Nana i Na Loea Hula

Kumu Hula: Hu'i Park

: Hullmark

Interviewer: Lovina LePendu

Date: April 27, 1990

('ANO'AI.) 'Ano'ai. (WHAT IS YOUR FULL GIVEN NAME?) My given name is Elizabeth Ma'ihu'i

Brown Park (maiden name was Brown). (DO YOU HAVE A TRANSLATION FOR "MA'I" AND "HU'I"?)

That's a personal given name; it's a dream name that I had when my mother was pregnant for me. She

was six months pregnant when she gave me that, when she had that dream. That's a name that belongs

to my aunt, but she had passed away. (DID SHE GIVE YOU ANY HISTORY ABOUT THAT NAME?) No.

None whatsoever. (SO SHE KEPT IT FOR HERSELF?) Mmhm.

(DO YOU TEACH PRESENTLY?) Yes Ido. (WHERE?) 1674 Lusitana Street. (ABOUT WHAT AGE

ARE YOUR STUDENTS?) My students start from three years old and the kupuna, 74. (FROM THREE TO

74 YEARS OLD?) Mmhm. (WHAT IS THE HALAU'S NAME?) Hu'i Park's Hula Studio. (DO YOU TEACH

BOTH KAHIKO AND AUANA?) Yes. (HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING?) This November

will be 16 years. (CAN YOU TELL ME, IF YOU REMEMBER, WHAT AGE YOU STARTED TO LEARN HULA?)

Eight years old. (HOW ABOUT YOUR FIRST TEACHER?) Ah, Mariah! Mrs. Mariah...! can't remember

her last name, but this was with Parks and Recreation at Lanakila Park. (DID SHE TEACH AT HER HOUSE

OR AT LANAKILA PARK?) At Lanakila Park - Parks and Recreation. (DO YOU REMEMBER HOW LONG

YOU STUDIED UNDER THIS TEACHER?) Well, every summer and then during the weekdays at Likelike

School with Aunty Sally who was teaching hula auana. (THIS IS ANOTHER TEACHER - AUNTY SALLY?)

Sally Woods, yeah. She was Woods at the time, now she's Naluai. At Likelike School - and then

summer time we'd go to the parks. (DID YOU LEARN KAHIKO, AUANA?) Then I went with Joe Kahaulilio

for 14 years - 14 1/2 years. (WITH MARIAH DID YOU LEARN. . .) No kahiko, only auana. Even Aunty

Sally was only agana. Joe Kahaglilio was agana and kahiko. (AND DID YOU LEARN ANY OLI WITH THESE

PEOPLE?) Ah, no, no. (Only the dance?) Yeah.

(DO YOU REMEMBER THE METHODS THEY USED TO HAVE? LIKE MARIAH. DID THEY HAVE A

SPECIAL STYLE OR SOMEBODY ELSE'S STYLE?) No. She was just simple basics - kaholo, kalakaua step,

the kawelu, uehe, hela - simple basic steps. (IT WAS JUST LIKE "ENTERTAINMENT" HULA, YEAH?)

Yeah. (WITH THE BASIC.)

(DO YOU HAVE SPECIAL MEMORIES OR EXPERIENCES THAT YOU HAD WITH ONE OF THESE

KUMU?) With Joseph. (WITH JOE?) Kahaulilio. In what sort of memories? (OH, LIKE THINGS THAT HE HAD SPECIAL THAT REMINDS YOU OF HIS WAY OF TEACHING.) Well, my style of dancing is Joe Kahaulilio's. (YOU KEPT HIS STYLE?) Yeah, even though I danced with Aunty Vicky for 17 years. We all were, somewhat, Joe Kahaulilio's students - most of us. So we still keep his - I do, anyway - keep his styling. And Aunty Vicky was pleased with us keeping his styling.

(DID YOU UNIK! FROM ANY OF THESE TEACHERS?) No. (DID YOU UNIK! FROM ANY OTHER?) I don't believe in uniki nowadays because the rituals are, um. . .not everybody can go through that now anymore.

(WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE A TEACHER?) Well, I didn't realize that I was gonna be a teacher until I was in the travel agency and I was traveling to Hilo one aloha week and Aunty Genoa was in the plane with me and she had a studio up at Kaneali'i - her recording studio - and she wanted somebody to come in and teach, and she asked me. And I told her, "Oh, no! I don't think I want to." Then the second time I went up to Hilo again, again Aunty Genoa. . .because I've travelled all over with Aunty Genoa as a dancer with her. I went all over Japan, Expo. (YOU WERE STILL A DANCER AT THAT TIME?) Yeah. And she asked me, "Hu'i, come." This was in 1974. And at that time my daughter, who was 20 at the time, was going to have a baby, so I thought, "Oh, I'd better stay home, quit my job and help her take care of baby." And so I said yes to _____ in 1974, and she opened up and I started teaching until now. For one year I taught for Aunty Genoa and the second year she turned it over to me as a job. This is why 'til today Aunty Genoa. . . (AT THAT TIME, DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU OPENED? AT YOUR HOME?) No, at the studio, Kaneali'i Street, between Booth and Kaneali'i. Right on the corner. (HER STUDIO?) Yes. It was Genoa Keawe's Hula Studio and I was teaching for her for one year. Then the following year she said, "Hu'i, you can take over the studio." So since then I've been teaching.

(OF ALL YOUR HULA TEACHERS, WHICH ONE HAD THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON YOU?) Well, Aunty Vicky has given us so much. She really instilled grooming, how to be a lady, and "polished" us in other words, she polished us. (EVENTUALLY SHE KEPT UNCLE JOE'S STYLING?) She liked Joe's styling because she wasn't teaching us at the time when we were dancing for her - Joe Kahaulilio was. He was always our chanter. And then when he left for Kaua'i, Kawai came in to chant and George Holokai came

in to chant for us. (AND THIS IS KAWAI. . .) Cockett. And George Holokai used to chant for us also. Because we didn't want to chant in those days, not like now when everybody learns everything. We didn't want to, so. . . (SO YOU HAD A CHANTER.) Yeah, we had. . . (YOU WOULD JUST DANCE IT?) We were just dancers. (SO YOU'RE STYLE IS KEPT TO UNCLE JOE'S AND YOU DIDN'T FORM, LATER ON, YOUR OWN STYLE?) No. Well, some I did, but I take from the stylings of Joe Kahaulilio and the grooming of Aunty Vicky, the polishing of Aunty Vicky. The strictness.

(DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY DIFFICULTIES DURING YOUR HULA CAREER?) Oh, yeah. When you open a studio, you know, there's so much jealousy, yeah? But then you just leave it up to the Lord and then he takes good care of you. And also I must mention when I first taught kahiko I went back to Hoakalei [Kamau'u]. She gave me the basics and she was just like Joe. Back to the basic of "Kawika", "Ulu No Weo", "Pele"; you know, for the helas, for the uehes, for the kaholos. I studied under her at Nu'uanu.

(WHAT GIVES YOU THE MOST JOY IN TEACHING TODAY?) Um, the joy when I accomplish a student that you can maybe win the Keiki Hula, really, even if you never placed in anything; but the respect and dedication of the student and the final product. (SO YOU THINK THAT'S WHAT YOU CONSIDER YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?) And I must say the product of my children. When I take them they all have to start from the beginning – even if they've had hula they have to start from the beginning, because I have to do all the. . .bad habits, yeah - undo bad habits. But my greatest thing is when someone sees a teenager of mine and they want that girl. (YOU ALWAYS END UP LOSING YOUR STUDENTS ALONG THE WAY.) Yes, because someone else wants them. You know who takes my students? Ala. So it's a great challenge for me. (DO YOU THINK IT'S THE STYLING?) No. (OR BECAUSE THE BASIC IS THERE?) Well, yes. And I feel great because they can go on to other things. It's a feather in my cap that someone else wants my student. I would never want somebody else's student - I don't. (BECAUSE YOU WANT THEM TO START FROM THE BEGINNING?) Yeah., beginning. But when my students accomplished and somebody else wants them it's a big feather in my cap. I let them go. It's great. (BUT THEY'RE PICKING UP SOMEBODY WHO'S READY ALREADY.) Yeah. So they're not training them. So they just step right into that line. So they're lucky. So I don't mind that, and it's a feather in my cap. For 10 years I had that student and finally someone wants them and the student come and ask me if they can go. Aunty Ala asked them, because they dance in high school, so Aunty Ala sees that. So she says, "Oh, come and dance with me." And if they ask me, with my blessing they can go because I feel that's a feather in my cap that somebody else liked that work, and they don't have to work hard on them. . . . No sense you hold them back because you're going to have bad vibes and the doors is always wide open for them to leave, but let me know first. Give me that credit. And so she took two girls. It's a feather in my cap, Lovina. I feel happy.

(CAN YOU TALK TO ME ABOUT 'UNIK! AGAIN?) 'Uniki. (YOU DON'T UNIK! AND YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN IT.) I don't believe in 'uniki, and my teachers never believed in 'uniki because, in the old days, you had to live in with the kumu – with the master or the kumu, whichever – and you have to abstain from sex, you have to really be there and learn the hula. Like I remember Eleanor Hiram telling the story of hers, and we cannot go through those things. I had a husband and I'm not going to deprive him of anything, that you're together or if he was fooling around. How can you go through rituals like that? I know a lot of them that do, and yet go through that. I'm sitting in there and they're going through all these ceremonies and I'm laughing to myself because they're hypocrites. (YOU THINK IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO SENSE OF WHAT THE WORD "UNIK!" MEANS?) Yea. They just want to be part of it. (A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK UNIK! IS A PIECE OF PAPER.) Yeah, but then they've never done the real requirements that's required... (BUT AS FAR AS UNIKI, THE WORD "UNIKI", YOU HAVE TO RESEARCH IT, THEN YOU KNOW THE MEANING OF IT.) It's a lot of work. Yes. It's a lot of work to put into it and your heart and your self have to be dedicated to the hula. I am not really dedicated to the hula. There's other things in life that I put first before hula, but this is why I want the kids to learn what I had learned a long time ago. (IT'S A SHARING PROCESS FOR YOU.) Yeah. (IT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT TO GIVE TO OTHER PEOPLE.) Yeah. And a lot of children that's in my studio are non-paying students. So when I give them for ten years and twelve years. . .! have a girl that's with me for 15 years, going on 16 years, and she's never had another hula teacher. And she's satisfied. But I always feel, if anybody wants them in their show, I tell them, "It's your time to go." You know, 'cause there's so many kids coming up and I have to work on them, 'cause if I can't teach them anymore then go on. (WHEN YOU SEE THAT YOUR CHILDREN ARE READY, DO YOU GIVE THEM A SPECIAL CERTIFICATE?) Yes. In the hula auana they have classes of teaching: one implement, one kala'au, one pu'ili, one 'uli'uli, and

the ipu. If they have accomplished that, and on top of that creating their own, I give them a hapa-hable song and they create it and they can teach that class, I think they're ready for an auana, because then when the Hawaiian come - I always give them some Hawaiian basic words, and I teach it to the baby's too - and they will come and we will check it out and if I don't understand it I will go to a source. And I always used to go to Lolena. Lolena is the principal for Punana Leo, and she has always been my friend from way back. So I always went to her to check it out, and if she say "maika'i" then we go on, or I bring her and she listens to them. And I thought graduating them, like this 10th year...no, the 15th year I graduated 6 girls who have been with me from 10 years to 15 years, and they have a certificate of accomplishment that they have accomplished for five, ten, fifteen years – five years they had taught the basics, come in and learned the basics; they had taught them to all these classes, and I feel that that's an accomplishment for them. Then they've created a hapa-haole number which I would give them, simple one but then they would put it into hula. If I feel that it's alright, they create it themselves. (TO YOU IT'S LIKE THEY'RE READY TO BE. . .) Yes, to teach. To auana, just auana, yes. And now, Lovina, we're into my 20th year and that's why they're learning the pahu drum. And every girl, before she graduates and gets a paper, know how to make a ti leaf skirt, know how to make a haku lei, know how to make regular kui lei, and they can do anything that I have taught them. (WHEN ITALK TO OTHER PEOPLE, THE UNIKLEOR THEM SOUNDS LIKE YOUR GRADUATION OF CERTIFICATE. FOR THEM IT'S A WHOLE UNIKI RIGHT THERE.) And I don't ask my girls to abstain from anything. I just ask them, "I don't want no boyfriends around here." (YOU SAW THEM READY. . .) That's right! (DO YOU LOOK INTO THE YEARS THEY'VE PUT IN?) Yes! Oh, yes! They have to put. . . (PUT IN SO MANY YEARS.) Yes. Because I can tell a girl when she's really natural. Okay, then I'll say, "Okay. Why don't you come on Saturday and let's see if you can handle a class." I'll sit in the class, in every class, and when I know they're good, then I will come later on, and then later on I'll come back and watch the class because I want to see how they have improved. It's just like an American teaching school. This is what l do. I don't know about anybody else, but this is my. . .because of Aunty Vicky and Uncle Joe always telling me , I remember , is never to do anything that you're not supposed to do , like go in deep and you don't know how to handle it. Don't do it. (SO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU DON'T WANT TO DO THAT BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW HOW?) Yeah.

(WHAT WOULD BE YOUR ADVICE FOR THE YOUNG HULA TEACHER OR THE STUDENTS THAT ARE INTERESTED IN GOING ON THEIR OWN?) Well, there's a lot of teachers that should go back and learn the kahiko, especially when they cannot create. And then they want to take. . .there's another boy. . .like ! say, one of my girls dance for him at Pearl City. Now he wants her to teach, help him teach keikis, because we are good in the keikis and adults. However, I told the girl, "You cannot teach my numbers. The boy has to create his own. If it was your hula halau opening, fine, I'd say, 'This is yours. You go right ahead because I'm your teacher.' But I am not that boy's teacher. You cannot give him everything that you've learned." I've accomplished all these here, all this material under here and I said, "It takes pain and nightless sleeps to. . . (AND YOU DON'T KNOW THAT, YOU'RE JUST NEW AT IT.) That's right! (AND THEY'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HER.) Yes. I said, "No. Maybe you can help him teach. Teach the simple basics. Remember what I've taught you folks here, what I've learned from my teachers, all those simple basics. Keep the basics. Don't go put anything new." But you know, I cannot give advice to anybody else. I think they have to learn on their own. (...BUT THE OTHER PEOPLE, IT'S THEIRS.) That's right! (YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO TAKE IT.) You're not supposed to do that! (YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE ON YOUR OWN AND BE THE CREATOR OF YOUR OWN.) Lovina, watching Merrie Monarch this year, it's like a repeat from last year, but different people doing it. (YEAH, THEY COPY.) They copy, yes. (BECAUSE THEY THINK THAT, OH, THEY WON WITH THAT, I'M GONNA COPY. MAYBE I'LL WIN.) Yeah. But they're not. They have to get their own. (AND THEN THE PERSON WHO HAD IT JUST LOSE A LOT TOO, BECAUSE...YOU CANNOT COPY EXACTLY.) Cannot. (THERE'S NO WAY. THERE'S FEELING IN THE DANCE...) So what I suggested to my student - and she's a 13 year student - because she was a dancer these kids are all in high school competition, but the teachers see how good they are, they become alaka'is with that teacher. So this is another _____ of Michael Casupang. He opened a studio, he has all these little keiki, don't know how to handle them. So he asked Leialoha. But, see, my students learned, and I tell them, "If you going to do anything don't do it in back of my back. I know everybody on this island, and they will come back and tell me. So you be honest to me and I'll be honest to you." (. . .) So I suggested to her , I said , "You tell Michael , 'Take some classes from Hoakalei .'" Go back to basic. Nevermind all these _____ Go back to basic, then you develop from there. (DON'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW ONES THAT COME. . .) That's right! They go and pay. I went and pay

Hoakalei, you know, and I went to her classes, Ipo as my teacher, but she has the same basics like Hoakalei and Hoakalei would always come in and check - "Are you folks doing alright?" And you know "Kawika", your basic go back. . .no they want to start with new chants. (THEY JUST WANT TO COPY.) Yeah. You cannot do that. (THAT'S NOT WHAT THEIR THINKING OF.) Yeah. You have to use the old traditions. (THEY THINK GOING BACK TO THE BASICS IS. .) Oh, too much. (. . .THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT HULA IS A FEELING OF WORK.) Yeah. You gotta put that hard work. (IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU NEED THAT, IT'S BECAUSE EVERYBODY NEEDS SOME KIND OF ADVICE SOMEWHERE.) That's right. (AND IT DOESN'T HURT TO GO BACK. . .) That's right! See, we were the best dancers in the islands - "Hau'oli Girls". Eh, however, not all of us are teachers. Some of them didn't come. They'll go and help "Na Wai Eha", like my cousin Florence and Mapuana. They were products of Uncle Joe and Aunty Vicky and so is 'Ala, but 'Ala changed her styling. When she dance it's altogether different. But I can't give advice to the young ones, and they won't listen anyway. . . .

(WHAT DO YOU THINK OF HULA KAHIKO OF TODAY?) Well, I feel the same. (HOW ABOUT WHAT YOU SEE?) There's so much creativity in teachers now. Well, everybody looks for creativity and they can do an excellent job on creativity, but I won't follow different steps...

(WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO?) Hula Kahiko, definition? It's telling the story of our old, you know, old chants and. . I would say it would be telling stories through a slower medium. Like the hula auana, well, you can go 240 or you can go real slow or you can go medium. But the kahiko, I like it. I like it. Because I teach girls - I don't teach male dancers and I don't teach keiki kane - but I love girls because I love the girls soft. In my kahiko they are soft, they don't jump all over the place, and that's how I was taught from the beginning one at Lanakila park because Mariah was a woman teacher and she was very soft and so we learned it soft. Even with Uncle Joe; Joe was a man, but we still were soft.

(DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE CHANT?) My favorite chant is "Ka'ililauokekoa". (HOW ABOUT HULA KAHIKO?) That's the...oh, the hula auana you wanted? (NO. I WANTED THE CHANT ITSELF.)
"Ka'ililauokekoa". (YOU LIKE THE KAHIKO BETTER?) Yeah.

(WHAT DO YOU PREFER, HULA KAHIKO OR AUANA?) Well, now that I play music I love auana, but I will do kahiko, but not any old place. I'm like Aunty Vicky in that way. If the people are too

rowdy, we are not doing kahiko because they're not gonna understand and they not gonna respect it.

(YOU LOOK AT YOUR PUBLIC FIRST BEFORE YOU GO FOR IT.) Yes.

(DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL AUANA SONG THAT YOU LIKE?) "Mi Nei" is my favorite song - or "Ku'u Hoa Aloha". You know why "Mi Nei" is so special? When I taught hula auana, that was the first hula auana I created by myself. (SO IT'S SPECIAL FOR YOU IN THAT SENSE?) Mmhm. And that reminds me of my first teenage girls that I had from Roosevelt High School, and they were seniors.

(DO YOU THINK HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT?) Oh, very much so! (WHY?) Because it really helps you knowing the dual meanings of the song, because when you study a song there's a face value and then there's the kaona. (WHAT DO YOU THINK THE KAONA BRINGS INTO THE HULA?) Wonders. For women, you know, for older. . .and they're a older person and you can bring out the kaona; like Monday night's class, I can really, you know, . . .they know because they've been through life, yeah? So you can bring it really on and you can get really naughty, yeah? But with the girls, sometimes the song. . .I could just leave it as a face value. (BUT THEN YOU CAN TEACH THE SAME SONG TO THE TWO DIFFERENT. . .) Yeah. That's why Hawaiian language is important. (THAT'S WHERE THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE COMES IN.) Yeah. Very important. I never thought that way 10 years ago because it was just face. . . (BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW ANY BETTER.) Yeah. As you get older, you need it, you really do.

(WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER ARE HULA MASTERS OF TODAY?) That's a hard question. I feel hula masters should know everything about the hula and what goes with the hula. (IT'S HARD TO POINT TO SOMEBODY AS A HULA MASTER.) Yeah. I mean, so many people are proclaimed hula masters nowadays, you know, and you don't remember them from the days when you were dancing and all of a sudden they're a hula master. I feel if you did the work yourself, someday you will become that hula master. (YOU HAVE TO PROVE YOURSELF.) Yeah! You know everything that pertains to the hula: the clothes that go, if you make those clothes; if you make those leis; you make those implements; you do whatever, you know? In our day we didn't make the implements 'cause you can buy it or trade off, trade off, um...this is very secret. I remember that when I was with Joe

and I was helping him teach every service - armed services - he taught all the bases. And, in turn, he

used to need a lot of implements. Timothy Montgomery was the supplier for implements, and in turn he

would get free implements and he would teach Aunty Lokalia the hula auana and he would get implements, and this is how they were supplying all the . . .see, this is a secret that has never been told because everybody say that they took from Aunty Lokalia. I don't remember most of them. I mean, I've been in the hula many, many, many, many years dancing and going here and going there and I was in every night club. . .with Joe. And I told this once to Wendell, and I said, "You know, how can anybody say that they took from the master? At the time I knew her she wasn't a master." The other one that used to be there teaching her was Eleanor Hiram when we'd go there. And I remember way back, you know, in Kapahulu. And so, you know, half of these things I read of these people I think, "Jesus!" I mean, I'm telling you, Lovina, 'cause you're part of Kalihi-Palama Culture & Arts, and Jan knows about that too. Another one that knows is Pat, and that's why. . . (THAT'S WHAT YOU CONSIDER FOR THE OLD MASTERS, THOSE THAT YOU LOOK UP TO.) I thought, if she lived today, Eleanor Hiram would've been one of them because I have watched her when I was younger, and watching her. I admired her. She did everything. I thought that was really admirable. But to die so young, yeah? (YES.)

(BESIDES THE HULA, ARE YOU INVOLVED IN OTHER THINGS LIKE ART, CULTURE, HAWAIIANA?)

Yes. Cultural at school, in the Hawaiian Studies program. They're changing the name. They're not calling it "Kupuna" anymore. It's "Hawaiian Studies Program". This September [1990] will be changed 'cause we don't have too many kupunas. So we have a lot of makuas. So it's great that they just send it to Hawaiian Studies, and I'd rather they called me at school "Aunty" instead of "Kupuna"!; I'm still young, yeah, although I'm a kupuna! Hawaiian Studies is...we have our agricultural, Anthropology Club that we're in that we go once a year with Kalihi-Palama, yeah? (OH YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT.)

 this kind of stuff, yeah? Where's the simple motions? Usually the hula is the hands, to me, and the eyes that tells the story. (THE BODY DOESN'T TELL IT.) No. It's very suggestive. It's your eyes and your face that really...

(WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WORKSHOPS IN HULA? FOR STUDENTS OR KUMU?) Well, we went to a lot of workshops, when I was just dancing. (BUT TODAY WE DON'T HAVE TOO MANY ANYMORE.) No we don't. (WHAT DO YOU THINK, IS IT. . .) I think it should come back, you know. There's a lot of material that I think we should share with other people that wants it. That's the time to share it and offer it to them. (WHO DO YOU THINK NEEDS THE MOST?) You going put me on the line. (BECAUSE I WILL BE TRYING TO PUT THE WORKSHOPS TOGETHER.) You going put um down in the book? (I DON'T HAVE TO.) There's so many of them.

. . Lovina, "Papalina Lahilahi" - watch them up there. Nobody's dancing. They don't know how to do "Papalina". The only one - Leimomi Ho. We all knew the basic. That's a basic hula. Very basic - we teach here everybody. They know every year Kekua is gonna to play. Kekua Fernandez does that every year. Then the next song is "I Ali'i", everybody's gone. Nobody knows. Momi Ho is still there 'cause we all came from the same school. We all learned the basic. Those songs were taught by us by Joe Kahaulilio. All the basic songs. So how can they call themselves a master and they all disappear. They don't know the song. I've watched that every year, and every year they know those two songs. Create it. . . .