

Andrew Pine Kauai, Sr.



He says he learned everything he knows of paniolo life from his father and grandfathers. In the true paniolo tradition, Andrew is a “generational” Hawaiian cowboy. At age 16, he was a working cowboy, and later, foreman on Ulupalakua Ranch. He also worked on Kahuku Ranch in Ka`u, Hawai`i. But his special memories are driving cattle from Kaupo Manawainui up through Kahikinui to Ulupalakula Ranch, a journey that took 25 cowboys four days to drive a thousand head of cattle. In his retirement, Andrew is passing on his mana`o to his sons and mo`opuna. They know, when they hear his friends say, “he is a great cowboy, and a great human being”, that there is no greater praise for a true paniolo.

Paniolo Hall of Fame

Oral History Interview

Andrew Pine Kauai, Sr.

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By Anna Ilima Loomis

Andrew Kauai was born Jan. 6, 1938, in Kula. His father was William Kauai Sr., and his mother was Elizabeth (Poepoe) Kauai.

I was born in Kula Sanitorium, but I was raised on this ranch. My dad was a cowboy, my two grampas worked on this ranch. And I was kind of like the third generation.

I used to love horses, that's why I like to work ranch. I always did love horses. My dad was kind of a horse trainer too, so he taught me a lot. And I got to be interested in it, so I started learning anything about horses – polo, rodeos, I love it. Cowboy was my speed. I used to break a lot of horses, train a lot of horses, and my dad taught me all that and I learn everything from him. I learn a couple of things from other people too. As years go by you learn the new method, the easier method.

I had no high school education. I had to stay home and help my parents and send my brothers through high school -- had to raise animals, raise pigs, to send them to school. I stayed on the ranch, and when I was 16 years old, my dad asked me if I can come work on the ranch. I said, oh yeah. I love that.

I had four brothers and myself – five. I was the second oldest. My three brothers below us, they all went to high school. I wanted to go, but cannot afford. I wanted to go to Lahainaluna. My dad them just couldn't afford it. So all my life I work for the ranch, with no more high school diploma.

Actually, I work on this ranch 35 years only. And I work three and a half years on the Big Island, for a different ranch. Then I came back here; they had new owners.

On the other ranch I learn all different methods, all new methods, and when I came back, I was kinda in my prime, eh? The owner of this ranch, the manager, they look at me and say, "I think we're going to have a pretty good foreman." I was here about 27 years I think, as a foreman.

I: When you first started working for Ulupalakua, you were 16. Can you give me a picture of what this area looked like back then?

Right here in the back here, there was a store, there was a little store, and they had a long garage down through here, they had a breaking pen over there, down by that big tree, below the road, below the office. And right across there used to be a long stables. They had cowboy stables over here, two stables. One for the old-time cowboys on this side and then they had the young cowboys on the other end. Before there used to be a corral right across here. That's where we'd catch the horses. Every morning the horses come in – we start work about 6:30 – and by 6:00 the horses would be right in here. So when they say you're working cowboy, you just gotta come down here, tack room, grab your rope and start catching horse.

I: Did you have the same horse every time?

No. At that time we had a lot of horses. I had about six, seven horses on the ranch. My dad them had more, but they was kind of like old-timers. They had about 12, 14 horses. Use half for a year, then throw the other half down. You know where the Maui Meadows? Used to be that's where we'd rest all the horses, the cowboy horses and the young colts, and every year we'd have a big drive. They'd bring up all the horses, you pick what horses you want, maybe pick two, then send down two. You gotta always keep seven or eight.

I: About how many cowboys were working on the ranch?

Oh, at that time they had about 15 cowboys. I mean, not counting us. Just 15 regular cowboys – that's all they do, just cowboy. I was like a ranch hand. We do fence work, poison, and then cowboy. If they need cowboys -- like when we drive Makena, that's a big paddock.

I: So how many of you guys were there?

Oh, we had about 11 of us.

I: About how many horses did the ranch have at that time?

Close to 400. Yeah. I mean, that was a lot. I'm counting mares, colts, yearlings and all that. A lot of horses. Plus we did a lot of polo too, eh? So we had a lot of polo horses over here. After the season pau we bring them back home, do all their training, exercise them, and when it's time for play, right back again.

We had about four studs. Usually we keep one stud down at Camp One – Spreckelsville. The stable belonged to the same company, same owner. So we had horses down there and horses up here, had horses in Kipahulu.

I: In the breeding program, about how many colts would they have a year?

Oh, I'd say about 35.

I: About how long could you use the horse before it was ready to be done?

About 17 years old. I mean they went through hard knocks, before days, rocks, they get all kine. Especially below this makai section, everything is rocks and it goes all the way to Hawaiian Homes.

I: So, how did that make you feel, what happened to the older horses?

Well, at the start I'm not used to that, you know. Just like you killing old people. Especially with the horse you ride. And then, boom, you gotta put 'em away. I tell my dad, "what you going do with 'em?" They tell, "just put 'em away." I tell, "Wow, you just give me the horse!" He tell me, "Yeah, that horse old already."

See, when I first started, my dad gave me some of his horses. He hardly use that horse, so give him to me, so when I go cowboy, I get horse. When I see them put him away – boy, I don't feel so good. But afterwards, you gotta get used to it. I mean, it's hard, but... Like me, took me about three or four years, I think, to get used to. For the younger ones to come up, you gotta put away all the older ones. That's how life goes.

I: I wanted to ask you more about your father.

He started when he was fourteen years old. And my grandpa, his dad, was kind of like an ox trainer. He trained oxes to lead wild cattle, to bring them home. That was his job. But he was more like a carpenter. And my dad, well, he was born and raised up here, so he went right into the ranch, to work for the ranch. And then he got to training horses. I asked him how old he was, and he said he was about sixteen year old when he start training. I thought, hoo! I mean, those days, lotta horses, lotta rough horses.

He said he got all the scrub kind horses. I mean not quarter horses, these are all cross-bred, with morgan, thoroughbred -- he said it's not really uniform kind horses. Not like when I started, we had kind of uniform, we had thoroughbred-morgan. And they bred quarter horses after that, so not too bad. But his days, I look at the cowboys, I tell him, "Ho, they get a lot a broken bones!" He tell me, "Yup, you going get lotta broken bones too."

He taught me everything. And when he got disability, I was a foreman already, and I always ask my boss if they let me take my dad around, say I was gonna check cattle, check water troughs, or see what fence needed repair. I really admired my dad, you know, and my grandpa too—my mom's dad. He was the foreman too, on this ranch. I don't know if you remember this guy—Ikua Purdy? My grandpa used to work with him. Them two guys was the foremans on the ranch.

The way my dad taught me, and the way I look at my grandpa, I thought, "Wow, man, what a life you went through." When I started work, my grandpa was retired, already. He was staying in Kaupo with my auntie. And I follow his namesake, too. They named me his name, so. Pine. His name is Frank Pine Poepoe. Mines is Andrew Pine Kauai.

I: So you were saying your dad taught you a lot. Tell me a little about him. What kind of man was he?

Oh, he was kind of a mellow man. Really, really mellow. I mean, in certain ways. He teach you the right way to do it. He don't wanna see you get hurt. And, and if you no listen, that's up to you. And then he tell, "You see, now you learn – you learn the hard way." I used to learn hard way. I no used to listen him. I told him one time – I was about eighteen I think – I told him, "You know, Dad, your time is gone; now my time." He tell me, "Yeah, but you know when I built that stone wall? That stone wall stayed up." That mean he's saying that when he raise me, just like never broke down until now.

He kinda broke his feelings, that I said, "Hey Dad, your time is gone, now my time." And afterwards, you know, I thought about it, and I think, "oh why..." I don't know why I say that. It's just because – I guess I was young, when I say that. After that, no way man, I respect him. Whatever he said, I no care, just do it.

I: Where did you live when you were growing up on the ranch?

I used to stay with my grandpa most of that time. Down, way down, in my grandpa house, way down in the Panini. I stay mostly with my two grandpas. Either stay down here, or I go down Makena.

I: And then, you moved up here ... about how old were you?

Oh, shoots, I guess maybe I was about six, seven years old already. That's when my dad move up here, because our family was getting big, and just the one bedroom home, down there.

I: The ranch provided the home?

Yeah. Till now they still do. They built me one new house, you know, in 1993. Anything goes on, you just tell them, they repair it. They take care all the retirees, their spouses. I retired young, when I was 55. Nine years ago. He ask me, "Well, you get 30 years. What, you wanna retire?" I tell him, "Yeah boss, I wanna retire." He tell me, "Good." I mean, he back me up.

And that leave the younger guys come up, you know. That let the next guys step up to be a foreman. Because nowadays, it's different. When I finish, they already had a foreman. He's still a foreman now. But when he retires, there will be no foreman on this ranch.

I kinda admire what I used to do. I take orders from the manager, and then from there, I'd run everything on the ranch. I send certain boys there, certain boys there, then I come around check on 'em, go see what's going on. I do a lotta work too. If I need some tractor work done, I jump on the tractor and go do some.

I: I want to go back a little bit. Can you tell me about the work you did as a young man? Can you tell me about the cattle drives?

Ah, we go to Kipahulu. And we drive. My time, they had the road going through already. But before that there was no road, just trails. The guys older than me, they know those trails. But me, when I when work on the ranch there was road.

Ho, plenty steers they move, for like four days. You go Monday, reach home Thursday, Thursday night. And then Friday off. Friday and Saturday off. Man, you stay over there, all you eat—salt meat, can stuff, cracker. That's all you have -- poi, rice. Well, we have a cook go with us. He follows us on the military truck.

And boy, we gotta rest when we bring home 1000 head. We gotta rest at least every ten miles. That's a lotta cattle for pushing ten miles. We had a lotta cowboys, though. We had about 20-something cowboys. That mean you take all the cowboys when you go. And then get nine boys from Kipahulu. They all ride horses, too. They help us all the way to Kaupo. And then Kaupo help us all the way past their boundary, then from there on, only us, only the ranch.

Sometime we lose about 200 head. We drive in the night, that's why. That's when cattle cool, eh? We go when get moon, full moon. When the time full moon, that's when we go drive.

Man, soon as we break, make a round circle – the circle is big. That's a lotta cowboys. But you gotta stay up. You gotta jump down from your horse, but you gotta stay up. Gotta watch the cattle no go roam around, cause they wanna eat. They always put one old guy with two young guys, cause they know the young guys going sleep. Guarantee we sleep -- we still 13 year old. They used to yell at us, "Get up!" And we get up. But once we start going again, not bad.

But still yet. Hit 'em with the flashlight, and look, one cattle run out of the bunch. As long as nobody looking, no old timer, hell with 'em, let 'em go. The next ranch, the next guys gonna get 'em back. We lose about 200 head sometime, sometime less. But once we reach Kanaio, by Hawaiian Homes, you better make sure no lose nothing, because the owner of the ranch, he going drive too. He going be on a horse, and we drive daytime, but we get lotta corrals where we can stop to rest. When you can smell the cigar, he's around someplace. He smoke cigar. That's the only time you can tell when he's around.

I: What was his name?

Edward. Baldwin. He was a good cowboy. That's why I admire him too. He can cowboy, he ride a lotta rough horses, and manage all the ranch. Yeah, he know his cattle. You gotta know how to pick your cattle, you know, what cattle good for feed lot, what cattle good for slaughter. When you start picking up all your weanlings, you gotta know what heifers for replacement. You gotta look the body, the bones, and if you figure not too good, well, that's gotta go on feed and then kill. That's for feed lot.

Today they get two old boys on the ranch, they kinda miss me you know. They tell me, "Eh Jack," they call me Jack, "Hey Jack, eh brah, no more you, man." Now days these young guys they cannot, no can handle. Once in a while I go with them, and I just stay one side, just eye 'em up. They try to do how I use to do, but they cannot. They no more that skill. By the time they think about it, it gone already. You know, you gotta think way ahead of time. You better start thinking fifteen minutes from now, what you going do with 'em, and how they going come out, and this and that, and then when you get 'em all out, boom-boom-boom-boom -- all gone. Done, in no time.

I: Someone told me before it was mostly Hawaiian guys working at this ranch back then.

Majority yeah, majority. Hawaiian and Japanese.

I: But more towards Makawao was more Portuguese?

Yeah, they tell was more Portuguese. Haleakala Ranch was kind of half-half. They were Portuguese-Hawaiian mostly. Way down Grove Ranch they were mostly Portuguese.

I: Did anyone talk about why it's mostly Hawaiian guys out here?

I guess majority because it used to be Hawaiian homestead in Kanaio, and Makena get a lotta Hawaiians. They come up for job. So that's what really keep the Hawaiian going over here.

I: Did they use a lot of Hawaiian words when you were working? Or...

My time, yeah. I mean, when I first started, they used a lot of Hawaiian words. I only know a little bit, but I understand what they talking.

When tell you, "*mahape*," is in the back, "*mamua*" means in the front. And "Kaupo, Wailuku, Wailuku, Kaupo," that means that side. That's why you gotta know, when you line up, they tell, "*Mahape! Kaupo, mahape!*" That mean you stay on the Kaupo side. You know, the cattle going behind you, you gotta circle around. And they say, "*Pili! Pili mahape!*" That's mean, get together, get in the back and get together, or, "*Pili mamua*," that's mean go in front. But the only time you use that is when, they cattle, when wild cattle start to run away, that's when they yell in Hawaiian, "*Pili mamua!*" That's mean, help the other guy in front, **go**, ah. Man, by the time you reach there, no more your face -- be all scratch with wiliwili trees or panini bush.

But . . . I learned a lot from them. I learned how to work wild cattle. The first time I do that, man, I don't know what to do too with myself! I mean, their horns is big! Afterwards, I get kinda used to. When I start training my horses, I make sure that when I get off, they stay there. Otherwise they going get hurt. Plus, I take dogs. Always I had three dogs with me, when we chase wild cattle. The dogs slow 'em down, you know. They get them from underneath the panini bush -- The cactus? You get 'em out, then rope 'em in the clear. And then they bite on the nose, they fighting your dog, and first thing you know, you get one rope on them, they forget about the rope. You get 'em all tied up, soon as they get done, **gone**.

I used to teach my oldest son, he work with me. He was helping me. He went finish high school, and then asked me, "Dad, I like work for the ranch." I tell, "Well, I was ask the boss." They say ok. He work with me for fourteen years. So now he working Parker Ranch. He work there almost fourteen years. Yeah, his life changed now.

I: How many kids do you have?

I have four. Three sons, one daughter. My two sons, from my first wife, are cowboys. Then my youngest son, he's going University of Hawaii. I hope he show dad what he wen' learn.

In addition to being a working cowboy, Andrew Kauai competed in rodeo and polo.

I gave up rodeo in the '80s. I think, "Aw, man, I getting 45 years old." I was getting too old already for banging around. My bones no look too good. It's rough. I ride bulls bareback, saddle bronc, I do a lotta roping too. I find my son them, they always like rope with me. They see me ride, they like learn how to ride, I teach them. Now, my son, he's one of the state champion now. And my grandson, he's state champion for keiki bull riding.

I did lotta polo too. We had put a field over here, so that's when I started. My dad was the polo trainer. He used to train a lotta polo ponies. He got me into it.

Before days, you cannot play. You ride horses for the big shots, for the high class. You train 'em for them. You saddle 'em up. The only thing you can play, man, you gotta do stick and ball. Other than that, you cannot.

And then afterwards, Ulupalakua Ranch made a team, but only for the ranch boys, the cowboys. And Haleakala Ranch, Grove Ranch, Medeiros too, had kind of like cowboy team. Then we really know how to play polo. Then, all the rich guys, they look -- "Man! That guy good player!" They pick you as a substitute. If they get hurt, then you play. Yeah, you don't otherwise.

I: So all the cowboys started a team? Whose idea was it?

Oh, the owners of the ranch. That way they can pick. They look at your horses, they can say, "Oh, I want that horse." And they just take 'em away from you! They give you \$50, and that's it. That horse is going to them. It's going be on their string, going be on the polo string.

I: Who did you guys play?

Haleakala, Grove Ranch. We played Saturdays, Sundays. They had a Maui Pine team, too. But I think between us and Haleakala Ranch, it was the toughest. We played championship. They call that the Silver Cup. The Ranch Cowboy Silver Cup. Big silver cup, with small kine silver cups, for six guys.

I: Did the ranch cowboys ever play against the owners?

Yeah, warm up. I mean, you cannot play rough. You gotta play gentlemen game, man. Yeah, you no can just bump 'em, any time. You bump 'em, they tell you, "Out."

I: (laughs) But when you played against other cowboys, it was a rougher game?

Oh yeah. It's more like, you hit me, I hit you back. It's not like when you play with the big gunners. The big gunners, they see you coming, you tap 'em little bit, they move. Us, we no tap, we just give 'em the working. If you get good horse, you whack 'em with your horse. But afterward you learn how to play the the gentleman way.

I went down Argentina too. I seen a lotta polo down there. I rode couple horses. I played with them, with those Argentinians. The stable boys. They good. I mean, they good. They ride the scrub horses, but, boy, they look good on 'em, man. I get on one. I tell, "How much they selling this horse?" They say, "200 dollars." I tell, "Wow! Maui, this would go ten grand!" They say, "Yeah, but get lotta guy buy 'em, go up to the United States, they spend more money shipping 'em quarantine, and then sometimes it just doesn't make it." They get sick.

My ideal horse. I like to get those horses up there. I mean, they really, really polo ponies, you know? Not like we get, this quarter mix. We used to get mostly thoroughbreds crossed with the morgans. Thoroughbred get strong, the morgan has the power. So you use 3/4 thoroughbred, 1/4 morgan, you get good polo ponies. Only thing, when they get too much thoroughbred, they get crazy! They don't know nothing, they only know what is run. That's their life. And for suffah. Either you bail out, or run 'em through the trees, or run 'em on the stones.

I: (laughing) Before we go on, were there any memorable stories you had from playing polo?

Well, I had a lot, but mostly was falling down, hanging up, and ending up in hospital. And they say, "What happened?" You get kick in the head—the helmet fly off, so guarantee you hang up, man. Couple time I end up in the hospital; my mom, she never used to like that. She said, "Mo' bettah, jus' forget about polo." I tell her, "Nah, I kinda like polo."

I went into polo, and then when I came about 21, 22, then I started rodeo. But I still play polo, though, until the 80s. I played for the Maui team for about four years. Play with Peter Baldwin, Ben Baldwin, and this guy Mike Layger. They all top gunners. But I play with them.

Not too many guys can play for the Maui team. That time, those days, they look the skin, they don't look how you play. If you brown, you stay behind. I mean, no matter how good you are. They still throw one scrub guy in there, and he's playing. Until somebody get hurt, and then you go in there. But with the generation now, it's different. Peter Baldwin, he look for good players – he want Maui to win.

I: Let me go back to the ranching for a moment. You left Ulupalakua when you were about 21, 22, in 1960. And then you went to Kahuku Ranch.

Yeah, and I stay there three and a half years. That's when Freddy Rice was running the ranch. They wanted me. I tell 'em, it depend on the pay. I don't wanna go over there and get less, or the same pay as what I get over here. He said, "No, he going get better pay." So that's why I went. Ho man, I had almost twice the pay I was getting over here, and I had two kids already. That's why I moved.

And then, me and the foreman no can get along. George Manoa, Sr. He was a Maui boy, from Haleakala Ranch. I just couldn't get along. I just walk out. I knew he was going keep on picking. But I respect that man. He one good horse trainer, he taught me a lot too, so I respect him.

I tell Freddy Rice I going leave, so he recommend me over here. He gave me a good dakine –reference – that I could be one foreman. So when I came here, I work a year and a half, then I came one assistant foreman, then when they fired the foreman, I took over.

I: You said before that you learned a lot of new methods over there.

Yeah, in Kahuku. Working cattle. You know, how to pick cattle. Over there was more advanced. So when I back over here, they watch how I pick cattle, they really watch. And I knew I was going be the the foreman.

What I learned was, you gotta get the eye. You look over the bunch cattles, you just eye 'em up a little bit. Especially bulls. You know, you go picking bulls for breed, or you going buy bulls from somebody else. You get over there, you pick that bull, you take 'em out, you watch his conformation. Everything is eye. You can tell when you get one scrub bull, or one lanky bull. You know, no more body.

I: Tell me about the work you were doing at Kahuku Ranch.

I went over there as a cowboy. Every week we do horse feed, or haul salt blocks from Hilo all the way to Ka'u. It's kind of like a routine. We move cattle every day. They have a system where they run about 300 cows at a time. And there's only about 2000, I think. Every paddock we keep on moving. So take us guys about four days. That's what they call intensive grazing.

I: When you say you do cattle work, what does that mean?

Depend, depend. Cattle work means driving – like a big drive, like when you going brand. Every time you brand you drive the whole herd and you wean out, then next day you brand. And then you take out all the old cows, all the dries, that never give baby this past year. That's going slaughterhouse, already. Some guys they keep 'em for two years, but it's not worth it. You might as well raise a replacement heifer, for take over. And then kill that, make money. You know, that's how ranching is.

Before we used to rotate the cattle. You wean out to this paddock, in about two months you move 'em into different paddock. As you coming around, once you reach up here, it's time for slaughter, already. That's how they rotate. It's like a circuit.

I: Then when they reach the end ...

Then that's it. Time for kill. Once they reach almost the end, maybe about two months, they start feeding 'em. And then by the end of the two months, they ready to be killed.

I: When you were at Kahuku Ranch, what were the living conditions?

Oh, was good. They had good ranch housing. They had all the foremans, the cowboys, all in front. Nice. You stay kinda up. And you look down at the stables and the main office. And you get a main corral. Kinda nice. More like Kaupo. Kinda rainy, windy -- that mist rain, eh? When rain sometime, I kinda miss home though. I just think about Maui. But after about six months, I forget about Maui. I Big Island boy. So when I come over here rodeo, I going ride for Big Island.

I: You came back after three and a half years. Then a couple years after you came back to Ulupalakua, they made you foreman? But it sounds like that wasn't a surprise to you.

No. I knew. They was kinda looking up to it. They seen my reference, and they watch me how I work. They knew they had one young foreman. I mean, was kind of hard for give the old guys orders. My dad, my grand-uncle them. Man. I never thought I was going be their foreman. But I no give them hard job.

But they respect me. They do what I tell. And I respect them. I tell 'em, "You gotta do this, pau. Just do it, and you guys pau, pau, go home already." I respect them, they know. They did their thing already. They still do. They work late. I tell 'em, "Nah, just do it. There's another day. Tomorrow another day." They get the idea they gotta finish 'em. Especially my dad. He's always like, "gotta finish." I tell 'em, "Nah dad, no need finish. Tomorrow another day." [dad] "Hah, I gotta finish." He go finish 'em. I just let him do what he like. My mom used to grumble, she tell me, "How come you make him work late?" I tell, "I nevah make him work late. He like work late, that's up to him."

I: (laughing) What were the responsibilities of being foreman?

Oh, a lotta things. You get a lotta responsibility. You gotta respect your boss, your manager. And sometimes you gotta work together with the manager. You gotta say "Hey, what you think boss, we change this way, we try this way?" For he's older than me, and I get better ideas than him. So he kinda, "Yeah, we try 'em. We do it that way." From that time on he kinda leave things over to me.

So that's a lot of responsibility. We had to come on the weekends – I had one assistant foreman, me and him always on call. In case get cattle on the road. No matter where we stay, we gotta go help, get 'em out of the road. Or the boss call me, I call him.

Sometime I stay downtown, he might call me, say, "Okay, go pick up a couple boys." I tell, "I put in the time, cause these boys going grumble if they get no more pay." Us guys get salary, eh? They paid different. So I tell, "Put in the time so they no grumble." And he put in the time. They tell, "Eh man, we thought we was working for free!" But I tell, "Nah, now days is different, man."

You got lotta responsibility. You gotta watch what you doing, you gotta tell the boys, "watch out" -- there's a lot of dangerous things we do, ah. We move a lotta big water tanks, you know, that kind stuff. That's when I start getting nervous, man.

I: So it sounds like when you become foreman, you weren't just running cattle anymore, you were running people, too.

Right. Take a lotta responsibility. You know, everyday is like 24 hours, man. And you no more weekends. Like if I going take vacation, the assistant foreman take over. And he call me, "Eh, Jack...." This that, this that. I tell him, "Well, do the best you can. Do 'em, and then bumbye when I come home, then we figure 'em out." So he don't know when for move the cattle, you know, what time for move the cattle, and how long for stay

over there. I tell 'em, "No worry, get plenty feed, just throw 'em in there, leave 'em, when I come back, we can straighten things up."

I: Did you like it better when you had more responsibility? Or was it harder for you?

I kinda like it, because that was my goal, to get up there and be like my grandpa. My grandpa was the foreman on the ranch -- I wanna be one foreman too.

And I kind of like the bosses. When I ask them, "I like retire," the owner tell me, "You young yet." I tell him, "Yep. I get enough years." He tell me, "Yup, you get enough under your belt." So I retired. They made one big party for me, though. One big farewell party. I mean, the whole shebang. And they gave me this truck, my working truck. Plus they gave me one new house.

I: They took care of you over the years.

Yeah. They really take care. Even health, medical, too. All dakine.

I: Was that something all the ranches did? Or was that something special about Ulupalakua?

No... it's, it's special...with **him**, you know.

I: With Sumner Erdman?

With the dad. Sumner was not -- he wasn't even born. (Chuckles, tenderly) He's just acting, he is. Every time I look him, I smile. He tell, "Why you smiling, chief?" He call me chief. I tell, "Nothing. Just looking at you." He know I stay thinking of something. I like tell him, but ah. Yeah, because when I work this ranch, he no was even thought of. The father was single, when I came back. The father wasn't married to the mom.

He and the mom, his mom, they really good. I respect them, they respect me, and when we see each other, we don't just high nose, you know, they, "Hi, hello, how you," and all that. Me too, I just tell 'em the same thing too, you know.

I: And so, you're saying the family really did help take care.

Oh yeah. They did. I mean, not every ranch do this. I mean, Parker Ranch, you retire, you gotta get outta the house. They don't take care of you. Medical plan, you no more HMSA, man, you down the road. Over here, the, the ranch take care you til you 65. Then you underneath Medicare. And the ranch made one system, where, if medicare no can cover all, the HMSA from the ranch takes over. So medication, hospital bills, all under the ranch. And that was a good thing he did, you know. He take care all the spouses of all the retirees that died.

I: How involved was he in the day to day operations when you were working?

When I first started working on the ranch, he came down. Little while. He worked hard, though. He used to put me on the tractor, he tell me, "Hey, maybe you go up. . . with the tractor. Let's go clean the land." I tell, "What, now we going clean um, boss?" "Yep, burn 'em." He buy you one new torch, and you go ride and just burn that damn land. I tell, "Eh boss, we gotta make fire break." I tell, "Boss I don't think though, this small tractor can handle this. I rather bring down the big tractors." He tell me, "You think going run away?" "Yep, going run away, this fire. Run away in Maui Meadows, boy." And he look, and he just smile. I tell him, "Boss, let's not do that! (laughing)" Afterwards he kinda more stay in the office. He look where all his money coming from, I think.

I: I didn't want to forget to ask you about chasing wild cattle, before we finish.

Oh. It's the horse that counts, you know. It's the horse, and you gotta know what you doing. I mean, you no more horse under your belt, man, you going get hurt. Or the horse going get hurt or killed.

Wild cattle is something. Like you challenging them. I mean, all you get is a rope. And they get horns. And they can do a lotta damage with horns. In my lifetime, I seen lotta horses get horned about like this. They go right underneath the belly right in here, and come outside. Horse walks from me to that greenhouse – down. Dead.

So you gotta watch. You see one bull coming, don't let 'em stay. You better start going already, move out. You kinda run sideways, cause he's coming straight. He going come straight for you, and all you going do is move to the side. And he pass. And he going turn around, and eye you again. And he going come back for you. All you do is move on the side. Even if you get the rope on his head. Till he get tired. If you get him on the neck, alright, mo' bettah. Kinda choke him a little bit, make him learn. Then when he start chasing, you choke 'em, he lay down. But usually we find a tree about that big, about that wide, and we just throw rope, ovah and into the "Y" and then we pin 'em. And then we tie 'em around the head and leave 'em overnight. The next day you go over there, he's wild, but, yeah boy, his neck is soft, man. You can lead him like one cat. All his muscles come all soft.

Sometime we leave 'em two days. The more bad he is, the more long he going stay there. But before take him off the rope, we cut his horns off. We just leave him like that till time for go, then you cut his horn. Then that way, you moving him, and in the end he going bleed little bit, but not that bad.

When we gotta load him up on the truck, that's what really jammed up. It takes a lotta patient. You gotta get lotta guts, too. Hoo, that was a hard job. I used to watch all the old-timers. That's how I learned too, I watch lotta old timers, how they do 'em, ah. And my grand-uncle, he's pretty good, you know.

I: Who was that?

Jim Hapakuka. He taught me mostly about wild cattle. I always stick with him. Cowboy life. He always take me on the far end, every time. That's where you going learn how to run this ranch, he tell me. When I came foreman, he tell me, "See, I told you you going run this ranch!" (laughter).

He teach me a lotta things. So what I do for him, I break in horse. I give him. He like that. Then he get horse. I train couple young horse for him. And he show me how to rope with them. How to handle, knock down, and tie. You know, only one man. Rope 'em, throw 'em down, and get off of your horse, and tie up the back legs. They gotta be fast. I mean, you gotta get down there. Make sure your horse is paying 'em, choking 'em, or the buggah, he no, he no stand up, ah?

I: What was the purpose of catching the wild cattle in the first place?

The purpose is for get rid of them. Cause when they start breeding, the calfs gonna come like them. Sure, the mama is tame, but majority the calves is gonna turn on the dad's side. And then they get wild. Wild cattle all over the place.

Right now, we still get one bunch of wild cattle up in Hawaiian Homes, running around on the top. And the last I rope over there I think was 1989. Rope about three – me and my other nephew. He like to rope. I tell, "You like know what is cattle? Come on, I show you how to rope cattle." He rope. He rope two. He no was too happy, though. He tell, he no like his horse get killed! I tell, "Well, I told you, you gotta wake up. When you rope, you gotta know how to handle your rope." But he was glad, though. He said he never did in his life rope cattle like that. He rope only in the arena. I tell, "Arena and out here, is two different things. Arena, they cannot run away."

Wild cattle was good to eat. They make money out of the wild cattle, because the ranch never take care, they was born and raised on their own. And then when you hamburger them, that's money for the ranch. That's the idea too, was get rid of all them guys.

And then when we got the helicopter was better yet. We bring so many wild cattle inside. We drive the whole works, we drive the whole bunch. We use it for bring 'em into the corral, then the cowboys don't have to go that high up, with the horses. Most time I stay on top the chopper. I know how we going bring 'em in, I let the down foreman know what's coming. I can call 'em on the radio. "They coming on the *makai* side..." He line up all the boys. They fit right into the pen. Then we lock 'em up. Easy.

Actually, it's not the ranch helicopter. So whatever wild cattle we get pay for the helicopter. Before they don't like the idea because just like the ranch was using 'em free. Then we use the wild cattle for pay off. And it does pay off. Pay about four, five times.

I: How many wild cattle you think you brought down over there?

Hoo! Hard for tell. That's a lot of cattle we brought. All the years I work ... I think over one hundred. And before we had lotta cattle down here too, dry-country cattle. Down here is more dangerous, because they all in the cactus. And you gotta get dogs. Up there you cannot take dogs cause the dogs no going last, too high elevation. They die. Down here, as long as they get water, they can handle. And it helps you a lot too for get cattle out of the cactus.

I tell you, you go up the mountain and you rope them, you better make sure your horse is strong, or you gotta get one good rest. Once you chase one wild cattle and he turn on you, you better make sure your horse gets there, or you get that bull whip, and you move out – otherwise your horse going be dead. You carrying saddle.

That's why when we started using helicopter it was good. It was really good, because the horses rest. And the cattle come out a little bit tired, so the same day we bring them down the same day we take them out. We don't leave them overnight. They going jump the corral, they going bust the fence and everything going run out. So once we get them in we try to load them up on the truck, get them home, lock them up, or take them straight to the slaughterhouse. Majority go straight to the slaughterhouse.

Helicopter do a lot of job. That place up there is big. We can drive that paddock with a helicopter in an hour and a half, where we drive with horses take us guys three-quarter day to bring them down. And when they reach down, pau, that's it for the day. You cannot separate them. The next day you separate and you spend another actual day branding them, so the cattle stay in the corral for about three days. So with the helicopter it take two days and boom, boom.

I: When did you start using the helicopter?

Oh, I think it was in the late 70s. I think we was the first guys to use helicopter.

I: What did you think when you first started using it.

Well at first you're not used to riding helicopter, you know what I mean? No more door. You only get one strap. Whoa. Until you get used to it. A lot of guys they ride, they get sick. Gotta bring them down. Sometimes you gotta put them in the pasture, leave them there a little while and pick them up and take them back down. I remember my son, he was trying for throw up, man. I tell him, "don't you throw up!" I tell the pilot, "Put him down. Leave him in the pasture – we'll go chase cattle, bumbye he'll get used to it."

We use shotgun too. Sometimes the damn wild cattle no like move out, yeah? We pop them guys on the legs. Small bee-bees, just for sting them, so they move, they stay with the herd. Sometimes we pop them right on the rump. Oh man you can see blood. Only the wild cattle we do that though. Just shoot in the bushes, you look – whoa, you never know they had about 25, 30 heads underneath there. You cannot see them, until they pop out.

I: When you were going up on horseback, how would you find the cattle?

Before we used to go with dog. You gotta get strong dogs. You gotta get dogs that get a little bit pointer in there. The stamina – they can last. Those kind dogs giong find them. They going bark. Before days no more pigs – you make them bark cattle. They shoo them out, your own bunch. Chase them out, send them to the next guy, keep going. Like running water going down the hill. The boss he look that, the foremans they look at that from below, they happy because they know it's a good drive. You can see a really good drive coming down.

Then when you get close to the corral that's when everything's shaky, eh? Cowboys start running, you gotta go tell them just wait, let them find their way. And once one go through the gate, everybody going follow. They come in slow. The wild cattle all looking back. The more noise you make, the more they look back. The less noise you make, they going be looking in the front, they call that the *makamua*, where the front cattle going. The other guy yell, "hey, the *makamua* going in." So the other guy just push little bit. Then he yell on top, "*mahope, pai pai*" – that means, "behind, push." Then he tell "*hoalu*" that means slack, no push. Just wait.

We have tame cattle up there with them. See, we drive the whole thing. They mix up with the tame cattle. That's why we get lotta wild cattle, cause it breed with them. And their keikis, we don't see them for two years – that's going to be wild cattle already. When they start to get long horns, oh boy. I mean they get horns, man, just like one needle. That catch you, man, you're gone.

I: What was the worst injury that you had?

Broken leg, and collarbone. And my hands. That's why you see my arthritis. All bust. Bust, my old hands. I rope, riding one young horse. The cattle leap, my young horse leap, and I get the slack, yeah? I look my hands – I saw the shape of them all just drop. I thought, wow, this is it. Broke. Sure enough, all bust.

I: How many times did you break your leg?

Two times. Once was compound fracture, like. The bone stick out. I had one in Kahuku and one time over here. Kahuku ranch was the worst one though. I was training one horse, I never know I was running my horse on the cement, he was spinning around – ho, he caught the cement, he slide, he spin like that, right there on the rock. Ho. My leg just went the opposite way. I mean bust. Clean bust. I pull down my pant – ho, the bone sticking out. I thought oh boy. I gotta cut my boots. Cut them off. That was the worst one. And then the other one was over here. That wasn't compound, just crack 'em. Then the rest of my bones over here, all broke over here. Couple times rodeo, but most times it was working. One time polo. That was hard life, though. I look my sons, I tell them, you guys never get the hard knock yet.

I: When did you start training horses?

I started when I was about 18. I used to ride, but I didn't know what I was doing. My dad was telling me what for do and I thought I knew more than my dad. But I came about 18, then I listen my dad. He tell me this the way, that the way.

Yeah, that was hard life. Had seven guys breaking in horses – four were old-timers. All the old-timers, dad guys, they ride the kind horse that's half break, yeah? Us young guys was the gang that would get on top the first time. We have some pictures. Watch us guys flying over the fence, into the pasture. Against the fence, against the trees. We used to laugh, then afterwards we get serious. I mean, the owner no like the idea that we're getting buck off every time, because we're going to get hurt.

The ranch supply the boots. You gotta get the kind boots that could come out of the stirrups. Only when we breaking horse we use them, other than that, we take them off. We use other kind boots. Was hard life. Each of us ride seven horses a day – that's one guy, one day. Man, you only ride three then you got four after lunch. Boy. And then, we no get through work till about four o'clock. Sometimes later then that. Then bottle down the throat. Have a couple beers. Next day, same thing again.

I: How did you train them?

You gotta get it in you. I mean, you gotta get guts. You gotta listen to the old-timer tell you what for do. In your mind you try learn something on your own, you know, what's the easiest way, and how you going get buck off. That's the main thing, is how you going get buck off. Why you learn all that skill.

You not riding the same horse every time, you riding all different horses. Every horse get different style. Some they jump, some they buck, some they jump and buck. Some they go backwards, so you get all. If they go backwards, you gotta think how you going make them not go back. You tie them to the post and you get on. But you better watch out because he going jump. And when he jump he pin you against that corral. So you gotta be kinda fast – get up on them and stick with him. Then you take off the rope and then he start bucking. Once you get on him, he not going go back. All he going do is buck. The idea is you get that habit out. When you put the leg in the stirrup you go back. You gotta train them how to stop that habit. Otherwise you going into the bucking rodeo, eh?

And some horses they come out of good bloodlines. That's the worst kind of horses. If the mother and the father came out of good bloodlines, those are the worst, stupid horses. But once you get them going good, man, you get one ace.

Mines was all da kine horses – condemned. When guys no can ride them, I ride them. And after that I keep them. And long years, maybe three or four years, they become good. Then anybody can ride them. Other than that, only me ride them. Those are the kind of horses I like. Then nobody ask you for a horse. “You want to ride him? Shoot, go ahead. You catch him.”

I had one guy from the mainland, he came. This guy, kinda good cowboy. He just came for vacation. He tell me, “Jack, I wanna ride that horse.” I tell him, “Go ahead. Go catch him.” He do everything alright. He catch him and everything, get on. Buck with him. He tell, “At least it's minor.” I tell, “Yep. Minor.”

We working, separating cattle. First thing, boom, he's down. He tell, “**damn!** Man, he just dumped me!” I said, “I told you. You could ride him this morning, but you gotta watch him. He's 24-hours on alert. Don't you ever sleep on him -- he dump you.”

He dump me how many times. He buck in the stable, coming out here, two times. I was talking story, busy talking story. Boo! Down. Boy, you get mad. You're burning. He going go little ways, again he start. I mean afterwards he kinda cut that habit off where he no buck you, he just spooks. He came one of my ace for catch wild cattle. I figure if he don't buck, he don't bother me, he going catch wild cattle. And if the wild cattle poke him and he die, he deserve it. That was life. I mean I sit on a lotta horses, boy, in my lifetime. Over 400, 500 horses, maybe.

I: Which one was the best one?

Ah, I had couple best. I had one, Buckaroo. Named her Buckaroo because every morning she buck. When she was getting older she came my ace, my top horse. Could rope cattle, could separate cattle, could throw calves. I use her arena, I use her play polo. She broke her leg playing polo. Man, what a waste. But I save her. Actually that was a ranch horse. The ranch said put 'em away, kill her. They don't want to spend money on 'em. I told them, nah, I don't want to kill 'em. I'll spend money on her. I want to keep 'em. So they turned the papers over to me. I kept her, healed her legs up, because I loved that horse.

And I got four colts out of her. Three came like her, came really, really soft. I get one playing polo, he was good. I call him Prince Pupule. He *pupule*, ah, he was **crazy**. I mean, took me almost two years for make him. He going good, then all of a sudden he become crazy. He came a top polo pony. Peter Baldwin bought him, for play polo. He bought him for five grand. He's still around, I think.

These young guys now days, I don't know. They scared get on a horse, I don't know why. I tell them, "you guys like be cowboys, but you no like get on top the horse. You guys like ride the kind horse already made, just get on and rope." They're hard to make, horses. All my nephews, they come from Kihei, Kahului, they don't know what is horses, but they come up here with me, vacation. I put them on the kind half-break. The kind that buck once in a while, buck them off. They tell me, "I no like ride that horse that you gave me last year, you know." I tell, "Why? What's wrong with that horse? How you going learn?" That's what they did. They learn. They came good cowboys.

I: The last question I wanted to ask you was what do you think was the best time of your career?

Maybe about 35 to 43. I was in my prime and getting out of my prime. And they kind of respect me. They know what I used to do and it's been proven that I was a cowboy. Some guys can only do one thing. Me, I can kind of do almost everything. Polo. Ranching. Rodeo. Whatever. That's why my dad always tell me, do the best, what you can. Never mind about somebody else. Do what you can do. Someday, he tell me, someday you'll be there. I tell him, "Nah, dad. I'm there already. Enough." (Laughter).