

Interview w. David Kanaka`ole 3/2/97 at Kapāpala Ranch
by Charles Langlas, with Terry Leianuenue Reveira

Side 1

(starts with conversation between David K. and Terry R.)

CL: Can you tell me a little bit about when you were growing up?

DK: Yeah.

CL: How your life was here when you were little?

DK: Oh, mostly when I was small, mostly I was up there at the big house, playing with Ted. Ted Sumner. Mrs. Sumner wants, so that's why. We had two, one babysit like, Japanee.

CL: Oh, babysit you kids.

DK: Yeah, take care of me and Ted. While they go out, eh?

LR: How old you was when you started to learn cowboy work, paniolo work?

DK: Oh, I was going to school yet, I think so. I started to. I was about fifteen.

LR: You remember some of the families used to live over here? the name of the families?

DK: Ah.

LR: Vierra? Vierra used to live over there?

DK: Yeah. Before Vierra was Johnson.

CL: Hawaiian family Johnson?

DK: It's a Norwegian. Married Hawaiian, Lizzie, I think Kimo li`ili`i I think she was. Kimonui's daughter.

LR: And the houses was all full with the different families?

DK: Oh yeah. All full. Over here was Paul Nuuanu I think.

CL: Oh, I know that name. Married Puna girl?

DK: No, not that wahine. Kekoa that's the wife, Kekoa.

Oh, then Jack Poh_. Yeah Poh_. The wife Pestano I think.

Then we go, then yardboy, two yardboy. One Filipino. Yeah Filipino, one Japanee. Oh every other year change.

LR: Had cook, Chinese cook? Had the cook too?

DK: Cook? That's only big drives, only in the summer. Branding. Brand here once a year.

LR: Which house you guys used to live in? Was this one--when you were small?

DK: Yeah.

CL: So there's this one up here [mauka of house we're at]?

DK: That was Johnson. And then Vierra. After Johnson then Vierra.

CL: Oh, after they left.

DK: Then up there there's the mechanic and, he's the mechanic and take care the cooler, electric light. We get our own electric power. See that small little house? That small little house, and the big house is where the mechanic and ___ is. Mechanic or engineer.

CL: That big green one?

DK: No that was little one. Lately they rebuilt that one. Something little smaller than that. Two single man that's why.

Then when Tom and ___ [Iris?] stayed there, then they rebuilt. My brother was foreman then, eh? And they stayed.

LR: Which one was foreman?

DK: Tom.

LR: Oh Tommy. You used to work, after that you he used to go different ranches to work too?

DK: No. I just stayed here and then, then when I was put out, then sawmill.

CL: Sawmill?

DK: Sawmill in Hilo. Campbell and Burns.

CL: How long you stayed working here?

DK: Oh, I think Liggett came, and he threw me out. Was in the fifties. Cause when I pulled over, somebody changed my battery. So I couldn't start the car and come back. And he throw money at me. And after I worked for Mizuno.

LR: Oh Mizuno. At the store?

DK: Canefield. [unintelligible] Then I went work for Kamau, eh? chase cattle and such.

LR: Down Puna side?

DK: In town, where the Waiakea High School. That was all ranch there.

CL: That's around where his house was.

DK: Ah, Kamau, no. He's just Kino`ole, yeah. Right Kino`ole and Kaha`ope`a. Yeah, that's where he was staying. But his ranch was where Waiakea High now. Was only the elementary school was there. Over there was all pasture, until the university.

CL: So after Liggett threw you off, then you went Hilo?

DK: Then I went Hilo.

CL: And the first place you worked?

DK: Sawmill... oh, first place Kamau, and then sawmill. Sawmill I think closed down.

[bit omitted]

You know where Hilo Hattie's? right below there the mill was.

CL: You never went work for Keauhou ranch did you?

DK: Keauhou, no, no. Yeah then _____
I went roping for McCandless, working for Mr. Mott.

CL: Where?

DK: He's the owner of Mount Ka`ala. It's Oahu. Mount Ka`ala, yeah. Run by Mott. McCandless name, but that's the son-in-law.

CL: So when was that, you were young then?

DK: No, in the fifties (?)

CL: So I guess after you left this place you moved around.

DK: Yeah. See I got hurt, I got hurt in the ripper. [shows me that a finger is missing on one hand] See I was there edging, edging and rip saw, eh? And then the planing mill got behind. They want us to go catch up, to make the load for the day, ship out. So they struck the big mill and we went down there. And then that damn ripper, that no more fender. The guys, I didn't know that thing, you right near to, it suck your hand in. [unintelligible] I was running that trainer mill, eh? That was condemned already that, the ripper. I don't know why it wasn't use the regular one. Call us down, we gotta hurry, and they all ...

CL: You know your sister Api, she told me that when she was twelve your father took her up to Halema`uma`u, introduced her to Pele.

DK: Twelve? Oh I was baby yet.

CL: Your father ever took you up to Halema`uma`u?
DK: No, no.
CL: Did you ever hear anything about him going up there?
DK: No, nothing.
CL: You were the youngest right?
DK: ... start working and I started going more...
CL: Started working and...
DK: School study.
CL: How old were you when you finished school?
DK: Fifteen. ...
My dad was working with the military. The camp.
CL: What did he do at the military camp?
DK: Go find, look for these people that were lost. Only military men, they go up maybe hunting, or I don't know, camping or walking. They don't watch. Go look for em.
CL: Plenty got lost?
DK: Yeah. Plenty got lost. Cause they go out in the woods, and they couldn't find their way back. Or some take off. Some way down the beach side, and meet somebody, and they change their clothes and they take off. They leave their army clothes and get other clothes...
CL: But your dad, he was working at the ranch here too, right? he just helped them.
DK: Foreman, foreman he was.
CL: Oh, he was foreman.
DK: Yeah. That's why military want him.

CL: Is Sumner the first one you remember? the first manager?
DK: Ah, Monsarratt.
CL: You remember him.
DK: I was maybe, I must be about twenty, the foreman, Peleli`ili`i, eh? He was the foreman.
CL: Peleli`ili`i?
DK: He _____ [used to go on] crutches.
CL: Crutches?
DK: He use crutches but he _____. He lives right out here, Puakalehua. That's where he rest.
CL: Now? But when he was foreman he lived here, yeah? or he lived over there?
DK: I don' know where he live. All that time was, he goes out and then come back on horse. Must have been down there, the saddle house. Unless he _____ [had] his own house, his own place. Maybe he have another house somewheres.
CL: So he was the foreman under Monsarratt?
DK: Monsarratt, yeah.
CL: And the son you played with. (DK: What?) And you played with his son Peleli`ili`i? Maybe I heard wrong.
DK: Peleli`ili`i. Oh they called him, that's what they call him, small Pele, but I didn't see the big Pele.
CL: Oh.
DK: He was already old. And after him my dad took over. That's when Sumner came in.
CL: Did he have children?
DK: No, wasn't any children.

CL: What about this name Lupenui? Did you know anybody Lupenui?
DK: Yeah. That's Makakupu, eh? Yeah he's the m_`. You know what's a m_`? s'ali`i. Ali`i and it's big. Nani Lupenui.
CL: You saw him or you just heard about him?
DK: I heard about him, and I talk with him spiritual. Even now today. I know where he is. S'out there. He own the place. That Makakupu. And he gave it to me. My dad supposed to be there too. He's one of the m_`, but under Lupenui. There's three I know, m_` over there. My dad, him and he's the secretary-treasurer I think the m_`, Moke Kahuanui.
[more]

Side 2

CL: Do you know Becky Pau? I thought her grandfather was this Paul Nuuanu.
DK: Pau. Maybe, I don't know. Paul Nuuanu and them was way older than I am. I'm only baby.
CL: I think he moved from here to Kapa`ahu, no?
DK: To... Yeah, they moved. He was from Puakalehua, the mother and dad. Yeah, that's how Peleli`ili`i got down there with his wahine _____. That's where they were staying, Peleli`ili`i's place, eh?
CL: What about Emma Kauhi, Emma Stone, you remember her?
DK: I remember her but I don't know their family. They in Puna.
CL: But she used to come to Punalu`u.
DK: Yeah. They have family there, they used to come New Year and after Christmas.
CL: You remember them ever coming up here, to serenade?
DK: Yeah, serenade.
CL: What was that like, when they serenaded?
DK: Oh, _____ songs you know...

[Lei comes in and talks to us.]

CL: So what about, who used to live on this side over here, in the next house down?
LR: Who used to live next door when you guys was living over here?
DK: Yeah, Nuuanu asking me about.
CL: Oh, that was Nuuanu?
DK: Paul Nuuanu. And Peleli`ili`i, Kekoa, the wife. Then next, Jack Poha.
CL: He was young?
DK: No, they were all old.
And Nohea, Nohea what? Nahinu. Below that house the brother Kalua, Kalua's house.
And _____ the daughter's house, Kalua and _____.
Then Napoleon, on the third.
LR: Oh, the third one.
DK: Not that George, the father. He's French.
CL: Is that the last one, Napoleon?
LR: The third, the one next to my grandma on the right side, on the mauka side, yeah?
CL: So one was Nohea Nahinu, and one was Kalua. They lived

together or separate?

DK: Separate. Cause they always want the _____ separate. Family.

CL: Is that all?

DK: Ah, Obed Keliihoomalu. He had the third house. That's the wife that Johnson married.

CL: The daughter?

DK: No, the wife. I think, he lost his finger wrestling cattle. Got infected. That's how he died. And he was our Sunday School teacher.

CL: So that's the same house that Napoleon was in, the third house?

DK: Ah, yeah. That's after Napoleon.

LR: Besides cowboy, you guys would go fishing too?

DK: Oh yeah, used to go on the mule. Only use mule.

LR: Mule. That was more Punalu`u side or down this side by the ranch?

DK: Down this side. Punalu`u side we get the truck.

CL: So usually when you went down fishing with the mule, which place did you go?

DK: Papalehau. Papalehau, and then we go either Ka`aone, `Opihinehe, then come back again.

LR: So you stay over couple days, then come back.

DK: Yeah. We go generally Friday to Sunday.

LR: Had plenty fish? lotsa fish?

DK: Well get, not me, but Napoleon and _____. Sometimes they catch _____

CL: You didn't fish?

DK: Well, only bamboo like that, but not...

CL: You didn't learn to throw net?

DK: No, no can throw net. Only at Ka`aone.

LR: You pole fished. You know, over there before, they used to make salt over there?

DK: 'As Papalehau.

LR: And they made it with the ti leaf or?

DK: No, they... In those small hole here and there.

LR: Oh, they were collecting.

DK: When this big wave come. Whoosh. (LR: Fill em up.) They'd settle up. Just like plate, yeah? That's why said papale, like a hat here, white hat there, white. That's all around, that's all salt.

CL: Oh, that's where the name Papalehau comes from?

DK: That's why they call Papalehau, because white hat there, all white hats.

CL: Too good you, you know those things.

DK: Yeah. We go with a spoon there, yeah, just scrape it. Just top and underneath all water. Just like a plate, that's how it is. Scrape em all on top, salt and underneath saltwater. There was a plate here, plate there.

CL: Could you get salt anytime of year?

DK: Ah, I don't know if anytime of the year, but we went fishing in the... I go with the Napoleon, go fishing.

LR: So wintertime or summertime go?

DK: Mostly summer. That's how.
CL: You folks used to bring back plenty salt?
DK: Some time yeah, not every time.
LR: And when they went fishing, they would come back and share the fish with everyone? if they plenty?
DK: Oh yeah. If they got plenty they share. Salt.
CL: You salt the fish up?
DK: What you catch over there early yeah. You salt that. The ones you catch in the morning and then afternoon you come home already, well, take em home [fresh].
CL: What about `opihi, you brought that back too?
DK: Um. `Opihi, they don't want you to visit, come home then they start picking em.
LR: They poke em down there.
CL: Did people say a reason for why you do the `opihi that way?
DK: Oh, because they know you have to fix down there. We used to have a container for it.
CL: Was there any place for limu down there?
DK: Oh. I don't know, I think so, but we all bamboo down there so I don't know. Limu. I think, the fish hang around, must be limu.
CL: There was no limu at Ka`aone?
DK: Oh yeah. Limu there. I think kohu.
CL: Did you go pick it there, that limu kohu?
DK: No. I don't pick much limu, it's others.
(730)
LR: They used to grow vegetables over here? They had garden?
DK: Over here ____

CL: You remember canoes? You remember anybody fishing from canoe at Punalu`u?
DK: Canoe, yeah. Was quite a few... Only I know McBride used to come down. Punahoa li`ili`i.
CL: Punahoa li`ili`i?
DK: But before that yeah, those people used to stay Punalu`u, but they all oldtimers. They used to have canoe every guy go out. Netting that kind.
CL: You know what they caught?
DK: Caught `pelu. And, they know ko`a too. For kawele'a, nenu, kahala.
CL: Oh, kahala. `Ahi?
DK: They know where, they know the ko`a. Umhm.
CL: Did you ever go out on a canoe?
DK: Only once I went with, for `opelu.
CL: How was it?
DK: We pull one time, that's enough. Was with Punahoa.
CL: Oh, with Punahoa.
DK: Punahoa li`ili`i, eh? He and I. That time with McBride's canoe.
CL: That McBride, was he part-Hawaiian?
DK: No. He's pure white, but he's not from here, he's from somewheres Keaukaha side, he married a Hawaiian wahine, eh? He comes over here and...
CL: So Punahoa li`ili`i, was he your age?
DK: About, yeah. He was born and raised at Punalu`u.

CL: That's not the same as Fred Punahoa?
DK: That's Fred.
CL: That's him?
DK: Yeah.
CL: The one that played the guitar?
DK: Yeah, that's him.
CL: You tired?
DK: No, no.
CL: Not feeling good though.
DK: Yeah.
CL: So that time, was that the only canoe left? [DK: What?]
When you went out on McBride's canoe, was that the only one then?
DK: No, there's several others, but those nobody came, or... that
time was only McBride went out. There was three or four canoes
more resting on the beach.
That was his crew, eh? they all came together, for `opelu.
CL: How many of you in the canoe?
DK: Ah, four.
CL: Four.
DK: One guide the canoe, and Punahoa and I paddle, _____
CL: Somebody threw the bait?
DK: Ah, small Punahoa. He the feeder.
CL: You had one glass box?
DK: Yeah, to look, eh?
CL: And what shape net you folks used? Was it a round one?
DK: Yeah, round. On both end, yeah? had a long stick, something
like bar eh? Two ends. Goes under the ama of the canoe. ____
And then you lower it down from the canoe, you lower it down. ____

CL: When the net's under the water does it look round like this
or long this this (showing drawing)?
DK: It looks like that, because the ama goes down like that, eh?
on the canoe. ____ You lower it down over here, it goes down
deep see? Then you feed em, feed on top. Then you start pulling
from below, you pull that thing. So they won't run away from on
the side eh? So same the other side. Both side will be locked.
Until you get the [stick?] going to the other one. Then you hang
on to the two end, eh? You get the other one so the two end meet.
CL: Heavy?
DK: No, not too heavy.
CL: Maybe depends how many fish.
DK: That time we had two ____.
CL: So when you pull, is it hard to balance?
DK: Balance? No. Cause you pulling that, you pulling that on
the side of the float, eh? the ama.

CL: So what about in between Papalehau and Punalu`u, you know
like down Kamehame and in there, you ever went down there?
DK: No, I didn't... down Kananelu side.
That's all fishing ground, there. That's where they go
fishing all these fishermen, all along there.
CL: From Punalu`u they go there.
DK: Yeah, Punalu`u they go over. [Tape ends]

DK said the canoes from Punalu`u would go for several days into the area of HVNP. They stayed overnight at Kaaone or somewhere.
He didn't fish that much, mostly stayed at the ranch.