

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

| | |
|--|--|
| Ke ‘Ano Wikiō (<i>Type</i>) | HPS Event: Panel (edited) |
| Kūpuna (<i>Elders</i>) | Nona Beamer, Puluelo Park, George Naope |
| Nā Helu Wikiō (<i>Tape #s</i>) | HPS 0031 & HPS 0032 |
| Lā (<i>Date</i>) | July 30, 2001 |
| Wahi (<i>Location</i>) | Ka ‘Aha Hula ‘o Hālauaola (World Conference on Hula), Edith Kanakaole Stadium, Waiakea, Hilo, Hawai‘i Island |
| Luna Ho‘omalū (<i>Moderator</i>) | Maile Loo |
| Kanaka Ho‘opa‘a Mo‘olelo (<i>Videographers</i>) | Gene Kois & Kehaulani Bailey |
| Nā hoa kipa (<i>Others present</i>) | Audience members |



| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Nā Loina Ho‘ohana (<i>Access & Use</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>This Transcript is provided as a research tool; Each document represents one (1) multi-hour session</i> ➤ <i>HPS does not include Hawaiian diacritical markings in peoples’ names, mele titles, or commercial names/locations that do not historically use them (i.e. Halekulani Hotel)</i> ➤ <i>Information in brackets reflect physical movement, background sounds, censored content, clarifications, colloquialisms, and "sic" terms (words likely intended by the speaker)</i> ➤ <i>DISCLAIMER: Please be advised that this transcript may contain content of a mature nature that may not be suitable for youth</i> ➤ <i>When citing this resource, please use: “Hula Preservation Society”</i> ➤ <i>For questions regarding use of content contained herein, please contact archive@hulapreservation.org or call (808) 247-9440</i> ➤ <i>We acknowledge there may still be corrections needed. If you find items of question (content, spelling, etc.), please take note and kindly contact us at archive@hulapreservation.org We appreciate your kōkua!</i> |
|---|--|

PANEL – “VOICES OF OUR KŪPUNA” WITH NONA BEAMER, PULUELO PARK, & GEORGE NAOPE

Raw Tape #s: HPS 0031, 0032

Date: July 30, 2001

Location: Ka ‘Aha Hula ‘o Hālaauola (World Conference on Hula), Edith Kanakaole Stadium, Waiakea, Hilo, Hawai‘i Island

Moderator: Maile Loo

Videographers: Gene Kois & Kehaulani Bailey

[TEXT & PHOTO]

Nā Kumu Hula

Puluelo Park, George Naope, Nona Beamer

(00:20)

[TEXT SCROLL]

By summer 2001, Hula Preservation Society had been conducting one-on-one oral history interviews with hula elders for about a year.

When we learned of the very first Ka ‘Aha Hula ‘o Hālaauola (World Conference on Hula) happening in Hilo that July, we decided to host a kūpuna panel discussion for attendees.

Here it is! Auntie Pulu and her down home nature, Uncle George with his firm yet rascal ways, and Auntie Nona, the endearing teacher.

Their commitment to teaching and deep love for hula shone through!

Enjoy!

[PHOTO OF PNP WITH TEXT]

Auntie Pulu started the program with her Aloha chant ... Akahai e nā Hawai‘i ... ‘olu‘olu ka mana‘o ...

(1:00)

[PNP CONTINUES HER ALOHA CHANT]

ML: Aloha... No need, you can just talk.

GN: Oh.

ML: You’re wired. Yeah.

GN: [CHANT: Noho Ana]

[APPLAUSE]

NB: Maika‘i. You’re such a sweet man. Such a sweet man. You so sweet, I’ve got to give you a kiss.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: That's a sweet man. In the forest on the ridges of the mountains, dwells the presence of the Goddess Laka. She lives in the source from whence comes the great mist. Laka, the patron of our hula.

(2:58)

[NB CHANTS: Laka Chant]

GN: E aloha.

[APPLAUSE]

ML: Good morning, everyone. My name is Maile Beamer Loo, and I'm pleased to be here to share the morning with you with our beloved kūpuna. Um, our non-profit called the Hula Preservation Society really seeks to honor our elders by allowing them to share their stories. I know, don't give me that furrowed eyebrow. [LAUGHS] M-m. You told me not to talk too long too, so I'm going to make it short. [LAUGHS] But anyway, we seek to-to give them an opportunity to share their stories. And what we're doing is, we're documenting it all using um, digital video and computers. And so that we can hear their voices and see their smiles and the twinkles in their eyes for many, many years to come after they're-they're not with us anymore. So this morning, they've kindly all come here to share their opinions, their backgrounds, their stories with you. And so we're going to be asking some questions and just letting them talk story. And um, we have two microphones up here in the front, so after um, maybe forty-five minutes or so, if you folks have questions, please feel free to come up to the microphones.

GN: [WHISPERS PLAYFULLY TO AUDIENCE] Don't ask!

[LAUGHTER]

ML: Um, so please come forward so that everybody can hear your question. So was that short enough?

[LAUGHTER]

ML: No comment. Actually, when he arrived this-when Uncle George arrived this morning, he-I saw the orange shoes first.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: And I thought, oh boy, my mom is gonna have a fit.

NB: I love orange.

ML: Because she loves orange. [LAUGHS]

NB: I told him he was so edible, I could start from his toes and nibble all the way up. [LAUGHTER]

(05:00)

NB: He didn't seem to mind.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And I told them I wore this color, 'cause I was thinking of Halloween. And I'm gonna be sitting next to two witches.

[OUTBURSTS OF LAUGHTER]

NB: Touché, touché. [LAUGHTER] Oh, you sharp, George. Wow, He's sharp.

GN: I went to the Beamer school.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: So I don't really need to say a whole lot about them. You know who they are. You know what they're about. Without further ado. We just wanted to start off asking you if you could share a little bit about um, your hula beginnings. You know, what-what was your memory of the first time you saw a hula when you were a child? What got you interested?

[LAUGHTER]

GN: She's older.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: You guys can duke it out.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Well, my first was here in Hilo. And uh, Grandma was having us do a Christmas program at the hospital. And here came this gigantic red figure down the hall. Ho, ho, ho. And the jingle of the bells and scared me out of my wits. And I thought, Oh, if this has anything to do with a hula program, I don't want to be a hula dancer. That was my first experience being on a hula program. And to this day, every time I see a ho-ho-ho with all the jingle bells, [GASPS] I want to run away. M-m, it was very terrifying for a little kid. [CHUCKLES] I didn't want to be a hula dancer.

[LAUGHTER]

PNP: Well, my first experience-I come from Kōhala. And I have tūtū's that love hula. My whole family on my paternal side are uh, musicians, dancers, you name it. So we used to see this as a-a little girl growing up. I used to see hula done in a different way than today's way. It's the old-fashioned way.

My first experience was seeing my Tutu. And I remember her, Tutu MacDougal. She used to have hair hanging all the way down to the floor. All white. And she was about eighty years old. And I used to act like a princess, because my grandfather's home was just awesome. This is where the ali'i's came and stay when they were-went to Kōhala. And I used to dance around in that beautiful garden. And this tūtū used to watch me from across the fence. Says, Hūi, hūi. Pēpē, come. Mai, mai, mai. I said, Oh, Tutu, you was watching me? And I would get embarrassed. And she says, Beautiful. But that's not the way to do the ku'i. And she says, You watch Tutu. And I've never seen anything so beautiful like that grandmother get up and she used to do the old-time hula. I don't know if you all know what the old-time hula was. It was just gestures. Sweet gestures. And that's when I fell in love with the hula. I never got it, I-I never learned it. You know, go uh, to hula classes there, because there were no hula classes. They didn't charge or there was no such thing. You go to one tūtū and she dances the hula, and that's what you learn. But when I came to Honolulu, oh, that's big bucks. You had to go to class, yeah, and learn. So my first teacher was my aunt, who is um, a court dancer. And uh ... bless her heart, Katie Nakaula was my first teacher. I got to learn the kuahu style of dancing. And I didn't like it, because after hula, I have to drink with her. You know, she-they believed in having a little 'ōmole and that you have-after your workout, you're supposed to feel a little relaxed. Well, I didn't drink at that time. So I told her, No. And in the meantime-Napua Stevens is a cousin of mine. So I told her about Auntie Nak-and I says, Oh, I-I just dread when the hula was over. And she says, Why? I says, Oh, because I have to drink some um, 'ōmole that I don't-it's so strong. And so she says, Well, why don't you try my dear friend, Lokalia Montgomery? I said, Oh, she's the same way? Oh, no, no, no. She's different. Okay. She said, I'll call her. You want to go? You want to try her? And so I did. She called and uh, she accepted me. And I went there, for the first time, I learned that hula was not free. You had to pay to come to classes. And uh, that's where my real hula began, in um, Lokalia's class. So I'm a student of Lokalia Montgomery. I better not go any further. I got so much stories to tell.

(10:00)

My dear George over here. How did you come to learn the hula?

GN: Well, the first thing I can remember about hula was, I hated it.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I was about three-no, four years old, and my great-grandmother lived next door to this wonderful lady. And she shoved me over into her hālau. And then all I learned from uh, from about four years old until I was twelve, I never danced. I just ... pa'i the ipu and chanted. And this lady, her name was "Mama Fuji", Auntie Mary Fuji. And she was the mother of Auntie Edith Kanakaole, and Pualani and them, so I lived next door to them. So I was forced to go hula. And that was like seven days a week.

NB: Oh, my.

GN: And I chanted, but I-as I said, I didn't dance until I was about twelve, when they made me get up and dance. I didn't think I could even dance, but after watching her scold all this haumāna, I learned something. So I never got scolding. I was good.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: And then I learned under one of the great masters who lived in Puna at that time, uh ... what his name? No, not Lokalia. Uh, uncle-uncle ... Well, anyway. I forget the name.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: But-and uh, I'll think about it later.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: And then I went to-I went to school and graduated from the University of Utah. And then Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music for my doctor's. I came home and then-and put me at University of Hawai'i. And I didn't teach music, I taught anthropology. I didn't even know what the hell anthropology was, you know.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: But every time Dr. Emory would say, You're going out in the field. I would say, Doctor, can I stay here and do research? 'Cause I wasn't about to go dig up any Hawaiian's grave. But I'm not superstitious, you know. I just don't take chances.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: So-and then I continued-I went back to hula and been teaching hula ever since. And I'm gonna be fifty-something years teaching. And I'm the youngest of them two.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Maika'i nō, maika'i nō.

[APPLAUSE] [LAUGHTER]

(12:23)

[TEXT SLATE]

When you were young, what terms were used for ancient hula?

(12:30)

PNP: Yes, I've never heard that word kahiko when I was back in Kōhala. The word 'ōlapa was used. But never kahiko. So ... that's all I know of uh, the ancient hulas that they call. When I came to Honolulu, I learned kahiko. But back in Kōhala, no, I didn't know that at that time.

GN: All I-all I heard in my days was kahiko. Everything was kahiko. And everybody was surrounded uh, I was surrounded by people with kahiko. And-and if you notice now, I still am.

[CHUCKLES]

GN: But the hula kahiko--the hula kahiko is uh, to me, the ... uh ... important part of our history and our-our hula. For our-those chants tell the story and our-our-our culture and our heritage. And I-I think, you know, ma-many people are doing kahiko today. And-but you know, everybody have their own style in presenting their kahiko. So that's what makes the hula so interesting. Because you can see the same dance by-done by a ha-another hālau, and look-still look different for you. It doesn't mean they're wrong. They're just interpreting the song into their meaning. Because one Hawaiian word, got so many meanings to one word and maybe little-uh, but I seen songs that I've written uh, where it's all completely different from what I did. But I can-I can see oh, well, that's when I met my husband, or that's when I met my first boyfriend and all that kinda stuff, they're putting it together. But that's not wrong. That's inter-you know, to me, the hula is the ability to create one's most inner feelings. And not somebody else's. So that's good. And we take from many teachers who teach kahiko. And as I say, they te-they all have different styles. And they come from different islands. So every island have their own style of dancing the hula. So if you're smart enough to take this from this teacher, the best from this one, and the best from that, and the best from this one, you end up creating your own style of dancing. And this is what the hula is all about. And today, the only thing we Hawaiians can call our own is the hula. You can go all over the world-Japan and Germany, where I teach, they can't change that name hula. But they change everything else around here.

[APPLAUSE]

NB: Thank you.

GN: So just remember that the hula is Hawai'i.

(15:00)

NB: [CHUCKLES] Well, we were raised in Nāpo'opo'o, my mother was born in Ho'okena, and uh, very early, I heard about 'ōlapa. And I saw them dancing what they told me was 'ōlapa. Uh, some of it was kind of rough. Um, mostly because the way they were chanting was a little guttural. And I didn't care for it. I don't think little kids like rough voices. You know, it didn't appeal to me uh, at all. But then when we ... got ready to go to school and they shipped us all off to Honolulu to English Standard school so we could learn how to speak good English, then I found that hula was a little different. And it was a little more pleasing. And then in the 20s, my mother started a studio, and of course all of her work was Sweetheart Grandma, Helen Desha Beamer, which was Hilo style. So that's all we knew, was that uh, style in the family. M-hm. But kahiko was um, a modern term uh, to us. 'Ōlapa was the term we knew, more familiar. M-hm.

ML: What do you um, think about when-

GN: Wait.

ML: Oh. Sorry.

GN: Now I remember.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: No, my second teacher was Joseph Ilalaole.

NB: Oh.

GN: And he, you know, one of the great masters of the hula. And-and Auntie Mary was also one of the greatest teachers, you know. But we learned under the name, that-the hula kahiko, you know. It was kahiko. And we-we first do the different types of dances, you know, of the-the ancient hulas. And 'ōlapa was the name of the-the person performing the hula, is an 'ōlapa. Today, we call 'em haumāna. And so-but this is what I remember when I was young. And healthy.

[LAUGHTER]

(17:08)

[TEXT SLATE]

Do you consider a chant written in modern times to be kahiko?

(17:11)

GN: To me, that is not kahiko. Because it's written today. Maybe fifty years from now or hundred years from now, it will be kahiko. And-and-and the thing is that, you know, we should never criticize anybody for writing kahiko. Because-but-but some of our people write kahiko, like for about-like about wahine kapu, about Pele. They even haven't come to the volcano, so how do they know. You have to see it. And our folks, old folks have seen these things, and they lived through things. And we who were born and raised on the island of Hawai'i, we see the lava flow every time, we go up to see this, and we know. So like Johnny Lum Ho as an example. He writes chants. Uh, but-but he's writing about what he saw today. So therefore, it's not a-it's not kahiko. It's today. But someday, it will be kahiko. That's why if any of you write chants, you should write chants about, you know, when you were little, how-how nice-like those of you who live in Waikīkī especially. You know, before I used to walk down Kuhio Avenue, all the way down, you can see the beach. Try now. You can't see nothing. You know. So these are the things that we want-we want to write about to remember. Just like us here in Hawai'i, and I come from Keaukaha. Now, we-used to be so beautiful down there, you know. But now they have all kind s-junk stuffs around, they blocking the view, and all that kinda thing. But I remember these-these days, you know. And this is what those of you who are young should be writing about, your thing. Not what happened before, 'cause you weren't there. So this is what the hula is all about. And writing chants is wonderful, but write about the things you see and when you went through, and not what you heard somebody told you about.

PNP: I believe kahiko would be um, the 'ōlapa of old. And if you create your own, that's beautiful too. You know, a lot of people write chants. I do too. And I put it into um, hula. Or kahiko style. But it's not of the old. It's today time.

Everybody is ... doing their own creation. And it could be the same hula that we learned. Maybe someone learned from me, and then they went to another hālau, they had the same hula. But it was taught in a different way. So that's-to me, it's hula. Yeah. You want to come and learn. That's the way to go.

(19:40)

[TEXT SLATE]

What do you consider to be traditional kahiko?

(19:44)

GN: But I consider the hula pahu as being one of the top dances of the-the kahiko uh, uh, numbers, you know. And then of course, the hula 'āla'apapa, using the ipu heke and stuff. And that too.

(20:00)

And the uh, the hula noho, the hula kuolo, the hula 'ōhelo. These are all an-ancient dances. You don't see too much of it to-today. You know, very few teachers teach it. But to me, this is the-the-we-we should- and all of us should learn this kinda dances so we can keep these dances alive, otherwise they're going to die. You know, when I first started in Merrie Monarch Festival, forty-two years ago, there was only three hālau's that did the hula kahiko. And that was Auntie Vickie Ii, uh, Louise Kaleiki and Luka Kaleiki. And ...

ML: Wong.

GN: Keolalaulani Rose-what was her name? Mary-

NB: Mary Wong.

GN: Mary Wong.

NB: M-hm.

GN: They were the only. And then for six years, I gave them the-the mele's and the chants, you know, on a CD. Thank God for the haole's, you know, they gave us something we can ...

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And we taped it and gave them the translations and everything. And if you come to the Merrie Monarch Festival and watch thirty-six hālau's do the same number, thirty-six hālau's did it differently. This is the creativity of the ha-what we have in Hawaiian dancing. But now we don't have to do that. They're writing their own. And I like stop 'em, but [INDISTINCT]. But anyway, that's how it started, really. And the Merrie Monarch has done a lot for-for the hula. And as King Kalakaua says, the hula is a language of the heart and therefore, the heartbeat of the Hawaiian people. Without the hula, there'd be no Hawaiians. There'd be no Hawai'i. You know, when our Creator created the world, He must have loved us Hawaiians. Yeah. You know, He gave us no gold, no oil, no diamonds, no nothing. No poison animals, no nothing. All he gave us was aloha. And what we want to do today is sell 'em and go, ALOOOOOHA. You know. [LAUGHTER] And everybody-I can't hear you. And everybody says the same thing over and they're yelling the-that word, you know. They don't know what alo-I-I stopped these two guys one day in the hotel. I said, Do you have a girlfriend or wife? He said, Yes. I said, Do you tell your wife or your girlfriend, I LOOOOOVE YOU?

[LAUGHTER]



GN: Then you don't say that word aloha that way either. He said, Thank you Uncle. [INDISTINCT]
[APPLAUSE]

NB: You are such a gem, George. A real gem. Yeah, look at all the gems he has. All in here. Ooo-we. Oh, my goodness sakes. Hidden, some are hidden.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: That's all from the Japanese. I by-I bow low. And I same height as them, eh? So all the clothes fit me.
[INDISTINCT] I no need take my pants-I buy 'em down at Penneys or something, they gotta go cut about this much off the leg.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: This way, I don't have to. But most Hawaiians can't go to a Japanese store, you know. They gotta go to the sumo store.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: I'm-I'm sure glad I came with you.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I'm here because she invited me. I didn't want to come.

[LAUGHTER]

(23:31)

[TEXT SLATE]

Would you please share some of the basics from your hula tradition?

(23:37)

GN: I want to do the step first, okay?

ML: Okay.

GN: The two-

NB: Don't fall down, now.

GN: Okay. No, I not going fall down. I'm going do'em sitting-I'm gonna do it-

NB: You're going to do it sitting down?

GN: I'm gonna do it sit-down. [LAUGHTER] And that's hard.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: He told us he's going to lie down and do it. [LAUGHTER]

ML: On the table.

GN: That's the next step.

[LAUGHTER]



TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

GN: You know, we take-we take like the 'uwehe. You know, 'uwehe? You know, today you-you watch the 'uwehe. When-and you know, when you do the 'uwehe, you-you know, you [INDISTINCT], 'uwehe the knees and go up this way, you know. And the only reason I'm doing this is because I don't want them to do it. 'Cause today they do, one-

[LAUGHTER]

GN: -and they can't do that. See, I can.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: So just don't do that. Don't open your-you know what they do, they're taking the word ... they're leaving the U out and taking wehe. [INDISTINCT] Which means to unwrap. You know, you cannot do that. Time and place for that.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: So just remember. When the feet-when knee hurts and the back hurts, your muscle hurts, that means you're right. Have you seen the girls dance in the hula-at Merrie Monarch? They're dancing, and they go like this. All the lā'ī fall here.

[LAUGHTER]

(25:00)

GN: But when they get the holokū, they go like this and the legs open. And the light from behind shining.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I see-I see all those things. I'm sure everybody else does too.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I'm a-I'm-I'm a watcher.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: But that's true. You watch next time. I like tell why they do that, but I'm scared. Those kumu hula more big than me, yeah?

[LAUGHTER]

GN: But uh, but this is where uh, a teacher comes in and-to correct [INDISTINCT] the child. Because which is right when it hurts. You're right. But you know, do it as close to authenticity as you can. And the 'uwehe. So they're taking the word, leaving the U out, and they're taking wehe and opening. Means to unwrap. You know. We know. Or open up or whatever.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And-and then the next step that everybody-that everybody does today is the-is-is the hela. Yeah, they all hela like this. And you know. And it isn't this forty-five degree angle. And you do-and-and toe wise, huh. So dum, dum, dum. Not ... But as I said, everybody have their own style, yeah? But do-do it the right way, and you see how difference it makes the hula. Yeah. 'Cause this way without-without-many people teach the hula, 'uwehe--uh, hela, and they know. And they, okay, throw the kikala out and throw the kika, but if you-if you don't 'ai ha'a ... you-you 'ai ha'a down, you find automatically, the hips going to move by itself. Without you going-- [GRUNTING]. You know.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I know all-I know all that stuff, but you know, I go-I travel the world, I see that. Oh, god.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: Why is God punishing me and sending me over here.

[LAUGHTER]



TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

GN: But ... but you know, and the-the thing is, and uh, we're just talking [INDISTINCT]. But you know, all of us should never you know, criticize another kuma hula. See, when you teach hula, at least I do, my students-and I tell them first of all, they must learn to love themselves and respect themselves. When they have love and respect for themselves, they will have love and respect for the next person. And then [INDISTINCT] haumāna. As I said, every ha-kumu hula has something good, and we should learn from them. But-and [INDISTINCT]. Because every time I go in the mirror-every morning, I get up-and this is for real. I get up, I go to the lua. Yeah. Do my thing, and I go by the mirror, wash my face, and go by the basin, go, Mirror, mirror on the wall.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: Who's the greatest of them all?

[LAUGHTER]

GN: The bugga never answer yet.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And if they went answer me, I wouldn't be here to tell you the story.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: So thank you, God.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Oh, George, you are something. He's a rarity, isn't he? Isn't he a rarity? [APPLAUSE] You really are.

GN: Okay, back to history.

ML: Do you want to demonstrate, Mom?

NB: Okay. Oh, this noisy place.

ML: Are you okay? Got enough room?

NB: I'm fine.

ML: Okay.

NB: I'm not wired, so I can walk around.

ML: Yeah, you can walk around.

NB: Okay. [CHUCKLES] I don't want to fall off.

GN: You better not, before you fall down.

NB: Oh, I didn't wear a slip. I'd better to stand over here.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: No peeking, Uncle George.

NB: No look. No look.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Oh, dear. Well, the fundamental difference in the Beamer style of hula, as George says, we start with a ha'a. But you want to watch the placement of your feet. And I only say what my grandma said to me. That the placement of the feet shouldn't be any wider than your shoulders, so you wouldn't stand like this. Your shoulders are here, the placement of your feet is there. And then of course, the ha'a. And not just a flex. It's a flex like you're sitting in a straight chair. So that you have your weight even, and your back is against the back of the chair, so your shoulders are back. You don't do a ha'a like that. You do a ha'a as though you're sitting in a straight chair. Uh-huh. And I think that's good advice, to sit with our shoulders back. Uh-huh.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: And our fundamental-what's he doing behind my back?

[LAUGHTER]

NB: You see, the eyes really tell the story.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: You can tell what's going on in his mind. [LAUGHTER] So from the ha'a, the Beamer style is lewa.

(30:00)

Where we change the weight and simultaneously lift the heel and the hip. Simultaneously. And the lewa, in all the directions, going forward, going back, going down, up, to the right, to the left. All of your directions. And the secret of the Beamer style is lifting up. Lifting up. Lifting up. We use three counts in the holo. And the fourth count, we use as a pause. Kahi, lua, kolu, hā. Kahi, lua, kolu, hā. So we don't use a fourth count. My father would always say, Work a little, ah, rest. So we have to rest. Fourth count, rest. Fourth count, rest. And that's ... the difference in the Beamer style, is the lift of the heel and the lift of the hip. So every step that you do will reflect that lift. Whether you do the 'ami, whether you do the 'ewalu, whether you do a huli. The lift is the same. The foot you step on takes the weight. The opposite heel and hip will lift.

[APPLAUSE]

ML: Thank you, Mom.

NB: Okay.

ML: Auntie Pulu.

PNP: Yeah. Okay. I don't need that mic. Um ... my basic hula is flat feet.

ML: Here, I can hold it. I can hold it for you. I can hold it for you. Okay.

PNP: Oh. Okay. Um, I've been taught to dance the hula flat feet. I've never done uh, lifting of the heels when I hula. And uh, my 'ami is flat. Because my kūpuna's told me, the beauty of the hula is your body movement. And what you can inject into the audience. If you can't tell the story with the movements of your body and your hands, then you're not a hula dancer. So it was hard at first. I couldn't understand what she meant. Keep the feet flat down, and move without making a sound. You know how hard that is? When you move ... we usually make swish. Yeah. No, I heard you swishing. So we have to bend down more, just step flat over. And pause. Not this way. Down. One, two-that was their kāholo. Okay. But notice, the body moves with your step. That's why it's important to watch the feet. What their counts are. Now, if you were to do a hela, it would be turned here. But it's flat. It's not up. Down. Okay. One, two, three, four. And that's our hela. Now, the 'ami is flat feet again. That's where your 'ai ha'a comes. Bending the knees. Your body is supposed to move gracefully. Not



TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

exaggerated. Very gracefully. Down-and we go all the way down to the floor. But I'm not gonna do that for you. [LAUGHTER]

ML: [CHUCKLES]

PNP: That's hard. But uh, we always go all to the floor, four counts. And come back up again on the left. Four counts. And that's my type of hula in Na Hula O Puamana. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: Mahalo.

NB: Maika'i. Maika'i.

(33:54)

[TEXT SLATE]

Do you have a story connected to Pele that you can share with us?

(33:57)

NB: [CHUCKLES]

PNP: [CHUCKLES]

GN: Pele didn't show me nothing.

[LAUGHTER] [APPLAUSE]

GN: But I'm gonna tell you a story about somebody who-who does uh, all this-they do all of these things. And one day, Auntie Vickie Ii and Pauline Kekahuna ... and myself and Hoakalei were going to the volcano. And Auntie Io was the driver. You ever rode with Auntie Io? Oh, god, what a ride.

NB: Yeah. [CHUCKLES]

GN: She start talking to Pele, and the car's going thataway. You know. But anyway, and-and Auntie says to Auntie Pauline and Auntie Vickie and Hoaka-Hoakalei, Oh, go in there-no-Don't go in there. You know. You just come and you-you give your makana here, and not there. But they no listen. They go anyway. And all of a sudden out of nowhere ... the steam shot up in the air from-from the ground. And I was-and I was smart. I listened to her. You know, to Auntie Io. And uh, I di-I didn't go. But I could hear the la-ladies screaming. You know. That's one experience they had, not me. I was smart.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And I still smart.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Yes, that's true.

GN: I no do dakine. So I don't know about anybody else. But ... you know, one time at the vol-volcano, Auntie Io was the creator of the Mauna Ala. You know, in Honolulu. And she came to the vol-to the volcano, and I used to-we used to do the ho'ola'a. I started the ho'ola'a for the new-the king and queen of Aloha Week and you know, and I

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

did that for seventeen years. And Auntie came one day to the volcano. Hundreds of people up there. And Auntie came, and I was waiting for Auntie to chant the court in. Then Auntie got off her car. She call her-the car Uhu. You know, oh, boy, what a name. Anyway she called her car Uhu. She came in and she had all these hala leis on. And always, Auntie Lokalia said and um, Daddy Bray said, Don't bring hala to the volcano. It's not good. But here came Auntie with all the hala lei. I look at her. And I said, Auntie, how come you coming with all this hala leis? She said, Oh, they told me to bring it to-to-to the-to the-to Wahine Kapu. I said, oh boy. Anyway, I started to chant, we walked the court down. Then Auntie got up and Auntie did a dance up there. I called it the Dance of the Seven Veils.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And she was doing all these colors, you know. One-take one kīhei off. And the thing go, choo, in the vol-in the volcano. And the wind is blowing, the kāhili's are this way. But she takes the next one off and oli once, throw it in the thing, go [INDISTINCT]. Then she took the hala lei out. And she chanted, and she took the hala lei, and there's hundreds of people watching now. Auntie take these leis off her neck, went to the end of the Halema'uma'u, and oli and threw the thing down. I thought, oh, good. Then all of a sudden, shoom, the leis all came back on the stage. You know, the wind blew it back up. And she did that-took three times. The third time she threw the thing down, the thing didn't come back on the stage. Now people-ooh, ooh, you know. [INDISTINCT] I was shaking like a leaf.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: And then anyway, she ... the thing didn't come back. But you the fences, if you've been to the volcano, at Halema'uma'u. Well, I-the thing didn't come again, but Auntie climbed over the fence, picked up the-the hala lei, and went to the end of the volcano, and-threw the thing down. The thing didn't come back.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: That's another experience I had with Auntie Io. You know, and then-I mean, it's really something. You had to see the lady. When she open-when we opened Merrie Monarch, she and Auntie Lokalia ... we did-the opening was-Merrie Monarch Festival was there in-in the Civic Auditorium. Yeah. And ... and it was [INDISTINCT]. And Auntie was dancing, and all of a sudden-again, hundreds of people there. You know the white birds from the volcano? They're flying-and-and I think some of you kids will, you know, remember that-that birds flying in the wind. Then all of sudden when Auntie got through, the birds were gone. And that's how strong she was, you know. So ... I had-I was so lucky to be around all these people. Lived at the right time when all of these greats were alive, you know. Like Auntie Helen. I used to take up at her house at Hale Huki up here in Pu'u'eo. And uh, with Auntie Kawohi. You know. But I had a good time. As I said, I was lucky. I lived at the right time. I don't know about these guys.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: [INDISTINCT] she had Auntie. She had her mother. [CHUCKLES]

NB: Well, I don't know that I have a Pele story. But the first time I remember going up to dance at Halema'uma'u-- and of course, Grandma puts me right in the middle, 'cause I'm the littlest one, and Auntie Kawohi is behind me, and Auntie Harriet, and my mother, and others. Uh, Napua Stevens was with us that day. And I was center front. [CHANTS] And my skirt did not move. So I stopped dancing. So I went to Grandma, I said, Pele's mad at me. She doesn't want me to dance. And so I'm standing there by Grandma, pouting. Oh, boy, I got the biggest shove and back out there. But I really thought that uh, Pele didn't want me to dance.

(40:00)

Because my skirt would not move. The wind was too strong. So that's the only Pele story I have. [LAUGHTER]

PNP: Well, I've had some experience, uh, with Pele. Um ... I don't know if any of you know uh, Momi Lum. She's a cousin of mine too. She takes care of the um ... what heiau is that?

ML: The heiau. Mo'okini.

PNP: Mo'okini Heiau. And um, she called me one day from Honolulu. She says, Puluelo, drop everything and come up here to Hilo. I told her, Why? She says, Our tūtū wants to see you. I said, What tūtū is that? And she said, Never mind, don't ask questions. Just catch the plane and come up here. So I said, Oh, wait a minute, now. I got-I got classes. She says, Cancel your classes and come up here. So I had to call all around, and then finally canceled, and I got an evening flight coming up here. Oh, my gosh. I wish I didn't come. It was raining, pouring heavy. That's the first time I've been in Hilo too. So-well, and there she saw me, and picked me up, and we went up to the volcano. Right across of volcano, there are homes. Beautiful homes in there. We were staying in one of those homes. So I told her, What do-I said, Our tūtū lives here? She said, No, this is where we're living. We're gonna stay. I said, Oh, where's this tūtū you're talking about. She said, Never mind. But before uh, she told me to come up, she said, Go to the store and get this 'ōmole. I said, What kind of 'ōmole? She says, um, Beefeaters. I says, Beefeaters? What's that? See, I didn't drink at that time, so I don't know what liquor was. [LAUGHTER] And she said, It's liquor. I says, Eh, I don't go to stores and buy liquor. That's how--[CHUCKLES]. She says, You have to go get it. I says, Beefeaters. I said, Oh, Momi, I have to go when nobody's looking, because I'm embarrassed. I never went in a liquor store. She says, Look, go in the evening and pick it up. I said, Okay. So I listened to her, I got the-and I'm looking at this, gin, Beefeater-when I went there, I said, Beefeaters. He says, Yeah, we have Beefeaters. I says, Oh, okay, I want one. He comes out with a bottle. I said, My gosh, is that gin? He said, Yeah. I said, Okay, wrap 'em up quickly. So that's what I brought up. And when I was really cussing my cousin out, I thought, how dare she makes me buy these things. So anyway, we came up and she took me there. And I was kinda tired because the trip and that-all this rain that was going on. So finally we uh, went to sleep. Next morning, I heard birds, and I thought, gee, am I dreaming or what? I opened the curtain and I looked out. There's a beautiful garden with purple flowers. I said, Oh my, this is so pretty. And I'm admiring, and then I called her. I said, Momi, this is so nice. Is this where our tūtū lives? She said, No, I told you, not here, we have to go to her. I said, Oh, okay. She said, Hurry up, eat breakfast and we'll go. So I went. We went down into the volcano, and then I could smell this-what do you call that?

NB: Sulfur.

PNP: Sulfur? It was so strong. It was-oh, I couldn't even breathe. And she says, Oh, this is where our tūtū lives. I said, Oh. I didn't even know it was a volcano, 'cause I'd never been there before. And now I'm twenty-eight years old when I came up here at that time. So um, she says um, And this is where the volcano is. I said, Our tūtū lives here? She said, Yes. I said, Oh, okay. So we get out. And so my uncle was with us, Dewey Mookini. He was uh, chief of police at that time. And uh, he says, Oh, Baby, wait, I'll come and open the door for you. When he opened it, it began to rain. It wasn't raining when we went up there, but it began to rain. And then he said, Oh, Baby, go back in the car. I said, Oh, wait a minute. No, no, no, I-I have to step out in that rain. He says, No, you going get wet. I says, That's my blessing. I said, My name is Puluelo. Remember? And he went, Oh, I forgot about that. I said, No, that's my blessing. So I get out of the car and he said-then Momi says, Don't go yet, all the tourists are coming down. And as soon as they cleared, then she said, Walk and follow that-that walkway. I didn't know where I was going. I didn't even know I was in the volcano place or anything. I go right, and she said, When you touch a fence, stop. I said, Oh, all right. So I went. You couldn't see nothing, it was fog. I said,

Okay, I touched the fence. She says, Okay, stay there, wait. And I waited, and couldn't see anything. All of a sudden, whoa, we're standing, and where's tūtū? She said, Wait, wait.

(45:00)

All of a sudden, that I looked down and I could see the fog just going like this. I couldn't believe it. I said, [GASPS]-and my eyes got so big, and I had uh, my little daughter, Soonie, with me. And she-I said, Soonie, come. Come with Mommy. Look down there. Look. It's going, it's clearing, it's clearing. And there was nothing down there. I said, Oh, it's nothing down there. And she says, Wait, just wait. All of a sudden, I said, Oh, gosh, it's just a puka. Nothing down there. Then there was this bright light, down on the bottom now. And all of a sudden, I saw five doves flying on the bottom of that pit. I thought, Wait a minute. Am I going crazy? And I'm looking. I said, Soonie, do you see birds down there? She said, Yes, Mommy. What are they doing there? And I-I'm looking up-here's the sky up here. I said, Where-how-they didn't even go down in that puka. And then I said, Could they have come from that lighted part where you see sunlight like? And she-and we were watching, waiting for those birds to go out there. Then I said, Momi, Momi, I screamed for Momi and Uncle to come and look. And they came and says-my uncle goes like this to me. He backs away from me and looking like that? And I turned to him, I says, What? [CHUCKLES] I got so exc-why was he looking at me like that. And um, then uh, Momi comes and she says, Puluelo, look above your head. And there were the five doves, circling my head. That's the story of-they said that I was welcomed into the place, and that's my cousin's story. But you know, it was an-a experience I will never forget as long as I live. Because that was beautiful. And I thought if that was our tūtū, Pele, that came to show me beauty more than fire, then I was very happy. And that's my story.

ML: [CHUCKLES] Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: Thank you.

(47:04)

[TEXT SLATE]

Looking back on your long careers in hula, is there anything you wish were different today?

(47:08)

PNP: No. [CHUCKLES] [LAUGHTER] No, I would not change hula. I think it's a uh, a thing of creation. Every kumu hula has its own way of teaching. I even learn from other kumu hulas, and I think it's interesting because they got something I don't have. So not-we-all kumu hulas don't have everything. We don't know everything. So we get to learn as we go along. How old I am? I'm-I'm gonna be fifty years next year, teaching the hula. And I still go to learn. Never say you cannot learn because you're a kumu hula.

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: Thank you.

NB: My turn? Okay. [CHUCKLES] Well, I'm very grateful for this renaissance in hula. Because I lived through a time where we couldn't give it away, we couldn't sell it. No one was interested in it. There wasn't any educational value. So I'm very grateful for this resurgence in hula. No, I wouldn't change anything. I would ... admonish the young kumu to be a little more mindful of humility. I think because many of the kumu are young,

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

that they need to be ... a little more mindful of the aloha way of doing things, you know. That it's not necessary to raise your voice. It's not necessary to yell at the children, or not necessary to use bad language. I think we have to try to be more aloha like in our hearts and in our minds. To be humble, to be kind to each other, to be kind to our neighbors, to be kind to the people that cross the street in front of you. If we say that this aloha is the way to live, we've got to live it. That it is real, it is workable. All over the world, people want to come to learn about aloha. And we have to treasure it and live it very sincerely in our hearts. So I would like to admonish the kumu to be very mindful of aloha. To be humble and to be kind, and-because everything you give comes back to you. And the way to live is in aloha. The whole world wants what we have. But we have to treasure it a little more, and be more cognizant of it, to live more aloha.

[APPLAUSE]

GN: Well, I think we should uh, not-not change the hula. We should continue to do. But the most important thing that the kumu hulas should learn is to share it and not sell it. You know, that's true.

(50:00)

Now everybody's selling hula. You know. \$45, \$60 a month, I mean, you know what I mean? Once a week. And half of them used to take from me. They used to pay \$5. One lesson for the 30 years that they took from me - I don't want their money they owe me. I just want the interest on the money they owe me.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: But-but that's true, though, you know. You can't sell it. You cannot sell aloha, and you cannot sell hula. And they say to me, Uncle, how long-how many years have you gone to Japan? I say, this is my 44th year, you know.

NB: Oh, my.

GN: And how many years you've been going to Germany and to Switzerland and to London? I say, oh, about 30-something years, you know. And uh, and the Japanese, all Japanese, yeah, you know, I have-so many of my students here from-not uh, that-where I teach, and they all-some Japanese are here. They said, But you speak Japanese, Uncle, after-after forty-three years, you teach-you speak Japanese? Oh, hell, no.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I only know three words. Ohayoo gozaimasu, good morning, sayonara, goodbye, and ikura desu ka, how much you going pay me?

[LAUGHTER]

GN: But Japanese good, you no need tell the money, they put it in the envelope. [LAUGHTER] And they give you more than-what you would ask for. What you-what you call that Chi? What you call the envelope say, what you call that? Maka--makana. Makana. That's Hawaiian, you stupid.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: They don't know Hawaiian. What you call that? Huh?

NB: Omiyage.

GN: Oh, yeah, yeah, that one. That's what you-see, you Japanese, dumb, you learn Hawaiian. Learn your own language.

[LAUGHTER]

ML: Do you folks have-oh ... Do you-are you ready to take questions from the audience?



Hula Preservation Society

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

[GN PLAYFULLY MOUTHS TO AUDIENCE “NO” & SHAKES HIS HEAD]

NB: Ready as ever.

[LAUGHTER]

(52:10)

[TEXT SLATE]

What were the first dances you learned? What is your favorite kahiko?

(52:17)

NB: Well, I was a ‘ukulele player before I was a dancer. My grandmother needed somebody to play for her, so she could dance. So I started playing ‘ukulele before I uh, learned to dance. And I think my first and favorite was Liliu E. Because I loved the story of the queen. And Grandma would say, Well, just think that you’re a little princess. Well, I was dark and I was fat, and I was ugly. But she made me feel like a little princess. So I have to say that Liliu E was the one I enjoyed the most. But um, I learned He Ono because it made my skirt move. And the faster you sing, the faster your skirt moves. So I had a lot of fun with He Ono. But I think uh, I have to say Liliu was my favorite. M-hm, m-hm. But that’s more ‘auana than-than uh, uh, kahiko. But when we did the Kawika, she also taught us Liliuokalani. Because they were brother and sister. So we would do one verse, Eia nō Kāwika ka heke a‘o nā pua; the other verse, Eia nō ‘o Lili‘u ‘eā, ka heke a‘o nā pua ‘eā. [CHANTS] Oh, I loved that. I liked that combination of doing for the brother and the sister. And it felt so good doing that nice uh, ‘ewalu. So pretty. And later on, I felt real sexy doing that, you know. [CHUCKLES]

GN: Well ... before I ever learned to dance, you know, we had to learn all of the basic steps, the basic fundamentals of hula. Then when I finally learned, was ready to do the hula-well, which my teacher thought I was ready-uh, and the first dance I learned was Ulei Pahu. It was the men’s dance, you know. And I always remembered the dance. And that’s a nice dance. And for the men, the men danced. And many times, you know, because of-in those days, the women didn’t dance, you know, the olden days. The men did all the dances. And sometimes, you see, af-after class I’ll tell you why. But anyway, but um, and then I-I’m gonna-for my basics, when I’m teaching my youngsters, you know, my basic is either-if-if it’s for the boys, it’s um, Kawika for the boys and Liliu for the girls. ‘Cause basic fundamentals only easy, yeah. Only kāholo, ‘uwehe or just ‘uwehe all the way through. But uh, those are my two numbers I like. To-for basic movements. ‘Cause now they have a song, it’s-it’s easier. Put your little hands on your hip and bend your knees and point your toes, or whatever it’s called.

(55:00)

Or we going to hukilau. But well, that’s for the tourists. [CHUCKLES] You. [POINTS TO PNP]

PNP: Uh, yeah. My first learning was uh, Liliu and Kawika. Those were the two dances that I learned. But the one that I really like is my pahu, Kaulilua. I’ll tell you a little story about that one. It took me almost a year to learn Kaulilua.

GN: That’s right.

PNP: Because I was never on the beat. And Lokalia kept saying, No, come back next week, try again. Study at home. And it was so hard. I could not get that beat. And then finally, I got mad, because I was way back. She was going ahead with other classes, 'cause I'm a single uh, person. But she had other students. They were way past me. I got so mad one night, I stayed up until one o'clock in the morning, chanting by my-good thing I live in Pālolo, way in the boon docks, yeah. Right near the water-reservoir, so nobody could hear me. And I worked it and worked it. The next day, tired as I was, she says, I hope you learned. I says, I think so. Then I started with Kaulilua. And when I pau, she says, Hooray. [CLAPS] See, I could do my other two, which was Aua Ia and um ...

NB: Koolau.

PNP: A Koolau Au. I could do those two, but I could never get my Kaulilua. When I finally made it, she says, Oh, it's about time! I was wondering when you're gonna finish your-that was my uh, graduation time. But the beginning was Kawika and Liliu is what I learned. And of course, my noho one is-I love that one. [CHANTS] A ka luna o Puuonioni. That's with 'ili'ili's. That was my favorite; 'til today, it still is. Mahalo. That's all.

[APPLAUSE]

(57:07)

[TEXT SLATE]

Could you share some advice for us students and younger kumu hula?

(57:11)

NB: Well, I think the beautiful balance is aloha, darling. Not just what you see and what you hear. It's got to be what you feel. And I think we need to always be cognizant of it. Sure, what you see is beautiful, what you hear is lovely. But what you feel is much more precious. Uh-huh. And I think it behooves us all to search our hearts and do things with a real feeling of love. Not just speaking of it, not just pretending it. But living it. And it is the everyday things, being kind to one another. Your neighbor, your family. When I say I treated my classes like my family [CHUCKLES], I did. I pretended they all belonged to me. [CHUCKLES] But I think that's a sweet way to live. M-hm. And that would be my best advice. Yeah. Like Uncle George says, when you know you, uh-huh, then you can respect other people. But to know yourself well, to feel comfortable with yourself. 'Cause you can't put yourself up as a kumu and feel good in your heart if you're not at that level. And your kindness and your concern for one another, and your love for each other puts you on a-on a better plane of balance and kindness, and all those good things. You know, that word pono is so important. And you try to explain so many things that are sort of nebulous. You want to feel right about something. How do you know it's right? When it's right in your heart. Your mind tells you it's right, spiritually it's right, philosophically it's right. Let your heart tell you when it's right. M-hm.

GN: Thank you.

NB: You're welcome.

GN: I was gonna say the same thing, but she beat me.

[LAUGHTER]

PNP: Um, my uh, answer to you is that um ... when you dance and you do a number, you should have a spiritual feeling of the song. You should know that song in and out before you even teach it. Uh, if you're not-if you're learning from a teacher, try to instill that song. Make believe, say, um ... say Kaulana O Hilo O Hawaii? You would show what-what is kaulana? It's famous. Hilo is very famous of Hawai'i. Um, then you should project that famous uh, motion into your audience. I think-I always thought my haumāna could feel their numbers. If they didn't feel it, I can see it in their faces.

(60:00)

And-and when they dance, they have to do it with feelings for each other. That way, you know, the love is there. And they don't deviate and get away from-oh, I'm better than she is. That kinda thing don't go. Uh, that's my way of looking at the hula, if you're gonna instill ... a hula. Make up, a hula. Be sure that you learn it with feelings.

NB: May I add something to that, Maile?

PNP: Yes

NB: m-hm? Well, like she says, Kaulana. So I think we all agree, this is a kaulana gesture. That's fine. There's nothing wrong with kaulana. But what about this kaulana?

GN: That's right.

NB: Isn't that a difference? When you feel that spirit coming. This is fine. But fine isn't good enough. It wants to be wonderful. Kaulana with a pride and the joy. Not just this.

[APPLAUSE]

NB: Kaulana. [CHUCKLES]

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: That's a good feeling.

NB: Can I do one more? [CHUCKLES] Well, we say that the basic hula movements ... Grandma would say, Well think that you're sitting on the beach, the sand is nice and dry, and it's warm. And of course, sometimes they'll do this, you know. She'll say, well you're not petting a kitten. You're drawing your fingers through-or you're not stroking a fur coat. You're drawing the fingers through the sand. All right. What about gestures of emotion? They go from you, outward. I love you, very much. Uh-huh. And you don't want to drop it on the floor. You want to be sure you contain all the love that you're giving. What about uh, emotions of uh, sadness? You have the same turning of the hand. Like your heart is troubled. M-hm. What about motions of description? If they're beautiful enough for you to describe, share it with everyone else. Say, Come with me. We're going up to the mountain. It's not just an ordinary mountain. It's a glorious mountain. So I would ... remind you [CHUCKLES] that it isn't just a mountain. M-hm. It is the most beautiful mountain you have ever seen. And your face and your spirit will make that mountain beautiful.

[APPLAUSE]

GN: You said what I was going say.

[LAUGHTER]

(1:02:00)

[TEXT SLATE]

What is your opinion on the world of hula today?

(1:02:54)

PNP: There are some wonderful hālau's. Oh, my goodness. I watch them and I'm amazed to see so many good ones. But if there's any bad ones, I didn't get to really watch. [CHUCKLES] 'Cause I'm just looking at the good ones. That's my answer. I don't know about you. [CHUCKLES]

GN: You know, there are other-as um, Puluelo says, there are lot of good hālau's, you know. And lot of hālau's are just trying yet. So you gotta give them a chance. And the thing is that uh, we should never criticize a-another hālau. As I said, it's-then you know, all of you who've taken hula know it's not that damn easy to get up and do the kāhōlo. You know, or to-to 'ami 'akau, 'ami hema. It's not easy. It takes talent and time and patience. Especially on the kumu hula. 'Cause sometimes you get some dummies. And ask me, I had the best in the world. You know, I like kill 'em.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: But ... now, I'm nice. But before, I used to bust ipu heke's on their head and bust 'ukulele. Ask some of them I know. Nowadays it's called child abuse. So now I swear.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: We gonna have a new law. Gonna change em. No vulgarity. But anyway, that's was our-that's out job. It's not to criticize somebody, it's just don't do the same mistake, yeah. And-and if we don't-and if we don't understand, there's people like us. Don't be afraid to ask us. This is our job. We will try to give you an answer and not-not say, Oh, you know, you was bad. So you know, I judge contests. Now I don't judge any more contests. I got enough enemies. I don't need some more. You know what I mean?

[LAUGHTER]

GN: Only few winners, all the rest are losers. You know what I mean? I no like. And so-I-sometime I uh, I never put any writing on my paper. Yeah, you kumu hulas know who got. I just say on there, your dancers were wonderful, they should try harder.

(1:05:00)

This is my telephone number, please call me or see me after the show. Then nobody calls me. Nobody come see me. But I don't like to write on the thing, because you know, you know, by the time it gets to that, hundred people know what you wrote on the thing. Because all those tally people telling everybody. So I don't. So then they-they cannot talk about me. I don't put any-any um ... comments. Only say they were good. Try harder. But mostly, see me after the show or see me--[CHUCKLES]. And this is my telephone number. But nobody calls. Un-unless I catch 'em on the road, then they know. Then I yell at 'em. But anyway, but that's what-that's what we here for. Not to criticize. And you know ... [CHUCKLES] we've seen our days. And so uh, but we're here to help. And that's what we share. And that's why we're here today. Not uh ... for anything else, but to share our mana'o with you guys, you know. So if you have no other questions, pau. You know. I need a cigarette.

(1:06:07)

[TEXT SLATE]

Would you be willing to share a fond or impactful memory from your long lives in hula?

(1:06:16)

NB: Well, I felt very unworthy as a Hawaiian for most of my life. I'll be seventy-eight in a couple of weeks. And until I was about seventy, I didn't feel I was a worthy Hawaiian. I had done everything I knew how to be a good Hawaiian. At Kamehameha, Mr. Midkiff had sent me down to see Peter Buck, 'cause I wanted to leave Kamehameha. I thought, I'm Scot, Swede, French, German, half Hawaiian. I could go to haole school as well as Hawaiian school. So he sent me down to see Dr. Buck. And Dr. Buck pounded the desk and he had a Scotch father and a Maori mother. So I'm a half-breed too, he says. I didn't like being called a half-breed. But I said that I was very sad about being a Hawaiian. Hawaiian wasn't respected, and I didn't want to be a Hawaiian. I wanted to go to haole school and be a haole. And he pounded the desk. You get the best education that you can and be the BEST goddamn Hawaiian you know how to be. And I thought, well, I would try to be the best Hawaiian. But if I had gone to Punahou, they wouldn't have accepted my sister at Kamehameha, my cousin Helen, um, my cousin Lei Becker. So I stayed at uh, Kamehameha. But I was very unhappy about being a Hawaiian until I was about seventy years old. And I had adopted a young man from the Von Trapp family. And he came to an interview with me. And I had said that I had been out in left field by myself all these years. And he says, Ma, you're not out in left field anymore. We all love you. And for the first time, I felt like oh, maybe I am a worthy Hawaiian after all. After seventy years of being downtrodden and saying that we weren't uh, uh, worth being educated, and we were second-class citizens, everything. And finally, I have some family that loves me, and I thought well now, maybe I am a worthy Hawaiian after all this time. So it wasn't until I was seventy years old that I began feeling, maybe I have made a contribution. Just by trying to be the best damn Hawaiian I know how to be. H-m. [CHUCKLES]

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: George you.

GN: I've-I've-you know, I've never had any-any kind of bad experience or ... everything that I've done, I've uh, I-I liked. And-and I enjoy every hālau. Uh, you know, right or wrong. But they're trying hard, you know. So I enjoy that. I remember one time, I was in the-in the class with Auntie Lokalia Montgomery, and Margaret and I was private students of hers, learning. And Auntie-Auntie Lo-Lokalia was about five hundred pounds, you know. I mean, big buggah. And she live in this old house. And Margaret uh, said to me, Brother, why don't you ask Auntie how come when she dances, all the windows don't shake. And I said, Hmm, so I told 'em-I said, Okay. So I raised my hand and Auntie Lokalia went, Yes, what do you want? I said, Auntie, may I ask you a question? She said yeah. How come when you-and I said it the wrong way. 'Cause Margaret told me that. And I-uncle, how-Auntie, how come when you dance, all the windows don't shake? And when I dance, the windows shake. Auntie went put her glasses on her forehead and said, Very simple answer. Because you're stupid.

[LAUGHTER]

GN: I wanted to kill mar-Margaret, by the way, is Maiki Aiu. You folks heard of Maiki, huh? Well, she was-she and I were together. This- this is ancient days. But I never forgot what Auntie-Auntie say, Because you're stupid, that's why. You know.

[LAUGHTER]

(1:10:00)



GN: Well, I never asked another question after that.

[LAUGHTER]

NB: Oh, dear. Oh, dear.

GN: But the hula is-is-is sharing. Yeah, with-with each other. That-that's the important thing to remember. If the next guy does wrong, just shut your mouth and just don't do the same thing. You know. Just enjoy. 'Cause you all of you know how hard it is to get up there and dance, and to learn the hula. It's not that simple. Looks simple once you know. But getting there is the thing. No more questions. Thank you.

PNP: As far as teaching, I find that it's very interesting. Each one is an interesting person to me. I take that into great consideration. Because ... you have the uh, the mind and the brains, like I do. So if I taught you something and you went home and learned it, and came back and do it, that's terrific. Because you know, not very many go home and-they usually say, oh, I'll do it tomorrow or something. Then when they come back to hula, oh, what happened to you, you can't do hula the way I taught you. Oh, I didn't have a chance to practice. That's important, your practice. But no one is wrong when it's-comes to dancing the hula. It's learning it the right way. And-and enjoying your hula. If you enjoy it, then you love it. That's why you're there, learning the hula. That's the way I see hula to be.

(1:11:56)

[TEXT SLATE]

Could you share some of the occasions you recall seeing hula when you were younger?

(1:12:04)

NB: Well, in our family, Princess Kawananakoa was one of our favorite people, and she loved my mother. So whenever my mother was uh, uh, in Honolulu, you know, she would always ask her to come. And I loved sitting on her lap. She was a sweet lady, and she always smelled of lavender and her skin was so soft. And I loved sitting on her lap and nuzzling her ear. And our first uh, I think, family uh, performances were for Princess uh, Kawananakoa. M-hm. And then we did go out to Princess Kahanu's. This was after um, uh, Prince Kuhio died. They had a beach place at Kuhio, and a long uh, pier that went out. And they had cannon facing out to the ocean, and I'd sit on the cannon and play Giddy-Up Horsey. You know. But they always treated us beautifully, and the cook would make a centerpiece of candy. And it would be grass house and coconut trees, all of candy. So the whole-all the kids would sit around and eat the centerpiece. And oh, we loved going to Princess Kahanu's. Uh-huh. And we had a place up in Volcano. She would come to visit us. Uh-huh. So I would say our favorite performances as a family were for Princess uh, Kawananakoa and Princess Kahanu. M-hm.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Was it private? Private gathering?

NB: Yeah, uh-huh. Because they always asked the family to-to um, come. And my father was a fine singer, and uncles and great-grandmother and grandmother, and so those were the performances I remember the most. Uh-huh.

GN: [CHUCKLES] Uh, I remember those old days too, but like uh, Nona said, you know, we didn't have competition in those days. And you know, and we appreciated every hālau and every kumu hula was our auntie or our uncle,

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

you know, this-this kinda thing. But we-we-we-we got together on certain days for certain occasions and the different hālau's, and we appreciated each other, you know. And ... of course, we all thought we was better than the next one. But ... everybody was good. No competition. You know. And um ... and in fact, the Merrie Monarch festival when it started, it was not supposed to be a competition. But the kumu hulas wanted it, so the-I was out-voted. So that's how come it became a competition. And it-and it was not intended to be. It was intended for-for us to share with each other. You know. That's what it was. Originally.

PNP: Yes, Uncle George was saying that, the right thing, because I remember the old stadium. I was uh, I think I came in the second year-

GN: She was one of the first.

PNP: --that they um, uh, had the competition. And I brought five, only five little dancers.

(1:15:00)

And I thought oh, gosh, that's good. You know, we're just gonna show what we do in our hālau. Oh, gosh, it got bigger and bigger. And well, as the years went by-I think was the third or-third year, then they moved here. But I had been from the old one. And uh, I enjoyed that. Because we didn't have to go so much for competition. Who does this and who does that, yeah. That-that-so I'm one of the-I think I'm the only one living. Right? And George. [CHUCKLES] He and I. Because uh, we-I had um-

GN: I'm young.

PNP: Uh, Zuttermeister, uh, Kauai, she was a judge. My-my kumu, Lokalia, was a judge. And um, uh, Iolani Luahine was a judge. So that's when I went in at that time. And I remember Aloha winning the Miss Hula. Remember. I was there at that time. So all those kumu's are no more. And uh, Louise Kaleiki and her sister. They're not here. And I-I'm surprised George-just George and I are still together for the uh, competition. So I think, like I said, this-this year is forty-nine years. Next year, I'll be fifty. And guess what? I'm gonna come back and try again. Bring my group back. Not to compete, just to show Puluelo has been here before. [LAUGHTER]

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: Thank you, mahalo.

PNP: I think I competed ten years. And then I gave up because it was-the cost was going up and up and up, and I couldn't afford it, and the kids got tired of fund raising. And that's why you haven't seen me. But I'm gonna come back next year. Bring my hālau. I'm still teaching. Very actively. And so ...

ML: Well, we're so grateful that all of you are still so active and are here to share with all of us, it's a rare opportunity. Um, we're just about out of time. Is there anything you would like end-share parting thoughts? Anything else to share?

PNP: Oh, just for that girl that just came up. You know, um, you were asking about the different hulas. When I first went to Honolulu, uh, I think I was in Catholic school at that time. I was nine years old. You know what was my first hula 'auana? I went in this hālau and I admired the singing. Because I'm in school, they live in the back of the school. And I said, I have to go see what's-'cause I love singing. I was once a singer, not a hula student. But

TRANSCRIPT: Voices of Our Kūpuna, 2001

anyway, I went back there and I watched and that's the first time I'd seen hula danced that way. They were flat on their backs with the legs under. And I saw Lovely Hula Hands done. Up in the air. It was-and when they came up, they gracefully went and swooped like the doves. I thought, Oh, I have to come and learn this. That was my first 'auana that I learned. And I joined um, Caroline Tuck. She's an old teacher that passed away. That was her. And so I learned only that number as an 'auana. So that's my story. Okay, dear.

ML: No, anything before we end our session- to say?

NB: Well, I'm just so grateful for all of your interest and all of the aloha. And we feel all of the love and I know it's for real, my friends. Aloha to you all.

[APPLAUSE]

PNP: Aloha.

GN: Mahalo.

ML: Thank you so much.

[APPLAUSE]

[AUDIENCE STANDS]

NB: [LAUGHS] So glad we were with you George. So glad.

ML: Thank you all for coming, and mahalo again to our kūpuna.

(1:19:12)

[TEXT & PHOTO]

Puluelo Park 1924-2004, George Naope 1928-2009, Nona Beamer 1923-2008

(1:19:19)

[END]