

MARY KAUAKAHI MOKU

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Mary Kauakahi Moku

(1903 - 1973)

Mary Kauakahi met her husband, Moses Moku, while both of them were taking religion courses at the University of Hawaii in the early 1920's. Inspired by "an ideal teacher and an ideal Christian" who taught her at Maunaolu Seminary, Mary Moku had decided to become a missionary. At the time of this interview, she had become an ordained minister and was serving three churches on the Island of Maui.

Mary and Moses Moku worked as a team until his death and adopted eight children in their first parish assignment, Kau, Hawaii. While Moses preached, Mary put her talent to work in poultry farming, multiplying thirteen chicks into a thousand chickens. She and her children also raised vegetables and their own taro for poi and would sell the eggs, capons, and vegetables to stores to supplement her husband's meager income.

This is Mary's story of her early life on Molo-kai, her years at Maunaolu and the Honolulu Theological Seminary, and the twenty-five working years with Moses on Hawaii.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

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INTERVIEW WITH MARY KAUAKAHI MOKU

(MRS. MOSES MOKU)

At her home in Wailuku, Maui 96793

Sometime in 1971-72

M: Mary K. Moku

L: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

L: To begin with, I'd like to know about your parents; something about them. Their names to begin with.

M: Um hm. Parents' name. (long pause and the sound of paper rustling) And what else?

L: Well, you were born on Molokai.

M: Yes.

L: What did your father do?

M: I really don't know because my father died when I was about three or four years old.

L: Oh. Did you live with your mother?

M: I lived with my mother and my mother's brothers and family all together all the time. Once in awhile I went to live with my father's mother and his relatives and then change around, you know. And I am an only child.

L: Oh. (surprise) What part of Molokai?

M: Kamiloloa, next to Kaunakakai. You know where the homesteads that's moving?

L: Yeh.

M: That heights. Kamiloloa Heights.

L: No, I don't know.

M: You haven't been to Molokai?

L: No. I know where Kaunakakai is, that's about it.

M: Well, you come further out towards east. This side, my parents lived.

L: Is that where they had always lived?

M: No, my father was in Honolulu. He went to school in Honolulu and then when he came back he married my mother.

L: On Molokai.

M: On Molokai. My father was a Catholic; my mother was a Protestant. Her parents and grandparents were converts--Congregational Protestant converts--and that was kind of difficult for the family. (Lynda chuckles)

But then my father took sick. They said he had leprosy. I don't know, I didn't see him. Then they took him to Kalaupapa, the leper settlement, and from then on I have never seen him. Until he died. I remember everybody in the house screaming when they were told that my father had died. And I was a little girl but I understood that it had something to do with my father. And that's about all I know. And my mother never married until I was fifteen years old.

L: Hmm. Was this a large family of relatives?

M: My father also was an only child in his family and I was an only child. My mother and my father's only child, but my mother had quite a number of brothers and only one sister, so the brothers took over my daddy's place. So they kinda looked after us.

L: Did your mother have to go to work or anything like that?

M: No, she didn't have to go to work. She stayed home and she helped raise the other brothers' children and me and they probably spoiled me because I was an only niece and everybody else spoiled me. They did everything for me; so did my father's family. They didn't let me do anything, you know, they just did it for me. All I needed to do was just to cry and I got it. (Lynda laughs) Sit down and kick my feet and I got it. So this was my early life, but yet, my father's family wanted to take me away from her. She said, "No, this is my child and I brought her up. No, not because her father is dead and her father's family will take her away from me. No. I am still alive. She's my child." So I lived with my mother's folks and my moth-

er but when it came to going to church, my father's family would demand that I must go to the Catholic church. So my mother had a favorite aunt, a cousin of my daddy's. She would say, "You come and get my daughter. You take her over to the morning mass, or wherever you do, then nine o'clock you can come back to my church. Sunday School."

L: You went to both. (laughs)

M: So my father's cousin did that. Every Sunday she'd pick me up; take me to the Catholic church. I didn't understand anything, of course. Then they brought me back and she stayed in the church with us--my mother's church.

L: And that was the Congregational church.

M: The Congregational church. Of course they were oldtime converts, you know, her parents, so this is their church. And we got along very nicely and any time they wanted to take me for a weekend, she always said, "Okay, but certain time bring her back," and they did that so I was going between the two families and the two families were trying to beat each other who could spoil me the most, so that I guess the idea was to see which one I would love the most, but I loved my mother the most so I would always come back to my mother. If I went away two or three days, I would cry. All I needed to do was to kick, "I'm going home to my mother." They'd take me. (Lynda laughs)

My mother's family were not rich but they had enough. They worked. Had enough to keep the family going.

L: What sort of thing did the brothers do? Were they ranchers or something?

M: No, they worked for the ranch--Molokai Ranch. Then it was just beginning. They were fishermen. We had our own fishing business. They were fishermen so we made some kind of living, but poor. We were not rich but we were brought up in the very strict kind of religious background. Congregational missionaries' background. We didn't do any cooking on Sunday. We did it all on Saturday. Sunday, we ate everything cold. And we went to church and we came back late in the afternoon. And we weren't even allowed to climb a coconut tree or to go out and catch a crab. Everybody had to be in the house. This was strictly their way of bringing us up. Congregational Christian way, I guess. So we grew up that way.

L: But you didn't rebel?

M: No, we didn't because if we did--I didn't get spanking, as

I say, I'm the only child, but I didn't rebel because we didn't have any other children there with my mother and my uncles and my grandma, except an older cousin and she looked after me so I didn't have anybody else to play with.

And I learned to speak Hawaiian fluently. Only Hawaiian.

L: Oh really? You didn't speak English?

M: No, I didn't speak English because nobody around the house spoke English. We all spoke Hawaiian until I was thirteen years old. I'd been sick off and on and by the time I was thirteen years old the doctor said okay, I can go to school so I went to grammar grade school in Kaunakakai and in two years, I made three grades.

L: Wow. That was your first real schooling.

M: Yes, that's the first time I ever learned the ABC's (Lynda chuckles) but I spoke Hawaiian very fluently.

L: Uh huh. Did your mother teach you other Hawaiian cultural things?

M: Well, she didn't. . .

L: The cooking and crafts and things?

M: As I said, I was spared it. I didn't do a thing. I didn't cook. I could ride a horse. They would saddle it for me and my uncles would put their hand here and then get on there and then go on the horse. I'd go out riding and come back and get off the same way. The first uncle that saw me came to get me down and took the horse away. I didn't even know how to saddle a horse. They did it all for me. Kind of spoiled me. Thirteen years old, I started to learn my ABC's and about one year, two years, they give me, I made three grades and then I was ready for the fourth grade.

Then an uncle of my mother's came over and asked them if I could come over here to missionary seminary here at Maunaolu. That was a missionary school and he was one of the trustees so he wanted me to come. Then my mother thought this was a chance to get me separated from my father's family, as much as she hated to let me come to boarding school, so she says, "Okay, you can take her to boarding school," so I came to boarding school at Maunaolu Seminary then.

L: Oh, when was this now?

M: About 1916, I think, or somewhere around there. 1913, '14,

'15. Between 1915 and 1916, September, I came over. This granduncle came. I didn't want to come. I cried. I didn't want to leave, you know, but he brought me so my mother came along, until I was up to the school. It took me one whole year to get adjusted. I cried every night. I wanted to go home, but I couldn't walk. We lived across the ocean. And I was pretty sure if she lived around here I would have walked, ran away from school. And I didn't do that 'cause it was impossible, but by that time I could write. I could write Hawaiian and every week I wrote a Hawaiian letter to my mother and she would write back and tell me, "You better stay in school. This is good for you; for your future. I'm not going to live all my life to take care of you. I may die before you so you better take this as a chance for education."

So it took me one whole year to get adjusted in school and then after I got adjusted in school, school became real good. To me it was good that I was away from the family, from my father's family who was always fighting for me, and I made plenty new friends and then I began to pick up and I picked up real fast.

L: The learning part?

M: The learning part.

L: Was it like a high school?

M: Well, no, it was really a grammar boarding school that they were teaching the girls more home economics but while we were there, they gave us tests from the high school, a couple of us girls who made the highest grades in the class, you know; seventh grade, eighth grade. So we took tests and as high as seventh grade we took freshman tests, sophomore tests. Junior test was a little hard but we just flew by those ninth grade, tenth grade tests and when we came to junior it was a little hard. We were only supposed to be seminary but I must say our seminary teachers were really high-class teachers. They taught us everything, even from home economics to what the high school was having, so this is easy and we just passed by and once in awhile they would use us for substitute teachers up this other school, those who passed from the high school--Maui High School. But we didn't take any senior test. By the time we were finished the junior test--we didn't make "A," of course, but we made "pass," passing mark so we decided we better not tackle the senior test 'cause we might not be able to do it. And then we just confined ourselves to what we already had taken so that we could become sometimes substitute teachers for the public schools at Paia there. We didn't like to do that because it gave us extra things

to do. We'd teach during the day and go back and make up our lessons for the next day during the night. Come back and plan our work for the school. Of course there was money but not too much money but the work was kinda hard, you know, going to school, coming back and school again, do your work so that you would make your grade so you could graduate. We were only eighth graders at that time--eighth grader graduates--but by the time we finished eighth grade, we were equal to a high school. That's the kind of learning they taught us in the seminary.

L: What kind of teachers came and taught at Maunaolu then?

M: Most of them were all haole teachers that came from the mainland. And then teachers, some of them come from Wellesly College and all those big colleges, you know, some from some other seminaries, girls' seminaries. They were very good teachers, otherwise we couldn't make ninth grade or sophomore. Can not. So they were pretty good.

Before I graduated, I used to go home and tell my mother--we were still the same old style, no cooking Sunday, and I'd go home and tell my mother, "You know, in the school our hygiene teacher say, 'In the morning you must have something hot, you know, like hot tea and eat something warm in the morning.'" She said, "No, no, we can't do that because we cannot have smoke," 'cause we didn't have a kerosene stove. Everything was wood stove, you know, and the smoke would go up. "No, no, it's tabu. Sundays we don't let the smoke go up, that's work." So I said, "No need smoke, Mama, you know. There's some kind of stove that no smoke." She said, "What kind is that?" I said, "They call it kerosene stove." "Oh. No smoke?" I said, "No, no smoke. We buy kerosene." And she said, "And what you do?" I said, "If you let me show you the picture of the kerosene stove," and I had a catalogue I showed her. And I says, "Buy this kind with big oven." She said, "What need oven for?" I said, "So I can show you that I can bake bread. I can bake cake. I can bake cookies. This is what I learned in school." She says, "Okay, we see." So she finally bought a kerosene stove with a big oven, then from then on--maybe this was a trick--from then on, we had hot breakfasts Sunday morning. And lunch, we came back, we had hot lunch and we had hot dinner. Everything was cooked on kerosene stove, so I probably kind of fooled them by saying that. (Lynda laughs) She wouldn't have cooked if there was any smoke, so we used kerosene and I put that over so finally the rest of families around us thought it was pretty good because our family was eating hot food Sunday and they were not, so everybody started buying kerosene stove so they could cook without smoke. This was the way they were brought up by the missionaries.

You mustn't cook on Sunday. No smoke. Everybody was using wood stove. Not stove, just open fire but wood. So I did that to the family. Change. Kinda changed their life but I was glad that I gone to boarding school and I had learned many things that I would not have learned if I'd stayed home. I changed the mode of living.

Then I says, "Well, sometimes some haoles come to our place and visit us, you know. Some of our teachers come around." And we didn't have a very--nothing fancy in a Hawaiian home and we didn't have fancy dishes, so I told my mother, "Bymby I buy some dishes." She said, "What kind dishes this?" We ate out of coconut shell, you know, you cut other half and this is the way you eat. Everything old-fashioned. And I said, "Well, we're going to get the plates," so first we got agate plates. And then I says, "We going get the knife, fork, and spoon." They said, "We don't eat with those kind things." I said, "But the haoles would. They don't eat with their fingers, you know." So because I was the pet they said, "Well, if you think this is okay, go ahead. Go ahead and get it."

So I would buy some things from here before I went back to Molokai. Buy a dozen forks and spoons and knives, then some tablespoons and finally they learned how to use these things, and they thought I was pretty good. They said, "This was worth going to school," 'cause I came back, I did the cooking and I baked and they liked the baking because they never had those kind things. They never ate biscuits before. Never ate cake, you know, baked, except the kind they buy from the store. And I made cookies, so they thought this was very good. And sew my own clothes, so my mother said, "This is worth going."

Then when I was still in school up here, I wanted to become a missionary.

L: Oh, really?

M: Uh huh. We had a teacher that had come back from Africa--Sudan--who taught--was teaching in one of those missionary schools and to me she was my ideal teacher and ideal Christian. She never scolded us when we were naughty. School kids, we were naughty. She never scolded us. She took us in her room, made us sit on the chairs, and she sat down and would pray and tell God all that we did and then God forgive us. And after she got through, we all cried. She never spanked us. But the teachers before that, oh! You just reach out to get one guava, you going get good spanking. They pull up your clothes and spank you.

L: Oh really.

M: Um hm. But this one, she's very different so I says, "Well,

this is really a good Christian; good missionary." I was very good at my Bible studies. In fact, I made "A" all the time. If you don't make "A" or "B" in your Bible studies, they won't graduate you, because this is missionary school. So I always made "A." So I says, "If I could take some kind of correspondence course in a few subjects if she knew where I could do this." She said, "Yes."

L: Some kind of what?

M: Correspondence course. Bible course.

L: Correspondence. Oh, yeh.

M: Some school. We didn't have it here. She said, "Yes," she knew. So she got me taking some courses from Moody Bible Institute.

L: Um. That's in Chicago, isn't it?

M: Um hm. Then they would send me questionnaires. Send me first the lessons and I read and study them. Send me questionnaires and I'll answer and send back. Maybe study the old prophets and then I'd answer and then study of something else and I'll answer. Then for each semester I got a certificate for my studies for each kind of lesson that I took. If I took the old prophets, I would get a certificate for that. I finished that, I got a certificate. Although I made "A" I was very good and so she says, "What do you want to be?" I said, "I want to be a missionary just like you. I want to go missionaries--some schools--but I want to go to India or Africa." She says, "Maybe you can make it. You're starting to be a very good Bible teacher." And this gave me hope. I said, "Okay."

I came back. I told my mother, "I want to go to ministers' school." She didn't say, "No." She says, "Okay. How much will it cost?" And I told her how much and then I went to Honolulu. They had a Honolulu Bible Training School. It was run by our Hawaiian Board of Missions, in Honolulu. Then they had a Christian workers' institute which was then called Theological Seminary, in Honolulu. I boarded there. I went to school there.

L: They had a theological seminary in Honolulu?

M: Yes, um hm. Not very much, just small kind. And then I took off one nine-months. I went to University of Hawaii for religion. Then they were teaching religion in University of Hawaii.

L: About when is this, now, just so I kind of get an idea of

where we are?

M: This is way back in 1922. This is just beginning, you know, and it wasn't much of a school but then we got something. At the Theological Seminary--the Honolulu Theological Seminary--we had good teachers. We had good teachers there and what they didn't have there, we went up to the University of Hawaii to get.

Then in the meantime, the nine months that I was out at the university taking these special classes, daytime, half the time I went to business college, so I tried to cram in everything, you know, 'cause I thought going to business college would help me a lot if I went away, so. And even if I learned the language or didn't learn, I could do it faster if I did shorthand and typing, so I took business college for nine months and finished my business college. I took shorthand, typing, business English, spelling and everything else that had to do with business. I even took bookkeeping. I didn't know what I wanted bookkeeping for but I thought, might as well do it. (Lynda laughs) I knew there wouldn't be any money over there as a missionary, but I said, well, anyhow I take bookkeeping, so I took bookkeeping just to be sure that even if I had to do it, nobody else would do it over there, I would have to teach it or do it. So I was prepared for this and prepared to be a Bible teacher.

And when I went to seminary, of course, I had to take the whole minister's course. There was no such thing as just learning Bible to become a missionary. Not that way. You had to take the whole course; minister's course. Bible training was not just like that, you had to take the whole theological course.

L: How long did that take?

M: That took me three years. And then the fourth year I took special classes and then I got married, then we went to Kau for ten years. Kau.

L: On the Big Island, you mean?

M: Yes, that's our first parish for ten years. After ten years, they send you away to go to school, so we went back to school. Honolulu. University of Hawaii. And then we came back, we went to Hilo. Then while we were in Hilo, suddenly it wasn't ten years then. Then the board says, "You earned another year of schooling," and then we both went. So we went to the San Francisco Theological Seminary this time and I took several courses, but my husband took--what he took, I didn't take, 'cause by that time I knew just what the churches need and what I could do to help in

the church. And these I took, like religious education--DRE work--I took that. And I took some Bible courses too and I took the Life of Christ. So after taking all these courses, we came back. (dogs barking in background) And when we came back, I went to every convocation that the ministers had. I was equal to any of these boys that graduated from our seminary here in Honolulu, you know. What I had had was equal and more to theirs, so every year we had a ministers' school for all the ministers and they said ministers' wives don't need to come. So I said, "What's the matter? Minister's wife preach too, eh, so I'm going." I opened that door so that wives could come and I said, "This is my line. This is my choice of work, so I think I ought to continue, even though I married a minister." I had married a man that was already a minister and ordained. So I says, "Don't have to have two ministers in the family but at least we could be a team."

So every convocation, I went back and it was good because I did everything in shorthand and then I typed it for my husband, so that was easy. He didn't have to bother about taking notes. He was lucky he had a wife who sat there who took notes for him and that was a big help. I took all the notes and typed it all up for him and I was learning at the same time. So every time I went to these convocations, I got credit because we had to take in lectures and write out our lectures, see, and I got credits for every lecture--every convocation I went to.

When I got credits, the credits gave me enough to become a Bachelor of Divinity, but I didn't want to be ordained because I thought, there's one minister in the family, that's enough. I can help around in anything else. I didn't want to be a minister, to be ordained until my husband died. And when he died they asked me to become a minister. I said, "No, I want to be an example to the rest of the men who have earned their way up the hard way, so as far as I'm concerned, I'm already a D.D. [Doctor of Divinity], but give me the rights just like the rest." First, I become a deaconess, then I become a licentiate, then they made me a lay minister because I had charge of the churches here. Even though I was a licentiate I took care of two churches.

L: You mean you were an acting minister.

M: Yes, acting minister for two churches. This is called licentiate, every year, and then they made me a lay minister. Lay minister means three years, then you go back in, but all this time I have been going to the convocations. Still I was adding more credits and so finally the whole state association thought--many people wondered when. . . . I was made lay minister. Everybody else wanted to become

lay minister, although they were just licentiates. Why should I be? "She's a minister's wife." They didn't know my background. Why should I be made a minister and here they were licentiates? And I was.

So our state conferences: Nobody [may] be made lay minister until Mary Moku becomes ordained to be a minister because you folks haven't made anything. You haven't earned the credit that she has.

L: This is still in the Congregational church?

M: Yes, in the Congregational church. So I dilly-dallied and I waited and I waited. I wasn't so sure that's what I wanted. Now I'm old and I didn't think I ought to be. . . They ought to get somebody younger. What knowledge I have I could share it and I could still take care of the churches and it wasn't necessary for me to be ordained and so they said, "If we don't ordain you, the rest can not become lay ministers. You are holding up." And I know everybody was fussing about it, so I says, "Okay." So they ordained me Bachelor of Divinity.

L: When was this, now?

M: Last year in March, I think. Took me lots of time to think it over, you know. (laughter) I didn't want to accept because I thought that there would be other younger boys who would come around and my time is just about. . . . I'm old now. I didn't think that would be necessary. They said, "No, it's necessary because you're already a lay minister and if they don't ordain you those other folks would never be made lay ministers." (dogs barking) And they all were craving. I said, "Poor things, let them become lay ministers." "No, you must be ordained." So I had to say, "Okay," for the sake of the rest, but the others are not fully ordained. They're not fully ordained but at least it gives them some rights to take care of some of the rites of the church when they become a lay minister.

L: Well, what do you do now? Are you a minister to a church?

M: Yes, yes. I am a full-fledged ordained B.D. minister. Bachelor of Divinity.

L: You have a church here in Wailuku?

M: Yes, I have three churches. Two in Wailuku--that big Hawaiian church across from the post office, that's my church. One way out--little ways out, about four or five miles out here at plantation villiage. And I have one

right in that big Kahului Dream City--Filipino church.

L: Oh. And you preach at these three churches regularly?

M: Two churches regularly every Sunday, nine o'clock.

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L: In Honolulu.

M: Um hm. He was going to University of Hawaii, School of Religion, and I was taking a part-time course up there and then part-time at the seminary down below.

L: What was your husband's name?

M: Moses Moku.

L: Moses. And what was your maiden name?

M: Kauakahi.

L: Kauakahi.

M: Yes, Mary Kauakahi.

L: Well, your husband was already. . . . When were you married?

M: 1924.

L: Your husband was already a minister?

M: Yes, he was already ordained. He was ordained four years before. He was in Kauai before he came back and went back to university to take some more courses, then we were married.

L: You said your first church was Kau.

M: Yes, we took the whole district of Kau.

L: Yeh, that's a lot of territory, isn't it?

M: And then five more churches in Puna--Puna district--so he had ten churches.

L: Did you do any preaching then yourself?

M: When he went to Puna district, the close churches I would preach. Yes, I preached when he was away. This is the

only time.

L: Uh huh. Then would he take turns from one Sunday to the next or would he try to get to the church. . .

M: Well, he would try and cover about two or three churches a Sunday. Maybe two in the morning, one in the afternoon. Then the next time he'd take another two. But when he went to Puna--that's a hundred miles, you know--he would have to spend almost one week over there. If he goes on a Friday, do all the calling Saturday, Sunday have church, then do some more calling and then he comes back.

He usually goes on a Sunday when they have a rally where all the churches come together--Puna churches; five churches come together--so then he have to go earlier to do all the calling before they have the church and he'd come back maybe Monday--the following Monday.

But in the meantime, we didn't have very much pay. You know a minister didn't earn very much and the board only gave him fifty dollars a month then. The church was supposed to give him thirty-five dollars a month. Sometimes it came; sometimes it didn't, but the board's fifty dollars always came.

And I taught school over there, but we adopted eight children. Some of them came to us seven, eight, ten, fourteen years old. Some were his relatives; some were my relatives. So some of the children we took were only seven days old and I couldn't go to school, so. We liked children, so I couldn't go to teach. So I had to do something. I stayed home, took care of the kids. I read everything I can get on chicken--poultry raising, and we had a little pet hen and when she was ready to set--she was going to sit on her eggs, poor thing, this was not the kind, you know. It was just an egg that we always ate. We didn't have any rooster for her, so I went and bought. Somebody was raising thoroughbred Rhode Island reds. Thirteen eggs: \$2.50 a setting. So I told my husband, "Well, I have some chicken-raising talent." (Lynda laughs) "And I will go and buy some." So we bought these thirteen eggs and we put it under this pet hen, you know, and she sat on the eggs and all thirteen eggs came out. Thirteen chicks. So I said, "Well, now we start to raise it."

Then I read about brooder and incubators and how to breed and all these things, so I says, "Well, now we're going to have a brooder for these thirteen chicks. Small brooder." (chime rings) Open the door! Come inside! (the door is opened and the recorder is turned off and on again)

My boys farmed. We all farmed after school was over. So my husband was pretty good at carpentry so he made chicken coops in the back all off the ground with screens

and a place for them to eat outside. We started from thirteen chicks and then I bought some more eggs and we bought one incubator and then we bought a brooder, then finally we went into real business and I was raising a thousand chickens all the year round. This was off the ground. There were many more that we discarded--too old and good-for-nothing. We throw them down and this is for the house, for us to eat. And out of these thousand chickens, most of them we used just for laying eggs to sell to the store. And we used the roosters for--we caponed them so they'd grow big. We caponed the roosters. While we were farming, we were raising chickens the same time.

L: Wow. A thousand chickens are a lot of work.

M: Yes, lot of work but it pays. So we didn't see the money. We sold our eggs at the stores and we took food and clothing and things for the children. I sold my eggs and some chickens and some vegetables. We had two hospitals there, one in Waiohinu and one in Pahala that came under the county. That was the only time we saw the money, the check that came from what we sold to the hospitals, but otherwise we didn't see anything. We sold some of our vegetables and chickens' eggs and capons to Hilo Konshiwa Store. We dealt with them, you see, so twice a month they would deliver all our groceries, my chick feed, and everything. They would deliver that, so they'd take back a truckload of whatever we have. They took that back to the store, so this is how. . . . At the end of the month, if there was anything left, they would send us a check.

L: Oh, I see. (chuckles)

M: We didn't see the money and the stores around--all around --the Kau stores there bought all their eggs from us. And we knew how to cull our chickens, which was the best layer and the one that no good layer we'd throw 'um down and give them scratch, any kind, so that they could fatten up and then we'd market them, you see. And the ones that were best layers we put them up and they'd get the best care and the best kind of food. Of course, we have to buy that. We order. They deliver all our groceries and our chicken feed twice a month from Kwong See Wo and this was my talent. I always said that my talent was raising chicken and this helped supplement the family so I didn't have to go and teach. I stayed home with the kids and we worked, and every one of the children all learned about chickens and poultry. I even joined the Poultry Association of Hawaii so that I could sell my eggs the same price that everybody was selling them and so much for everything, you know. I wasn't cheating nobody and nobody was cheating me. So I

joined the poultry association and they had one fair--county fair, Hilo. They wanted us to take our chickens. I wasn't so keen about it because we had to go over there and stay around there, hang around the pen, yeh, so we took a pen of rooster and four hens. This is called one pen and just a pen of rooster--Number One rooster; two Number One's is the best--and then a pen of just pullets, just beginning to lay. So we had about three or four different kind of pens that we took. This is called a pen and we had to watch this and all of our pens got blue ribbons anyway and that was a good boost to our business because all our schools around and all other people who wanted to raise these kind thoroughbred kind that only us had would come to our farm to buy either a pen or just a rooster. A rooster would cost twenty-five dollars for only one. And we culled these, you know, and these are all separated and you put them in each pen. You can't put those kind of roosters together so this is all first-class kind. This is twenty-five-dollar kind and separate them.

The kind pen--four hens to a rooster, Number One kind --then they buy one whole pen. And we leg-band them so we know which is the best layer and we cull them--we know just how many eggs this chicken would lay. Through the week, most of them would lay about six days in the week. They start very early the next day. Six days and one day don't and this is supposed to be the best layer so these are reserved 'cause they are the best layers. And out of these best layers, we put them in the pen and their chicks, after that, will become best layers too.

L: Oh, they do.

M: Yeh, you mate them with the best rooster--the first-class kind--and these are called first-class layers and they do become first-class layers too.

L: Hmm. We've been talking about raising chickens, my husband and I, just for ourselves and I'm very interested in them.

M: So I had a good experience but poor but we never told my mother we were hard-up and all that kind 'cause she would feel very sorry for us. She knew we were having a hard time but she would never, never make us feel small by sending us money, telling us, "Here, here use this stuff." Never. Always on holidays or birthdays she would send us some money or send us some food just to remind us, or send me some clothes. I couldn't afford clothes because I had kids. She'd send something just to remind us that she was remembering us and this was her way of treating us. She didn't want me to feel that--'cause I told her, I says,

"This is my choice. If I didn't marry one minister, I'd be rich, but this is my choice, so I want to be more useful than just being rich for nothing."

L: Hmm. And you raised these eight children?

M: I raised these eight children. This girl down below there, that's my baby girl. That boy over there is my second boy. Right there is a Japanese, Hawaiian. That one is Japanese-Hawaiian-Norwegian. That's my son, my oldest son. These two are brothers. Japanese-Hawaiian-Norwegian. And I have some other kids. They're not here. So I've raised eight kids, except one died and one more. A boy who was sixteen years old died. So I have six more. I had three girls and the rest were boys so I brought them up but they grew up the hard way. Everybody worked. My motto was: You don't work; you don't eat. If you have worked, you eat. You don't help with the raising of the chickens, you don't wear clothes; you wear gunny sack, because it costs money to buy clothes and it is the chicken that pays for the clothes.

So everybody says, "What's this?" I say, "This is my one talent. I'm putting that one talent to use here; multiplying that one talent. (Lynda laughs) Thirteen chicks to a thousand chickens a year."

The children grew up and I'm very proud of them. They're good kids. They're not millionaires, of course, but they're good kids. This boy is in New Mexico. When this boy was in New Mexico, he died in New Mexico so he left all that he owned in New Mexico--there were land and houses--he left it to me, so I left it to this boy. He lives in New Mexico. Of course I have the living rights but after I die it's going to be his. That's his. He has four children. He has a Belgian wife. (Lynda laughs) He went to Germany, you know, during wartime and came back with a Belgian bride and they prefer to be in the mainland. I say, "Okay, then you can have the place," so he lives there with the children. I have a home there that--a place rented. My son had two homes, one he made for me and one for him, my oldest son. He was never married, so my house is rented and the rent from my house goes to educate, to send his children to college. See, his oldest daughter finished college. My namesake is finishing college and they use the rent from my house. So I told him, I said, I don't want him to touch that place; I don't want him to sell it, because I'm still living, he can't touch it. I want that to go for the kids so they would have something. He's a major now, my son.

Then I sold my big boy's portion and bought this boy here a property in Albuquerque so it would be closer for the kids to go to school in Albuquerque town and he put up

a house and I told him, I say, "Okay, now you and your wife pay for that. I got you this, now you ready, you put up your own big house. Go ahead, but be sure you pay for it because Mama's not going to pay for it. I'm not going to sell my place to pay for it. That's to educate the kids."

L: That's wonderful. I wanted to ask you, when did you come to Maui?

M: 1950. We lived on Hawaii twenty-five years.

L: So that's where your children all grew up there.

M: That's where my children all grew up. Well, we bought a fifty-acre farm up there so that this is where my children farmed. Then they'd come back, they had to--and we would plant taro up there. We never did buy because it was so expensive and we didn't have money so we bought this property and we farmed up there. We planted our own taro and all my boys--that big boy and I we pound the poi. He'd go on one side with a big boy and I on one side with a big boy and these are the stones. I had somemore stones. We would pound our own poi. There was no electricity. We didn't know there was something like a machine to grind the poi so it really was done by hand. (Lynda laughs) We pound the poi and we would pack the poi down--the taro--and we had it in a Ford pickup.

If my husband went to Puna, I would use this little Ford pickup to deliver the eggs around to the stores, you know, but I hated to go to Pahala. It was too far for a wahine. A wahine to Naalehu wasn't too bad, but to go all the way to Pahala, I hated to go; to make that kind of trip to supply them with eggs. Sometimes I had to hire somebody to take it over. To drive the car over. I didn't like driving, until my husband comes back, 'cause at the time none of the kids was big enough--old enough--to drive so I had to do all of that.

L: Yeh. What town did you live in, in Kau?

M: Waiohinu.

L: Wai. . . ?

M: Waiohinu.

L: Waiohino.

M: Yeh, right above Naalehu. This is where that Mark Twain development is coming up. It's coming right below my land now.

L: That means your land goes up, huh?

M: Well, taxes up already and I hope the price will go up.

L: (laughing) Yeh.

M: I would like to sell some of that 'cause the lands is going up and all of my children have their own. They're married and they bought their own place and they're not anxious to go back and farm, you know, 'cause they live in Honolulu and this one there on the mainland is not anxious to come back and farm. None of the kids want to come back and farm now, so I would prefer to sell some property, maybe forty-one acres and the balance, leave it for maybe a little homesite for the kiddies, if they want. And I have some Kona lands, too. That's from my husband. And some Molokai pieces of land which has come down from the family.

L: Where did your husband's family come from?

M: Kona. The last church we were there was Mokuakekua Church, that oldest Hawaiian church [in Kailua-Kona, originally built in 1823 by Governor Kuakini]. My nephew is the minister of that church now. He look like a haole boy. His father is haole. Reverend Bouchard.

L: Oh yeh. My husband met him.

M: You know him. That's my nephew. When we were in Kau, he was in Kau too. He was a little boy then down in Punaluu. We didn't have any babies so my boys would say, "Go get that baby and bring him home for us." So when we'd go down to get sand for our chicken coop, we'd bring him home. The kiddies would rally around him when he was small, you know, so he really grew up with my--he was a baby for my children. (Lynda laughs) That Bouchard. So now he is minister.

This big boy my husband wanted him to become a minister and this is what he says, he says, "No." He sees the kind of way ministers is going to live: little money, you have to work hard, nobody appreciates you. And he says, "If I'm going to get married, my children will not have the opportunity that other children have, because I don't have money and can't send my kids. . ." which is true. All of our children only went as far as high school. Couldn't send them to college 'cause there was no money. That was impossible, but high school was the best we could do for them. Then they went on their own. After that they worked and the boys went into the army and they came out and they go back to school, which is good--good for them. Otherwise they wouldn't be very much use 'cause we

didn't give them very much education. But they had to self-educate themselves 'cause we didn't have, so my big son says, "No, I would not become a minister." When Bouchard was going away to school, he was so happy, my husband, that his nephew was going to become a minister. He went away to Fuller Seminary, you know. He was so happy that there was some member of the family who would put on his boots, so he was very happy that one nephew was going to become a minister. And he didn't dare dream that one day I would let myself be ordained. (Lynda laughs) Because I always said, "One minister in the family enough." Two ministers, no 'nough to eat, two people. (laughter) We won't make enough money, so one got to be something. One got to use some kind of talent. We can not be both ministers. So as a wife, he and I were a team. We really did the work together.

When he was here he had some other churches. When he went out, I preached at the two churches but I never looked at his sermons. He used to tell me, "You correct me over here." I said, "No. I married you a minister, this is the way you going make a living, this is the way you going to support me, and I am not going to become a minister, and I'm not going to look at your sermon, whether it's mistake or not, you go ahead and do it the way you supposed to do it. This is the way you earn your living." So I don't.

L: Yeh. That could have led to problems too, don't you think?

M: Yeh, 'cause I said, if I did it would be my sermon, not yours. Not yours. You do it your way. And then sometimes after he got through, he came home, I'd say, "Oh, you lolo kanaka you." I'd bawl him out. "You shouldn't have done this. You shouldn't have said this." He said, "Why didn't you tell me before then?" I says, "Well, you could think. That's what you went in for." (Lynda laughs) So he would say, "Well, you better help me." I say, "Oh no, no, no, no, no. I'm not a minister. You are. I'm the mother." So we never had any trouble. No. He knew that he had to do it.

If he didn't do it Thursday night, I'd get after him. I'd say, "You better start doing something tonight, you know." And he'd do it. And sometimes he'd wait. He'd do everything else. He's so busy with everything else, by the time Friday came he'd start on something. Saturday night he'd sit up 'til about two o'clock in the morning. I did all the typing and I'd cut the stencil and mimeograph and did all of that for him. By Saturday two o'clock, he comes to bed, he's all tired already. Then the next morning he preaches and then I scold him. I say, "You didn't do a good job. You didn't give enough time." But he's

tired already.

L: Yeh. It's like writing a term paper at the last minute.
(laughs) That's my speed.

M: Last minute and sat up 'til two o'clock in the morning, you know. And he come back, he's so tired. Get up early in the morning. He's got to make about three churches in the morning. Get up early in the morning and get going. Well, that's his tough luck, I tell him what to do.

L: I wanted to ask you, before I take up too much of your time. . .

M: No, that's okay.

L: When you were a child on Molokai, what sort of things did you do for amusement?

M: I say I was the only child.

L: Um hm, so you had to sort of amuse yourself, I guess, huh?

M: I went down the beach there, catch crab, played around with the crab. I would tie him with a string, you know, and let the crab run around. And I used to get a little net. I used to catch shrimp, catch small little fishes, come back. This was amusing to me and yet we ate it.

L: You caught shrimp in the ocean?

M: Yes, ocean shrimp. (telephone rings) Then I would go and climb the coconut tree, knock the coconut down, come down, pick up the coconut and eat it. (she is moving away toward the telephone while she says this and Lynda laughs) Hello! (recorder is turned off and on again)

L: Let's see now, you said from 1924 to 1934 you were at [Kau].

M: Yeh, in '34 we came back to school, Honolulu.

L: So that ten year chunk you were at Kau.

M: Yeh, yeh, ten years in Kau.

L: Then you came back to Honolulu.

M: Then we came back to Honolulu, and then after Honolulu one year, then we went back to Hamakua churches [on the Island of Hawaii]. We covered all of Hamakua churches and Kohala and Waimea.

- L: Wow! How many churches was that?
- M: Ah, three in Hamakua, Waimea, and one down that wharf way down the beach there. Waimea, down. What is it now? I've forgotten the name of that place, but anyhow, where they ship the cattle.
- L: You don't mean Laupahoehoe?
- M: No, no.
- L: Mahukona?
- M: No, further over. Kawaihae! Kawaihae. There was a church at Kawaihae. We served down there. And then he had Kohala Church, the Hawaiian church at Kohala. Once a quarter he would go there. Then he would go once a quarter to the one ranch church. At that time I think the ranch belonged to Mr. Erdman's daughter's husband, I think, who had married over there and he used to down and take care of that church too.
- L: Did your husband preach in Hawaiian most of the time or what?
- M: No, he preached in English but if he went to a church with --when he went to the ranch, he would preach Hawaiian because all Hawaiian boys. Hawaiian men, you know. And even the boss came. He understood Hawaiian too, Mr. Erdman's son-in-law.
- L: Is that Richard Sharp? Smart. [Richard Smart, owner of Parker Ranch.]
- M: No, no, no. Erdman. This Dillingham family. Louise Dillingham married Erdman, Mr. Erdman, who was also my teacher when I was in the Honolulu Theological Seminary. And his daughter--Ronald von Holt. Von Holt family. [Marion Eleanor Dillingham married the Reverend John Pinney Erdman and Dorothy Erdman married Alexander Ronald K. von Holt.] He would come and then my husband would preach Hawaiian to the Hawaiian cowboys.
- All come with the leggings and the boots, you know, all ready to go and catch a car. (Lynda laughs) They all came over with big hats and all come in church. So different from the regular churches that we would go to. And here comes von Holt with big hat and all these leggings is clink-clink-clinking and all come inside. They would sit down and he would have service for them and serve Communion and then come back down Kawaihae.
- Oh yeh, we covered all those Hawaiian churches right

around the island. If he was a minister call at one church, pretty soon all the other churches he had to take care of and when we came to. . .

L: Yeh. Well, did each of those churches pay him something? Or where did your money come from, from the board?

M: Ohhhh, sometime. Came from the board and not much. Sometimes they would give ten dollars. Sometimes all depends.

L: On what they had, huh?

M: Whatever they had and you don't expect too much, but that was all right. By the time my kiddies were growing, being on their own most of them then and working, so it wasn't too hard, except for little ones, you know. We would pack them around.

Then we went to the mainland in 1948. 1949 we came back. We went to the San Francisco Theological Seminary. We came back. Then we moved to Kona. Mokuakeaua where Bouchard is and we stayed there about a year. Not quite one year and then 1950 we came here. January 1950 we left there and we came here [to Maui].

L: Wow. How come you moved around so much? Did the board send you?

M: Um hm.

L: They'd just say, "We need you so-and-so" and you'd have to go?

M: Yes, they send me there and then they add on some more churches, see. (Lynda laughs) So from there we came here. Well, I thought he was tired but we took smaller churches, you know, because he wasn't getting too well. He was getting heart attack and he was getting diabetic and all, so I says, "It's too much. Better take smaller churches, instead of taking big church," so we came here. We moved here. But yet, here is big but we don't have too many members. And the other little church over there is small too but there you don't have too many members. You put them together, maybe you make about ninety members. That's good enough, but to take those big churches that he had--like Haili [Church in Hilo], you have about three hundred, four hundred people. It was just a little bit too hard. When we were in Hilo. . .

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed, edited, and final typing by Katherine B. Allen, 1979

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THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.