

Oral History Program

**OH-464**

**Box #21**

**Oral History Program**

**Maude Nakila**

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**Brigham Young University-Hawaii**  
**ORAL-HISTORY PROGRAM**  
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**Maude Nakila**

**INTERVIEW NO:**

*OH-469*

**DATE OF INTERVIEW:**

March 26, 2003

**INTERVIEWER:**

Uluwehi Nakila

**SUBJECT:**

Hawaiian Born Raised and Lived

**Maude F.W. Hanohano-Nakila**

This is an interview of my dad's mother, Maude Nakila for my History 492 Oral History Class. I wanted to find out about her life growing up in Honolulu with 16 siblings. Her opinion of what life was like as an older child, going to school, family life, and also her recollection of the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Lastly I wanted have her talk about meeting her husband, Joseph Nakila.

For the reader's sake and understanding I edited a lot of "um's", "so", and other redundant words to make her answers and my questions specific. Also through most of the interview she refers to her father and mother as mom and dad, but also "grandpa" or "your grandfather", and "grandma", or "your grandmother." She refers to her brothers and sisters as "Uncle", and "Aunty", with the exception of her mother's cousin, Uncle William Ka'iama. Near the end of the interview when she talks about her husband, she also refers to him as "grandpa." I guess calling her parents great grandparents, and her siblings' grand aunts and uncles for my sake are weird, especially now that she herself is a great-grandmother.

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INT: Aloha this is Uluwehi and I'm interviewing my Grandma. It is Wednesday, March 26, 2003, and it is about 10:55 in the morning, and we are in Waimanalo in Grandma's house.

INT: HI Grandma.

GN: Hi Uluwehi.

INT: So can you tell me your full name?

GN: Maude Frances Wahineka'ili Kumuhonua Hanohano Nakila

INT: And who gave you your name?

GN: My name was given to me by my Grandmother.

INT: Who, your Mom's Mom?

GN: My Father's step-mother. (Helen Hanohano)

INT: Okay, and when were you born?

GN: I was born on December 23, 1923. I was born at home, I was delivered by a mid-wife, her name was Kekue. And I first lived in Liliha, then we moved down to Waikiki, and from Waikiki to Kapahulu, and from Kapahulu to Kaimuki. And that's where I grew up the rest of my years.

INT: Until you were married?

GN: Yep, until I got married and went on my own.

INT: And who are your parents?

GN: My parents are my Dad, Peter Joseph Solomon Hanohano. My mother is Stella Kaliko'okalani Pi'ianai'a.

INT: What did your Mom and Dad do?

GN: My Dad went to school at St. Louis graduated from there and went to University of Hawaii, (Manoa), graduated from University of Hawaii, and then he became a chemist for Hawaiian Pine. And from there he went to work for the Navy as a physical accountant.

INT: Hawaiian Pine, is that some sort of school or something?

GN: No, no, it was where they had pineapple (canned), he was a chemist. He went in there as a ordinary worker, but he was interested in finding out something about the pineapple and the benefits one gets out of eating it. He was the one that invented the Genaca machine, but because he didn't have it patent, someone else took it. That's what they used to peel the pineapple, and cut it in to slices.

INT: What did your Mom do?

GN: My Mom was a nurse and she worked for Dr. Wayson, and after she started raising her family she was a stay home Mom.

INT: How many siblings did you have and what kid were you?

GN: I had twelve brothers and four sisters, with me would be five. There are 17 of us and I was the fourth oldest child, second oldest girl.

INT: So you were one of the oldest kids who had to take care of the rest of them?

GN: I was one of the oldest ones that did most of the chores.

INT: What did school did you and your siblings go to?

GN: When we lived in Kaimuki we went to St. Patrick's, and then after being there for a couple years, Grandma said, "I'm sending my girls to St. Andrew's Priory", so went to St. Andrews Priory and that's where I graduated from.

INT: All the girl's went to St. Andrew's and all the boys went to?

GN: All the boys went to St. Louis.

INT: And in school, what was it like? Did they really enforce learning English as opposed to Hawaiian?

GN: It wasn't enforced, that was the language that was spoken there and was taught. They never even mentioned learning the Hawaiian language, but the language I learned was French while I was in school.

INT: I didn't know that.

GN: Yeah, I took French for three years, and Mrs. Biggs was my French teacher.

INT: So were all your teachers Haole?

GN: Yep, every one, I had nuns that were teachers too.

INT: So kids in your school did they know how to speak Hawaiian but didn't?

GN: No, none at all, you only spoke English, but the language they had in school French and Latin.

INT: And you had to learn either or?

GN: Either, or. So, I took French instead of Latin. I don't know why, I should've probably taken Latin because Latin is the basic of our English language, but I took French instead

INT: What was it like in your home in your parent's generation speaking Hawaiian?

GN: Well, we kind of wanted to learn the language but my Dad said, "No." He said you need to speak perfect English and that that would be the language that you will be using in the years to come. So all we did was speak English and speak it well.

INT: Did they speak Hawaiian but not around you guys?

GN: Just between themselves, my parents spoke Hawaiian. But when they spoke to us, it was in English.

INT: What about, were you taught anything in the culture like Hula or learn how to make mats?

GN: Well, we learned Hula because Grandma was a Hula dancer.

INT: Your Mom?

GN: Yep, Mom was a Hula Dancer. So she wanted us to learn how to dance Hula, and that was the only way that we were exposed to the Hawaiian language.

INT: And Hula?

GN: And Hula because of the songs and when you're dancing you have to know the motions to go with the words. So that was the only time we were exposed to Hawaiian language.

INT: What about talking pidgin?

GN: Well talking pidgin was just between us children, especially the older ones because we wanted to be funny or have some crazy laughs. You know, we would speak broken English or pidgin in other words. And every time your Grandfather heard it he wouldn't say a word, all he did was look at us, his eyes just as wide as ever staring at us. We looked at him and he waited for us to correct ourselves. And that's the way it was. Grandma never interfered because she knew that that was his emphasis on, speaking perfect English.

INT: What kind of things did you kids do to have fun? What kind of rascal stuffs did you do?

GN: Well, we played milk covers as one of the games we competed against our brothers, or my cousins that would come down to visit. We played milk cover, we played marbles, you know Uncle Eddie would build skate boards and he would take the ball bearing out of the car when Grandpa was fixing and the thing was on, I forgot the name of it. But anyways, he would go and take the ball bearings out of the car and he would build the skate board and we would have a skate board, we would ride it up and down the side walk on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue. So it was our activity, we never had bikes and things like that until the younger ones grew up and Uncle William Kai'ama bought bikes for the little ones, a three wheel bike and a two wheeler, and that was it. And we played baseball, we even played football.

INT: Oh, you too, Grandma?

GN: Oh yes! The boys against the girls. And I mean it was rough.

INT: Did you win?

GN: Sometimes. It was so funny, but you know, because the boys always wanted to compete against us. Auntie Esther and I, and Auntie Irene was the ones that were more tomboys and we wanted, "to go ahead, let's play." We compete against them, it was only a touch football, no tackling.

INT: Weren't you the marble champ, weren't you pretty good at that?

GN: Oh, yes, that and also milk covers. And we also played another thing where we would throw jacks and we would play "kini", we would use little pebbles and throw them on the ground and see if we could hit it one little pebble against the other pebble and if we get it you pick it up and it's yours, your "kini" they called it, and that's what we did.

INT: What did you do as a family for fun?

GN: We would go on picnics.

INT: Where?

GN: It used to be at Diamond Head quarry after you pass the Waikiki Kapi'olani Park, there's a hill that goes up and there you can see an out look (lookout)? Well, just before the out look (lookout) there was a road that we'd go down and we would spend the day there. Or else we would go to all the way down to Punalu'u and spend the weekend there.

INT: Wow, with family?

GN: With family, the whole family. We would go swimming and we would go mountain climbing to Sacred Falls and ah...

INT: So you guys used to go down to Punalu'u and...

GN: Yeah, during the summer, we usually spent the summer down in Punalu'u.

INT: You guys had a summer house?

GN: Yeah we had a house across the street from the Schuman's (Schuman Carriage). And we would spend our summer there. Grandpa raised rabbits, we would raise vegetables also, and papayas. And that was because Uncle William Kai'ama, Grandma's cousin lived there because he didn't like living up in town so he stayed down the country and he was the one who took care the rabbits, and he took care of the place.

INT: So what did town look like back then? Was it much different from now?

GN: It didn't have that much buildings that it has now, now they have skyscrapers, all those tall buildings. They had some but it wasn't that many, like what they have now.

INT: What was your house like?

GN: It was a two story house; the one in Kaimuki was a two story house. It had a bath and 5 bedrooms, and then downstairs had a bath and one bedroom, that was the guest room, and then the living room and the king-size room.

INT: That's where you raised the vegetables?



GN: Yea most of our vegetables were raised in Kaimuki.

INT: And turkeys?

GN: Turkeys, we only had a couple of them because they liked to fly. So we only had a couple of turkeys, but most of them were chickens, and then the rabbits were raised down in Punalu'u.

INT: And you remember doing that ever since you were kids?

GN: Yea because we had to feed the animals and collect the eggs. Aunty Esther and I were the ones who had to collect the eggs when we come back from school every afternoon. Because we couldn't do it in the morning, we would leave 7 o'clock in the morning to get the bus to go to St. Andrews. So we would do that after we get home. Then we had to go down and water the garden and weed it. If Grandma was preparing dinner and she needed a certain vegetable she would tell the children, whoever's growing a certain thing, if she needed carrots, you go out to the garden, pull out the carrots, wash it up and give it to Grandma. If she needed corn, you get the corn. If you needed lettuce, we would get the lettuce so we could have a toss green salad. And then we had the eggs. And some times the chickens would not lay the eggs where it rolls to the back of the coop, where we lift up the lid and collect the eggs. Sometimes they lay the eggs on the flooring, so we have to go into the coop, and when you go into the coop the chicken attacks you. So one of us would carry a stick and the other one would pick up the eggs. So if the chicken comes for you, you just whack 'um with the stick. And that's what we did, Aunty Esther and I. And when the Holiday's came around, we were not allowed to drink soda pop. But on Thanksgiving, your Great-Grandpa would make home-made root beer so that it would be ready for us on Christmas and New Years, and that's the only time we were allowed to drink home-made root beer.

INT: With ice cream?

GN: And we made our own ice-cream at home. Everybody would take turns to wind the machine, and if you didn't put your share of winding, you would have the least ice-cream on your dish. So we would all have a turn to wind the machine. We hardly bought ice-cream from the store, it was all homemade.

INT: How old were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

GN: I was going to be 16 because I was a junior in High school. December 7<sup>th</sup> it happened and December 23<sup>rd</sup> was my birthday.

INT: So what do you remember about that day?

GN: Well it was a surprise because we were getting ready to go to church. We didn't have TV. at that time, and Grandpa turned on the radio and it said that Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese. My oldest brother Albert, was picked up by one of his friends, they were going to go to church. And they were riding up on Harding Avenue, and they said this plane came overhead and was shooting at the cars as they were going. So they (brother Albert) just turned right around and came back home.

INT: And they had no idea?

GN: They didn't know! They didn't know what was happening. They came home and said "Dad! We were driving up on Harding Ave. and there was a plane and it had the red..."

INT: The Japanese, the red dot?

GN: Yea, on the plane, and they were shooting at the cars on Harding Avenue. And he said, "Is something happening?" And Grandpa said, "Yes, there's a war, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. And then, he being the oldest and he was out of school already. He was working at Pearl Harbor."

INT: Uncle Albert?

GN: Yes Uncle Albert. The employees had to report to Pearl Harbor, so he went in. And he and his friend went walking, and when they were walking together the Japanese plane came and was shooting at them. And he (Uncle Albert) told his friend, "get covered, lay down to the ground" but his friend didn't. And he saw his own friend get killed, get shot. But he (Uncle Albert) didn't because he stayed down on the ground. And we didn't see him for two days and we thought that something happened to him. And when he came home, he was telling us they were picking up dead bodies, and our Uncle William Ka'iama was there, and we didn't see him for a whole week. But he didn't get killed; he was just doing what was asked of him. And then Grandpa became very ill after that, he couldn't go to work. So Uncle Eddie and I, being the two older ones, because Aunty Mariah was ill. He and I went to work, we went and applied and got hired. And I worked in an office at Shop 70 and he worked in an electric shop.

INT: And you had to sacrifice going to school for a while?

GN: For at least 6 months. So when Grandpa got well we returned back to school. So I had to repeat my junior year because I only did half of it.

INT: So when you flipped on the radio and heard Pearl Harbor was being attacked could you see anything from your house in Kaimuki?

GN: In the evening we would go upstairs and look out towards town and see all the fire and the bombing and all that.

INT: What about that morning, could you see?

GN: No we couldn't see, we didn't even know that something was happening, because we were going to church, so we didn't go to church. So that night we could see from our window, looking towards town, we saw the bombing and all that fire from a distance. But it was funny because before the war started, our foster brother William Mailolo, he had a feeling that something was stirring, because he was already in the army. He would come home and tells your Great-Grandma, "mom," he says "you know, something's going to happen." And she says "what makes you think?" And he said "I had this feeling, I was on this Jeep with this Japanese boy was also on the army, and he was driving the jeep, and it seemed like he was up to something that was not right." And sure enough there was the attack.

INT: Were you scared?

GN: Of course we were scared. And we had to live under the Marshal Law, and we couldn't have lights on after a certain time because the reflection could, you know the places could see our lights on. So we had to turn our lights off at a certain time.

INT: Do you remember what time that was?

GN: No I don't remember.

INT: We had to black it out. Grandpa would put (funnels around the light bulbs to focus the light on the table) so that we could have light so we could study.

INT: Were there guards on the streets after a certain hour?

GN: Well we never noticed it because we were always at home.

INT: What about food?

GN: Your Uncle Carl was the one to go and stand in line if we needed poi because poi was not that much at the time (not easily accessible.) And if you wanted it you had to stand in line and wait for your turn to go and buy it. I don't know how many pounds were allowed, when we wanted to eat poi. He would walk from where we were living, all the way to Waiialae Ave., stand in line until he got the poi and walk back home. I think it was about a mile.

INT: Did you guys have to go on ration cards?

GN: No, we didn't have that.

INT: It was just harder to get food right when you needed it?

GN: Yeah, it was that way.

INT: What about traveling? Did you get to go out a lot?

GN: No we spent most of our time at home. Because gas was rationed also, so, Grandpa needed the car to go to work. It was best for us to just stay home instead of going out. He (Grandpa) felt that it would be safer too because you never know what would happen if we were away from the house. So we stayed at home.

INT: So your family survived from already raising food. It wasn't that hard?

GN: It wasn't that hard for us because we had a sufficient amount of food. We had vegetables and if we needed chicken, we had chicken there. We had one little pig and eventually he was killed. But other than that, we had the rabbits down the country in Punalu'u. So we had chicken, rabbits, and the pig.

INT: Did you still get to go to the beach? Was it barb wired off?

GN: No it wasn't barb wired. If we did ever go down to Punalu'u we were free to go down to the beach because the beach was right across the street, there was no problem there. But it took a while before we even got down there. When the war broke our, because we were not able to buy the gas that it would take to go all the way down to Punalu'u. I guess they rationed it, we were allowed so many gallons of gas a week I guess.

INT: What about Japanese living down in Hawai'i during that time, did you have any friends...?

GN: Yea our neighbor across the street was Japanese.

INT: And was there a different attitude towards them?

GN: No.

INT: Did anybody have to get shipped to Japanese Camps?

GN: Not where we were living.

INT: You didn't know anybody?

GN: No, we had a neighbor across the street and two houses down was another Japanese family. And right next door was another Part-Japanese, well he (the husband) was Japanese, but his wife was Hawaiian: Yoshimoto's. So it was no problem. We treated them like...

INT: Like normal.

GN: Yea like normal, they were our friends, even till this day. We were close to Sophie, she was; more our age, and even till this day we're still friends, although we're older. I don't know about her brother, I know she had a brother, Clarence. I only remember Sophie because Sophie was close, we practically grew up together.

INT: After Pearl Harbor you and Uncle Albert had to work?

GN: No, Albert was already in service, Uncle Edward.

INT: And after Pearl Harbor you got to go back to school?

GN: Yea.

INT: And you graduated a year after you were supposed to?

GN: Uh huh.

INT: What year was that?

GN: 1945, no not 1945, 1943 I graduated. And Uncle Eddie graduated and went into the Service, he went into the Airforce.

INT: When did you meet Grandpa? (Joseph K. Nakila-her husband)

GN: Oh when the war was, I guess it was over when I met him. We went to my Jr. Prom.

INT: So how did you meet him?

GN: Well I went to visit my step-Grandmother, and my father said "you could ask him."

INT: How was Grandpa (Joseph Nakila) there? Because he's from Maui, who was he visiting?

GN: His Step-Grandmother. Grandpa's (Joseph) Aunt was the hanai daughter to our Step-Grandmother. And that's how we met.

INT: So you asked him to your prom?

GN: Yea. But he didn't stay here in Honolulu, he went back to Maui. But we communicated.

INT: And then he took you to your prom?

GN: Yes.

INT: And where did you go, what did you do?

GN: Our prom was, it was really weird. We had a Jr. Prom over at the Tabernacle and then our Sr. Prom we had at St. Clement's Church. And his father was a taxi driver and he was the one who took us. On the taxi!

INT: So was he a handsome guy?

GN: Yea, he passed, he was okay! (laugh)

INT: What happened at the prom, didn't someone eye you out because they were jealous?

GN: I don't know?

INT: And then Grandpa said, "what, I can't be here with a pretty girl?"

GN: I don't remember that. (Yes she does, she told me earlier when I wasn't recording. She must have forgotten during the interview.) Probably somebody made a wise crack, and he gave his opinion.

INT: So they had live bands at the prom?

GN: Yes they did.

INT: Did they play big band music?

GN: No, it was more waltz, fox trot.

INT: So after the prom you guys started liking each other...

GN: Yes and we communicated. He went back Maui, he wanted so much to get into the military but they wouldn't take him in because he had a problem with his hearing. So he never served in the military. So he came down and worked at Pearl Harbor for a while, and then he took to the test for the City and County Refuse Department and passed it. He was a Refuse man Truck Driver. And then after that he was one of those who had to go to the different businesses and check on their rubbish. Because they had to pay for the pick up of rubbish. He was like an inspector. He didn't graduate from Lahainaluna, but he took that course...

INT: He took the G.E.D course.

GN: Yea, later and graduated.

INT: That was when he was in his seventies yea?

GN: No in his sixties.

INT: I remember that, I remember the pictures.

GN: At least he made an effort to go and finish his G.E.D. But he was good, the teacher couldn't believe it. And then, we raised our family.

INT: And when did you guys get married?

GN: In September 23, 1948 or '49. We were married 52 years when he died. 1949. I remember several times when we went out on dates with Grandpa. He couldn't stand people staring at me.

INT: Because you were so beautiful.

GN: He was always ready to fist fight. I said "foget it." I says "let's just get out of here; we don't need to go through something like that."

INT: All the guys would be looking at you?

GN: Yea you know, we would go down to Waikiki, maybe go to the theatre. And then we would browse and see what's on Waikiki.

INT: Waikiki das why. (Meaning Waikiki is known for its worldly filth.)

GN: That's the only place we went to, we never went into town, just in Waikiki. And it used to upset him; he couldn't stand people staring at me. But he was kind of cool, I would say, "Hey, let's just get out of here." So he did.

INT: Grandpa was your first and only boyfriend?

GN: Well I had a couple of admirers but I never went out with them.

INT: Well I think that's it.

GN: That's it? Okay let's listen to it, and see what it sounds like.

INT: Okay, say goodbye to the tape.

GN: Well Uluwehi, thank you for the interview.

INT: Thank you grandma.

GN: I love you.

INT: Love you.