

Interview

KEKUNI BLAISDELL

Reel 1

59:32 bars and tones

(shot 1)

00:00 GENERAL CONVERSATION (**MEDIUM** with stands in shot, **PAN**; **00:05-MEDIUM WIDE** with stands, lights, interviewer; **00:11-00:17-ZOOM IN** to **MEDIUM**)

(shot 2)

00:25 QUESTION: (**MEDIUM**) Would you please tell us something about your background; your birth, your upbringing, your education, and your professional career?

00:34 BLAISDELL: Well, I was born March 11, 1925 ... in one of the old Kapiolani maternity homes, the second one, on Beretania Street where uh, I guess the Mormon Tabernacle is now or ... Foodland. And—

(shot 3)

00:54 QUESTION: And your parents were?

00:56 BLAISDELL: My parents were—my mother was Margeurite Nameleonalani Piltz, P-I-L-T-Z. So her father was Captain George Piltz, of the Dickenson, which was a cable ship that took care of the cables uh, running between here and—mainly between here and ... Midway then Northwest Hawaiian Islands. M-hm. And her mother was a Puuohau from Kohala, who had been uh, orphaned when her parents died, and was hanai by the Queen Liliuokalani. So the Queen sent her to school at the old Kawaiahao Seminary. And she married ... Captain Piltz, and they had six children. And the second child was my mother, Marguerite Piltz, and she married my father, whose name was James Kealiikauahi Akana. But I found out later that his father's name was really Yim. But his wife and the children took the name Akana. And his wife was Martha Keliikipi Wongham from the Island of Maui. And she became a servant of the Queen at the Queen's home at Paokalani in Waikiki. So the Queen provided a little cottage for her and her family on uh ... Ohua, what used to be Ohua Lane, which is a branch of Kalakaua Avenue, where the St. Augustine Church is now. Well, on the corner just Diamond Head of the

church was Aoki Store. And in back of Aoki Store was the cottage where my father and his siblings were born, in a home provided by the Queen, because his mother, my grandmother, was a servant in her Waikiki household. So my father and his siblings grew up there, and were beachboys. My father went to McKinley High School, and my mother went to school there, and I presume that's where they met.

03:34 QUESTION: And your father's name was?

(shot 4)

03:36 BLAISDELL: James Kealiikauahi Akana, A-K-A-N-A.

03:42 QUESTION: Where's the Blaisdell?

03:44 BLAISDELL: **(03:44-03:55-ZOOM IN from MEDIUM to CU)** Ah. [CHUCKLES] My father died when I was in the second grade, and that was in 1932, and in 1940 my mother remarried William Blaisdell. Who at that time was a fireman, later became fire chief. As his father had been; his father was a fire chief. So when I was—when I was a youngster, my father later became fire chief.

04:16 QUESTION: And—

(shot 5)

04:16 BLAISDELL: So he married my mother, and he hanai my sister and me. So my sister was Kahiapo, number one ... child in the family, and I was number two.

04:28 QUESTION: This James Blaisdell, I assume—

04:31 BLAISDELL: William.

04:32 QUESTION: William—

04:32 BLAISDELL: William Blaisdell.

04:33 QUESTION: --Blaisdell; he was related to Neal Blaisdell—

04:34 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes.

04:35 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

04:36 BLAISDELL: That's right; William Kaahi Blaisdell was number two son; Neal was number one son.

04:42 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

04:43 BLAISDELL: There were five boys altogether.

04:45 QUESTION: Neal and—

04:45 BLAISDELL: In that family. And they were all super athletes; all five of them were super athletes.

04:52 QUESTION: So you have a rich pedigree on both your natural father and—

04:56 BLAISDELL: That's—that's right.

04:57 QUESTION: --your hanai father and—

04:58 BLAISDELL: That's right.

04:59 QUESTION: --and your mother's side.

05:00 BLAISDELL: My hanai father was a Blaisdell, and his mother was a Merseberg. And the Mersebergs, kanaka family, related to the Cummins. Cummins family, you know, owned Waiamanalo Plantation.

(shot 6)

05:15 QUESTION: How Hawaiian was your upbringing? Obviously there was Hawaiian on every side of it and every part of it, but how Hawaiian was it? How traditionally **(05:22-05:35-ZOOM IN to tighter CU)** Hawaiian was your upbringing as a kid?

05:28 BLAISDELL: Well, I knew I was kanaka. I knew I wasn't a White man. [CHUCKLES] I—I knew I was Pake, uh-huh, but ... I—I wasn't in that culture.

(shot 7)

05:42 QUESTION: How did you know you were kanaka? I mean, what—

05:45 BLAISDELL: Well, because my ... my grandparents spoke ... the language; both grandmothers fluent. My grandfathers, semi-fluent. But then the next generation, my parents for example, were ... knew only occasional words, and would speak it only when they didn't want us to know what was going on. The message to us in our generation was, you live in the White man's world, in order to survive, better learn White man's ways.

06:20 QUESTION: There were just two of you in your family; two

children.

(shot 8)

06:22 BLAISDELL: At that time; m-hm.

06:24 QUESTION: And did your mother and stepfather have more children?

06:30 BLAISDELL: No, they didn't, but my father had been married previously. And he had three children. He had married Louise Gay of Gay & Robinson family; Kauai. So he had three children. So they're my hanai siblings.

06:44 QUESTION: H-m.

06:45 BLAISDELL: And then my second father died, Fire Chief William Blaisdell ... I'm—I'm sorry; my mother died. My mother died [CHUCKLES] when I was in medical school, and so my second father, Fire Chief Blaisdell, married Minna Cruz Auld, A-U-L-D. And she brought into the family three children. So there were eight of us al—

07:12 QUESTION: Eight in all.

(shot 9)

07:13 BLAISDELL: --together. M-hm.

07:15 QUESTION: Where'd you go to school?

07:18 BLAISDELL: I started at Punahou. But then when my father died in 1932, I was in the second grade; couldn't afford to stay there, so I went to public school. Aliiolani School in Kaimuki, because we lived in Kaimuki at that time. And then I had a year at Iolani, boarding school when it was down here on Nuuanu and Judd Street. Then I went back to public school, and then I was admitted to Kamehameha seventh grade in 1937. From 1937 to 1942, I was at Kamehameha. Graduated in 1942, during the second world war.

(shot 10)

08:04 QUESTION: That's quite an odyssey from Punahou to public school, to Iolani to public school, to Kamehameha. Today, a child would have trouble getting through public school or any of the private schools without some exposure to Hawaiian culture. Before getting to Kamehameha, did you have much exposure to Hawaiian culture in school?

08:29 BLAISDELL: No. No, uh, um, virtually none. You know, just Lei Day, for example. But at that time ... nothing much else. And at

Kamehameha, the official policy of the school at that time with respect to the boys' school, m-m, was to make blue collar workers of us. And it was a military school, and it was a boarding school. So very strict. So we were up with the bugle and asleep at night with taps, the bugle.

09:02 QUESTION: And—

09:03 BLAISDELL: Were in uniform; m-hm.

09:05 QUESTION: Did you take Hawaiian language there?

09:08 BLAISDELL: No; it wasn't taught.

09:10 QUESTION: Hawaiian language wasn't taught at Kamehameha in the 19—

(09:12-09:20-PAN RIGHT, PAN LEFT)

(shot 11)

09:13 BLAISDELL: It wasn't—wasn't taught. M-hm.

09:15 QUESTION: Did they teach any Hawaiian culture courses?

09:17 BLAISDELL: Uh, yes; one ... one member of the faculty, Donald Kilolani Mitchell was into Hawaiian culture and language. So he was the sole exception. And in a sense, he was uh ... he was counter to the official policy of the school, which was to ... to Westernize, Americanize, colonize us to whitewash us.

09:48 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

09:49 BLAISDELL: But—but he—he was the exception. So he uh ... he taught us—uh, he didn't teach us, he just encouraged us to know who we really were. And instead of being ashamed of being kanaka, which was the message which I had when I was a child, taught us to be proud.

(shot 12)

10:13 QUESTION: Where did the message come from? Did it come from your parents, or did it come from you relatives, or did it come from the culture of the—

(shot 13)

10:21 INTERRUPTION/GENERAL CONVERSATION

10:27 QUESTION: You said that when you were growing up you were ... the message was to be ashamed of being a kanaka.

10:36 BLAISDELL: Well, I was ashamed to be, but you know, I was kanaka, I couldn't change that.

10:41 QUESTION: Again, where did that message come from? Did it come from your parents, your relatives, did it come from the outside culture, did it come from peers, did it come from local culture? Where—

10:49 BLAISDELL: Well, it came mainly from school. M-hm; m-hm.

10:53 QUESTION: At Kamehameha.

10:55 BLAISDELL: Uh, even in public school. But at Kamehameha, it—it was very mixed. You know, the official policy was to become Westernized and Americanized. The single exception was Kilolani Mitchell. And of course, we had song contest once a year. But we didn't know what we were singing. We enjoyed it ... you know, but didn't—really didn't understand it.

11:20 QUESTION: No one understood the Hawaiian—

11:22 BLAISDELL: Well, very few; very few.

11:24 QUESTION: Yeah.

11:24 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

(shot 14)

11:26 QUESTION: You mentioned Donald Mitchell. I once had a student named Rudy Mitchell, an older student who was—

11:32 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

11:33 QUESTION: Do you know Rudy?

11:34 BLAISDELL: Yes; he's an anthropologist, isn't he?

11:36 QUESTION: Right.

11:37 BLAISDELL: Used to be out at Waimea—

11:38 QUESTION: Right. But is he related—

11:40 BLAISDELL: I don't think so.

11:41 QUESTION: Oh, you don't.

11:42 BLAISDELL: No; Donald Mitchell was from the Midwest. American, had come out here in 1928 upon um ... completing college. Came out here just for a summer, and then intended to go back to America to go to medical school. But stayed. He fell in love with our people and our land, and our culture, and immersed himself ... in it. Became very close, for example, to Mary Kawena Pukui and Charles King ... and Iolani Luahine, and would bring them up to talk to us, usually once a year or so. And then he was—he became close to uh, Terangi Roa [PHONETIC], Peter Buck, who was director of the Bishop Museum at that time. He was close to Kenneth Emory. M-hm.

(shot 15)

12:35 QUESTION: Did he or did ... did any of your relatives or any of the old-timers, did they ever bemoan the overthrow of the Kingdom, did they ever bemoan becoming a territory of the United States?

12:51 BLAISDELL: We weren't supposed to talk about it. We weren't supposed to. If we asked any questions about it, and the response was uh, niele, kulikuli. You know what niele means? Nosey. M-hm. Kulikuli means don't talk about it. Or my other grandmother, who was very sweet and polite, would say, poina. You know what that means? I've forgotten. Didn't want to talk about it. My uh, my Tutu Mariah Puuohau Piltz, who had been hanai by the Queen, (13:27-13:55-SLOW ZOOM IN to tighter CU) was given uh ... a painting of ku'u hai aloha, the Hawaiian Kingdom flag. I'll show it to you. It's in the room back there. Which she kept it in back of a door in the back parlor. So one didn't see it unless one knew it was there and made a point of looking for it. So the Queen had given her this. But they're not something to be displayed or talked about.

(shot 16)

14:03 QUESTION: Kekuni, do you think that had to do with fear or shame, or ... what was it? Was there a fear of the colonizer, or ...

14:15 BLAISDELL: I don't think it was; I think it was considered some—something of a dark past that needed to be forgotten. That we lived in a different and new world. That's what I think. M-m.

(shot 17)

14:31 QUESTION: You are kanaka maoli.

14:34 BLAISDELL: Yes.

14:35 QUESTION: And—

14:35 BLAISDELL: Indeed. [CHUCKLES]

14:36 QUESTION: What does that mean to you in the larger sense?

14:39 BLAISDELL: Yes; yes. Kanaka means a human being, a person. And maoli means true, real, genuine. Coming from the land, part of the land, returning to the land. And it's the same ... name that the people in Aotearoa refer to them—themselves to use to identify themselves at times, and that is tongati maori [PHONETIC]. And in Tahiti, it's taata maoli [PHONETIC]. Same word; same language; same culture; same people. And as Captain Cook wrote in his journal, same nation. Dispersed over this vast ocean. So the term is a metaphor. It conveys this attachment to what we consider to be very sacred environment. And ... a nation that stretches across at least a third of the globe. And in a sense, therefore, the largest nation in the world. And yet, when I was a—in school, even at Kamehameha ... when we were—looked at that map of the Pacific, we'd say, see those dots up there; these are the Hawaiian Islands. We were made to feel insignificant. But as kanaka maoli, we have a very, very different view. That whole, vast ocean is our homeland, and it does not separate us, as we have been taught, but it binds us. So part of our movement is reconnecting with our Pacific brothers and sisters. And that's part of our movement.

(shot 18)

16:49 QUESTION: That was precisely what that Kalakaua preached that same—

16:54 BLAISDELL: That's right.

16:55 QUESTION: That same thing.

16:56 BLAISDELL: He did, indeed.

16:56 QUESTION: And people laughed at—

16:57 BLAISDELL: He did, indeed.

16:58 QUESTION: The—the—

16:59 BLAISDELL: That's right.

16:59 QUESTION: The haoles here laughed at-

17:00 BLAISDELL: That's right; m-hm. So we've been taught to turn our backs on our brothers and sisters, our cousins in the Pacific, and look only to America ... for inspiration and vision and leadership. So our movement is, in a sense, to do the opposite. M-hm. To connect,

reconnect with all of the peoples ... in the Pacific. All right. And that's why, for example, Hokule'a; the voyaging is so important. Right? And we've learned from the Maori people about kohangareo; m-hm. You know, punana leo, our language, the nest system, we learned from the Maori people.

17:53 QUESTION: You have to explain that a little bit more to me.

17:54 BLAISDELL: Oh, oh.

17:54 QUESTION: I don't—

17:55 BLAISDELL: Well, we have a language immersion program here that is called Punana Leo. Leo is voice. Punana refers to a nest. And it's really a Hawaiianization of the same word in the Maori language, which is kohangareo. It's the same word; it's just pronounced a little differently. And the Maori started ... this way of revitalizing their language by creating in communities language nests where the youngsters learn as their first language ... their native language, rather than something they learn later in school. So that's ... we learned that from the Maori, and we have that program here. And out of that came the immersion language schools in the public schools.

(shot 19)

18:51 QUESTION: I want to go back what you were talking about, the voyaging and the—

18:54 BLAISDELL: Yes.

18:55 QUESTION: --Hokule'a and being separated.

18:56 BLAISDELL: Yes.

18:57 QUESTION: When you were going to Kamehameha or when you were at the University or whenever, do you remember what they taught you about how these islands were peopled?

19:08 BLAISDELL: Uh, yes. There was a—there was a little book ... by Kuykendall, official textbook, History of Hawaii. And that's what we learned. M-hm. And it began with uh ... I think Kamehameha and Captain Cook; something like that.

19:34 QUESTION: It didn't really talk about the—

19:35 BLAISDELL: Yeah; m-hm.

(shot 20)

19:36 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE] at all. When did you first become aware of the issue of statehood? I mean, when did you ever think about it, or did you ever? I mean, was it something that was taught or discussed in schools or in high schools and college? Where did you run into it for the first—

19:59 BLAISDELL: Yes—

20:00 QUESTION: --time?

20:01 BLAISDELL: --uh, I first heard about it when I was at (20:02-20:24-ZOOM IN from CU to EX CU) Kamehameha Schools; Kamehameha School for Boys. That was from 1937 to 1942. So statehood was beginning to become uh ... an issue. And I remember that there were debates on it. And we were taught as part of ... our Americanization uh, that this was favorable. That the—that our islands were ... were second rate. We were second rate students, because—or [CHUCKLES]—citizens because we did not have full viti—voting rights, for example. We didn't elect our governor, and our judges were appointed by the presen—President of the United States, and we had to send a delegate off to the United States Congress, but he didn't have a vote. So you know, we learned in social science that this was unfair, and that the way to restore fairness, equal opportunity for all was to support statehood. So we were caught up in that at that time.

(shot 21)

21:24 QUESTION: Did you ever question it, or did Mr. Mitchell ever question, or do you know anyone who questioned it?

21:29 BLAISDELL: No; mm-mm. No. Mm-mm.

21:33 QUESTION: Um—

21:34 BLAISDELL: Uh, we—we heard about, m-m, Southerners in the United States who didn't like people of color. And that's why they opposed it. And—but that was all the more reason for us to promote it and advocate it.

21:53 QUESTION: That's interesting; that's an interesting [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

21:56 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

(shot 22)

22:01 QUESTION: We've heard at least one person who is Hawaiian argue that Hawaiians have a cultural tendency to remain silent when they disagree with a position society is taking, rather than voice their opposition, and to follow their leaders. How does that argument sound to you?

22:26 BLAISDELL: Well, it de—it depends on the setting. And who the other participants are, in whatever they—the discussion is. So among our own people, we ... instinctively defer always and initially to the elders. They're called upon, for example, fairly regularly to give the opening pule. And the opening pule sets the tone. It gives some idea of what the agenda is, and what the hoped-for outcome is.

(shot 23)

23:12 QUESTION: And pule is prayer?

23:13 BLAISDELL: Pule is prayer; yes. So that's—so that's important; m-hm. And that usually sets the tone, right, for something that's fairly formal. Now if you're talking about just talk-story sessions, well then that's fairly open and uh ... and doesn't have too much structure. But the main principle there is, and in fact even formal, is that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Everyone. So in formal session, usually as you may know, people are asked to introduce themselves, each person introduces themselves; gives background. And that's become more and more customary these days to begin with one's genealogy. But when I was a youngsters, um, we didn't know our genealogy.

24:09 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

24:10 BLAISDELL: We didn't talk about our genea—yeah; not beyond our parents and grandparents.

24:14 QUESTION: So you educated yourself in your genealogy—

24:16 BLAISDELL: Yeah; so I had to learn my genealogy. You know, what I was telling you, I had to learn that. I had to go find out.

24:22 QUESTION: By and large, aside from your parents you had—

24:24 BLAISDELL: Yeah, that's right; that's right; m-hm, m-hm, m-hm, m-hm.

24:28 QUESTION: Um—

24:29 BLAISDELL: Yeah; so you know, you were talking about how one behaves; m-hm. So when we're among ourselves, that's—that's

generally the pattern. We recognize instinctively seniority within a group. And ordinarily, the younger people don't speak until they're—they're asked—

(shot 24)

24:48 QUESTION: In 19—

24:48 BLAISDELL: --to speak.

24:49 QUESTION: --42, you graduated from Kamehameha.

24:51 BLAISDELL: Yes. (24:51-25:02-ZOOM OUT from EX CU to CU)

24:52 QUESTION: And you go to college.

24:53 BLAISDELL: Yes.

24:53 QUESTION: At the University?

24:54 BLAISDELL: Oh, no; not here. The war was on.

24:57 QUESTION: The war was on. So you go to ...

25:01 BLAISDELL: Well, I—I went to the University of Redlands, which is—

25:05 QUESTION: That's right.

25:06 BLAISDELL: Which is another story. See, I was—I was trained to be an electrician at Kamehameha. And at that time, the curriculum ... was such that there was an extra year added ... to our schooling. We had what was called low eleventh—there was seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth. We had low eleventh, high eleventh, and then twelfth; graduation. An extra year. Because during the high eleventh and twelfth years, senior years, we worked every two weeks Downtown in a blue collar job. So I worked at what was then called Hawaiian Pine, the cannery, as an electrician. So I learned how to wind motors and wire ... a building and replace lights. And the idea was that when we graduated from school, we'd have a job. We'd go to work. And that was the ceiling. Now, Homer Barnes, who was the principal in charge at that time, had just begun to introduce some college prep courses. So it was possible to take some courses. But that wasn't the standard pathway. M-hm. So my going away to school and going to medical school was an aberration. No one in my family had ever become a physician. So it happened because of Donald Kilolani Mitchell ... who took me aside when I was a junior or so, and asked me if I'd ever

thought about becoming a doctor. I said, no. Told him what I just told you. And he said, well, you think about it. Then the war came. And he told me, you know, if you go—if you qualify and are admitted to college, pre-medical course to become a doctor, you can be deferred. And so he and Ola [UNINTELLIGIBLE], who was music teacher at Kamehameha at that time, helped me get into the University of Redlands, where all the [UNINTELLIGIBLE] children had gone to school. And my grades were good enough, and I got a little financial support from the school, and I went to work part-time while a student. Always did that. So I went to the University of Redlands.

27:38 QUESTION: You must have been—

27:38 BLAISDELL: During the war—

27:39 QUESTION: --a hell of a—

27:39 BLAISDELL: --two years.

27:39 QUESTION: --student.

27:40 BLAISDELL: Well, I don't know.

27:41 QUESTION: You must have been good.

27:42 BLAISDELL: Well, good enough.

27:43 QUESTION: Good grades.

27:44 BLAISDELL: Good enough. Yeah, good enough to get there. M-hm. And the war was on, so you went to school year around. So after two years, I applied for medical school. And it's usually four years pre-med, but the war was on. And I was accepted by the University of Chicago to go to medical school.

28:02 QUESTION: And didn't you get cold?

28:03 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes. So, I went there after two years, and then the University of Redlands gave me a bachelors degree after I finished my first year at Chicago. So programs were accelerated during the war. And I graduated with an MD degree in December of 1947.

(shot 25)

28:24 QUESTION: And did you have a specialty, or did you specialize
...

28:27 BLAISDELL: That came later.

28:28 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

28:29 BLAISDELL: I be—

28:29 QUESTION: So—

28:29 BLAISDELL: I became an internist and hematologist, blood specialist later.

(shot 26)

28:35 QUESTION: Are you coming back to Hawaii at all in the summertime or anything?

28:39 BLAISDELL: No; the war ... the war was on, and uh ... planes were only beginning to be ... flown. So it wasn't until after I finished medical school that I came back.

28:53 QUESTION: So you were living among the Americans.

28:55 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes.

28:56 QUESTION: What did you think?

28:56 BLAISDELL: I became an American. Oh, yeah; I became an American.

(shot 27)

28:59 QUESTION: No second thoughts or no questioning in the back of your mind that maybe this is not for a kanaka maoli?

29:07 BLAISDELL: No; I had to come back. I had to come back. I knew that I was in a foreign land, and I could not live out my life there. (29:16-29:22-ZOOM IN to tighter CU) So I kept up—

29:20 QUESTION: Why did you know—

29:21 BLAISDELL: --my connection—

29:21 QUESTION: --Kekuni, that you were in a foreign—

29:22 BLAISDELL: Well, the—

29:23 QUESTION: I mean, I know a lot of people that go and stay, and—

29:25 BLAISDELL: Well, that—that—that's the way I am.
[CHUCKLES] That's the way I am.

29:29 QUESTION: M-hm.

29:30 BLAISDELL: That's the way I am. And uh, music means a lot to me, and poetry means a lot to me. So I just sing myself—sing to myself and play the ukulele in order to survive. When it got cold or when it became sweltering, warm, or when I was alone. M-hm.

29:51 QUESTION: Did you ever do anything—

29:55 END

Interview

KEKUNI BLAISDELL

Reel 2

(shot 1)

00:00 GENERAL CONVERSATION (**MEDIUM** w/ **PANS**; **00:40-00:44-ZOOM IN** from **MEDIUM** to **CU**) .

(shot 2)

01:00 QUESTION: (**CU**) Kekuni, in your Kamehameha School class of 1942 yearbook, there's no Kekuni Blaisdell.

01:08 BLAISDELL: There's no Kekuni—

01:08 QUESTION: There's a guy here named—

01:09 BLAISDELL: --Blaisdell.

01:09 QUESTION: --Dick Blaisdell.

01:10 BLAISDELL: That's right.

01:10 QUESTION: How did that come about?

01:11 BLAISDELL: Oh, well, I wanted to be known as Dick; that's a Haole name. I didn't want to be known by a kanaka name. Kekuni just sounded strange. Strange, peculiar; I didn't want to be—isn't that something?

01:25 QUESTION: Did you literally pick Dick out of the air, or—

01:28 BLAISDELL: No, no; I was known—I was known as Dick as a boy.

01:31 QUESTION: But is that part of your name?

01:33 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes.

01:33 QUESTION: Your—

01:34 BLAISDELL: I'm Richard; my official name is Richard.

01:36 QUESTION: On your birth certificate?

01:37 BLAISDELL: Yes; Richard Kekuni Blai—uh, Akana initially, and then changed to Blaisdell.

01:42 QUESTION: Well, I see a few—I'm not sure about that. I see a few Hawaiian names, but almost everybody—there's Henry and Donald, and Goldie, and Thomas and—

01:55 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

01:56 QUESTION: And so forth. But I don't see many Hawaiian first names here.

01:59 BLAISDELL: Right.

02:00 QUESTION: Almost everybody did what ...

02:02 BLAISDELL: Yeah. That's right. When we went to—went to school, even in grade school, we had to have a Western name. If we didn't, we were given one.

(shot 3)

02:11 QUESTION: You go to the University of Redlands, then you go to medical school at the University of Chicago.

02:17 BLAISDELL: Right.

02:19 QUESTION: And you come home in 1951? No.

02:27 BLAISDELL: Well, I come home for—for a visit after I graduate; m-hm. But then I go back to America to intern at the Hopkins in Baltimore. And then a year at Tulane as a medical resident in Charity Hospital. Which was segregated Black country then. M-hm. And then the war was on; Korean War. And so I joined the um, regular Army because ... I had no pay when I was an intern. So I wanted to support myself. I joined the Army, regular Army. And then after a year at Tulane, I went to Fort Sam Houston, went into the regular Army for four years. Had a year in research in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and then went to Japan and Korea and Taiwan ... before I was able to get out of the Army. And then went back to America to complete my medical residency. Well, in—first, I had a year of pathology at Duke, and then went back to Chicago to finish medical residency, had a fellowship in hematology and joined the faculty there, and it was then that I was invited to go to the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission—

03:58 QUESTION: What year are we—

03:58 BLAISDELL: --in Hiroshima. And Nagasaki. So that was 19
...

04:09 QUESTION: Fifty—

04:10 BLAISDELL: '57, m-hm.

04:13 QUESTION: 1957—

04:14 BLAISDELL: '57, '59; two years.

(shot 4)

04:18 QUESTION: You were not a physician—you were not—

04:20 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes.

04:21 QUESTION: --a physician when you were in the Army?

04:23 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes. I was a medical officer. (04:25-04:55-
ZOOM OUT from CU to MEDIUM CU)

04:25 QUESTION: A medical—

04:25 BLAISDELL: Oh, yeah.

04:26 QUESTION: --officer.

04:26 BLAISDELL: Oh, yeah; I was in Korea, I was in a battalion.

04:30 QUESTION: Was there fighting going on?

04:31 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes; every night a round would come in,
casualties. Oh, yeah.

04:36 QUESTION: So you were a MASH kinda guy?

04:38 BLAISDELL: Yes, but we were north of MASH. MASH was
down in back of us; we were up front in the hills.

04:47 QUESTION: That had to be traumatizing. Was it? That had to
be scary.

04:49 BLAISDELL: That's war. That's war.

(shot 5)

04:52 QUESTION: And you were a captain then, or ...

04:54 BLAISDELL: Uh-huh.

04:55 QUESTION: Was that your rank, captain?

04:56 BLAISDELL: Captain; and later became a major. M-hm; I was a captain then.

05:00 QUESTION: So you're treating guys coming straight in off the—

05:02 BLAISDELL: Yeah.

05:02 QUESTION: --off the lines.

05:03 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

05:03 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

05:04 BLAISDELL: And if they're severe, we had to send them to MASH.

(shot 6)

05:08 QUESTION: And then in—so tell me about that Hiroshima experience. You were there for two years and you were dealing with people who were suffering the after—

05:17 BLAISDELL: Yes.

05:18 QUESTION: --effects of the bombing and—

05:19 BLAISDELL: Hiro—Hiroshima and Nagasaki; yeah.

05:21 QUESTION: Was that—

05:21 BLAISDELL: Atomic bomb—

05:22 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

05:22 BLAISDELL: --survivors. Very.

05:24 QUESTION: How so?

05:31 BLAISDELL: Well, the setting itself. So although the city had been rebuilt, they had intentionally kept the so-called Hiroshima Dome still there as—as a relic. And there was a museum there. And the people there were very, very, very conscious of this disaster and the implications towards peace. So very anti-war. Although Japan was a base for ... supporting the Korean War. So there were hospitals in Japan ... US military hospitals taking care of the casualties that came from ... Korea. But anyway, I went back there later; Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. So we—our job was to regularly examine these survivors for so-called delayed or latent, late ... effects of radiation exposure. And so a rise in the incidence of leukemia had already been reported when I was there, so I studied other marrow disorders such as myelodysplasia, and a peculiar leukopenia, that is declining white cell counts, blood white cell counts that occurred, still unexplained. And at that time, thyroid cancer was beginning to be described among the exposed survivors.

(shot 7)

07:18 QUESTION: For a sensitive man, a poet and a musician, that had to bother you.

07:24 BLAISDELL: Oh, of course. Of course.

07:27 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

07:28 BLAISDELL: Of course. And I—and I readily identified with the people there ... who ... their country was occupied by the United States, and now was being used by the United States to fight a war ... across the channel in Korea.

07:48 QUESTION: Did you feel that then?

07:50 BLAISDELL: Of course. Indeed. And I was uh, you know, I'd—I'd come out of the Army and had been down to Taiwan and was part of that. And so I felt very uneasy, you know, conflict within myself. Being an American, military man, and still in a war machine. M-hm. Indeed.

(shot 8)

08:16 QUESTION: Were you married by this time?

08:18 BLAISDELL: Yeah.

08:19 QUESTION: And you were taking—

08:20 BLAISDELL: When I came back—

08:20 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

08:21 BLAISDELL: --I was married.

08:22 QUESTION: You were?

08:23 BLAISDELL: I wa—I was not married.

08:24 QUESTION: Oh, I see.

08:25 BLAISDELL: So I hanai, I adopted my son, who you see out there, before I was married. And I can—

08:30 QUESTION: Was he an orphan?

08:32 BLAISDELL: He was an orphan; m-hm. He was an orphan; m-m. M-hm.

08:36 QUESTION: So you come home with a son—

08:37 BLAISDELL: I come home with a boy who speaks only Japanese, nihongo; Take. That's right. My family's—oh, what's all this about?

08:46 QUESTION: How old was he?

08:47 BLAISDELL: He was uh ... almost ... yeah, I guess he was a little over two years by then.

08:54 QUESTION: Uh-huh.

08:54 BLAISDELL: 'Cause I'd been there two years. M-hm. Then I took him to Chicago. So went back to Chicago.

09:02 QUESTION: Single father.

09:03 BLAISDELL: Single father. Found a nurse, University of Chicago, Medical Center, Irene Saito, who was a Waimanalo girl ... who had completed nursing training at St. Francis Hospital here, and then had gone away to America for some graduate training ... in psychiatry in St. Louis, and then had taken a job in Chicago at the university, and that's where I met her. That's where we were married.

(shot 9)

09:34 QUESTION: When do you eventually get back here?

09:37 BLAISDELL: So then I came back in 1966. So in 1965 ... the University of Hawaii here had decided to start a medical school. And the first dean was Windsor Cutting, who had been dean at Stanford. So he was experienced.

10:03 QUESTION: And he's—

10:04 BLAISDELL: And he needed a chair of the Department of Medicine. And he had heard about me, because I had received uh ... a [UNINTELLIGIBLE] ... award, a faculty award.

10:21 QUESTION: At?

10:22 BLAISDELL: When I was at the University of Chicago. And he was one of the judges selecting candidates, and that's how he knew about me. So he called me up and asked me if I was interested, and if so, could I meet him at O'Hare Airport, 'cause he was stopping over there for two hours. So we chatted there, and it looked good. And then St. Francis Hospital at that time invited me out as a visiting professor, even before we had the medical school started. So I got to ...

10:57 QUESTION: You were—

10:57 BLAISDELL: --look at what was going on.

(shot 10)

10:59 QUESTION: With all due respect, as a kanaka maoli—

11:04 BLAISDELL: Yes.

11:04 QUESTION: --you spent an awful lot of time in America.

11:06 BLAISDELL: That's right. That's right.

11:08 QUESTION: I mean, you're there—after you get back from Hiroshima—

11:11 BLAISDELL: I was really bleached.

11:12 QUESTION: --in 1969, you're there for seven years.

11:15 BLAISDELL: Yes. Altogether, I was away for over twenty years.

11:18 QUESTION: Twenty years—

(shot 11)

11:19 BLAISDELL: From 1942 to 1966; altogether, I was away that—some years in ... in Asia. M-hm.

11:33 QUESTION: And then you begin teaching at the University of Hawaii.

11:37 BLAISDELL: Yeah; we start the medical school here.

11:39 QUESTION: In 1966.

11:41 BLAISDELL: '66.

11:42 QUESTION: And you will remain on that faculty from 1966 until?

(shot 12)

11:47 BLAISDELL: 'Til now.

11:51 QUESTION: The Hawaiian renaissance to my mind, I can remember teaching Pacific islands history out of a book by Sharpe, I think it was, who basically didn't buy the idea of Polynesians being able to navigate—

12:07 BLAISDELL: That's right.

12:08 QUESTION: I remember my excitement in—

12:09 BLAISDELL: That's right.

12:09 QUESTION: --1976 when I watched the boat come back from Tahiti and Nathan Wong was on it, and as it docked. And I guess that was not '78, actually [UNINTELLIGIBLE]. Anyway, how exciting that was. What happened to you? When did your consciousness about Hawaiian pride begin to develop?

12:32 BLAISDELL: Well, I was ... I always identified as a kanaka. And you know, and I was always interested in—in the literature, reading about this. I remember when I first read the Queen's Story ... by Hawaii's Queen, for example, and how profoundly moved I was by that, and aware of the injustice of it all. But I was too colonized, caught up in the colonial establishment ... to get myself to do anything about it, until 1983. After that, I was involved in a number of—or several cultural projects. For example, I was one of the founding members of Hui Hanai, which is supporting advisory community organization to the Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center. And that's how I became ... learned more about the

plight of our people there, and I was in on the publication of the Queen's Songbook. And I was active in the ... Hawaiian Civic Clubs at that time. But I never stepped out of ... propriety [CHUCKLES] at that time; m-hm. Until—

14:04 QUESTION: The end of propriety came in—

14:06 BLAISDELL: In 1983, when I was asked to help draft the health section of the Native Hawaiian Study Commission Report. And there, (14:18-14:55-SLOW ZOOM IN from MEDIUM CU to CU) I was just stunned—

14:20 QUESTION: Explain—

14:21 BLAISDELL: --to find how serious our health plight was. The shortest life expectancy, highest mortality rates for the major causes of death, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. And as well as infections. M-hm. And high infant mortality rates at that time. And then discovered that it wasn't confined to health. You know, we have the highest rates for incarceration in the prisons, highest rates for dropout from the schools. So it was across the board. And we were landless. And how come we were landless? We call this our homeland and yet we don't have land. Foreigners have our land. And I began to read and teach myself, and talk about others how important land is to us. And therefore, the importance of reviving this term, this label for identifying ourselves as kanaka maoli. So in a very important sense, we are not Americans, and we are not Native Americans. And in a very important sense, we are not even Hawaiians or Native Hawaiians, with an upper class capital N or a lower case n, because those are all colonial terms. (16:00) And in the Congress of the United States, they have definitions, each one of those terms, that degrade us, subordinate us. We're called indigenous now. And in the Akaka Bill, we're indigenous to the United States. Which to me and to us is falsification of history and who we are. We are not indigenous to the United States. We're indigenous to our homeland. This is our homeland. We are a distinct people and nation; separate ... from the United States.

(16:46) The United States invaded our country in 1893; has occupied our country since 1898, and has not left. Colonized us; and the official definition of colonialism in the United Nations is foreign domination, exploitation, subjugation. And it's an international crime. And the United States has admitted in the Apology Resolution of 1993 ... that they conspired or they con—participated in conspiring, invading ... our homeland in order to support ... the Haole oligarchy, which took our government and our lands. The United States ack—acknowledges its guilt.

(shot 13)

17:53 QUESTION: So statehood is simply a legal definition of this

colonization, in your mind?

18:00 BLAISDELL: Statehood is really part of ... furthering colonization ... in an attempt to legitimize ... this process and ... permanently ... control ... our lands and our lives for what is now United States global economic and military ambitions. We're just pawns in that ... process.

(shot 14)

18:58 QUESTION: Okay; I'm gonna be devil's advocate.

19:00 BLAISDELL: Sure.

19:00 QUESTION: Let me do this. You received your undergraduate education,

(19:06-19:15-ZOOM OUT to wider CU) your medical education, even your first faint glimpse of Hawaiian consciousness from a—

19:15 BLAISDELL: From a Haole; from a non-kanaka.

19:16 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

19:18 BLAISDELL: That's right.

19:19 QUESTION: You went to and were honored by great universities on the mainland, the University of Chicago as a faculty member, and Duke and so forth. Your wife was—you were able to meet your wife—

19:40 BLAISDELL: Uh-huh.

19:40 QUESTION: You were able to get your son because you—

19:42 BLAISDELL: Yeah.

19:43 QUESTION: --you were taken to a place by Americans. You were—

19:46 BLAISDELL: Right.

19:47 QUESTION: You were—the medical school that you have worked with for the last twenty-some years is a—

19:55 BLAISDELL: Thirty-eight years.

19:56 QUESTION: --would have ever have existed without statehood and being part of the United States and it's named after one the architects of statehood—

20:04 BLAISDELL: That's right.

20:05 QUESTION: --John A. Burns.

20:06 BLAISDELL: That's right.

20:07 QUESTION: Are there no benefits to a kanaka maoli for being part of the United States and—

20:12 BLAISDELL: Of course.

20:13 QUESTION: --being an American?

20:13 BLAISDELL: Of course, there are. Undeniably so. Of course. And I'm grateful; forever grateful. Cannot be denied. In a very important sense, were it not for Kilolani Mitchell, a non-kanaka, an American ...

20:35 (OFFSCREEN VOICE): Okay.

20:35 BLAISDELL: --I wouldn't have gone—I would not have gone to medical school.

20:38 GENERAL CONVERSATION

20:40 BLAISDELL: M-hm; you're right. M-hm.

20:44 GENERAL CONVERSATION

(shot 15)

20:48 BLAISDELL: (20:48-20:53-crew member crosses frame; 20:58-21:03-crew member crosses back; sound rough) And I was helped along the way. Every place I went, I was helped by a non-kanaka. Wouldn't have ... wouldn't have been able to do it without them. Indeed. And so America and the American system does indeed have virtues. Noble ones. Which I ardently support and respect, and have become part of our modern kanaka maoli culture. No doubt about it. M-hm.

(shot 16)

21:32 QUESTION: There's a but coming here, Kekuni. I know there's a but. But.

21:37 BLAISDELL: But you know, there are two main reasons for the

kanaka maoli re—uh, movement. And that is, we kanaka maoli continue to be on the bottom. And in some ways, the situation is getting worse; not better.

(21:52-22:01-ZOOM IN to tighter CU) In some ways, it's getting better, **(21:58-22:13-offscreen papers rustle)** but in other ways it's not. In other words, we're still feeling pain. And the second main reason is ... that it's unjust. M-hm. That's not only a violation of kanaka maoli law, which I haven't talked about ... and international law, but United States law. The United States is violating its own law, its own constitution ... by its illegal presence ... in our homeland. And therefore, you know, we call upon the United States to just abide and honor its own laws, including international law. And since this is our homeland, and you—and they occupy our homeland, under international law, the occupier has to respect the host law. So you need to respect our laws.

(shot 17)

23:20 QUESTION: So what would you have the United States do?

23:23 BLAISDELL: So ... we call upon—we have called upon the United States, m-m, especially since our kanaka maoli tribunal in 1993, August of 1993 ... where we had a panel of ... seven judges, m-hm ... who found the United States guilty of nine main char—charges. And one of the recommendations was that the United States, as well as the world community, officially recognize our inherent sovereignty and right to self-determination. Another recommendation was that the United States ... return all of our lands without delay. And that the United States ... begin to negotiate us as equals ... through the executive and state department branches. Not under the Department of Interior. Which is what the Akaka Bill calls for. **(25:18)** So in 1946, a year after the founding of the United Nations ... our homeland called Hawaii was put on the United Nations list of non-self-governing territories. That is that we were officially designated as a colony. Colony means foreign domination, exploitation, subjugation. And therefore, eligible for decolonization. And the decolonization process means—includes ... self-determination. That is, the colonized people, in this case kanaka maoli, have the right to self-determination. Which in the United Nations is a process of education, and eventually choosing par—proper vote with international community supervision three main options. One, remaining incorporated within the United States. **(26:45-27:03-SLOW ZOOM IN to tighter CU)** Two, independence. Three ... is something between those two. Such as enjoyed by Micronesian states. Now, the United Nations in 1946 and thereafter set up this decolonization process. And scores of colonies in Africa and Asia, for example even in the Pacific, underwent decolonization, became independent. And when the United States State Department and representatives at the UN began to realize that we were on the list for decolonization ... they immediately thwarted that. In fact, we

were not even informed of this. All right, so what I'm telling you now, I did not learn at the Kamehameha Schools.

28:13 QUESTION: Kekuni—yeah. I guess they have to do something.

28:17 END

Interview

KEKUNI BLAISDELL

Reel 3

(shot 1)

00:02 GENERAL CONVERSATION (CU)

00:12 QUESTION: (CU) Now, your argument, then, is that if 1959, the passage of the statehood bill, the plebiscite on statehood was not a valid election according to international law. What would you have had instead?

00:28 BLAISDELL: M-hm. The United States should have abided by ... cha—Chapter 11 ... Article 73 of the United Nations Charter. M-hm. Which ... under which the United States was designated as the administrative authority for territories that were non-self-governing, which is a way of saying a colony. And that this was a sacred trust, the charter says that, a sacred trust, administering—administering authority as a sacred trust to prepare these people for self-government. That's what it said at that time. In later resolutions, the term self-determination was used. The United States was supposed to do that. Didn't. Instead, it went ahead with this fraudulent ... statehood process, because they wanted ... Hawaii to be removed from that list of colonies. And by becoming a state, would be removed, m-hm, and then the United States could call this process, and the United States did call this process self-determination. But it was not self-determined.

(shot 2)

02:04 QUESTION: You would have had a ballot with ...

02:06 BLAISDELL: Three options. M-hm.

02:11 QUESTION: Remain an incorporated, independence, or something in between.

02:16 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

02:17 QUESTION: Like the Micronesian Islands, where again, the United States was the administrative authority, but ultimately they would choose something else.

02:24 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

02:25 QUESTION: You say they, the United States wanted to take this off the ...

02:32 BLAISDELL: List; uh-huh.

02:33 QUESTION: But some of the people who were involved in this, they went back to what you were taught at Kamehameha School in the 1930s. I mean, former Governor Ariyoshi or Dan Inouye, or many other people would say, that was really about first class citizenship, and that's why they wanted statehood. They wanted first class citizenship.

02:57 BLAISDELL: Right; very good. And of course, I don't have any argument on that; all right. So especially the Asian settlers here in our homeland, under the Big Five, the Haole oligarchy ... under their heel ... were kept there ... so of course, support, equal opportunity, equal representation, and vote.

(03:27-03:46-ZOOM OUT from CU to MEDIUM CU)

Of course. So were not against that at all. M-hm, and were aware that the Haole oligarchy began to change too, from being against statehood to realizing that for economic reasons, the sugar designation for example, m-hm, was a benefit to become a state. So even the Honolulu Advertiser ... came to support statehood. And the two parties vied with each other to see which could get most credit for it.

(shot 3)

04:08 INTERRUPTION/GENERAL CONVERSATION

(shot 4)

04:41 BLAISDELL: There—there was a blackout ... complete blackout.

04:47 QUESTION: If you had had a—

04:48 BLAISDELL: Of this information.

04:49 QUESTION: Let's say in 1959, the ballot had said statehood for Hawaii, independence, or something else.

05:04 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

05:06 QUESTION: Do you believe that the people of Hawaii, the population of Hawaii, the electorate of Hawaii in 1959 would have voted for something other than statehood?

05:20 BLAISDELL: No, because they weren't informed. That's what I'm saying. The blackout. All right; the United States had a sacred trust to prepare the people for self-government. That's in ... Chapter 11, Article 73 of the United Nations Charter, drafted in 1945. And when do I first learn about that? In 1989. And most people here, uh, in this room don't even know about it. Most of our own people today don't even know about it. Still not taught.

(shot 5)

06:11 QUESTION: And thus, the vote in which—it was seventeen to one for statehood.

06:16 BLAISDELL: That's right.

06:18 QUESTION: You would argue that the ballot was fraudulent and—

06:21 BLAISDELL: The whole process was.

06:22 QUESTION: And the whole process was fraudulent.

06:23 BLAISDELL: The whole process was. All right; and it be—you know, even before that ballot, this was really a referendum on a bill that had already been passed by Congress. And we colonized people had no input on that. So in a sense, it's after the fact. Congress has already passed it. And you have a referendum to approve it.

(shot 6)

07:02 QUESTION: But colonized people—I mean, people of Hawaiian background and ancestry took part in the election of the Delegate to Congress, and back in the territorial period—

07:14 BLAISDELL: Yeah; of course.

07:15 QUESTION: --Prince Kuhio introduced a—

07:16 BLAISDELL: Of course; that's correct.

07:17 QUESTION: --a statehood bill and—

07:18 BLAISDELL: Yes; yes. M-hm. Yeah. And why? Because Kalakaua under that system began to realize the Big Five were still in control. The President of the United States appointed a governor and

never appointed a kanaka.

(07:38-offscreen TELEPHONE RING) So this was one way to try to see if we could relieve the plight of our people. So even Robert Wilcox at one time ...

07:52 QUESTION: [UNINTELLIGIBLE]

07:53 BLAISDELL: --advocated statehood.

07:55 GENERAL CONVERSATION

(shot 7)

08:10 BLAISDELL: Uh, do you understand what I'm saying? The United States had a responsibility to educate ... the people here about this, and intentionally did not. Instead of that, only when mainly the Asian settlers here began to ... assert themselves for equal opportunity, only then did they finally respond and support it. But for their own personal reasons. Meanwhile, kanaka maoli still out of the picture.

(shot 8)

08:56 QUESTION: Kekuni?

08:57 BLAISDELL: Yes.

08:58 QUESTION: I have never—

08:58 GENERAL CONVERSATION

09:07 QUESTION: I have nothing but sympathy for the argument, I know the history, you helped me to understand the legal rationale. But I also spent some time studying politics [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

09:27 BLAISDELL: Oh, yes; you're—you're the expert.

09:31 QUESTION: I've spent some studying.

09:33 BLAISDELL: Yeah; and—

09:34 QUESTION: And I can't—

09:34 BLAISDELL: --you've written about it.

09:35 QUESTION: I can't for the life of me figure out politically how

statehood, with all the education that men as brilliant as you and as the Hawaiian Studies Center and (10:00-PAN DOWN and ZOOM IN from subject's face to

EX CU of subject's hands) as so many leaders in the Hawaiian movement, how statehood can be undone, or how the people of Hawaii, whether you define that in the broader sense or only as kanaka maoli, can be—you might get me to vote for independence.

10:22 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

10:23 QUESTION: Or for something other than statehood.

10:25 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

10:25 QUESTION: Knowing the history and liking Hawaii more than I like Bush.

10:30 BLAISDELL: M-hm.

10:32 QUESTION: But I'm not sure you could get more than about three percent of us, or two percent of us.

10:38 BLAISDELL: I think you're right.

10:39 QUESTION: So how is this ever going to be—

10:41 BLAISDELL: I think you're right.

10:43 QUESTION: --undone?

10:44 BLAISDELL: I think you're right. You know the answer. You're an educator. (10:48-PAN UP from EX CU of subject's hands to CU of face) That's what education is for. That's why we are teachers. And we have a responsibility as teachers to uh, bring out all the evidence and lay it out there. So that people can decide. But the United States intentionally blocked it. Uh, intentionally. So what I'm saying is, let's throw light on it. Let's open the doors, open the windows, turn on the lights. You know. Malamalama is supposed to mean radiating knowledge, uh, the torch. Symbol or the icon of the University. Well, University, let's do it. And not just Manoa, all right, and not just the universities and community colleges, but get it down into all the schools. I mean, all it is, is the truth. What's so bad about the truth? [CHUCKLES] But ... it's dangerous; it's going to shake up this establishment. Just think. If our homeland—we call it kapae 'aina. You know about that?

12:22 QUESTION: Yeah.

12:23 BLAISDELL: M-hm. If our homeland does become independent ... that means we have power [UNINTELLIGIBLE] military and economic machine here. Which of course, brings up some other very important points that we haven't discussed, that need to be discussed.

(shot 9)

12:46 QUESTION: Namely?

12:49 BLAISDELL: Namely that what is going on under the rubric of statehood ... meaning Hawaii is a state of the United States is ... a self-destructive process. M-m. We are exploiting ... our people (13:18-13:26-ZOOM IN to tighter CU) and our sacred environment. You know, our—our environment to us is not just the environment. [CHANT] You ever heard that?

13:46 QUESTION: No.

13:47 BLAISDELL: Probably not. Probably not; most people ... probably not. Or if they have heard it, they probably don't know what it's about. They're probably the most profound ... words and mana'o, ideas in the whole corpus of our cultural literature. Those are the opening lines of kumulipo. You've heard of kumulipo. Maybe the oldest chant. Certainly the longest chant, when it was finally recorded at the time of our King Kalakaua, and first translated into English by our Queen when she was imprisoned. Well, the opening lines refer to the hot earth turning against changing sky. But the metaphor is the mating of (14:43-14:58-ZOOM OUT from CU to MEDIUM CU) our sky father Wakea with Papa, our earth mother. And out of that mating comes everything in our cosmos. And since we all have—everything has the same past, that means everything, all are related. Not only related, but we're ohana, because we all have the same ... past. Not only that, but everything is living. You know, when I went to school, even at Kamehameha, I was taught even by my science teacher, Kilolani Mitchell, that this [TAPPING] noho, this chair and this here was inanimate. That animals and plants had life, but nothing else. But kanaka believe that everything has life. This chair is living. It can feel, (15:47-15:55-ZOOM OUT from MEDIUM CU to MEDIUM) it's conscious. Not only that, it communicates. It's sending off messages. See these reflections here; those are messages. It can hear what we're saying here. M-m. We were told this was superstitious bunk. But that's a basic ... belief. Everything is living, everything conscious, everything communicated. In a sense, everything's sacred. Therefore ... we cannot knowingly destroy, contaminate, pollute. And that's what we're doing. The population continues to go up, up, up, up, up, up, up.

More and more automobiles, more and more buildings, more and more roads; more and more destruction. Our people, kanaka maoli people perhaps numbered as many as there are now. Perhaps a million. Entirely self-sufficient. Living off the land and the sea ... in harmony. With sustain—a sustainable, renewable ... environment. Had to, so that we could survive. But not modern society here. It's destroying the environment. Destroying ourselves. And then we're supposed to move on, I suppose. Those who are able to move on, go somewhere else. That's what the Pacific is for. Self-destructive; it's implosive. And that seems to be the credo of modern, Western, industrial, scientific ... man. But it's madness. So it isn't merely a matter of kanaka maoli. Not at all. It's a matter of what I consider **(18:24-18:31-ZOOM IN to tighter MEDIUM)** to be basic ... values. For survival. And if ... kanaka, some kanaka don't subscribe to it, to me they're not kanaka. If non-kanaka support it, to me they're kanaka. So me it's not a matter of race, at all. It's a matter of state of mind, of belief ... of faith, of hope. And the future of man, not as a taker **(19:29-20:09-SLOW ZOOM IN from MEDIUM CU to CU)** and exploiter ... but one who shares and cares. And to me, that's the real ... test ... of what is bandied about as aloha. Unless it's sharing, unless it's caring ... it's just fluff.

(shot 10)

20:16 QUESTION: Well, I'm out of questions, Anne.

20:20 QUESTION: I have a question. Actually, in terms of the Hawaiian sovereignty movement, what practical steps do you see can be done, and what kind of changes do you think are possible?

20:36 BLAISDELL: Yes; excellent question, right. I think you—that was one of your questions. M-hm. Well, may we begin with the term sovereignty?

20:47 QUESTION: M-hm.

20:48 BLAISDELL: It used to mean ...

20:52 QUESTION: You can keep looking at Dan.

20:54 BLAISDELL: Uh ... sovereignty use to mean uh, absolute ... total, supreme authority, political power. 'Cause it belonged to the sovereign, the wearer of the crown. But now, it's used by the United States, for example, especially with respect to so-called indigenous people like American Indians, uh ... as meaning or as having meaning where there are levels of sovereignty. So American Indians are sovereign, but ... not entirely. They're sovereign on their lands; on the other hand the

United States Congress has plenary power, can take away those lands anytime. And they're under the department or Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Department of Interior. So we tend to avoid using the term sovereignty because its use can mean whatever one wants to use. And we try to use terms that to us are clearer in definition, such as self-determination. All right. So that's why that—those noble words are up there. (22:24) All peoples have the right to self-determination. And by virtue of that right can they freely determine their political status. And freely pursue ... their economic social and cultural development. So that's in general assembly, United Nations General Assembly Resolution—we call it 1514—of 1960. And it's in the resolution which defines self-determination ... and the process for colonies becoming independent. So we use the term self-determination, special definition. Independence to mean independence. That is, country that stands by itself, for itself. M-m. Has its own territory, its own people, citizens, its own government and its own relationships with other nation states, eligible for membership in the United Nations. So that's what we mean. (23:53) On the other hand, we also know that we live in an interdependent world. Can't be entirely independent, go off and hide somewhere. There's no place to hide. So we have to coexist. Not only coexist, but we feel, you know, we have to, as I said before, care and share. And it doesn't stop at our borders. And so ... our path ... is pursuing this—this ideal. And international law provides for it. And the United N—States as a member of the United Nations ... should be abiding by that law.

(shot 11)

25:14 QUESTION: What is your view of the Akaka Bill [UNINTELLIGIBLE].

25:18 BLAISDELL: Yes; and that's why we oppose ... the Akaka Bill. And for three main reasons. One is, the Akaka Bill ... is said to be ... legislation for self-determination and sovereignty. But it did not begin with the kanaka maoli people. It began in Washington, DC ... by members of United States Congress. The United States is a separate nation from our nation. Therefore ... it—it is—it is not our determination, it is predetermination by the colonizer, the United States, being imposed on us. Makes a mockery of self-determination, yet it's called self-determination. So it's an example of the United States twists words, so that they come out the ex—meaning the exact opposite. The second reason is really derived from the first reason. And that is, it calls for a puppet government. All right. (26:46) So the United States Congress designs a process for pup—puppet government. This foreign nation over there decides for us what our government is going to be. And it's going to be a puppet government within the US Department of Interior. Which means we become wards. In the words of a Supreme Court decision ...

wards of a domestic dependent nation. Isn't that interesting? Domestic dependent nation; another contradiction in terms. A nation that's domestic and dependent means it's not a nation. [CHUCKLES] And yet, that's—that's in the language ... of American Indian law. And then the last feature of it is, under the plenary power of the United States Congress. What does that mean? That means that no matter what is promised in that legislation, United States Congress can change it any time. Any time. (28:07) So that's why we also believe that the real intent of the Akaka Bill ... is not as it says, to promote self-determination, but the exact opposite. And not only that ... but to get us kanaka maoli to support it, to endorse it, to sign up, you know, ka inoa, and register and vote. Get involved in the process. By so doing ... we demonstrate that we relinquish ... our right to our inherent sovereignty, right to self-determination ... and independence. By participating in this process, we're giving it up. We're admitting the game's over; we give it all up. And whereas because of the Apology Resolution of 1993, you know, Public Law 103-150 ... because of that resolution, m-hm, which the United States acknowledges it was wrong in invading ... our country in support of the ... provisional government here ... the United States will ... oh; because of that, there's a cloud over the title of all of our lands. All right. (30:00) Our land's our lands, we've never given them up. And the Apology Resolution says that; we've never given them up. But if we participate in the Akaka Bill process, that means we do give up. We relinquish.

30:19

END

Interview

KEKUNI BLAISDELL

Reel 4

(shot 1)

00:02 GENERAL CONVERSATION (CU)

(shot 2)

00:29 BLAISDELL: (CU) All right. It has to do with land. There's a cloud—that Apology Resolution places a cloud on all titles in our homeland. The Akaka Bill, if we endorse it, means we're giving it up. And no—no longer any cloud; the United States can do what it wants with our lands. All right.

(shot 3)

00:56 QUESTION: Anne?

01:02 QUESTION: Certain things are being advised in order to take steps forward in getting any sort of reparations. One is education, organization. What very specific practical steps do you see need to be done in order for the Hawaiian community to get any satisfaction, to get anything back? And then what does it mean in terms of land?

01:33 BLAISDELL: Very good question too, isn't it? Very good. M-hm. So you brought up the point of education. And we feel very strongly that it has to be more than beyond just formal education. And with the power of the communications media ... we have to have our own ... media facilities. So we present our story in our way, to reach our people effectively. And I was delighted [CHUCKLES] to hear Lilikala say last week that it's in the plans for Center of Hawaiian Studies, going to have their own video station. Ae. (**02:45**) We don't even have our own newspaper now, and there used to be dozens of kanaka maoli newspapers. We don't even have one in our movement right now. So we need print media, we need the electronic media, and we need the experts doing that. So 'Olelo, for example, is having a profound effect in our communities. And computers and the Internet. But of course, only those who have access. And ... we need to be reaching 'opio. Have you heard the word 'opio? 'Opio refers to the younger generation. M-m. So we have Punana Leo and our other schools now, charter schools. So it's—we're beginning there. And on the Manoa campus, just learned this year that through

[UNINTELLIGIBLE] there's now been established a Hawaiian Law and Politics Society ... with—headed by graduate students in political science and in the law school. So—and—and in the Center for Hawaiian Studies. Very promising development, right. (04:21) So there needs to be a network throughout the educat—formal educational system, reaching all the community colleges and other parts of the University that you're in. M-m. So that the younger generation knows—not only knows, but feels it in the na'au, in the gut, and therefore acts accordingly. You know, we believe that we really haven't learned anything unless we can feel it, and unless we can live it. That is, act on it. No point in memorizing something just for a final examination. It's not worth anything unless it's incorporated, you know, in the mana in our bodies, and we actually live it. So we have to be ... reaching across generationally. And that means it has to involve families; our 'ohana.

(05:32) But our families are in trouble. We seem to have the highest rates for ... drug abuse, for example. It's frightening. M-hm. So part of our problem—well, that leads me to analyzing what ... our problem is too. You know, you uh, tend—tend to think that our plight is due to others, the colonizer who's colonized us. And if only it would let up, we would be okay. Well, that's in large part true, but of course, we ourselves because of this process and other relationships are self-destructive. We manifest self-destructive ... behavior. We smoke tobacco more than anyone else. We drink more alcohol than anyone else. We take more ... harmful drugs than anyone else. We're less likely to use even s—auto seatbelts. We overeat, don't get enough exercise. And that in turn, I feel ... the self-destructive behavior, I feel is related to cultural conflict. Which I've referred to before. The dominant Western culture is based on ... individualism, materialism, exploitation of others and ... the natural resources. Which is what capitalism is. If you make a profit, take the profit for the individual. And if it means exploiting others, well, that's the system. (08:00) Kanaka maoli ... values are very different. And I think I've referred to some of this before. The first is what people usually call spirituality. But to me, I call it mana. And that is, we believe that everything has special life and power. And some people and some things have more than others. And it's—it—

(shot 4)

08:37 INTERRUPTION (CUT-NEW CU)

08:44 QUESTION: Kekuni, what practical steps toward reparations would you suggest?

08:57 BLAISDELL: Reparations ... I consider to be ... payment for injury, for damages. Then there's also the matter of back rent. The United States has occupied our country for over a hundred years; never

paid rent. But more basic than those two is ... land. We are still landless. And as long as we are landless, that is we don't even have the basic resources to support ourselves. And of course, that's why the colonial system doesn't want to yield; because it means they have to give up our land. Once we have our land, and we use it ... for our movement. And in a sense that to mean useless. And one is to promote self-sufficiency. We know that it's not feasible for that to be completely—we can't be completely self-sufficient. But being self-sufficient is part of our culture. (10:44) I mean, I should be growing—I should have a lo'i right here. I should have water with an 'auwai running right through here. There used to be. This whole valley was famous for its lo'i, growing of taro. We should be doing that, and that's part of our culture. Right. And taro is ... you know about—taro is our kahiapo. All right. So we all ought to be doing that. M-hm. And that's also means that we're protecting and nurturing and sustaining our environment. (11:28) But we also know that we live in a modern, globalized world, and therefore, land—at least in order to survive in the modern world, also has to be used for other things, and some of these other things are destructive, that we ought to put a brake on ... on that. But anyway, the income from these lands should be coming to us. Of course, the United States doesn't want to talk about that. M-hm. They talk about ceded lands, but then they just talk about it. And ... that's why OHA is trying to reach a settlement, but ... it doesn't look like that's going to happen. And it doesn't look like that's going to happen on the Akaka Bill either.

(shot 5)

12:19 QUESTION: But you think return of lands is primary?

12:21 BLAISDELL: Primary. And that's why it was one of the first recommendations of the 1993 tribunal; return of all kanaka maoli lands, without delay. M-m.

(shot 6)

12:38 GENERAL CONVERSATION (12:42-12:54-ZOOM OUT from CU to MEDIUM)

B-ROLL

(b-roll 1)

13:28 woman (MEDIUM)

13:31 woman (CU; 13:38-14:37-ROOM TONE RECORDING)

(b-roll 2)

14:37 location (**WIDE, reverse from interview, no sound**) - subject enters shot, gathers notes, walks around, sits down (**15:49**), stands (**15:58**) and exits

(b-roll 3)

16:10 family photos (**CU, PANS; 18:23-ZOOM IN to EX CU of photos, PANS**)

18:48 END