

Interview 2 with Sonny Kaniho 5/27/96 Tape 1 side A

CL: So Sonny, when I look at this I think, I guess your father wasn't at Keamoku that long before you folks moved to Humuula.

SK: Okay, I brought the wrong one out I think. Yeah, I brought the wrong one out but we can go from there. Yeah I just pick up the wrong paper. What we have here 1914.

CL: To Humuula but then. I know you told me you were born at Keamoku, right?

SK: No my sister.

CL: Oh your sister.

SK: Yeah.

CL: Oh, you were born up at Humuula?

SK: No, I was born at Kawaihae uka in 1922.

CL: Oh okay. And your sister, she was born before you or after you?

SK: No she was born '23. This one I put here Sonny.

CL: Okay.

SK: Everybody knows my sister by Dolly. At the small time. All we can use her Helen or Dolly, which one you like.

CL: So what, your dad moved first to Keamoku to work and then moved up to Humuula?

SK: Yeah. As you go through the (?) when Carter stopped him (?) and he spent some time with Carter in the white house. Cause Carter wouldn't give him a job, wanted to talk him more about the ranch. Then he wasn't too interested in talking about it so he said, if you don't give me a job I will quit. Something in that manner. And so he sent Keamoku right away, yeah, to run that area. And when he was sent down and then the family moved to Keamoku. Then that's when Dolly was born. Yeah. And after she was born then the same year we went move to Waiki'i, ah no, Humuula, yeah by wagon.

CL: Did you hear anything about Keamoku at that time? About what it was like there.

SK: No. At that time I was so so small I didn't hear. But after I worked with the ranch for a while and went, after, we went to Waimea and while I still a young person and we had the

opportunity, I was riding with the cowboys. Then I went down there. Then I noticed the shear house at that time. But that didn't come into my mind as I grow and being around and people talks about Parker Ranch. Then my concern, when was that shear house built? So I don't have no story on that. It appears it was there before Humuula station was. All I can say, they took em away from Keamoku to Humuula. It's because of the pest weeds like, that gets on the wool. So they took em up there. That's the only way I can see. So that was replaced.

CL: Did anybody tell you that or you just think that?

SK: Oh that is my thinking yeah.

CL: Yeah. Cause I did hear that story from somebody else too, that that was the reason.

SK: Yeah, it's only by thinking. You know if you get up and you see and then your indication, what was the reason they had it down here or why did they move it up there. See I don't know. But only the way I can see they moved it up there because the pest weed. All this berries sticks on them. But up Humuula those were free. You know free invested they effect the wool, ah quality.

CL: Do you know the names of those weeds?

SK: I only know by the Hawaiian word. The scientific name I don't really because it's

CL: Well the Hawaiian name is good.

SK: They call em ti, yeah t-i. Nobody know, we pronounce it but in the Hawaiian way because we, we always say ti. But it's not because no, it's ki, k-i instead of

CL: But not the same as la'i eh?

SK: No, no. Nah, it's a weed that sticks on every, I don't know if we have em right around here. It's kinda long but it has a fuzzy things over here. And you walk through em and it sticks on you. At the end of the leaf or branch or something. Yeah and it's where this thing over there, and it touches you or you, when its dry you just eat it, they drop to the ground. That's all. And the other one was that, I think they call it castor oil plant. You know with the berries. They call kikania (?), something like that. I kinda forget now.

CL: I heard, yeah, I forget too.

SK: I think kikania.

CL: Kikania I thought was, yeah I heard kikania.

SK: And you know what is what you call this other plant's flower. They make lei. I think they call that kika yeah.

CL: Yeah, the one they make that lei. Is that cigar flower?

SK: Yeah. What's the scientific name on that?

CL: I don't know.

SK: That's a good name, I don't know. That was it, they ask you what the name, I say I don't know.

CL: A lot of things I only know the Hawaiian names.

SK: Those I would be that thing was affecting the quality of the wool. That kikania used to get in the horses tail. You know when they get inside there, then they pick all that and they come and that's a difficult time for them for clean that tail. It makes the tail bundle up harder.

CL: So in later years, did you go down to Keamoku? When you were riding cowboy, did you ever go down there?

SK: Oh we always go down when we, cattles working, cattle work down there, we go down there. Many times I go alone by taking horses down there. Because when we do that, we take the horse a day ahead the next morning we ride the truck out there and saddle the horse and we work from there come in. Otherwise we have to ride from here, especially if we gotta bring beef cattle in. Then we gotta leave little early and we have to get out there just like from daybreak and we bring, we move the cattle slow.

CL: What was left there? That would have been about, what 1930's, '40's.

SK: No, all my things happened, was all in the 1930's. But I went, when I came down here I was, in 1930 in Waimea from Waiki'i. My recollection, I used to go with the cowboys before I was ten years old, going out with them.

CL: Up to Keamoku.

SK: Yeah. You know because I ride with my dad them. So that's only I can say we talk about Keamoku, I would say from 1932. Yeah because my mother passed away. But before my mother passed away I was riding with the cowboys already. And I think in that same time a year later, you know '33, that's my recollection because I see they talk about Will Rodgers in one of the Purdy books. Yeah and I met him at Makahalau, Parker Ranch.

CL: Will Rodgers?

SK: Yeah Will Rodgers.

CL: So what was there at Keamoku when you went down there? Just the shear house or was there...

SK: No it's station house. In those days they have lot of station house. So the worker don't have to travel here all the time. But communication like telephone was installed already. So all they gotta do is they have to get on the phone, and they crank that old phone.

CL: So they had telephone up to Laumai'a house and all those too?

SK: Oh yeah. It went right through to Keanakolu, right around. All you gotta do is, the line goes straight to Humuula and when they want to go in further then they had to connect the wire. Then what they call it, you see it on

CL: Yeah, what you call, switch.

SK: It's yeah, it's just like a

CL: Like a circuit breaker.

SK: I would say the circuit breaker, they connect the circuit for a longer distance. So when they go longer distance, difficult of hearing of the voice comes a little difficult. You gotta talk louder or something. So if they had the, without the circuit breaker the communication from Humuula to Waimea is difficult. So they break em over there. Unless they go far in, to go far in they leave it connected, nobody. But I think the buzzing of the phone call is not effective as closer. So when they get, but there's one always a person at Humuula. Is any phone call then he calls on the other end and then he gets them then he, the current go right through.

CL: So coming back to Keamoku, there was a shear house and there was a living house I guess you call, station house. Was there anything else?

SK: Yeah. Ranch house, that's where they, shear house, there's one cottage here, cottage, a person, I think they had one family down there so they make a house separate for the. Oh no, I think this [cottage] was the older house because this was older, this one looks more new. Yeah. Maybe they had a older building there, I don't know. But my recollection this, we stayed in this house [the cottage], in my opinion. Yeah. After I grew up and see this house, I feel we were staying here or maybe we were here [the ranch house]. I'm not sure. But the shear house, materials and everything correspond with this.

[See the map Sonny drew of the station.]

CL: With the cottage.

SK: Yeah. Maybe they had other buildings there or maybe had the other buildings out here. But I don't have any recollection if there were older materials laying around. But that one, the [ranch] house they, and they had a lanai go right on like this. You know just like you see up in the Mainland. They always have some kind of lanai. Yeah.

CL: That ranch house (?)

SK: This one right here.

CL: And was there, there was no sheep left then in the thirties, right?

SK: No, there's no sheep. All gone. But your question, like I said, I would like to know when was that shear house built?

CL: Well I think that there was from some stuff that I've read, I think there was a sheep station there already by 1900. But when it started I don't know. Earlier than that but I don't know when.

SK: Yeah, because in the Humuula area there was a shear house. Okay, let me get my other papers. Get extra paper with you? Humuula. Do good indication. This is Mauna Kea. Keanakolu. Hanipoi, you know where that is? Makahalau then it come Puu Kikoni. I don't know why it's Puu

CL: Kikoni. I saw it written.

SK: Written on a map. But I don't know what hill is that Puu Kikoni. You know there's small (?) Makahalau and (?) too they, oh that's a name I get hard time pronounce. Kalu, that's the old they call this old dairy. He has a old dairy.

CL: Oh yeah I saw that.

SK: It start with K. And right around here is what you call it, `Umi...

CL: `Umikoa?

SK: Yeah, ranch. So we stay here and there's Laumaia, oh where right here is Pi'ihonua. And I think right in here is Puakala where Auwae, eh? Auwae told you about this? I think that's where they were staying.

CL: He didn't tell me but

SK: I think that's where they was a community inside there.

CL: I know there was, all I heard about that was that Hitchcock started the ranch there. What kind of community?

SK: A community of Hawaiians over there. Because when I look at the old maps and all the maps, were a lot of people had lands up there. So but Puakaala was a place like the Shipman Ranch runs around here. They meet inside here. My recollection at times, we traveled from here because they know the people, my dad them know. We'd go here.

CL: To Puakala.

SK: Yeah Puakala. You know just ride the horse back, on horseback.

CL: Do you remember who was there that you used to visit?

SK: I cannot recollect some name but there was a number of em but as far as names is concerned. But when I met Papa Auwae and he was telling me then gave me a gave me a better vision that it was a number of people staying there. That they close together. I guess they go out this way but somehow...

CL: We didn't talk about Puakala. I should ask him.

SK: Then you go ask him then he can give you more. Because if you gonna tell him, he be telling you but he's, just like he's in the whole area. Because this whole area is called Humuula ahupua`a. And all this small little towns between.

CL: But mostly what we talked about was just the area of the sheep station what I talked about with him.

SK: Humuula? Yeah. Humuula was only a place from Waimea to get in, that's where it started. If you talk to him, Auwai, the trail comes from Waipunalei, Laupahoehoe to Hilo, come up to Keanakolu. But all the old trail and this one go Volcano House.

CL: Yes, from, well from Puu 'O'o there's a trail, is that the one you mean?

SK: That's the same trail that comes all from down here. They come from Laupahoehoe and Waipunalei all those places and they go up there. If you can get him more on that one I think we will have a better, more history of that place. We can get a younger guys who been living with the old peoples there, if they have recollection would be good.

CL: Yeah, I talked to some cowboys from Puu 'o'o' who used to drive cattle down the trail.

SK: Shipman's cattle I think was all going to Hilo. All to Hilo so the drive down there. Then later years I think when the trucks came in, I think during the war years that's when all those things came in.

CL: Yeah cause that's when they built the road.

SK: But CC came in 1930 went open up more trails inside there. That I don't have anything on that. Only I recollection is my dad knows all these trail. We're fortunate because he was with the older peoples. So he talks about those old people but he said they, they don't tell you anything if they [don't] trust you. Unless they trust you, you can. And those things stay like that but my dad was a little younger though, all compared to them. They were old people. But from him, his observation on those p;id people, that's where he learned. He watched the old people. When we work with him he doesn't teach you anything. All he tell you, do this. When you go back the old days and you know you supposed to be learn on your own, watch. Hard, you know? I know that first job.

CL: What if you don't do it right?

SK: Then they get after you. Because I know. One day we was going up Humuula on the car. He just give me a ride he say go out there and shoot em, the sheep. He doesn't tell me this is the, you got a safety and everything. No. Oh--my horse too, go ride that horse. Whatever the tame horse or what. I just have to ride em. By just watching them. I cannot recollect he showing me how to saddle a horse, why you do this, why you that. I don't have no recollection of that. But everything you must pick up on your own. I don't know but these things wouldn't come out to maybe you wasn't here and asking me these things. So we come, you asking a question and I don't know how to answer but all I can say from what watching and this and that and just telling you that I don't recall him telling me how you pick a cattle, how you rode the horse, especially the gun. He didn't show me, he just gave me the gun and gave me the bullet and I, well was just watching them.

CL: You know when you folks left Humuula and you went down to Waiki'i, do you know who took your dad's place up there?

SK: Yeah, that was Henry Afong. He's the guy I use em when the Department of Interior came down, ah no Inouye talked about the Hawaiian Homes program. I used him.

CL: I saw they did a, I saw an interview that they did with (?) '83 I think. He said he worked up at Humuula but I didn't know for sure when.

SK: Henry, I don't know if he was working for the ranch at that time. Maybe he was, I don't know. But I remember he was up on this other place. Only by I hear them talking.

CL: What other place?

SK: Right up by, you know where Anna's Ranch is? Yeah, that area.

CL: Before he went up to Humuula?

SK: Yeah.

CL: He's not alive anymore is he?

SK: No he's, Hhe would be 100 years old this year. He would be 102 or 101. See, if my dad was living he would be 102.

CL: Oh they're the same.

SK: Yeah they're the same. I think they call that place up there Keawewei.

CL: Yeah, I saw that place.

SK: Keawewei or Kawaihae uka, the upper of Kawaihae.

CL: And then there was one other thing about Humuula. You know when we were riding around, we were looking at the sheep station over here and then there was some rectangle of green trees up there. You know what I mean?

SK: When we was up Humuula sheep station?

CL: No before that when we were on your place.

SK: Oh on my place and we were looking up Mauna Kea side?

CL: Yeah. The sheep station was over there but more straight up there was this rectangle of trees.

SK: Oh that look like pine trees. Yeah, I think that was planted after 1940, after I left the place. And right on top of there Parker Ranch put one reservoir. But what year I'm not too sure. Maybe it's in the '60's or something like that, I don't know. But I can find out. I'll ask these guys down here who works on that.

CL: I was just wondering if it was anything very significant or not.

SK: I don't know if there is anything but when I was working (?) those trees wasn't there. And the reservoir wasn't there. The

reservoir was placed there because they put that road, that road going up the observatory. (end of side A) Interview with Sonny Kaniho Tape 1 side B

CL: Did you ever hear of, your family the Kaniho family or any others, living up above Keamoku years back?

SK: No. As far as the Kaniho family I don't recall anything. The only time I remember Waiki'i when we moved down there for us to go to school. That's the only time. Passing through I have no recollection.

CL: Can you tell me what Waiki'i was like when you moved there for school?

SK: What you see there, there were there at that time. But there were more buildings than that. Especially makai side, the stable. There was a school house there and if you facing makai side the school, from the stable, the school was more on the right side by the end of the big trees go inside there. But that big house you see underneath the tree, that was there already. Then when you looking at Humuula side of that houses there was the school. Then they had one alleyway goes through, there was another person, just about you pass the schoolhouse, ah the stable.

CL: I'll give you another sheet of paper. That's the stable still there right?

SK: Yeah. The stable, Waiki'i, the stables, white house. Well they call that boss house eh. The boss house or luna house eh. Here was the school.

CL: Who lived in the boss house those days?

SK: The boss of the area.

CL: Yeah, you don't know who that was.

SK: No I don't recall who was at that time there. Okay that's the school, that's one alleyway, that goes down all into this area. That's where all the houses stay.

CL: So this is all makai side of the road.

SK: Yeah, all makai side of the road. Over here had one house. Huluhia, old man Huluhia. But I don't know. See I only know them by Huluhia but they say their name is Levi. I'm not sure. But there was another one Levi that lives up there, he said they were brothers. But this one was the older one. But they said they took us to Humuula. So I don't really know. But down inside this area there were so many houses down here I

CL: Is that where you folks lived, down in there? Did you live down in there in one of those houses?

SK: No. Right after here you come through this alley way. There was a big, it's a cabin here on stilt. Then I think okay, Huluhia's house, this, over here was a big gulch you know. Yeah that was a gulch.

CL: Is that the one they call Awaiakeakua?

SK: I don't know what's the name at that time yeah. But it was a deep gulch. But now I think they all the things come down and it's filled up, flood you know. But down here is a flat. The gulch comes then one time it's a flat and you get, then you have the polo field down here.

CL: In your day too there was a polo field there?

SK: No, no, now. That's the polo field. But a lot of people down here, the most significant thing was the Russian ovens.

CL: For bread?

SK: Yeah. It's built like a igloo. That's one correction. I don't know if there's any one. If there's one down there you should take a picture of it. I think we should though. Oh this guys have been real nice to me. Maybe you should stop by.

CL: The Russians.

SK: No, no the Waiki'i people, that work inside that building. Maybe you should stop by there and ask em. They might question you. But you just say oh Sonny said, something like that. I don't know if there's the same people still inside there. All you want to do is take a picture of the, if any Russian ovens still exists. I think the cattle get in there rub em and knock em all down eh. But they built like a igloo like.

CL: Out of what? Brick? No not brick.

SK: Stone. I don't know whether that was lava rocks or regular loose blue rocks around here. Those Europeans, everything was bricks but we didn't have bricks. So they probably used lava. They chip em off or use the rocks in this, shape em up.

CL: Did you see them baking bread?

SK: I would say yes, because we were around them all the time. But for recollection... I would say yeah because I seen them with that but when I got there was only one Russian family and one other person. He was the boss of that area and he married my mother's sister. But he came

CL: Elarionoff?

SK: Elarnionoff. You know him?

CL: I heard

SK: Through Helen Aveiro. Yeah. That's one but for one I try to get Leningrad, you know the son over here eh, to write a biography. But he don't have. I says write to the aunties. But I don't know if the aunties are living yet. The last time I met them I think was in the '70's or the '60's. But they were elderly peoples you see. Now if your dad was living oh he's way up in age.

CL: So Elarionoff was the only Russian left there then?

SK: There was one, I don't know, they were called, all I remember they say Muragi, Muragi. So must be M-u-r something, Muragis. Could be, Muraskis because M-u-r-a-s-k-i something like Muraskis. I've been to Europe, I gotta, I was in Europe for seven years so those kinda things.

CL: And what were the other kind of people living there then?

SK: Japanese. Now we coming back, I was kinda amazed the poultry farm was taken care by I think Korean, I think was a Korean person.

CL: Oh there's poultry farm up there?

SK: Because they had a poultry farm up there. Waiki'i had poultry and piggery beside hay and corn. Too bad, we can't get all those guys who's been up there. But my understanding, the Russians was in the West Coast and Carter had them all come down here. But what year I don't know.

CL: How many kids was in the school?

SK: Gee I don't have any idea.

CL: Was one room school?

SK: Yeah one room school. I think, I don't know what grade they go to. I don't know whether it's first, second and third or (?) It was a, yeah my recollection I think, while I was there, I remember two school teacher up there.

CL: At the same time?

SK: I think the first one was, I kinda forget now, I don't know which was the first. One was Igawa and the man one I cannot

recall the name because the husband was a motor mechanic for Parker Ranch. Because they were around for a long time so that's my recollection.

CL: The husband of Igawa.

SK: Igawa, I think it's Igawa. But now I'm getting mixed up with the Igawa and the Ogawa. But I think was Igawa, I'm not sure now. You know You can just used both names. I cannot recollect. The other man, I think he was a single man but I cannot recollect where did he stay up there. Did he come up from Waimea or something like that or he lives up there. That I cannot recall. But Mrs. Igawa she, they live up there. Because the husband was a motor mechanic up there. That's interesting now you telling me, that I cannot say. But as far as school is concerned I don't really know. So if a parents up there had maybe two kids going or something like that I would say more then ten. But as far as number of house I don't have no idea. But if I go back and look at the area I can maybe more or less tell you how many families was there. You might see some kind of infrastructure or something like that, yeah some kind of foundation. But he had one last house down there past the polo field, I think some place around here. With the gulch come down here, yeah I would say around here because if the hired houses, oh yeah the houses come like this. And stable, no this is the camp, many houses inside here too. I would think more than ten family was there.

CL: I heard about the Bell family living there at one time.

SK: Yeah he came right after Elarionoff got fired. I would say in thirty, during the CC years.

CL: Oh, I thought they were there before, Bells, Piko Bell.

SK: No not Piko Bell. Alex Bell. Piko Bell I think was down here. Maybe he could be up there but he was a blacksmith. He could have been up there but as far as a supervisor for that area it was Elarionoff. Then when he got fired, then Alex Bell went up there.

CL: So Piko Bell was a blacksmith.

SK: Yeah he was down here, a blacksmith. Waimea, yeah.

CL: Did you ever hear anything about Waiki'i before the Russians came in? What might have been up there?

SK: No all I know from stories, but it was later years when I found out about this, their coming there. But I didn't know nothing about it until I, I know the Russians was there but I had no knowlege of them, oh they came from here or something like that. But after, it was for something, I think after, its' fair

for to me to say. After I got into the service, went around the world and something and when I come back here I look at this I look that and try to put things together. And I think that's the best way I can explain it. Yeah living with peoples then you know the Russians then like that. Would be interesting to know how many of them came at that time.

CL: Well you can read some stuff about the Russians coming about nineteen something, I think 1906 or something like that.

SK: As far as Russian was here they were here in the 1800. Because Honolulu Harbor I knew at one time was called the Russian fort. You gave me a good idea. The only way I can find that is down in the archive or the Bishop Museum. That's the only way I can.

CL: Did you ever hear of a spring at Waiki'i, water spring?

SK: No I haven't heard that, no.

CL: Cause of the name I wondered you know.

SK: Because the name of the place. Has values you know. They get their name because of something. Either a person or something but it's usually, it's something. So interpretation, to interpret the word Waiki'i I don't really know what it is.

CL: One other thing I might ask you about. You know this area between Waiki'i, maybe I can check it on the map. (getting the map) Let's see, it doesn't show Waiki'i I think. It shows Keamoku sheep station but it doesn't show Waiki'i.

SK: This side here that's this puu you see right outside here.

CL: What I wanted to ask you about was down in here. You know how you go past Puu Ke'eke'e?

SK: Puu Ke'eke'e, yeah that's the Saddle Road.

CL: And Waiki'i must be about in here somewhere.

SK: (talking and looking at the map) See this boundary here, it's all Hawaiian Home land I think.

CL: So then when you get over in here, if you're going from Waiki'i up toward Humuula here.

SK: Okay well let's make it this way, if Keamoku sheep station down here, Nohona'ohae. That's a hill.

CL: Yeah and it's right close to where the Saddle Road.

SK: That's an intersection. (more looking at the map)

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CL: But this area in here, where Pohakuloa Training Area is now, what was happening there in '20's and the '30's? Maybe the '20's you cannot remember but in the '30's.

SK: I would say in the '20's and '30's the Pohakuloa area, Parker Ranch was in use for that. I think prior to the Parkers being together, that Parker, Sam Parker who was living, one of the Parker boys was living, they were using that paddock for horse area. Turn the horse loose area.

CL: Must have been the Mauna Kea, the upper side where the grass is yeah.

SK: The grass is all on a flat area. Their water was way on top. The water horse get the water. I think, I don't know if they had they piped that down from that spring they have up there. My recollection they had a water trough down there. I say was a water strough down there because they say they had a water trough down there. And they came down by, from the spring. You ever met this guy Lindsey, Johnny Lindsey?

CL: I have a student who's talking to Johnny Lindsey. She talked to him a couple of times and we were talking about going up to Humuula with him. But we didn't do it yet.

SK: Those guys they way ahead of me. They have more to say.

CL: You think there's anybody else. People mentioned Yutaka Kimura.

SK: Yeah Yutaka Kimura is the oldest one we have here. The only way if you can get somebody who knows him well, because like you coming around everybody here and things like that, they kinda leery of what the purposes is. For me all I need is somebody to put it in some kind of documents or something like that. But I wouldn't, my recollection of anything. But as far as being authority, no. [bit missing] with the dairy or something.

CL: Yeah I read that biography of him. And I think you're right, I think he was down at the dairy and not too much up there that I know.

SK: No he went into the cowboy after I left here. Yeah then he became a cowboy. But he was mostly with the dairy. But of his years when he came with his parents here because he started from that Puu Wa`awa`a from there with the dad. That's, I haven't read his book. I got his book.

CL: I just looked at it. There's not much about Puu Wa`awa`a on that side.

SK: Most time you come over there but you don't have a deep knowledge or something in it. But he was up here. Because I look at him, my being around for the ranch, we working ranch for just three years and he was not in that area in the cowboy era but he came after that. Then that's a different thing. He be come in the modern style. But he was not in the, now if I'm gonna go back a little more, my dad he won't let a man do something that he hasn't done before. When get into the rough thing with wild cattles like that, he takes over. He don't put nobody in, he do it himself. Why I don't know. But he doesn't make anybody do a job that he cannot do. If he can do it then he make em. That's one thing with him. So growing up with them, living with all these young guys, the way they talk about my dad. I think he's crazy. He get more guts than sense. That's a different thing. And there was a lot of old guys. But he had lot of respect for em.
(end of tape)

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p. 9 Waikii plan

p. 10 Russian ovens at Waikii

ps. 13 PTA--thinks Parker Ranch used for horses in the 20's, 30's