathoms deep—and I caught her. She was very tired and wanted to go to the top but I held her down. She started to bite me and

pulled my father's pants—that day the pants were finished. She made many holes in them ... maybe she was about 16 years old. When she got to the top she swore like hell because she said she nearly died, and I got angry at her. My cousin said, "You are wrong. You held her under water and you got angry at her when she swore at you." When my cousin told me I was wrong I told her to shut up—that it was none of her business. So my cousin told the girls to return home because I was mad—had lost my mind. "He plays with a girl and gets angry."

I got angry because she swore at me; she called me a silly fool and things like that. I was afraid to go home with my father's pants like that—because they were torn—so I took them off and threw them into the sea. My father didn't find out for a long time.

My first real experience with a girl was when I was 16 years old. I met her by the side of the road at night and started talking to her. We went right to the side of the road and did it right away. She had the reputation of being a larrikan [promiscuous] girl. When I was young there were plenty of girls. There were many different ways. I remember one girl. Many boys tried to go to her at night and make love to her, but she always threw them out. But if you went to her and didn't wake her up you could do anything you want and she'd never stop you. She'd pretend to be asleep ... but not really asleep. ... The boys and girls in Rotuma were very smart to make love without getting caught.

If you wanted to be with a woman, you talked to her before and she would tell you where to go, sometimes at night, but sometimes in the daytime, too. I was very sly. Sometimes when it was raining and I knew there was an adolescent girl alone in a house I would go inside and start talking to the girl. Then we would go to the bed just like it was night time.

The only thing is that the girls were afraid the boy would tell about her, so if she knew you were the kind of boy who would tell about her then she wouldn't like you, but if she knew you wouldn't tell, then it was all right. But the girls were different, some easy, some hard. Some you had to talk with for a long time and go slowly, but some were very quick.

When I was young it was good, but now I'm too old. My body is too weak. When you're 20 or 30, your body is strong and it's good, but when you're 40 you rest, and when you're 50 you're too weak.

One day when I was about 16 or 17 years old I got sick and had to go to the hospital for about two weeks. I had a fever—about 103 degrees, the doctor said. When I returned home from the hospital, my brother was playing with another boy and he got angry at him and spat at him. I saw him and got angry and wanted to smack him, because he's my brother and I didn't like him to act that way with the other boys. I smacked his head and hit his face, but too hard and knocked him out. He fell down and blood was coming out of his nose. When he got up he cried and went right home—back to our father and mother. When my father saw him he got very angry. After that, every Sunday for about three months when he came to church at Sumi he never talked to me or gave me anything. That's why I wanted to become a lay brother, meaning I have no more father. I went to see Father Griffon. He asked what I wanted and I told him I wanted to become a lay brother. He told me to wait—that he'll write a letter to the Bishop and when he received a reply I could go to Fiji. When the letter returned, I went to Fiji. I wasn't angry at my father by the time I left—that was finished—but it was too late. The letter was already written.

It was in Fiji that I learned to play the organ and what do you call it ... the trumpet. In 1928 we went to play for Cardinal Charity in Suva.

The Cardinal came from Rome to Sydney to attend a conference and then he went to Fiji on his way to America. I shook hands with Cardinal Charity and the Bishop said to him that these were some Rotuman boys, and Cardinal Charity said, “I know.”

The school was at Loreto, on Ovalau. Sometimes we went to the bush to cut copra, sometimes we went fishing. At that time we were learning philosophy and theology. School was hard, but not too hard.

In 1929 I came back to Rotuma and stayed at Sumi. Now I live alone with my old mother, but most of the time I go to sleep in the house of a widow friend that I provide with food and money. I am the organist at the Upu Mission Church and go to church often.

Chapter 4

Women Born in the First Decade of the Twentieth Century

(Age 55)

There were only two of us in our family—my brother and I, who was the younger. We were a very poor family, but I remember that our parents did their best for us. There was no school at that time so my brother and I never learned anything. We just realized things by our wisdom and reason, and when we got older we learned to do things just by getting used to it and learning to help my mother. I never went to any other villages without my mother. Sometimes I would go away for about two weeks, but always accompanied by my mother. When I was still an adolescent my parents died and my brother and I lived with our relations. What a pity to see us. We didn't know how to work properly to please our new family, so many times we hardly had enough food to eat. Sometimes we had only one meal a day. We didn't blame ourselves because we knew our parents had spoiled us and by then they were dead and we were badly treated by their relations.

I began to make friends with my neighbours and I knew they began to love me for they all knew how badly my family treated me. I spent most of my days with my friends while my brother continued to live with our family. There were three of us who became good friends and we stayed together in one home. We stayed this way until one of my friends got married and she took me with her. I lived with my friend and her husband. She loved me as if I were her real sister and yet we were just friends. We lived together until one day she asked me if I would like to get married, because there was an adolescent boy who wanted to marry me

but was a bit too shy to speak to me. I just told her that if she knew the boy would love me and would realize that getting married was not just a matter of a few months, but of a lifetime—but if she knew he was a good boy and she liked him, then I said I would agree. She was really a good friend for me because she did choose the right man. We got married in a few months and began a family of our own. I didn't know how to work properly and yet I was lucky because I married a kind man. He helped me sometimes and always spoke kind words when we were together. We stayed together only four years and had one daughter, but unluckily my husband died. How could I imagine the one who loved me being put into his hidden home [his grave]; and our daughter was only about 2 years old.

My brother and his wife came and took us with them. It was a good thing my sister-in-law was a nice woman or else my daughter and I would have had a rough time. Whatever she did for her own children she did for my daughter. She loved her as if she were one of her own children. One day my brother asked me if I would like to travel to Fiji and I told them that if they could send me I would be very pleased. So they did send me and I went to Fiji and stayed there for four years. A few years after that my daughter got married and had a family of her own. I have lived with them from then up to now. My daughter had two sons and I helped to look after them, and I did domestic work and native work for my daughter, for I know that now I am very old and very soon I may die, and she'll be alone to do all the work herself.

(Age 53)

As far back as I can remember, I lived with my parents and brothers and sisters. My mother and father were very kind to us and as children we were very happy. We used to play together every day. Sometimes we could joke with my mother, but I was afraid to joke with my father because sometimes he would punish me. He was the one who always punished the children in our family so I didn't want to joke with him.

When I was 6 years old my father sent me to school. I liked school very much, because at that time the schools in Rotuma weren't very good, and we only had to learn a few things, so most of the time we spent playing with our friends. I made plenty of friends in school and we played and joked all the time. I liked it better in school than the time when I was with my brothers and sisters at home.

I left school when I was 14 years old and I stayed with my brothers and sisters at home. Most of the time I spent at home helping my mother, but on holidays I used to go out with my girl friends and look for fun. Sometimes we went out and met boys. We would talk to them and joke, just like we really knew them well. One day I met a boy and every time that I used to go out with my friends I used to talk and joke with him. I watched the way he acted and began to like him very much. Deep in my heart I was in love with him, but I didn't know whether he loved me or not, so I joked with him and always hid my love.

One night I went with my brothers to a dance and I met him. That night he was drunk, and when I danced with him he told me all about his love for me, so I told him that I loved him, too. I told him that I started to love him from the first day we met, and that if he really loved me he would come and tell my parents so we could get married. He came and talked to

my parents and we got married soon afterwards. I was 16 years old at the time.

We got married and really loved each other very much. I was very happy because I was living with the one I loved best. Being married was better than being single. My husband was a very kind man and always did his best for me and our children, and I always did my best to take care of him, especially preparing the food to eat.

My husband died in 1950. I was lucky that I had plenty of sons so I still got everything I wanted from them. I felt sad for a whole month after my husband died. Whenever I would look at his picture during that time I would cry. I thought about his kindness to me when he was alive. I'll never marry again until I die.

Men Born in the 1910s

(Age 44)

I was the second oldest in a family of three children. There were the two of us brothers, and our sister, who was the youngest. We were brought up by our dear parents, who at the time did their very best to afford us with all that we needed. Whatever we asked them for they were ready to give us. I can remember that we were living in my father's home.

They were really kind and always told us to play and love each other, even to love our neighbouring friends, never mind that they would insult us. Before we entered school, Mother already gave us some lessons in politeness and obedience. I sometimes obeyed but sometimes not, so my parents seemed to love the other two more than myself. They seemed to take no care at all if they heard anything about my name. The neighbours began to speak about me because I became very cheeky to them.

I hated school but because we had to go, I just went and paid no attention at all to the teacher. They frightened me with everything they had but I remained a brave and a disobedient pupil. For five years I was in school but never once was I given a reward or even promoted.

I left school and began to help my father and elder brother in their plantations. They liked me because I worked very well and helped them a lot. Unluckily, our dear father died, leaving only the two of us with our sister and dear mother. My brother was older and a bit wiser and showed me how to act towards my mother and our sister. Mother felt so sad about her husband's death that she ate very little every day for about three months, and we felt the same way too. We loved her because although our father rested in peace she was still mourning him.

We lived together for a few years until my brother got married and went to his wife's home. I took care of the rest of us. I did my best and my mother used to tell me if my father were alive he would be lucky to have me helping him in his plantation. Although I was only 15 years old, I brought food into our *kohea* [native kitchen] like an old man. I cut copra and worked in every possible way to earn money for my mother and sister. I gave them everything they would need before they would ask me. My mother used to tell me that I had changed my manners; she never thought that I would become so kind as I was then.

I began to roam in the evenings. We went to other villages and sought pleasure among the adolescent boys and girls whom we met. The young men in our village had a club and we went out every night, whether it rained or not. After a few months I felt that I began to love one of the adolescent girls. I spoke to her and I know she felt the same way. I told my mother, but since my father was dead she told me to wait for a while. One of my relations knew about it and came and told my mother that if I wanted to get married, and if she would give her agreement, he would help. The matter was talked over and the wedding day was set, but the girl changed her mind and ran away with another boy. I was so ashamed, but what could I do with no more wedding to be talked about? My friends and I kept on roaming to other villages. I then met a woman whose husband had died and left her with a daughter. I began to speak to her and when I knew she was in love with me I began to stay away from home. I knew my mother wouldn't like her because of our different religions, and when I told the woman about this she brought her daughter and came to my home. My mother did not like this kind of wedding but I told her there was nothing more to be done; we would just get married this way.

This woman was very kind to my mother and my sister. A year later my sister got married and left us, and my mother married again, so only my wife and I were left in our family. My mother is still alive and living in her husband's home. She's now weak and very feeble and her son (my half-brother) is looking after her.

My wife and I stayed together for many years and we had many children. I seemed to be hated by the people in our village but I didn't know why; maybe I was a bit cheeky to them. I am now getting old and can't work properly in my plantations, so most days during the week I spend fishing in the sea. My wife didn't like to fish, or maybe she didn't know how, so I had to go fishing without her. My two adopted 10-year-old sons are working in my plantations instead of going to school. My wife doesn't do a thing, so to avoid quarrelling I have to do all the work for her. I think that's why all my relations seem to look down on me and my family.

(Age 43)

Only three days after I was born, my mother died. Then I lived with my mother's mother. My grandmother was very poor, but she got our clothes and things in payment for her *sarao* [massage]. My father married again and I moved to live with him and his wife at the age of 6. It was better living with my grandmother than with my father and stepmother, because my grandmother liked to give me things but my stepmother didn't. I found out that if you live with your stepmother or stepfather they will treat you differently than their own children. My father loved my stepmother and sometimes he didn't like the way she treated me, but he was afraid to talk for fear that they might get angry at each other and separate.

My father sent me to school at Upu mission when I was about 10 years old. I was happy in school because I met plenty of boys and girls and it was fun being with your friends every day.

I got married while I was in school, to a half-European woman. I soon found married life the happiest time of my life. Every day when I came home she would prepare food for me. She was a kind woman and would save money—almost five shillings out of the six I made in a day's work at Morris Hedstrom.

When my wife died I thought of her every day because I had to take care of the children. It was very hard for me without a woman to look after my children, so I got married again. This marriage was different from the one with my first wife. This wife is not as kind as the last one. The way she treats the children by my first wife is different from the way she treats her own. I do really love my wife, but sometimes I feel bad about the way she treats my children, so I decided to send my children to their mother's side. Now I live alone with my wife and our own children, and it seems just the same now as in the beginning when I got married to my first wife.

(Age 41)

There were four children in our family, and I was the youngest. As far back as I can remember, our parents loved us and my father worked very hard to afford us with everything we needed. My father died when I was young and not long after his death my mother got married again to a man from another district. My stepfather loved me since I was the only child in the family [who was still at home], and he took me everywhere he would go when he visited with the neighbours. He bought me anything I would ask him for.

He sent me to school and told me to try hard so that one day he might see me working in an office. I saw my teacher with starched clothes and I wished and hoped that one day I would be able to follow his footsteps, but unluckily I got seriously ill and was forced to stay away from school. I got a pain in my back and was in bed for a long time. I had a disease of the spinal column and it appeared in my back as what the natives call *tö' ta*. My teacher told me to stay home, and after that I didn't go to school again. My stepfather took me with him to his plantations and got me any kind of fruit he could find. Other children began to laugh at me because my back looked so strange to them, and as I grew that thing grew bigger. When I was already a grown man, I was still very short, and most people would look at me as a youth.

I made friends with my neighbours and went out with them (the adolescent boys) and found much pleasure in going from village to village. Adolescent girls seemed to laugh at me because of my strange build, but I took no notice of them. Every place I went, people seemed to laugh at me.

Many times I went with my stepfather to his plantations and he showed me how to plant and told me to work hard and learn well how to work in a plantation, so that one day I might be able to keep a plantation

by myself without anybody to lead me. I worked with him and helped him as best I could. The day my stepfather died I cried as if he were my real father. I thought of the way he treated me and how kind he was to me and my mother.

My elder brother got married and my two sisters looked after my dear mother, who is now blind and very old and isn't able to do anything. I'm now working very hard to help my brother who lives in the same family with us. Since I'm a cripple I never once thought of getting married because I knew that no woman would ever look at me—they only laugh at me. I had a swollen joint once and it didn't cure properly and it ended up that I couldn't bend my knee any more, and I became funnier than ever in my appearance to the people, but I couldn't help it, because my Creator wanted me to grow up this way.

I'm now helping my brother to look after his children, and I try to bring home whatever my nieces and nephews wish for and their father cannot provide. My blind mother is still alive and her two daughters are not married. The four of us are living with her and treating her kindly, the way she treated us when we were young.

Chapter 6

Women Born in the 1910s

(Age 48)

There were five of us in our family in which I was the second youngest; there were three boys and two of us were girls. We were kindly brought up by our parents as far back as I can remember, living in my mother's home. I knew they loved us, but I was the real pet in the family. The others could cry for something and my parents would provide it in two or three days, but for me they were in great haste to bring it to me. I wondered why my parents loved me that much more than my sister and three brothers. Many times I overheard my parents talking and my mother would say that they had to do their very best and bring home whatever I would ask for because when I grew up I would be the most beautiful girl on the island, so they had to see that I wouldn't be in want of something. Whenever a feast (*kato 'aga*) would be held somewhere on the island, my mother always sewed me a new dress and took me with her. Everywhere she went, I would be with her.

At home I used to roam around the village playing with the children in the neighbourhood. My mother always looked for me to come home for dinner, but as soon as I finished eating, off I went to my playmates. I never did anything at home, just roam, eat, and sleep, because I was the pet and nobody in the family was allowed to say something to me except my mother.

They sent me to school with my brothers, but since I worked as I pleased, I only went to school when I wished to. Most days in the week I stayed home, but no one scolded me. It seemed to me that my mother

preferred me to be at her side day in and day out. The teacher told my mother not to let me be absent so often so I would learn something, but I didn't change. I was so spoilt and became more and more disobedient, but my parents still sided with me all the time. When I grew up I began to think more wisely, but it was too late. I was too old and still in the lower classes. My parents told me to leave school when I was 15 years of age, but never once did I receive a reward in school, and I couldn't read or write properly.

I stayed home to help my mother and the more I was with her, the more I heard her talking about my beauty. She used to tell me to act like this and that so that people would look at me, but by then I was a bit wiser and began to tell my mother that she was making me worse than other children in the village.

I began to make friends with other adolescent girls in the village and played games at night with adolescent boys who would come from other villages. After a few months I met a boy who seemed to love me in return, and I told my parents that they would like him if he spoke to them. He did come one day with his father, and not long afterwards our dreams came true; we got married and stayed in my home. Life seemed to have changed, and whatever I would do I had to think of my husband, not my parents like before. My husband was a hard-working man and very kind to my parents and me.

Unluckily, my mother died a year after our marriage, and everyone could imagine the sadness that overtook me during the day of her funeral and a few days afterwards. I really felt sorry for her death, because I knew she loved me a great deal and never used harsh words with me. My husband and I went to his home and stayed for a couple of years when I gave birth to a daughter. We felt so glad to have a child of our

own. But my husband went off one day with his gun and didn't return. When people went in search of him they found him dead. I didn't know whether it was an accident or he shot himself purposely. With whom would I stay now that my kind husband and both my parents were dead? I came to our village and stayed with a cousin and his wife. I had a daughter, but they treated me as if I were one of their own children. They loved my daughter, who then was able to walk.

I began to roam again like an adolescent girl. After a few months I ran away with an adolescent boy and my daughter. At the beginning this boy's parents liked me, but later on they didn't want to stay with us any longer and built a native house for themselves. My husband and I have stayed together for many years and we've had many children, but he was not like my first husband, who was a hard-working man. He was kind to me, but many things I needed he just told me that he couldn't get them. I then thought back to my parents and my first husband, but what could I do; we had more than five children.

Now we are both getting old and only two of our children are still in school; the rest are out of school and two are already married. My husband is unable to work properly and is only a weak old man who struggles to provide food for us. I thought of leaving him, but where would I go? He could only cut copra and go fishing, and if I wanted something he would go to the old man at the far end of our village to ask him. Now that I am getting old, I have to stay home and wait until my husband can bring something home to satisfy me.

(Age 46)

Remembering the past times when I was living with my uncle, I think I was the saddest living creature ever to exist at that time. My poor mother was living with her brother and his wife, and I was with her. I remember well that I had a bad time with my uncle. They had many children and yet they hated me like an animal. I grew up without knowing my father, and my mother never mentioned to me who and where my father was, dead or alive.

I went to school when I was small, but my uncle only paid my school fees for three years, so I left school and helped at home. I loved to play with my cousins, but some days I saw that they didn't want to play with me. They (my cousins) all went to school. I heard that my teacher said that if one studied hard they would get good results, but how was I to study hard? My mother couldn't afford sending me to school, and my uncle wanted me to stay home.

I was badly treated, so one day I ran away to my cousin and his wife. They had only four children and treated me as if I were one of their children. I told them how my uncle treated me and my cousin invited me to come with him at that time. He was willing to pay my school fees if I would study hard, but by then it was too late. I was over 14. My mother came and wanted me to go with her and I refused, but my cousin told me to go because my mother came and asked him in the Rotuman way. I went with my mother, but only two weeks passed and I was treated the same way as before. I did all the household work—cleaned the house, did the washing and cooking, had to go fishing. I was just like a labourer to my uncle and his wife. I never went to dances and cinemas and even had no chance of going with other girls.

One day my cousin came and told my mother that he wanted me to marry a man. He was sure that I would live happily if I would get married to him. I didn't like that man because he had been married before, but my mother and my cousin forced me to marry him and at last I gave my consent to them.

We got married and because my uncle was so unkind to me we went to live in my husband's home. We stayed happily together. My husband was so nice that I never thought of going back to my uncle. He brought me nice food and everything I wanted before I could ask him to bring it. We stayed together for only five years when he died. I was really sad because I knew that I would have to go back to my uncle and perhaps stay with him throughout life. We had no children and I was lonely again. By then my uncle no longer treated me badly because I was older and helped him and his wife. I even went and helped him in his plantations. Then my mother died and I was left alone with my uncle.

Since then I met another young man who I knew would treat me nicely like my first husband, but my uncle wouldn't agree to it because of our different religions. I knew that this young man would love me, so I left my uncle and ran away with him. We got married and have lived together ever since and still I haven't any children. I've adopted my sister-in-law's children and treat them as my own. Whenever I thought of the time with my uncle, I never knew that one day I would live a happy life. I was so ill treated by him that I think I will never forget about it. I pity my mother who really had a rough time with her brother, and I wish she was still alive so that I could treat her nicely. My second husband has the same character as my first one. We are living together without quarrelling and I think I am very lucky to have married these two kind men, one after another.

(Age 45)

We were six children in our family and I was the eldest. We lived on a farm in Fiji when my father was working there. We had a good time with our parents; they loved us and treated us kindly. My mother taught me how to work and I was a great help to her. I played with my younger brothers and sisters while she did the cooking and washing for us. I knew she would get very tired and sometimes I cleaned our dormitory and the surroundings for her. When I entered school, I left my mother to do her work and to look after the others, but when I came home after school I did what I could to help her.

One day my mother brought us to this island of Rotuma. She said that we just came to spend the Christmas with her parents and would return after three months. What a pity, we stayed and months passed and we never returned to Fiji. I had to stay away from school and my brothers and sisters hardly went to school. I wished I could go to school but there wasn't anybody to pay for my school things.

My father left my mother and took another wife, so my mother had to take care of us and, poor thing, how could she earn enough money to support everything for the six of us? I knew how poor we were, so I was very obedient to my mother and so were my siblings. Later my mother got married again but her new husband hated us. They quarrelled too much. By that time I was old enough to know about a family, so I took my brothers and sisters to our grandparents. So we were brought up by our grandparents who loved us very much, but they were getting old, so my auntie and her husband took care of us; they lived with us in the same home. We went to school, but by that time it was a bit late to learn, so after two years I left school and helped with the work at home.

I made friends with a neighbouring girl about my age and we had good times. We knew each other very well and we always had the same mind when we wished to do something. It was then that I began to make friends with boys, but I was afraid that my grandparents might become very angry with me. One day I told my auntie and grandmother that I had a boyfriend and they didn't like it and told me not to make any more boyfriends, so I didn't. I stayed away from my friends for a few days and did not even go out in the evenings. Then one day my grandmother told me that I was going to get married. She knew that that man would take good care of me. I wondered what sort of a man my grandparents would give me to. All the days before I got married I thought of leaving my grandparents and running away to find a new home for myself, but my conscience told me to wait; maybe it was the right thing my people were doing to me.

It was really right! We got married even though I didn't know the man before and I was a bit frightened of him, but he was very kind to me. Two weeks after our wedding we went to his home. He wanted us to live there. Soon after my brothers and sisters came and stayed with us. He took good care of us. He loved us and we stayed in his home as if we were with our own parents.

Now we have only two children living with us. We are still taking care of my brothers and sisters along with our children. I enjoyed having a family of my own, with nobody to speak to us except myself. Now my family is still the same and not even once has my husband grumbled about my brothers and sisters; he is the same every day and treats them so kindly, and our children live happily with us.

(Age 45)

I was the oldest of three children who had different fathers and were brought up in three different homes. I can remember being brought up by my dear mother without someone to care for us. Poor me and my mother, who was doing all she could to provide us with food and earn money for our living. She was strong enough to work like a man. I had everything I wished for and all the food I wanted. There were only two of us in the family then, and she really did enough to support us. She used to speak about the wealthy people and the poor ones; they lived the same and death came to everyone, whether rich or poor. She always told me to keep quiet about the things that wealthy children had because she couldn't provide them, as I didn't have a father to help her give me all that I needed.

She sent me to school, but at that time I didn't feel like studying and stayed home with my mother. We were poor and she couldn't afford everything. Most days I stayed home and instead of going somewhere else she would sometimes spend a few hours with me talking about our future and how I should act to be kind to my friends and everybody in the neighbourhood. I did as she told me, but sometimes the weather changed and I didn't feel well, and I'm sure my character changed too.

When I grew older, I became wiser and my mother could trust me to do her work and to help her however I could. My friends always told me to come with them and at the beginning I refused because I wasn't old enough to follow them. Later I joined them and everywhere they went I followed. It happened that I met a boy who seemed to love me, and as I thought of my poor mother, I wished that boy really loved me so that my dear mother wouldn't have to work so hard. That boy spoke to me many times, but I was scared that he might leave me, so I went with him to his home. Life so changed and I felt as if I were in a new world. The boy was

very kind, and when I brought him home he was kind to my mother. He worked very hard, so my mother stopped going to the bush like a man. Now she had someone to take her place. My mother was used to hard work; she did all our work at home, but I was like a child. My husband and I stayed for many years and had two sons and two daughters, but unluckily my daughters died and only my sons survived. The elder one has gone on a voyage to Fiji and our younger son is with us.

How could you imagine the sadness that overtook me when my daughters died, one after the other. I wanted a daughter because I love girls, so because we had no more children, I took my cousin's daughter and then a son and adopted them as my own. How I love kids to be with me at home. Now it is so pitiful to see my dear old mother weak and feeble; she is like a child to me. I have to care for her like my two little wards. My husband and I are both getting old, and yet my husband is still strong enough to afford us with all that we need. We treat my mother kindly in return for the hard work she had done for me when I was small up until I got married. Before, all my relations stayed away from me because there was only myself and my poor mother and they didn't want us to join their family, but now that my husband is a hard-working man, their eyes seem fixed on me whenever they want something. I am now supporting my own family and never think of calling on any relations in want of something.

(Age 44)

There were only two of us children in the family. I was younger than my brother, and we were living with our dear father as far back as I could remember. My parents had a row one day and our mother left us with him; she went home and didn't come back to him again. I was growing older and can remember that he brought another woman to take care of us when he went to work. This woman brought us up and she loved us, but still I can say that if she were our real mother she would have cared more for us. We went to school and sometimes we had breakfast but sometimes we didn't. Sometimes our clothes were very dirty and we had to stay home. She gave us hidings when she wanted us to do something and we did not.

My father always told us to do our best in school because that was the only way to earn our own living and nobody would look down on us if we could get a good job. We really did our best and my brother later became an engineer, but I gave up learning and stayed home to look after my father. My father got married again but my stepmother wasn't nice to me, so I left them and went to live with my auntie. She was nice to me, but still she wasn't my real mother, and sometimes I knew she was wild with me by the way she acted.

I began to make friends and then boyfriends with anybody whom I would meet, no matter whether I knew him or not. I was acting this way, and then my auntie found out about it and she scolded me and she wanted me to go back to my father. I went back home but was still doing the same thing. Later on someone came and wanted me to marry him and my father gave his consent. I never knew this man before but because of his smart way of speaking my father thought that he would really love me, so that was why he gave him his agreement.

We got married and stayed at my home for a few months. Then this husband of mine began to show me his character. We stayed quietly together for a few months, then began to know each other's characters. He didn't have good manners towards my family and was lazy so I told him that we should go to his home, and yes, we did go. There I found life hard and miserable. He went out every night, I knew not where, and sometimes he came back home drunk and made us quarrel. I held and held my anger until one day I had enough of him and determined to leave him. I loved my three children but since my stepmother wasn't kind to me I was forced to leave them with their father. I came and stayed again with my father. My stepmother was, I think, becoming older and began to treat me as her own daughter, or maybe I was wise enough to do everything for her, which was why she began to love me. I stayed with them for about two years until my husband brought our children and begged me to pardon him to stay with him again. He said that he would change his manners and that he would not drink again. Now he has really changed himself and we live together again. We are with our five children, bringing them up to become good boys and girls and to love one another.

My father died a few years after my husband and I started living together again. I couldn't express how sad I was. I knew that I had lost my kind father and would never have him back again. I felt sorry for my stepmother, who had to go back to her own home.

My husband was once taken seriously ill and I really didn't know what to do. I thought of my dear children and wondered if he died who would take care of us. But luckily he recovered and is looking after us.

(Age 43)

There were seven of us in our family and I was the second youngest. There were four boys and three of us were girls. Our parents were very kind people and all of us liked them. We always came home and spoke with them and did whatever they would ask without delay. As I grew up I noticed these things and I asked them why the young people always liked to be with them, and my mother answered that if I grew up to be as kind-hearted as they were, people would love me too. They brought me up and taught me how to work and how to be a good person to my neighbours and anyone whom I might meet. At that time there was no school, so only our parents taught us how to behave ourselves. We all stayed with our parents and they took care of us until we were old enough to help them. Mother taught me how to work and I was always with her. Sometimes the adolescent girls came and we took strolls in the evening, but I never stayed with them until midnight.

Days came and went, but I continued to help my mother with her work. My two eldest brothers and two sisters got married and went to live in their wives' and husbands' homes, and that left the three youngest of us to look after our old parents. We stayed together and they all loved me—I was a real pet. I liked to be with the other young women, but I never went with them to the dances or to the cinema. Sometimes my brothers asked me if I wanted to go but I refused, because I just didn't like going to either of them. I always stayed at home and asked my mother to tell me some legends about Rotuma, which I loved to hear.

Unluckily, there was an epidemic of dysentery over this island and we all got it except one of my unmarried brothers, and in a couple of days my father died. I was so sick that I wasn't able to go and see my father's funeral. My mother, too, was very sick and she didn't even know who had

taken my father to the cemetery. When I recovered I thought of my father and began to cry, remembering his kindness to all of us, his children. He never used harsh words with us. Whenever he was angry with one of us, he just told us not to do that again. We really miss him.

When I was about 30 years old, a young man wanted to marry me, and he spoke to our village chief, and the chief came to my elder brother. My brother asked the chief to go back and wait, because he had to ask me first. My two brothers and my mother liked that boy, but for myself, I didn't feel like leaving my mother. I thought of what it would be like if I got married to that boy and he wasn't as good to me as my two brothers. Then we might get into trouble and I would live a sad life. I told them I didn't want to get married. My brother went and told the chief.

After that, I knew I had to be good to my mother and brothers. I was still the same to them and have never done anything to make them angry at me. After a while my elder brother got married, and then the younger. The latter lives with his wife at her home, while the former stayed with us. My brother had four daughters and two sons, and I took care of them from their childhood up to now. My mother died when my brother had five children. I felt very sad but couldn't help it, because there must be an end to every living creature on this earth. I wished she would have lived longer, to be with me all the time. Now I am very old, living with my brother and his children. They treat me so nicely that I live very happily with them, and I am in want of nothing.

Chapter 7

Men Born in the 1920s

(Age 39)

There were eight children in the family—five boys and three girls. I was the third eldest. I stayed with my parents for only a few months, and then my father's sister took me with her to another district and she and her husband raised me. They had no children of their own. I thought they were my real parents until I was about 8 years old, when I finally learned that they had just adopted me. Sometimes after that I went to visit my real parents, but I found that my aunt and uncle treated me better. I guess that was because I had been separated from them for a long time, and besides that they had plenty of other children at home. For my aunt, I was an only child.

I started going to school when I was 6 years old. I think I was probably the worst boy in the school. One reason for that is probably because my adopted father was the chief, and I was used to having my own way. So I didn't listen to the teachers, and if they would say anything to me I would just go home and they couldn't touch me. At that time I know the people of that district didn't like me much. The children my own age hated me because I was such a bully at the time. I stayed in school until I was 12 years old and had reached Class 4. I wasn't very interested in the work and only did things because I was told to do them, so I didn't do very well in school in Rotuma.

I went to Fiji with my adopted father to a Methodist Synod meeting in 1934 when I was 12 years old. While we were in Fiji, he put me in school at the Suva Methodist Boy's School for the three-month period

he planned to stay, but when it came time for him to go back to Rotuma he asked me if I would like to stay on at the school and learn some more, and I agreed.

While I was going to school there, I stayed with a cousin of mine who was a teacher in the compound. I found life at this school different from anything I'd ever known. The boys didn't waste time there as much as they did in Rotuma. They studied seriously, and I had to study hard too if I wanted to keep up with the class. My cousin also did me a lot of good. He taught me many things, not by the third degree, but by logical methods that made me interested and eager to learn. I began to change my ways then and became interested in school. I began to pick up in school very well. During the first year I was in Class 5 and barely passed, coming in about 64th among about 70. Part of my trouble was with the language, because most of the teaching was in Fijian and English. The next year, though, in Class 6, I came in eighth in the class and earned the progressive prize for greatest advancement.

I stayed at this school for six years and got through Form IV. At the end of that year—1941—I took my qualifying exam and passed in everything except in Fijian, but because I was a Rotuman they awarded me a pass.

The following year the government was going to send me to the Teacher's Training Institution at Davuilevu, but at the last minute I changed my mind. The headmaster sent me to Morris Hedstrom Ltd. to take a job in the shipping office. I stayed there for about a month, but almost every afternoon I would go to the police training depot and play ping-pong and cricket with the Rotuman fellows there. I became interested in the police department and decided to join. For one thing I was only getting 8/6 per week at MH, and since I didn't have anyone to take care

of me I couldn't get along very well on that, so I joined the police as a recruit on the 6th of February, 1942.

I trained as a recruit for three months and took the police examination and did so well they made me a second-class constable. I was assigned to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Suva. I stayed with the CID for about two years and found it very interesting. I worked in the office most of the time, but went out sometimes. One thing, I think that working with fingerprints ruined my eyes, and I've had to wear glasses ever since.

After two years I was assigned to the Immigration and Licensing Department. I stayed there for about ten years up until 1954. I found the work hard, but interesting. One thing I didn't like: besides our regular weekly hours we were on night call and sometimes on weekends.

The first time I returned to Rotuma was for a holiday in December 1946, when I was 24 years old. During the time I was here I renewed my acquaintance with a girl I had met in Fiji the year before. I met her several times during the *mane'a* and I finally proposed. She agreed but said it was up to her parents. It so happened that her mother didn't like me. She hated me like castor oil. She disliked me because she knew I was a bad boy when I was young and because she had heard that in Fiji I would go with one girl and then throw her over for another, and things like that; it was partly true. My adopted father went *sok fäeaga* [formal marriage proposal] with kava but her mother refused. He went again with an *apei* [fine mat] to *faksoro* [in this context, to beseech] and this time my girlfriend and her father agreed, although her mother still refused, but the marriage plans were made. We got married very simply on a Sunday in church. After that we went and had a bite to eat at my wife's house. My mother-in-law didn't even shake hands with me. She didn't want a formal wedding. We got

married in March and I took her to live at my house until June when we went to Fiji.

I enjoyed married life and it helped me a lot with my work. I didn't roam around so much and got enough sleep so I was able to work properly. By the way, before leaving Rotuma I went again to *faksoro* my mother-in-law and this time she told me all her reasons why she had objected, but she accepted my *faksoro* and we became very good friends after that.

I resigned from the Immigration Department because of false promises and bad working conditions. I applied to the Colonial Secretary for a transfer, and in July 1954 I went to the Income Tax Department. I stayed there for two years, until June 1956, when I was transferred to administration, to which I had applied. I asked to be sent to Rotuma and was assigned to Rotuma as the clerk of the district. I felt I had served Fiji long enough and wanted to serve my own people for a change. Last year the job of sub-accountant was also transferred to the clerk, whereas before it had been done by the District Officer. I feel that the work I have to do now is far too much work for one man.

Now I have eight children of my own—five boys and three girls. I feel like I have a big responsibility in my children and worry about how I will be able to pay for their secondary school education. As far as I can tell now I'd like to stay in Rotuma. Before I retire I'd like to build a house for myself and my children. My biggest concern is that my children get a good education and a good job.

(Age 38)

My parents were always very kind to me and my brothers, and they got everything that we wanted if they could. They took real good care of us until we were able to take care of ourselves.

When I was 5 years old I went to school. I liked it very much because I got to know many children. In school I learned how to take good care of myself and how to become a good person. When I was 15 years old I stopped going to school and stayed home instead.

Beginning with the time that I was 12 years old, I felt very different about girls than when I was younger. After I stopped going to school, I began to go out to the girls every night. Most of the time I would go out with the other boys, but one night I met a girl that I really fell in love with. I went to her every night for about three months and I found out that she really loved me too.

During the time I was seeing this girl was the happiest time of my life. Every day I thought about her and it made me feel happy. It was easy for me to do hard jobs because I would think about her and feel happy, and it didn't bother me when people would speak harshly to me because I knew she loved me and that was all that mattered to me. We saw each other like that for four years and finally we got married.

We were married for only three years and then we separated because after we were married we lived together with her parents, and her mother's way was not good. She always treated me like a child and would always tell me what to do. I couldn't stand it any more so I finally left my wife with her mother and father.

A few years later I got married again, and I found out that married life in Rotuma is not so bad if both our parents will be kind to us, or if we do not live together with them after we were married. When I got married

in 1948 I became a Methodist to be of the same religion as my wife. Changing my religion was not hard for me because I really loved my wife and besides, I like the Methodists.

I lived with my second wife in a house that was given to me by B.P.'s [Burns Philp] because I had the job of overseer. When I was made the overseer I found it hard at first, but I discovered that if you are a kind person and know your job well, it isn't too difficult. I stayed at B.P.'s until 1953 when I stopped working for B.P.'s and moved to my wife's home to become the *faufisi* [second-ranking chief] of the district and also a *fa'és ho'aga* [head of a section of a district]. Later on I was made the chairman of the local co-op. Being a leader for all these things was different than when I was free because I had to think all the time about the welfare of the people. But I found it hard only in the beginning, and when I got used to it, it wasn't too bad because I knew what to do and my only problem was telling the people to do it. Now I am living together with my wife and will do whatever the district chief says.

(Age 38)

We were only two brothers who grew up together and were brought up by our mother. My mother was a poor woman who lived with her father, our grandfather. She loved us and I knew she was doing her best to comfort us when we were crying in want of something. Sometimes I was curious to know who my father was, and she just told me that I hadn't got a father. I roamed around and played with the other children, and when I saw their toys I really wanted some of my own but thought of my mother and just went away. I knew she wouldn't be able to get some for us.

My elder brother loved me and whenever he came back from school we two played together. When I entered school we always went and came back together. I had a hard time in my first year in school, although I loved to learn. My grandfather was old and I knew it was a bit hard for him to support us in school so my brother had to stay home. Three years later I also had to leave school; at that time I was in Class 6. I still wanted to study but there wasn't anybody to pay my school fees. Life was becoming harder for me because I knew I had to work and look after my mother and grandfather. I had to cut copra to earn money for us and sometimes became so tired that I went to sleep without supper. By the time I was 17 I got used to our native kind of work.

In the evenings I went with other adolescent boys taking strolls and playing cards or any game happening in the village. I met many adolescent girls but because my mother was so poor I didn't feel like making friends with any of them. A few years later I told my mother that I would like to marry a girl whom I met and I thought she would be nice to her. In our native custom it is a hard thing for the boy's parents if he wants to marry a girl. My mother told me about all the preparations required before a wedding but still I wanted to marry that girl because my mother

was getting very old and there wasn't a woman in the family to take care of us. One night I went and brought the girl home. My mother was very angry with me and so were the girl's parents.

I loved both my mother and my wife. At first my wife was very kind to my mother and helped her but everybody should know what it's like to take care of an old woman. A few months passed and my wife began grumbling to me about my mother, but I took no notice. I told her that my mother was old and when she was wild with her to just go away and not face her. We stayed together for four years, but she didn't take care of my mother properly, and when I thought of how kindly my mother had brought us up I made up my mind to send my wife back home.

I told my mother that if every girl in the world was of the same kind and character as my wife it would be better for me to stay single than to marry again. Poor mother had really had enough of her and didn't say anything. My mother died soon afterwards and I felt very sad. I wondered if I would be able to find another wife who would be as kind as my mother. I went out in the evenings and met another girl whom I married afterwards. We loved each other and lived happily from the beginning after our wedding up to now. We haven't got any children and yet I wish my mother were alive so she might see the difference between my first wife and the second wife. She's really nice to me and even to the children of our neighbours. Everybody says that I was very lucky that I have a very kind wife but it's really true.

(Age 35)

I am the fourth child in a family of seven children—five boys and two girls. We are from a good family and were rich, but the way our father treated us, it was as if we were beggars. Our parents were very kind to us when we were young children. Whatever we were in need of, they always provided. They were kind to us and to our relations.

When my two older brothers and sister went to school I was left at home with my mother, but most of the time I spent with my grandmother. I was living with my parents, but my grandmother took care of me and she was the one who brought me up. I became a lively child and many in the family hated me, with the exception of my grandmother who really didn't want anybody to scold me, like my parents and others older than me. Sometimes I went out and played with other children, but I was bigger than my friends and used to fight with them, so their parents hated to see my face whenever I went to their homes.

When I reached the age of 6, I began to go to school with the others. It's funny to think of that time because I really had no interest at all in school. So many days I just hid myself in the bushes near the end of the village waiting for the other children to return. Then I would accompany them as if I were coming back from school. Learning was a bit better for me, but I really hated to see teachers using sticks to punish the other children and sometimes me. Never once had my parents scolded or hit me so I hated anybody to raise a hand to me. School lessons were always the last thing for me, and as a result of neglecting my lessons I didn't do well. So when I was 14 I left school and stayed home like a child of 2 years of age. My grandmother didn't want my parents to scold me so I was able to do as I pleased.

When I was about 15, my grandmother gave me her oil so that I could help her do *sarao* [massage]. I later became a masseur and was using *rē ʻai* [magic], and many people came to me to be massaged. I also was called to go to people's homes to do the same work. Whatever I did, whether good or bad, people were frightened to talk about it. At that time I never helped my father in his plantations or elsewhere; I just went roaming around on my bicycle from house to house doing the same work (massaging) every day.

One day I heard about people going to Fiji and I asked my father to send me there. He did, and after a few months I found myself walking up and down the Suva path. My father gave me enough money so that I would not have to work because he knew that people like me wouldn't be able to get a good job in town. In Suva I met a lovely girl whom I loved and many times I tried to speak to her, but I didn't know how to talk to girls. I finally got a chance one day and spoke to her. We began to know each other and at the end we were like a married couple. I really loved this girl and told her to wait so I could return home and tell my parents. I came home on the next boat and told my family about this and they all refused to accept it and gee! People should have seen my inner organs. How sorry I was to leave this girl behind; I should have brought her with me. I gradually forgot her because we could see each other no more. Then I met another girl but my parents still didn't want me to get married and refused to accept her as well. I still kept seeing her using false pretences, but later rumours went around and the girl found out that my parents had refused her, so she left for Fiji. I felt so sorry for her because I knew we loved each other and planned for our future together, and yet we had to part because of my parents. I didn't feel like talking to any girl by then because my parents were not so nice whenever I talked to them about

marriage. Three years passed and I was still a loafer and never did any work or helped my father in his plantations.

About that time my mother became seriously ill with a sore on her knee and was taken to the hospital in Suva and had her foot cut off. I felt sorry for her because I knew she wouldn't be able to do her work properly. Now she is walking with the help of two walking sticks and I know she feels the difference between now and before her foot was cut off.

I asked my father and he bought me a motorbike and I was like a famous man going around the island. A few months later, I met a third girl. I loved her and wondered if my parents would reject her as well. I knew that she loved me so we planned our future, but we guessed that my parents wouldn't like her because she was of a different religion. Anyway, I took her home and we got married in a few weeks' time. Then I began to settle down and started to work in the plantations for the first time because I knew I was going to have to provide for a family of my own. Working in the plantations was harder than I expected, but I managed to do it.

My wife was very kind to me and my parents and also to my grandmother. She knew that my mother was unable to walk properly and Granny was weak, so she took all the family work for herself. Now that I was married and wise enough to go into business, my father bought a little bus and began a bakery right near our home. I had so many friends who helped with the work, but everything was finished within nine months. My father was very angry with me, but he didn't dare say anything because he would be knocked down by the blow that I would be able to give him. I was so spoilt that my parents and wife were not allowed to say something that would arouse my anger or else they had to find their way out. I thought I would never know how to be kind to anyone.

Now I am older and wiser and I realise how bad I have been to my parents and poor wife, who is staying home doing all the work. My wife and I have six children and I am trying very hard to work for my family, especially for my children. I do hope they don't grow up spoilt like myself. I am now a driver for one of the R.C.A. [Rotuma Cooperative Association] lorries, hoping that my work will be of value for everyone in the family. It's really hard trying to change myself to become a kind person to everyone, but I think I may be able to change things around and control my bad temper.

(Age 35)

I am the fourth child out of a family of six children. I can still remember the kind treatment that our dear parents had given us. Our father was serious but kind and mother was the same to us every day.

I used to go out and play with my neighbour friends and sometimes came back very late in the evening, but my parents never scolded me. At that time I was too young to know what was good or bad and kept acting like that until my mother warned me that if I ever did it again she would give me a good stick on my legs, and I was so scared that I didn't go out again without her permission.

I was sent to school when I was 6 years old. I loved to study, but most of the time laziness ruled so all the lessons were very hard for me. I tried my best to overcome my laziness and began to work hard to learn. During the first four years I was promoted from class to class. When I reached the age of 10, I entered boarding school where I spent seven years but didn't succeed in my learning. I left school and went home to help my father who was then old and very feeble. After a few months my elder brother came back from Fiji and I took my chance and left Rotuma for Fiji. I spent a few months away from home but didn't find any pleasure during the few months I spent in town. I came back to find my father in bed with not enough strength to walk around. Poor father died after a long illness. You can imagine how sorry I felt when my father died. He was really serious to others but kind to his children. After his funeral my mother left the village, which she was very used to along with the people, but went back to her home village. I went with her. I kept company with the other adolescent boys in the village and we went out every evening seeking pleasure for ourselves in other villages, as other young men used to

do. Later I met one of the girls whom I loved and told my mother about it and she didn't reject it because she seemed to have the same will as mine.

A few months later my dreams came true. I got married to this girl and my mother and I went to live in her home. How different my life was from the time before I got married. Whenever I wished to go someplace I had to let my wife know first. She was so nice and kind to my mother, and so my mother seemed to love her more than I did. Everything seemed to change when our first child was born. It made me feel strange and to love my wife whenever my eyes came across my baby. We lived happily with our baby and my dear mother.

It happened one day that I was chosen by our relations to take the subchief's title. I knew I was too young and not wise enough to lead many people, but I had to take it. Many a time my elders were wild with me but I didn't care because they had chosen me to look after them. I was brave and very insolent to them and they seemed to hate me later.

A few years passed when a great suffering came upon me. One of my five children died a sudden death. He seemed to be poisoned by something. How sad I was to think of it, but it dawned on me that maybe it was a punishment given me for how I had treated the older people in our village. I changed myself then and became a new person towards my people, and now my wife and I are loved by our neighbours and are leading a happier life among the others in the village.

(Age 35)

The first time I can remember was when I was living with my parents; I was about 5 or 6 at the time. At that time I thought Rotuma was the only place in the world. I was the second oldest in the family and was brought up by my grandmother. I went to stay with her when I was about 7 years old. That's when I started school. I lived with my grandmother and her two unmarried sons—they were around 20 or 22. At that time I was the only child in Rotuma who could do the Samoan knife dance, but I did it with a club. I taught myself by watching a fellow dance when the governor came to Rotuma. I remember dancing at a wedding.

My grandmother treated me very well. Anytime she ate something good, she wanted me to taste it. I was closer to my grandmother than to my own parents. She let me do almost whatever I wanted. But sometimes, if I did something wrong, she would make me kneel. I would feel ashamed at times like that—with the other children watching.

I went to school at Upu. I didn't find school very difficult because I was very studious. One year we had an exhibition of handwriting and I took first prize in my age group. I boarded there for three years. We had to do work in the bush as well. At that time we were building the church at Upu and we helped there sometimes.

I can remember one time when we were out in the bush. It was the first time that I ever saw a dead man. He had been out in the bush and hadn't come back all night, so we went to look for him. We found him lying dead. Some people said that he had been beaten up by devils. I knew the man pretty well because he used to plant right next to us. I couldn't sleep that night. I was 10 years old at the time. I was frightened, and after that I didn't want to go in the bush by myself to that place.

When I was 13 years old I went to Cawaci, near Levuka, on Ovalau. I went to the minor seminary; a brother who was Rotuman suggested that I become a priest. I was a bit more intelligent than the other boys. I liked the idea but my mother didn't like it. She wasn't sternly opposed to it, but she wasn't very happy. She thought something might happen and I'd have to leave the priesthood later on. That happened to some of the lay brothers. That kind of thing is more shameful, I think, to the Rotumans than to Europeans. She also said that by the time I come back she'll be dead, and she was right. My grandmother was dead by then.

When I got to Fiji I was sorry that I had gone. I felt terribly homesick. I thought I was better off in Rotuma; the food was more plentiful and the clothes were better; the Fijians went around without a shirt. In Fiji you had to be independent—wash your own clothes. We had practically no *i'ini* [meat, fish, eggs], and mostly just *vati* [leafy greens], but it was a mysterious thing to me that I became fat. I was very thankful to my parents—every time they sent a letter they sent me cash, ten shillings or so. One peculiar thing—in the ten years that I was away while my mother was alive, she never sent me a single letter, but my father told me that every letter he sent, she would read first. Another thing in school, I didn't know what my future would be. It was very unsettled, but I was living among the Fijians, and I reckon the Fijians are a very kind-hearted people. I stayed in this school for seven years. We had to pass the Leaving School Certificate and the Qualifying Examinations, which permitted me to go to the training college, but since I was going to become a priest I stayed at the seminary and continued studying Latin, theology and catechism. I still found school easy for me.

After seven years I had to move to Namosau, in Mba. I spent two and a half years there. Life was even tougher there. They didn't grow any

food there, so we had to buy everything; for *i'imi* we had to go to the river and search for *kai*, a kind of shellfish. Still at that time nothing was settled. Finally, at the end of that time I was told that I was going to be sent to St. Patrick's college in Silverstream, near Wellington, in New Zealand. I was about 24 years old then. When I was told, I was delighted. I came to Rotuma for about two weeks after hearing that. Only once during my seven years at Cawaci did I return to Rotuma for a holiday. My mother had died in the meantime.

I can remember the day I learned my mother had died. I was a sacristan, preparing the altar for the Mass, when Father Foley called me out and told me the sad news that my mother had passed away. Everything looked bad to me. My mother was going to come to Fiji, but she got sick and died. I thought of what my mother had told me before I left—that when I would come back she probably would be dead. Of course, being a Christian I prayed a lot. It made it much worse to be away from home ... it's worse than if you're among your own people. I lost interest in everything. I just did what others did, but with no life. For the first week I didn't sleep well, didn't eat well. I thought of how much my mother would have liked to see me as a priest, but now she had died. Even now I feel bad when I see someone with their mother. I really think that the best person in the world is your mother. Your brothers and sisters may be loyal to you, but your mother's your own flesh. All the good I had in mind to do for her materially, I couldn't do.

When I went to New Zealand I was worse off than when I went to Fiji. For one thing I found that the white people are more unsociable than the coloured people. That was mostly in the school itself, especially in the beginning. Some of the older people, the married ones, were very good to me and brought me to their homes. I stayed at Silverstream for two years.

It was supposed to be three years for matriculation, but after two years I got my school certificate and went to the seminary. Life in the seminary for seven years was a different life. There were times for silence and recollection. The Marist order is a religious order, professing three vows, instead of the two taken by secular priests. Besides the ordinary two vows of chastity and obedience, we had to take the vow for poverty. We did two years philosophy at Greenmeadows. I found philosophy very tough. This was the first time I found school really difficult. It was very abstract stuff. But I got through all right. In between the first and second years of philosophy, we did a year of noviciate at Highden. There was no study of philosophy. It was mainly to study the constitution of the Society of Mary. Mostly it was a life of prayers and silence. I found this year very discouraging. Sometimes I felt like packing my things and leaving. It was really supposed to be a trial—they're trying you out. On the last day of that year we were professed and took our three vows.

After the first year of philosophy at Greenmeadows, the year of the noviciate, and the second year of philosophy, I started the theology course at Greenmeadows. I found it more interesting than philosophy. Seminary life is the best of all, because you don't get any temptations. Your mind is mostly on what your exam questions are going to be. In all my seven years, they never told me my marks. Theology is a mystery because you can only understand part of it. You cannot understand the whole lot because of the limitations of the human mind. If there was something I didn't understand, I was taught to take it on faith. But at the same time, they told me I should question more. I was naturally too reserved. I tried to do everything myself without asking—pride, I think.

If you asked me now, if you had it to do over again, would you become a priest, I'd have to think about it. It doesn't mean I regret it, but

I'd have to think. The life and obligations are not easy. You're not your own boss. I was anxious though to come back to Rotuma and work among my own people.

After I was ordained I spent three months in pastoral work in New Zealand. After that I was appointed for six weeks in North Auckland as an assistant priest, and after that I was sent back to Fiji. First I was appointed as assistant priest at Levuka for about two-and-a-half months, and then I was sent to Rotuma. I felt great about being sent to Rotuma. I have no desire to be posted anywhere else but here.

When I came back they had a big *kato'aga* [ceremonial feast] for me. I felt especially grateful to the Wesleyans—to go to all that trouble. I don't think the Catholic people would do that for a Wesleyan minister who was returning.

I like being in Rotuma, but now I feel somewhat deficient. If I had another chance to study in New Zealand, I think I would do better. There are so many things I don't know—music, for instance; I'm very interested in music. The most important thing for a priest is to be able to deal with the people. I think I still have a lot to learn about that. I think most of the time I'm too easy. But it's better to have charity for the people. Maybe the trouble is that being a Rotuman I get too familiar with the people. I really should keep a certain distance, but I find it difficult to do it. Maybe it's harder for a young fellow. The old people don't like the priest to be too easy going—they like him to be a priest. It's because they're used to the French fathers, I think. The only trouble is, if you're strict the people will be scared of you and stay away from you. However, I think the Rotuman children respect you even if you are familiar with them, unlike the Fijian children.

As a priest you can't be perfectly happy, but when you come back from talking to people as a priest, you feel good because you've done something worthwhile. One shouldn't be surprised if he isn't perfectly happy, because God doesn't intend you to be perfectly happy in this life.

In Rotuma we have two denominations, and in order to be successful you should treat them both equally. If the Wesleyans see that the priest is kind to them, they may feel more sympathetic to the Catholic church.

I also think the priest should be respectful to the chiefs. I think the French fathers were wrong in the way they treated the chiefs. After all, the people look up to the chiefs and if you want to get their cooperation, it's better if the chiefs are favourably disposed towards you. Otherwise they just try to stay away.

I think a man goes on learning until he dies. I've done some things seriously wrong—about Rotuman custom—since I've returned to Rotuma. Like one time when I was riding on my bicycle past a *mamasa* [welcoming ceremony]. I went right past without slowing down. I felt very bad about that. It's respectful to at least slow down, if not get off your bicycle and walk until you are past. That shows that you feel something about what's happening, not like it doesn't mean anything to you. The worst thing was that they stopped me near the end of the road and asked me to join them and eat; I really felt ashamed. In New Zealand they might say that is silly, but in Rotuma it's the accepted thing and I think it's proper to follow the custom. I wouldn't do anything like that again. I think that some of the Rotumans who get educated ignore the proper customs of etiquette and I think the old Rotuman customs should be kept.

(Age 35)

I lived together with my parents and brothers and sisters. Although my mother and father were very poor, they always did their best to look after us, and I can remember that they were very kind. That was a happy time for me when I was living at home. I would play with my brothers and sisters every day, and we really loved each other very much. When I was about 19 years old, I took a trip to Fiji and left my family in Rotuma. I got quickly discouraged though, and any time that I wasn't doing something to keep myself busy, I would think of my brothers and sisters and the way we had lived together. Thinking of them made me want to come back to Rotuma. After I was in Fiji for six months, I gave up and decided to come back home.

After I came back home, I started to go out with my friends every night, and finally I met a girl and fell in love with her. I wanted to marry her and told my mother and father about it, but they didn't like the idea because they said her ways were not so good. So I gave up that girl and looked for another one. I finally found one and got married to her.

A year after I was married my father died, leaving only myself, my mother and younger brothers. My older brother had already gotten married and moved to his wife's home. So when my father died I was the only one left to look after my mother and brothers. I was only 22 years old at the time. After my father died I felt very bad. We were very poor and it seemed like such a big burden for me to look after my mother and brothers properly. Nearly every night I would lie awake thinking of the next day and try to plan ahead. I would think of the time when my father was still living and sometimes I felt so discouraged that I thought I was going to die. That was the most unhappy time of my life.

One day one of my brothers died, and I thought about him for three years before I was able to forget him. I continued to look after my brothers until they were all married, leaving only my mother, my wife and I. My wife and I now have eight children. But I am still living very poorly.

I don't want to be a *fa es ho'aga*, but I do it because I love my mother. This *ho'aga* came from her side and by taking it I'll always be able to remember her, even after she has died. We are living very poorly like this just because when we were small the schools in Rotuma were no good, so we didn't learn anything.

(Age 34)

The first time I can remember is when I was about 5 years old. At that time I lived with my mother and father, brothers and sisters, and my father's cousins. I think our family was the biggest one in our district at that time. There were about fifteen people including me. From the time I was 5 years old until I was around 13, life was very easy for me. That was because there were many people in our family to work, and they said I was only a child and they didn't try to get me to work. Nobody told me what to do and I always did as I wanted.

My mother and father sent me to school when I was 6 years old. I liked school very much, because I made many friends and we used to play together every day. During that time I know I was a very bad boy. That was because my father and mother had always let me do anything that I wanted, so I didn't care about anyone. When I was in school I used to play all the time, but I didn't want to listen to what the teacher was saying. Sometimes the teacher had to force me to stop playing and sit down. Every day, after school, I used to destroy other people's property—things like flowers that people had planted near their houses.

When I became an adolescent, I was still the same way. Sometimes I wanted to eat something that didn't belong to me or our family, but I'd take it anyway. The people were always angry at me and said that I was a bad boy, but as far as I was concerned it was good fun. I knew what I was doing was very bad, but I kept on doing it because I thought it was fun.

When I was about 19 years old I went to Fiji and joined the army. I liked being in the army very much; it was more fun than the time that I was in Rotuma. In the army I was always with my friends and sometimes we all got drunk together and sang songs, and other times we got drunk and we all would go to a dance together.

After being in the army for nearly two years I decided to return to Rotuma in time for the Christmas holidays. I came back home and saw my mother and father again, and we all spent a very happy Christmas together. Every night I used to go with my friends to the beach games, and one night I met a girl. I looked at her and loved her right away. I liked the way she talked and the way she acted, so every night during that Christmas holiday I went to be with her. One night she asked me whether I really loved her or not, and I answered by telling her I loved her with all my heart and soul. After having been with her every night during the playtime (*mane'a*), my mind was made up and I didn't care about anything else, only her. I thought of her every day and when I left her, I counted the hours and minutes until I would meet her again the next night. On the last night of the holiday season I listened to the way she talked to me and I knew that she really loved me.

One night I went to her and we talked the whole night, and I slept there and the next day I stayed at her home, *fu'u* [literally, “to stay”; an informal type of marital commitment]. Soon after that we were married. I lived with her in her home for about two years and then we moved to my mother's home. I liked married life from the beginning. Living with the one I loved made me very happy. It also made me happy to have children and I like living with my family.

Unluckily, starting in 1954 until today, I have suffered from filariasis and filarial fever. Having a family to take care of makes it even harder for me. But I think now that the reason I'm sick is because of the way I used to act when I was a youth—always destroying things. I think I'm being punished by God for all the bad things I did when I was younger. I'll never treat my own sons the way my mother and father treated me, letting me do whatever I wanted without ever punishing me.

(Age 31)

The first time I can remember is when I was living with my mother, father and brother. I was older than my brother. My mother and father were very kind to us and we always got what we wanted because we were the only two children. We really loved each other very much. They also gave us much freedom, and it was easy to do what we wanted.

When I was 6 years old my parents sent me to school. I can remember going to school with my friends, and on our way we would play on the road and were very happy. I liked school at first because I got to know a lot of children I didn't know before and made friends with them; we got to love each other just like brothers and sisters. Also in school we learned how to do things and I liked that too. Before I went to school I didn't know anything, but in school I learned how to protect my body from sickness, and I learned how to cure myself if I got sick.

When I was around 13 years old I started to go out with the other boys at night. After going out with them for a few weeks I changed my mind about school and began to hate it. I wanted to go out with the boys instead. So when I was 14 years old I told my father that I didn't want to go to school and asked him if I could stay home. I told him that I wasn't really learning anything in school and that he was just wasting his money by sending me, and that it would be better if I could stay home and help him with his plantations.

Dad agreed that I could stop going to school if I wanted, so I stayed home and helped him. I went with him to the bush during the day, but in the night I always went with the boys and looked for fun. I was happy to be out of school, because I didn't have anything to worry about. When I was in school the teacher would give us homework, and I would worry, because I knew that if I didn't do my homework, or made too many

mistakes, the teacher would punish me. After I stopped going to school, life seemed much easier and I didn't worry about anything. Sometimes when I went out with the boys at night we used to joke with the girls. It made me feel happy to be near the girls and joke with them.

I stayed like this until I was about 18 years old, having a good time with the adolescent boys and girls in my village. After that some of my friends went to Fiji, and I felt that I would like to go too because I knew I would miss them and wouldn't be happy. I asked my father to send me to Fiji and he did, when I was about 19 years old.

After I was in Fiji for a while, I got a job as a sailor on an overseas boat. I sailed to some big places, like Australia and America. There I saw the most wonderful things I had ever seen in my whole life. On my first visit to one of those countries I couldn't believe it. It was so wonderful that I thought I might be coming to enter heaven. The moving of the lights and the colours were fantastic. The first trip I was afraid, but when I got used to it I liked it very much. I saw plenty of beautiful and exciting things and for a while I couldn't think of anything else. I think that when I was sailing it was the happiest time of my life. When you're a sailor you can see plenty of new and exciting things. I also saw the most beautiful girls that I had ever seen. Some of them were so beautiful that when I saw their faces I couldn't believe they were real people.

After I had been sailing for a few years I got a note from my mother. I started to read it and in the first line I read that my father had died. I dropped the note and started to cry and couldn't finish the letter. I thought about the time I was with my father and knew that I would really miss him. On that day I couldn't do anything—just look at the sky and cry and think of him, knowing I would never see him again.

Soon after that I gave up sailing and came back home to take care of my mother because I knew she was the only one left and there was no one else who would look after her properly. After I came home I decided it would be better to get married, because I had already seen all the things I wanted to see when I was a sailor. So in 1955 I got married.

I like married life very much, and I am taking care of my wife, mother, and two children. I don't think of anything else except taking care of them now, because I've already seen what I've wanted. I'll stay here in Rotuma looking after my wife and children until God takes me away from the world. I think it's good for a Rotuman boy to sail for a while and see some of the world before coming back home to settle down.

(Age 31)

I lived together with my parents and two sisters; I was the oldest of the children. Between the ages of 3 and 5 years old, I always used to go and play with the children who lived next to us. Sometimes, if I went too far from home, my mother would punish me when I came back home.

When I was 6 years old my mother and father sent me to school and I liked it very much because I could leave home with the children and not come back home until the afternoon, but my parents would never punish me for it. Every night when I went to bed I would think about the next day—hoping it would come quickly so that I could be with my friends again. I liked very much to be with the other children every day because it was so much fun to play together. Sometimes I didn't eat my lunch in school because I spent the lunchtime playing without stopping to eat.

When I was 10 years old my father wanted me to board at school so I did. About a year after that my father died and I felt very sad for a long time. It was about two years before I really felt better. I liked boarding school at the beginning, but after a couple of years I didn't like it any more because there wasn't much food to eat. So one day I ran home to my mother. She told me to go back to school, but I told her that I give up. My mother got married again and I stayed with her and her husband. Every day I used to go with him to the bush and I felt very comfortable working with him. My stepfather used to let me do anything that I wanted, sometimes I would go with my friends to the bush and didn't do any work—only play.

When I was 16 years old, I left my mother and her husband and came to live with my auntie in another district. She was very kind to me in every way, but I found out that it was different than living with my real mother. When I was with my mother, I could do anything I wanted

without asking, but when I lived with my aunt I was afraid to do as I pleased without asking her first. That's because she was my auntie and not my mother. The way I talked to her was different than the way I would talk with my mother. When I talked with my mother I didn't show respect, but when I talked with my aunt I had to be respectful. Also, I was able to joke with my mother, but I was afraid to joke with my auntie.

When I was 21 years old I got married, and at the beginning I didn't like it as much as when I was single because I was used to going out in the night instead of staying home. After I got married I always had to stay home with my wife. That was something new for me and I didn't like it. After we had our first two children, I got used to staying home and by that time I liked married life. I wouldn't like to live like I did when I was single again. I love my children and I don't like to leave them. I want to be with them all the time.

(Age 31)

I was the eldest of eight children. The first things I can remember is when I was about 5 years old. At that time there was only my brother, who was about 3, and myself. My parents were very much devoted to me. I can remember very little strapping when I was young, even if I did mischievous things. We bullied boys much younger than ourselves but were never punished for it like other children. If you don't strap your child for bullying a neighbour's child, it's likely to result in a misunderstanding with the neighbours, but that was seldom done to me.

I went to school when I was 6. I was so attached to my mother that very often after I first started school I would run back home. After I got adjusted to going to school—maybe after about two months—things got better. I wasn't very active as far as joining the other boys in running around and playing games. As far as I can remember I did well in my first year. The teacher wasn't very conscientious, maybe because of the poor pay. He used to give us our lessons and then go off fishing or something. We all feared him, because when he came back to class after going fishing, if he found that the children didn't do their work properly, he strapped them. He was a domineering type.

Just before the end of this first year in school, in 1936, my parents moved to Davuilevu, near Suva. My father was sent there by the Methodist Church to undergo a theological course. I entered the Davuilevu primary school. I found school quite different there than what I had experienced in Rotuma, perhaps because the teachers there were mission teachers and had a very friendly approach to teaching. They were very understanding. One was a European lady and the rest were Fijian teachers. I was placed in the first grade, under the care of a male Fijian teacher, and I found him very much to my liking. I spent six years at this

school. For the first three years I stayed with my parents and there were very few changes because I could always go home after school. The main drawback during this time was language, because teaching was mostly in Fijian. Once I mastered the language, which didn't take very long, I found my way about in school and with other children in the community. I didn't do very well in the lower classes. The highest I ever got to was fourth place (out of thirty-two) in Class 5.

At the end of 1939 my parents returned to Rotuma, after my father completed his course. I was left to live with Rotuman boys. They had a separate hostel there, more or less organised by Wilson Inia. Then I realised the change. I suppose my life seemed empty with both my parents gone. But since the boys were all Rotumans, and Wilson was there to look after us, it didn't take me long to adjust—about a month or two. The new “family” was quite an interesting one. There were twenty-one of us, and we had a head boy (prefect) and we had to plant to feed ourselves, apart from the money our parents used to send over. This money was kept by Inia. Organisation was very good at that time. We were well looked after. He was very careful about how our money was used and he made sure that none of the boys ran out of money; once a boy would run out, he would inform their parents and get them to send more. We looked upon him as someone who represented our parents, especially in a far away country.

Life in that little dormitory was very well organised. We used to work on the plantation very early in the morning, from six to half-past seven, and then go to school after that. After school, at 3 o'clock, we would go back home and again go to the plantation from 4 to 5 o'clock. After that we would shower and have our dinner. In the evenings we had study time, which was compulsory, from around 7 to 9 o'clock. That was the

schedule on Mondays through Fridays. On Saturdays we washed our clothes and maybe went to the movies if we had funds. On Sunday we went to church and Sunday school. I liked going to church and Sunday school then. I lived with these boys for two years like this.

At the end of 1940, Wilson went to a conference in India, and we were left on our own. Things became very badly disorganised then, particularly the financial side. There was no one to look after it. Each boy had to look after his own. Wilson returned in 1941, but unfortunately he got sick and was laid up in the hospital. When he recovered he went to Rotuma for a holiday, and because of the disorganisation most of the boys left, but I stayed along with three others. Eighteen of the boys left and went to look for jobs. I was too young to go and look for a job then. I was thinking that I would wait until the following year—1942—and would go to Suva then and try to see what I could do about a job.

But in 1942, fortunately, one of my uncles came to Davuilevu to take the theological course, and my parents suggested that I stay with him and his wife. I noticed a great change in life from the hostel to this family. He was rather harsh in his ways, and I found life very hard living with him because I had to work hard, doing planting and hard jobs to please him. I stayed with them for the whole of 1942, and in 1943 another uncle of mine, who was a schoolteacher, came over to Fiji to teach in a nearby school, so my parents suggested that I go and stay with him. Although I found it hard, life was more or less organised living with this uncle. I had to travel three miles to school every day. One thing I liked about staying with him was that I was back again into an organised life, more or less like when Wilson was at the hostel. Besides, there were two other chaps of my age living with them. Although my uncle was a strict disciplinarian, there

were three of us to share the punishment, so it was not so bad. In fact I was quite happy living with them.

Towards the end of 1943, when I was in Class 7B, my uncle suggested that I go and board at the school. At first I wasn't very keen on the idea, because I would be the only Rotuman there. The others were mostly Fijian. I would have been the first Rotuman to board there. But my uncle thought it would be better for my studies. I was doing quite well in school, but the traveling tired me out and I often went to bed early without doing any reading. So in 1944 I left to board in this school.

In spite of the previous experience I had had living with the Rotuman boys, I found this very different, and much to my dislike. There were several reasons—first, I suppose, because of the complete Fijian society, and the hard manual labour we had to do. Most important of all was because by then I had an attraction for Suva, and I realised I had a few very close relations in Suva whom I could live with. I was about 15 years old at the time. Another thing that drew me to Suva was the fact that the Rotuman labour corps was doing war work there at the time, so there was a large Rotuman community there, most of whom were boys roughly about my age or a little older.

During that year of boarding, I began to spend quite a bit of my time in Suva, especially during the weekends. I very much wanted to go to Suva then, but I stayed on in school for the remainder of the year. During one period though, for about two weeks, I went away from school and tried to get a job, but I couldn't find one. I even tried to enter the army, but was told I was too young, so I had to go back to school. In spite of all this leaving school and going to Suva, I came in second in my class in 1944, and the headmaster was holding me as sort of a prospect for the Fijian Qualifying Examination (FQE), which I would take after the

following year. I wanted to leave school, but the headmaster talked me into staying for the next year—after Class 8—in order to sit for the exam. At that time the FQE was very highly regarded in Fiji because it was the only exam they had. After passing that, you could become a trainee for almost any job in Fiji—go to the medical school, get a government job, etc. So I stayed in boarding school for the next year.

I didn't do much that year by way of school work. I spent most of my time in Suva and created so much of a problem—staying out of school for weeks at a time—that the headmaster finally decided not to let me sit for the examination. I was almost on the point of leaving school of my own accord when, towards the end of 1945, my uncle, the teacher, was transferred to my school. He had heard of all the reports and threatened to send me back to Rotuma if I was to leave school. I dreaded that, and decided to stay in school for another year. I had to stay back in Class 8 for another year. I concentrated on my work and was selected to sit the Qualifying Examination. I passed the exam at the end of 1946. After I passed the exam I went right to Suva, before school closed down, and got a job. I didn't know I had passed and was awaiting the result. I got a job sorting mail in the post office. I worked there for two weeks and quit because I didn't like it, so I got a job as an office boy in a legal firm. I didn't like that job much, either. I would have stayed there, but three weeks after I had joined that firm I learned that I had passed the exam, and I decided to go into the Nasinu Training College and become a teacher.

I always wanted to become a teacher. The first impression that I wanted to be a teacher was one day when I about 8 or 9 years old and I saw Ratu Edward Cakabou. He was a visiting teacher then. I was more or less attracted by the man's personal appearance, and I thought that if I

were to become a teacher I might one day get a job like his, which was very highly regarded. He was highly respected, largely because of his royal blood. I was unaware of that, though, and thought the great homage paid to him was because of his position, and that anyone who got to such a position would be treated likewise. Secondly, because through my long years in school I had come across many kinds of teachers and I felt that I could join the competition and be a good one.

At the beginning of 1947, I went to Nasinu. I found the life there very much to my liking, perhaps because I was living with people of my own age. I also had the pleasure of knowing that I was pursuing something that would someday make a difference between me and a typical Rotuman. The longer I stayed there the more interested I became in the teaching profession. Because of that I settled down to work and did rather well. At the end of the two-year course I made up my mind to come to Rotuma first thing, and at the end of 1947 I was appointed to the Malhaha school. I stayed at the Malhaha school, teaching Class 6 most of the time, until 1953 when I was temporarily transferred to the Motusa school. Towards the end of 1953 I returned to the Malhaha school—the new one which had just been built. I taught Class 6 until the end of 1954, when I took over Class 7. At the end of 1955 I was awarded the Rotuma Development Fund Scholarship to take teacher's training in New Zealand.

When I had returned back to Rotuma in 1948, I was at a loss with regard to Rotuman customs, because of the long years away. I had been away for more than twelve years and hadn't returned home during that time. When I returned I had to undergo a long period of adaptation to Rotuman society. I didn't seem to like the company of the adolescent boys much because of the way they went around, so I kept pretty much to myself. It took me just about the whole of 1949, but I adapted and became

a Rotuman myself. I took up the ways of the youth and became very active in most of the social undertakings of the adolescent boys.

In Fiji my only relationship with girls was of a social type—like school socials. At first I tried to be straightforward with the girls in Rotuma, but that was not the practice. So I quickly changed over to their methods of approach. Late in 1950, I got attracted to one of the girls. This girl had been in Fiji for a while and she was somewhat straightforward—the Fijian style, I suppose. There was no real courtship at all. We met in secret three times and consequently, on the third meeting, she came to my place with me. My parents didn't like it, since my father was holding an office in the Methodist Church here and she was a Catholic. I suppose because of religious reasons and decency, they agreed to let us get married, and so we were properly married in the Methodist Church. Her father was dead then, and her mother didn't have much choice in the matter.

The marriage was rather a broken one—we were more often separated than living together. My assumption is that the girl's mother was strongly urging her daughter to go back to the Catholic church. I think she was more or less convinced that would be the right thing to do, and she tried to win me over to her side. I was not prepared to make a change, nor were my parents and my close relations. She started going to her mother and staying there for long periods, which, I suppose, gave me too much opportunity to flirt around with Methodist girls from my side. Now and again she would return but things never got any better. And on the last occasion when she went home, in 1954, we separated for good. We got officially divorced after I returned from New Zealand. I had two children by this woman—both boys. I have the youngest with me—he's 6 years old, and she has the oldest—he's 8 years old. When she went away for the final time, she was carrying the youngest one, and I didn't make any attempt to

claim the child because most of my relations thought it would be bad for the children making a tug-o-war over them. Nothing more was said about our marriage until I returned from New Zealand. The court decision was for each of us to have one son, and ordinarily, according to Rotuman custom, I should have gotten the eldest one, but she had already sent him to Fiji to stay with her sister, so I took the youngest one.

I left for New Zealand in 1956. It took me almost six months to adapt myself—particularly to the social life there. The college I went to was co-educational and residential. Social life there was very high—very advanced in comparison to what I had experienced in Rotuma. Here, there are a lot of restrictions between boys and girls, but there, there was almost complete freedom. I liked it from the beginning, but several things kept me out of the scene. One was that I was conscious all the time that I had been sent by the Rotuman people and I felt obliged to accomplish something and bring it back to them. My main aim was to succeed in my studies. The other thing that kept me out of the social life for the first six months was the attitude of the Europeans in Fiji and Rotuma for the natives. I felt inferior and was very reluctant to take an active part in the social life. But this inferior feeling gradually wore off and I began to make friends and got to know most of the students. I found that there was in fact very little feeling of colour superiority among the European students and the faculty. After the first six months I was very well adapted—too well adapted in fact.

I think that one of the things that made me popular there was the part I played in college sports. They're not quite like the Americans, but they're quite keen in sports. I played rugby as one of the first fifteen (first team varsity); participated in track and field—I threw the shotput, javelin and discus; I played soccer on the first eleven, and finally became a

representative player for the South Auckland County provincial team. I began to take a very lively part in most of the social functions there. I went to nearly all the social dances and joined several college groups. At first I was very reluctant to partake in dating, but I was more or less encouraged by the friendly response of the girls. To be honest, when I started dating I was still conscious of the fact that I was different. I was always sure that a boyfriend of mine and his date were along. Soon I got used to dating on my own and my self-consciousness died out. In fact I got really used to dating, and perhaps I overdid it. I felt that it was an honour and a privilege to go around with European girls, since it was something that was not practiced here in Fiji. But even then I felt that it was just a temporary sort of thing. I was never convinced that any of these girls would ever be willing to lead an island life, so I felt that there was no sense proceeding with a romantic affair where one finds it hard to turn back. For me it was just like playing a game. There were times when girls got infatuated and mistook it for love. Maybe it's because they were young—only around 19 or 20. I made sure to tell them the facts about island life and made it clear to them that it was hopeless—that they could never be happy in an island life. I considered staying in New Zealand to get an advanced teacher's certificate, but I never considered staying there permanently.

In school, those subjects concerned with education I found to my liking from the beginning and I did well in them. I also took courses in art, science and English during the first year. The only thing I really found tough was English. I finished the two-year program and received the certificate. After completing these two years in New Zealand, I returned to Fiji. That was in 1957. In 1958 I taught Form III in a school for Fijian boys in Lodonu, Fiji. In 1959 I returned to Rotuma and have taught at the Malhaha school—Form IV—since then.

I think the part that influenced my attitude toward life most was the two years I spent in New Zealand. In New Zealand I found much more freedom than in Rotuma. When they say things in New Zealand, they have very little concern for the opinions of others, and people feel free to express themselves. In Rotuma the teacher is the source of education—and it is the same in Fiji. I became a very independent thinking person, although that has slowly been counteracted by my staying here in Rotuma. I feel that the longer I stay here the less independent I'll become.

(Age 31)

I lived with my father and mother and my sisters and brothers. When I was a small boy, I was very happy because my father was a catechist and I was always moving from village to village and district to district. I had plenty of friends and girlfriends all over the island. We then moved to one place and stayed there to live. I was very unhappy when we stayed there because I liked to go from place to place. Then my father died when I was about 13 years old. After my father died we started to live very poorly. I thought about my father for five years, because he was a kind man to us and gave us whatever we wanted. I felt bad because if I wanted something I could not get it and I was too young to work for it. That's why I thought about him for so long.

When I was 18 or 19 and could work to get money, I started living happily again. I started trying to make girlfriends and my life became very happy. Then I found out that it's better to get married because I was getting old and I needed somebody to take care of my clothes and food. When I was young, sometimes I would come home and would have to cook my food because my mother was busy. Then I got married and found out that married life was the best because I had somebody to look after my needs.

Now I'm chief of a district and it's the first time in my life I feel really bad. Being a chief is hard and I'm very unhappy. The night that I found out I was the new chief, four days from then I could still not remember and think about what I was doing—just like I had no brain.

One day I went to the bush to weed my garden and left my knife stuck in a tree. I didn't feel like working so I just prepared my food and when I finished I couldn't remember where my knife was.

Now I've been chief for three weeks and still have trouble thinking and I worry too much. It's better to live like I did before than to be chief. If you're a good chief the people will all like you, but if you are a bad chief they will hate you. I'm worried about whether I'll be a good chief or not; a worried life is no good.

(Age 31)

I'll begin to tell the story of my life from the time I was 6 years old. I had four half-sisters and two half-brothers, and I was the only child from my parents. They loved me very dearly and gave me anything that I asked for and did anything that I wanted them to do. I felt that they loved me more than my half-brothers and half-sisters. The way my parents treated them was very different from the way they treated me.

We lived apart from the villages; I had no children to play with, so I would always follow my father to his plantation in the bush. While he was working, I used to play by myself in the bush. Sometimes I wouldn't go with my father to his plantation but would stay at home. My favourite game was to build toy sailing boats and take them down to the sea and sail them all by myself. I was very happy during my childhood days, with nothing in mind but sailing boats.

Before I was 7 years old, I entered the Malhaha District School. My first day in school I was very sad. I was thinking about my sailing boats. I was not used to having a lot of kids to play with—I was used to playing by myself. After school I came back home and my father asked me if I liked school. I said with my lips, "Yes," but in my mind, "No." I already hated school on the first day. About three months later, Christmas time arrived, and I was very happy because there would be holidays and I wouldn't have to go to school again until the next year.

After Christmas I went back to school again and was very unhappy. I still hated kids. I was used to being with no other kids to order me around. So from this time on I started to be a bad boy. I was going to school with my half-sister, who was 16 years old. She always took my side in school. I didn't learn anything but how to fight. Starting from this year, nobody in my village liked me. Even now, if you ask anybody whether I

was a good kid or not, they'll tell you! As soon as people saw me playing with their kids or coming near their house, they would chase me away.

When I was 8 years old, my half-sister and I went to Suva to stay with my brother and his wife, who had gone to Suva during Christmas time. My brother's wife was Catholic, and they liked the idea that I should go to the Brother's School [a Catholic mission school]. This was the time that I started to learn some English. I was only nine months in school, and then Master [Wilson] Inia came back from Australia and took me to the Methodist mission school at Davuilevu, twelve miles outside of Suva. At this time, I started to love school because I had a little bit of knowledge in my mind.

I was second in my Class 3 exams, and first in my Class 4 exams. I went into Class 5 in the same year. I remained in each class for only a half-year, coming in first each time, until Class 8. When I was in Class 4, my parents came to Suva because they loved me very dearly. My father would come to Davuilevu every Saturday and give me about a pound to spend. I started to go to movies then by sneaking out of school. As soon as I started to go to the movies, my work began to suffer, and I always thought of what I had seen. In Class 8, I went to the hospital for three months to be treated for sores on my legs and spent three more months at home. Then I told my father I wanted to go to agricultural school, but after nine months there I ran away.

Then while I was staying with my father in Suva, I met an American sergeant one day, in 1941 or 1942, who asked me if I could find him a girl for the night. I found him a Samoan girl who lived in our apartment house, and he tried to pay me for my service. I refused, but I asked him if he could find me a job, so he told me to wait for him at 8 o'clock the following morning. Then he drove away with this girl in his

jeep. The next morning, my father got up early to go fishing, and instead of going off to school, I waited for the American. He came by just after 8 o'clock and told me to get in his jeep. I thought we would be stopping at the American base at Samabula, but after he drove past Samabula I asked him where we were going. He said that he was stationed at Nadi and he was taking me to be his assistant. I began to feel a little bit afraid.

My father, in the meantime, had checked with the administrators at Davuilevu and discovered that I had not come there. He reported me missing to the police and posters with my picture were distributed all over the island. Within a week, the police came to the American base at Nadi and asked for me. The sergeant and I went back to Suva, and we arranged properly with my father for me to go work for him at Nadi. For the next eight years or so, I worked for this sergeant, whose job was to check American mechanical equipment throughout the Pacific. We went to the Gilberts, Carolines, Marshalls, Samoa, and Hawai'i, and even as far as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Vancouver. At the end of this time I was a technical sergeant myself.

Then one day my boss told me that he was going to the Carolines to be discharged, and at this same time there was a demand for a person who could take care of some outboard motors and other mechanical equipment and who could speak a little bit of Gilbertese, to conduct a scientific expedition to the Gilbert group. My boss suggested that I go with them and then rejoin him in the Marshalls and we would go "home" to America together.

I spent several months with the expedition in the Gilberts, and when they were preparing to leave, I told the expedition leader that I was staying on. He tried to persuade me to go, realising that there was a woman involved, but I refused. So they left without me.

This girl and I ran away together and stayed at the Mission house. Her parents, and the parents of her fiancé, who had gone to another island in the group, made magic to break up our relationship. One day we had a fight about my fountain pen, something very trivial, and she went away. Then I made magic at her, and now she is crippled and will never be able to get a husband. If I should go back and touch her or talk to her, she would recover, but she's crippled now.

Then I ran away with another girl on a boat to Suva, and when we got to the Suva we discovered that I didn't have a landing permit for her. She was forced to stay on the boat for two days, while the matter was deliberated by the Fiji administration. I wasn't married to this girl, and the ruling was that she would be allowed to land, but if we weren't married within a month, I would have to go to jail for six months and she would be sent back to her island. That is why we got married. If it weren't for that, I would never marry.

(Age 30)

I am the youngest of four children. The first thing I can remember is going to a wedding. I was about 3 years old at the time. I used to sleep with my mother when I was young. It's a custom in Rotuma for young children to sleep with their mother until they go to school, or until there's another baby. Since I was the youngest, I slept with her until I went to school. I was breast fed until I was nearly 3 years old.

I started school when I was 5, one year before I was supposed to. My older brother was in school and I wanted to go, so my mother said all right. The first year I wasn't on the school roll. The first year I think I liked it, but towards the second, third and fourth years I hated school, but then I couldn't leave. I hated reading because of the way it was taught—by the letter-sound method. I was pretty good at numbers, but most of the work in the lower grades had to do with reading. Another thing was the kinds of “torture” the teachers would impose. If we didn't know our spelling lesson, for instance, the teacher would have the boy next to you pull your ears, and you would pull his if he didn't know his lesson.

Because of being the youngest, I was a pet in the family. They treated me more or less like a grandchild. When I was 6, my next oldest brother was 16. If anything ever happened between me and my brothers, my parents would always shield me from them. If we had a fish that wasn't enough for all, I looked upon it as my due. Of course mother and father would agree. If they went to a party or wedding, I expected to be taken along. If my older brother or sister asked me to go to the store for something, and I was too lazy to go, I wouldn't, because my mother and father wouldn't make me go and they couldn't force me. Sometimes they would disagree, like if Dad would like me to go to the bush with him, but Mom didn't want me to because of the mosquitoes and being afraid I

might get hurt. Sometimes I would run away and join him, and I would come back in the evening clinging to Father, because Mom might give me a whack. It was Dad who would reconcile things. Sometimes it was the other way around, if I would go with Mom when Dad didn't want me to go. If one of them wanted to punish me for something, I would run to the other and they would protect me. It was very seldom that both of them wanted to punish me. The only times that would happen is when I would go off with my friends and stay away until after dark, and they would have to come searching for me.

I never was pals with my brother and sisters because of the age difference. My eldest sister was fifteen years my senior, the next sister was twelve years, and my brother ten years. It was very seldom that I was with them for any length of time. I was mostly with Mom and Dad. They didn't regard me much like a brother. They regarded me as belonging to Mom and Dad and not to them. Sometimes one of them would have to stay with me while the others went out to work. I always chose my eldest sister, because she was the only one who didn't tease me. My other sister used to pretend she was going to leave me and I had to chase her around the house.

One other reason I was never happy in school in the early grades was because I was always in the bottom of the class, because I was a year younger than the other kids, and besides I was very naughty. I was one of those little bullies. My uncle lived right next to the school and he was a subchief; I could run to his house and if I wanted to I could swear at everyone and they couldn't touch me. Besides being at the bottom of the class, my elder siblings used to say that I wasn't any good and wasn't getting anywhere. In the 4th grade I repeated the year and that gave me a chance to catch up, and from then on I held my own. I had two years in

the 5th grade because that was the top grade in the schools in Rotuma and I was too young to leave school—only 10 years old—so I had to stay in school.

During my second year in the 5th grade—it was 1941—one of the teachers left to join the service in Fiji, so the other teacher asked me to take a class. For three months I taught Class 3. I was only 11 years old at the time. My pay was 12 shillings a month. In 1942 Wilson Inia came to Rotuma and took about six of the best students, including myself, to coach for the Queen Victoria School examination. I was the youngest of them. At the end of 1942 we sat for the examination, and myself and two others passed. But they said that I was too young to be accepted, so in 1943 I went to the Paptea school for about a month. Then I was having severe headaches every morning about 9 o'clock for about three weeks. I would cry out loud until school was over about 3 o'clock, without any inhibitions at all. The AMO [Assistant Medical Officer] recommended that I leave school, so I did. After I left school, the headaches stopped completely. Later on in that year another teacher came to the Malhaha school and I went back for the third term.

I had ear trouble at that time too, and maybe it was the wind in Paptea—that's the windy part of the island—or maybe it was a fear of the schoolteacher, who was pretty rough. He used to walk all over the class, hitting the students over the head with a stick if they didn't know their lessons. Sometimes he would hardly give you time to answer.

At the end of the year I sat for the entrance examination again and passed, but I didn't come top and missed getting the Rotuman scholarship. The next year, in 1944, I went to Fiji, but I didn't go to Queen Victoria School. I went to Lelean Memorial School at Davuilevu and they placed me in Class 5. This was my fifth year in Class 5, but it was a more

advanced school. I was 14 years old at the time. In the first year I was not very happy because I didn't know English well enough, and I knew no Fijian. For the first few weeks I knew nothing about what the teacher said. Then gradually I got to know some Fijian and my English got better and I got to know some boys. This was the first time that I was absolutely separated from home. Many of the things you did at home you couldn't do at the boarding school. We had to wash our own clothes and look after our own things. We had to learn to be completely independent. The first two years were spent getting on my feet and adjusting to the new life. I didn't do badly those first two years. I came in second in my class both years. The third year I was well adjusted and did well. I came in top in the end-of-the-year examination. After the fourth year, I sat for the Fijian Qualifying Examinations after coming in tops in my class. I got through and was selected to go to medical school, but at the time I didn't know what I wanted to do, so I went back to secondary school at Davuilevu. Then I went into Form III. At the end of that year I came back to Rotuma for a holiday at Christmas.

When I came back I was shy at first, but soon I got my feet, and realised that I wasn't so bad after all. I had been away and had learned something, and the girls looked up to me, and I was able to take advantage of them quite easily. My emotions were very intense. I really went for it. It was new and I certainly enjoyed it. To break it off was very painful.

That was my first taste of adult life. My friends had all finished school and some of them were already married. I was 18 years old at the time. I learned to smoke and drink at that time. My mom was still alive then and she still treated me like a pet.

At one of the beach games I met a girl who I really thought I liked. I told my mother that I didn't want to go back to school the next year. She

said it was up to me. Just before the boat came, my elder brother, who was the money earner in the family—cutting copra—sent over my school fees and paid for my passage on the boat. It was he who supported me through school when my father was getting too old to work. He learned what had happened but he flatly refused to accept it. He said that this would be one time that he would have his way after all he had done—that I had to go back to school, so I went back. I went, but I didn't intend to go to school. I planned to collect the money my brother had sent and go to Suva to work. My very close friend was with me and we decided to do this together. We were a month late to school. We went to the headmaster and asked for the money our respective brothers had sent, telling him our intentions, and also asked him for testimonials. I don't mean to boast, but we were the two best brains in the school. He looked at us and flatly refused. He said he would send the money back to our brothers and wouldn't give us a testimonial—for one thing it was past the time for us to apply for government jobs. So that ended our job hunting and we went back to school. That was a tough year for us, because we had had a taste of outside life. We were real smokers by then, and we weren't permitted to smoke in school, so we had to smoke in secret. As a matter of fact we were caught once and were given four hours of hard labour.

After Form V, I took the Cambridge School Certificate Examination and passed. Ordinarily it's given at the end of Form VI, but you can sit for it at the end of Form V if your teacher thinks you have a chance.

After that year I came back to Rotuma for another holiday—to renew my acquaintances. Only this time I was a bit older and realised that marriage was out of the question. I had no job. This time I enjoyed a bit of the *mane'a* [the play time during the Christmas holidays], but I was

somewhat disappointed. The first time I came, I thought this was the life. This time I felt differently. I still liked it, but not enough to want to stay. For one thing I was thinking about getting a government job.

I didn't want to go back to school, partially because the last year I didn't have a very good record—smoking and acting up, and I felt that my presence might be a bad influence on the younger boys. The last two years I had been a school prefect—an older boy who looks after the younger boys and directs them. Also, my father was getting too old to support me and my brother had gotten married and had started a family of his own, so I couldn't expect him to support me much longer, so I decided it was about time I got a job and support myself.

I went back and saw the headmaster and he asked me what I wanted to do, and I told him I wanted to go to the teacher's training school at Nasinu. The government supplies board, tuition and pocket money (10 shillings per month). All you have to supply is your clothes. I still don't know why I decided to become a teacher. Maybe it was because of my experience of teaching when I was 11. It might have been in the back of my brain that I liked teaching.

I had more freedom in training college, so I liked it better. I dare say I was very happy during those two years. I did very well. I suspect I was either first or second the last year, but no positions were announced. I was a member of the student council the last year.

After getting my teacher's certificate, I was appointed to Queen Victoria School as an assistant master. That was a good opportunity for me because I worked with people who were experts in their various fields. I learned quite a bit there from the masters themselves. I taught three years there and after that I went to a training college in New Zealand; it was a two-year course. I studied in a general training program and one

year of the university course directed by the University of Auckland. New Zealand was absolutely new. It was as big a jump from Suva as Suva was from Rotuma. The first year was quite different for me. The Europeans in Suva don't mix freely with the coloured people. In New Zealand, the people don't seem to realise you're black or brown. There's no colour bar. It might be there, but I didn't suffer from it. The people were friendly. One thing that impressed me was the general high standard of living compared with Rotuma and Suva. The methods of teaching also impressed me. There was more freedom for the students. For example, if you strike a student in New Zealand you can be prosecuted for assault. In Fiji and Rotuma, the teachers strike the students quite often, even though there are rules against it. Also the abundance of material things, like books and general school equipment, like sports equipment.

I had about five months of student teaching, not all at one stretch. I taught European children, and sometimes the children would tell me that their mother wanted me to come for tea, but they usually lived too far. European children are not shy. Even if you're new to a class, if you ask them to tell stories there will be many hands up. In my opinion it was harder. First of all, they're so active. You have to keep moving all the time. Rotuman children are not so very active. They're very passive.

I left New Zealand in 1957 and went to Suva, where I was appointed to Rotuma. I arrived in Rotuma towards the end of February 1958. That was when they first started the secondary department at the Malhaha school. I was appointed to teach Form III.

My mother died when I was in New Zealand. It wasn't much of a shock because she was old. I had a few beers with the boys on the following day and cried a bit, but if I wasn't drunk, I don't think I would have.

There was nothing to do in Rotuma like there was in New Zealand—no horse racing, no Saturday sports ... the only thing there was beer. Drinking beer was the only sort of entertainment I was able to find.

I met my wife in Fiji for the first time in 1952. She was staying with my cousin—being my cousin's wife's relative. But at that time she was a little kid. When I came back from New Zealand I met her again and she was grown up. I arranged through a relative of mine to have her come along to one of the cafes for lunch with us, in Suva, and I proposed to her that day—in cold blood. She wasn't very keen on the idea. She expected me to treat her as my cousin would—being an affinal relative—with respect. She said she would tell my cousin, as though she were trying to frighten me, but I told her that I couldn't care less, that there was no harm done. Nothing more was said. Actually I had asked her to come with me on the boat to Rotuma ... I would pay her way and we would ask her parents for permission to marry.

I came to Rotuma and she continued to work in Suva. In December of that same year she came to Rotuma. I didn't bring up the subject of marriage that year. That was because there was a hurricane and my house got blown down. I was too tied up financially to get married. She stayed for the Christmas holiday and I saw her now and then. I knew that she didn't dislike me, although I don't think she had any particularly strong feelings towards me either. She went back to Fiji in January. In April she came back to Rotuma and there was a rumour about that she was going to stay for good. Sometime in May or June I wrote her a letter, forcing the issue, but no reply came. Actually that wasn't a bad sign. In Rotuma a girl sometimes won't answer because if something happens the boy might use such a letter to ridicule her. If she really rejected me she could write a letter and tell me off, so I wasn't discouraged. During the

next few social occasions I wanted to see where I stood, and I found that there was no change in her attitude. I asked her about the letter and she said she had read it. During the two-week holiday I spent the first week drinking, and the second week I went to her district to see what I could do. I saw her during that week but there was no mention of marriage. I decided on the last Sunday of that week to see her grandfather, the chief of that district. She had been on my mind for two years. I went to him on the following Tuesday, and he responded favourably. We had a full-scale Rotuman wedding in February. During the engagement period I didn't see her at all.

On my wedding day I wasn't really myself. I was almost oblivious to what was going on. It wasn't until about a week later that I really realised what had happened. So far I like married life very much. Sometimes I think about going out with the boys, but my wife's family has been good to me, and that kind of compensates for my loss. Now I talk in the plural—I speak of we, and ours, instead of I and mine.

I was first elected to the Council of Chiefs last year. That was when the first representatives were elected. I thought I might do good in the Council so I had a friend nominate me, so he wrote a letter of nomination and found a man to second it, and they sent the letter to the District Officer. Mine was the only genuine nomination. There were a couple of others, but the people had signed the others' names—Rotuman style—and as a consequence I was automatically elected.

When I first attended a Council meeting I was rather awed by it and thought it might prove to be beyond me. Later on I found I was able to hold my own. I was one of the few educated people on the Council, and I found the outlook of the majority quite narrow. One thing I found in the Council is you have to take things very easy. Radical changes, even though

they may be good ones, won't be followed by the people. Take the Land Commission, for example.

The idea was to register and survey the lands. That's where the old ideas and the modern ideas clashed. The modern idea was to register people in only one or two *kainaga*, but the old idea was having your rights intact in all your *kainaga*. The people couldn't see that registration in one or two *kainaga* did not necessarily interfere with your rights in the other *kainaga*. If the people had a bit more education they would have been able to read the bill without it being interpreted. Even many of the Council members couldn't read the bill and it had to be translated into Rotuman. If the Council members couldn't understand the bill, how could the poor people in the villages understand it?

Chapter 8

Women Born in the 1920s

(Age 38)

I was the youngest in a family of six children, and we all lived together with our parents. They were very good and kind to us but we were poor, and sometimes we could read on their faces that they were worried about something. We always could tell from the expressions on their faces whether they were happy or sad. I was the youngest and really was my parents' pet. They always did whatever I asked them to do for me. My father worked very hard and tried every means he could to earn money for us. They used to tell us sometimes that if we wanted something and my father could not provide it right away, we should try not to cry out and should be patient, because my father was poor and if he could, he would get it for us afterwards. It came about that all the others had gone to school except me, and then I realized that my parents loved me much more than the rest. They took me with them every place they went and whatever I asked for they always got for me.

In school I became very lazy and I played instead of trying to learn. I did funny things and made all sorts of sounds which attracted the others' attention, and many times I got the stick from my teacher. I acted like this for three years and never got promoted. When I entered boarding school I was still the same. Lessons became harder and I played more than one could expect from a big girl like me. I made a fool of myself and said all kinds of funny things that distracted everyone in the classroom, so sometimes I was sent outside for punishment. I nearly jumped for joy when one day our school mistress told me that from then on I would stay

and help the others without having to do schoolwork. I preferred to play than to sit down and work seriously. After six years in the boarding school I went home and helped my mother with the domestic work.

It is hard to say that I really helped my mother properly because I couldn't stay still for a whole day doing the same thing. The neighbouring adolescent girls liked me because I used to do funny things to make them laugh. They came over and we spent the evenings together in my home, but sometimes we would go out for a stroll.

One day I met a boy whom I seemed to love. We began to see each other and spoke about the future. This boy knew how to play music and this made me like him even more. I thought he was the only man in the world. I told my parents about him and that we wished to get married as soon as we possibly could, but my parents told me that I was still too young. My brothers and sisters had all gotten married and only myself was left and they wanted me to stay with them. That boy and I kept on seeing each other so one day I went with him to his home. My parents were very angry with me but I didn't care. This boy promised to take good care of me so I was willing to leave my parents. Our wishes and dreams came true and we finally got married. I found out later on that this boy's family was as poor as my parents were, and we had to work hard to look after ourselves and this boy's parents. After we had had six children we were still living with his parents, but they were not easy people to live with. Finally, one day my husband built a native-style house and we and our children went to live there, leaving his parents with his sister and husband to look after them. My husband did his best and worked hard after that, because we had a family of our own, and he had to support us by himself.

It happened sometimes that I was called on to act as the *hän mane'āk sū* [clown] at weddings and was supposed to do all kinds of funny things,

but my husband was very kind and is of good character and he didn't mind it. People laughed and enjoyed my funny actions and movements, but I couldn't tell whether they really enjoyed the merriments of my funny actions, or whether they were really laughing at how ugly I made myself look, but still I didn't care, even though sometimes I overheard people saying that I was just like an ape. My husband and children were still the same despite all these things.

Sometimes after I was married I would go and spend a few days with my parents, and I felt very sorry when my father died because I knew he really loved me despite my wrongdoings to him and my mother. Anything I did was always all right with him.

Now my husband and I have about ten children and we are doing our best to afford them with their needs. I can remember that my parents had had a hard time doing the same thing for us when we were young. Now only my mother is alive and she is still living with my eldest brother, but I wish she was with me so that I could treat her the way she treated me when I was a child.

(Age 37)

I was the eldest of four daughters in our family. We had no brothers. I had a different father than my other sisters and I was raised by my mother. She had no husband to help her and she had to take care of me by herself. It was a pity to see her working so hard in order to be able to get what we needed from the family we lived with. I always envied the neighbouring children with all their fancy toys and nice new clothes, but whenever I would ask my mother for something, she would look at me sadly and tell me not to ask for anything because she wouldn't be able to get it for me. As I became a little older I learned what my mother could get me and what she couldn't, so I only asked for what I knew she could get and she would get it for me.

I can remember the day when my mother got married and she told me that I was going to have a father and that he would be able to get for me the things I wanted. My stepfather was a kind man. He loved my mother and me and whatever I asked him for he always gave it to me. He worked very hard and my mother was able to stay with me in the house instead of having to go out and do the work of a man. I was a pet to my stepfather and I became more cheeky than anyone would have suspected before my mother had gotten married.

My mother had a baby girl but my stepfather still treated me the same way. After they had had only two children my stepfather died. I cried and cried thinking about him and how kind he had been to me. I felt as bad as if he would have been my real father; everybody in the village always spoke about his kindness towards my mother and me. I really missed him very much, and my poor mother once again had to work very hard to provide for the three of us.

She sent me to school, but I was a poor student and spent several years in school without getting promoted to a higher class. I felt bad to see my mother working so hard so I stopped going to school in order to stay home and help her.

I made friends with some of the neighbouring girls and we always played games like cards and things like that. I happened to meet a boy to whom I was attracted, and he in turn was attracted to me. Finally one day we met and talked and before long we were married and I went to live in my husband's home. My mother got married again too and went with her two daughters to her husband's home.

I felt very strange at the beginning of our marriage and I felt very embarrassed with my husband, but he acted as though he were a real man and a husband to me. We stayed together and I began to know what kind of character he really had, and I felt that I didn't want this kind of man for a husband. We stayed together many years without children so I finally left him and went back to my mother. I stayed with my mother and her husband, and after about two years I got married to another man whom I thought to be kinder than my first husband. I went to live in his home. At first he was nice and kind to me, but later on he didn't allow me to go to any other house in the village. He didn't like to see me laughing with anyone, and whenever he was angry at someone else he would come home and take it out on me. I had our first child—a baby girl—but still my husband acted the same to me. I was frightened at that time that he might kill me if I would try to run away from him, and because of his jealousy I just sat at home like a mouse caught in a trap. I couldn't say a single word whenever he was angry. Instead of being happy I was sadder than a slave. We have stayed together for many years now and have had about ten children, but my husband has not really changed much. Many times I

thought of leaving him, but I didn't know who would take care of my children if I did. I wish he could change his manners and be like my stepfather who brought me up.

My mother's second husband died and she came to live with me and brought her daughter with her. But we were all the same to my husband—we had to do everything according to his wishes. Never mind if I was ready to give birth to a child, he would make me go with him to work in his plantations or cut copra. What a life! I never saw another woman who has worked as hard as I have done. I have stuck it out because I wanted to avoid quarrelling, because we already had many children and I felt sorry for them. But I know he won't change his character.

A few years ago one of our daughters of about 5 years old died. I was really sad about it because it was the first time I had ever met with such a thing—my own child to be dead. My husband seemed to feel sad, too, but still he was the same old man—he'll never change.

Now we are living together with my mother and our children, and I have given up thinking about changing my way of life, because I'm afraid he would give us up. Besides, he supports us with the food we need and whatever the children ask for he always brings home for them.

(Age 36)

Out of the twelve of us children, only three survived. I was the eldest and was brought up by my auntie and her husband. I think they didn't want me to think of my parents, and they did their very best for me. They had no children and whatever I would ask for, they would give me. I had everything I needed, even toys. I went to school and came back home to play with my toys or I would roam around the village, but they still treated me as a little child. When I reached the age of 10, I entered boarding school. My auntie still washed my clothes and brought my food, but unluckily she was forced to leave me and go to Makogai [leper colony]. I was left alone with my uncle and yet he didn't want me to go back to my parents. I didn't know how to wash my clothes and he washed them for me. I became a cheeky child and most of the people hated me for my pride. They said that my uncle and aunt petted me too much; that was why I became this sort of a child. I didn't pay any attention to my teachers and came last in every test. I hated school and instead of listening I played and became worst in our class. I was very naughty thinking this was a nice thing to be proud of. My auntie returned after two years and I couldn't express how glad I was to see her back again.

After six years in boarding school, I was still in Class 4. I left for home. I made friends with my neighbours and we stayed together sometimes when we wished to go for picnics on Sundays and during holidays. We were together for a few months when one day my auntie told me that one boy had come to tell her that he wanted me to marry him. I was a bit annoyed, but she comforted me and said that she knew that that boy was nice and that he might love me. I agreed at last but I didn't really know him.

We got married two months later and it made me feel funny and strange in the beginning. I was, so to say, ashamed of my husband and most of the time I spent with my parents in their home. I was just getting used to being in this state of a married life when I went to stay with my husband. He was a nice man and loved my aunt and uncle as I did. We stayed together for a while with them before coming to his home, where we are staying now. We had more than ten children and I realize now that naughty children are really bad; I thought back to the time when I was a very naughty child, but that was because I was a bit spoiled by my aunt and uncle. My husband was so kind to me that we stayed together for many years without quarrelling. He did his best to give me everything I would ask for and what our children need. I do hope that they won't follow in my footsteps from when I was a child. I know what kind of person I became after being spoiled. I hardly knew how to keep my home in order; it was hard for me to settle down with everything at home.

My auntie died a few years after my uncle's death. I really felt very sad about them because they did love me, and I knew that they did more for me than if I had lived with my own parents.

Now I am living with my husband and children in his home where he supports us with what I need for the children while my own parents are living in another village.

(Age 32)

My mother died when I was 3 years old, but I didn't feel anything because I was too small at the time. After my mother died I lived with my grandmother [mother's mother], my aunt [mother's sister], and my brother. My brother was younger than I. As far as I can remember, our lives were poor.

My brother died when I was 13 years old and I felt very sad for a long time—for about a year. I knew that only he would do everything I wanted, so when he died I knew I'd never get the things I want easily.

When I was 14 years old, my grandmother took me to Fiji and I lived with my mother's sister and her husband. In the beginning I liked Fiji, because everything was new to me, but when I got used to it I didn't like it any more. Anytime we wanted something we had to get money for it. Also, I lived with my aunt, but I wasn't really happy because she wasn't my real mother, and I couldn't act with her the way I could have with my own mother. I had to show respect to her and not do anything without her permission. I found out that living in Fiji is very different than living in Rotuma, and I liked Rotuma better. In Fiji I needed money for anything that I wanted, but in Rotuma if you didn't have the money to get something you could go *fara* [begging] and the owner will give it to you without money.

When I was 18 years old, I went back to Rotuma to my aunt there, and I got married the following year. After I was married I realized how very different married life was from single life. For me, married life was much better than my life before I was married. My husband did everything that I wanted better than anyone when I was living with my grandmother. I love my husband and he makes me very happy all the

time. Now we have eight children and they, too, make me happy. I love my children even more than I love my husband.

(Age 32)

There were seven children in our family, and I was the second eldest. I can remember that first I was living with my brothers and sisters, but since there were too many of us, my uncle and his wife came and took me with them. My uncle was my mother's brother. He had no children and they took good care of me. They took me anywhere they might go to spend the evening. They were not very poor and I would get anything I might ask for. I always had new dresses whenever we went anywhere for a few days on a holiday. I became very cheeky, and when I visited my parents my mother told me that I would grow up to be a spoiled child and would be the worst of the children in the neighbourhood. I thought it was a good thing to be a daring child, so I kept on with my misbehaviours. My auntie just told me to be kind and that I should never tell lies when I would be a grown-up person.

When I was about 7 years old, my uncle sent me to school. I liked to learn, but sometimes the lessons were a bit hard and my exercises were not right and I got the stick on my fingernails, so I stayed away from school sometimes. But I tried and tried, and it happened that I came first in the class and was promoted each time to a higher class. When I reached the age of 14, my auntie became very ill and I was forced to leave school so that I could stay home to look after her. After a few months in bed she died, leaving my uncle and myself. You could not imagine how sorry I was, for I knew that now I would have to look after my uncle and myself. There was nobody to be trusted except myself. Now there wasn't anybody to do whatever I wished for or to help me with the domestic work. I had to do all the daily work myself before the thoughts of my auntie had hardly faded away. At that time I hardly knew how to cook or get a meal ready

for my uncle and myself. But after a few years I was able to manage our home and my uncle trusted me as much as if my aunt were still alive.

I began to make friends with my neighbours and began to go out with other girls taking evening strolls, but my uncle didn't like me to go out in the evening, and because I was frightened of him I stayed in. I told my friends the reason why I stayed away and they left me alone.

Not long after that I began to notice the way my uncle was beginning to treat me. He still loved me, but in a different way. I became very scared of him, but he acted as if he were doing nothing wrong—but it was very bad for me because his love had changed over and we were no longer uncle and niece, but husband and wife. I was very frightened because he told me that if I would tell anyone he would kill me. I was even too frightened to tell my parents. I just stayed there until I had a baby from my cruel uncle. I was a bit silly that time, I suppose, because I should have gone and told my parents at the beginning, but I stayed on as if my uncle were doing the right thing.

My parents came and told me to go, but I was still scared because he said he would kill me, and I told them that it didn't make any difference that he was my uncle—I would stay and marry him, because by then I had already had a baby from him. Everybody seemed to mock us, and whenever we went somewhere they seemed to look at us like foreigners. He was an old man, but he frightened me with his knife, and we did get married.

After a few years we went over to stay in Fiji. There we had another child, but imagine the difference between us—he was 60 years old, while I was only 29. Everybody thought that we were uncle and niece, and they were really surprised when they heard that we were husband and wife. By then I grew more and more to love him, because he was old and

feeble, and only I would take care of him because all our relations were angry at us. After five years we came back to Rotuma with our two children and found that both of my parents had died. What a pity to think of what I had done. They had been angry at me and I went away without saying I was sorry to them, and when I came back they were dead. All this happened because I was so afraid of my uncle ... husband.

After a year he died, leaving me and our children. I did feel sad because I was used to living with him, but on the other hand I was glad, for I knew that now I could go anyplace I wanted without someone stopping me. I was just like a jailbird when I was living with my uncle and now when I think of it I just feel angry about it. Now everyone can see that I am very happy living amongst my neighbours with my children—a family of our own, with my eldest son working and supplying all our needs.

(Age 30)

As far back as I can remember I was well treated by my parents. They worked very hard and tried their very best for me not to cry out in want of any food or anything else. I remember that sometimes I wanted to go with them and wanted one of them to carry me, so they did. My father knew what kind of native foods are good for children so he did his best and not once was I in need of food. During the last war so many people were short of clothing, but I was not because my mother took care of my clothes and gave me only the clothes I needed on each occasion.

I have three sisters and two half-brothers and two half-sisters. We were brought up to love each other and yes, we did. My two half-brothers were not living with us but still I love them and any time one of them comes home I treat him nicely.

I found life during school days was hard when I was small. I was proud of myself during school days because every year I received rewards from my teachers for being first in class. I loved schooling, and was promoted every year to higher classes until I entered secondary school in Fiji where I was alone to take care of my belongings. I began to worry about my parents and how different my new leaders treated me. So instead of doing my best in my studies, I began to be downhearted. I only stayed in secondary school for three years when I sent for my father to come and take me away, and he did as I wanted.

I was left with my younger sister and her husband in Suva and she let me go to dances and movies. I started to look at the adolescent boys who were the same age as myself. When I began to make boyfriends I was frightened my parents might find out and they might object, but they were mainly concerned that I might choose a bad boy. They just gave me their advice. They wanted me to choose the right man so that we could make a

good family. I had some boyfriends whom I went with and we loved each other, but soon I found that our manners were different. I left them but I had a hard feeling trying my best to stay away from them.

At last I found the right one. We arranged our marriage and now we are staying together with my parents at my home. Just after we got married I thought that we would be staying in the same mood throughout life. We were in great happiness. Both of us stayed home, not roaming like before. When I was single I went to any place I wished to; all I had to do was let my mother know. But now I find that life is growing harder and whatever I want to do I have to let my husband know, and I have to do as he wishes.

Now we have four children and I realize that I am leading a harder life than I had ever dreamt of. I have to work hard now to keep my children clean and healthy. I try to treat them nicely, the way my parents treated me. Sometimes I feel sorry for them because I know that I will not get everything they need like my parents did for me when I was small. Now I just pray that my children will grow up to love each others and to lead a good life.

Once I got seriously ill and was taken to the hospital and I was worried about my children. They don't know yet how to do their clothes and clean themselves. If I die my children will be left behind and I don't know whether they'll be living a happy life or not. It happens to many children that their mothers died and their fathers got married again and their stepmothers don't treat them as nicely, so these children are living a sad and unhappy life. I am glad that I am up again and have a chance to look after my children again.

(Age 30)

As far back as I can remember I was living with my parents and brothers and sisters. The first thing I can remember is when I was about 6 years old. That's when I started school. In school I learned to do the right thing. I liked school very much because I met many children that I didn't know before, and we had a lot of fun playing together. Sometimes in school I was punished by the teacher, but I didn't care. The teacher usually punished me for playing in the classroom.

I came out from school when I was 14 years old and stayed at home with my family. For the first week after I stopped going to school I felt very bad because I thought of the fun I used to have playing with my friends, and it made me feel like going back again. But after a few weeks at home I got used to it and didn't think about going to school again. I stayed home and helped my mother, and she taught me how to fish and how to make mats.

Both my mother and father were very kind to us, but I loved my mother more than my father. That was because I always worked together with my mother, but I didn't spend so much time with my father, so I didn't think about him as much as I thought about my mother. I loved both of them, but I loved my mother more.

Mother taught me how to work, and by the time I was about 18 years old I knew very well how to work in the Rotuman way. I also knew how to fish very well. I got married in 1950, and I found out that for me married life was better than being single. My husband was very kind to me. He is even more kind to me than my mother or father. Sometimes they couldn't get me what I wanted, but my husband always gets me whatever I want.

When my husband became chief I felt very bad—right up until now. I'm afraid, because I know I have to be kind to the people all the time and have to lead the women in the right way. I always worry about what I should do to lead the people in the right way and make them happy. This is the first time in my life that I've always had to worry about what I'm going to do and whether my husband and I will be able to do the right things. I feel anxious because we are poor people and it will be very hard for my husband and me to get the things that the people will need to make them happy. If the people like you they will do what you say, but if they are angry at you they won't want to do what you want them to. This is the first time in my life that I am really worried and live unhappily, because my husband has become a chief and we are poor people. It's better for a rich man to be chief.

(Age 30)

I was born in 1930 in my mother's home and was the only child in our family. After three months, my parents moved to my father's home, and that is the only home I've ever really known. I've lived there from then until today.

When I was a small girl I had many friends. They always came home to play with me, but I never went out to play with them in their homes. When I was about 4 years old, sometimes I can remember going out with my father to his plantations in the bush. I saw that he was planting food, and I realized that this was the place from which he brought food home each day. Some other times I went with him to the store when he was going to buy something, and I saw him buy things to eat, and sometimes other things, like dresses for me. Sometimes, too, I went with my mother and she would buy nice things for me, like jewels and toys, to make me happy. Seeing all these things, I began to know that there were some things that my father produced himself, and other things that must be bought at the store. I also remember many times when my mother would come home from fishing in the sea, bringing plenty of fish with her, and then cooking them for me to eat. I also saw her quite often making mats inside the house. Sometimes I would go with my father or mother to feed the pigs.

One time I can remember that my father was sick and had to be in bed for two months. During that time I always went with my mother to the bush and moved the cows and my father's horse for grazing. I would pick up ripe fruits, like mangoes or *vi* [*Spondias dulcis*], which had fallen under the trees near the road, and eat them. That's why I liked to go with my mother every day when she went to move the animals. I was very happy that time, because I liked to eat mangoes and *vi*, and also oranges.

When I was young my parents treated me very well. They always tried to give me everything I wanted. I remember one time at Christmas when I went with my father to buy a Christmas present for me. I saw a nice toy in the store. It was a pretty doll with a pretty dress, and I wanted my father to buy it, but at that time the price of copra was very bad, and it was a very hard time for everyone who had to earn money from cutting copra, like my father. It wasn't bad for the people who were earning their money from jobs—it was easy for them—but for the people who had to cut copra it was a hard time. My father wanted to buy me an umbrella, but I liked the doll better. The two were the same price, and finally my father bought both of them because he did not want to make me worry about the toy, and the umbrella was a useful thing. He knew I liked the toy better, and that's why he bought both of them for me. I'll never forget that day.

When I was 5 years old, the welfare nurse told my mother that it would be better to send me to school, because I grew quickly and was the biggest girl in the baby show. So my parents sent me to school at Upu. The first day I went to school I was frightened of the teacher, and the children, too. But the next day I started to make friends and play with the other children. They were older than me and had been in school before. Soon I liked school better than anything, but my mother never let me go to school when it was raining or when the sun was very hot. When that would happen I would cry.

When I was 6 years old, my mother got sick and the doctor took her to the hospital. She stayed in the hospital for a month, and when she came out my father sent her to Fiji for a holiday and I went with her. I stayed in Fiji with my mother for three months, and then we returned to Rotuma and I went to school again. At that time English wasn't being

taught at Upu. Most of the children at the school from my district were Methodist; I was the only Catholic child amongst them. On every Monday and Friday when school was over the Methodist children would be dismissed, but the Catholic children would stay in school and study catechism for about half an hour. The children from my district would always stay and play outside, waiting for me to finish catechism so we could go home together.

In 1938, when I was 8 years old, I stopped going to school for a whole year because I was sick. I got yaws, and it was a very bad disease. At the end of 1939 I went to school again, and this time the teacher began to teach me how to sew and embroider and crochet.

When I was 11 years old, I started going to boarding school at Upu. I was very happy in boarding school. Every morning we woke up and went to mass. After mass, we had breakfast and then went to school. I lived in boarding school for six years and was very happy every day. I tried hard to learn everything that the sisters taught me to do, including studying in school. In 1944 the sister began to teach me some English, but I found it very hard to learn. At the Upu school, Class 5 was the highest. I stayed in class from 1940 until 1946, when the headteacher started Class 6. I stayed in Class 6 for two years and came out from school in 1947. My teacher wanted to send me to Fiji for further schooling, but my parents didn't want me to go far away from them and wanted me to come home instead.

During that first year at home I was not very happy because I was used to living with many girls like myself, but I was also happy to live with my parents again and help them with their work. But I still kept thinking about the time I was in school. For me, the best thing I can think of is to study in school and learn every subject.

In 1948, I went to Fiji and stayed for three months, and this helped me to forget all about school, and I began to feel happy again. After I returned, a young man came and talked to my father and asked to marry me. My father consented and told me that he would like me to marry this young man, and we were married on April 28th, 1949. I had seen this boy before, but I had never talked with him. On the day before the wedding we went together to talk to Father Soubeyran, and he told us all about being husband and wife. I was nervous and surprised, because I had never been in love with anyone before. So the next day we got married in church, and after that we had a Rotuman-style ceremony at my father's house. On my wedding day I felt very embarrassed and strange.

After a week had passed, and everybody had gone home leaving only our family, I realized how different married life was from when I was single. I found married life harder than unmarried life. I loved my husband very much and always did everything good for him. But after about five months something happened. One night about 3 o'clock in the morning my husband surprised me. He woke me up and asked me what I was going to do—go with him to his home or stay here? I was so startled that I couldn't answer his question, so he asked me again. He said that he had taken all of his things back to his house, except his knife, which he was holding in his hand. I was frightened and told him that I would stay at home, so on that night we separated. From that night on I stopped loving him. Then, after five years, he came back to my parents one time and apologized to them for his mistakes and for the bad things he did to me and asked them to forgive him. He said he wanted to return to me at our home. I told him that if he promised not to do what he did before he could stay, but after one month, he got angry with me on one Sunday morning

and went back to his house. Since then we have never been together, and I have never made anyone else my boyfriend.

After a year, I met a boy and he tried to make love to me. He was two years older than me but had never been married before. I loved him, but we were both Catholic, and I knew it would be very bad for me to make him my lover, because we both knew that a person cannot marry twice in Church if they have a husband or wife who's still living. He went away to Fiji soon after that, but after about three years he came back to talk to me. I had told him to try and find another girl to marry, but he said that it was very hard for him to marry someone else knowing that I still didn't have a husband. I told him to stop thinking of that, because we were both Catholic and knew the laws of the Church. Soon after that he went to Fiji.

Not long after that my father got sick and had to go to Suva for medical care, and I had to look after my mother and me, because I had no brothers. I got a job as secretary for the co-op, after studying bookkeeping at night under Wilson Inia. Now I have a good job and am able to help my father support our family. My ambition is to always give my best, and to look after my mother and father. I want to make everything go well, to love God and ask him to be with us everywhere and keep us happy.

Chapter 9

Men Born in the 1930s

(Age 29)

I was born on Uea and lived there with my mother and father. The first time in my life that I can remember is when I was about 4 years old. There were six families on Uea during that time. I was very happy then—I had no brothers and sisters with us, so my mother and father were very kind to me. They always gave me whatever I wanted. Actually I had four sisters, but they weren't living on Uea with us. Besides, I was the only boy, so my father loved me very much. He took me everywhere he went. Sometimes he took me with him to Rotuma for a visit and my sister would want to go back with him to Uea, but he said no. Only I would go back with him.

When I was 6 years old, he brought me to Rotuma and left me there because I was old enough to go to school. After only a week both my mother and father came back from Uea to stay there with my sisters and me. I enjoyed living with my sisters because we would go to school together, and at home we used to play and joke all the time. My sisters loved me very much and they always took real good care of me because I was their only brother. From the time I was 6 until I was nearly 13 years old was the happiest time of my life. During that time I never had to do any hard work.

When I was 13 years old, I started to joke with the girls and began to make girlfriends. I started making love to girls around that time so I stopped liking school and wanted to stop going. I wanted to be able to act like the adolescent boys and go out with the girls every night without having to worry about going to school the next day. Sometimes the

teacher would give me some work to do but I didn't feel like doing it because I was always thinking of the girls. There were only three things I felt like doing during this time—planting, fishing, and being with the girls. I knew that if you were good in planting and fishing the girls will like you very much and you'll be able to get plenty of girls to make love to.

When I was 14 years old, I had an affair with a married woman. This affair began one day when we were out cutting copra. This woman had come *faksoro* [in this context, to beseech] to me to cut copra. I went with plenty other boys and girls. I met this woman and spent the whole day cutting copra with her. It was during the Christmas holiday season, so after we were finished cutting copra we had a *mane'a* [play time] and we started to make love. Our affair lasted for about six months, and then her husband came back from Fiji. I would see her sometimes after her husband had returned and I joked to her about the way we had acted when her husband was in Fiji.

When I was 15 years old, my father took me to Uea and I lived there for two years before coming back to Rotuma. Soon after I came back, I met two other girls. On the first night I returned there was a dance. Before the dance I met one of the girls and she asked me if I would take her to the dance. I took her and after the dance I walked her home, but on our way back home we stopped someplace near the road and spent the whole night talking without sleeping. There was a dance the next night, too, but this girl's parents didn't want her to go because they knew we had been together the night before and they didn't want her to meet me. But before the dance another girl asked me to take her. Her mother had invited me to dinner because I had just returned from Uea, and after dinner she asked me if I would take her. After the dance I took her home

and we slept together in her home. Then I had two girls that I was in love with and I couldn't make up my mind.

The next day I went back to my mother and father in Uea. Before I had left that girl she asked me to come back again, so I went to Uea happily and returned at the end of a week. When I came back to Rotuma, the girl's mother knew that we had made friends, so she didn't like me anymore. Even after a month, she still didn't like me. I met the girl again and she asked me to take her to Uea for a look around, just like she was coming *taupiri* [to live with without being married]. So I took her to Uea, but no one knew that we had gone. After six months I came back *faksoro* [in this context, to apologise] to her parents. Her mother still didn't like me, so I went back to Uea with my wife and my oldest sister. My mother and father then went over to Rotuma, so there were only the three of us on Uea. Then I went to Rotuma, too, and got caught in the hurricane of 1948 and couldn't return to Uea, so I stayed in Rotuma to look after my mother and father. After the hurricane I went back to Uea.

In 1950, I came back to Rotuma with my wife and sister, but still my wife's mother didn't like me and got angry with me. She had wanted her daughter to marry someone else. I went *faksoro* again, and this time her mother accepted my apology. In 1951 or 1952 we got married and went to live at my home in Uea.

From the time I got out of school, I had a really good friend. We had promised that absolutely nothing would come between us, not even marriage. On alternate Sundays, my wife and I would go to eat with him at his house, or he would come to us. This went on until I knew that my friend liked my wife and was trying his luck, but I didn't know if he had succeeded. I got angry with my wife, but not with my friend. At this time I

loved my friend more than my wife. We kept on seeing each other each week, and I say that my wife loved my friend more than she loved me.

Then my friend's grandfather died. I took my wife to the funeral and left her there for the five-day mourning period to take care of my friend and to help his parents prepare food, etc. In my mind, I was testing them. After four days, however, everybody knew about these two. After the five days, my wife came back, but my friends came and told me about the way these two carried on. I asked my wife about this and she got angry with me. I left her, knowing that she would go back to her parents, who lived right next to my friend. I thought they would get married. My friend loved my wife's oldest sister, however, and they got married instead.

After we were separated for about two months, I went *faksoro* to my wife to come back to me. Her parents wanted me to stay with them, so I stayed for one week and then my wife and I ran away. We really loved each other again and started to live happily as before. We got a daughter here. Then my wife quarrelled with my mother, and I took her to live with her mother's side. This was in 1953.

At this time, we lived with our child and only my wife's mother, because her husband had died. This lasted for only two years, before my wife started to try to make love to another man in her mother's village. At this time I was working for Morris Hedstrom, making nine shillings a day. I would leave my wife and her mother at home in the morning, and come back at 4:30 in the afternoon. My parents told me that my wife had a boyfriend, but I didn't believe it. I began watching my wife's ways very closely, and saw that she was acting a little bit differently to me, so I figured that my parents were right.

One day I went back home at lunchtime. My wife's mother had gone to visit her other daughter, and only my wife was home with the

child. But when I got home, I found only my daughter, who told me that my wife had gone to the bush. I went to the bush and caught my wife and her boyfriend right in the act of making love. My parents were right.

Before I had caught them, I had prayed to God that if what my parents had told me was true, let him show it to me. When he did, I was happy for the knowledge and didn't get angry with either of them. Then I became a local preacher because of what God had done for me.

We didn't separate at this time because I didn't want my child to be fatherless or motherless, but I knew in my mind that we were going to separate. My wife started acting better to me than ever before, and I felt that we should separate when everything was alright, so nobody would get angry.

In 1955, the three of us went to Fiji. I went to Vatakoula and worked in the mines. Then we heard that the boy with whom I had caught my wife was going to get married. My wife wanted to go back to Rotuma—I think to try to break up the marriage. I paid her passage, but when she got back to Rotuma her boyfriend was already married, so she found another boyfriend. My mother and father wrote me in Vatakoula about her new friend.

I came back to Rotuma and was met on the boat by my parents and friends. They told me all about my wife and when I went to our home, I knew in my mind that we were going to separate. She didn't realise that I knew about her, so I gave her a week to *faksoro*. She didn't, however, and in that week I found a note that she had written to her new boyfriend. I told her that it would be better if we separated. But she felt that if we separated without a fight, she would get the full blame, but if we quarrelled first, the blame would be shared. I didn't give her a chance to quarrel but went back to my parents' house.

Then I got a letter from one of my uncles in Levuka, who wanted me to come and stay and work for him. He telegraphed the District Officer to ask permission for me to go, and my wife went to the District Officer to try to make him stop me from going. He asked her if we were still living together and she said no. He told her that unless she came *faksoro* to me and I went back to live with her, she had no grounds to stop me from going. She came and told me that the District Officer said that I couldn't go, and the day that the boat was to leave I went to him and asked him why he refused to let me go. He told me that my wife lied to me. That day my wife came *faksoro* and tried to keep me here, but I went to Fiji anyway. This was in 1957.

My first month at Levuka, I met another girlfriend. I took her to the movies one night and then made love to her. At this time, I had forgotten my wife. This girl was a half-caste and had European ways. I still had Rotuman ways, and when she wanted to kiss me in public, I would feel very ashamed. I didn't like the way she acted, so I left her. Then I met a girl from Rotuma and made friends with her.

I came back to Rotuma in 1959. My wife wanted to live with me again, but I always went to live with my girlfriend that Christmas. My wife came and cried to my mother and kept trying to meet me to talk to me, but in my mind I never wanted to talk to her again. One day I came home and found my mother and my wife together. I told my mother to tell my wife to go home. My wife went instead to my sister's house. Every night she would come *faksoro*. Then I got very sick and stayed with my sister, and my wife got me everything from the store that she knew a sick person would like. When I got well I loved her again and we lived together after three years of separation.

(Age 28)

There were twelve children in our family, and I am the eldest. Five of my brothers are still alive and three of my sisters. Two boys and one girl died. I lived at home with my mother and father until I was 13 years old, except for holidays with grandparents and other relatives. My relationship with my mother was quite close, but my old man was quite stern. I didn't know him very well; I think I more or less feared him.

I started to go to school when I was 6 years old. I went to the Paptea school. There were only two teachers in the school at that time. I liked it then. I think most of the boys and girls in Rotuma like school when they first go. You have a chance to play around with your friends. There were only a few teachers, so you had plenty of freedom. I came in first in Class 2, a class of about thirty something. The schools then were giving out better prizes than they are nowadays. I can remember that I got one shirt and a pair of pants for coming in first.

I liked school when I was little, but when I got to Class 3 or 4 they began to give corporal punishments, cracking you on the head for just about anything. At that point I dreaded going to school just about every morning. The teacher at that time was very hard, but he was also the best teacher in Rotuma. I stayed in the Paptea school for about seven years, going through Class 6. In 1945 three of us sat for the entrance exam for the Queen Victoria School (QVS) in Fiji. Two of us passed and went to Fiji at the end of 1945 and started QVS in the beginning of 1946.

Going to QVS was totally different than anything I had known. I was one of the smallest boys in the school. You can imagine how I felt looking at the older fellows. My first year was horrible; as I was an outsider, the older boys always used to bully me. I made some very good friends, though. Some of the big boys used to give me a hand with things.

Besides school, we had to cut firewood and do an hours work every morning, before school, from 6 to 7 am. It was a boarding school. The food wasn't very good; we had meat only about once a week. We had to wash our clothes and iron them. This was the first time I ever had to do this kind of thing and I found it tough. The big boys used to help sometimes, though, and the washing wasn't too bad, although you can imagine how clean the clothes got. But the ironing was difficult, and sometimes you would spend fifteen minutes with a shirt and get nowhere.

During the first week at the school I got the measles and was sent to the hospital. I felt awful and missed my parents very much and the care they used to give me. I'd say I really missed home for about the first three months, but once you got to know the boys you tend to forget them. In the first exam I came last, mostly because I came back from the hospital only about three weeks before the exam.

The first year was preparatory and once we passed that we went into Form I. After failing that first exam I felt like chucking Suva altogether and going back home, but some of the boys encouraged me to carry on. It was worse because they arranged us in class according to the way we did on the exam—the person who did best in the back and the one who did worst right up in front. On the next exam I did better, though, and in the final exam at the end of the year I came in tenth out of about 35 pupils.

I spent seven years in the QVS, through Form VI. During the later years in the school I liked it very much and did quite well. I got through the Junior and Senior Cambridge exams all right, and during the fifth year I became one of the three house captains and head boys of the school.

I came back to Rotuma in 1951, after my sixth year. I sat for the Senior Cambridge exam in November and right after that came to

Rotuma. I was 19 years old at the time. I found Rotuma had changed. The people I knew had suddenly grown up and there were a lot of new houses, but the standard of living and things like that were the same. I had a lot of fun during that Christmas vacation and participated in the beach games. I met one girl that I liked very much and carried on a correspondence with her for a while, but I didn't have any serious intentions. It was just my first contact with the opposite sex. My father said I was too young to get involved with a girl, probably because he was afraid I would lose interest in school. He told me not to get married until I was older and more settled. He nearly made me promise that I wouldn't get married until I was over 30.

That was the year they had the big hurricane in Suva, so I didn't get a boat back to Fiji until April. The vacation in Rotuma cost me plenty. I didn't get back to school until the first term was almost over and I was quite a bit behind. The principal told me to stay for the two-week vacation, but that didn't help much. I'd say that that holiday in Rotuma caused me to fail my last exam—the University Entrance. At the end of the year I was a bit too old to go back to school, so I went to work at the Government buildings. I got a job as a clerk in the Registrar General's office. I stayed with this job for one year, and during that year the inspector of schools asked me if I would like to try teaching. My job as a clerk was easy-going, but there wasn't much advantage to it. I wanted to do something that would be useful for the people in Rotuma. The inspector of schools asked me if I would like take a bursary (scholarship) to New Zealand to study education and come back to become a teacher. I looked upon that as one of the best chances I would ever get. I liked the idea of becoming a teacher. In fact I had applied for Nasinu Training College before, but I had backed out of it because my sister was already

going there. Being older than her, I felt that maybe I wouldn't get on well with her; I felt that I might lose my feeling of priority over her if we came back on an equal basis.

I went to New Zealand early in 1954. At first I found it a bit strange. The first thing I noticed was the amount of cars. After being there for a week I started Ardmore Teacher's College, about eighteen miles from Auckland. I found it easy to adjust to the life there. I didn't feel strange at all, being with Europeans. There were many Maoris, Cook Islanders, and Samoans there. Besides, I had many European friends in Suva and had lived on and off with a New Zealand couple—he was a teacher. I spent three holidays with them. The only thing that really seemed strange to me was the size of the place. I didn't find the schoolwork itself very hard. Most of it was just educational courses. I had some difficulty with physical education theory because some of the terms were new, and I hadn't any experience with some of the activities that were included.

I wasn't used to the social activities at the start. I wasn't used to the idea of courting. At first I was rather embarrassed to ask a girl to go to the pictures, but I was lucky because on the boat to New Zealand I met two part-Maori women who had a niece in the college, and they wrote me a letter of introduction to her. I got to know her and she introduced me to a lot of other girls. There were about 800 girls and about 200 boys, so the girls would try to get the boys to date them. So about four or five months after I started, I began to date. I dated throughout the two years, but I never had any intention of having any serious affairs. For one thing it was against regulations for me to get married in New Zealand, and secondly I didn't want to get a wife I couldn't support. Someone who was used to

living in New Zealand would be apt to demand more than I could give her in life here in Rotuma.

I stayed in New Zealand until the middle of 1956. I got out of college at the end of 1955 but spent the last six months roaming around New Zealand, taking different jobs. My first job was on a sheep farm. I worked for a building contractor, on a wharf, in the freezing works, and as a delivery boy. I enjoyed that period very much. I saw a lot of people and a lot of places. I spent most of my other holidays visiting with people who had invited me to their homes. One time I hitch-hiked around 390 miles with my friend.

By the way, I was not supposed to work in New Zealand. It was the first thing they told me when I got off the boat. But they were lenient with me because I had been using my real name instead of a false one. Also, the people in Fiji didn't know where I was, and the agency in New Zealand had been instructed to send me straight to Suva as soon as they got into contact with me. I went back to Auckland in April and saw the agency and they made my reservations back to Suva. The first plane I could catch was in July.

I came back to Suva and the education inspector had a good go at me for spending a six-month holiday without permission. They told me they paid my fare back only because I had a good record at the college; otherwise they wouldn't have. They told me that I would start teaching at the same salary I earned as a clerk, and I told them I wouldn't teach on that salary, so they ended up by offering me about one-and-a half times my old salary and I accepted. I started off at the Brother's School in Suva. It's a Catholic school attended by all denominations. I started off with a class of seventy-five. That's a hell of a big class for the first time of teaching. I found it pretty hard, partly because it was my first time and

partly because there was such a mixture of people—Indians, Fijians, half-castes, Samoans, Rotumans—everything. I taught in both English and Fijian.

Then, at the end of 1956 I was assigned to be headmaster of the Motusa school, where I now am. At first the Rotuman children seemed very strange to me. The Rotuman children don't act as European children do. Their interests are different. For one thing, their experiences are very narrow, and their sense of leadership is not as keen. I've tried two ways of inducing leadership. The first two years I tried to induce individual students to take responsibility for the class at times when I was gone. It didn't work out very well. The individuals who were chosen didn't know how to control the class, and the other children didn't want to follow what the leader would say. Since the end of last year I've tried a new experiment—appointing class leaders for a term. It works quite well with some, but not so well with others. At first favouritism was a bit of a problem, but I threatened to punish the leaders if they showed favouritism. I tried to point out to them that when you are a leader you must regard everyone as an equal, regardless of who are your friends. Now I think it's working quite well.

My impression of Rotuma on returning was quite good. I felt that Rotuma had advanced a good deal. For one thing, I feel the Rotumans have lost a lot of the old customs that should not exist, like the custom of *fara* [in this context, begging for favours]. Now the people don't do this so much, and they're getting used to the idea of selling. Some of the Rotumans regard that as a bad sign—the increase of selling—but in the long run I think it is best. I think the Rotumans are better able to look after themselves. Take the co-op, for example. When it first started there was a lot of suspicion. There was a lot of opposition from the Rotumans and

from the firms as well. Many of the people laughed at the idea, but now they're joining it. In sports, for example, there was hardly anything played before without a fight, but now it's gradually getting better, even though there are fights now and again.

In 1958 I was elected to the Rotuma Council of Chiefs as a district representative [*mata*]. My impression of Council meetings was that the District Officer had the say most of the time. The chiefs more or less followed whatever the D.O. suggested. That is probably because when there were European D.O.s the chiefs were in awe of them, and this attitude has continued towards the Rotuman D.O.s. At the beginning, the say of the representatives was very limited. Wilson Inia, for instance, was dismissed because of a difference with the D.O. I think the initial idea was for the Council representatives to be advisors, but that has gradually changed. Now I would say that the representatives have about equal rights as the chiefs. Now the representatives do most of the talking. We can usually persuade the chiefs to come around to our point of view. Some of the chiefs are quite conservative. One of the chiefs always looks at things from the religious point of view; one of the Council representatives is that way, too. On the whole, I think the Council functions pretty well. Sometimes the chiefs are a little slow to express themselves, but as a body I think it represents the opinion of the people pretty well.

Right now I have no future plans with regard to marriage. I'd like to continue to teach, or if some opportunity to help the Rotuman people arose, say in the RCA, I might take it.

(Age 26)

I was born and lived in Suva with my parents until 1939 when my father, who was a foreman of works building bridges, was transferred to the Western District on Viti Levu. I have four siblings, a brother and sister who are older than me and a brother and sister who are younger.

I started school at 6 years old in Lautoka at St. Thomas' school, run by the Marist sisters. I didn't like school at all until I got to Standard 6. I suppose it was because I would have preferred to go out fishing and swimming. I was somewhat mischievous and got the stick sometimes, but I don't remember hating any teachers.

My relationship with my parents was just a normal one of respect and affection. I might resent it sometimes if they would punish me for something, but nothing very intense. I would fight with my brothers and sisters sometimes—just the usual sorts of thing. My father gave me most of the discipline. To a certain extent he was strict. He would tell me something once and would never repeat it. The second time he would give me a hiding or make me skip a meal. My mother was more or less the reverse. She was the one who gave me all the comfort; if I made a mistake, she wouldn't belt me straight away. She more or less talked to me and tried to teach me.

During 1944 and 1945 I was seriously sick and dropped out of school on the doctor's orders. I was always a sickly child—delicate. I didn't really get better until I went to New Zealand. I couldn't work very hard and although I liked sports, I couldn't play very much. I think it was some sort of heart ailment. Also some sorts of food affected me. Some kinds of food I couldn't keep in—I would spew them out. Life was sort of pleasant those two years. I was under a doctor's care and he saw to it that I wasn't given any work. I rested most of the time. For the first year of my illness I

stayed at home with my parents, and at the end of the first year the parish priest, Father Roe, an Irishman, asked my parents if he could adopt me. It was very hard for my parents to care for me properly because the doctor was ordering all kinds of special care and treatment, and it made it difficult as far as my brothers and sisters were concerned. My parents appreciated the offer so I went with him to the local presbytery. I stayed with him at the local parish until the end of 1946 when he was transferred to Australia.

I found it rather strange living in the presbytery at first, but after a while I got used to it. I felt very lonely because there was only the two of us, and I missed the companionship of my brothers and sisters. That was my first taste of responsibility. At that time there was a shortage of priests, and quite often he would go away and leave all kinds of money lying around, tempting me. I think maybe that's what he was doing, testing me. Just before he left, he called me up to have a talk with him. He told me that he was quite pleased with me and explained that he had counted the money before he left each time. But I never had touched anything. I really appreciated that, too, because at my present job I handle a lot of cash. When business was good we sometimes had up to 8,000 pounds in the safe. Before, when I was single, I sometimes ran my account up to around 100 pounds, and I would want to drink and go out with the boys, but never once when I looked into the safe was I tempted to take any money out.

In 1947 Father Roe left, and he left me to be taken care of by the next priest, Father Walter. I was well enough to go to school again, but I was still under the doctor's care, so Father Roe felt it would be best for me to stay at the presbytery. My parents lived only about seven houses away and I saw them quite often, but for the most part they left me alone. If I

went home for a weekend they treated me just like the others, the same as before I left.

I noticed a big change when Father Walter came. Father Roe was rather strict and hard—English-style discipline. Father Walter was an American, from a rather well-off family, I think, and he had plenty of everything. He gave me everything I wanted. Staying with him I got the idea that Americans have money to throw all over. He wasn't so strict like the other father. I could go to the pictures, I could go anywhere I liked as long as I was home for tea and in bed at the right time. I enjoyed this time very much. I stayed with him until 1948 when I went off to the Marist secondary school in Mba.

Up until 1944 I didn't like school very much and usually came in about eleventh or twelfth in classes of about thirty-five students. But after being sick, and staying with Father Roe, my studies improved when I started school again. He was a strict disciplinarian and kept me to my studies. When I started school again in 1946 I studied harder and finished first in the class. I realised then that I could do something. From 1946 until I left from New Zealand, I've never come in lower than first.

I didn't like secondary school. In fact I ran away twice. As I said, I got to like studying in the few years before, but in this school they stressed manual labour instead of studying. Sometimes we would spend all afternoon until around 7 pm in the bush, and they'd expect you to study after you came home, dog-tired. On top of that, the food was no good and we had to work to feed ourselves. But each time I came home they telephoned Father Walter, and Father Walter would take me back. I spent three years at this school. After trying to run away twice and failing, I decided that since I didn't want to lose my chance for education, I'd stay, and I adjusted my schedule so that I was studying from 4 am until 6 am. It

was against the rules, but I didn't want to lose my chance for an education and I had to pass the Junior Cambridge or stay an extra year in that place. I knew that I wasn't fit for manual work, and without a secondary education I wouldn't be able to get an office job. When I ran away from school I wanted to go to the brothers in Suva, but Father Walter wanted me to stay under the Marist order. They, Father Walter, and the Bishop as well, wanted me to become a priest. After the second year, I took the Junior Cambridge exam and received a credit pass. After spending the third year at this secondary school, the school was moved to Cawaci and I completed my secondary education there. After that year, in 1952, I passed the Senior Cambridge exam.

After finishing that year, I applied for the priesthood and was accepted. I was sent to New Zealand to Holy Cross College to study philosophy. I found New Zealand very cold. I was a bit apprehensive about going to New Zealand because there was a definite colour bar in Fiji, and I didn't know how I would fit in in a country of all white people. I remember how shocked I was the first time I saw a Maori overseer over white men. I found that the people in New Zealand were different all together. There was no discrimination whatsoever. If the rest of the world was like New Zealand, then the things that people like Leslie Cheshire and people like that write about colour bar are not true. Also, the whole way of life was different. In Fiji life is geared to the natives, but in New Zealand the people have a broader outlook on life.

In school the only thing I had difficulty with was English. English in Fiji was taught as a foreign language to a certain extent, and grammar was emphasised. In New Zealand they treated English as if it were your native tongue and asked the students to compare literary styles. You would have had to have read many books before. I found philosophy very, very

interesting. It makes a man think. It's just what I enjoy most. It's all based on reason. There's no formulas in it; I could never remember formulas. It was based on the facts of everyday life. I did well and came in first in everything except English and Church History. At the end of my second year, I had a nervous breakdown and had to leave college for six months. I blame myself. I had always come in first since Standard 6 and I wanted to keep up here. I also felt that a priest had to meet all kinds of problems—genuine problems and people from other religions who would try to trap you. I felt I had to have everything completely in hand, and I guess I drove myself too hard.

I got to the point where I couldn't sleep at night and would lie awake night after night, thinking of unsolved problems. After many weeks like that I would get very touchy, and it got to the point at times when too much noise would make me scream. Half of the time I didn't know why I had acted that way. I'd have a row and not know why I acted that way. The professors noticed this and had me see a doctor, and the doctor recommended a six-month rest. It was during that time that I first started to doubt whether or not I wanted to become a priest. I had been awarded a seat in the College of Propaganda in Rome but was left behind because of my breakdown. I was supposed to go after the next year, but I thought of how much pressure I was under in New Zealand and knew it would be worse in Rome. I completed the third year at Holy Cross, but having the nervous breakdown knocked off all my self-confidence. The Catholic Church would have had to pay for my education in Rome, and I was afraid I would be a failure. It was pride, I guess. Now that I think of it I guess it wasn't a very good reason to quit. If my parents had been paying for it I might have tried. I asked the Bishop if I might complete my priest's training in New Zealand and then go to Rome afterwards, but he refused,

and if you don't take the Bishop's word, they don't permit you to go into the priesthood.

I tried to get a job and went to the Bishop to get my exam certificates and a testimonial from him, but he refused to see me and refused to give me anything. So I got a job in customs just like an ordinary primary boy, with no certificates to show. I started out as a license clerk at 16 pounds a month, and another fellow had a job as senior clerk for 80 pounds a month. He proved to be incompetent, and the comptroller of customs asked me if I could try the job, since I had more or less proved myself. So we switched jobs. I thought that I would receive his salary, but after six months I was still getting only 16 pounds a month and the fellow who took my job was still getting 80. This was because I didn't have my certificates. When I put as a reference the Bishop, indicating he had my certificates, the reply came back without recognition. So I quit that job.

I went over to Burns Philp and told them everything, and they told me they would start me at the same pay as the government, 16 pounds a month, but if I proved myself they would give me a raise. I started in November, and in December I got my raise and was transferred to Rotuma. I came to Rotuma in January 1957.

My first impression of Rotuma was horrible. It was a change of life altogether. My relatives all came to me as though I could take all the money I wanted and they soon ran me into debt. I never even had seen most of them before. They would just come up to me and tell me how we were related and then ask for what they wanted. If I refused, they would say I was just a European.

I met my wife in the office in Suva. She was working at Burns Philp, too. I saw her several times before coming to Rotuma and we dated

a bit. When I came here we corresponded. I proposed to her through the mail and she accepted. We were married at Upu by Father Beattie.

Honestly, I can say I went too soon into married life. I was only out of college for a year. Here in Rotuma, though, it was lonely. There was nothing to do and no place to go. I just went from work to home. I didn't really know anyone, either. Now we have two children and I guess I'm more or less adjusted to married life.

[Plans for future?] Keep on working supporting my family, I suppose. [Here in Rotuma?] No, I'd never have a penny to educate my children if I stayed in Rotuma, with weddings, etc.; we've participated in six weddings alone this year, and one of them cost us up to 13 pounds.

(Age 26)

I am the second youngest out of a family of eight children, seven boys and a girl who is the oldest of us. As far back as I can remember, my parents were very kind people. They treated us so kindly when we were small up to the time we all left school to help them. When I was small I seemed to be the pet of the family. My parents brought me different kinds of toys and even dolls though I am a boy and I always stayed in the house with Mother. I very seldom went out to play with other children in the neighbourhood. Whenever I didn't feel like playing with my playthings, I always followed in my mother's footsteps in the house. Of course I was to be found anyplace where my mother could be presented. I remember that never once did I disobey my parents' words. I think that was why I became a pet of theirs. The older children seemed to hate me because they all noticed how our parents treated me.

When I reached the age of 6, my parents sent me to school. Most of the time in school I was thinking of my parents and didn't pay much attention to my teacher. I preferred to play, turning around and drawing others' attention to me. The teacher used to tell me that I was a bit half-witted; he didn't realise that I was purposely planning to waste time. I really hated school. Years passed and I was still a lazy student. When I was 14 I felt great joy when I was told by my parents to leave school.

I was still like a child, never feeling like going to the bush to help Dad in his plantations. I was roaming like a 5-year-old child in our village. Many times I saw that my older brothers were angry with our father for this, yet he never spoke to me about it. Later I learned from my mother that I had poor health and that was why they were treating me like a pet. A whole year passed and I was still treated as a child. One day I was told that I was going on a trip to Fiji and there I would stay with my two oldest

brothers. My heart beat with joy and I wished the boat would come earlier than expected. The day came and I bid farewell to my parents. When I came to Fiji my eyes were opened wide when I saw the place was so different from my home. Day after day for two whole months I was to be seen in town. Unluckily, I got news that my dear dad was seriously ill, so I returned home on the first available boat.

I came home to see Father was bedridden. I was no longer a child. I was changed and became the best adolescent boy in the village. I worked very hard in the plantations, and looked after Mother and Auntie with her two children. After a few months I had to take another voyage to accompany my sick father on board on his way to the hospital in Suva. How sad I was when I looked at my sick father. While my father was in the hospital, I stayed with my two brothers. I then returned by the next boat to stay with dear Mother again. I worked very hard for Mother and Auntie. When Dad came home from the hospital I had already begun building a house of stone. But he was weak and unable to help me. People in the village saw me working hard like an old man and noticed my changed manners and chose me to be the chairman of the district's cooperative society. I didn't like it because I was too young to lead many people older than myself. It was very hard for me whenever we had a meeting or something happened to the society that I had to see to.

I began to make friends with the other youth in our village and to go out at night finding pleasures for ourselves. I met many adolescent girls who I felt to love but they seemed to take no notice of me. Maybe I was a bit shy and couldn't speak to them properly. Then I met a girl and we loved each other, but when I told my parents they refused to accept it. I told her to wait until I could win over my parents.

After a few months my poor father died of this new disease called polio. How sad I was to think of him, treating me like a pet from my childhood until that time. I really felt so sorry, but it was clear to me that we are not the rulers of our lives. I really missed him. Not long after his death, I got married to the girl my parents had previously rejected. I didn't care about my mother's and other relations' anger but fulfilled what I had dreamed about for a long time.

Now my mother is very kind to my wife and we are living together in the new house that I built. I am still chairman of the cooperative and hope to be a good person for the people of the district.

(Age 25)

I was born of Catholic parents and am still a Catholic today. I was the sixth in a family of twelve. In our family there are nine boys and three girls.

My father's father was a pure white man from the States. He came to Rotuma and traded in the early days with the natives and married a native woman. My mother's parents are both Rotumans. My parents are both still living today.

This life story of mine begins at the time I first attended school and that was the Sumi Catholic School. I was in that school for only a year before my father sent me to Levuka. I was a pupil in the Levuka Public school and was boarding in the Levuka Hostel for about a year until we finally got a house of our own. I went to Levuka in March 1944 with my mother and three elder brothers. We were in Levuka for only two years—1944 and 1945—and then we moved to Suva in 1946.

My mother came back to Rotuma with another brother of mine, leaving three of us. My elder brother left school and was working and left me and another brother. We went to Suva and attended St. Felix College for one year, in 1946. At the end of that year my uncle from Vatukoula came to Suva and took me to Vatukoula to stay with him. I was in Vatukoula from 1947 until the middle of 1948 when I went back to Suva again. In the time I was staying in Vatukoula I did not attend any school at all, just stayed home roaming the countryside. My brother from Rotuma heard about this and he came to Vatukoula and thanked my uncle and took me to Suva and left me to board with another uncle. This time I went back to the St. Felix College to start all over again; that was in 1948.

By the end of that year I ran away from Uncle and went to board in the St. Felix College. Uncle had been very cruel to me and I could not

stand it, so I told the Head Brother of the school and he admitted me in the school as a boarder. My boarding there was £4/-/- a month and school fees were free, but we had to work every afternoon cleaning the classrooms and the school compound. It was not hard though, because besides me there were another three boarders and we all shared the work to be done. We had a timetable of work to be done that was changed every week. My elder brother, who started work in Levuka, got a job on one of the BSIP vessels and was in the Solomons at that time. I wrote to him and explained the situation and he was pleased with what I did. He sent me £20/-/- every month to pay for my boarding, clothing, and pocket money. I gave this money to the Head Brother to look after it for me.

At St. Felix College, I had to start all over again in Primer 1, which was very shameful because I was the biggest boy in a class amongst tiny tots. Anyhow, I was in Primer 1 for only one month before I went on to Primer 2, and I skipped Primers 3 and 4 and went to Standard 1 in that same year. I don't know why Brother shifted me that quickly; was it because I was too old for that class or was I doing good work? In 1949 I jumped from Standard 1 to Standard 3, and in that same year I moved on to Standard 4. At the end of the year on our final examination I came sixteenth place in a class of forty-three boys. In 1950 I was in Standard 5 and at the end of the year I came third in my class of forty-seven boys. In 1951 I went to Standard 6, the last standard in the primary school, and was studying hard for the Marist Brothers High School entrance. We boarders were having night class conducted by the Brothers. By the final exam, at the end of 1951, I came in second place in my class of thirty-some students. The Dux of the school was only one point ahead of me. I got high marks for all subjects except in English, where this chap beat me. Nevertheless, I was very glad about the results, although I was hoping to

get the Cup for the Dux of the School. Our Head Brother, a Spaniard by name of Brother Raephael, congratulated me on the results of the examination.

In December of 1951, I came home on the *Yanawai* for Christmas with my parents. It had been seven years since I was away from Mum and Dad, and I thought it was time for me to go home since I had finished my primary education. I came home and, oh, I had plenty of fun here. I went around with the girls at night and by jeepers I thought that this island was paradise, for as is natural, when we young people get together and mix around together there's bound to be something naughty about it. I eloped with one girl during that Christmas holiday and when it was time for me to return to Suva my mind was not all there. I was double minded whether I should go back to Suva or stay here and marry this girl. My father was very angry about it, but it was soon over because I just had to go back to school to complete my secondary education. Anyhow I went back to Suva in February on the *Tui Cakau* in 1952.

I got back to school in Suva and this time I was not boarding in the Brothers school but was boarding with an aunty in Suva. I came back from school in the afternoon and used to go out at night after women, because my holiday in Rotuma spoiled my head. I was thinking all the time about women in school, outside and everywhere. In September 1952 I received a letter from my parents saying that the girl [I had eloped with] had given birth to a baby boy from me. This made me very wild because I was ashamed to say I had a baby and was still in school. I was only 16 years of age at the time. I denied the baby was mine and so the parents of that girl registered the baby in their name, and still to this day the baby has not been re-registered under mine, although I am willing to say now that the baby is mine since I have settled down and am not ashamed any

longer. This little boy of mine is 8 years old now and is schooling in Sumi. His mother is married now to another chap.

During that year (1952), I thought I was going to go crazy. My mind was all mixed up. During the second term in 1952, I came in sixteenth place in the Form III final examinations. The Head Brother of the St. Felix College heard about this and was very angry about it. He saw me and asked me what was wrong and I explained to him the situation and he said not to be down-hearted: “Do your best; I know you can do better than that, my boy.” These were his words to me and they struck me very hard. So in the third term examination, I came in fifth place in a class of sixty-three boys. It was good news to the Brother again. He was very happy about the news of our exam.

I came home again at the end of 1952 for Christmas. I came home feeling happy, but when I arrived in Rotuma and went home I found that my father was very sick, just about dying and, well, I got very worried. During that Christmas I didn’t have much fun because I was worried about Father. I was getting ready to go back to Suva early in 1953 but unfortunately I didn’t because the manager of Morris Hedstrom Ltd Rotuma had seen my father about me working in the office. He said that his clerk has passed away that week and that he needed a young fellow to help him in the office. I had to go to work to please the old man, but it was against my will. My ambition was that when I complete my secondary education I would go in for doctor or barrister. Anyhow, I started work for MH Ltd on January 19th, 1953. It was not long after that they sent a clerk from HQ in Suva to Rotuma, and when this fellow came I left MH’s and went back to Suva. That was in May 1953.

I got back to Suva and was admitted to the Marist Brothers High School and continued my secondary education. By the end of the year I

was supposed to sit for the Junior Cambridge (Overseas) but I came back to Rotuma again for Christmas and this time my old man wouldn't let me go back to school again and saw the manager again about me working. I started again in December of that same year and am still working for MH Ltd today.

During my time here, there have been a lot of changes. There have been three managers, and all the office hands have all got the boot except me. This is not a good story to tell, but still I will say just a bit of it. It was the first and the biggest thing that happened in Rotuma. There was a big court case, the firm and government against the manager and ourselves. They found that there was a large sum of money missing somewhere. We had two lawyers from Suva, one was for the firm and the government and one was for the manager, but we poor blokes had no lawyer because we couldn't afford one and hadn't experienced a thing like this in our lives, so we were all frightened. The case results: Three chaps got two years and myself nine months in the clink. It was a big mystery. Someone got away with it and we poor fellows, because we can't afford a lawyer to fight for us, just had to take what punishment they liked to put on us. Nobody knows the real mystery of this case. I was lucky enough because the firm took me back to my old position again and here am I still working for them.

I got married in 1955 when I was 19 years of age. Our first baby was born in 1956, and another baby was born this year. Our first child was a boy and second baby a girl. I had a lot of trouble before I got permission from my father to marry this girl. My father wouldn't give his permission for me to marry her because we are very close relations. She is a third cousin to me, but all the same I just couldn't help it. I love her and we love each other, and that is the main thing. Finally the old people gave in and

so we married and are still living together now. We are having a very happy life together and I don't think I will forget her as long as I live.

(Age 25)

I have five brothers and six sisters, and I'm the third oldest. I lived with my mother and father. Life wasn't bad. It was a bit hard because it was a big family. My parents treated us very well. When I was about 6 years old, I used to go with my father to the bush. I would go and help him gather the nuts and he would cut copra. We would carry the copra back home on horseback. I liked going to the bush with my father very much.

When I was about 7 years old, I started school. I was pretty lazy in school. I had very little interest in it. But I still tried my best and for the first four years I always came in first in the class. That was here at Sumi. When I started Class 5, I stayed at the boarding school here at Sumi. The first year was very hard. We had to work ... go to the bush and plant taro, and sometimes we felt like playing instead of going to the bush. We had to carry the food on our shoulders. I didn't miss home very much because there were plenty of boys. I stayed in the boarding school for seven years, until I was 18 years old.

After that I went to Cawaci, near Levuka. I went to the college there for one year. It was very hard being far away from home. Life wasn't very pleasant, especially since I wasn't used to the Fijians. They usually spoke in Fijian and I couldn't understand them. The studies, too, were hard. I was in Form IV. We studied geometry, English, a little bit of Latin and things like that.

After that year, I was ready to make up my mind to become a brother. When I first started this school I wanted to be a doctor, but I couldn't advance in my studies so I decided to become a brother. Father Fahey spoke to me and convinced me to become a brother. So I was sent to Sydney for the noviciate. I stayed in Sydney for four years. I found Sydney very cold. I found life very different, especially the food. I found

the boys in the noviciate very friendly. There were five nationalities represented: Tongans, Fijians, Samoans, Solomon Islanders, and Australians. There were also two of us Rotumans there. I didn't feel very lonesome because we had made friends with the Fijian fellows before we left. In Australia they spoke English.

After I finished with the noviciate I was sent to the New Hebrides to be a mechanic. The American brother at Port Villa taught me to be a mechanic. I stayed there for three years. I enjoyed this time very much. I liked the work, it was very interesting. I learned to fix cars and all kinds of mechanical things. When I left there I was 25 years old and trained as a mechanic.

After that I had a six months' holiday and I went back to Fiji, and then I came back to Rotuma. I almost couldn't speak the language; I had to learn it all over again. That was last year, and now I'm staying here at Sumi. I like it very much. There's plenty of work. I think I'd like to stay here.

(Age 21)

All my life I've lived in the same village. When I was a child I was living with my mother and father and sisters and brothers. There were ten children in our family, five boys and five girls. All of us are still alive except my youngest sister who died in 1957 when she was 4 years old.

My mother and father were poor, but they were always very kind to us. They did their best to supply us with everything that we needed. Sometimes, if we asked for something which they could not give us at the time, they would ask us to wait and would get it for us when they could. They also did their best to teach us to be kind to each other and to other people, so that after they have died the people will still love us.

When I was 6 years old, my mother and father sent me to school. In school I learned how to read and write, and also how to behave in the right way. During that time I began to make friends with the other boys and I found out that if you have a good friend, your life will be happy.

When I was about 10 years old, one of my aunts came from Fiji and took my four oldest brothers and sisters to live with her, leaving me alone with my small sisters. In the month that they left me I felt very sad, and sometimes during that month I would think about them, and the way we had lived together, and I would cry. I missed them very much. I had a hard time after they left, but I got used to it after a few months. Sometimes, when my father was sick, I had to stay home from school and get food for the family. Finally I left school so that I could help my father work on his plantations. I knew that if he would work too hard by himself he might get sick and die, and there would be no one to look after my small sisters as well as their father did.

After I would get through helping my father every day, I used to go out with my friends. Sometimes we would go fishing together and

sometimes we'd just go for walks together around the district. One time, when I was working with my friends taking the copra to Motusa on the co-op truck, I had a bad accident. I fell off the truck and broke some bones and had to be taken to the hospital. At first most of the people thought I was going to die, and I was unconscious for two days. All of my family was praying for me at that time. They gave an *apei* [fine white mat] to the priest at the Upu mission to say a mass for me. I spent one month in the hospital before I was allowed to come home. Before that accident I used to go to church but I was kind of a larrikin boy—always going with the boys and doing what they did, even if it wasn't right. But after this accident, and the way God saved my life, I decided to try to do my best to act in the right way, and I've remembered that right up until today.

After I came home from the hospital my father told me that if I wanted to go to Fiji, he would send me there for a holiday. I went to Fiji and spent five months there before coming back to my mother and father and all my friends.

Soon after I came back I started to go out in the evenings with my friends. We went to the shows and dances together and always had a good time. Then one day I met a girl whom I liked and I wanted to make her my girlfriend. I started to go to see her almost every night. Then one day she told me that she was afraid to continue this way because the people might find out and tell her mother and father, and if that would happen and I wouldn't marry her, she would be very ashamed, and maybe she wouldn't be able to find another husband because of it. Because I had been holding her close to me in my arms nearly every night I felt like I would like to marry her. Besides, when I heard she was afraid I felt bad, because she was my girlfriend and I didn't want anything to hurt her. A couple of days after that I went to her again and she told me that I better

make up my mind if I wanted to marry her or not, so I went right to her mother and father and told them that I really loved their daughter and that I wanted to marry her. After I talked to them they said they would agree to it and let me marry their daughter. I came home that night with my heart full of happiness and love. I told my parents about it but they didn't like it and didn't want me to marry this girl. When the girl's mother found out that my parents didn't want me to marry her, she told me that she'd never let me marry her daughter.

From that experience I found out that having a girlfriend is very different from having a boyfriend. If you really love a girl and want to marry her, nothing in the world can stop your love for her. A girl can change your mind so you'll never think of anything else; you'll think of her every minute.

Two years after that (this year), I met another nice-looking girl. It made me very happy to be with her whenever I could. Just like before, I didn't want to think of anything else but her every minute of the day, but now she has gone to Fiji and left me alone.

Chapter 10

Women Born in the 1930s

(Age 28)

There were many of us in our family in which I was the youngest. As far back as I can remember my parents were very kind, but they were strict and the family had a hard time with them. Whenever they said something, nobody could turn things around because my father wouldn't stand for it. When he said something, nobody had a chance to utter a word. My father was so strict in character that many of our relations were frightened to come to our home.

My parents sent me to school, and when I came home work was waiting for me and I had to finish it before I could have a rest. My father was kind but hard to live with. We worked like boys whenever there was no school. I was more worried about home than school and, to tell the truth, I couldn't study properly. Instead of learning, I thought of what was awaiting me at home, but I never grumbled because if my father would hear any murmuring I would get a good hitting with his belt. Until the time I left school, I was never promoted to higher classes. I stayed home to help my mother and to help my father in his plantations and look after the animals. I didn't even think of running away because I knew that once my parents died I couldn't have them again, and as the years passed away, the weaker they became.

After a few years with them, I got married to an older man who was a catechist and we stayed for a while with my parents. Finally I had to leave them. My husband and I went to Fiji and then to the Solomon Islands. There I found life harder than I ever knew; I met people of

different races whose customs and languages were so different from ours. My husband was far from home and instead of being kind to me he was worse than my father. Life seemed so dark to me, and the thought of home was always ringing around in my brain. How my heart yearned for home. Whenever he was tired or angry with the natives, he mostly came and took it out on me.

We stayed for many years on this island and we had three children, so when we came back to Fiji we and our children could speak the language. My heart beat for joy when I heard that we were to come back to Rotuma; home sweet home. We came and stayed with my parents and here we had another child, and for goodness sake, I got fed up with my husband and sent him home. He never changed his manners and I preferred to stay alone with my parents. He left, but since he was still a catechist my parents wanted me to go with him. I went to his home and yet he still was the same, so one day I came home and never thought about him anymore. Before he went to Fiji he wanted to bring our children with him, but I could not send the children away because they were my own and I loved them. My husband sent for me to come over and bring the children but the thought of him had vanished. My parents were both getting old and I had to stay and look after them. My dear father was so strict when we were small but now I was the pet in our family. I worked because I was used to working hard and I never got sick or felt lazy at all.

Now we are living together with my parents and my four boys are without a father to look after them, only my dear weak father and myself, and sometimes my brother-in-law gives us something to help us for our dear old parents.

Married life to me is a sad life.

(Age 26)

I was born and lived together with my parents and brothers and sisters. From 3 years old until the time I was 5, I had a very good time with my brothers and sisters. We used to play with each other and joke. Sometimes my father would punish us for playing too much inside the house, because we would crack the dishes or break the things that my mother had put properly. During that time I loved my mother, but I didn't like my father because he used to punish us.

When I was 6 years old, I started to go to school. I liked school very much because I always passed the examinations and did well in my lessons, so the teacher didn't punish me. Each year I came in first in my class. When I was 13 years old, I sat for the Fiji Secondary Examination and passed, and the teacher sent me to St. Agnes College at Nanroga, in Fiji, to study stenography.

I spent four years in the secondary school. I tried very hard and did well, especially in typing and shorthand. I consistently got over 90 percent in both those subjects. In the second year, I never failed an examination and ended up first in the class. The next two years I studied so that I could sit for the Junior Cambridge examination, but the Christmas before I was to sit for the exam my father asked me to come home to Rotuma to spend the holiday season at home. He hadn't seen me for four years and he wanted me to spend some time at home before going back to school. Not only that, but he had heard of how well I was doing in school and was proud of me.

I thought it would be a good idea to take a holiday because I had been studying very hard and felt it would be good to have a rest before beginning to study again. So I left the secondary school and returned to Rotuma in December of 1932. But I still liked school and intended to

return after the holiday. When I got home my parents were very glad to see me and were very kind to me. The other people in the district treated me well, too. I really spent a good Christmas holiday that year and had plenty of fun. Nearly every night I went *fara* with the boys and girls. It was the first Christmas holiday I had ever spent in which I had such good fun. My mother and father let me go with the boys and girls every night. They didn't mind because they trusted me. They said I had learned everything in school and should know how to protect myself from the sins of the world.

Unluckily, I didn't know how the Rotuman boys trick the girls, because I had been at school and didn't have any boyfriends. So I didn't know the ways of the Rotuman boys. One night during that Christmas holiday I met a boy and he talked to me. He told me that he loved me from the first time he saw me. I believed him because from the first time we had met he always acted good to me and talked sweet. On that night he told me all about his feelings for me. I thought about the kindness he had shown to me and made up my mind to love him. I thought that he was telling the truth—that he really wanted to keep me—so I trusted him, but when he knew I was going to have a baby he left me.

When my parents and close relatives knew that I was going to have a baby they got very angry with me. At that time I didn't know what to do and cried myself to sleep nearly every night. I said that it was my father's fault, because he was the one who wanted me to come to Rotuma in the first place. My father really got angry with me and sent me to my mother's brother's house. I stayed in that village and got married in 1955. This time I knew how to make a man keep me for his wife. We have two children now, but I don't really like married life. Unfortunately I have no choice because I've already spoiled my life.

(Age 26)

I was born at Upu in 1934. I stayed with my family, and my mother and father looked after me while I was young. At the age of 6 years, I went to school at Upu. When I was 12 years old I wanted to be a nun. At this time I prayed to pass examinations and to get things for me, and whatever I prayed for I got. That's why I wanted to give my life to God. I felt this way until the age of 14. Every time I would go home I would tell my parents how much I wanted to be a nun, and each time they just said "Oh!" When I was 14, they told me that they didn't want me to be a sister. So then I took it into my mind just to look for a job and to sit for an examination to find something to do. At the age of 15, I sat for the Fiji nurses examination, which I passed along with some other girls. Then I went to tell my father and mother that I was going to be a nurse, but my mother didn't like me to do so. My mother said that if I wanted to be a nurse, I could stay at Sumi and let the fathers and sisters there pay my way to Fiji, but if I did they would not call me their daughter any more. My mother said to me, "If you come and stay with me, I'll do anything you want me to do." So I made up my mind to leave the convent.

I came home and stayed with my parents for one year. For this whole year I didn't do any work, and anything I asked for they would get for me. At the age of 18, I went to Fiji and stayed primarily with my auntie in Levuka. When I had gotten out of the convent, I felt shy to talk to people, especially the men and boys. If a boy started to talk to me, I felt like running away. Some people say that it's easy for a boy to get a girl from the convent, because she's not used to joking with the people and doesn't know how to act with the boys. When I came out of the convent, I kept this always in mind and felt shy to talk to the boys. When I was in Fiji I learned how to talk to the boys without being shy.

In Fiji I was impressed with the differences between Rotuma and this modern world, and I felt that I wanted to stay here for good. I returned to Rotuma after six months. I had learned how to dance in Fiji, and I always felt like dancing and going out when I came back to Rotuma. At this time, if I wanted to go to a dance, I couldn't go by myself; my brother had to take me. But any time some young people would come and ask me to do something with them, I would go. I had started to enjoy my life. After about a year and a half, I went back to Fiji.

I went first to Levuka to see my auntie (father's sister), and she and she and I went to visit our *kainaga* in Suva and then went to see my brother at Vatakoula. We also went to Mba. This trip, I wanted to go out to dances and shows all the time. Even in Suva, however, I wouldn't go anywhere alone, because I was frightened of the boys. Even if a boy would touch me or try to talk with me, I would run away and my body would feel all bad. When I think of what would happen to the girls who come out of the convent, I would feel frightened.

I came back to Rotuma when I was about 21 years old. At this time, my mother and father trusted me to take care of myself, and they would let me go out alone. They would just tell me to take care of myself before I left and asked me if I had a good time when I returned.

(Age 25)

My father and mother separated when I was 3 years old, and I stayed with my mother. My mother was very poor, so if she wanted something she had to cut copra to get money to get it. My mother got married again several times, and I always stayed with her. All of my stepfathers were very kind to me, but still it wasn't like having my own father. I had to show respect to my stepfather. I was small, but I was old enough to know what's good and what's bad. I knew they weren't my real fathers, so I was afraid to ask them for the things I wanted. So if I ever wanted anything I would tell my mother instead, and she would tell her husband.

My mother sent me to school but I only went up to Class 3, because I couldn't get money to pay for it and all the things I needed for school. I was afraid to ask my stepfather for the money I needed.

I came out from school, but still I couldn't act to my stepfather like it would have been with my real father, so I lived unhappily until I was 19 years old. Since I turned 19, until now, I have been very happy, because I can do what I want without worrying about anything.

Unluckily, when I went to Fiji in 1958 to work for a Rotuman couple, I met a man who acted very kind to me. At first I didn't love him, but he was so kind to me that in the end I did. He always talked sweetly and kindly to me and in the end I had a baby from him. I wanted to stay with him in Fiji, but the Rotuman man I was staying with didn't like that man, and they sent me back to Rotuma.

(Age 24)

I was the second oldest in a family of four children. We were all girls, without a brother. When I reached the age of knowing reason, I can remember that there were only two of us with our parents. We had good times with our parents; they were very nice to us. They treated us so kindly that I never thought of going to stay with any other relatives, as some other children used to do in our neighbourhood. Whatever my sister and I asked from our parents they always gave to us, and if it was hard for them to give it to us immediately they tried their very best to get it from somewhere.

Mother was so nice, she always took us with her any place she would go. She never used harsh words on us or even scolded us once. She was so kind that I never thought of disobeying her words. She brought us many different toys to play with so that we wouldn't roam about in the village like other children.

Both my sister and I went to school and our dear mother had to bring our lunch every day. Our home was not far from school, so every day before the lunch bell rang I could see our mother coming with our food and waiting for us. I took pleasure in school and did every lesson my teacher had given to our class. I tried my very best and every year I was promoted to a higher class until I reached Class 6, the highest class in our school. At the end of the year I was one of the pupils who passed and was to be promoted to Class 7, so my parents sent me to Fiji for higher education.

I entered Delainavesi School and there I found studies harder than I expected. Nevertheless I was brave enough to face all difficulties that I was to meet during my years at boarding school. I spent a year in Class 7 and two years in Class 8, but I barely passed my Qualifying Examination.

I thought of leaving school and going to work to earn a living, because I felt I wouldn't be able to do well if I kept on studying. I wrote over to my parents and told them that I intended to become a nurse and they gave their agreement. I applied to the matron at the Civic War Memorial Hospital in Suva, and my heart jumped for joy when I found out that I was accepted.

As a training nurse I had to try hard to learn how to treat the different kinds of people who came in for attention. Being so shy of people actually caused a delay in my training. I was so slow in my work that the matron had to speak to me every month. I met with both good and bad times, but since I loved the work I tried my very best to do well and to do as I was told. I was good in my studies, of course, but the work in the hospital with the sick was a bit hard for me because I wasn't used to being in the view of so many people. I was an adolescent girl then, and being in the constant company of boys who were studying to be doctors, I began to think of making boyfriends.

I met a boy who had the same thoughts as I had, so one day we met each other and said how we felt about each other. We became friends and from then on my shyness began to leave me and I was able to face many people and knew how to speak to them. When I reached the end of my third year of training, I sat for my last exam and was one of the six who made it through. I was so glad that I took a trip to Rotuma to tell my parents about my happiness and returned to Fiji on the same boat. After that I worked in the hospital, but my intentions were to work for my native land and my people, and then one day my dreams came true. I was called to go and work for my people in Rotuma. Gee! How my heart beat with joy when I was on my way to my native land. This is very hard work, of

course, but since I love it, I look upon everything as easy. As for my boyfriend, I left him as soon as I noticed that he had bad manners.

Now I am working in the hospital in my native land and I enjoy working for my people. I try to treat them all the same, and I often relieve the doctor with cases that I know how to handle. I learned how to drive, and whenever the doctor is too busy to go around the island visiting the sick I take the ambulance and see the sick people instead of him.

My parents are both living and I have a good chance to look after them. My eldest sister was married and has had six children, and my younger sister just got married at the beginning of this year. The youngest is still at school; I hope she is successful like the rest of us. My parents are now becoming old, but they have two sons-in-law looking after them and I am giving them some help, so they are able to do whatever they wish. I am very lucky to have parents now so that I can treat them with the kindness they treated me with from the time I was small until the day I left for Fiji. Now that I have achieved my goal, I want to help them to have everything they need. I also hope that what I am doing is helping my people on this island of ours. I don't think of married life any more but would rather stay single and help the sick in the hospital and on different parts of the island whenever I am needed.

Chapter 11

Men (Birthyear Unknown)

(Man 1)

I was the eldest of the three of us—myself and my two sisters. The youngest died when she was about 3 years old. I was brought up by my father's brother and his wife. They had no children but myself with them. They really loved me as if I were their real son. Whatever I asked for they always gave to me, so that I wouldn't think of my parents. How nicely and kindly they took care of me because of my withered hand. My aunt used to dress me and do for me whatever I wanted to do for myself but couldn't, because I was unable to.

They sent me to school, but sometimes I didn't go, because even after I had reached the age of 8 years old I still couldn't dress myself, and anytime I wanted to go to the toilet I had to go straight home. After three years of being a day pupil I went to the boarding school. My auntie had to come every morning to the dormitory to dress me for church and for school, and then she returned home. She did this for me until I was able to take care of myself.

In school, the teacher always scolded me because I always did what I wanted, whether it was during a lesson or not. I found out that it was a bit hard for me to learn, so I told my uncle and aunt and they just told me to do my best. When I was 14 years old, I was sent home from school for not having been promoted. But my aunt and uncle knew I had done my best. I had spent six years in the boarding school.

My aunt and uncle still had no children so there were only the three of us in the family. I helped my uncle with his plantations and then I

began to know how to work and help him properly, so one day he went away to Fiji leaving me to feed my aunt and take care of her. After a few months we received a telegram telling us that he had died in the hospital. What a pity to see my aunt crying, and both of us knew we couldn't see his face again. I felt very sad, for I knew if I were staying with my parents I wouldn't have gotten everything I got from my uncle and aunt.

One day my auntie took me back to my father, but by then my mother had died and my father had gotten married again. His wife was planning to go to Fiji at that time. I would have liked to go with her but she said that it would be too expensive for the two of us to go, so I'd have to wait. She went by the next trip and hadn't yet returned to Rotuma when, unluckily, my father died. When my stepmother came back she returned to her own village, and I was left alone in our home. I went to stay with some of my near relations, but since I couldn't work properly—only with one hand—they always looked down on me, so one day I went to one of the storekeepers and asked if I could work for him for a little payment, so that I wouldn't have to stay with any of my relations and could support myself. I did work in his plantations, planting everything he told me to, and during the first six weeks he paid me ten shillings a week—but I did all his work in the plantations. I sold food and fruits for him and when I'd come back he'd take all the money I had gotten and would go away without a word. When I wanted something I had to ask him for it, and yet I was still doing all his work. Many times he told me that I should wait for him on the plantation—that he would bring my food up—but the whole day and night he didn't come, and I would go all day without food. I was badly treated by that man, and many times he knew I was angry at him from the looks I gave him. I left this cruel man and went to live with my sister and her husband. That man is now old but he hasn't been able to

get anyone to work for him, because all the neighbours know how badly he treated me.

But my sister's mother-in-law didn't want me to live with them, so I had to go and find another home for myself. Now I am working for a little payment at the Sumi Catholic mission and have enough food. It's just like it was when I was with my uncle and aunt.

(Man 2)

I was the only one in my family and grew up very lonely. When I reached the age of reason, my mother told me that my father had died when I was 5 months old and that she was bringing me up without a father. When I was 8 years old, my mother got married again. My stepfather took care of me from that time and didn't want me to go to my mother's relatives. He gave me everything I needed, as well as toys and whatever he thought might please me. I went to school and he bought me everything I needed for school. I grew older and sometimes went to school, but sometimes I didn't reach the place. I would play on the road and come back pretending that I was coming back from school. I acted this way and by the time I was 14 I was still in the lower grades, so I was asked to leave school and to go with my stepfather to work. He wanted me to be a carpenter and sent me over to that department, which he was in charge of. Every day I became very drunk and he became very wild with me. By then my mother died and left me with my stepfather.

Two years after my mother's death this man married again, but he still kept me with him. Through my stupidity I lost control of myself over liquor and I knew my stepfather was very angry with me, but since he brought me up he might have loved me anyway.

Being with the other adolescent boys, we used to take strolls every evening, and one day I met a girl that I wanted to make friends with, if she didn't mind. I met her now and then, and when I finally met her at a dance I began to talk with her. To my relief, she seemed to have the same feelings as I did, and so we became friends, and not long after that we got married. We stayed together for a year but I think because we were of different races and because our characters were different we didn't get along well together, and one day I got fed up with her and sent her home.

During that time I couldn't stay away from liquor, so maybe that was the reason. A couple of years later, I got married to a young woman of my own race, by my relations' wishes. I wondered if I could keep myself away from liquor. As I became older I did, because my wife didn't like me to drink or smoke. I had a hard time at the beginning, but I got used to it after a few months. When we had had two children, my wife got seriously ill and was taken to the hospital. I felt very sorry for her because I knew if she happened to die, there would be no one who would look after the children like their own mother did.

But she soon recovered and we lived together without anything to worry about. Now we have five children and they are all schooling together. I'm doing my very best for them and hope they won't be like me when I was young. The children are sometimes very naughty and I scold them, but I suppose I was worse than any of them. I'm now working very hard for them, because I know that if I don't give them what they need, they won't have it. I'm earning money for them and if they want to continue their studies I will be able to pay for them.

When my mother died I was still a youth and not as wise as I am now. I knew that my mother would not be with me any longer, but I was not like the others—always thinking and speaking about her. It was the same when my stepfather died. After my mother's death, he had three wives. He died a few years ago, but I didn't feel much about his death, even though I did love him. Now that I'm earning so much money every month, I wish they were both alive so that I could pay them back for everything they had done for me.

Chapter 12

Women (Birthyear Unknown)

(Woman 1)

I was the eldest in a family of eight children. As far back as I can remember my parents loved all of us, but I was the pet. I knew they were poor, but whatever they had on hand they used to keep for me. They taught me to love my four brothers and three sisters and to teach them good ways, as I had been taught by my elders. I was the one who was supposed to lead our family to love each other. They also told me not to cry for anything, because they were poor and were doing their best to satisfy our needs. They really did, because I cannot remember ever crying out for want of something.

During my school years I did my very best in my studies. I was promoted every year from class to class and my parents knew how eager I was to continue my studies. By the time I entered secondary school there were five of us attending school. My parents tried everything they could to earn money for us, but still they were forced to tell me to stay home to let my younger brothers and sisters go to school. I stayed home to help my mother look after the others. I felt sorry the rest for I knew they would also eventually have to leave school, no matter how good they were.

I helped my mother for a couple of years, and then I heard that there was a European couple who wanted to have an adolescent girl to work for them, so I volunteered. I went to work for this couple, hoping that the money I would earn would be of help to my parents. I sent them half of everything I earned and bought them some clothes and sent it to them by mail.

While I was working I met a boy of about my age. I liked him and wished we could be friends. Then it happened that one day my wish came true. We became friends and I wrote to my parents and told them about this boy, and that we were making friends. They wrote back telling me to be sure to choose the right man—someone who would do his best to give me everything. They reminded me of how poor our family was and they didn't want me to follow in their footsteps. I kept my eye on this boy's ways and when I knew that he was really a nice boy we got married.

At the beginning I was a bit shy and I was afraid that my husband might change his mind, and then my parents would be very angry at me. We still went to dances and shows, but I knew that I was living in a different state of life than before I was married. Every day I would think of the time when I was single. I had never made my parents or anyone else angry with me, and I wondered how my husband and I were going to be. Sometimes I was a bit scared because I did not want us to have a row for useless matters. In spite of all my funny ideas and thoughts my husband was the same from then up to now. He was a very kind man to me and towards my parents. We stayed together for many years, but unluckily we had no children. We were getting older and yet we had only our adopted son, my husband's nephew. My husband died a few years ago, leaving me with this boy whom I have taken care of and loved as if he were my own son.

On the day my husband died, I thought I would go mad. I knew he really loved me because when we first got married I thought we might be like others—some people who get married and have rows after four or five months—but this didn't happen to us. He was nice to me from the beginning until the time he died. I felt very sorry for him and wished he would be alive so that we might live together with our adopted son. Now

there are only the three of us—me, my nephew, and his wife—and I do hope they will live happily together as my husband and I did when he was alive.

(Woman 2)

I was the oldest of my mother's six children, all girls. Before I was born, my mother and her parents lived in my grandfather's home in a different district. As far back as I can remember I was brought up by my grandparents, and I knew they really loved me because my mother was their only daughter. My grandfather had very bad eyesight and my grandmother was weak and crippled, but they worked very hard to take care of all my needs. They found every possible way to earn money for our living. Whatever my mouth might whisper they brought in so that I wouldn't have to ask them again and again. Every toy I saw in the store and asked them for they bought for me. The neighbouring children who came to visit were not allowed to touch my toys. My grandmother hated to see any child touch my toys. I used to go and play with them in their homes, but whenever the older children would make me cry, if my grandmother heard it, she would come like a parrot and take me home. She didn't want to see me cry.

They sent me to school, but because I was lazy I was just promoted to Class 2 when I was 10 and had to enter boarding school. Most of the time I didn't go to school; I just stayed outside and worked for my superiors. The teacher didn't care very much because she knew I wouldn't be able to learn well like the others. For six whole years I was in boarding school but couldn't read or write properly. I was really spoilt and became very cheeky to everybody who seemed to hate me. I came home to help my grandparents, but by then my mother got married and lived in her husband's home and I went to stay with them. There were just the three of us in the family. My stepfather supplied us with food and all that we needed because by then my grandparents were old and unable to work like the time that they were strong. My grandmother died in the year I went to

stay with my mother. I felt so sorry because I knew she loved me and treated me so kindly when I was small.

My grandfather was completely blind by then and left the village and went to his father's home in another district. After a few months he died of a sudden illness and I stayed with my mother's cousin who also died shortly after, leaving me with a new-born child to take care of. The Sisters took the baby and I went along as well to look after the child. When she grew up, she went to be with her father and I went to stay with one of my relations. They loved me, but not like the way my grandparents did. I had taken a child of my auntie and brought her up to be my ward, but as soon as she was old enough, she left me and went to her parent.

I stayed with this auntie for nearly eight years and then I returned to my mother. How life changed living with my own mother. I worked whenever I wanted to and didn't have to hear harsh words or see funny faces. Maybe I was too cheeky and the people couldn't stand the way I acted or the way I used to speak to them or their children, but by then I felt like a heavy load had been lifted from my shoulders. Life changed from bad to good. I helped my mother with the domestic work and helped my stepfather cut copra. Never mind that it sounds like hard work—I did it on my own without anybody telling me or forcing me to do it.

I was sent to Fiji, but after nine months I returned home thinking of my dear mother, who had become old and weak. I stayed with them for another few years and they sent me again to Fiji. This time I went to stay with my half-sister who was working and wanted someone to look after her children. But because my parents were very old I only stayed for a few months before deciding to go back and visit them. This time I came home and saw how feeble and weak my mother was and felt so sorry for her. I'm now doing all I can to help her because very soon I will bid farewell to

them and do not know when I will return home again. I wish to stay but I have to go back to my half-sister who is now working and needs someone to take care of her children when she's away.

I was very friendly with people from here and other villages where I had stayed before, but I never even thought of getting married. I prefer to stay single and be happy rather than get married and have someone I have to listen to or have to do everything to please him. Staying single is better than to marry.

(Woman 3)

I am third eldest out of a family of five. Two boys and the three of us are girls. When I came to know reason, I could remember my dear father's teaching to us in which he wished we could grow up and become wise people in our district.

We were kindly brought up by our dear parents. They never used harsh words on us and there wasn't one of us who did anything to make them angry. I had to play with my neighbours, but on the other hand my brother always accompanied me because older children sometimes made me cry. They left me alone and ran away to their homes, so I had to come back home to play with my toys, which my father bought to keep me busy, and yet I preferred to go out in the sun.

Father sent me to school when I came to the age of 6. During the first year I felt very lazy during school lessons and most of the time I spent playing and looking around and teasing the other children in the class to play with me. I had no interest at all in learning. For three years I came last in my class, so thinking of the money my father was using on me, I thought to change my mind. I then became a hard-learning child and so very eager to know my lessons and always ready to answer whatever question my teacher could ask. I did very well until I reach the highest class in my school, so I was told to go to Fiji for further education. My parents agreed and I entered the girls school in Navesi. There I did very well and at the end of four years I passed my qualifying exam.

Unable to continue on, I left school and lived with a cousin in Suva. I then learned to be a typist, but my father couldn't pay for my learning so I decided to become a nurse. I gave my application and was admitted, so I became a training nurse. I loved the work and was very quick in studying what I was told to study. After the third year I got

through our exams and became a staff nurse. I worked in the C. W. H. Hospital for another year when I met a young man who was studying to be a doctor. We loved each other so dearly that we became engaged.

Thinking of myself, who really hated boys when I was in school, and then engaged to be married later on! At the end of that year I was told to leave for Rotuma to work for my people. I love it, of course, but hated to leave my fiancé, and felt very lonely and sad when the boat was sailing away from the wharf, where I could see the young man who stole my heart waving his hands to me.

When I reached Rotuma, I felt very glad to see my dear parents waiting for me with my brothers and sisters. I was kindly welcomed by all of my relations and my fiancé's relations too.

I began to work in the hospital in Ahau and spent the weekends at home. After a year, two nurses were told to stay at their house to help the others in the villages because there was only one doctor on the island and he really needed more doctors or nurses. I was the second nurse, so I came home to look after two districts. After two years at home doing my favourite nursing, I learned that my fiancé had gone to New Zealand to complete his course. I became very impatient after three long years of waiting without hearing any more definite words from him.

By then I met another young man whom I seemed to love whenever he spoke to me. I told my parents about it and they refused to accept it, so I pretended to obey them. When we had made all our plans to settle down, we made known our wedding day. My parents were really very angry with me but I wanted my dreams to come true.

There was no *kato'aga* on my wedding day and I did not wear a wedding dress. We just had a church ceremony. All this happened because my parents really hated the young man.

Now all my dreams have ended and I am expecting a baby, but whatever my parents had told me about my husband is true; he is showing up now and I think I will meet things I had not expected from him, and yet he seems to be kind to me.

My parents are still alive with my two brothers and two sisters. They are all married and they are all well now. At the beginning of last year, something happened that made me so worried I thought it would never be cleared. My younger sister became seriously ill and was taken to the hospital in Ahau and yet we, the nurses and the doctor, couldn't cure her illness, so she was taken to the hospital in Fiji. I wasn't allowed to go with her, and another nurse went instead of me. I stayed home, sending telegrams asking the matron in C. W. M. Hospital about my sister's illness. When I got news that she was improving, it lifted a heavy load off my shoulders. I felt normal again and began to do my work as usual. Now my sister is home with her husband and she is as strong and healthy as one can ever see.

Now I am married and yet doing the same nursing work until I give birth and then someone is to replace me.

(Woman 4)

I was the only child in the family. I was not a lucky girl because I didn't have a brother or a sister to play with and felt very lonely. I can remember that I was a real pet to my parents. My parents were of good family; although they were not rich people, they had enough to afford everything I needed. Whatever they knew I wanted they always brought in before I would ask them. Wherever my mother went, she would take me with her. I had all kinds of toys at home. My parents bought them so that I wouldn't cry for other children's toys. The children from the neighbourhood came sometimes, but when they quarrelled about my toys my mother always sent them home. She told me not to give my toys to them when they come but since I loved children to play with me I always called them and gave them my toys so that I might have friends with me every day.

When I reached the age of 6 my parents sent me to school. I wasn't old enough to know how to care for myself and I can remember that my dear mother had a rough time with me. Every day I had to change my school dress even though school was only half a day. It began at half past seven and lasted until twelve noon, then off we went home for the rest of the day. I took no pleasure at all in learning, so during my first two years I stayed in one class. When I reached the age of 10, I was forced to leave my parents and go to a boarding school. I was a real spoilt child; I never knew how to work, even to wash dishes. Many a time I thought of my mother and thought of running home but I was frightened of my superior. Every time I saw my mother I always cried but she just encouraged me because there were many other children who were living away from their parents. My mother used to tell me to study hard so that one day one of us might be a clerk in an office or someone important somewhere else on this island,

so I began to study hard and made up my mind not to play in school anymore.

After a few years I reached Class 7, and at the end of the year one of the sisters who was a training nurse in Suva visited our school. She looked very kind and when she spoke of the training she was receiving I made up my mind to join her if possible. Two of us gave our applications to her. She returned next year and we were both called to join the nurses' training in Suva. I was filled with joy when I told my mother about it.

By then my poor dad was dead and mother was alone with me. I felt very sad because he had been so kind and afforded me all I needed and there was not one thing I ever wanted that he didn't get for me. Dear mother got married again and I was just the same to my stepfather. He was as kind as if I were his own child. He did as my mother told him and when I wanted something he tried his best to get it for me. He was the one taking care of mum and me when I was ready to leave for the nurses' training. He got for me all the clothes that I needed and when the boat came, my friend and I left for our new home in Suva. There I was new to everybody in my new family and I was a bit frightened. The worst thing was that I couldn't speak English properly and always thought of home. Three months passed before I got used to the place and the people, and then I lived as if I were with my poor mum.

I found studies becoming harder and harder and many times I failed my exams, but still I loved the work and studied much harder. I attended different races in the hospital and the only thought that came into my mind was that I wanted to work for my people in Rotuma. After four years of hard studies I became a staff nurse and yet still worked with my friends in the hospital. I was thinking of going home to work for my own people and one day my dreams came true. I left Suva for my

homeland and came to the hospital in Ahau. There were about six of us taking care of the sick in the hospital and visiting the sick in their homes around the island.

While working there I met with many boys who seemed to attract my thoughts. But I didn't dare try to make friends, for I knew it would be useless to get married to a roamer and in the end I would be sorry for myself. After two years in the hospital I was sent to look after two districts. I lived in my own home and visited homes in the two districts and gave the people whatever they needed and treated their sores.

While there I met a young man who was a teacher in the mission. When we met together I knew I loved him and that he loved me. I knew I would be well cared for if I married him, so in a few months time we made our dreams come true. We got married and lived in my home. People always gossiped about us because my husband had been a cheeky boy, but since he knew that he was now in a different stage of life he changed his manners and became a very good man towards me and my parents. He was kind, and whatever I asked of him he provided. People seemed to be jealous of us and said nasty words about us, but I never cared about it. I just did my work and acted the same to everybody who might come and call for me.

My husband and I had a daughter and I had a rest for a year. Then I began to engage again and yet I am still the same to my people. I always go with my husband whenever there is a call during the night. He helps me sometimes in my work and yet people seem to hate us; I wonder why! I am doing my best to help them and attend to the sick when I am called for, yet they don't realize it. It's nice to think that I am working for my own people at home.

(Woman 5)

I was the youngest of the seven children. I can remember that my parents treated us so kindly but of course I was the youngest and I was the pet. My mother always took me wherever she went. They both were very kind and used to teach my elder brothers and sisters every kind of light work that children could do—how to keep the dormitory and surroundings clean, and my eldest sister to wash our clothes. They wanted us to love each other, especially when they were out of sight. It was a great pity for us when our mother died and left us with our father. I was in my third year in school when she died. From then on my eldest sister, who was old enough, managed our family. I was very poor in knowledge and had a hard time with my teacher. I tried my best but I had only reached Class 6 when I was fifteen, so I chose to leave school although I loved learning.

At that time there were only three of us left with our father. The others got married and stayed with their wives and husbands. I began to make friends with my neighbours and my thoughts began to wander and to think of worldly joy, and then I began to make boyfriends. In the beginning I was very ashamed and feared my father would find out about it. He was still kind to us and warned the three of us to look for the right wife or husband. I then took my chance and chose the right man for me.

For the first few months we showed love and respect to each other as if we would never be angry with one another. We stayed peacefully as if everything in this whole world belonged to us. We went to dances and cinemas, but then we stopped acting as before. Now that we were married we had to act as a gentleman and a lady or else everybody would gossip about us. We have had many children and I realize that my parents must have had a really hard life with the seven of us. I had to do all the work for my children and not one of them could help either me or their father. I am

doing my best to give them everything they need. I always give them my advice so that they would be smart in school and study hard because I know that this is the easier way to a better life. Unless one gets a good job, he or she has to cut copra and plant to earn a living, and I do hope all my children will take the right path and lead a good life.

I was not wise enough when my mother died but I still was very sad. I knew that I couldn't have her back again and if anybody took her place they would never be like her. My father is with us now but he is weak and feeble and I have to take good care of him. He got seriously ill once and I thought I'd lose him. I was so worried that I couldn't do my work properly but now he has recovered and is staying with me. I wish neither of us would die so that I may have the chance to treat him the way he treated me when I was young. I was very lucky to have such good and kind parents, but unfortunately only my father is living up to now, while my mother died before I could look after myself properly.