

Edna Nahale, Interview #2 at her home in Nu‘uanu Valley c. 1990  
by Charles Langlas

(Note: this interview was done after talking to Haleola Lee Hong and Kini Pe‘a, the brother and sister of Mrs. Nahale, about the Pe‘a genealogy)

CL: What I’m wondering is, I know that your mother married your father, and your grandmother married your grandfather. But who married first?

EN: My father.

CL: Your father married your mother first.

EN: Yeah, wait, 1905? I think... you have it recorded, written down, 1905?

CL: I don’t think I have the marriage date. But I know that your brother Gabriel was born in 1906.

EN: Not 1905? Wait, you want me get all those birth certificates and stuff?

CL: You think you have a marriage certificate?

EN: Marriage, yes. Could be in my father’s one. Father’s, no that’s David Nahale. Peter Pe‘a. Whose certificate of marriage is this? Lizzy Ahua’i, her maiden name, [my] mother, place of marriage. ‘Cause, see, we lived on the ranch, so I remember all that. And I remember who made the coffin.

CL: Could you tell me everything that you remember about when your father died? Ah, when your grandfather died, what all happened?

EN: When my grandfather died, my father stayed, we stayed for a while up there in Panau Iki. Then we moved to Kauhiwai. My father owns that place. We just stayed there for a while while the house was being built in Kaimu. And Kini Aki was the one who build the house. We had a big house, two story house, upstairs, downstairs. How many bedrooms? Six bedrooms and the parlor. That old fashion kind, outside lanai goes all the way, and then separate dining room. And then right through the dining room is the kitchen. Then a step you [go] down, through the floor. We had two tank waters in the back, but before that we stay in Kauhiwai. Just one little house. And we slept on, right on the floor. Who was the baby that time? I’ve forgotten who was, my brother Peter must have been the baby. But we went there purposely for my father to cut ohia wood for the foundation of the house. You know, poles. That’s what he was doing there. When all finished the house, then we moved back to Kaimu. Then, gee, I was about eight years old I think. Then I went to Kalapana School.

CL: That house at Kauhiwai, was that there before? Or did you build that when you moved up there?

EN: That was already there. It's just one straight roof and down, that's it.

CL: One room?

EN: Just one flat...room, that's all. Just one room, just one straight. Everybody sleep on the floor.

CL: Yeah, yeah.

EN: Old fashion. And they had uki to put on the side of the house, down on the ground, so the rain won't go in the house.

CL: Oh, uki grass?

EN: Uki.

CL: That grass with the seed?

EN: With that brown... hat's what they call "uki." That's when people making leis, that dark, dark stuff. Dried stuff.

CL: Yeah. Did it have a wood floor?

En: No, just ground.

CL: Just ground. No rocks?

EN: Lauhala, just lauhala, and just plain lauhala mats. And everybody just sleep on the floor. On the ground in other words.

CL: Was there a rock platform?

EN: No, no. Just the ground.

CL: And the mat, was it a thick mat?

EN: They were just lauhala mats.

CL: Sometimes I heard people talk about these thick mats that were woven double that they slept on on the floor.

En: No, just plain, plain, plain mats. Because my mother weaves a lot, lauhala mats. And sends it to Maui to the Rice family. It was downstairs when we moved to Kaimu. She used to do orders from the Rice all the time. Then she would send it by boat, eh, only boat those days.

CL: So she had to send it up to Hilo, and then it went by boat?

EN: Yeah, to Maui. And this, 'eke mau'u they call it, grass bag. They roll the mat up and then use all those grass bag to cover it all up and ship it away. Even the goat skin from Panau, my father used to take down to Pahoa and put it on train. And then they take it away. I don't know where. I think they ship it to Hilo some place, and somebody takes care of it.

CL: Yeah, yeah. So you don't know who would have built that house at Kauhiwai?

EN: They must have built it before. Maybe when they were living... I don't know, they may have... then right next to ours was my aunt's estate. You see, all the Pe'a children had their own lots. My father had Kauhiwai. And right next to is Kilohana, the other sister who married Elderts had her own property, but she had a beautiful house. I used to, we used to go over there. It's a high house, a big house. Elderts was her husband, William Elderts, and, oh, they had the gardenias. Ho, gardenias growing, and all the flowers. Then they left and went down to Koa'e to live. You know, the Elderts. That's where she died, my auth Kilohana, that was her name. Then Kahikina. Get, ah Kilohana. Her estate is Kilohana. That's the name of her estate, but it's way up here as you're going down Puna, Leilani Estate, and right there.

C: Yeah, I know. James showed me that one time. Up toward, a little more toward Pahoa, I think.

EN: Yeah, towards Pahoa. One of my cousin is still living there. Kaheiki boy, living in there, by himself I think. That estate, I don't know what happened. Nobody settles. Somebody is paying tax. I don't know what happened. It's a big estate. And she's buried in there. They were living in Moloka'i. And then when she died in Moloka'i, they brought her body back and buried in her own estate, Kahikina. she never had children. She hanai'd the brother's children.

CL: Who did she hanai?

EN: Hanai, ah, Lily. They went to Moloka'i. One Elderts boy, Herman Elderts, her hanai. They hanai'd Herman Elderts and Lily and Maria, Maria Pe'a. That's the brother from, the one Keaukaha family.

CL: Oh.

EN: That's my cousin, my uncle's Maria.

CL: Okay. The John Pe'ali'ili'i. That family.

EN: Yeah, yeah, that was her father. You see, my auntie had hanai'd that one, and hanai'd from the oldest brother, Benjamin. Yeah, that's it. And then they went to Moloka'i. Then Lily Blaisdell, I mean Lily Pe'a, married the Blaisdell, Edward Blaisdell. Then had the children. The daughter is still living up there Moloka'i, homestead.

CL: Oh.

EN: And she has her family up there, near the Blaisdell family.

CL: Do you know, before your mother got married, your mother and grandmother lived in Kaimu, eh?

EN: Yeah.

CL: Do you know, did you ever hear anything about when there lived there before? Before they moved to Panau?

EN: Yeah, because I remember there was a low house. When they built the new house, you know, when they came from Panau, they had a low house. So they had to knock it down. But it was more in the front. The new house was built further on the other side, Hilo side. So they knocked that house down. I remember the foundation. I think that's where Ahua'i, oh and had another, Koli, sister to my grandmother Haleola. Always lived with Haleola, the sister. And she had club foot. Then Ahua'i had a daughter with Koli. You see, because these two, you know, I think [Koli was the] younger sister, and her name [Koli's daughter] was Keake, same like the mother, Keakeli'ili'i.

CL: Yeah, yeah, I heard about here.

EN: Keakeli'ili'i. Then she [Keake] married to Moana Paelua. That was her husband. she never had children. She kinda kept my sister, Mrs. Lindsey.

CL: Yeah.

EN: You heard from her, I think.

CL: Yeah.

EN: So that's how it was. But she did, no children. And she had hanai'd one of my sisters, and died, only eight months. That was Elizabeth.

CL: Okay. Koli did? or Keakeli'ili'i ?

EN: Keakeli'ili'i did, in Hilo. That's where i went to live and go to school, with her. We stayed with her. Her husband was Moana Paelua. They never had children. I went to school, because I went to St. Joseph School, and graduated, grammar grades, they

called it during those days. Because I have the certificate. Then my cousin was still— from Keaukaha one—was going to school with me the same time, Mary Po’oloku. That’s from that Keaukaha one, Pe’ali’ili’i.

CL: She married Manuia? Is that the one? Oh no, no, sorry, I take that back.

EN: No. That’s Pe’ali’ili’i’s daughter Mary. But she died without being married. We went to St. Joseph School. Then from there, I went to Hilo Junior, they used to call it. Hilo Junior. Right where the Union School is. Used to be Union School they call it. Across was Hilo Junior High. I went there. And then I went to Hilo High School Then graduated 1927. But in the meantime, I stayed with so many people. Ho. I stayed with my aunty Keake, because where she lived in Hilo was nearer to St. Joseph School, so I stayed with her. Then when I going to the junior high, I stayed with my grand-aunt, my grandmother Haleola’s sister, Ma’aha Ho’opi’opi’o.

CL: Because that was closer on that side?

EN: Yeah. I just walked from her to go to... Then she passed away. So my mother rented a house in Villafranca. I don’t know if you know Villafranca.

CL: Yeah, I know where that is.

EN: Villafranca. Akana Poi, Chinese man used to own an old building, so Koli... Wherever I was put in, Koli was the keeper of us. And my sister Maria was [with us]. She take care, but strict old lady. Oh, boy. So we stayed with her. And Ma’aha had the kind old fashion house. Downstairs is where they eat and cook, downstairs. Two story, and the steps right in the middle go into the... only one.

CL: Room?

EN: One whole room.

CL: Downstairs?

EN: Upstairs. and downstairs one whole room just. And the lua li’ili’i outside, the toilet, outside kind. But in the front was a big yard, and they plant all taro. And Koli and the old lady [take care the taro]. Of course I didn’t see Ho’opi’o because he died already. That was Haleola’s sister. And then I stayed with her. Then she died, that’s why we had to move. Had two boys living in the same house. They had the bed, the two brothers, John Ho’opi’opi’o and small John. Big John, Small John. The Koli and I and Maria, we just sleep on the floor. Then we go downstairs eat. Oh boy!

CL: So you slept on mats there?

EN: Yeah, mats, mats.

CL: Did you have, at that time, the fine mats?

EN: No, the regular maka, maybe fourth inch, or half an inch mats, you know. My grandmother had a fine, Haleola, when she live in Kaimu. She had her own room. She never sleep on the bed, always on the floor. We had the lauhala mats, the regular. Then she had this fine mat. And she rolled it up when she pau sleep. She roll it up and put... and they so neat, ooh. So neat.

CL: But you kids had beds?

EN: Oh, yeah, we had. The last room had bed. The other bedroom... my brother had the front bedroom, because you... and the steps come in from down below. And downstairs is the lanai that goes practically the same way like the top.

CL: Oh. Yeah, yeah.

EN: You know. One bedroom would be down. The first bedroom, downstairs. And the [inaudible] the parlor goes in. And then one bedroom, and then go inside just like how, and one more bedroom, and then across this one is another bedroom. And across the parlor is another bedroom, and then the hallway goes on, and then another bedroom way in on the other side.

CL: Let me show you this and see if it looks right. Kini drew this for me. You tell me if it looks right.

EN: Where you have it down there?

CL: Somewhere here.

EN: In the back here, no?

CL: Here.

EN: Is that one? Could be. Oh yeah, the step coming, yeah.

CL: This is from the back, and this one from the beach side.

EN: But we didn't have any back [stairs].

CL: You didn't have stairway here?

EN: No, just straight. You just look down from this place. But from the front, yeah. yeah, bedroom, bedroom, bedroom, right. And this the parlor, and it ends there. Pau. No more steps going down.

CL: Okay, okay.