

## ROY ALLEN WALL, JR.

### Kahua Ranch, Wall Ranch, Hawai'i

Seventy-six years ago Roy Allen Wall, Jr. was born and raised on the Wall Ranch, his family's ranch in Kona. There he learned the cowboy basics from his father, Roy A. Wall Sr., and Pila Kelii, whose employment with the Walls would span four generations.

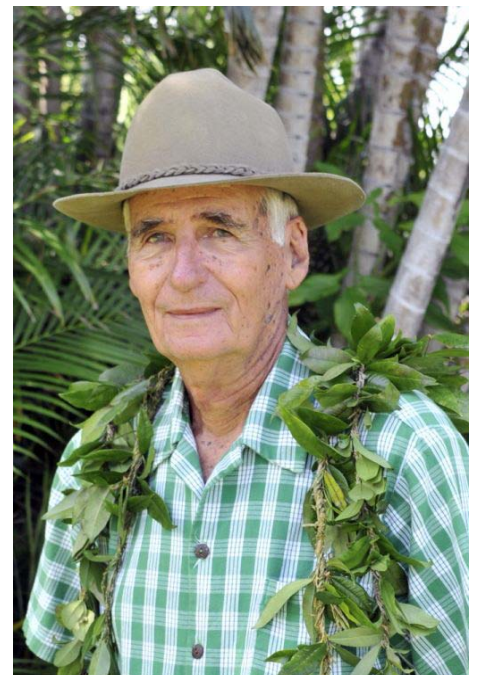


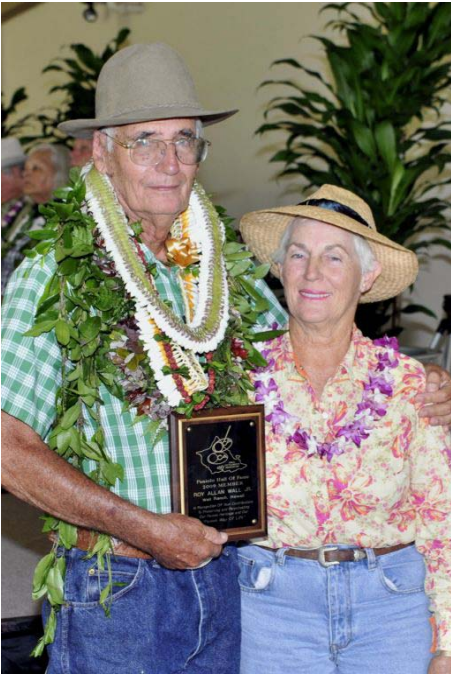
Allen was educated at Punahou and Cal Poly, where he received a degree in Animal Husbandry Science in 1955. There he met his future boss and mentor, Monty Richards. Following service with the US army in Korea, Allen was hired as a bookkeeper for Kahua Ranch. Although Monty's definition of this title was a bit broader than the term implies; Allen remained at Kahua for twenty years, eventually becoming Assistant Manager.

Following the death of his father, he returned to Wall Ranch in 1978. There he developed an independent water system, upgraded his pastures and fenced them for a better rotation system. All his efforts rewarded him with a vastly improved herd. He continues the enterprise with the able assistance of wife Patty and sons Roy and Chance. He is especially proud of the work ethic and interest of his grandchildren.

Allen remembers the final years of shipping cattle out of Keauhou on the SS Hawai'i, often jointly with Palika Ranch. As a boy he recalls driving the *pipi moku* single file on the Beach Trail from Kainaliu Kai to Keauhou. This was a time when almost all ranch work was done the hard way, on horseback and with pack animals. He has not only experienced those old days of Hawaiian ranching, but gone through all the vicissitudes in ranching in Hawai'i right into the new millennium.

Allen still finds time to compose Hawaiian language songs, which he sings while accompanying himself on guitar. He is accomplished in the making of the Hawaiian tree saddle. Through





his life and accomplishments he continues to engender and perpetuate the *paniolo* lifestyle he loves so well.

Photos by Robert Gonzalez

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### **Roy Allen Wall, Jr. Interview** **October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

LW: This is Lynne Wolforth. I am with Roy Allen Wall, Jr. We are doing an oral history for the Paniolo Hall of Fame. We're sitting in Mr. Wall's office in Kainaliu, Hawaii. Okay. We have a really long history to review here. The Wall Ranch is something that's been in operation for how long?

RW: Well, it's been since 1941. But long before that under different names. Under different family names.

LW: And what were those?

RW: Initially Roy, which would go back to the 1860's. And then Tommy White would be from about 1900 to 1941. And then my dad, 1941 to 1978. And myself. since 1978 to the present. So there's been four principals, I guess we'd call them.

LW: Would that be your great grandfather in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

RW: Yes.

LW: And did he settle here then?

RW: He was like Greenwell, Johnson... all of them came about the time of the California gold rush. I guess they went to California first. Whether they made any money or not I don't know but they heard that the monarchy was giving away land in Hawaii. That was attractive. And they all came to

Kona. About the same time. About the time after the Mahele and into the 1850's. And they all started here. And it seems that the people... these Europeans or American that came here and settled, the ones who stayed with livestock prevailed. The ones who tried to go into farming (the original coffee was done by Europeans who came here) got land and tried to raise coffee plantation style. They all either failed or gave up... died... left... whatever. They all didn't stay. So that's a fact. And Greenwell was in both but mainly in ranching so their family stayed, obviously.

LW: So what is it about this area right here that's good for ranching?

RW: Actually we're in the coffee belt right here. The ranching is either further makai or further mauka... high elevation. This would be land that's not suitable for farming. It's either too rocky or too dry. And so cattle or forestry would be the only agricultural uses Mauka.

LW: So your ranch is actually makai?

RW: Some of it. Both mauka and makai.

LW: So how does it go? What's the territory like there?

RW: Well, it's like the *ahupua'a* system. We're on the *ahupua'a* Lehu'ula.

LW: Lehupula?

RW: Lehu'ula. It means red ashes, red cinder. And then next to us the other *ahupua'a* is Kawa Nui, which is right across the next stone wall over here. And of course this middle part is either in residential or coffee. So the ranching it would be either side. "Cause *ahupua'a*s run *makai* to *mauka*.

LW: So your great grandfather got a land grant or a...?

RW: Well they accumulated land two ways. Initially a grant, but then they purchased after that. And they were actually... my great grandparents were tenants of Lunalilo. And when his estate was settled because he had massive debts so his executor sold off practically everything. And so we were able to buy the land they had leased from him. His tenants.

LW: That's your great grandfather?

RW: Yes. William Roy.

LW: William Roy. Okay let's see... so about when was your grandfather born?

RW: My grandfather came from the East... New Jersey. He married a daughter of William Roy.

LW: Oh, I see.

RW: So that's why we're not Roys.

LW: Okay. I see. So he was Wall?

RW: Yes.

LW: And when did he come out then?

RW: I think it was probably around 1880, somewhere around there. I'm not sure of the exact date. And he initially worked for the Shipmans in Hilo. He was the manager of their meat market.

LW: So he was in the business before he met your great grandmother?

RW: Yes, but the Shipmans, you see, are my relatives so I guess that's where he met my grandmother. We're cousins.

LW: Through... who is that through? Kinau was her name? The Shipman connection to you was...?

RW: William Shipman married Mary Johnson who was the half sister of my grandmother. To go back further... you know it gets tangled left and right.

LW: That's okay.

RW: My great great grandfather was John Davis, who was a nephew of Isaac Davis, the King's right hand man. And he married a woman named Kauwe (his full name comprised of 49 letters)... Kahuana. And they had a daughter, Eliza, she first married William Johnson, and then he died and she married William Roy. And so I have lots of half cousins. The Shipmans, the Paris's came from the Johnson side. So the Roys and the Walls came from the Roy side. So that's why this just ties it together, you see.

LW: Yes. So how'd they meet then? 'Cause the Shipmans, of course, are all in Puna.

RW: Yes, but the Shipmans, you see, Mary Shipman was a Johnson, who had inherited property in Kona. And so the Shipmans had property here. I think they've sold everything by now on this side, but initially they did have part of the Johnson property here.

LW: I, of course, am always fascinated by 19<sup>th</sup> century history. So we'll get to your history, too. I probably should move along here. One of the Roy girls marries a Wall. Is that how it goes?

RW: She was the youngest of her generation. Before that, my grandfather, Allen Wall, one of the reasons he came out here from New Jersey is his uncle, Charlie Wall, was one of these people who went to the gold rush and I don't know... he must have made some money or maybe he sold things to the miners. You know the ones who made the most money were the ones who provided the miners with the services. Anyway, he came to Hawai'i earlier, I guess in the 1850's and he got into all kinds of businesses. Merchants selling things to people and he took a lease *mauka* from Kamehameha,

the 5<sup>th</sup>, who owned what is now the land of Kamehameha Schools. He owned the property long before Mrs. Bishop inherited. Anyway, he took a lease on this Keauhou Mauka and started a sheep venture, of all things.

LW: Oh, no kidding.

RW: Then he sold out to Dr. Trousseau, who's another historic figure. You've probably heard his name. He was a physician to Kalakaua and Lunalilo. Then Charlie Wall went into business in Ka'u, I think. A store kind of business and he brought his nephew out to help him. And so after Charlie Wall closed... he had a habit of going through businesses, selling them off and going on to something else. He went to O'ahu, and Allen stayed here and then went to work for Shipman. And then after he and my grandmother were married they moved to Kona and lived with my grandmother's mother. And in 1913 she died and her vast landholdings, which she accumulated from both Johnson and Roy, were divvied up with the children. And so my grandparents then... she had a big house up here. Actually Ku'ulani lives where her house was. And they started a hotel. The Wall Hotel. I don't know... around 1910 or something. They closed it in 1927 because the Interisland Steam Navigation Company opened the Kona Inn in Kailua. Before that they had a need for these small country hotels. Manago is one of the survivors of that era. The tradesmen and the salesmen from Honolulu would come up, they needed a place to stay. And there was tourism then, even on a small scale. People came and traveled. Even when they had horse and carriage they had tourists. But not like today. But anyway, there were adventurous people, I guess, because it was pretty rustic yet. After they closed the hotel, they still had this big establishment. I mean they didn't take in lodgers any more, but they kept up a catering business where people would come and have parties and use the facilities. Not the kind that cater like today, where the caterer comes to you. In this case, people came to them and they provided the dining room and the kitchen and all the stuff. And so she had a big staff of people that she employed doing this. And next door was her sister, who married Thomas White. The Walls had three children. Two girls and a boy. My father was the boy. My grandmother had health problems after she had my father so he was given *hanai*, the Hawaiian... to the Whites. So that's how Wall Ranch kind of came together from the two sisters' property.

LW: And so they were ranching? Somebody was ranching the land?

RW: Oh... Tommy White was running the ranch. My grandparents were mainly in the hotel business although they were milking cows and running chickens and pigs and everything else. So they had a farm combination kind of, to go with that.

LW: But they weren't necessarily in the beef industry.

RW: Well, yes and no. I think they had a few beef cows, too, which they used for home use.

LW: So the sisters... that's another consolidation of land with Allen Wall.

RW: Well, Roy Wall, my father. That's why I'm called Allen because it's a generation skip, you see. We have the same name. And then my son is called Roy... the third, now. So we go that way and we keep kind of... it's not as confusing.

LW: So your father, then is most interested in cattle industry.

RW: Oh yes, he didn't care about the hotel business or anything like that. Actually during the depression, the 1930's, he worked in the court system. He was an administrator in the court. I guess he was a Clerk, basically. In Kailua. Where Hale Halawai is today was the old courthouse. Maybe you've seen pictures of it. You know they had to take it down because it was filled with termites, but it was a wonderful historic building. Really of the old... I mean you look at that and... big lanai all around, two story... big courtroom with the old ceiling fan. Anyway he had to work there to make ends meet and he worked part-time on the ranch with Tommy White. After Tommy White died, he had to give that up and ranch fulltime.

LW: What was ranching like then, do you think? Did your dad talk about it or did you work then as a boy on that ranch with your dad?

RW: Yes. You know as far back as I can remember, we were all involved in it and one of the things we used to do that seems really distant today is the way we handled the cattle. We used to ship them to O'ahu in the old way. On the steamers. And our port was Keauhou. So we trailed the cattle from Kainaliu Kai, which is directly *makai* here, over on the beach trail to Keauhou. And then they were held overnight there and then the steamer came the next morning and they were shipped. Today most of the pictures of this process show it at Kailua... or Kawaihae. But we did it at Keauhou. They did it at Kealakekua Bay and Ka'awaloa; they did it at Ho'okena and the next one would be Ka'alu'alu and Ka'u all the same way.

LW: So would the boat come and stop at every one or did you arrange it?

RW: It was booked ahead of time because they were going to... there were two markets on O'ahu basically, Kahua and Hawai'i Meat. Hawai'i Meat was controlled by Parker Ranch, of course. And the S.S. Humu'ula was under charter to Parker Ranch. The S.S. Hawai'i, her sister ship was the Kahua ship. We shipped on that one. 'Cause we were allied with Kahua.

LW: So you make a date, or you have to plan with neighbor ranches or how did you do it?

RW: You would have to make a booking with the buyer, who is on O'ahu, under these two markets... or marketing organizations.

LW: The market would arrange for the steamer?

RW: I think so. I don't know. I was a kid so I don't know the exact process. But I know it happened but I can't tell you exactly what steps they went through, but I assume that's the way it was done. The slaughter houses on O'ahu would make the shipping arrangements and they'd give you a date and you had to have your cattle there. And my family had a beach house. The Whites had a beach house at Keauhou. We stayed there.

LW: Tell me what you remember... you'd do it all in one day... you'd take three days, you'd get up early in the morning, it was ten cowboys, three cowboys... just your family. How'd it go like that?

RW: Well the process started up the mountain, of course, the cattle were brought down from *mauka* way before. Usually young ones. And then they were fattened *makai*. On the better, more productive land... the grass. And when they were ready, we always cooperated with our Paris cousins. Always. When Billy Paris had his day, the Historical Society put on a party for him. I told them that Billy and I are continuing an association that started with our great grandparents, our grandparents, our parents and now he and I cooperate. Same way. So usually in the shipping we would combine. Maybe they would put in so many head and we would put in so many head. I think the amount we usually shipped was about thirty. And different proportions, you know. So the Paris men and us would... before the shipping date, I think the day before they'd actually bring the cattle to Keauhou and then some of the cowboys actually slept on our lanai overnight... of the house. And then the next morning the ship would come early before dawn. They'd blow their whistle and here it is. (Shows photographs.)

LW: Oh... that's the landing here at Keauhou?

RW: Yeah... and those are the cowboys. Some of them work for Paris, some of them for us.

LW: Is that scanned? That photograph?

RW: Oh, it's everywhere. It's at the Historic Society, it's... a lot of people have that copy now. And this is my Aunt Kapua. Do you know her?

LW: Everybody talks about her. I never did meet her but of course, the first oral history I did in the ranching community here on the Big Island, she came up. So you hear about her almost every interview, too. She was quite a woman.

RW: I always called her Kapua... never Aunt Kapua. Anyway, that's how it was done. Until 1941. That was the last time.

LW: Was that exciting for a boy?

RW: Oh yeah... of course I didn't participate in the shipping process. I was too young but... taking the cattle over there and all, I recall that. And then staying overnight and then watching them. That was the old pier at Keauhou. Right now this area would be the one covered with concrete, where they have that boat landing.

LW: I'm sure that was fabulously exciting to do that. Before I get to your in between years here, tell me about how you could characterize ranching when you were a boy.

RW: Well first of all, until the end of World War II, there were no four wheel drive trucks. Everything was done horseback. We did all our work horseback. We had no chain saws. We used what they referred to as the Japan saw to cut posts, to cut anything. So it's a Japanese saw, which is very

efficient. And a lot of things like they used block and tackle to pull the wire. That's not done today. Or to lift or raise anything heavy was block and tackle. We used donkeys for packing stuff *mauka*. Of course firewood... branding fires were all wood. No more propane and the stuff we have today and no more bulldozers. They used... in addition to the donkeys we had heavy horses. They were part Percheron. Very stout animals that could pull. The ponies we have today, they could never handle the logs and the size of the posts we have. They're just not that kind of animal. These are just some of the things I can think of that are different. Very different.

LW: As a young man, you have gotten a very good education. You're a Punahou grad. And then went on to Cal Poly. And you majored in animal husbandry at Cal Poly. So you knew you were heading towards being a cattleman.

RW: Yes.

LW: Was that education useful? Are you glad you did that?

RW: Oh, yes. Of course.

LW: I guess your generation did that. Your bio says that you met Monty Richards there. He went to Cal Poly, too?

RW: Yes.

LW: Were you just there at the same time or you...?

RW: Yes.

LW: You're not in the same class, are you?

RW: No, no. He's older than I am.

LW: He's a little bit older. It must not be more than four years?

RW: Three or four... two... three. I think three.

LW: What did you use from that?

RW: After I graduated from Cal Poly, I came home for not even a full year and then I was drafted. I went to Korea. Stayed through two winters there. And when I came back, Kahua was looking for a bookkeeper to be Monty's understudy. And so that's how I was hired there. And I stayed there twenty-one years. Till my dad died. Then I came back here.

LW: Did you have to do some managing, too, at Kahua?



RW: Yes. You see, Monty was active in everything and one of his big things was the Board of Regents at UH. So he spent a lot of time away from the ranch. And that was my role then, to fill in.

LW: Your father would not have gotten a college education?

RW: I was the first one in my family. My father just went to high school.

LW: I mean you end up having a professional job as a young adult. But tell me about that kind of school learning about animals.

RW: You learn more on the job. At Kahua I learned quickly that the work entailed more than managing animals and resources. College did not teach me labor relations, the management of people. Kahua still operated under the old feudal system. Feudal system meaning that we did everything for the workers. We paid them in cash, not checks. We counseled them, we buried them. Kahua is a unique place still, but back then it seemed more isolated than the present.

One of the great things that happened in my time there was my reawakening to the *olelo maoli* (Hawaiian language). When I was a kid that was the language the cowboys spoke. My grandmother, her siblings and my father spoke it. But, with one exception, they did not speak it to me... they spoke around me. The exception was my Great Aunt, Elizabeth White. When I was eight or nine, I was left in her care after school each afternoon. Her home was at Kawanui near where I live now. After work my father would collect me to return to Holualoa where we were living at that time. *Aue*, Aunt Lizzie, *poho kona mana'o* (she suffered from an illness of the mind, dementia). After the death of Uncle Tommy she became reclusive and reverted to her birth language. Her sole companion was Kimura, a long time employee of the Whites. He did the cooking, tended the chickens, fed the dog and kept up the yard. Aunt Lizzie addressed him as "Kimula". He had been the sole Japanese working with Uncle Tommy white's Paniolo (Naluahine, Hailama, Walia and Keawe ma). He learned their language, although his manner of speech reflected the Japanese. For instance, *kolohe*, a word often attributed to the behavior of small boys, was pronounced "*korohe*". Somehow, I was able to sort it out when Kimula and Aunt Lizzie were conversing.

When I went to Kahua some of the old guys were retiring or nearing retirement and when they were speaking Hawaiian, I realized I knew just what they were saying. So, knowing my background, they challenged me to speak with them. I had been long from the tongue and I didn't consciously know I knew it, but it came back. I think I am fortunate. There are very few in my generation who speak it. Now they have the Punana Leo and it's being revived, but the way the old folks spoke is different – not as correct, lots of abbreviation. So maybe I am not correct, but anyway, it was an interesting time there.

LW: So the old guys that were retiring... the older cowboys who were retiring... who might those people be? Do you remember any names?

RW: Oh yes. Of course... I remember them all.

LW: Can we get some names down in the record here?

RW: Charlie Akina, John Iokepa, John Kainoa, Peter Kainoa, Frank Kainoa, Clement Ho'opai, Clement Kahelekuli, James Ho'opai... he's still alive. Samson Oleso, Albert De La Cruz, Henry Rafael... Tino Salvador. He was a yardman. Boy, I...

LW: Just to have that record is important. So there were whole families then? I'm trying to get a picture of what it would be like the late 40's or... about what you're talking about?

RW: No, no. My era was the '57. I started in '57.

LW: So even in '57, those families were still speaking Hawaiian at home? Or just on the job?

RW: The older guys were speaking it on the job. I don't know what they talked at home.

LW: And the older guys in '57 would have been how old?

RW: Oh they were in their sixties, I guess. And some of them actually retired but came back when we had cattle work because they still rode horses. So these are retirees but when there's a big job they came back and helped. As long as they were able to they did that. That was common.

LW: Seems like that still happen, yuh?

RW: Yeah. Yeah.

LW: So on the job they would speak Hawaiian to each other?

RW: Yeah. And you know the young guys, I don't know... I think either they had no interest in learning the language or... everybody used the vocabulary. The vocabulary was common. Describing cattle, horses, some of the words were Hawaiian words. But I'm talking about conversation. They didn't do it. My generation lost that. They didn't speak it. They use the vocabulary. Today they still use the vocabulary. You know, it's common. But not the language.

LW: That's interesting, you know. You hear that but I don't get dates on it so what you're providing right now is a little bit like kind of a dateline. Say '57, these old guys were this age and they were using the language.

RW: Not all the time because of course they spoke English or broken English, anyway. Most of them had not even finished high school. At that age, you know... they'd go maybe for a few grades but...

LW: They would have been born before World War I.

RW: Yeah. In the early part of the century. Yeah.

LW: And Hawaiian was still spoken strongly.

RW: Yeah. Of course. Even when I was a kid, when I was ten years old and all the people here were speaking it. I told you my grandmother ran this hotel and when she had big parties, she had on call help. And some of these parties were Hawaiian luau. So they had the Hawaiian food they had to prepare. And so the Hawaiian ladies would come and work in the kitchen and they spoke Hawaiian in the kitchen. And then the men would do the kalua pig outside. They'd do the outside part. So it was spoken when I was a kid. And maybe that's how it got into my brain... to be resurrected later.

LW: So ranching right there in the late '50's... you're kind of saying the '60's is a time of big change on the ranches?

RW: Yes.

LW: Okay. So let's characterize the ranch in the late '50's. Kahua is a big ranch.

RW: It was bigger before. Now it's split. between Pono Holo and Kahua.

LW: You had families that were part of the larger family of the ranch.

RW: Some of the people lived in ranch housing at the ranch. At the headquarters. And others... some lived in Kohala, one lived in Kawaihae... actually two at Kawaihae. And they commuted to work.

LW: So the ranch kind of took care of everybody's needs?

RW: Yeah. They had just kind of phased this out when I came there but they actually had a store keeper in Kohala, Mr. Naito... he had Naito Store there... he would come up every weekend and bring groceries and open up a store, actually, and then the people would... the wives would come and they'd sign for the food and that would be taken out of the paycheck. And then we had poi man that came from Waipio. The Mock Chews... I think that family's still in the poi business. And they'd come up on occasion and sell their poi out of the back of their truck. We killed a beef every week for the employees. And we milked cows and each family got a gallon of milk. Unpasteurized, of course. Just a regular gallon bottle, and they got it four days a week. Not five days because the calves were turned out with the mother for the weekend so there was no milk on Monday. Then the calves were locked up, so there was milk for four days. That was one of the perquisites. And then because we were isolated they had their own gas. They sold gas to their employees. Things like that.

LW: I guess that road was... I mean it's not so good now. Then it must have been isolating, huh?

RW: Now they've paved a little bit of the shoulder but back then it was not. It was just double laned. And all my kids were born in Kohala Hospital. They went to school at HPA. And Monty and I always like to say we paid tuition at HPA for twenty-five years.

LW: 'Cause his kids all went, too, huh?

RW: Yeah. But you know thanks to him we got a special dispensation. We were supposed to board our kids because outside of a certain distance that was a school policy. But Phyllis was the school nurse and Monty was kind of in the... I don't know if he was a trustee at that time but he was influential in the school so we got special treatment, which I always appreciated.

LW: So your kids came home?

RW: Yes.

LW: I boarded my daughter at HPA. Because Hilo was too far.

RW: Yes. Oh, sure, sure. Well we were only twelve miles away.

LW: But twelve miles!

RW: But you know the big change was... now that you mentioned you asked about a ranching change... well you see, when I went there there were still grass fattened cattle. And this all changed around 1962, I think, when they started the feedlots on O'ahu. And so then we were sending feeder cattle there to be fed. And that was a big change.

LW: How does that change things? You send them younger... what's the dynamic there?

RW: Well Kahua also had a ranch at Wai'alua... they leased from Wai'alua Sugar. It was steep above Wai'alua there. And so we send the young weaned calves down there to grow them out, until they were about seven hundred pounds. Then they put them in the feedlot. That was kind of the progression. We also did not only there, but we leased land in Kohala from Kohala Sugar at Kokoiki. And that was another part of it. And they went from there to the feedlot. So that was the big change. Big change.

LW: Previously you had to have pasturage to fatten them and then afterwards you didn't. What kind of change is that?

RW: Well what they did was increase the cow herd so they could produce more cattle, by taking these heavy animals off the grass, taking them away when they were young, you made room for more cows. And so the ranch basically became a cow/calf factory. And we got the feeders off to grass somewhere else and then to the feedlots, so it made room for cows.

LW: You increase your cow herd by taking... what are they called? Is that a new name for them, feeders?

RW: Yeah... feeders, yeah.

LW: You didn't have feeders when you're fattened them on grass?

RW: Well not really because the animals stayed in the same place, basically. And just grew bigger and older and we were subject to the weather, too. When it turned dry there wasn't that much grass. It would take longer to fatten these cattle or get them to a weight where you could ship them to O'ahu to be...

LW: How do you know what weight they are?

RW: We had scales. We would scale the cattle and then estimation, too. Over time you can figure out how much an animal is going to weigh by looking at it. But if you want accurate weights we had a scale.

LW: So you could just kind of eyeball it from experience?

RW: And also condition. The degree of finish... how finished they were.

LW: Afterwards, in '62 the feedlot on O'ahu opens?

RW: Yes.

LW: And that was Hawaii Meat Company?

RW: Yes.

LW: Which is basically Parker Ranch?

RW: Yes. They owned the majority of the stock, yes. But they fed cattle for Kahua. So the Kahua people... people who are allied with Kahua sent their cattle there.

LW: Was Mr. White's operation here similar to what was going on out there?

RW: You mean at Kahua? Yes, it's a smaller scale, of course, it was a smaller place. Same thing but it was my father's time when the feedlot thing changed. He was sending cattle through Kahua. So he would send his feeders, around seven hundred pounds, then they'd go down to Hawai'i Meat to the feedlot.

LW: So the feedlot operation, you'd load up the feeders, at about seven hundred pounds, into trucks?

RW: Yes.

LW: And truck them to...?

RW: Now we're talking transportation. This is a different area. It was around 1949 or... I think '49... the Humu'ula went out of commission. She'd actually been worn out. Twenty years... she'd been twenty years in service between the islands. And she was the last steamer. The others had

already been sold off. Some of them didn't survive World War II. Not that they were sunk or anything, but they were just burnt out by that time. Then the steamer was replaced by the barge. Young Brothers. They started at Kailua. They took down the old wooden wharf and built the concrete pier they have today. And at the end of it they made pens. And then the trucks would bring these cattle there, unload them into the pens, and then there was a chute the barge came alongside. You see, the steamer was... couldn't come up to the pier. Not enough draft. But the barge, being a flat bottom vessel, and the tug, which was a smaller thing, could come to the pier. There was enough draft, enough water there to float them. So that was the change suddenly. At Kailua, the vessel could come to the pier. And so the cattle just walked aboard, into what they called the cattle barge, which was basically a floating pen. It could take three hundred head. There was a problem at Kailua, though. At Kailua, during the winter time, we'd get these surges from the south. And it's an open bay. There's no breakwater. They couldn't hold the barge at the pier. It was bucking, you know. And it was very dangerous because even these big hawsers they tied up with... they're that big around...

LW: You mean the rope that's...

RW: Yeah. They'd snap. And then anybody near, you could be decapitated by that. Or even a truck could be wrecked by it. And I remember watching the tug trying to hold alongside. You know the barge is next to the pier and the tug is next to the barge... trying to hold them there. And finally what they end up doing is taking the cattle and hauling them to Kawaihae. And at the time in the early '50's, the military was starting to... the feds were starting to upgrade Kawaihae Harbor. Because of their Pohakuloa... taking troops and equipment up there. So they were putting federal money into that and expanding the breakwater and making it a safer port. So then the cattle shipping shifted to Kawaihae. So the Kona cattle and cattle from Parker Ranch were trucked down there. And they could do it safely because they were protected more or less from the ocean. Most of the time. There were sometimes severe storms, of course, so the barge couldn't come in. Because it was too rough and the entrance was too narrow. But those were rare. Not like Kona. So then the cattle barge was in service... I don't know... gee, it was... when did they stop that? The EPA caused them to go out of the cattle barge 'cause what they do is after they took the cattle to O'ahu, they'd bring the barge back empty and obviously the tug would shoot it with high pressure hoses to wash the manure away. The EPA decided that was too much pollution. The ocean was too small. And so the ranchers were forced to use roll on, roll off trailers, which would contain all this pollution. Really, I mean... manure is an excellent food. It's just grass, you know. I mean a fish food. But we were forced into that. The tug company loved this because they could use their barges for everything. They didn't have to specialize with a barge that only took cargo one way and had to go the other way empty. Cause it was a cattle pen. So that's how we got to... basically we still have that today... I mean between the outer islands and O'ahu. They go in trailers. And the trailers became cowtainers, which were specialized. And now the cowtainers go to the mainland. And that was the next big change. Because the feedlots went out of business. The feedlot on O'ahu went out of business... was it the early '80's? I'm not sure. Because it was costing too much to bring the feed here. And this even happened on the mainland in a way. California, the Valley used to have these huge feedlots. When I was going to college, they had huge feedlots in the Central Valley. Those all left. They went to where the grain is being produced, to the Southwest, to Texas panhandle, Oklahoma. That's

where they are today and that's where the grain is. And this change kind of happened in Hawai'i, too. Now the cattle go to the feed... where the grain or the feed is. So this is the next big change.

LW: Do you think Kahua changed along with the cattle industry part of it? Did the social part of Kahua change, too, in the '60's then? Was that same system where the ranch took care of all their families, was that still in place in the '60's.

RW: Yes, it was. Up until the '70's. And after that I don't know. You have to ask Monty or somebody. I'm not... it just happened gradually. We got to a point where I no longer went down to the little Bank of Hawai'i and counted all the money out with the teller there. We started paying the men by check. And then they started paying them from the Honolulu office. Alan Gottlieb was the last business manager when I was there. They were doing all this bookkeeping that we'd been doing up at the ranch. So things got more streamlined and modernized in that way.

LW: Okay. Well, you certainly needed fewer people.

RW: Yes.

LW: Like four wheelers and trucks... you didn't need as many cowboy families to do stuff. So in '78, you come back here. So let's talk about that, then. Tell me about your ranch then. Or your father's ranch.

RW: Well one of the big problems I wanted to resolve... and my father kind of started this. I knew we had to get an independent water system. You know the County water system here was developed in around 1960, 1962. Before that everybody had catchment tanks. Every farm, every coffee farm, every residence had their tank... redwood tank next to the house. They caught the water off the roof. The coffee farmers are very conservative, the older generation. They were used to living this way. I don't think the present people could live this way. Well some do, of course, in Ocean View Estates, South Kona, there are a lot of people off the grid. One thing the County water doesn't go more than a quarter mile *mauka* of this road. Everybody that lives above there either has their own catchment tank or they put in a private pump and pump County water up. Well anyway, the ranchers, now, being way *mauka*, and our neighbors, the Greenwells, did put in a pumping system to take the water quite high up there. I think they took it almost to six thousand feet. And then they gravity it down. And we were able to buy that water. But through the years it was very unreliable. There were a lot of breakdowns. I just felt we had to get away from that. So we started developing our own big... I started small by building tank sheds, and not using redwood tanks, which were becoming more and more expensive. And of course, the redwood tank leaks when it dries out. You have to keep it wet. And so if the cattle drink all the water and the tank is empty for a while, the wood opens... the staves open. Then when you try to recharge it again, you waste a lot of water because it has to swell up again. Anyway redwood was becoming more and more expensive. It's used more for houses and stuff now. Not for tanks and industrial use. Now they have other kinds of tanks that are cheaper and more secure. Metal corrugated tanks with liners, fiber glass, all kinds... you can even have concrete tanks if you want to spend that much money. So we started with that, and then we lined our big reservoir and we put in ground catchment. And we have about two acres of ground catchment. When we get a storm, we catch a lot of water. We bank the water.

LW: How high is that then?

RW: That's about forty-two hundred feet.

LW: And you have two acres of catchment?

RW: Yeah.

LW: Wow.

RW: Well, we need it. Our neighbors to the north, Palani Ranch, have somewhat the same system. And the people who had the pumping system, the ones to the south of us, have either gone out of business or downsized and they're just running cattle on a hobby type basis. Because the pumping... you cannot sustain a pumping system with the cost of fuel today. Fuel keeps going up. When they started this kind of thing, pumping water up to those high elevations. Diesel fuel was nineteen cents a gallon. Nineteen cents. And today this off road diesel is three fifty (\$3.50). So it's a big, big, big difference.

LW: So it was a good thing that you decided to create.

RW: That was an accomplishment I thought was my thing I'm most proud of. Doing that, getting that done. It took a few years. We started with tank sheds, smaller, and continued to put in more and finally worked up to where we could line this big pond. And so today, even in the middle of a drought we have water. And we hope we get some winter storms this year. We didn't have any storms last year. Not any. But we're still living on water we banked back two or three years ago.

LW: What kind of cattle do you run?

RW: I have Angus cattle.

LW: And you're doing the same cow/calf operation... is that what you're doing today?

RW: Yes. We recently sent some cattle to the mainland. This drought has been devastating and we kind of have to get back on the track. And once we get rain... we have to have rain. I guess you know that the whole island is under drought. In fact, this County, I believe, is considered the driest place in the whole United States. Maybe not right here. You look out the window, you see green grass. It's raining here in the coffee belt. But outside where the cattle are, no. And if you came through Kohala or Waimea, you see how parched that place is. The Kohala mountains. Kahua... they're having it rough, too, there. And they're sending a lot of cattle to the mainland. And the way that works, you can send them up there and they'll keep them on grass and they can sell them off of grass, or you can take them right through and retain ownership all the way to the meat market. And people do that. There are options that way. But you know it costs a lot of money to get them up there.



LW: Just to get them there.

RW: Yes. Matson. And you have to pay them up front. A lot of the rest of it can be financed, you know.

LW: You mean the pasturage and all that?

RW: Yes.

LW: Feeding them once you get on the mainland.

RW: Yes. Once you get on the mainland you're financing it but...

LW: That you pay out of your profit they get...

RW: Right.

LW: ...slaughtered?

RW: Yes.

LW: Sometimes you can sell them right away, or...

RW: Not there because you have to cover your transportation costs. You sell them too soon you won't make it back... you won't get back what you paid Matson and the truckers in between. You know every step of the way they're riding on a truck somewhere. And Young Brothers. From Kawaihae they have to get on Young Brothers to go to Sand Island, and be staged and get on the container ship. And then they land in... let's say Oakland... and they get on a truck and they're trucked to the Valley for another staging area. And then from there they're trucked to where ever the pasture is. And that sometimes is in Oregon. So you know there's a lot of truck driving. And those truckers have to be paid.

LW: So when you create a big water catchment system like the one you built, do you contract people or did you and your sons do it or what?

RW: We contract with a mainland contractor. Come down here and seal it. Now when we're doing our tank sheds or any carpentry, we do it all ourselves. The one thing we've contracted is the big reservoir and catchment and any big tractor work we do. We contract that... road building or stuff. But the rest of it we do it all ourselves.

LW: Well, I've seen the reservoir at Kahuku. And that's a big one. Is that one bigger or smaller or...?

RW: I don't really know.

LW: I can't remember the figures on it but it was... designed like yours, I think, with big catchment areas so that...

RW: And at high elevations, too, so that the water can gravitate down. You know the cheapest form of energy is gravity, I always say. You never want to get in that situation where you have to pump water. Or haul water. But we've had to haul water to intermediate... I mean partway up *mauka*. Where the reservoir system doesn't come to. But we're fortunate, right across the street at Barbara Nobriga's, they have a water hauling business so we're able to use them. And that's a going business right now in Kona. The trucks are always going... servicing people who like these people who live off the grid, maybe their tanks are too small or they're not used to they don't conserve water or whatever. The time comes when you just don't have enough rain to recharge. You know it's like the people at Ocean View. Sometimes when these newcomers come and buy land there, they think they can get away with just buying a little plastic swimming pool and that will be their water. Well I think they've learned long since that's not the way to go. You want to have a sizeable tank if you're going to have a household. Normal household use. My son lives two miles *mauka* above Kainaliu and they have catchment. But they do things like they take their laundry to a Laundromat. There are ways to stretch your water. Just don't waste it.

LW: So are both your sons involved in the ranch?

RW: That son is a fireman but he does work part-time on the ranch, yes. The other one works full-time.

LW: Do you have *mauka* land, too, that you use for ranching.

RW: Yeah, yeah.

LW: So you have *makai* land... I mean do you have *makai* land, too?

RW: Yeah.

LW: Nowadays, how are you doing that? In the old days you fattened low down. Are you still doing that kind of stuff or how does what you're doing now differ...

RW: What we're doing now is not normal. 'Cause of the drought. We've taken cows down there from *mauka* that normally wouldn't be there. Just so they'll survive. Because *mauka* is really devastated. We're not doing what we usually do at all now.

LW: Now what do you usually do?

RW: That's why I say we've got to get back on track. Well that's right. We grow the cattle out down there. By that I mean you'll get them to a... like heifers that we're going to replace, use them for cows. You know they have to be grown out before they're bred. And any cows or cattle that are too big to ship as feeders, they go down there and are finished so they can go to the local market. That's

the other market. It's not just all going to the mainland or feeders. You always have these other kind of cattle that are going to hamburger and...

LW: Locally you do that?

RW: Yes. Everybody does that. And I'm hoping that... well, we all hope that eventually we can market our cattle here and get away from this business of going to the mainland. But we have to have more infrastructure. We don't have the capacity to process all of the cattle we produce here. And today there's more and more of a demand for grass fed beef. And hamburger that is not adulterated like you buy at CostCo. It comes from the mainland and you don't know what kind of cattle make it up... you know, because it's all mixed. All mixed. And people want healthier beef. So it's growing... it's growing here.

LW: And part of the problem was the waste from the processing plants.

RW: Yes. That's right.

LW: What do you do with the waste from this tiny place?

RW: Well, for one thing, and they're working on this, I understand. You need a rendering plant.

LW: And what do you render?

RW: You render all the waste from the cattle. Not... I'm not talking about the manure. That's not a problem. The manure is not a problem so much as the offal... the innards of the animal. This stuff is all being thrown away now and it is a waste. Because there's a lot of value there. You can convert it into things like soap, pharmaceuticals. There are many things they make from this by-product that have real value. But you have to have that... you have to invest in the equipment and how to do it to realize that. And we don't have it at this point. It all goes into a settling pond or a landfill or something. And we have to have that here. And also we're under a mandate. By we I mean the industry, the processor, to get this done. Because of the environmental problems with it. There is a lot of value in that by-product if it can just be processed, made, manufactured or whatever.

LW: Have you read any of those newer books like The Omnivore's Dilemma?

RW: No.

LW: And there's another one that's probably more about cattle specifically. But you read those books, you want to buy local. You don't want to buy the meat that came from the feedlot cattle.

RW: Yes, that's right.

LW: So it's true, we do... more and more... more and more people want to buy local grass finished...

RW: You know there's another industry. Eggs. The last big egg company was up Kawaihae Road and it went out of business. And now what's happening is local people here are picking up the business. My sister has a flock of a hundred some chickens. And she's selling eggs on the side of the road. And fresh island eggs are in demand because people realize that the one that they buy from, the mainland eggs might have been in transit for twelve or fourteen days. They're old.

LW: Yeah.

RW: Yeah. People don't want them now.

LW: My friends all have... I eat fresh eggs and there's just no comparison but they're a little more expensive.

RW: Oh yes, I'm sure.

LW: What do you think makes a good cattleman?

RW: I think a good cattleman is someone who is a good steward of the land. And takes care of the land. And we try to do that. But we have challenges like this drought. It's certainly a big challenge. There are places where we have the grass bitten down to the dirt. We don't like that, we don't normally do it, but circumstances cause it. We have a problem mauka. I told you my ancestor Charlie Wall brought his sheep here. Well, they're still here, and normally the sheep stay at the higher elevation up on the Kamehameha lands. But this drought has forced them all down on us and our pastures. And they take the grass. They compete with the cattle. So they're really riding us. Plus they get into the forest and eat and destroy the native vegetation. It's terrible. But we know that in past experience when it starts raining again, they'll leave. Because they're wool sheep, they're used to a temperate climate and they won't stay where it's too tropical or too wet. And I hope that they never get down into the lower elevation where they won't leave. But they have left in the past when the droughts end, they go back. But they've done the damage already. And you know sheep are very ruinous. Goats at least will eat guavas and some plants that are noxious and undesirable. But sheep, they take the grass. They do eat the fireweed. That's true. Which is a pest. But they do more damage than good, really. So when I was a kid, heck... of course the climate has changed a lot. If we saw a sheep mauka everybody got excited. They wanted to hunt them and eat them. They were rare. Today nobody's interested in sheep. I guess they've overindulged in them or something, only the young guys want to hunt them now.

LW: I guess people will eat lamb but they won't eat mutton.

RW: No. Well you know, I maintain this. That if the plantation bosses back in the early part of this century... you know these immigrants that came from Asia. If they'd raised sheep and fed their people, there'd be a culture of wanting to eat them now. They like the pigs, you know. Well we don't have the plantation any more but the people who descended from them will still hunt pigs. They like pork but the local population except for a few of the cowboys who lived up there and ate these animals, most of them don't want to eat sheep.

LW: So what challenges are there on the makai land?

RW: Well, drought again.

LW: Do you seed grass any more or is that just something your dads did?

RW: Seed grass?

LW: Yeah.

RW: We did that... that's good to do after a drought. We did that after the big drought in the '70's. We seeded grass *makai*. Might do it again. Depending on how much cover is left. Recently I haven't notice the grass as badly impacted *makai* as *mauka*. We'll just have to see. We did some fence work and made a fence road earlier this year and I tried to bring in cuttings. Not seed, but like kikuyu grass. What they call *pulapula*. The grass with the roots and planting it. But unfortunately the drought didn't end so that didn't take too well. But we'll do it again and it'll get more strength.

LW: So what are your favorite grasses?

RW: Well, you know it's different up there than down here. Down here we have a lot of guinea grass. We have *ekoa*... you know that word?

LW: Yeah, but go ahead.

RW: Ka'u and Kona it's *ekoa*... everywhere else in this state they call it *koa haole*. This is a local culture. So that's the big feed *makai*. Of course we have green panic, which is a type of guinea grass. Smaller. And we have pangola and kikuyu. And mauka it's mainly kikuyu. And some pangola in the middle country. Middle I mean by around three thousand feet. The pangola has a very short season. It's only good from June to September. And then it goes dorman. But the kikuyu lasts longer. People have tried seeding rye grass and other temperate grasses *mauka* but so far there hasn't been anything that can last and produce like kikuyu grass. As long it gets enough rain. Right now it's not a point. We hope that... you know, they say we're due for a wet winter. Well, we hope so. They say after New Year's so we got a few months to go yet. To get through this thing.

LW: So what do you think about the future of ranching in Hawai'i?

RW: Well I would hope that we can resolve this marketing thing. I think that's the big part. Get the cattle sold here. Get away from the mainland.

LW: That takes two sentences to say but it's a whole big thing to...

RW: I know. Every politician talks about this. How we need to be more self sufficient. We've only got a week or so of food in the warehouses. You hear this all the time. But we never seem to make enough progress towards resolving that. They think well, if the ships can't come then the airplanes can come. But if they're dependent on the airplane...

LW: That can be only so big.

RW: Well... and it's going to cost you more. Everything's going to cost more. I don't know. I think things will change. The other thing it depends on, we get a lot of our stuff that comes in, product, comes from foreign countries. The strength of the dollar makes a big difference, too. These imports tend to drop off if the dollar gets too weak. And that's happening now. The dollar is starting to slide. So who knows? It'll be like Australia or New Zealand. They'll find more profitable markets in China and Southeast Asia... Indonesia. That can happen, too. Maybe that stuff won't be coming this way now actually. But who knows?

LW: So we need to make sure we can supplement with our own?

RW: Yeah.

LW: So you're thinking it would start with the rendering... some kind of rendering processing that would take care of some of the problems of slaughtering... I mean processing. Those big processing plants, nobody wants to live next to them. They're horrible smelling and they're just a mess. Where could you put one.? I suppose Big Island is probably the biggest place, right? I don't know.

RW: Well I think there are a lot of places. One place that I think of is... you know where West Hawai'i Concrete is? That's already an industrial place. There's water available there. There's power available there. There is no residential area near there, and not likely to be because nobody wants to live in that kind of a place. They like it up in Waiki'i, yes. Waiki'i is nice. But down there in the dessert, and you know. that's one place it could be. And the other thing that's important is you have reasonably level land. So that when you get a flood or something and you have your containment basin. You're not running it right into the ocean. Like you do if you have kind of a slope and you have some gullies and this stuff overflows. There are a lot of these considerations to think about as to where you would site this type of thing.

LW: Well, I think it should be a project for the current animal husbandry class at Cal Poly.

RW: I don't know. I think they have their problems in California, too.

LW: But there are still boys from here going over there... or girls.

RW: Yes, I'm trying to get my granddaughter to go there.

LW: Is she in high school now?

RW: Yes, she's a senior. I have three seniors graduating. But one is more interested in ranching than the others. So... I don't know... there are problems everywhere. In California they have problems with the water there. In the delta area around Sacramento and Stockton, the farmers are hurting 'cause they're cutting the water off to preserve some fish or something like that.

LW: So you have one granddaughter that may kind of come up behind your sons?

RW: Actually I'm very fortunate. All of my grandchildren are interested, and they have a strong work ethic and they help us during summertime. Doing fence work. And these are girls. And they do the work of men. And we pay them for their summer work. Now where they go to college I don't know. I don't think that's resolved at this point.

LW: Can you remember kind of a point at which there were more women involved in ranching? In the day to day operations? Kapua Heuer was unusual. That's real old time but can you... was it your generation or...

RW: I'm trying to think. No. In my generation, no. Well there's Barbara across the street, my cousin. She's more of a horse person. Well, kind of like her mother. And Pudding, her sister lives in Hilo. You know Pudding?

LW: Yeah, I know Pudding.

RW: That's who Patty was visiting down Kainaliu Beach. She has a house down there. And they're horse people. Not really ranchers but... Sarah Moore down at Kealia is kind of into it. Do you know Sarah?

LW: Does she have a nickname? No.

RW: No, I don't know.

LW: Well I spoke to Tita.

RW: Yeah, you know Tita. She works for Tita.

LW: And how old is she... I mean what generation is she?

RW: She's younger than me but...

LW: Because it could be more like Ku'ulani's generation really, where more girls are involved.

RW: Yes, but they're all horse people. Not really ranchers. Well kind of... Well I have a grandson, too, but he's young. He likes going out on the ranch work but I don't know what... you know...

LW: How old is he?

RW: He's about ten, I think.

LW: Yes, it's hard to know at that age. What they'll really end up focusing on. Well, your experience has crossed many eras like at least three, certainly. Pre-World War II... right after World

War II... the '60's and current. When you look at all of that history, what comes to your mind when I mention that long history to you?

RW: A lot of changes. Every decade had big changes.

LW: I think you described some of them.

RW: Do you know the history of Biogenics in Kohala? After the plantation Kohala Sugar went out of business in 1973, and then the parent company had visions of making it into all kinds of agricultural uses. So it would be cattle, they'd be growing grain, there'd be feedlots and all. They had a group of investors come in and the State and County were falling over each other to get these people favorable loan rates and to encourage them. Well people took advantage of it and so it ended up in a big scandal. But in the meantime they did start a feedlot. We did feed some feed cattle with them. They tried to raise corn and they tried to raise milo. One of the problems with the milo was that the birds came by the millions and by raising this grain, it's like rats, you know, if there's enough food their population will explode. Same thing happened to the birds. So that was a kind of a failure. But it came down to the fact that we couldn't raise the grain cheaply enough here. It was cheaper to import it to feed cattle. So that whole thing collapsed by about 1979 or 1980. It just ended. I think of that day because when I first came back to Kona in 1978, my dad had put cattle in that lot over there. I just came on in time to market them. And then that was the end. There was no more after that. The thing went down. That history is all documented. But that was kind of another attempt to fatten cattle... finish and sell them here. It didn't work. Maybe it didn't work because the people were dishonest... I mean the people that ran it. But they had all kinds of problems, too, with making it... pay.

LW: So did you see any similarities across those decades? Is there anything that stayed the same?

RW: Stayed the same... well, you know a lot of this change was not sudden, but gradually. And so... I think... the other thing is the weather. That's important. It's gotten dryer. It's gotten dryer. Hell, when I was a kid, it was a lot wetter than it is now. And that's why we could survive with the cattle drinking out of waterholes *mauka* and not having any kind of water system. Because it was only in the '60's when these bigger ranches started pumping water up the hill... well, then you wonder what were they doing from the time this kind of operation started back in the middle of the 1800's... but how did they survive up to 1960? Well the answer is the climate. The climate. It was wetter and they had ground water up there and less cattle. And then about the '60's, the weather started to get gradually drier. It's still wetter than it is now. And it's been progressively drier. And I have fifty-one years of rainfall records here so I know exactly what's happened. And this year is one of the driest on record. But it's not only us. They say there's a fire hazard in Volcano National Park. Now that's unheard of. Unheard of for the Volcano to be so dry that there's a fire hazard in the forest. That's never happened. Sure when the lava is flowing down in Puna, yeah. The forest will catch fire on the side sometimes but I mean now they're talking about the whole park, you know. And I imagine a lot of people up there are hauling water. Just try thinking of the Kilauea Lodge just to stay in business.

LW: Hauling water. Crazy.



RW: No, it's not just Puna or here... it's this island. And probably the State.

LW: Well there's not much we can do about the weather.

RW: No. We just have to adapt. And that's been the... you know the constant in ranching is trying to adapt to new conditions.

LW: Well you've been able to kind of maintain a family connection over all those years. That's really impressive.

RW: That's another thing. There are a lot of ranches that have gone out of business or the families have sold out or changed. There's been a lot of them. Here in Kona. Pu'uwa'awa'a, Huehue Ranch... the Greenwells horseshoe One Ranch, our neighbors. Kealakekua Ranch. Gone. The McCandless have fragmented. They're still in business. Kahuku... gone.

LW: You've just named all the big ones.

RW: And when you think of... in Kona... the family... Palani... the Greenwells, still. Us and the cousins, the Paris's... still...

LW: What's the name of their ranch?

RW: Palika Ranch. Billy is a Hall of Fame person, too. He's been interviewed.

LW: Yeah, I've met... I don't know what... I did something. Maybe I did an interview with him for something. Now I can't remember what it was. Oh, because when I did some work with the Shipman stuff 'cause he's a Shipman relative.

RW: Yeah. And then... McCandless with the other family. Tita and her sister.

LW: Maybe I suppose Mr. Greenwell, senior... who's gone now... he said that part of the reason that he was able to maintain Palani was because of his business sense.

RW: Jimmy Greenwell?

LW: No, the older man.

RW: Yeah, Jimmy... the senior? James Greenwell?

LW: Yeah, James.

RW: Yeah, he was the head of Hawai'i Meat Company for many years.

LW: So does your business sense help you keep everything together here?

RW: Yes. But you know, Palani Ranch, they also have their Lani Hau Corporation, which is in Kailua. The big shopping center and all. They have income that supplements the ranching.

LW: Is that the case with your...

RW: I don't have any commercial property, but we have farm land that we lease to coffee farmers. And that certainly helps us to maintain our cattle operation.

LW: Well, it's admirable. To have your family want to keep it going and be so involved. It's a wonderful thing. Any last comments before I...

RW: I don't know I guess... I don't know what else.

LW: I know. We've gone over quite a bit. I almost feel like talking more about the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 'Cause you've done some research and stuff, I can tell.

RW: Yes.

LW: That may not be part of what we're doing for the Cattlemen's Association but you've done that with Ku'ulani before, haven't you?

RW: Yes. Yes. You see, Waihou is a central place in our family. And here again, because of weather... back about the time my great grandmother married Roy, after Johnson had died, they had all these cattle, and I think the weather had gone south down here. It was bad. They needed to get water for their animals. They moved their domicile... their house or where they lived down here, up to Waihou, which is about two miles above Kainaliu. And it's in supposedly the wettest part of Kona. Right now it's not the wettest part of Kona. But there was ground water, seeps, springs... more water there. So Waihou became the homestead. And my grandmother was raised there and some of her siblings. Then when she got that place, she kept it up and they had gardens up there. It was kind of a show place in the old days. Also, in the old way of handling cattle, the animals were running pretty much wild *mauka* and it was open range like the West, no fences, no walls, nothing, before the 1880's. And so the families here, the Greenwells and the Paris... they called themselves the Johnsons (they became the Paris's) and the Roys all cooperated. They would drive the cattle to Waihou where they had large pens. And then they would apportion them and brand them in the same way they did in the old West. They'd sort out the calves and the mothers, and the calf... the ownership of the calf went with the mother so when they saw this calf drinking from this mother, it had say a Greenwell brand on it, then the calf was branded with the Greenwell brand. You see, that way the ownership was apportioned. And if there were any large unbranded cattle they probably had a system where they drew straws or cards or something, you know. Whatever. Jan ken po, yeah? Okay. So that was the old system before then and in 1881... I have a letter from what was called the Fence Commission. They directed William Roy and Henry Greenwell to begin fencing their boundaries. And so this work began in 1880's and went into the early 1900's. And *mauka*, fencing meant a stone wall because there's so much rock around and labor was so cheap. So they built miles of stone wall up there. And then the ranches became separate entities more. And then the

dairy industry started here. What happened was on O'ahu the affluent haoles and the *ali'i* wanted more amenities here. Luxuries. And one of the things they wanted very badly was butter. And of course, the Portuguese were making bread and all and a lot of this cooking required butter. And there's no refrigeration and it was pretty hard to bring butter from the East coast around the Horn and have it arrive in any usable fashion so these dairies started up here. And the reason they were located *mauka* was because of the climate. It's hard to make butter in commercial quantities in a tropical climate. My grandmother used to make butter the old way in the churn. But she had a refrigerator so it went into that. But up *mauka* where you had night time temperatures that went into the 40's, you could make the butter up there and they had a way of packing it in barrels with salt. And it could survive the trip to O'ahu. I don't think anybody who knows how to do that today... I actually think butter with salt and have it not turn rancid. I think it's an art. But anyway, so they had these little dairies up there. And suddenly they had a value added product that beat beef by a mile in terms of what you could get for it. So everybody was in it. The Portuguese, a lot of the dairies were run by Portuguese families on the Greenwell side, basically. On our side they were Japanese and Hawaiians. But around the time of the first World War, or just before, refrigeration came to Hawai'i, and so butter could be made on O'ahu now and closer to the market so dairies went out here. But the refrigeration also made beef more marketable. No longer did you have to salt the beef, you could keep it for a while. So it worked to make the beef more valuable but we lost the butter trade. So that's kind of the history of that. And all the dairy camps *mauka* that had been dairies became stations for the paniolo. Because before we had jeeps, four wheel drive, people had to stay up there. It took too long to ride up there. You couldn't get a day's work done and come home. So they went up and camped and they did their cattle work. Once we got the jeeps, the four wheel drive, nobody would to stay up there. They wanted to come home to their TV's and home cooking.

LW: Makes sense.

RW: Yes. So that's kind of a brief history of... you said 1900's... 1800's.

LW: Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Okay... what's a colorful example of a story about guys who worked for you?

RW: This would be when I was nine or ten years old. This guy worked for the County road crew. And he was a powder man... you know, dynamite. But also he worked part-time for Palika, the Paris Ranch, and my dad as a stone wall... he repaired stone walls. And he was Okinawan. Tall guy. Okinawans, a lot of them are tall, you know. As opposed to the Japanese for some reason. And he was missing fingers on his hands. And that was a result of his fishing method, which was with dynamite. Dynamite the fish. Back then explosives were not really regulated that closely. They were pretty loose about it. Anybody could claim to be a powder man. And they used a lot of dynamite. Today where we use a jackhammer to dig postholes, they'd use powder. They drilled and blew up the rock. Or if you want to get rid of a stump, they didn't have excavators or tractors or anything so dynamite. They blew it up. The most interesting thing about this fellow from a small kid's standpoint... he had only one eye. And he had an empty eye socket. Probably from dynamite. And he kept a bag of marbles, and every day he selected a different marble to put in his eye socket. Now imagine the startling effect of this... I mean to a small kid. You know marbles come in all colors and

combinations and they have these wavy lines in them. Now think of a guy with a red marble with yellow streaks in his eye socket.

LW: It must have been fascinating.

RW: So maybe this is just an example of it.

LW: So who is Pila Keli'i again? You mention him here in your bio.

RW: Pila Puamamane Keli'i is his name. He worked for Wall Ranch for four generations of my family. He began working for Allen Wall, my grandfather. To begin with, this work included milking cows and cutting guava firewood at Mai'aloa with the yard man. The wood was packed down on donkeys to fuel the woodstove and outside boiler at Mahealani. Pila had quit school in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to apprentice to Uncle Johnny Johnson, who was more comfortable speaking the Hawaiian than English and took his gin mixed with strawberry soda.

Naluahine was Pila's cowboy mentor. Pila said Naluahine's training methods included leading unbroken horses with the boys riding. Naluahine would be riding a stout cowhorse with the lead rope snubbed tight to the pommel – the new horse's head held close. Soon Naluahine would slack the rope – he wanted to see if the boys could ride! In his youth, Naluahine was a champion bronc rider.

Pila worked for my father. When I was small I rode with Pila on his rounds to check cattle and land. This was before we had Jeeps and 4-wheel drive trucks. We went far. He showed me how to work the rawhide, repair saddles, shoe the horse, build stonewall and make wire fence. He called me Ale, always patient in his instructions. He told me that when he was going to school sometimes he and his brother Johnnie would have to walk up to Konawaena from Kainaliu Beach, where they were living, when the donkeys ran away.

Pila was not always the model citizen. I told my boys "you knew him in his late years, sober and sedate." *Pau hana*, my parents did not consider him a good influence. He love his beer, wine and song. His younger brothers, Kaiwi and Kuhea played instruments, as did some of his other cohorts. They would not end until they were immobilized by drink. Also it was not good if Kauano'e (Louie Hoomanawanui) came around. He would usually try to provoke a fight (anybody but Pila). Although my father was often critical of Pila's carousing, I know he admired his skills, strength and dexterity. Also Pila was good with animals, never abusing them.

One time, Pila was hunting pigs mauka. He heard dogs barking in the forest. He went in there and came across a pig cave, dog barking inside. He went close – look out! Wolf dog sprang at Pila. He shot it point blank, dropping it at his feet. Lucy! Big German Shepherd! Pila's rifle, a single shot 22. He told us never approach wild dogs unarmed, especially if they are killing an animal. Better bring an automatic weapon!

Pila was a strong man, but slow to anger. My father told me he once decked a notorious bully, much bigger than him, who had been hurting boys in Kainaliu. In the Second World War, he was drafted into the Army. Mauna Roy went in at the same time. At Pila's funeral, Mauna told me some

toughs from Kalihi saw Pila. “Look da country bumpkin.” They continued to harass Pila – *Ka kuhihewa* (wrong move). Pila knocked them down one by one – *pau pilikia!* Mauna was never bothered either afterward because others knew he was Pila’s friend.

After my father died I returned to Kona. At that time I became Pila’s boss. Pila trained by two sons. He showed them how to kalua pigs, trap and raise them in the Hawaiian way. He was a skilled bulldozer operator, trained Roy. Pila was an expert fisherman – throw net and diver.

There was a time when Pila and his brothers saw the *ahu’ua’a* of Lehu’ula and Kawanui as their domain, especially at Kainaliu Kai. This was a vestige of the old *ahupua’a* system – outsiders were not welcome. This was not racial. The Japanese and Filipino farmers who resided within the *ahupua’a* were included, as were Palika and Hooper ma, who were family. As we controlled access from the *mauka* road, others could come in only by the Beach Trail or from the sea. He would lament in his late years of the loss of resources to greedy invaders who came by boat and stripped the riches he and his family had conserved.

After World War Two, Pila did not return immediately to the ranch. He went to work for Honoka’a Sugar Company where he received training in operating equipment. After a couple of years there he came home to Kona.

Years later he would tell me “I no like that place, all pali over there, the water all *lepo*, the fish no good.” Although the pay was better, it was at a time when the union was in the process of organizing the sugar companies. Pila did not identify with the plantation culture. He said “this is my place (Kona), I have to be here. I like one boss only.” Billy Bergin’s book Loyal to the Land illustrates this *mana’o*. We saw this among the cowboys at Kahua also.

Pila continued to work for Wall Ranch twelve years more – mostly part time horseback, less and less as his health declined. I could see that he did not want to give it up. But the day came when he told me “*minamina* I cannot *kokua* now.” I told him that he had given us so much and that he should retire now and *ho’omaha kino* (rest the body). He continued to saddle his horse George and lead his young *mo’opuna* around.

Afterward, Pila stayed in the house, seldom went outside. Toots (Patsy Makahanaloa), Pila’s daughter told me “Papa sick, won’t go to the hospital – *Nuha!*” Dr. Mitchell told the family “he’s starting to let go – he wants to die at home, let him.” One day Toots called me “come, Papa is dying.” I went to Pila’s house and entered the kitchen. Toots and Agnes (wife of Pila) “he doesn’t know you, he doesn’t know us. His mind is ruined. If we give him food, hits our hand. Drinks a little water only.”

In the small dining room Pila sat in front of the TV, not watching it. His gaze was toward the window above. *He’aka ike iāia? Minamina kona mana’o* (What does he see? Regret his state of mind). I sat in the chair next to him. The women continued to say “he doesn’t know you, he doesn’t know anybody, he won’t talk. He only growls at us.” I place my hand on his. “*Pila, eia mai au.*” (I have come.) There was no response. From Toots, “he doesn’t know you!” The minutes passed. Then slowly, he turned toward me. He spoke. “Only now you fellah come?” Then he turned away and spoke no more.

At the time I took this as a rebuke, but Kepa Maly (Hawaiian historian) had a different view. His words “*Nui kealoha*, he waited for you. He had already left his family and friends.” One final time he came back for me – before death. Toots called the day after. “Papa’s gone.” The women continued to insist that Pila did not know me, but he did not speak again.

LW: It’s a moving story.

RW: Yes.