

Tape No. 34-54-3-00

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Helen Lind (HL)

Honolulu, O‘ahu

December 13, 2000

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is the third session with Helen Lind, it's December 13, 2000.

Okay, last time we left off you were talking about the practice house in Mānoa. Previously you had said that you had been hired, Carey Miller had hired you at UH. I guess I'd like you to talk about how—now that you're a teacher, if you had a sense of how—the students may have changed even though this is just a year. If you noticed a difference in the students from when you were a student?

HL: Now you talking about today or you talking . . .

HY: When you started teaching at UH.

HL: When I started. They're, about the same. I had many friends who were still students, even had a couple of boys who were still students that took me to dances and things. No, I don't think there's any difference. I think there's a big difference today in the students today and the students then.

HY: And what about, you know I'm curious about the expectations of a student graduating out of your department. You said they were mostly girls, mostly women, and they have a practice house to practicing running a household, if the intent was to have them run a household or whether the intent was to have them have a career like you did in teaching nutrition.

HL: No, it was to learn how a good, supposedly good, household operates. We took turns, one week you're the cook and another week you're something else and somebody took care of the money, expenses, and somebody did the buying.

HY: And so, you think that the intent was that these students after they graduated would learn how to run households, not necessarily would have a career?

HL: No, I don't think that was—it was just another part of learning to live. I don't think it was aimed at somebody's just gonna be a housewife. I don't think so.

HY: So you were one of the people that actually got a job.

- HL: As far as I know, practically everyone in my class graduating with me in that department got jobs. Most of them, practically all were teachers. There might have been one or two that went into chemistry with the Board of Health or something, but they were all teachers. It was one of the few professions for women then. You were either a secretary or you were a teacher or you were a nurse, that was about it. If you went and applied for a job in the bank or something, you'd have one heck of a time getting in simply because you were a woman. I know that when Patsy Mink made some remarks in a biographical sketch in the newspaper some time ago—she came along a lot later than I—and she said that she wanted to go to—what was it? Medical school or was it law school? Some professional school. And she couldn't get in because she was a woman, and something else because she was a woman.
- HY: You were at UH for another eight years, is that right? So you were there during the war years.
- HL: All our classes were stopped. There were no classes held for a couple of months. I don't know exactly how long. We were all put into a fingerprinting office on the campus.
- HY: Where was that?
- HL: Where? I've forgotten exactly where it was, but we had certain duties assigned to us. Some of them were registering the people entering, others were taking the fingerprints others were doing something else and giving you the folder. I'm not sure if we had ration books; I don't think at that time. I think it was just fingerprinting.
- HY: And whose records were you keeping?
- HL: Well everybody who lived here had to be fingerprinted and recorded.
- HY: Yeah, so it wasn't just people on campus.
- HL: You could go to anyplace. It's like when you got your ration book for beer, liquor, and gas and you could go to any one of the places set up to do that. I don't remember how long we did that, maybe it was month, I'm not sure. Classes resumed some time later. I don't remember exactly how much later.
- HY: Do you remember if military made use of your facilities? I heard something about using storage.
- HL: I'm not sure. They took over Punahou School, I think it was the (army) engineering department, but I'm not sure about the university campus. I guess I didn't go looking.
- HY: I heard something about them storing canned goods in Miller Hall, which was not called Miller Hall at that time.
- HL: The Home Economics Building at that time.
- HY: Do you remember December 7, what you were doing?
- HL: Yes, we were sleeping. We had been to the football game the day before—the university and I think it was San Jose. Then we went to a party all night and we were sleeping. My

mother called, and that was [how] we learned that the Japanese planes were bombing. My brother was home and he—my mother saw the planes and went in and told him they were different kinds of planes and they weren't doing what they usually did every morning. They were off schedule and everything, and her day was planned around the planes because every morning it was exactly the same time and this one was off schedule. My brother went out and looked up and there were planes with big red—I guess there were circles on them that they could see. He and a friend that was spending the night rushed into town and my mother was telling us this on the phone. We lived up the street here and we went out and looked up and all we could see—I guess you'd call them dogfights or something. Every once in a while there was a little plane and there would be a burst of smoke going up some place. I went out front, I heard a rumbling sound. This was later on probably the middle of the day and there was a big, big cannon on a carrier going up the street and there were soldiers sitting on it, several of them, they were throwing kisses (chuckles). They came and put pillboxes, I think that's what you call those cement things, and they had one at the corner at Farmers Road and Keala'olu Avenue. They had all these able bodies, *haole* men, were given a gun and put on guard duty and they were in these concrete boxes and had slits that you looked out. I guess they felt maybe there was going to be a landing. I'm not sure just what it was, or this whole area was farming area and they were afraid that the Japanese who lived here might do something and I don't know what else, but that didn't last too long. They had an encampment of soldiers over on the golf course and we had several of them over here a number of times.

HY: What about the blackouts?

HL: Well, we blacked out the bathroom totally and any time you wanted to do any reading or looking at something you went into the bathroom and closed the door 'cause it just had one window. The rest of the cottage we lived in had so many windows it was impossible to black it out so we just had to grope around in the dark. We had special blackout lights though. I remember the light globe. I kept one of those for a long, long time and I don't know what happened to it. I think somebody threw it away. It was black and it had a space at the bottom that wasn't black that let the light through. It was about as big as maybe the end of your thumb. Those were permitted [but] they didn't appear right away of course. We had lights on the cars that were adjusted for just a pinpoint of light, but you couldn't go out, you weren't supposed to drive at night.

HY: Did some of the food shortages affect your classes at all, in terms of studying nutrition? Did that have any effect on you at all?

HL: Now what was it that's having an effect?

HY: Did some of the food shortages or the rationing have any affect on you as somebody teaching nutrition?

HL: Not right then. Some of the vegetables were still in the markets and later on when all the supplies were gone and they weren't shipping in supplies is when we had problems, but not at first. I don't remember exactly when, and you just adjusted to that.

HY: So would you say it didn't really affect classrooms so much?

HL: No, it really didn't.

- HY: Well, you had gotten married by the time the war started, you were already married. Maybe you can talk about how you met your husband.
- HL: Well, I met him by—he was with Dohrmann and Hotel Supply Company and sold, the company sold, kitchen equipment. I was buying small equipment for the new laboratories and the new building and I visited Theo Davies (another supplier), and all these other places, and that's where I met him.
- HY: Was the war something that affected your husband's business being a hotel supplier?
- HL: Well, he was still with Dohrmann then. He was one of the salesmen and I think he had accounts with the army, but I think a lot of the buying was done on the Mainland. I'm not sure. He was due to be drafted, but they stopped drafting here. After a few months they stopped drafting and so he didn't have to be drafted because he had all these army accounts and he was helping to order supplies for the army. They set up camps all over.
- HY: Maybe you can talk about why after eight years you decided to leave the university.
- HL: Well, during the war the transportation was difficult. Now I had a car, my own car before, but I had sold my car in 1941. When I went to the Mainland in the summertime and when I came back the war started before I found another car. I'm talking about a used car now. It became difficult then getting all the way to university. You know, there were so many transfers and everything and everything was so uncertain, so I decided I wanted to have a family and so I just decided to quit and I quit. I retired.
- HY: Did you think at that time you would eventually return to teaching?
- HL: No, I don't think teaching was really my calling. At least that kind, the food and stuff, I don't think that was my calling. I was a lot more interested in history and archaeology and the history of Hawai'i and so forth. That was my avocation, I guess you call it.
- HY: And how did that interest start do you think?
- HL: Well, I've always been interested in it and I was curious and would find out things and so I stayed home and took care of my family, raised my own children. If they were going to get any goofy ideas I wanted them to have my goofy ideas, not somebody else's. I had all these courses in raising children. I mean, what to feed them and how to nurse them and the psychology of it, so I decided I'm going to stay home and take care of my own children. After twenty-two years, I went back. I volunteered first, and then found myself the executive secretary of the Hawaiian Historical Society and librarian. The woman, Mrs. [Willowdean] Handy, her husband was—her former husband had been at Bishop Museum, that Handy, Dr. Handy. Mrs. Handy was running it and she decided she was going to quit. She's going to retire for good, so she taught me the business and then retired. So then I found myself at the historical society doing the kind of thing that I enjoyed doing.
- HY: Well during the time that you were raising your children, you had mentioned that you had gotten the home economics building named after Carey Miller. Before that though, when the home economics building was built, did you have any input into that? By then you were faculty.

- HL: During the summers, let's see, that first summer I think I worked in the nutrition laboratory. Miss Miller left and went on a trip around the world or something. It was her sabbatical and I worked in the nutrition laboratory—I think it was that summer—checking tables and things that were going to be published in different scientific articles. The second summer, in 1937, I didn't work at the university, I went to Hilo, spent the summer in Hilo and got to know that island real well, and in 1938 I went to the Mainland. Now teachers then were paid for twelve months. Over the summer you got a check every month, but if you were a teacher in good standing you could borrow that money from the bank and go someplace, so that's how many of the teachers traveled in the summertime. We took the whole summer's salary because it was a guaranteed salary, so I went to the Mainland with friends and we toured all over in the west. In 1939 the building had just been completed by the summertime and it needed a lot of fixing up and the floors needed to be acid stained and the trim had to be put on and the laboratories had to be fitted out with all the appliances and stuff. I worked there for that summer.
- HY: So were you sort of liaison between . . .
- HL: Between the contractors and the university. Dr. [Arthur] Keller was the dean of applied science, was the one that I was always reporting to or if he wanted a message sent to the man who's doing the floors, it was sent to me and then I had to hunt up the man.
- HY: And then, '58 or so the building was named.
- HL: She was retired. In those days you had to retire at sixty-five, you weren't allowed to work any longer. Now [you] can work as long as you want. So she had to retire but she kept an office and went there and finished up a lot of research and stuff that she had started. We had a big to-do. We first met in Farrington Hall and Dean Keller [spoke] about Miss Miller's background and why the building was named for her and then we all went across the road over to the home ec building and we had a big party. A committee of us, about five or six of us, had worked for about a year. We contacted every graduate of that department and everybody who had graduated with a degree in that department by mail and by phone and we asked for donations and we got donations and we had this great big gathering. It was well attended; it was a nice affair and all the university officials were there so it was very nice.
- HY: I think I asked you a little bit about the Crawford administration, but during the time that you were there did you have any feeling about the various administrations?
- HL: No, as a student I really didn't have much contact with the president, the offices, most of my contacts were just the people I had classes with.
- HY: I think that's usually the case.
- HL: I did have contact with Mrs. Bilger because she was the dean of women and I remember seeing her a number of times.
- HY: I want to ask you a little about the time that you spent raising your children. Did you have aspirations for them to go to college or did you think about them going to UH?
- HL: Well, my children grew up just expecting that they were going to college. That was it. I don't remember doing a lot of teaching them about things. I remember Linus Pauling Jr.

was interviewed one year. He said, talking about his father, when his father got the Nobel Prize, and he said every Sunday morning it was a learning class at the breakfast table. "We had to learn all the chemistry of this and that." My children screamed and laughed because that's what was happening here. Why did the pancakes rise?

(Laughter)

And what made the jelly thicken. You know, and all the chemistry of it. No, I think they just grew up—we had rather strict rules, I had rather strict rules. There was no going out during the week and no visiting during the week. If somebody came—one of Ian's friends came one night, this is when he was in high school and it was not the weekend, and so I went out and told him he had to leave, (chuckles) that there was no visiting, no going out, except on the weekend.

You know, we've always had on the books here a law that said that if you are under the age of, I think of eighteen, you couldn't be on the street after was it eight o'clock. Or ten o'clock? Something like that without an adult being responsible for you. This was the curfew and nobody paid any attention to that. And I had a great to-do with the YWCA because my daughter was in some club there and they were going to have a dance, a party with the boys of some other club and the boys were going to drive them home. My daughter was fourteen years old. I phoned in and asked for the girl who was the advisor of this club and she said, "But that's what the students want." I couldn't believe it, I just couldn't believe that they would do what the students want. I asked her how old she was and she was twenty. She was a university student and she was the advisor of this club and they were letting these kids do what they shouldn't have been doing. So I was always accused of hiding behind the skirts of the law, but I wouldn't see that. I said, "If you want to go to the party, fine. We'll take you there and we'll pick you up after." And I had a to-do with the YWCA administration, I don't know what office, and they couldn't care less. So, well, I think this is Ian [Lind, HL's son] driving in.

HY: So then you spent, I think you said fourteen years at Hawaiian Historical Society.

HL: Off and on, off and on. It was more like sixteen. They kept calling me back. Somebody would quit. They weren't paying enough—they were real chintzy—to keep someone there. They didn't have any pension plan or they weren't collecting for social security, they weren't doing anything. There's Ian [Lind, HL's son].

(Taping stops, then resumes)

HY: Let's see, you're talking about Hawaiian Historical Society and you found this type of work more your calling.

HL: Yes, it was a lot more exciting, I think.

HY: You said you did administrative, librarian, and research, you did kind of a lot of different things.

HL: See, we had many requests for information and we gave an hour free, an hour of research free, and then we answered the letters and told them if they wanted more research that it would be so much an hour. There were a lot of taking care of the membership and the bills and office work connected with running a society. There was the library when they

had new books that had to be catalogued and placed in the library. And then we have—it's a closed stack library—the researchers come in. They can't browse through the shelves. They had to know what it was they wanted to see, explain what it was they were looking for and then you had to know something about those books to go find what they're looking for. The real experienced researchers looked in the catalogues but others often just told you what kind of things they wanted and then you had to go in the back room and get them.

HY: Before we started taping today you mentioned, to backtrack a little bit, the scholarship fund that Carey Miller had set up. Can you talk about that a little bit?

HL: Well, they solicit applications from high school seniors and also from university students and graduate students, so there's a whole mixture of all kinds of people looking for money. It has always been quite, I guess, advertised enough so that they had quite a number of applicants and it's a big job going through the applications. The society, the [Hawai'i] Dietetic Association, has a committee each year—it changes—and they review all the applications and they chart them. The trustees, I'm one of the trustees, the trustees set up the criteria of how many points you get for this or that or something else. It's pretty well set up, and we meet almost every year there's some kind of alteration. In fact, next week we have a meeting coming up. The information goes out to the different schools and wherever they're going to advertise, and I think they have to be in by about April. All applications have to be filled in by April and the announcement of those who are chosen is usually in May. They have an affair, a meeting with refreshments and all that. Or sometimes, in the past couple of years, they've had it in conjunction with some other groups that are a part of the dietetic association because there are a number of sources for scholarships or awards for people in food and nutrition.

HY: And this is something—his is her legacy really.

HL: Yes, she left three hundred thousand dollars for this. That is administered by the First Hawaiian Bank trust division. They invest the funds, they take care of all the work involved in handling the money, and they turn over to the dietetic association the interest each year. For the past few years it's been about twenty thousand a year. Some of the winners, the ones chosen, have been going away to school to become dietitians, some of them are at (UII). Some of them are graduate students who have been here—either graduated from this university or worked here—and then they're going to go to the Mainland for further study. They usually get the biggest amount, like three to four thousand dollars.

HY: And then at some point did you leave the Hawaiian Historical Society?

HL: Yes, I worked for a couple of years for the [Hawaiian] Mission Children's Society—that's the other half of that library. Combined, it's a combined library. [I was] editing and revising a book for them and then I quit. After that was done and the book was published, I decided to retire.

HY: You remained fairly active and interested in Hawaiian history.

HL: Well, yes. It's peculiar. When I was involved working there, I knew practically everybody who came to the meetings. I go to a meeting now and I don't know a soul. I know the gals who work in the office, but it's a whole new thing.

HY: Well, do you have any other thoughts about your time at UH as a faculty member or as a student?

HL: What kind of things?

HY: Well, you know just how you feel about your time there overall.

HL: Well, I think one of the problems with how I viewed the job was you're locked up in a woman's world. All your colleagues are women, all your students are women; you don't get out into the real life. At the historical society they were mixed. It was real life to me. One of the things about the historical society that I would like to mention is that I grew up, nobody ever—there wasn't any discussion or teaching at home or at any place about the Hawaiian revolution, nothing. Nobody took sides. My family's best friends were people who were engaged in the revolution, John C. Lane for instance. He married one of—there were two sisters who were like sisters of my mother. They were all taken care of at the priory. They all lived full time at the priory as girls. And he married one of them, and so I knew John C. Lane, Uncle John C. His mother had the same Hawaiian name as my mother's grandmother and they tried to figure out how come, because in those days names were private property, they were given. You didn't just choose a name. Like a surname today. If you're born a Jones, you don't say, "I wanna be a Smith." In those days they gave one name and it was a family name and they had the same name in their family. And so, I knew Johnny [John Henry] Wilson, I knew Prince [Jonah] Kūhiō [Kalaniana'ole]. I can't say I really knew him, I remember him.

HY: What were your impressions that you do remember?

HL: Well, we used to go—the Lanes lived on what is now Kapahulu Avenue just off Kalākaua [Avenue] and right on the beach was Prince Kūhiō's home. That's why it's called Kūhiō Beach. It had a big *lānai*, a stone *lānai* with a *hao* tree and there was a cannon on it. So we went there, we went to the beach every day and we would go there and play on the *lānai*. The house itself was closed up when he wasn't there. All the furniture was covered with big white sheets or something and I remember how spooky it was. Mrs. Elizabeth Kahanu, Mrs. Prince Kūhiō, was some sort of a distant connection of my mother's family in Hāna, and that was how I knew. So all these people—Kathleen Mellen wrote several books about Hawaiian history and one of them, I've forgotten what the title was, I remember I had a copy and I thought I gave it to maybe my daughter, but everybody in that book I had known at some time or another. The two girls that were like my mother's sisters, their mother is in Queen Lili'uokalani's book, was her attendant going to Washington D.C. or something. So all of these people were involved but nobody ever, ever, had a discussion about who was the bad guy and who was the good guy until I got to the historical society. There I was just shocked that they were still fighting the revolution. I mean, there were good guys and bad guys.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

HY: So when you got there [to the Hawaiian Historical Society] you remembered these people you knew from your childhood and suddenly they had a different kind of significance for you.



HL: I didn't really realize how important they were in different fields. Now you take Johnny Wilson for instance, Bob Krauss wrote a biography of him several years ago and Bob Krauss got his information mostly from the singer [Napua Stevens] Poire. I've forgotten a singer before, and when Mrs. Johnny Wilson [Kini "Jennie" Kapahu Wilson] was a widow in old age, this gal took care of her, and so most of the information Bob Krauss got was from them. He doesn't know how Johnny Wilson went to California. He doesn't know who he was associated in his early years except the Tahitian relatives.

Johnny Wilson was a protégé of my grandfather. My grandfather [Robert W.] Cathcart was a mathematician. He was an accountant for the steamship company, Wilder Steamship [Company], and he met Johnny Wilson through Sunday outings. They all went to Waikīkī to a certain place, and discovered that the boy was mathematically minded and so he taught him. In his old age, Johnny Wilson—I went to see him a number of years before he died. He told me that he never had a job—after he figured out a job—he did not commence construction until Cathcart had checked his figures, is what he had told me. He himself told me that it was Cathcart who took him to California to enter Stanford [University]. Now I have a picture of my Hawaiian grandmother, Mrs. Cathcart, taken in San Francisco. I often wondered how the heck she got this picture with the photographer's stamp on the framing, San Francisco. That's how, that was when. So anyway, whenever there was anything said about the Hawaiian revolution—this was when I was at the historical society—the Sunday following that, Albertine Loomis was at the front door of Kawaiaha'ō Church handing out a printed rebuttal. This went on all the time I was there. I couldn't get over it. (Chuckles) I guess I better not say anymore about it.

HY: Is there anything else you want to talk about before we end?

HL: (I would like to add a bit about a very special instructor in the Home Economics department that I have never found mentioned in histories or memoirs of the early days of the University. She has had a lasting influence on me and probably on a good many others. Her name was Madame Dahl, an older French woman with a heavy French accent and a keen artistic eye, who was the head of the clothing department. In fact I can't remember any other teacher in that department so she may have been the only one. From her I took dressmaking (including pattern making), children's clothing, tailoring (I made a suit and matching overcoat), and millinery. The most interesting class was focused on personal appearance. It was about clothing styles to enhance your body build, fabric color selection to enhance your skin tone, good posture and gracious body movement. We found this important for the fashion show we presented annually wearing the clothing we had made. I have a distinct memory of the show we presented one year at the Art Academy. Madame Dahl retired soon after I graduated.)

HY: Okay. Thank you so much.

END OF INTERVIEW