

Interview with Robert Makuakane, by C. Langlas 7/2/99

Side A

CL: So, now, tell me about this brackish water in the crack again.

RM: As a youngster, we used to come from the Kalapana area--to fish and so was in age, what 8 years old. From 1948 to the 60s we used to fish. And we used to come horseback riding, my dad, my mom, my sisters, and other members of our family. To pick up `opihi and throw net, dry the fish and take it in. Normally we stay out here about a week. We camp over for a week, you know. Pick the `opihi, poke the `opihi, salt it up, put it in those old 5 gallon cracker cans. So, you know, after couple days you need to take a bath, so we used to go in at the Great Crack. There was the Great Crack, they used to walk down about twenty or thirty feet. And it was pretty wide, I mean, the bottom I'd say about 8 to 10 feet wide.

CL: Was it hard to get down?

RM: Oh no, you can just walk, because of the earthquake and drops in the rock. No, it was pretty easy walking down in the crack. And it's brackish water, it's cold, very cold. So we used to use that water to take a bath. In fact when you come more over to, we call it "the kiawe tree" area. Right down at the kiawe tree. It's way over this side, almost the Kamehame area. But over there, right along the shore line you gonna find brackish water. So, that, we used to scoop brackish water from there. And use that for take a bath. I used to shore line fish and `opihi picking from 48 till the 60s.

CL: That was with Gabriel [Kealoha]?

RM: Yeah, that's my brother-in-law. His wife is my sister, so. She used to come out with us, my two sisters, myself, my dad, my mom. And then we would have other family, cousins and stuff that would come over. But we used to stay out at least a week at a time. And like I say, we throw net, we salt and dry it, and keep it and may be take it. And all on horseback. So the older, like my mom and dad, the older...kids used to ride, we used to walk. And then after while we got to know the Bengays down there, that was staying down at Punalu`u. They used to take care of our horses. We come over, and then someone else from our family's come and pick us up in Punalu`u, with the truck or the car. Right? So we ride all the way over, leave our horses and mules with the Bengays, and then we wanted to come out and pick `opihi, go fishing again, then we just come to Punalu`u to pick up the horses. And then go out from here, it was lot closer than coming all the way from Kalapana.

CL: Oh the first time you rode all the way from Kalapana?

RM: Oh we did all the time, from before. Then we come and stay out like I said about a week, 5 days or whatever, then we start going back. But everything is preserved. We get `opihi, we poke the `opihi, we clean it at night, salt it down. And you go along the shoreline, you put it in the water. And then, we gett 30 gallon, whatever, we put em on the horse and go back. All the way back to Kalapana. You know that's a long, long ride. But eh, that's the way my dad supported the family, selling. And those days, in the forties and fifties, it was \$18 a gallon. Nowdays they like hundred 18 dollars a gallon.

[Robert mentioned that there was brackish water at Kiawe Tree before taping started.]

CL: So you know this place with the kiawe tree, you think that's here? I was told there's brackish water here where it says Waio`ala.

RM: Right, the spring eh? (looking at the map)
It's straight down though from the cinder pit.

CL: Oh, you know, Anthony [Oliveira] said it's here, where it says Pueo.

RM: Yeah, because from this Red Hill, just slightly over from this cinder pit. Pueo? Anthony who, Oliveira? Right along the shore line you have the brackish water, in fact the whole shore of Ka` has brackish water comin out all the time. I mean, you can find an area away from the ocean, you gonna have brackish water coming out.

(bit omitted)

But if you tell me the Red Hill, it's just slightly Kona side, the cinder hill and just slightly over, about a half a mile away straight down. That's where you have the kiawe tree, right in there.

CL: There's a road over here I know down from this cinder pit.

RM: Right over here they're takin it. The powder house road they used to call it, you go straight down.

CL: Does it go down right to the kiawe tree?

RM: Go right down, right to the kiawe tree. But it belongs to IASCO now. Before C. Brewer had the lease of it, and Hawaiian Ranch used to have it, and then Yamagata came, Kawaihae ranch. So they had that area restricted. And you need permission from the ranch or from the plantation to go down. That belongs to IASCO, the area down there now. But the

plantation was the one that really improved the road, you know the access down to the beach, cause a lot of their workers were using, fishing down there. So they took a bulldozer down there, made a nice road going down. And coming over toward the kiawe tree. Just a short area, I'd say about a half-a-mile, quarter-of-a-mile where it's kind a rough. Just short of the kiawe tree from the ocean side. Bt from the highway here going down they have a nice road going down, to the kiawe tree. Half of the area's the p_hoehoe, so that had that marked, that painted so you could follow the p_hoehoe going down. You get into the `a`a, then they had it bulldozed.

Anthony guys ever mentioned about using the brackish water, the spring water to bathe or drink? We used to drink it too, you boil it and drink it, you know.

CL: He said it was there, that's all. Cause they more often came down over this side.

(bit omitted about Oliveiras)

CL: I think you said you went ulua fishing in this area.

RM: Oh yeah, the double-drop area and over here in this area, eh? I been over to da kine, Waiwelawela, came down on horse back.

CL: From Pahala?

RM: Yeah, well, you come up to that Pu`u da kine. Pu`u `Ula`ula, yeah, from that area you take the trailer and horseback down to Waiwelawela.

CL: You go direct down or?

RM: Along, they get the fence, eh? right along the fence, then go over into Waiwelawela. So along in here used to ulua fish, all along. All the way down to Punalu`u. Ulua.

CL: Oh, no special place?

RM: No, no special place. We just go wherever.

CL: Slide bait kind?

RM: Slide bait. Those are my two top ulua poles. For slide bait, all slide bait. Because I used to enter that ulua tournament every year, that casting club ulua tournament. For about 11 years I had entered that ulua tournament. In the 80s, and then the early 90s. In fact the mid 90s I was still entering the tournament. Then I was busy, so the last three years I haven't entered, the Hilo Casting Club tournament. June, July usually they have it.

(bit omitted on tournament)

So when, that started from the late 70s to the mid 90s almost.
...but ulua I been fishing from when I was a baby, when my dad used to do that.

CL: What kind did he do, the old kind, pipi ulua?

RM: The old kind, right, with the puhi. Like a lasso, cowboy style, throw it out, then pull it in, touch the puhi see if it's warm. Cause the Hawaiians believe if the puhi's warm then the ulua is around, now you throw the hook in the water. Yeah the lasso type, my dad used to do that from when i was young. And then the hang kind, right, they hang it over the cliff, yeah. Till they come with this pole type and slide fishing and its a lot easier. Instead of all day swinging that lasso. From the day I was born my dad was already doing that ulua fishing, the old type.

CL: Did he ever when he was coming down here?

RM: Oh we did, because that's what we did. He caught ulua, we'd cut it, fillet it, then we'd dry it. Salt it and dry it.

CL: He didn't have a post down here...

RM: ...lasso style, or he used to if he can find a stick just hang it over the pali. He used to do that. That was the old kind, the aho one, they used to call the aho cord. No more the monofilament.

CL: They make it with coconut, yeah? Or was it the cotton?

RM: Well, he had the cotton one and the coconut fiber one.

CL: I've heard that for the hang type and maybe too for the cowboy style, there are certain places that are better, that stick out into the [ocean].

RM:RM: Right, that's what you want, where the water comes in and goes out. You get certain areas. But then when we came over, we started pound `opihi, and then we stop. Wherever we rested, then he would go out along the shoreline to see where was a good place wherever we stopped to rest. And then do it there. And then as we continue again the next day, again that night when we stop to rest again, look for an area where he can go fishing again. There was no particular area. I mean there was good areas for only ulua. Like the double-drop area, I know like Derasin family steady they go to the double-drop. But when we were coming over from Kalapana was just wherever we stopped to rest, wherever you can hang in th proximity of our camp area.

CL: How long do you think that double-drop area is?

RM: I'd say easily quarter of a mile, you know, the double-drop, maybe a little longer where the pāhoehoe. That's pāhoehoe that.

CL: And it must be Puna side of the crack, yeah?

RM: Yeah, Puna side of the crack. Where did Anthony say the fresh water is? at Pueo?

CL: Well...this is where he said the kiawe tree is.

RM: Oh yeah, so it's this side over here, inside here. Right here look like the area. That name there, what is that? Kauhū`ula. I'd right about inside that area.

CL: You never heard that name, though, eh?

RM: No, I haven't heard that name.

CL: Mahuka, yeah. (RM: Yeah, Mahuka Bay) People talk about that, and Waiapele people talk about.

RM: Right. Even La`ahana, no, I haven't heard. Waiwelawela only I've heard Waiwelawela, Mahuka Bay, these in between names I haven't heard. Waiapele, yeah I've heard.

CL: But Pueo you haven't heard.

RM: No, I haven't heard Pueo. Palima Point, yeah, of course I know where Palima Point is. Very popular issue a while back. Spaceport.

Anthony folks would be the best, and Thomas Ka`iliawa, the family that born and raised here, you know. I was kind of implanted here in 71. But they was born and raised here, for 50 60 years.

CL: And I think you said you were born 1940?

RM: 1940.

CL: Do you know how your father came to know this coast in here?

RM: Well my dad, our family, we have some of the Makuakanes in the Ka` area. But my dad used to be a cowboy with the ranch over here. (CL: Kapapala Ranch?) Right, Kapapala Ranch. So that's why we knew the Halfway House. When we used to come over from Puna, if it was too late, then we used to stay at the Halfway House out there. In the National Park, you know, where the boundary there. Oliveira is our family too, see, they married to Kanaka`ole. So the Kanaka`ole's our family. So my dad used to be a cowboy here, and participate in the rodeos when they used to have it here. So my dad knew.

CL: He probably fished when he was...

RM: Right with the cowboy, so he knew this area. When we came around, oh, now's a good time, I get kids, I can make em do the work. So we started pretty young poundin `opihi, in fact, a lot of this cliff area that you couldn't go down, he used to tie us youngsters on the rope and we down the cliff poundin `opihi. And he holdin the rope up there. Yep. Done all that.

(bit omitted)

The lady to talk to is Margaret Dancel, or Pele Hanoa. I don't think they went over that far, they Punalu`u area. Even Margaret Dancel, even though she's like a kupuna in this area, I don't think she'd gone over this way. They're mostly Punalu`u, Honuapo area, South Point, and over Kona. Because their family actually was the Grace family from Kona. I don't know too many that went this way [toward the park from Kiawe Tree], except for us from Puna coming this way.

(bit omitted)

CL: Is there places where you can throw net in this section here?

RM: There's some areas, yeah, that you can. It's pretty rough, and there's certain areas, because you get the p_hoehoe coming up, ledges where the fishes come up to feed, where we could throw net. But not very much. Lot of our fishing was through pole-fishing you know.

CL: So all this area from Kamehame over to park.

RM: Yeah. Kamehame you have some areas to throw net, and the kiawe tree, Kona side you have areas. There's two or three spots where you can throw for moi and other stuff. And over to Waiwelawela area you have just a couple places again where you can, it's safe enough. If you crazy enough you can throw em in the deep blue but. Theirs just a few areas until you get over to da kine, past Waiwelawela area and you go to Halap_.

Going over more into the park area you have a bigger area to throw net. But now it's illegal, eh? that side to throw net. Or spearing, you cannot spear.

CL: As far as I know, the park cannot really control anything below the high water line, cause they don't own it. I don't think there's any regulations on spearing.

RM: Oh, before they used to stop em, guys coming out with spears. They used to enforce guys comin out with spear.

CL: It might be that they wouldn't let you transport a spear. How long ago back are you talking?

RM: Maybe 70s, no? Mid 70s. In the 80s when they had problem with the Galizas, Dane and Dirk, down Halapē. But they were going in throw net. Going in steady, with the boat, and staying over at Halap_ area.

(portion omitted about park control of fishing)

RM: When we go fishing it's for us, to eat, for our own consumption or give to the families and friends for consumption And not to sell. We don't do that. I catch enough that I can eat and that's eat. My family don't eat anything out of the freezer anyway, so, have to be fresh.

(portion omitted about enforcing park rules, commercial selling)

CL: Do you think you could locate on the map the areas where you could throw net?

RM: No, I don't think so. Cause I don't know these names. But there is areas I know, because we've done it. Like I said down at Kiawe tree, couple areas they have moi holes and holehole holes.

CL: Do you think from the double-drop area on there's any places?

RM: No, I don't think so. I'm not sure, but I don't think there is. But back this way there's several areas that you have to Palima Point.

(bit omitted) Depending on how crazy you are, there's places where you can go throw for moi and other stuff, in the rough. Maybe there's a couple places that you can, that it's safe to throw. But to point it out on the map to you, I cannot do.

(bit omitted)

CL: Let me just get out this map, over toward Pāpalehau. Do you remember what it looks like?

RM: Not really, but I know we used to camp over there.

CL: Do you remember one place had an island?

RM: An island out in the ocean, eh? Yeah, I remember that at Pāpalehau.

CL: Kind of a pointed one?

RM: Right. It's not that far away from the land, the water go right around. In fact there's one also at this kiawe tree, it's a flat island right outside where the water goes right around. And Pāpalehau I think there's one there also, cause we used to jump in the water for get the `opihi out on that island, yeah.

(big omitted)

Side B

CL: You know that brackish pond in the crack you were talking about, how far was that from the shore?

RM: From the shore, maybe hundred yards or closer. Because we used to walk away from the shore, from our camp area to up in the crack to walk down into it. Now, with all this earthquake, to go back and go find it's gonna take time, because I haven't been there for a while.

(bit omitted)

Waiwelawela, yeah, there's one right there.

CL: Yeah, there's that warm pond. I don't know how warm.

RM: Pretty warm. (CL: Is it hot to get into?) No, no it's not hot to get into, just warm. It's almost similar to that warm pond by Pohoiki. (bit omitted)

CL: Anything else you can think of concerning fishing in this coast in here?

RM: No, that's about it. Lotta good areas for menpachi fishing, and then ulua.

CL: People would usually fish for both, yeah?

RM: Right. You throw your ulua pole in one corner, and your menpachi fish in the area that you know there's menpachi. Because the ulua don't want the light. So you cannot put your lamp hangin over the side with the ulua pole there. Doesn't work. The ulua don't like light, eh? Menpachi, you gotta hang a lamp over the side for menpachi. So normally you go one point ulua fish, the other point you go and do the menpachi fishing.

But like Waiwelawela area, man, when was the last time I went down there, 80s I think, mid-80s or late 80s was the last time I been down in that area. We came from the kind, Pu`u `Ula`ula, from that area and go down along the fence and then we went over on the shore line. We went with horse.

CL: You could go past the fence?

RM: Oh, it was all bust up before, they just fix em up not too long ago.

(bit omitted)

RM: [Speaking of trail into park through Roger James Ranch] Is anyone else now trying to get access?

CL: Well, he [Anthony Oliveira] wants to be able to come through, and I think the park would like to give access. The only problem is to convince Ken Fujiyama. So that's one route to come in. And I think what the park is looking at is a road like that.

RM: And then come along the fence? We already have an access there, right above the ford, by Fontes. That's the one come to that Pu`u `Ula`ula.

(bit omitted)

CL: (Speaking of future park access road on easement) they could bring it from farther up I think.

RM: Well you get the petroglyph site up here, right? You know that turn when you go back up? Off the road, but you know the ford area, as soon as you make the turn over there, on makai side is petroglyph site, you know. Oh yeah, they got a big petroglyph site.

(bit omitted)

Fontes house, below, the road that goes down here is below his house, right along the mac nut, right along the fence. then you come back up to Pu`u `Ula`ula and come down along the fence. That's the road we took. (bit omitted) That's when we went over to Waiwelawela that time, to make `opihi. That's the last time I went down.

CL: And how about this [west] side over here?

RM: That's only to kiawe tree, that's the farthest over I went. Kiawe tree, that's it. Because we can come from, we get permission to go down Kamehame, we drive over to the kiawe tree. For the ulua fishing and menpachi and stuff.

But over from the kiawe tree, the double-drop, in the 80s, the mid-80s. I haven't gone over into the national park area. Only once in the 80s that I went to Waiwelawela.

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