

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

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**QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT**

**Tape #: HPS 0745 (MV884)**

**Date: August 22, 2006**

**Location: Waimea, Kohala, Hawai'i Island**

**Subject: Oral History Interview**

**Interviewer(s): Maile Loo**

**Videographer: Gene Kois**

(00:57)

QVD: --wonderful.

UTT

QVD: She's just ... they all seem to have the same temperament.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: The same kind of [TELEPHONE] love. They want to—

UTT

QVD: --just hug you all the time. I used to say, Okay ... I'm here. [CHUCKLE]

ML: That's enough. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: She just [HUG MOTION]. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Well, what—what family did she marry into down there?

QVD: She married uh, a Filipino man.

ML: Oh.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So it wasn't the homestead, was just the—

QVD: Just—

ML: --Keaukaha area?

QVD: No.

ML: Oh, was homestead?

QVD: She had a homestead. She had a—

ML: Oh—

QVD: --homestead.

ML: --she had the homestead.

QVD: Yeah, she had the—

ML: Oh, I see.

QVD: --homestead.

ML: I see.

QVD: My mother used to be outraged.

UTT

QVD: She'd say ... Lorvena, what is it about you that you need a homestead? What? You know what it does to you? It makes you lazy, you don't want to go out and work, you don't want to—to go ahead and—and—and ... and be creative and do—an—an—and create a business. My mother was always a businesswoman.

ML: Yeah; yeah.

QVD: So she says, You have—uh [CAR STARTING], you don't need to lean on the homestead.

UTT

QVD: And my—my auntie used to say, Your mother, she's too much. But they always ... called her for money and for certain—

UTT

QVD: --things.

[ONGOING BACKGROUND CONVERSATION OUTSIDE]

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [BACKGROUND CONVERSATION] Don't mind us. [INDISTINCT]

QVD: So when I got a homestead—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --it was like—my mom was like no you're not...

ML: She wasn't happy.

QVD: That haole can't afford to get you a—  
UTT

QVD: --place to live? What is this? I said, Mom, three hundred acres, Mom.

[ONGOING BACKGROUND CONVERSATION OUTSIDE UNIDENTIFIED MALE]

ML: Auntie Gordean's mom was like that too.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: She never wanted her kids to apply for homestead.

QVD: Homestead, no.

ML: I think it was for a different reason, but she was—she felt like that too. And—and after ... they ended up—she and her brother did, on—on Maui.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: You know.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But uh, but she always said her mom was against—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --against it. Yeah. But ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah. Hey; look at this. Hello?

ML: Yeah; I know.

QVD: [CHUCKLE]

ML: I know.

QVD: As I used to always say to her, You know what? No matter what you think—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --of the rest of the Hawaiians, I said, we are who we are.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I says, And we just contribute.

UTT

QVD: We're more of a—of somebody can give to.

ML: Yeah; yeah, yeah.

QVD: I have—I have ... given, when I used to live here a long time ago ... high school kids that were going to the mainland, and they'd call me Auntie Queenie, you know ... can—would you have time to show me how to eat at a dinner table? Can you help me—help me um, know where the forks are, and the knives are, and—and—and—and just some manners at the dinner table?

UTT

QVD: Foresight, though; they knew they were going to the mainland, they knew [WHINNYING] that this might happen.

UTT

QVD: Rather than be embarrassed—

ML: Right.

QVD: --or whatever. And I used to do that for the kids.

UTT

QVD: And so I got known.

ML: How nice; yeah.

QVD: Yeah. That, eh, you want ... go ask Auntie—Auntie Queenie.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

QVD: So those were good times, you know.

UTT

[BREAK IN TAPING]

QVD: It's something that is ... even to get gifts from their families would be ... a surprise.

UTT

QVD: [CHUCKLE]

ML: Right, right.

QVD: So these kinds of things were good things; and thank-you notes, and all that stuff. You know.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So there—you really feel like in this area, there is still that community, homestead community, or has it changed?

QVD: It's changed.

UTT

QVD: It's changed. And I don't know if it's changed because ... um ... there's—there's ... focus, so much focus on the um ... uh, the Hawaiian having uh ... to have more cliques now, than there was before.

*(05:00)*

You know, so uh, whatever the issue is, they're more interested in ... that, rather than—than learning just the basics of niceties.

UTT

QVD: That can take you from one step to the next, and everything else falls in place. You know? Um, there's a lot of—even ... even with ... people my age. Like Uncle Jamie and I were kinda quick with the society and all that stuff. And when I go to help uh, Alu Like or the senior groups, they always say, Hey, how come you don't join us? Why aren't you here? And I said, You know, I just am not ready for this right now. I'll come and help, do whatever I can. But to come and just sit here ... at meetings, and you guys talk about the same thing over and over and over again, I said ... I would prefer to come here if you folks need something, you know; call me. Uh, but in general, there's—and then there's—there's families that are ... I think really concerned about their kids and drugs. You know, that's a big thing now.

ML: So in this area ...

QVD: In this area—

ML: It's bad.

QVD: --it's bad. It's bad. Yeah. Bad. So--

ML: So you've actually lived here in three different uh, places, yeah? You said the first time was when you first got married in early 50s, then you—

UTT

ML: --left and came back in '80.

UTT

ML: So how has it—how—how'd it change that second time from the first time when you ... started?

QVD: I—I think—I think the ... the um ... the incoming of uh, other peoples from the mainland, and uh, and ... from wherever else they came from, um ... they have been able to—which is a good thing—to contribute, uh, their input. But their in—input took, I think, our local people from—from having their sort of um ... oh ... oh, what would I—their—their way of life, you know, uh, to—to a level where uh ... you either come and learn, or you're not included. Before, it was like ... yeah, there were many, many haole's, and the ranch was—was—uh, had sprinklings of—of haole luna's, if you might—if you call them, or whatever. But they were still gracious. They were wonderful. So that when they included you, you knew it was sincere, you knew it was wonderful, because they wanted you to be there. They wanted you to be there. But today, it's like, what can she or he contribute? The attitude is different, you know. Um ... and people like us are getting fewer and fewer. And we—we notice this—I notice this, Uncle Jamie does. So therefore, we don't go to the general meetings anymore. We don't participate in a lot of the activities—

ML: This is for the—

QVD: --here.

ML: --homestead association, or for the community association?

QVD: For the community too.

ML: Okay.

QVD: A lot of that. It's because ... they're not really sincerely open to ... everybody participating.

UTT

QVD: It's like they're handpicked already. So if you're coming, you're a gopher, so to speak. You're gonna be part of this and part of that, but ... they make you feel that way, anyway. You know. And I've seen that. I've seen that with the pā'ū committees, with the Aloha Week committees. And um ... I think I told you I've been down to Anna Perry-Fiske, and I've done that. And I have—I've not minced any words, and I've told them that um ... that these wonderful gay guys have gotta go. I don't want them—I would not want them ... dressing the pā'ū riders like they're in some damn ... you know, in—in some kind of a uh ... what do you call, the Rose Bowl Parade.

(10:00)

We want the pā'ū riders back. We want simplicity. We want elegance. We want horsewomen. We want people that know horses. So that when they come down that street, they're able to make that horse peki peki. They're able to sidestep, they're able to do these things. This is the pā'ū rider, and not all those flowers. And the headdress is like—you don't even get to see her face. This is—this is not the pā'ū rider. And I resent the fact that this Aloha Week committee don't acknowledge the pā'ū riders. They just say, Go in the morning—and I—I've been a judge for four years. We line them up, we look at them. We have them do uh, a nice soft ga—uh, canter, go around. And—and every time we do that, every year, one or two fall off their horses.

UTT

QVD: What—what have we got here? We don't just need a pretty face. We need a horsewoman.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Well, Auntie Queenie. And I said, Well, this is just my opinion. 'Cause this is the way we had to ride. And it makes the parade. It makes the parade. And when you sidestep, your outriders sidestep with you. And how beautiful is that? How beautiful is that? When you bow, whatever the island does, whatever she does, they follow to suit. And they can't follow suit if they can't ride. You know. And then the—the pā'ū's, some of them are too short. And I have to deduct ... uh, I don't. I make them get off the horse and wrap again.

UTT

QVD: You know, these kinds of things. It's important that they know how to do it right. You know? And there's just few of us that will do that anymore. They don't acknowledge the riders. There's a big thing down at the park after the parade. They should bring each island in and acknowledge these islands. Each participating unit and acknowledge that unit. The people are all down there. And you know what? They have five or six ... rock groups, hara—Hawaiian reggae groups, and maybe one or two that are basically paying—playing Hawaiian music. What are we doing? What are we doing? But you have all of this influence that is ... beginning to take over, and we're losing that. And whose fault is it? It's the people that are on the committees that need to have people looking at them and saying, No; no, no, no. You're in charge, but let's do it the way we've always done it. Yeah, there's always improvement. And—and—and everybody's open to—we're all open to that. But not to change it so drastically, that now your—your true supporters, special interest people, won't support it. They won't give any more money. They don't want any tr—they won't give trophies. Why? I don't want them representing me. I don't want this to say, Well ... all ... what—it's all good, sponsor this—this—no, I don't want that. And I think if we don't start doing these things in all of our Hawaiian uh ... special events, we will lose it. The monies for the Legislature; they're not gonna appropriate money. We're always looking for money—

UTT

QVD: --for Kamehameha Day. Why is that? We—that should be like the Rose Bowl Parade in California. Our Kamehameha Day should have that much honor.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: So there's something wrong somewhere. It's—it's not as authentic as it should be. Is that the problem? Or is it because we just don't have the right people in the right places?

(15:00)

We cannot have people that are ... that just rank themselves so above everyone else, like Lokelani Lindsey [CHUCKLE], and take that whole [CLAP] thing right down the drain. You know. I think it's ... I think it's a sad thing. And this is why uh ... I elect not to participate in a lot of events. It's because I ask, Well, who's on the program, what are we doing? And if it doesn't outline the way I think that I'm gonna be of some kind of ... tribute, I can contribute something, then I don't want to be in it. It's—it's just a mish-mash of everything else. And what?

ML: Like, why bother, then—

QVD: Yeah, why bother?



ML: --is what you're saying; yeah.

QVD: Yeah; why bother?

UTT

QVD: But ... uh ...

UTT

QVD: It's sad. It's like you talk about Waikīkī; where are our entertainers. There's no more places a young, up-and-coming entertainer can go, for free, because he doesn't have the money for the clothes or whatever, like we didn't, and hope that you get called from the audience, and you can dance, or you can sing. And there is born a talent. Hey; Don Ho did it; I did it. I mean, there's so many of us that did it. We had that opportunity to do it.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: You know. And those places are no longer. No longer.

ML: No.

QVD: Now, you have to go to a big Merrie Monarch, or you gotta go to a big whatever. You have to belong to a certain group. And it costs money. So you say, Okay, what's in my ... agenda?

UTT

QVD: What's-what's-next best to do? It—it's sad; it really is, it's sad.

ML: Yeah; it's so different uh, for those of us who, you know, grew up in hula in the 80s and 90s, versus you folks in the—

QVD: Oh, yes.

ML: --40s and 50s and all that. You know?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: It's a completely different world.

QVD: Yeah; different.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It's totally different. I mean, I can ... even now, here, when I'm here, and there is a beautiful evening, and it's late, twelve o'clock, two o'clock, and I know it's beautiful, and I know that the mahina's up, I can come here and go out there and dance. And I can hula. And I just feel like I'm just so close to everything. So close. But I wonder sometimes ... how much of the kumu's today, with the few masters that are left, that can translate this to

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their dancers without having to always be a routine, always be, you know, well, this is—this is the way we do it. But [TELEPHONE] ... it's to take them into that, you know, and do it. Excuse me.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[BREAK IN TAPING]

ML: So after—you—you came here after you got married, then, for the first time?

QVD: Yes.

ML: In Waimea.

QVD: Yes.

ML: This is the first place you folks lived, basically—

QVD: No.

ML: --together, or—

QVD: We lived in uh—

ML: You were on O'ahu?

QVD: --Waikīkī.

ML: Oh.

QVD: Um ... oh, gosh; I can't—in Kapahulu. And that was a very small home. And um ... I danced. It was—uh, that was the reason for living in Waikīkī, because I needed to get to work. And Uncle Jamie was—was still in the military. So that was very convenient. We were able to find a place in Waikīkī, and then we found a cottage in um, across of Kūhiō Beach. They had all those little cottages. We had one of those. Uh ... and then Uncle Jamie decided [WHINNY] one day that I should apply for a homestead. And I said, I don't think so. [CHUCKLE] My mother would not hear that. And he says, Why? I said, Because she thinks all Hawaiians that apply for homestead uh, live off of welfare. And then they would have no desire to get out and work, uh, and that just makes you less.

(20:00)

And he—and he laughed. He says, Well ... it's three hundred acres, and we should—we should really try to get one. And I said, So are you talking about where? He says, Moving to Waimea. [CHUCKLE] I was appalled. I

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said, No, no, I can't leave my hula now. He said, Well, we need to go, because the lots are gonna be given out. I said, When? Within a month. I said, Within a month? He says, Yeah. He says, So we have to get you to fill out one of these applications. And I says, Well, where do I go? He says, I have it right here. So he had the application and gave it to me; we signed up. And um ... besides, I was hāpai. I was almost—I was a little over five months, and I barely showed. I was still dancing. Well, of course, six months, I was like—pf-f-f. So ... the date was set for forty-eight three-hundred-acre lots. And it was here at Hawaiian Homes—I mean, at the school, at the gym. And my mom and my dad were very unhappy. And my mom said ... that I would be very unhappy; it was just not the thing for me to do. Well, Mom ... if we get this homestead, we're gonna go. Well, there must have been—I swear to God, there must have been five hundred people [WHINNY] there for homesteads. Forty-eight lots; number forty-five was called, and I was still sitting in the front row, just as happy as can be. 'Cause we had not ... even came close. Number forty-five, da-da-da-dum. Number forty-six, da-da-da-dum. And two more, and I'd be home free. Number forty-seven, Mary Anne Dowsett. [CHUCKLE] And I wanted to ... So we got the homestead. It got into the front page; Queenie Ventura is not half-Hawaiian ... this was a political move ... she is the star dancer with Alfred Apaka. And I think I have the articles, still have the articles. And it was terrible. With that, my mom was like a bull in the china shop; she was furious. So she went down to Hawaiian Homes ... with me, not with—Jamie didn't come; with me ... and showed them our genealogy and all. And that was not even an issue. I'd already gotten it. Doesn't matter. Maybe it was a political move; who knows? But I got the three hundred acres; and that's when we came up here.

UTT

QVD: And we raised five children here. And I think—I think they were five lucky kids; really, truly. Because they grew up to be survivors. They could handle cattle; they could do e—everything, anything. They could chop wood, build fires; they could hunt. They—and they were gracious kids. The nicest ... just gracious. I mean, my kids have—have stopped homesteaders way up in the mountains and said, You know—'cause they're hunting—my folks are right down here; come, we can give you a ride home. Five kids, Uncle Jamie and I, and we have a small truck. But they would do that, and we never stopped them. Because a homesteader had a flat tire, or the parent didn't come back to get him. But those were good ... good lessons for the kids. Because it helped them to be humble, helped them with humility, it helped them to know themselves. More than anything, to know themselves, who they are.

(25:00)

And ... I—I do believe that ... if—if a family ... even now ... if I had a summer camp, I would have a list, I mean, that just wouldn't stop. And have them just—just work ... on the farm. Pet the horses; watch the trainer train a horse; help make dinners; help make meals; build fires. You know. Just like the camps that you hear. You know what; Hawaiian Homes could do that. They could do it very easily. We could have that kind of a uh, um, outlet. We could have ... there was a time when Jackie Pung wanted to do that, a school, and Hawaiian Homes would not give them—give her the land. She had private people with finances that would finance it, just because they wanted to help the Hawaiian kids. Hawaiian Homes wouldn't even listen to her. There's so many things that could have been done with this land.

UTT

QVD: And nothing. And you wonder why.

ML: To this day, there's a lot of questions about the Department, you know.

QVD: Yes. Many. Many.

ML: So you—but you—you weren't raised as a—as a rancher or—

QVD: No. [CHUCKLE]

ML: --a farmer, so—

QVD: No.

ML: So—so you—

QVD: No.

ML: You were basic—you were born on O'ahu?

QVD: Born on O'ahu.

ML: At home or in the hospital, or ...

QVD: Hospital.

ML: Hospital.

QVD: Yeah. I was born—

ML: Kapiolani, or—

QVD: --at Kapiolani, I think.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah; hospital.

ML: 1930?

QVD: 1930.

ML: 1930; oh.

QVD: It says '31, but I think I was '30.

ML: Oh. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Anyway.

ML: And you just had your birthday?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: July ...

QVD: 18<sup>th</sup>.

ML: --18.

QVD: Uh-huh.

ML: Happy belated.

QVD: Uh-huh.

ML: [CHUCKLE] So you were born, and you lived in um ... I know your grandparents were in Lā'ie, but where did you folks—

QVD: Kaka'ako.

ML: Kaka'ako; m-m.

QVD: Yeah; I know that place like ... back of my hand. Yeah.

UTT

QVD: Grew up there. Yeah.

ML: And um, you men—you—we—we actually never asked you before, your full name. 'Cause I know we know you as Auntie Queenie, but—

QVD: [CHUCKLE]

ML: --you just said Mary Anne, so let's get the whole—the whole name. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Mary Anne ... with an E. Should have been—it—it really is Mary Annie. Mary Annie Kalanihelemalunaohawaii ... Ventura Dowsett. M-hm.

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ML: And who named you um, your—you know, your different names? Is there a Mary Annie—  
UTT

ML: --in the family, or how does ...

QVD: Mary was my father's mother, Mary Silva. Um, Annie was my mother's aunt, who was a musician, a singer. Kalanihelemaluna came from my ... my Tutu Man's genealogy. And of course, Ventura is my dad. And we just—and we're doing this—this Ventura gathering, and now we find that my dad is not Portuguese; that he's Italian.

ML: Really?

QVD: [CHUCKLE] And I'm going, What? We're Italian. And the name is spelled V-E-N ... T-U-R-I.  
UTT

QVD: So we're gonna bring that up.

ML: Interesting.

QVD: Interesting; yeah.

ML: Wow.

QVD: But his mother was Portuguese.

ML: Okay. So your—your father was half-Italian, half-Portuguese, rather than—

QVD: Half-Portuguese.

ML: --pure.

QVD: Pure Portuguese; yeah.

ML: Oh, interesting.

QVD: Interesting, yeah?

ML: Wow.

QVD: Yeah. So—

ML: Puts a new spin on things, huh?

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QVD: I know.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I know. It's like ... my kids are delighted. [CHUCKLE] I'm Italian? I said, You're Hawaiian. [CHUCKLE] But ... yeah, it's um ... it was a wonderful life, really. Very hard. Uh, and I—but I was dancing between babies; I was flying back and forth ... out at this airport on a little Cessna, going back and forth. And uh, so at the time, I was dancing a lot at the Halekulani with Auntie Lei Collins, Alice Fred—Fredlund, and um, Sybil Bright. Those three, and myself. And then I would be dancing with Auntie Io every now and then.

(30:00)

Um, but—and then I would go back to um—Alfred would call me, and we would do special um ... contracts, and um ... it was um ... that's when I got um ... in with uh, Henry J. Kaiser. So I was their dancer. And uh ... when I was there ... on the last contract with Henry J. Kaiser, he had the Hawaiian Village on the table at his home in San Francisco in Lafayette, all of the Hawaiian Homes—I mean, Hawaiian Village. And Alfred was standing there, and so was um, Alvin Isaacs. And he said, Queenie, I want to propose ... a proposal to you. I want you to work for Kaiser for the Hawaiian Village. This is marketing the Hawaiian Village for one year, and then you will be our dancer for the Hawaiian Village thereafter. I'd already had my children, five of them. I was already—when I went up there, and he said ... And in lieu of that, besides a nice, big salary every month, I will give you—with his attorney there—six hundred acres in Lafayette. I have a hundred head of purebred Hereford cows, and they're all ... been bred. We have a lovely home, enough for your five children and your husband, and all you have to do is say yes. I was so excited. I called Uncle Jamie; he was home, and he said, No. I said, What'd you say? He said, No. I said, Wait; Mr. Kaiser is here; he wants to talk to you. So he talks to Uncle Jamie. And Uncle Jamie says, Well, thank you very much, but I'd just as soon she'd come home. And then the attorney got on, Fitzsimmons got on, and he talked to Uncle Jamie. And he said, No. So—and Alfred was just ... he sat down, he was—his head like th—I'll never forget the look on his face. And after we hung up, Mr. Kaiser said to me, That's an admirable man, but he's stupid. [CHUCKLE] And I went, What? And he said, Queenie, you sign this contract. He says [CLAP], I want him—I told him I would fly him up now. Put him on my private plane, bring him up, let him look at Lafayette, six hundred acres, and tell me that he doesn't want that—the hundred red cows. He says, You just sign this contract right now. And I didn't. And I came home. But you know, uh ... there are times I think about that. You know. Uh, when we used to have very difficult times and my mother used to say to me, I told you, you were stupid. [CHUCKLE] Which is—her famous word is stupid. Anyway—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --um ... but I think—I think—I do believe that ... that our pl—that our lives are already planned out. They really are. And uh, for whatever reason ... uh ... he said no, um ... it took me a while to get over that, for a while.

ML: I can imagine.

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QVD: And—yeah. And I continued dancing. And when Hawaiian Village opened, I was sick that I ... he invited me, and I didn't want to go. Alfred said, You gotta come. And I didn't go. Lani was there, Jo Flanders was there. And uh ... just—they just ... anyway, that was I forget what year. But that was ... before I went to work for the Mauna Kea, when I became social director there.

UTT

QVD: And Mr. Rockefeller says, You do it all, Queenie. We're gonna bring the Big Three in, and I want you to coordinate all the music and the entertainers. And I did. And that's when Jo Flanders and I got into a big beef. Because I'd written letters to Lani and to Alfred, and to everybody, and ... if they would consider coming to the opening.

(35:00)

And that I would meet whatever demands they want financially. And so uh ... it went well. It went well; I did well. Anyway, but the hula, my hula continued.

UTT

QVD: You know. But let's go back to when I first came here to the island, before I left Honolulu. My two tūtū men, Tutu Hamana and Tutu Kaleohanu, my mother sat me in a kind of a ... a very closed meeting, yeah? And um, many things were said, laying of hands. And then they said to me ... When you go to Hawai'i, you are to look for—I think I told you—Naluahine; you need to look for him. He is in Kona somewhere. And when you get there, you tell him who you are, and nothing else. And I thought to myself ... I thought to myself ... wait.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

QVD: And I thought to myself ... in my mind, What are you saying to me? What are you saying to me, you three? And Tutu Hamana said to me ... put his hand across the table, and he said ... Maybe—maybe this is the time. This is the time for our 'ohana to come forth. And I said, How old is this man; do you know? Oh, maybe, maybe not yet one hundred. And I'm looking at them, and I'm going, So he doesn't speak English. Yeah? He doesn't talk like us. All Hawaiian. How am I gonna understand that? 'A'ole pilikia; you'll be fine. So I did go look for him, and I did find him. And he did take me out to the beach, and he did bless me and tell me—his granddaughter was there, and interpreted ... what all of this was about. Which I think just ... sort of ... I'm looking for the word ... sort of uh ... made me know ... and believe in this 'ohana, and who they were, and who I was, and what my mission was. You know. And ... and I think of—of my—my hula then, because it was very similar. Very similar. And uh ... and where I could swim, and where I should not maha'oi. Um ... and that I could go anywhere, except for those few places. Um, as I sit here at seventy-six, and I—then I was, what ... twenty—twenty-five, twenty-six. And I look back at those times. Um ... it was important then, at the moment. Right? But then I come back to my real life. I'm a mother of five; I'm married to this rancher; I'm learning to ride a horse; I'm learning to take care of five children like I'm a general—I had to be, to keep them all in order and in line. Um ... and still could not leave my hula behind. I would not do that. And thank God, Uncle Jamie ... is ... he's just so perfect for that.

(40:00)



**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
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Because he allowed me to do all—he could—he could have said very easily, No, I don't think so; not this time; you stay home. I've got cattle to brand; I've got this to do. No. And he took care of the children. He'd take care of the children. So—and I have to say, and I have to admit, sometimes my children ... was not one, the first; my hula was always first. And I paid a price for that. I paid a price for that. But ... um, I think you learn these things as you go on. Um ... I know so many of my ... my hula ... 'ohana and hula people that I know ... that did exactly that, and ... did not pay attention. And therefore ... it was not a nice thing, the way they ended up. Yeah. So—

UTT

QVD: But nevertheless ... with this, there's always the Lord.

UTT

QVD: Always.

ML: You um ... you spent a lot of time out in Lā'ie, yeah, as a—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --youngster.

QVD: Yes.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: A lot of time.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Seen many things, have witnessed a lot of things.

UTT

QVD: Um ...

ML: There's still family out there?

QVD: H-m?

ML: Still family out there, or pau?

QVD: Still family out there. But not pili.

UTT

QVD: You know. Um ... it's like every other family, I guess. When you grow up and you marry into different partners, yeah; the avenues are different, we go different ways, do different things. So it's not pili like before.

UTT

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QVD: We talk about those kinds of things now. Um ... before, it was uh, ho ... we walked, we talked, we slept, we danced, we sang, Kaleohano. Yeah.

ML: So that's your mom's ...

QVD: Father.

ML: Father; okay.

QVD: My grandmother, my Tutu Lady ... uh ... is ali'i.

UTT

QVD: And she was wonderful. She was um ... gracious. She had all the mannerisms of a ali'i. And uh ... but she was so ... she was so um ... out of the picture sometimes, you know. She would just recline all the time. She'd sit there, and Tutu Man would speak or talk to us, and we'd look at her. Come on, Tutu Lady, say something, you know. And she'd just sit there, and ... Maika'i; m-hm. Like that. My mother is the exact opposite of my grandmother.

ML: What was your um, tūtū lady's name?

QVD: Kamakea ...

UTT

QVD: Kahololio—no; Kamakea Kawahakauahi ... Kamakea Kawahakauahi ... Nahuina Kaue.

ML: K-A-U-E?

QVD: Yes.

ML: H-m; and what about your mom?

QVD: Kaue—Kaue ...

UTT

QVD: Kaleohano.

UTT

QVD: Kalili.

ML: And she was from O'ahu?

QVD: O'ahu.

UTT

QVD: But her ali'i line comes from Kaua'i.

ML: M-m. Right; you mentioned—

QVD: Uh—

ML: Kaumualii—

QVD: --Kaumualii.

ML: --yeah?

QVD: Yeah. And uh ... yeah.

ML: And what—what was your mom's name?

QVD: Keahi, Keahi, Keahialani Koalua—Koolua—Koalua—Kolua. Kapulauki ... I think it's k—oh, I just have the opposite, maybe. Gosh; I don't even remember that. Grandma's name and her name.

*(45:00)*

She is—she is Kawahakaukahi; I'm sorry.

ML: Okay.

QVD: And my grandmother is Kapulauki.

ML: Okay.

QVD: H-m. That's what they get for naming us all these—giving us all these Hawaiian names. [CHUCKLE]

ML: It's a lot to remember. [CHUCKLE] [CLANKING] Did your mom have a lot of brothers and sisters?

QVD: She had three sisters.

UTT

QVD: And one hānai.

UTT

QVD: Yeah; brother.

UTT

QVD: My grandmother married my tūtū man—at the time, way back then, right?

UTT

QVD: Much lower in ... in uh, stature.

UTT

QVD: So that her father ... put a kapu on her.

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ML: Oh.

QVD: But she was never—she will never have a son to carry his name. And I have it in gen—genealogy. She had five sons, and all at the age of sixteen months, they'd be crawling, my mom says; she watched her brothers die and just fall and sleep. Yeah.

ML: Five?

QVD: Five; five sons. So these are the kinds of things when people say, Oh, they never happen. Excuse me; I beg—beg to say, they happen. So ... there is no ... no one now that carries that name. He is hānai, my Uncle Gus Kaleohano is hānai. Um ... from his ... from her brother's offspring, that's a Kaue.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [SNEEZE] Excuse me.

QVD: But see, these are all—

ML: Sorry, Gene. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: These are all hula dancers. My Tutu Man—

ML: Wow.

QVD: --is a chanter. He's a hula dancer.

ML: Yeah. You know, I wanted to ask you. I was rereading some of our talks before, and you mentioned when he took you out, and you look—he showed you the shark through the fish box. That was your tu—no, that was your Tutu Hamana, yeah?

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Different—

QVD: M-hm.

ML: --tūtū man.

QVD: That's—

ML: Or—

QVD: --his brother.

ML: His brother; oh, okay.

QVD: Hamana.

ML: 'Cause he chanted too, you said, out there, yeah?

QVD: Yes; yes.

ML: So what was their chanting like that ... can you describe it?

QVD: [SIGH]

ML: Or, you know, however—how it varies from now, or how it varies from—

QVD: Oh—

ML: You know what I mean? Like—

QVD: Oh.

ML: Give us a sense of ...

QVD: Oh; there is—there is no comparison. None, whatsoever. None, whatsoever. I mean, when they oli, it's just ... you can see it. You can see that fin; you can see that manō, wh-h-h, come. Yeah. And they had; they had their own fish god, yeah, at the cliffs of Lā'ie; it was there. I used to watch them when we—he'd take us out on his ... on his uh ... on his boat, the 'upena. Ho, that 'upena so heavy in the back. And four men, rowing, rowing, rowing. And he would be up there. And after we all pau, let the—the nets go, paipai the net. Always, he'd take ... they would always go to the—to the cliffs, yeah? And give their ho'okupu's down ... come in. I was—I was so young. But ... I think, and I know for sure that ... um ... I was already ... from very young, I was gonna hula, from very young. My cousins used to accuse me of being hapa haole; that's why they liked me, 'cause I had a little—I look a little hapa [CHUCKLE] compared to them. But no; that was because they knew. Yeah. 'Cause they did so many wonderful things for me as a child. And it meant nothing, nothing. Because I didn't understand it. Why would I understand any of this? Oh; they like her best. Oh, look; they're picking her up; they're gonna—she's gonna stay with them for the weekend. Oh; you know.

(50:00)

And of course ... I thought the same thing too. But when they get in the evening and they lomilomi your fingers, and they start lomilomi your feet, and they start to lomilomi your arms and all of this, and I'm going ... h-m, how come, Tutu Lady? How come, Tutu Man? Oh, that's okay; we want you to have nice feet.

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UTT

QVD: So ... all these—all these very, very important steps, yeah? Uh, without being obvious, without talking about any of this; never. There was never an—any talk, anywhere. And even when I was in high school and I was dancing, and I had all this going with me ... never talked about it. Nothing to talk about. Yeah; there's nothing to talk about. Yeah. And when I went with Auntie Io ... that's when ... that's when I realized ... yes—

ML: It all came—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --together for you.

QVD: Yeah; everything came together. Yeah. But of course, a lot of people will know ... Queenie Ventura. Oh, yeah. Oh, she can really do the hula. When they talk about hula, they're talking about the hapa haole hula. And if they're talking about the Hawaiian, I have signature songs, right? That's what they know. That's what they know.

UTT

QVD: But I think if we were back ... in that world ... I know what it would be like.

ML: Right.

QVD: Yeah. So ... and I think—I think that ... my life, my role now couldn't be any better. Could not be any better. I don't search for the mountains or the caves, or for any of that. They call me. You know, eh? I don't know; what are you talking about? On the telephone. You know; you know. You know what we're talking about. We're here. And we are gonna take ... back to Waipi'o. Okay. Goodbye; thank you very much. What is that about? What is that about? It's got to be something from the past that makes the connection. I know it is.

ML: Do you think that that name, that particular name you were given was for a reason, or who—like who chose that name for you from the genealogy?

QVD: Tutu; Tutu Man.

ML: Tutu Man.

QVD: Kaleohano; yeah.

ML: So what did they tell you it meant, or what did—what—did they ever say what the—

QVD: Yeah; heavenly—

ML: --significance of that name was?

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QVD: Heavenly heavens over Hawai‘i. But that’s an alias. That’s an alias. So we know that. So ... and ... it’s um ... all of that just comes down to ... small. Small. That’s an alias.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. So—and you know ... I have—I’ve been given certain things from my ‘ohana, because they know that I would take care, that would be my responsibility. [WHINNY] And ... I don’t know that I can leave it behind for my children. It’s a very hard one. Yeah. I have something that’s over three hundred years old. It’s a hard one. So ... uh—

UTT

QVD: I don’t want it to be a showpiece. I want it to mean ... that we are who we are. I want it to ... to be alive. Very important. Um ...

oooooooo

QVD: I have one niece, my brother’s daughter. She’s the one on Maui. We—

ML: M-hm; yes.

QVD: --met.

ML: Yes.

QVD: That one, maybe. That one.

ML: Okay.

(55:00)

QVD: And in fact ... this young lady ... just got some land ... through the genealogy ... in Waihe‘u.

ML: Oh.

QVD: And ... laden with heiau’s. Laden with heiau’s. So she told me, Auntie ... I need for you to come. I said, You don’t need for me to come; what do you want me to come for? She said, I need for you to come. I said, Well, we shall see; we’ll see. But then I’m putting this both—this that I have [CLAP] ... is this—is this where I’m supposed to leave it? Is this where I’m supposed to take it? But um ... it is incredible. Incredible.

UTT

QVD: So ... all the Hawaiian kids I see now, I tell ‘em, You go tell your parents do your genealogy. [CHUCKLE]

ML: No; it’s true.

QVD: Go do your genealogy. Because you know what? Not even the United States Supreme Court can rule against it. Because three have already gotten their lands.

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UTT

QVD: Have already gotten their lands. And you wonder why Hawai'i is the only state that has lease property. And you know why? It's because they cannot show ownership.

UTT

QVD: Why can't they show ownership? Because the land is still ... out there. So I don't know; I—I—I ... I wonder ... even now. And I'm so blessed that you have come ... to—to just ... to just explore this.

[LOTS OF HORSE WHINNYING OUTSIDE]

ML: [CHUCKLE] What's going on out there?

QVD: Yeah.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]



**QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT**

**Tape #: HPS 0746 (MV885)**

**Date: August 22, 2006**

**Location: Waimea, Kohala, Hawai'i Island**

**Subject: Oral History Interview**

**Interviewer(s): Maile Loo**

**Videographer: Gene Kois**

(00:27)

QVD: Nine or eleven in here. Yeah. And we only have two that are ours. And the rest—

UTT

QVD: --are all boarders.

ML: Boarders; oh.

QVD: And then we have more outside the fifty acres.

ML: Oh; okay.

QVD: Yeah. You know, I often wonder, why Mom didn't get a homestead.

ML: Well ... she—

oooooooo

QVD: Um ... we ... we say certain things, and we talk about certain things, and it clicks to—to something that was related somehow. Yeah. Um ... it's—it's like ... Momi Lum is a good friend of mine, right? We were really buddies. Still are. When she came up and she wanted to kālai, clean the place up, she handpicked the people that—that ... the genealogy. And I do come from that—Moikeha, that's—that one. She's Mo'okini, but Moikeha is the—is the ali'i, yeah? So she called me and said, Queenie ... She was a senior at the University of Hawaii; I was a sophomore. But we were friends. She says, Queenie; she says, You need to fly to Hawai'i with me—and she gave me other names—and we're all going up there and we're gonna clean up the heiau. I said, What heiau? The Mo'okini Heiau. And so I said, Well, okay; I said, That's fine with me. Let me talk to Mom; I gotta make reservations. And I told my mom, and she was outraged. She says, No ... no; we do not clean a heiau. And I say, So—so what? She says, So no; no, I don't want you there. I said, Well, you have to tell me why. She said, I don't have to tell you anything. She says, You just listen to me now. So I called Momi up, and I said, Eh, my mom says I can't go. Momi says, Your mom knows that we're related, that you're—you know. And I said, Well, you know what, Mo; I have to listen to my mom, she says no. So years go by, and now it's a—it's a wonderful place of learning about heiau's. For the children; not to be afraid of them, and why. And so now I'm going from here to Kohala to visit. But every time I go ... every time I feel ... things and I hear things. And Momi knows this. So she says to me, You know, I'm going to have a dedication for—I guess it's four—four of the big ... the

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big rocks—and they're everywhere, and some—couple of haole's have them. And they took 'em out of Upolu, and one took 'em out of here. And I said, Gee, Mo. She says, I'm gonna go get them. And she builds a berm, just like that. See that dike?

UTT

QVD: She builds a berm, right in front of her school. And she brings those. They're—they're gods, right, as far as she's concerned. This is—worship this for whatever, whatever, whatever. And she places them on the berm. And this was the grand opening for the educational part of the heiau.

(05:00)

And she says to me, Okay, [CLAP] she says, So we're gonna do this, and I'd like you to take care of that. I said, Okay. So now people are all over. The tents are being—and all the tables face that berm like this. And the music is going, it's beautiful, the music is wonderful. And of course, she oli's, right? She does the greeting, and it was wonderful. And she says, And we have [CLAP] ... my 'ohana here, and she's gonna hula for us. And I knew that in time, I would be called, right? So that's okay. And she says to me ... Where would you like to dance? And I looked at her, and I look around, and I said, Up there. And she looked at me, she says, What? I said, Up there; I'm gonna dance up there. She said ... Are you sure? I said, I'm sure. I'll dance up there. And so the music starts, and I go ... there. And that was more ... of a testimony to me. Wh-h-h, I can go ... And I just felt ... and Momi kept looking at me, and they kept taking pictures, and she says to me ... she's doing that the whole time. So now I'm ending, I come down, end down below. She says, And what? I says, Wonderful, wonderful. She said, I want you to see the film; your feet not even touching the ground. I says, Please; the grass is tall. Please.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: The grass is tall. [CHUCKLE] And you know, when you look at that, it doesn't look like I'm touching the ground. But ... I know better. I feel it; I know better. Don't put something in here that it's really—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --not.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Not so. Not so.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: It looks maybe that way; it's because of the way I move, because of the energies that I feel.

UTT

QVD: Where it takes me. I said, And that's all it is, Mo. I said, But to go in your heiau ... I've been there twice, and I cannot go the third time. I hear the uē, the uē, the uē ... the uē. And then my mother tells me ... that she thinks

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that some of our family was sacrificed in there. They go way back. Yeah. And I'm like ... and then I find out that Nahuina, the family name—

UTT

QVD: --comes ... from Upolu. They come from there. What about all these connections, yeah? [CLAPS] All these connections. And you know ... I'm glad I'm telling you this story, because I think our young people, if they ever watch this, should know that we are alive here, that we are indeed here. Make no mistake. 'Cause ... I'm just as American as you guys think you are, but I'm this Hawaiian that have experienced all of this, and we are here.

UTT

QVD: And if you not just believe, but if you allow yourself to look, and to be part ... of a whispering branch ... the windy blown tree ... a bubble from your spring, whatever, we are here.

ML: Did you feel that when you were out in Lā'ie as a child?

QVD: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah.

ML: Just being immersed in—

QVD: Immersed in it. I used to swim Beauty Hole, go out, and I ne—my Tutu Man—the shark was so long, it was longer than a boat.

UTT

QVD: Barnacles all over him. My Tutu Man's talking to him. And I'm like ... little guy, and I'm in the 'upena like this, watching. [CHUCKLE] And Uncle Moki is saying to me, 'A'ole pilikia; just—just—it's okay, it's okay. Wh-h-ew, around the boat.

*(10:00)*

How many—how many people at my age ... huh, no matter who they are; they can be from Keaukaha, they can be from Waihe'e, Hāna, wherever. But you have that in your family. No matter. I'm not the only one.

UTT

QVD: Plenty. But never had the opportunity to tell the stories. Yeah? But they're everywhere.

UTT

QVD: They're everywhere. Ka'ū ... that's another place. You know, and it's um ... sometimes people look at me, and they go ... [SIGH] Do you read many books? I said, Are you saying do I tell stories? No. No, there's no need to. None of this has ever been talked about since—

UTT

QVD: --you. None.

ML: Well, thank you for sharing with us.

QVD: I—I don't think ... the time is right; your time is right.

UTT

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QVD: This time is right. Yeah; I believe it. And you know ... I'm sure your mom has the same kinds of stories. Same kinds of stories. You know. And to listen to those stories must be adventurous. That was my life; it was adventurous.

UTT

ML: Do you ever remember—I mean, you said your—your um, folks in Lā'ie were hula people.

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Do you remember a kuahu in the house, or in anybody's ... you know, did they—

QVD: No.

ML: --have that, or ...

QVD: Not there.

ML: No.

QVD: The boat house.

ML: In the boat house. So what did it look like, or what ... how did you know what it was, and—

QVD: I didn't know what it was.

UTT

QVD: 'Cause for me, it looked like ... bunch of trash.

UTT

QVD: It looked like ... um ... it looked like an opening like—like an oversized birdcage.

UTT

QVD: Way in the back of the boat house. But I knew, I knew ... the fish god. I knew—I saw it. I saw. Yeah. And my cousin, Roland Logan, was supposed to be the fisherman. So I was told he never did the right thing; he didn't share his hukilau, yeah? He just was whatever. It was—it disappeared, went.

UTT

QVD: Phew, gone; gone. And I said to my mama, Boy, Mom, he's my age. And she says, Yes. But did not do the right thing.

ML: So it was his responsibility—

QVD: It was his—

ML: --to take care of the—

QVD: --responsibility.

ML: --the fishing shrine.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But he didn't do that.

QVD: He did not do that.

ML: M-m; and that was the—

QVD: He did not.

ML: --one in the boat house? Or was it—

QVD: No.

ML: --a hula—

QVD: That was—

ML: --shrine?

QVD: --on the cliffs of Lā'ie.

ML: Oh; okay.

QVD: That one; on the cliffs of—

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: --Lā'ie. Yeah. The one in the boat house ... the tidal wave came, 1945. Wh-h-h; gone.

ML: But that was for hula? That one, that—

QVD: No.

ML: --shrine? That was—

QVD: Fish—

ML: --also—

QVD: Fish house.

ML: --fishing?

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Okay.

QVD: I never saw anything for the hula.

ML: Hula.

QVD: Just me on the lānai.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: With him.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. And it was just a matter of—for me, it was ... [CLAPPING] just ... [FEET TAPPING]

ML: Moving; that kind.

QVD: M-hm. Hela ... 'uehe ... 'ōniu. Ho; that voice. It was ... it was ... commanding ... but ... the—the facial expression on his face was ... maika'i. You know. Uh, even when I made a mistake, several mistakes, he would just say, Just hele hele; just go, don't stop. You know. And I used to get tired of that. [CHUCKLE] Because everybody went swimming, and I was back there. You know, and I was like, I don't think this is right. And worse—you know what was worse? I think it's because they never spoke Hawaiian to me. They would say it, only when they needed for me—or was—instead of saying, Wonderful, they would say, Maika'i. Or you know, whatever the expression was. Then they'd use the Hawaiian words. Otherwise, No, don't go that way, go this way. Or, Never mind.

UTT

(15:00)

QVD: What? And then my mother told me ... It's not popular to be a Hawaiian. We don't want you to speak the language. We want you to go to school, learn, so they don't steal from you, so they don't do this to you like they did it to us. And I'm saying to her—thinking to myself, What are you talking about, doing it to you folks? How more beautiful ... do you want a home? I mean, the home was incredible. Big—so they called it parlor, four bedrooms, big living room, all had lānai doors out to a sixty-foot lānai that wrapped the lānai, a breezeway that went into the dining room that sat sixteen people. All benches. And a—and a—and a sink like it looked like a washtub. You know. But ... so they don't take away from you.

ML: So you didn't really know the—what she was talking about, then, 'cause—

QVD: Had no idea.

ML: --it looked like you—they had it all.

QVD: Now, I know.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Now, I know. Because there's still land in our name in Lā'ie.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. So now I know. But ... I don't know. There's so many things in our lives. Uh, Jamie—Jamie keeps telling me, Why don't you go after it? I don't think so. I don't think so. Lā'ie is full of people now. And I think most of them are there for a good reason. You know, so just leave it be; let it go. He says, What about your children? I said, What about them? I said, My mother said the right thing; Go out and make your own.

ML: Make your own.

QVD: Yeah. Do your own. So ...

ML: So that—it was on that lānai that you first learned your hula steps with—

QVD: M-hm.

ML: --Tutu Kaleohano?

QVD: Tutu Kaleohano; yeah.

ML: Just him, or was your Tutu lady there or—

QVD: Just him. Just him.

ML: So he—he was a hula guy, then? He—he had had—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --training and—

QVD: Yes; he had training.

ML: What do you know about all that—

QVD: He had his kuahu; they had a kuahu down at the beach. Okay; my mother told me about that one.

ML: For hula?

QVD: 'Cause Mama was a hula dancer.

ML: Oh. That's the one—

QVD: And—

ML: --from Kaua'i? Or the line was from Kaua'i?

QVD: My mother; yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: She.

ML: Your mom's mom?

QVD: Yeah; down at the beach. And they 'ūniki ... down at the beach. I told, What in the world was that all about? She says, That was very different; very different.

ML: That was your mom's 'ūniki?

QVD: That's my mom.

ML: Okay.

QVD: My mom.

ML: So she had her training on O'ahu?

QVD: On O'ahu.

ML: When she was um—

QVD: With Tutu Man. Yeah.

ML: Out in Lā'ie, or in Kaka'ako?



QVD: In Lā'ie.

ML: In Lā'ie.

QVD: In Lā'ie.

ML: Okay. 'Cause you—

QVD: You know—

ML: --told us she was a kapu dancer, yeah?

QVD: Kapu dancer; yeah. You know, there is ... I should get pictures of my mama. My sister has them; she's making copies, of her and her um ... and the—and the troupe she was with.

ML: Yeah; I was gonna—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --ask you about that.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: You mentioned—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --you had a picture of her on the deck—

QVD: And their—

ML: --of a—

QVD: And their—and their ... ipu's.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Big.

ML: We'd love to see those—

QVD: Oh.

ML: --pictures. Yeah.

QVD: Big. Yes. And [CHUCKLE] I told her—

UTT

QVD: --Ooh ... you were short. [CHUCKLE] She was just ... short.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Ho, that tī leaf skirt is out here. I swear to God. And she says, Well, we weren't worried about how—size ten or size twelve. [CHUCKLE] We hula; that's what—

UTT

QVD: --we did. Now, when she was fifteen or sixteen, I think it was ... they were put—there was four of them, dancers ... and their master ... she was a woman, I think. Woman. And all the chanters behind them, were put on a boat. And they ... went to all the most important heiau's, and rededicated them.

ML: So if she was fifteen, what year would that have been?

QVD: Fifteen.

ML: Ro—roughly. When was she born?

QVD: I don't know; I forget.

ML: She was—

QVD: When she died—

ML: --thirty ...

QVD: --twenty years ago, little over twenty years ago, she was eighty-six. So that's a hundred and—

ML: So she was probably born around the turn of the century.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So the—okay.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So it would have been about maybe in the 19 ... teens, like—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --between 15 and 20.

QVD: I think so.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Yeah. But she says—

ML: Wow.

(20:00)

QVD: She says the one that just, just really made her feel very uneasy; Pu'ukoholā. Here.

ML: Right down here.

QVD: And because ... they got into dinghies, yeah? And they had to row to ... to shore. And she said the shore was lined with torches. At night, now; at night, lined with torches. She said they got into their dinghy ... quiet. And they rowed—I mean, they rowed—he did, up to the wall of the heiau, the manō heiau that's in the water. That's where they got off. And she says ... And the chanters stayed on the boat. She says, Can you im—she says, Just—just listen to what I'm saying. They stayed on the boat. And when they pa'i those ... ipu, she says, Kani; and we hula from there. I said, Mom, do you realize how long that is to get up there? She says, We did not go to the top. She says, We got up to the heiau, and that rock wall was all the way up, and then it leveled off. And that's where they hula. We did not go up there. It was not permissible. We—

UTT

QVD: --were not allowed. So that's where we went. And then she says they went to Maui; went to Hāna, I think. Hāna. And then the worst one—another one was on Moloka'i. She says, You know what? I swear; I swear, every kahuna was there. That island was known for the kahuna's. She says, But you know what? We just went in, did it, on the boat, [CLAP] and we were gone. Out. We just went to rededicate; that's all we did.

ML: And this was—this woman kumu she had was from Lā'ie?

QVD: I don't know—

ML: Or—

QVD: --where she was from.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I don't know whether she was from Lā'ie, or she was from ... Hau'ula.

UTT

QVD: But somewhere from there.

ML: Somewhere on that uh, on that—

QVD: Or even—

ML: --side.

QVD: --Kahana.

ML: M-m. Yeah; the whole area was—

QVD: That whole area.

ML: --ripe with—

QVD: Kahana.

ML: --hula—

QVD: Maybe Kahana; yeah.

ML: Would you recognize the name if you saw it?

QVD: No.

ML: Never heard it?

QVD: No.

ML: Okay. 'Cause there is some genealogy of hula—

QVD: Yeah?

ML: --that—that is from that side. But I—you know.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: I don't ... I don't know if that would help at all.

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: And then Mama had one hula kumu come, and he was an older man. Old man. And he had a daughter. She was exquisite. Very Hawaiian.

UTT

QVD: And they did ... we had a lū'au, and Mama wanted him to come. There was some kind of association with him.

ML: Do you remember his name?

QVD: No, I don't.

UTT

QVD: I don't know.

ML: He was an O'ahu fellow?

QVD: O'ahu; yeah.

UTT

QVD: And ... he chanted, she danced. And I will never forget her. Never.

UTT

QVD: I thought Auntie Io was spooky. I think she was more spooky than Auntie Io.

ML: No kidding? How old was she at the time around that you—

QVD: That girl—

ML: --saw her?

QVD: --must have been seventeen, eighteen. Yeah. Yeah. But oh, he was ... and then Mama had his table separate, to eat. I guess ... I guess in those times, they didn't mingle, yeah? They did not mingle. They just—they both ate, pau ... and Mama gave him some money, and then left. Yeah. But he had people waiting for him.

UTT

QVD: See, all these kinds of things, see, they trigger; now I'm talking.

ML: Yeah; this is—

QVD: Huh?

ML: --interesting, 'cause—

QVD: Just triggers all this ...

ML: Yeah.

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: You know, as if to say to me—and—and she—she says, When this man comes, I want you to—I want you to pay attention. I was married then.

UTT

QVD: Married? No; I was a senior in high school.

ML: Okay. So that would have been—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --in the 40s.

QVD: Because I ... I remembered ... dancing. I was a junior—junior, I think.

UTT

QVD: Because I had my favorite holokū on, and that was a yellow one.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: 'Cause I danced.

ML: Did they—did this kumu and his daughter do only 'ōlapa?

QVD: Only 'ōlapa; only 'ōlapa. Yeah.

ML: At a lū'au?

QVD: At a lū'au.

ML: Interesting.

QVD: At a lū'au.

ML: And—

*(25:00)*

QVD: But, not—not the whoop-de-do lū'au's you have today.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Very, very different.

ML: Tell—tell me about it.

QVD: Very different. The lū'au's ... that lū'au, our lū'au's usually opened with o—with an oli, yeah? And uh ... and then ... this is not whoever, whoever is gonna open the lū'au, but there are three or four within the group. And they all chant, they all oli. And ... and then they sit. And then ... and even the food is different. Uh ... the food is kalua pig, and they used kō'elepālau, the sweet potato. No sweet potato on the table. This is all with coconut milk, and—and—and all in—in um, banana leaf.

UTT

QVD: Yeah; they put it in banana leaf. It's very different. Um ... your lomi salmon never had green onions.

UTT

QVD: Uh—

ML: Just regular onion?

QVD: Tomato.

ML: Oh, just tomato—

QVD: Only tomato.

ML: --and salmon.

QVD: Yeah. I don't know why, but ...

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Uh, and what else did they have those days. And then they had on the table, in bowls, your ake your—your uh, your uh, 'opihi, your wana, uh, your um ... uh, what was my mom's favorite fish ... enenu. Yeah. So they felt that this was almost like how the ali'i's eat, yeah? Like that. All in beautiful bowls on the table. No paper plate. No paper plate. She got um ... I think she got uh, what do you call ... bowls—they were not beautiful koa plates and stuff anymore; they were just like little boat, platters like boats.

UTT

QVD: And I think she got that from Kulani Prison.

UTT

QVD: Up here.

UTT

QVD: My mom ... was ... quite ... the entertainer, and the ... and the—and the ... Martha Stewart [CHUCKLE], if you will, then. And no ... uh ... what did she ... uh, what did she have the first time, that big lū'au? Well, when I say big, I'm talking sixty people. Uh ... so everything was very different, yeah? Very different. And dry fish. Just all laid on the table. Dried 'ōpelu. Uh, so you know, I guess—I guess ... when the younger people watch me say and tell these stories ... probably saying ... Wow ... that lady really lived that life? You know? Really? And I think of it myself now, 'cause everything was taken for granted. Yeah. Even in Kaka'ako ... my Tutu Hamana

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

would catch turtles, m-m, and bring it to Kaka'ako. And they'd have it stored in a room, one room, big room. And then they would kill that turtle ... and make turtle stew. I hated that, but—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I mean, you could smell it from here to Lā'ie.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But you know what? And then they would make their poi 'ulu—that's taro and—and breadfruit mix. And that's another thing we had for poi. It was not poi; it was poi 'ulu. Yeah. Always the poi 'ulu.

UTT

QVD: And I used to tell them, What's the big deal? I'd rather have poi only. No, we have poi 'ulu. But if you want poi, then you go get your own taro. It's out there in that—in that bucket on the fire. You grab your own taro, you go get your own honey, and you make your own. But at the table, it's poi 'ulu. So ...

UTT

*(30:00)*

QVD: And you know what? I think ... I think if we had those—just a few of those kinds of things today ... I wonder what our children ... think about life in general, about Hawai'i, yeah? Instead of always going to McDonald, and whatever. Maybe twice a year, have that. Yeah. What is a wana? I mean, most kids you ask today, What's wana? Do you know wana?

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: No. Well, I'm going to tell you what wana is. You know, it's that poky thing that you see down at the beach, you know, you see that, yeah? Well, you take that out, and you take the tongues out. And what do you do with it; you fry it, you cook it? No, you eat it raw. [GASP]

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But the Japanese sell that ... at fifteen dollars a crack. Excuse me. You know, how delicious.

ML: And it's so good.

QVD: It is.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I love it with half-cooked lobster. [CHUCKLE] But ... oh ...

UTT



**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: An—and so all of these things surrounded me. And Lord knows, I was the least interested in my hula. They knew it, and they have to—they had to keep after me, and after me. And I kept saying, up 'til I was sophomore in high school, I'm a song leader, I don't want that; I don't want that. You know, but ... and Auntie Io; Auntie Io was another one. She was wonderful with me. And she—we'd all walk in, and she'd say ... Well, isn't it wonderful? Every one of you is my 'ohana. Every one. And she'd look at me and she'd say to me, And you-- [CHUCKLE] and she'd say to me, And you. Yes, Auntie Io. I want you to pay attention. Pay attention. Okay. Okay.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And goodness knows ... I think I was ... making my first hula skirt. She was down in Kaka'ako. And boy, I tell you, that was like ... an experience ... I ... I will never forget. 'Cause it was the old way; lap and tie, pull and tie. And I just—I just knew and felt like ... I'm so part of this. I'm so part of this world. And that no matter what my future brings ... that I will keep this, 'cause it belongs to me. It belongs to me.

UTT

ML: What—when—what age do you—or what caused you to have a turnaround in hula? You know, you were fighting it, fighting it, fighting it. But ... you—

QVD: Well, it was off and on. I'd go to Tom Hiona, and he inspired me. Until I saw him so inu, and so ... And I said—I went home and told Mama; Mom, he could hardly ...

UTT

QVD: --pa'i that ipu. He could hardly pa'i that. And she'd say, Oh, well. We just knew that that was gonna happen.

ML: That's too bad.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah, 'cause—

QVD: So then I went to Joshua.

ML: Right; yeah. I have my notes here—

QVD: And the one that really, really kinda turned me around too was Auntie Mary Ho.

UTT

QVD: Oh; she was down in Kaka'ako too.

ML: Right.

QVD: Oh. She would ... she would um ... talk story with us, like Auntie Io. Talk story. And she'd tell us ...

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: If you paid attention, and if you let yourself into this world ... you have no idea, no idea where it could take you. And you know, I would—I would come home thinking like that. And that is, I think, where ... your kumu ... turns you around. When you can come home, or wherever you are—wh-h-h; and it's there. And it's there.

(35:00)

UTT

QVD: Um ... it's like this here. Same thing. Sometimes—sometimes I wish ... I wish that I could just walk out there ... and just ... stand with them out there. You know.

UTT

QVD: But Mama always said to me, always said to me, My girl ... she says, You know ... your hula ... will be wonderful. She says, But I want you to be very careful in how you step and where you go. There's so much out there. That's why when Kawaikapu talked with me, and I said, I don't know, are you ready to challenge them? [CHUCKLE] Excuse me. [CHUCKLE] I don't think so, sweetie. We don't want to do that. He says, Well, I'm the only one there, you know. I said, No, you're not the only one there. I said ... Time is coming; people are beginning to see that now. They really are. They're beginning to realize that ... you know what, um ... there is another, another way to do this, without setting the fear in you. That's one thing my ... my kūpuna's never did, is to set the fear in me. And I know; I've seen them do that ... to students. Whoa.

UTT

QVD: Not right. Not good. Those days are pau. Those days are pau. At least I think so.

UTT

QVD: But this is what he was talking about.

ML: Yeah. Yeah; I remember—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --from last year—

QVD: Step lightly.

ML: --yeah? Yeah.

QVD: Yeah; step lightly.

ML: 'Cause you're—I mean ... your—your—your Tutu Man was your first teacher, really, then your—

QVD: M-hm.

ML: --mom, she sort of also nur—nurtured—

QVD: Nurtured me through it.

ML: --your hula.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Like how—what—

QVD: He was my—

ML: If he was more working on your basic, what role did your mom play in ... in—

QVD: She would watch; she would watch my feet. And she'd say, Don't shake that 'ōkole so much. It's not where it is. She said, It's here.

UTT

QVD: Here; remember, here. And so uh ... and she, too, would say very little. She would always say to me, I'm taking you to these ... these masters, because ... this is where you belong; here, here, and here. Don't work too good over here; okay, we're gonna go over here. My—my mom was a realist. You know. She really was.

UTT

QVD: But she could oli, she could—oh; she was wonderful. Wonderful.

ML: So do you re—recall the—the first time that you heard chanting?

QVD: The first time that I heard chanting ... well, it was always at the table. You know. When they said—when they said the prayers or whatever; to me, that was an oli, that was a chant, because it was so intense. You know. And then when Tutu Man chanted for me ... sounded the same. It sounded like ... this is the way it should be...said. Uh ... my—my dad and Jamie are very much alike. Uh, my mother ... even in her hula days, and she would dance at a party—

UTT

QVD: --at a gathering, um ... and my dad would always say to me ... You know, sometimes I feel so bad that I've taken your mom away from ... her hula.

**(40:00)**

And I'd say, You didn't take her away from the hula. No, you didn't. He'd say, Yeah, your mom was quite the hula dancer then. 'Cause the things that she did was not the kinda things you do, dance nightclub, dance this, do that, do this. Uh, totally different. And I said, But you know, Dad ... I think ... I think she knew what she was doing. And when she gave up what she did for you, she paid the price, 'cause it damn near took her life, but she paid the price. So ... and when I look at Jamie ... you know, he could have divorced me [CHUCKLE] a few times.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: You know. Goodbye.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: But um ... he had more admiration and appreciation than that good old boy jealousy crap. You know, just ... not him. He was always ... encouraging, always uh ... never possessive. But ... so good.

UTT

QVD: Even my mother had to—had to finally say ... You're very lucky to have that kind of man. Very lucky.

UTT

QVD: You know, I taught my two boys to dance hula with me; Alika and Kawika. When we hula together ... it is like—I think; I may be prejudiced—like—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --no other tree—threesome. Because I taught them to dance like men. 'Cause I have seen my Tutu Man dance, both of them. And so I did the same for them. And it is ... every now and then, we'd have a party. And I'd say, Okay, you two guys; you ready? And they look at each other. [CLAP] Let's go, Mom.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: You know? And it's wonderful. Uh, and they keep that as kind of uh, a precious gift that they're not gonna share. You know, and they won't do it with anyone else but me. I said, You should—guys should do it. No, Mom. Because only with you ... we feel like we can make any move, do any move...which was good.

ML: So um, when you would see your Tutu Man dancing—

QVD: Yes.

ML: That was uh, 'auana at—

QVD: 'Auana.

ML: --parties and things.

QVD: And—and 'ōlapa.

ML: And 'ōlapa? Oh—

QVD: And 'ōlapa.

ML: So what occasion would you have to see them 'ōlapa?

QVD: Tutu Man ... Tutu—Kaleohano—

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: --more than Hamana; Kaleohano. He had the greatest, greatest admiration for Pele. And he would do Aia La O Pele. And I watch him, and I'm like this.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Watching him. Mākaukau; and he'd get up. And he was a huge man. And he'd say, You watch me. And if I'm lucky, she's gonna be there. [CHUCKLE] You know ... how many people today ... have grandparents like that? No. And they always tell me ... You don't forget to mālama, to embrace ... to embrace. Because that's where all of this fire, and all of this ... comes from. That's where it comes from. Yeah.

UTT

QVD: But that was his favorite.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And he would have me do Kawika over and over ... and over. [CHUCKLE] But you know, not just—not just for the hula perfection, but to watch me.

UTT

QVD: I think, yeah? To watch—

ML: Oh, sure.

QVD: --this mo'opuna, yeah.

ML: Yeah. 'Cause you were the only one that—that was sort of—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --their chosen one that—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Yeah. And—and I could not understand that for a long—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --time. Because there were four other granddaughters. A year younger, two years younger, but nevertheless, they were there. No.

UTT

QVD: No. But if you want to join, try.

UTT

(45:00)

QVD: [CHUCKLE] Come try.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But ... no.

ML: Their efforts were on you.

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: On me. And you know, I—I'm sure it's like Nona, like your mom, and ... like uh ... Tootsie Notley. I know. Uh ... uh, unlike Mamo Howell, or those people, yeah? Um, we're—like Lani; Lani is the same way. Um ... Hoakalei, yeah? Uh, Joseph, Henry Pa, um ... when I listen to their stories ... I listen to their stories ... very similar. Very similar. And uh ... I would say nothing. Well, how's it Queenie? Um, you're going to Lā'ie this—this time—no; no. They're not well. Oh. Coming up, up to Kaka'ako. But you know, it um ... I do believe that ... we—we talk about the kuahu, and I think it's always with them. Yeah. Uh ... uh, I'm like that here. I feel like their energies not good—wh-h-h. I'm like a ... I'm like a storm in this house, on this 'āina. You know. My children used to watch me, and they'd say, Ho, Mom, what are you doing? Nothing.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Nothing; just—never mind. But now they know.

UTT

QVD: Now, they know. Um ...

ML: Did your Tutu Man give—or who gave you the nickname Queenie?

QVD: That was my mother.

UTT

QVD: Because her Auntie Annie was called Queenie too.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: And she loved—she said she loved her Auntie Annie. And I said, That's wonderful; why did you have to give me Queenie?

ML: [CHUCKLE]

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: I mean, as I grew up and danced everywhere on the mainland ... invariably, people would ask me, Where did you get that name Queenie from? And I remember in Palm Springs once with Charlie Farrell, who became a dear friend of mine, said ... I know I'm gonna have a couple friends in this evening when you folks come over. And they're gonna ask you where'd you get the name Queenie from. And I says, Yeah; and what should I say? He says, Just tell them you're a burlesque queen. [CHUCKLE] I said, What?

ML: How did that go over? [CHUCKLE]

QVD: He says, That'll stop 'em.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Hawaiian burlesque queen? How come I haven't seen you on stage? [CHUCKLE]

ML: That's cute.

QVD: But he was—he was—he was a funny person. M-m. You know My Little Margie? I don't know, was—huh?

GENE KOIS: Ann Southern?

QVD: Charlie Farrell, the father. Movie actor; he was my dear friend. He owned the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. When I used to dance there, he told me, Queenie, I want you to buy—there was nothing there. The Racquet Club—that place was a desert. He says, I want you to buy a piece of property right on the side here. I said to him, Sand? I'm gonna buy sand? I don't think so. [CHUCKLE] He says, Queenie, I'm gonna buy it... I think it was five thousand—five thousand dollars. Five thousand dollars? He says, Don't worry about it. He says, We'll take care of it. I said, No, I can't do that. Oh, no, no, no. No, no, no. I'm thinking I'm too good a Mormon kid, you can't do that. Anyway--

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But, no, no, no. So I did five winter shows there; five. I would go to Pasadena, do a winter show there, and then we'd go over to Palm Springs and do a winter show there. We got to be such wonderful friends. And he was an admiral in the Navy. Little—I think lit—I don't know how many people know that on the islands, maybe eno—a few, and not many. But he ... would drive ... I lived here then; I was just hāpai. And he would do his Navy whatever he had to do once a year at Pearl Harbor. And then he would drive with a two-flag—one of those limousine things, and drive into the homestead and come and see me.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And he would say to me, God, when are you gonna quit being pregnant? [CHUCKLE]

(50:00)

Because after I got married and had these babies all at one time ... I never went back. I told him, I can't; can't do that. But he would come and see me all the time. I ... in my hula, I met so many wonderful people on my ancient side, and so many wonderful people on my 'auana side. Unbelievable; unbelievable. And ... and I know, and I believe in my heart that ... if you love your hula ... and you can do both ... and you love people ... the world is your oyster. [CHUCKLE] I believe that. I do believe that. 'Cause I'm not the only one that did that. Lani Rodrigues did that. Um ... gosh; who else? Gloria Kanemura did that. Uh ... there's so many ... Aggie Auld did that.

UTT

QVD: Um, I don't think Tootsie Notley. Your mom did that.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Big time; New York. Big time. So ... uh ... we are ... I think we are ... without a doubt ... those few chosen ones whose life was already planned out. Some of us needed a kick in the butt, like me, but ... I think we were able to put across to the rest ... and I went just everywhere—the rest of the country that the hula is beautiful. I was supposed to be on the Ed Sullivan Show. And um, that was when Henry J. Kaiser—and I went home instead. And Pauline Cockett went; she was the one that went. Which is wonderful.

UTT

QVD: But these kinds of ... most wonderful events ... in our lives. I'd love to listen to your mom's stories.

ML: Crazy stories.

QVD: I would love—

ML: Yeah. Yeah.

QVD: --to listen to her—

UTT

QVD: --stories. Because ... uh ... as I read more about your mom, I am ... what a babe. What a babe. I am ... so ... so overwhelmed with her ... with her choice to continue her hula in a way where she just took Hawai'i by storm. Kamehameha Schools; look what she did for them. And look at what she's doing ... for the rest of Hawai'i. I mean, if she were well, she'd still be out there.

ML: Oh, yeah.

QVD: She'd take every appointment, even if she had a cough, or whatever. That would be her.

UTT

QVD: As I read about her, my gosh. You know. Uh—

ML: Yeah. Pretty amazing.

QVD: Amazing.



ML: Yeah.

QVD: Amazing, amazing. Just wonderful. Um ... my joy in hula ... has always been to dance with the rest of the hula dancers. To enjoy, to totally enjoy our hula. You know. Um ... one day, one day, soon, I would like to be up there dancing with your mom.

ML: It would be nice.

QVD: You know. I would love to do that.

ML: She's getting there.

QVD: Yeah. I'd love—

ML: Maybe next year. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --love, love to do that.

ML: Oh, that would be fun.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: That'd be really fun.

QVD: Yeah. And has been times where ... some of the hula dancers that are ... foremost hula dancers, soloists ... have shut out the hula world and a lot of people. Simply because ... I don't know, maybe they think they have diamonds on their toes or something. I don't know. [CHUCKLE]

**(55:00)**

But it just ... it just makes me sad. Because there's so much ... it's not a matter of picking up what you know or what I know. It's a matter of enjoying, I mean enjoying our kumu's, our masters. And this is what I have become, and I enjoy it. And that's what you've become. And aren't we lucky? Aren't we the special ones ... to have ... such lives.

UTT

QVD: Such beautiful lives. My children are all worried now. Well, Mom, do you have everything in order? And I only want to talk to you about this, because you know ... and I'm looking at my kids. What are you talking about? Well, we just want to know if everything is in order. You know, what you—what, you mean my burial? [CHUCKLE] Don't worry about that. Don't worry about that. Because I am enjoying life now, like I never have in a long time. I've had all your problems, your kids' problems. All of these things. But now, I said, I am totally enjoying my life. I'm going everywhere; I'm doing so many things. I said, You know ... and I keep thinking that I have a few more chapters in my life.

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Are you gonna still continue dancing? How's your balance? You know, since the accident, how's your balance? I said, My balance is perfect; it's good. Oh, good. Oh, good; we're worried about your balance. It's good. But ... until then ... I will dance on and on.

ML: Thank goodness.

QVD: I will dance on and on.

ML: [CHUCKLE] You mentioned um ...

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]

**QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT**

**Tape #: HPS 0747 (MV886)**

**Date: August 22, 2006**

**Location: Waimea, Kohala, Hawai'i Island**

**Subject: Oral History Interview**

**Interviewer(s): Maile Loo**

**Videographer: Gene Kois**

(00:52)

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

(02:03)

QVD: He has to be close to the ocean.

UTT

QVD: Which is what I'm trying to do, is get a Kawaihae lot.

UTT

QVD: I'd like to do that; get a Kawaihae lot, and be close to the ocean. So—

UTT

QVD: --I could do that. Yeah.

ML: As far as hospital and stuff, I mean, there's a really good hospital here in Waimea—

QVD: Excellent hospital.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: But—

ML: But not ...

QVD: They're not—

ML: The—the—

QVD: --equipped.

ML: --the breadth of doctors and things that you might need, or ...

QVD: Yeah; well, we have—

ML: Or specialists or whatever.

QVD: We have a good doctor here, but when it comes to ... you know, serious strokes and things like that—  
UTT

QVD: Wh-h-h—

ML: Gotta got to Honolulu.

QVD: Gotta go.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Um ... and—and even the heart doctor. Yeah. Uh, they can only do so much, and they just ...

ML: I see.

QVD: --wrap you up, and wh-h-h.

UTT

QVD: Over you go.

UTT

QVD: And we think we're at that point where if anything happens, it's gotta be serious. It can't just be—you know, at this point.

ML: Right.

QVD: You know, so I don't know. It's hard to leave a place like this when there's so much quiet.

UTT

QVD: And you know, an—and uh ... and when there are parties, they're good parties; they're nice.

UTT

QVD: And when the kids—children come, it's wonderful.

ML: I bet.

QVD: So it's hard.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: But we're trying to get one to come aboard. If one comes aboard, that'd be perfect. You know. Then I would turn the place over to them.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And just keep this as a life estate, until we've gone. But that way, we can go back and forth.

ML: Right.

QVD: We can do what we want to do, and they have to take care of that.

ML: Right; right.

QVD: Right now, we don't have any ... anyone that wants to just ... say, okay.

UTT

QVD: An—and I says, you know, I'm gonna tell you guys something. If that Akaka Bill does not fly ... this Hawaiian Homes and everything is gonna go. Let me tell you. They are heading that way.

UTT

QVD: They are heading that way, no matter what they say as far as the Act. They're gonna find loopholes in Hawaiian Homes; right now, that's what they're doing. They're not running this administration the way it should be run. Po-po-po, da-da-dum. So maybe we'll just give the Hawaiians that are on the list either a—a piece of property right now, and the rest of it be turned over to the State. Or we just give them monetary ...

ML: Compensation.

QVD: Yeah; compensations.

UTT

QVD: I've heard that talk.

ML: Really?

QVD: Yeah. I don't know if they say if you go the Akaka Bill ... then it's not a good thing. But if you ... no; it might be a good thing. Because at least it's a step in ... in the door. I don't know.

ML: It's hard to know what to—

QVD: Hard to know.

ML: --know these days. You know.

*(05:00)*

QVD: Yeah.

ML: You hear so many different arguments, and—

QVD: Yeah; yeah.

ML: --sides to the same story, so—

QVD: Same story.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It's all politics.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: They say they're gonna do, but when they get in there, the doing is ...

ML: [CHUCKLE] Until election time.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Until election time.

ML: Um ... your—you mentioned your mom had her 'ūniki on the beach?

QVD: On the beach.

ML: Was that right in Lā'ie?

QVD: No.

ML: Do you know where?

QVD: No. I think it was ... [SIGH] ... I think it was Kahuku. Or—or Kahana, Kahana Bay. It could have been Kahana Bay.

ML: Did you ever hear anything more about what she had to do, or ...

QVD: I was not interested.

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: [CHUCKLE] I really wasn't.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: When she talked to me about those things at—at the time, I think she knew that I thought it was just ... ah, something of the past. And ... and because they were not teaching us the language, that was very hard for me to even think, Why would I be doing this? Why?

ML: It just seemed, why—why did you need to know it?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah. If I was gonna know—if I couldn't do what Tutu Man is doing ... then why? I'm sure it was very—now I think about it, I—I'm sure it was very difficult for them ... to—to encourage me, to keep me in that Laamaikahiki. Yeah? You know. And uh ...

UTT

QVD: So she would talk to me about these events that she had. And uh ... but what—what was interesting with her kuahu was ... so she tells me, there was a pig's head in it. I said, A what? She says, Yes. I said, What was the purpose of that? She says, Well, that was the belief. I said, I ... and of course, when she mentioned things like that, it just made it more spooky, more uninviting to want to learn. And then down to the beach, in the water?

[COUGHING]

QVD: But you know ... um ... but she did indeed have these connections with all of these masters.

UTT

QVD: These—and they were ... men. And I think Auntie Tillie was the only—only other master that I knew. She was a Kauwe.

UTT

QVD: And ... uh ...

ML: Was she the sister of your grandmother, or the mother of—or—

QVD: She was the sister-in-law.

ML: Sister-in-law.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Was she also Kau—Kaua'i, then, or was she O'ahu?

QVD: She—O'ahu.

ML: O'ahu.

QVD: O'ahu.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: They were also ... they were also in Iolani Palace ... at the time, Mama says. And ... gosh, I could remember—  
if I could remember the stories.

ML: Who was in Iolani Palace?

QVD: Mama was a little girl then. So the last was Kapiolani?

ML: M-hm.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Well—yeah, the—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Well, before Liliuokalani.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: No.

ML: Kalakaua.

QVD: No. The last. Was Liliu?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: She was the last?

ML: M-hm.

QVD: Because ... Mama's ... Mama's um ... we'd go to Kawaiahao ... and ... there was a little house. And this  
wonderful lady, old lady; she was muumu [MIMICS WALKING].

UTT

QVD: Like this, yeah? And she was a feather kāhili maker. And Mama would talk to her, quite a bit.



(10:00)

And ... I guess it was Liliu. Anyway ... my great-grandfather ... great-grandfather ... at the time ... owned salt flats down at Kaka'ako.

ML: Salt?

QVD: Salt flats.

ML: Flats. Would this be—

QVD: That's where his Hawaiian—and we have a picture, I think.

UTT

QVD: of that thatch—

UTT

QVD: --hut, I think; I'm not sure.

ML: Was this—this was the Kaleohano ...

QVD: No.

ML: That grandfather's—

QVD: No.

ML: No?

QVD: No.

ML: Which side?

QVD: This was my grandmother's—

UTT

QVD: --father.

ML: Grandmother's father.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Okay. Do you know his name?

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: That's the one ... that put that curse on my grandmother. No name. He won't—

ML: Oh; okay.

QVD: Carry no name. And he ... he was the kahuna. Gosh, do I remember. Anyway, so I'm told—so we're told—that what is NBC, the Ward Estate, belonged to my great-grandfather.

UTT

QVD: The salt flats went all the way up there.

UTT

QVD: Or portions of it. Anyway, I—I don't remember. God, I ...

UTT

QVD: That's really ... see, it's not paying attention, because [CHUCKLE] ... I was like there were too many menehune's in my life. I-just too many.

ML: [CHUCKLE] Well, that—that might be documented, though, you know.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: The salt flats and—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --all that. That might be—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Just as a result of, you know, things—

QVD: I'm going to find out about that—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --this weekend.

ML: Oh, good.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Good.

QVD: So anyway ...

UTT

QVD: But um ... but I have a sister ... I had three sisters.

UTT

QVD: And one sister was hānai'd to my mother's cousin ... who was pure Hawaiian.

UTT

QVD: Her husband was pure Hawaiian. They could not have any children.

UTT

QVD: My mother was having them ... like there's no tomorrow.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And this child was born at home. That was my sister Lucy. And my auntie and uncle came and took the child. My mother—my grandmother was there; took the child. This sister grew up in a household that spoke Hawaiian. She is fluent Hawaiian. Sh—sh—she calls us lolo's. [CHUCKLE]

ML: That's not nice. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I said, Well, that may be so, but get in line.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Come on; let's start the hula. [CHUCKLE]

ML: There you go. [CHUCKLE] Oh.

QVD: [CHUCKLE]

ML: Funny.

QVD: But she speaks beautiful Hawaiian.

UTT

QVD: And when she's mad—[CHUCKLE]. Ooh. Anyway—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --she's younger, much younger.

UTT

QVD: Anyway, so—

UTT

QVD: But uh, lucky her. Lucky her.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: So the hula ... from my family ... was me.

ML: Okay.

QVD: The entire ... this generation.

UTT

QVD: It's me. There are many, many cousins out there ... and many have danced. Danced with Hoakalei. Yeah. Nieces danced with Hoakalei. And beautiful dancers. But ... never had that privilege, yeah?

UTT

QVD: Never had that—that wonderful openings, those openings. Yeah. So—

ML: Was your mom the chosen one in her—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --generation?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So that was it, there weren't any—

QVD: That was it.

ML: --others.

QVD: No.

ML: You—you mentioned that um, at one point in her life, she wanted to break the kapu that was on her, and you wen—she went to a man in Kaka'ako.

*(15:00)*

QVD: M-hm.

ML: Do you remember what his name was—

QVD: Actually—

ML: --or what happened?

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: No. She wanted all this to be—to huki [‘oki ] off of her, because she had another life. An—and it was—she said it was disastrous.

UTT

QVD: And she had her papa, my Tutu Man, Tutu Hamana, and—[CLEARS THROAT]—there were several others that had to stand with her.

UTT

QVD: With her. Now, for me, that sort of happened to me too.

UTT

QVD: Right up Nu‘uanu, where we lived.

ML: Yeah, you mentioned that.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: I wanted to ask you about—

QVD: And—

ML: --that too.

QVD: And so ... Mama could see it. I could not get out of bed. And so she called Tutu Hamana, called Tutu Kaleohano, and they came. But ... and they oli from the door, coming into my room. But ... they also were bishops. Both of them were bishops. So it was like a double. You know, okay; here we are. And uh ... they could always tell me who it was.

UTT

QVD: But that will be my secret.

UTT

QVD: And that’s the way it has to be.

ML: Was it lili kinda things?

QVD: Huh?

ML: Lili kinda—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --things for you?

QVD: Yeah; lili. Yeah.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And what about with your mom?

QVD: My mom ... no; she elected to do that. She did not want to be anymore. She want all the kapu's off. She says, Pau; she's pau. And she tried to tell me what she went through, in terms of her hula. You know. And um, her hula was ... was through dreams.

UTT

QVD: Many dreams; many hula men. I've had that, but not many, not many. Uh ... for—for my mama, I think she was ... destined to be like Auntie Io, Tom Hiona, those kind, you know. But you know, thank goodness ... I would not be here.

UTT

ML: Right.

QVD: No, I would not be here. An—and neither would my six siblings either. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Did she do this before you all were born, or after?

QVD: Yes; yes.

ML: Okay.

QVD: When she was very young.

ML: So is it like—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --she wanted to get—

QVD: Fifteen, sixteen.

ML: --married or something—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And so she wanted—

QVD: No; no. She just wanted—she said she just realized that ... she couldn't do much of anything. She was so—she felt so kapu. I mean, she just could not do this, couldn't do that, had to be disciplined there, had to do all of her ... whatever, whatever. She says ... and she said what made it hard was that it was not like living in a village of Hawaiians.

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: It was living with the Japanese, the Chinese, everybody else. And everybody was—at her age, was doing things. They were doing things. So she says, Why do I want to be this way? Why? So—and then not long after, she met my dad. And um, so she says, That was not an easy thing to do. Once you commit ... yeah? She says, And then try to be released from that kapu. So she says—

ML: She had a hard time.

QVD: She says, I am just fortunate I had the power behind me. Not me; the power behind me.

ML: And that was from your Tutu Man?

QVD: Yeah; Tutu Man. Yeah.

ML: Do you—

QVD: Tutu Hamana.

ML: Do you know if they had to do anything or ...

QVD: Oh, yes.

ML: Any rituals, or—

QVD: Oh, yes.

ML: Did you hear about ...

QVD: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah; they did. I didn't—

ML: Like what?

QVD: I didn't—they did a lot, but I don't know what it was.

UTT

QVD: I mean, even today. When I go to different islands, there are a few things I will do. I know this—this is protocol; I know. I have to do these things. Um ... if I'm approaching a heiau, I know what—I know what I need to do. And you need to know what it is that you have to ... take in ... all these kinds of things. Uh, and it never is tiring for me. It never is a chore. It never is something I should look at and say, Well, it's outdated. No. No. Because I am of this land.

(20:00)

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: I am of ... my 'ohana. And I do indeed come by the canoes, and I have that to prove; I can prove that. Which is wonderful. Which is wonderful.

ML: So in other words, you're freed from—from the kapu your mom broke free. You are—you are ... freed and—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But at the same time, you know, you—you have the good ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --that you've been able to share and enjoy, and—

QVD: That was something that Auntie Io—

ML: --ground you.

QVD: --kept very, very sharp on all of us. She was not ... not gonna allow us—she knew who we were, just like her. She knew who we were. And all of our parents taught, yeah, in this circle. Yeah. So therefore, we go and we do so much; there is that line. Yeah? And we backstroke.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I'm good at that. [CHUCKLE] But ... uh ... I don't think, I really don't believe that uh ... it'll ever be lost. [WHINNY] Our 'ōlapa's will never be lost. No matter what people like me, or Kawaikapu, or whatever thinks; oh, it's you know ... or whatever. If we want to make that change and do something, then we need to do it. But no wala'au, bla-bla.

UTT

QVD: We need to do it. And we need, I think more than anything else, is I've been asked by many ha—to come and just show. Yeah, like Maui.

UTT

QVD: When I did—

UTT

QVD: --with—yeah.

ML: It was wonderful.

QVD: --what we did in Maui. Just like that. So that they can make l—see the difference, so that we don't have to lecture on that. Seeing is believing.

UTT

QVD: Yeah? And so ... I think that will always be there, no matter what. There'll always be a Queenie, there'll always be a Nona somewhere. Not maybe.



**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But—but there will be. We will have, if—if the kumu's today will permit this. They tend to—to get these young ladies and keep them, so that it's so routine, and they don't give them ... like Auntie Io says ... Go, I give you that. [WHISPERS] Explore; look at your body; look at yourself. Look above; look at your feet. I don't know how many kum—kumu's do that. Yeah? [WHISPERS] Look around you; who you are. Yeah. Look. And you have it here, you have it here. Now, let's see it. I think those are ... good points for ... young dancers. I think they—they get into a routine ... which is wonderful. You all have to learn a routine to get to the Merrie Monarch. But after that, what? What now? What? Where does your hula go? Where? And only—

ML: To Japan.

QVD: --you—yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Only you can—  
UTT

QVD: --do this. And it cannot come if you are not a hundred and ten percent. You gotta be that. Because with that, comes all of ... whatever it is. It's just like Mom. When she oli's or when she sings, when she just gets up, it's like wh-h-h, that energy is there.

UTT

QVD: And it is ... it is a gift. It is a gift. So you take this gift, and you do something with it. You do not sit on it and live on its laurels. You do something with it.

(25:00)

Life is so ... life is so incredible. Every day, I sit here, and I ... when I'm pau, I sit here. It could be with a glass of wine, however.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And ... and I think to myself ... do you know ... we have got to be—these islands have got to be the most special place in the world; in the world, bar none. Because we have everything of the best right here. And we don't have any bears or snakes—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --or whatever. This is beautiful Hawai'i. So Auntie Queenie, how do you define hula? Look around you. And if you can interpret your hula to embrace what is here, that is your hula. And I think people like us and you and Maile and ... um, tell it very well. We tell it very well. Yeah.

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: But you know, uh, to—to have you and Gene and Mamie ... do this—and Eddie Kamae wants to talk to me again.  
UTT

QVD: Um ... it's—it's so ... it's so wonderful for us because we get to tell our stories. You get to—to go into this ... in this head here and scratch around and all of a sudden all of these things come up. And then—then I fe—feel very remiss, because ... I wasn't listening to my mom. I was not really listening to her. And she tells me about ... her great-grandfather ... his name was Uluhane. This is that man down at the salt flats, yeah? Uluhane. And she says, And he carried his pū'olo, his bag with ... with little pebbles in it. And I'm like, What? She says, Yes. He was a kahuna, but he was also a kahuna for the healing, and he would carry these ... pebbles. I says, So what happened to it? She says ... Well, I don't have it. And I'm saying to her, Are you saying that it should have been passed on? And she said, Yes. I says, So there was nobody, nobody he could leave it to? She says, No, because your grandmother was the only child. And because she did what she did, he put a curse on her. And it worked, didn't it? Five boys. So I'm glad he took it all with him. This is my mama. I can—I can understand the anger. But then again, I—I can also understand ... thank goodness ... I just didn't lock the hula out. I could have very easily ... if I didn't have my kūpuna's, if I did not have Tom Hiona, Auntie Mary Ho, Mrs. Joshua, uh ... Auntie Iolani, and Auntie Edith Kanakaole, Auntie uh, Montgomery, you know, they were all part of my life. They oli for me, so I can do my 'ōlapa. Can you imagine that? I mean now ... I just took things for granted, right?

UTT  
QVD: And now, when I stop and think back ... how ... why would they do that for me; why would they even care? And I'm talking not everybody else; uh, nobody with me, just me.

UTT  
QVD: Yeah. I'm down in Kona; Auntie Io is there; Auntie Lokalia is there. Uh ... Auntie Edith is there, and they're all talking, right? And they're all—Auntie Io says, You hula with us. Ho.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: In a second, I'm up, right? And those three ... are doing for me ... we're gonna do—we're gonna do—first, we're gonna do uh, Aia La O Pele, then we're gonna do Hamakua.

(30:00)

And to watch them ... watch each other's eyes, yeah, and then oli, and then watch me, and then-- I wish you were there, Gene.

UTT  
QVD: That would have been wonderful. But times like that ... are not for the camera; is it?

UTT  
QVD: Yeah.

ML: Just for you.

QVD: Yeah.

UTT  
QVD: Not for the camera. So ...

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

ML: Do you um ... do you know when your—your kūpuna became Mormons? Which generation?

QVD: Um ... yes. There is a book out ... and it's called Kaleohano. They're not making any more copies; I'm gonna try to get one.

UTT  
QVD: And he is a chief, and he was one—he was a high chief. And he was one of ... what do they call them? Mascots—no. He was attending ... uh, Liliuokalani when she went to Maui. The story is there. And ... somehow ... I don't know whether it was the pond, the pond that she wanted to go and bathe in ... whether it's in Waihe—Waihe'e or Waihinu. There's a pond there that she was supposed to have—they were supposed to have ... kapu'd for her. But ... the—the people in the village told Kaleohano ... I want to get the story straight—that the pond ... they were gonna—they were gonna baptize, the—the Mormon elders, were gonna baptize some new members. And Kaleohano was outraged, and he says, No, we're talking about our Queen. And they said, Okay. And who are these people, anyway? They're Mormons. And who—who was—who—who is these haole's? Were you t--And they said it was George Q. Cannon, who was very, very ... high in the Mormon -archy. And ... George Q. Cannon, and he was—and another one was a Hawaiian. Oh, I can't think of his name. I will get it all for you.

UTT  
QVD: Anyway ... and that ... they were gonna do it the day before, I think, the pond.

UTT  
QVD: Could they do that; could they use the pond? And Kaleohano said, Absolutely not. But the other high chief who was there with Kaleohano said ... Why not? Allow them; allow these people. This is their village, and she's come here to talk to them. Or something. So it happened. Kaleohano was so outraged that he went down to the pool at the time ... of the bap—baptism. And he listened to the two missionaries ... and was so taken by the gospel, that he was baptized right then. That was the first Mormon. And they have a tableau—you know what a tableau is. It's like a concert-- tableau. Every year, I think in Waihe'e, at that Mormon church, doing the Kaleohano story, because he was a high chief.

ML: Wow.

QVD: Something like that. I'll get the book.

ML: Yeah, the—

QVD: I'll get the book for you.

ML: That would have been—

QVD: The story.

ML: Do you know about what year?

QVD: [CHUCKLE] I don't know.

ML: I mean, I know it's 1800s, but—

QVD: Sound—sounds like they were still wearing malo's. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Sounds like it. [CHUCKLE] Huh—

QVD: Anyway—

ML: --interesting.

QVD: Interesting.

ML: So—

QVD: Interesting.

ML: Do you ever—did you ever hear of—of there being any kind of conflict? 'Cause your—your Tutu Man was—came from hula, and—

QVD: No.

ML: You know—

QVD: No, no. That's not the one.

ML: Oh.

QVD: No. This is the Kaleohano—this was Tutu— Tutu — Tutu Man, and Tutu Hamana's father.

ML: Yeah.

**(35:00)**

QVD: This is his father. My hula teacher was Kaleohano, Jr. He was the son—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --of this—my mother's father.

ML: But he was still Mormon, though, right? I mean, coming from the first Mormon—

QVD: Oh, yeah.

ML: --line.

QVD: Oh, yeah.

ML: But they still had hula—

QVD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

ML: So there was never a—

QVD: There was never—never a—a—

ML: Conflict or—

QVD: No; never. Never.

UTT

QVD: No.

ML: 'Cause there seems to have been a lot of hula up on that side of the island. But the Mormon, you know, community, the Mormon church is so strong up there—

QVD: Strong; yeah.

ML: --at the same time. So—

QVD: Strong; yeah.

ML: So there was never any—that you knew of, any—

QVD: My family, without a doubt ... are the most joyous people. They were composers. They al—also composed songs. Like, [SINGS] Pili Pili Mai, Lawe Mai E. Now, this is a family song, and we teach it to all the grandchildren; four verses. And all the great-grandchildren. So if my six ... great-grandchildren were here, to include the youngest, Abby, who is three, we'll sing. [SINGS] Pili Pili Mai, Lawe Mai E. Uh, this is gathering. Come; come to church and listen to the gospel. They composed so many songs. And guess who wanted to record them? Eddie Kamae.

UTT

QVD: And my mother said no.

ML: Really?

QVD: No.

ML: Was it—do you know why?

QVD: Because ... she loves his music, she loves his singing ... but she thinks he has altered too many melodies.  
UTT

QVD: And she was afraid. Now, all of these were oli's ... first, and then put into music. Right? So ... uh, we have a songbook about that.

ML: Oh, good; so it's all written down and—

QVD: All written down.

ML: Good; good.

QVD: All written down. Um, this family of mine, I think ... I think—I—I used to always accuse my mom, saying to her, Uh ... really favoritism for the gifts. [CHUCKLE] I don't know what kinda canoes you guys came on, but you know what, seems to me like uh, all of the gifted people just jumped in one canoe or something. [CHUCKLE] And came over here. My mother would get so mad at me. She'd say, Queenie, just you be quiet. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Don't say that, huh?

QVD: I said, I said, But you look; look at Tutu Man; I mean look at Tutu Hamana. He was this man, this gorgeous man. He portrays Kamehameha every year in the Kamehameha Day Parade. Have you ever seen a picture of him? Tutu Hamana. He's like this. He's Kamehameha. [CHUCKLE] And Tutu Hauma— Tutu Kaleohano used to say, Eh ... you know, that's not good. He's 'ōpala. Kamehameha. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Oh; jeez.

QVD: [CHUCKLE] My mother used to say ... I used to say, Why do you folks say that? That's not nice. And she'd say, Well, it's because they think they're so ali'i because they're from Keoua. And I said to them, You guys are so full of it. [CHUCKLE] And so ... this is—I think this is what makes me ... the way I felt when I was young. Here I am, you know, sort of like cool. And I've got this ancient family who are really the archives, who's trying to convert me into something like—wait a minute here, you know. And uh, all my life, I was that way with my kūpuna's. And so I made them laugh, and ... I would—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I would dance hula for them at just ... one pa'i, [CLAP] and I'd get up, you know.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And ... and I guess when I was young, I was kinda show-off, yeah? Only me and them, so show off. But ... now that I—I think about it, to hear them laugh, but more than that, I know, I know that they're giving me in their own hā, yeah, in their own hā, all of this. Now I understand it.

UTT

QVD: Now I realize that. Of course, I realized that when I was eighteen, but—

UTT

QVD: You know, as the years go by, more and more, I—I ... I realize that ... um ... I was so fortunate to be in this family. So fortunate.

*(40:00)*

And ... and they never, ever—even though they talked about Keoua, and he's Kamehameha, they never, ever uh ... were so serious about all of this. That ... that there was an argument; it was always a laughter. Always like, They're gone; it's all pau; it's all pau. Um ... and I know that um, even at church ... when they were bishops on the pulpit, and they would be—both of them ... their sermons would be in Hawaiian. Powerful Kaka'ako Church in Lā'ie. Powerful. But on the other side, they never forgot who they were; never. Never forgot who they were. So ... uh ...

UTT

QVD: Healthy. They both died of uh ... natural causes.

UTT

QVD: You know. No heart attack, or no diabetes, or no ... any of that. Just old age, and tired, and died. You know. Uh ... my grandmother, on the other hand, had many strokes, and um ... but uh, other than that ... I mean, we go back to Ni'ihau. All the way to Ni'ihau. And I—and I never paid attention to that. Auntie Genoa goes all the time; her family; Ni'ihau. And I used to say to my mom, You know, Auntie Genoa has invited me a couple of times, and I haven't been able to go, and I feel really bad. I said, I sure would look like ... terrible if I continue to say no. And she'd say, Well, if the time doesn't allow you, and it doesn't allow, then you ... you're not to go. And I'd say to her, Have you ever been to Ni'ihau? No. Did you ever have a desire to go to Ni'ihau? Yes. And I'd say, Why? She says, Because we own land in Ni'ihau.

UTT

QVD: We have ali'i land in Ni'ihau. And I said, Well, I hear the Robinsons bought that a long time ago. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE] That's from the Kaua'i line, then?

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: But ...

UTT

QVD: Oh, you bring up so many good memories.

ML: Yeah; thanks so much.

QVD: Oh, things that have been locked away in my ... young life. But now, I'm—I'm sorry I didn't listen to her; paid more attention. You know.

ML: Yeah; I mean, I know—I feel the same way for my—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --own family, you know. But we do—we did what we needed to do at the time, so—

QVD: We do what we need to do.

ML: But you remember a lot more than you probably realize, so—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: When it's all together, it's—you know, it paints a beautiful picture.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yes.

ML: There was a Tutu Man that you mentioned um ... in one of our early talks about um ... that you went to when you were ... uh, I—I guess this was in Kaka'ako?

QVD: M-hm.

ML: And there were five or six of you, and sort of he saw something in you. Now, was this the Tutu Man in—a relative, or just a Tutu Man from the neighborhood? It was—

QVD: I don't know.

ML: Are we talking about the same Tutu Man from Lā'ie or—

QVD: Must—must be Kaleohano.

ML: 'Cause he—uh—

QVD: He lived in Lā'ie.



ML: Oh, no; Kaka'ako.

QVD: Kaka'ako?

ML: And then men—mentioned Kanoe Cockett and the lei seller, Rachel's daughter. And he wanted to know if you were interested in 'ōlapa, and ... you were with him—

QVD: No, that was—

ML: --for a while 'til he was not well. Is that—

QVD: That was Tom Hiona.

ML: Oh.

QVD: Not Tutu Man; that was Tom Hiona.

ML: Okay. I have it—okay.

QVD: But not Kanoe Cockett; that was Rachel—Rachel's daughter. She and I went to ... we were lei sellers.

ML: Okay.

QVD: So ... when I was there with Tom Hiona, she walked in. And she said, Queenie, you're here. And I said, Yeah. She said, I've been here dancing with him for a while. And I said, Oh. Your mom knows Tom Hiona? I says, I don't know, but I know him now.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But oh, he was so incredible.

ML: So he was in Kaka'ako?

QVD: No.

ML: Okay.

QVD: No.

ML: I wonder what this other one—

QVD: Tom Hiona was in ... oh, where was he ... where was he; where was he.

(45:00)

ML: Chinatown?

QVD: No.

ML: Uh, Lauhala Street?

QVD: No.

ML: Um ...

QVD: Oh; where was Tom Hiona ... You know, I think he was down by ... you know where Borthwick—  
UTT

QVD: --Borthwick Mortuary is?

ML: Like on uh, Kukui, Vineyard area?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Maunakea Street.

QVD: I think—I think he was down there. But it was a house that we went to.

ML: M-m. Maybe uh, someone in his family or something or his house?

QVD: I don't know. I walked in, and there he was.

ML: So this was after Mary Ho?

QVD: After Mary Ho.

ML: Okay.

QVD: And then after Tom Hiona, I went to ... to ... to Joshua.

ML: Okay.

QVD: And then from Joshua, I went to ... oh, what was that lady's name?

ML: Was it Eleanor Hiram?

QVD: Eleanor Hiram.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Yes.

ML: Yeah, you mentioned her—

QVD: Thank you.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah; Eleanor Hiram.

ML: So uh, one of the things um ... oh, going back to Tom Hiona; was his—your time with him mostly ‘ōlapa, then?

QVD: ‘Ōlapa; only ‘ōlapa.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And what was different about his um, teachings than what you had already experienced? Like through family, or—I guess Mary Ho was mostly hapa haole, yeah, you said?

QVD: She was.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So how was—I guess how was it different than the ‘ōlapa you had seen in your family and—and learned?

QVD: Um ... in terms of Tom Hiona?

ML: Yeah; To—for Tom, yeah.

QVD: Tom was um ... he was like Kent Ghirard. Just like that. Yeah. Uh, very astute. Uh ... no fun, no humor. Uh ... it was just—poom, poom, and we’d all be up there. Do you know what we’re doing today? M-hm. We’d all look around like that. But he was very good; very. Execution was incredible. I think that’s where I learned ... execution, was from him.

UTT

QVD: More than Auntie Io. Auntie Io flowed with—with the ... with the kehau, with the—

UTT

QVD: She flowed. You know. Um ... with Tom Hiona, he was just absolutely—puh. Um ...

ML: What—what kind of—do you remember what—

QVD: Matter of fact.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: This is the way.

ML: Straightforward.

QVD: Straightforward; yeah.

ML: All business.

QVD: Yeah. Yeah.

ML: And it was just a few of you?

QVD: Yes.

ML: Do you remember any of the other ladies?

QVD: Oh, no.

ML: You di—did you know them prior—prior to, or they were just in a class?

QVD: No.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Just in a class. Just in a class.

ML: And it was all ‘ōlapa?

QVD: All ‘ōlapa.

ML: And his—was his—

QVD: And he was not nice.

UTT

QVD: I—I shouldn't say he was not nice. He was nice. It was just his demeanor.

UTT

QVD: When it was class time, he was ... that master. Um ... yeah.

ML: Were you in high school at this time?

QVD: Oh, no.

ML: Younger?

QVD: I was younger. I was like—

ML: Oh.

QVD: Puh ...

ML: Maybe middle school or—

QVD: Middle school, I think. Yeah; seventh grader.

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So that was kind of a uh, a shock for your [CLEARS THROAT] system—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --to have a teacher that—like that.

QVD: Yes. I mean, I had seen my mother's ... uh ... whoever he was, the master—

UTT

QVD: --at the lū'au. Him. Um ... uh ... but Tom Hiona was ... was totally, totally ... um ... a different—

UTT

QVD: --kind of kumu. Just totally different.

ML: Was he um ... well, what did your mom think about you going to him?

QVD: She took me there 'cause she thought he was—

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: In fact, I think ... I think ... that she was referred to by this other—

UTT

QVD: --master.

ML: The one that you—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --saw with the daughter.

QVD: That my mom—yeah; with the daughter. I think; because he ... I think he came from Kahuku, again, or Kahana Bay. That's where they all seemed to come from. You know?

*(50:00)*

ML: Yeah. And there's a—and on this genealogy um—I don't know if I have it in this folder—but there's a Lā'ie-Maui genealogy. So like it's the Lā'ie teachers go back to Maui and—

QVD: Maui.

ML: And Tom Hiona is Maui.

QVD: Oh.

ML: You know, his—

QVD: Uh-huh.

ML: --hula genealogy, so there's a lot of connection.

QVD: Oh.

ML: So that would make sense.

QVD: Yeah; that would make sense.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah; that would make sense.

ML: Yeah.

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: But ... he did not have my attention.

UTT

QVD: I mean, I ... I—I did ...but I could not get, like my Tutu Man ... my—I could—just could not ... follow his ... you know, his thoughts. Yeah. Like he was ... an—and he was ... he was uh ... I don't know, Mama thinks that he was too gone on liquor already. Yeah. He was ... had—yeah, he was too—

UTT

QVD: --too much there. She would say to me when she'd pick me up, Well, did you learn anything? And I'd say, Yes. And she'd say, Well, did you enjoy the class? I'd look at her and I'd say, No. Why? Because I can't get myself to—to just ... my—my energies, Mom, and my thoughts, I cannot ... go with him. And she said, [CLAP] You're out of there.

UTT

QVD: Right now. So I must have had five classes with him.

UTT

QVD: Maybe six.

ML: So maybe uh, what is that, a month, a month and a half.

QVD: Yeah, about that.

ML: About that?

QVD: About that. She says, Okay.

ML: Just wasn't the right fit—

QVD: No.

ML: --then.

QVD: No. It was just not the right ...

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: You know ... you—you know when you're—you become that—that climbing dancer, going from one step—next level to the next level. You—you can almost feel that growth, you know. Oh ... and that joy; that joy. You're either doing it right or you're not doing it right, but you're willing. Me, I'm willing to—where is it that we need to go. An—and—and for ... I think I—that's why I just love those four women, those three women, is because ... they molded me, they helped me. You know. Oh; uh, let me see that 'uehe again. Uh, I wan—uh, do—do the 'uehe. You know. And I didn't hesitate. Never hesitated because I knew I was learning. And I knew that they were the masters. There was no second thought on where I was. And better yet, the grounds I was on; better yet.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: So you went pretty much right away to Mrs. Joshua?

QVD: Yeah.

UTT

QVD: She was fun. She was wonderful.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: [CHUCKLE]

ML: So did—was that at um, on Kalākaua at Magic Hula Studio? Was that—

QVD: No.

ML: --what it was called, or ... where was it at?

QVD: Yes; yeah.

ML: Yeah?

QVD: That's right.

ML: Okay.

QVD: That's right. That's right.

ML: So was—

QVD: Because we danced at Hula Town ...

UTT

QVD: Pa—uh, Pago Pago. Oh, gosh, where else?

ML: So she took you out ... out dancing.

QVD: Leroy's. Leroy's; yeah.

ML: M-hm; yeah—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --you mentioned those—



QVD: Leroy's.

ML: --the last time.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: La Hula Rhumba?

QVD: La Hula Rhumba.

ML: Was that with her too?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE] Did you dance out with Mary Ho? Or were you just—

QVD: No.

ML: --learning? Okay.

QVD: Just—just there.

UTT

QVD: She never went anywhere. All she did was to teach. And she had us up against the wall like you'd never believe. Always. Always. Meditation, and then up against the wall. She was always concerned about our shoulders; never mind sticking the 'ōkole out; shoulders. And then out, to get our 'ami's properly done. Uh, the kinds of things—

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: She had helped you get good basic after your—

QVD: Good, yeah.

ML: --family's ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --start with you.

QVD: Yeah; I'd come home and I'll tell Mama the same thing. I said, Auntie Mary taught me this. She says, Good; show me. And I'd show her. She said, That's good; that's okay.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Then I'd—

ML: So she was kind of a neighbor to you folks in Kaka'ako, then?

QVD: Yes; yes.

UTT

QVD: Right up the street.

UTT

QVD: Halekauila Street.

UTT

*(55:00)*

QVD: Yeah; yeah. In fact, that's where Auntie Io was too.

UTT

QVD: Halekauila; m-hm. God, I can even remember that; Halekauila.

ML: Kaka'ako was a—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --happening hula place.

QVD: Whoa; it was.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: It really was. Yeah.

ML: And so one of the—I—a note I have here from uh ... you were mentioning Mrs. Joshua before that; she taught you the fancy ones?

QVD: Yes.

ML: What does that mean?

QVD: [SINGS] Oh, I'd love to see—

ML: Routines, or—

QVD: Da-da-dum, dee, da, dum. What's that? Pago Pago? No.

ML: Try again?

QVD: [SINGS] Oh, I'd love to see ... da-dee-dum, of Samoa.

ML: Oh—

QVD: Huh?

ML: --Samoa—

QVD: Samoa?

ML: Yeah; I'd like to see some mo' of Samoa.

QVD: Samoa.

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: When I came home—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --and I showed my mother that hula, oh, she was so upset.

ML: I can—

QVD: She wanted to—

ML: --imagine.

QVD: --take me out, and I said, No, don't. I'm really enjoying it. Because she has three daughters, and they're dancing, we're all dancing together. And I said, As a matter of fact, Mrs. Joshua is making an outfit for me. And she says, Oh, no; no, no. She says, yes, I—Yes, Mom, she is. I said, And the five of us ... Gladys, Lorraine, and who ...

ML: Blossom.

QVD: Blossom, myself, and Dora Paishon; Dora Paishon. And she says, And so what; tī leaf skirt, what else? She's making the tops? I said, No tī leaf skirts. She says, What is she making? I said, They're sarongs. She says,

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

What? I said, Sarongs. I said, and there's two-piece sarongs. And she says to me [CHUCKLE]--I have to tell you this, because—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --I can just see her face now. And she says to me ... No; absolutely not. And I said, Mom. No; I'm gonna call her up. I said, Mom, please; please let me dance.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Please. She says, Okay; all right. One time only. I said, All right. She says, What's all this other stuff? I said, Well, she's got cellophane skirts. She says, What kind of skirts? I said—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --Cellophane skirts. And I have a choice; I can either have red, all red, or all blue, or red and white, or blue and red, or I can have a rainbow color. And she's looking at me, and my mother is just at this point, like ... Queenie, we are not gonna do that. And I'm looking at her, and now I'm crying. And I'm saying, Please; please let me do this. And she's—she's looking at me, and I said, I've done everything you want me to do; so please let me do this. Okay, she says. So I come home with my ... with my outfit, and it's tiger.

ML: Oh, no.

QVD: The leopard ... patterned, and my mother is like ... You are not going to dance in--

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I said, Why don't—you have to take me down anyway. She says, I'm not going; your dad will take you down.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: So my dad drives me down. Everybody's there, and Mrs. Joshua says [WHINNY] ... Where's your mom? And I looked at her; I said, Oh, she couldn't come; she's stringing lei; she's got a big order.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And my dad turns around and he says, She's not very happy about the outfit she's gonna dance in. And I looked at my dad. And Mrs. Joshua says, Well, nobody is; but the girls look great in it, and the songs are perfect, and I tell you, we're gonna have a good floor show. Clem Low was on the piano; and who else was there? Oh, I just know the guys.

ML: These are the—from the clubs that you're talking about?

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: Yeah; we're talk—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: They played the music.

UTT

QVD: Hi, dear.

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]

**QUEENIE VENTURA DOWSETT**

**Tape #: HPS 0748 (MV887)**

**Date: August 22, 2006**

**Location: Waimea, Kohala, Hawai'i Island**

**Subject: Oral History Interview**

**Interviewer(s): Maile Loo**

**Videographer: Gene Kois**

*(00:40)*

QVD: --see some more of Samoa.

ML: Yeah; that's in—um, Uncle George Holokai still teaches that.

QVD: Really?

ML: From Tom Hiona. Yeah.

QVD: [SINGS] Oh, I'd—

ML: He's got a great routine for it.

QVD: --like to see some more—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --of Samoa.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And we're doing this in this leopard outfit.

ML: Oh, gosh.

QVD: Oh, gosh.

ML: So that was at those different clubs, and she had contracts—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --to go dance.

QVD: Yeah; we went there.

ML: And you must have been still young, then, about—

QVD: I'm very young.

ML: --twelve, thirteen, something like that?

QVD: Yeah. Twelve, thirteen.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: My mother was--[CHUCKLE]--Oh no!

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I said, You have to let me go, please. And then—and then I chose red cellophane, and I did Sophisticated Hula and Hands On Your Hips. My mother would not even let me dance at the house. I could not dance those numbers in the house.

ML: Wow.

QVD: No. I don't—I ... records; no. You better know what you're doing when you're down there practicing, because you're not gonna do at home here. Okay. [CHUCKLE] Okay.

ML: She didn't want to hear it or see it, huh?

QVD: But that didn't last too long.

UTT

QVD: Didn't last long at all. But I was—

UTT

QVD: I just hate to give up my cellophane skirt.

ML: Yeah; and Mrs. Joshua was known for those cellophanes, yeah? She made them and made the—the tops and—

QVD: The tops. The whole—

ML: --everything was—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And we wore plumeria leis.

UTT

QVD: Nothing grandeur or—

UTT

QVD: You know, just plumeria leis; yeah.

ML: Wow. Sounds fun, though.

QVD: So Clem Low and I go ... way back.

ML: Wow.

QVD: We go way, way back. Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Gosh.

ML: So that was maybe, what, a year, or not even a year, or—

QVD: Not even a year.

ML: Not even a year.

QVD: She said—pf-f-f; three months, I think.

ML: She got tired of ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yeah. And in between this ... no; no ... then when I got to middle school ... and went with ... what's her name?

ML: Hiram?

QVD: Hiram.

ML: Eleanor Hiram.

QVD: Um ... I danced with her, and we did—we did some ... events like ... the May Day Program at City Hall.



UTT

QVD: I think—I think that, and a few others. And that didn't last long too. Uh, and then I went with Big Auntie.

UTT

QVD: Is he gone?

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

ML: So you were saying you went with Big Auntie?

QVD: Yes.

ML: Lena Guerrero.

QVD: Lena Guerrero.

ML: So that was after Eleanor Hiram?

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And this was the USO—

QVD: I had a taste of—

ML: --shows, or ...

QVD: --hapa haole hula.

UTT

QVD: And I don't know how I got—you know, I can't remember how I got there. Emma, Auntie Emma Paishon, maybe.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. 'Cause she was singing. And Dora—she's my real aunt.

UTT

QVD: And ...

ML: Dora's your—

QVD: Dora—Dora's my cousin.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: Yeah. We danced.

ML: Oh.

QVD: In fact, I think—

ML: With the Joshuas?

QVD: --I have pictures of us together. I wonder.

UTT

QVD: In those crazy tiger outfits. [CHUCKLE]

ML: I'd love to see that. [CHUCKLE] Yeah.

QVD: Oh, gosh. Anyway ...

ML: So basically, the shows that you—you did with Mrs. Joshua, with Eleanor Hiram, with Big Auntie, were—were ... club—

QVD: Hapa haole.

ML: --shows—

QVD: Club shows.

ML: Hapa haole, USO—

QVD: M-hm.

ML: That kinda thing.

QVD: Until we got back to uh ... until I got to Auntie Io.

UTT

*(05:00)*

QVD: And then we did all of the 'ōlapa's, yeah?

ML: Right; right.

QVD: That was great.

ML: Yeah; I bet.

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: That was sensational. I think we opened the first Aloha Week, and that was down at the Ala Moana, when they had the stage out there. And so we were all excited.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And Auntie Io ... says, Well ... you girls are gonna wear tī leaves, yellow pā'ū—  
UTT

QVD: --tops, and bougainvillea leis. [CHUCKLE] What? Bougainvillea—purple; purple. And we all wore purple ... bougainvillea. And we did our 'ōlapa's in our tī leaf. It was beautiful.

UTT

QVD: Beautiful. And Henry ... Henry Pa helped with the choreography. We did uh ... and then we did uh, a holokū number, I guess it was. All—we all had blue satin holokū's. And white carnation leis ... and we did ... um ... Holo Waapa, I think. [SINGS] Kāua i ka holoholo--Yeah.

ML: In holokū?

QVD: In holokū. [SINGS] I ka pō mahina la'ila'i—Yeah. E kilo ho'nanea—yeah?

ML: Oh, Polailai.

QVD: Oh, Polailai.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [SINGS] Kāua i ka holoholo--

QVD: That's the one we did.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah; Polailai.

ML: Oh, that's pretty.

QVD: Yeah. Jesus; all mixed up.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: But those holokū's were beautiful. And you know what? We had long trains.

UTT

**TRANSCRIPT: Queenie Ventura Dowsett**  
**Oral History Interview: August 22, 2006**

QVD: And we went practice with our old holokū's, so you do not kick your train. And it was beautiful. When we all turned to look at each other; wh-h-sh; oh, was so beautiful. So beautiful.

UTT

QVD: Auntie Io ... was ... as everybody says, so—such a joyful person. But when it came to her hula, whoa; that was something ...

UTT

QVD: --extraordinary. You know. I mean, she could have us dance like one. Just one. Our unison was so beautiful.

UTT

QVD: So beautiful. She never, ever yelled or screamed or got upset.

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: Never.

ML: She didn't need to with you guys.

QVD: Yeah. Never.

ML: That's really neat, 'cause when I think about all—when you—when you talked about um, going and aud—auditioning, and you know, how she chose you, and it was—it makes total sense—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --that she chose all of you. Because you not only were accomplished—  
[COUGHING]

ML: --dancers in your own right, but you all had that—those generations—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --of hula behind you. So she knew—

QVD: Behind us.

ML: --that.

QVD: M-hm.

ML: You know.

QVD: She knew that.

ML: And so she wasn't just picking someone out of the air; you represented—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --a whole ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --you know, 'ohana.

QVD: Yeah. We were not—I think ... more than that too, we were not a troupe.

ML: Right.

QVD: We were there for a reason.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Right.

QVD: For a reason.

ML: And she probably felt very privileged to work with you.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: You know. Even though you—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --you were, you know, the ones ...

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --thanking, your—

QVD: Thanking—

ML: --lucky stars, you know, for being with her.

QVD: Whoa; what am I—yeah; here I am—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --in her presence, you know.

ML: Yeah. But she chose ...

QVD: Yeah. Oh, gosh.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: I—I was sure that I wouldn't make it, because ... I was in jeans, aloha shirt. Everybody else was all dressed—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --appropriately. But I had to go to the lei stand, so I had to wear jeans. She looked at me.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

UTT

QVD: 'Cause, you know, that's all she had to do ... was to say, I want you all to watch me. And then when we all got up—oh ... it was like ... oh ... it was like a ... like we'd been there before.

UTT

QVD: We'd been there with her before. So ...

UTT

QVD: Yeah. My dad picked me up, took me back to the lei stand. And Mama looked at me ... and smiled, and she said ... I know all about it. I said, You do? She says, Yeah, I know.

*(10:00)*

She says, Oh, I think you puka'd through. Yeah. I said, Oh, thank you very much. At least I knew what that meant.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: [CHUCKLE] I would always tell her, I don't think so. [CHUCKLE] This time, it was like, thank you—

ML: Okay.

QVD: --very much.

ML: Yeah. [CHUCKLE] Did your mom—um, well, what year did she start the lei stand? [CLEARS THROAT] Do you know?

QVD: She started the lei stand ... when she was ... I don't know ... maybe ... twenty-two, twenty-four.

ML: M-m; wow. So before—

QVD: We are the oldest—

ML: --you folks were born.

QVD: --at the ... in Honolulu, now.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Lei stand.

ML: Wow.

QVD: Yeah. How's that?

ML: That's great.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And it's still in the—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --family.

QVD: Still in the family; yeah.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And—

QVD: It's um ... it's something my mom has left ... to us.

UTT

QVD: All of us; not just the girls, but the boys too.

UTT

QVD: She said to us that we need to learn this trade, not because it's just Hawaiian, because it's something you can always fall back on.

UTT

QVD: If there's a time that you need to do something else for the time being and make some money, then you kui the lei. And uh ... and of course ... she's made ... she and my dad uh, you know, when it was their time, very close, sat us all down, no spouses, seven children ... and around her dining room table—

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: --at the round table, and handed out seven deeds—

UTT

QVD: --to each of us. And each of us had property in our names. She says, Here, this is for your hard work. This is what comes from doing a good business.

UTT

QVD: So do it ... do it uh ... do it uh, what you please with. Um, sell it, give it to your kids, live on it; whatever. You made this; this is your choice. And except for if you—

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: --don't want it, give it back to me.

ML: [CHUCKLE] That's always an option.

QVD: [CHUCKLE] Just—you don't want it—

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: I give it with my aloha, but if you don't want it, give it back to me. My dad; seven deeds. So with this whole life ... this was the frosting on the cake.

ML: That's true.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yup. And in—indeed, it's uh ... parents and grandparents uh ... I knew very little of my other family.

UTT

QVD: Portuguese family. I think a lot of that had to do with my dad marrying a Hawaiian.

UTT

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But now—

QVD: But—

ML: --you fi—



QVD: --now—

ML: --folks are planning a reunion and—

QVD: Oh, yeah. All of a sudden; yeah.

ML: That's nice.

QVD: And that's good.

ML: Is it next year, or ...

QVD: Next year.

ML: This next year.

QVD: Next year.

ML: Okay.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: That's terrific.

QVD: Yeah; I think it's gonna be wonderful.

ML: So you can meet your Italian relatives. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Oh. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Venturi and Ventura.

QVD: Ah; ah.

ML: That's like the Farden's; their name is actually um, Jardin.

QVD: Jardin?

ML: J-A-R-D-I-N.

QVD: Really?

ML: But it was transcribed di—you know, differently, and so it became Farden.

QVD: Oh, my gosh.

ML: But they didn't know that.

QVD: Yeah; yeah.

ML: Until, you know, more recently and—

QVD: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

ML: So it's actually Jardin.

QVD: Oh, wow.

ML: And they met long lost relatives and things and—

QVD: Oh, my goodness; isn't that something?

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Well—

ML: So that's happening for you. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I hope they don't think we're going to Italy, 'cause—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --we're not going to Italy. I don't want to know that if I am connected with the mafia. [CHUCKLE]

ML: I wonder what part of Italy the Venturis are from.

QVD: [CHUCKLE] If it's a vineyard, I'd be—

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: --very happy to go. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Then you'd be like, I'm there.

QVD: Here I am. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Some family stock.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And it was strange, 'cause when I became sixteen, when I was—made sixteenth birthday, my dad took me to Kaua'i. That's where they're from.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Anahola. And he took me there to meet his three brothers—

UTT

QVD: --their wives and their children. And it—it was ... it was really something. Because they all came to the airport, and most of them are blue-eyed people. And I looked at my dad and I said, And how come you're um [CLEARS THROAT], dark hair and dark eyes? And he says, I don't know; don't ask me that.

*(15:00)*

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: He says, I'm the youngest; anything could have happened. [CHUCKLE] He's from a family of nine sons. She had two marriages.

UTT

QVD: First, she—there was a Borges; there were five sons. And there was a Venturi, and there was four sons.

UTT

QVD: But all that I went to see were Venturis.

UTT

QVD: And they were all blue-eyed people, blond hair. But the moment they opened their mouths, they were Portuguese.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: And—and it was wonderful.

UTT

QVD: Truly wonderful.

ML: So your dad was born on Kaua'i?

QVD: No.

ML: Is he—

QVD: He was born in Honolulu.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: And his mother ... his father had died on Kaua'i.

ML: [CLEARS THROAT]

QVD: His—then his mother went to Honolulu to stay with a son.

ML: Oh, oh, oh.

QVD: August; they call him Augoose; August. And then she died ... and he was three years old; my dad was—  
UTT

QVD: --three years old. So he was raised by his brother.

UTT

QVD: Older brother. And uh ... he was a ... what do you call those ... nickel divers.

UTT

QVD: What you call, that dive--

UTT

QVD: --for money. That's what he was. I told him, I said, Wow. He says, Times were hard; I had to go and ... and dive for—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --money. I said, Were you a good diver? He says, I was really good.

UTT

QVD: He says, We always ate. He said, But can you imagine what's down there ... down in that ocean. I said, Oh, I don't know.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: He said, Yeah.

ML: So when did the Ventura—Venturis come to Hawai'i, then? What generation would that have been?

QVD: You know, I don't know. We're gonna find that out.

UTT

QVD: I don't know.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: We never paid attention; again, we never paid—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --attention to any of that. And my dad didn't talk about that.

UTT

QVD: He never talked about his family.

UTT

QVD: I said, Do you feel like you were an outcast? He says, No, there was nothing to outcast. Everybody was married and gone.

ML: Right, right.

QVD: He says—

ML: His parents were gone.

QVD: --And I stayed with your Uncle August. So—and they never ... cared—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --really. They were all gone. I said, Well ...

UTT

QVD: He says, So ... he says, But your mom has been just great.

UTT

QVD: They built the business together. They had homes in Nu'uaniu and Lanikai. We had homes in Lanikai, Enchanted Lakes; it was everywhere. My father was—was just ... real estate—my mother would call him real estate nut.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: He bought land on the mainland. They would go to Las Vegas, and they'd be driving through from there down to wherever, San Francisco or wherever, and they'd ... and they'd see all these flags flying. Empty ... miles and miles. They'd stop, and they'd buy one or two lots there. Then they'd go to Arizona, and they'd see flags again. They'd stop and buy two lots there. [PLANE] But at the time, she said it was thirty dollars down, thirty dollars a month. So my two brothers—three brothers ... got the land—the lands on the mainland.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: My mother said they didn't work hard enough.

ML: Oh. [CHUCKLE] So where was yours?

QVD: I had Lanikai.

ML: Oh; nice.

QVD: But I gave it to my sister.

UTT

QVD: 'Cause her husband had just died.

UTT

QVD: And left her with seven children. And we were all—my family was living there then; Lanikai. So my mom says, You know what? My dad said, You gave up your high school days, you know, and you sold leis, and you—bla-bla-bla-bla. And I was always with my mom, four, five o'clock in the morning; go down to the lei stand and help her. So we're gonna leave Lanikai to you. And I says, You know what? My sister was staying with them at the time. I was here, married.

UTT

QVD: Here. So I told them to give her the property, and that I would—that I wanted Waimea. 'Cause ... here. So they gave me the two acres up here.

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: Yeah. But I sold that.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: For three hundred thousand dollars, and got this and built the house.

UTT

QVD: Yeah. But ... you know, uh—

UTT

QVD: I don't think—I don't think I've ever ... ever um ... regret giving up or making choices in my life. I think they were good ones.

(20:00)

And um ... and I think most of all, I was able, even with my children, an—and ... taking care of them and whatever, I still held my—my hula intact. You know. And I'm very grateful for that, and—

UTT

QVD: And uh, this is—there's a part of me that still does what I need to do. Yeah.

ML: M-hm.

QVD: So ... yeah.

ML: Have any—

QVD: Sometimes I wish I could pass that on to—to—to just a multitude of ... young people. The hula is not something, if you love it, no matter what, there should always be that—that giving of you every day. Yeah; you give back every day. So ... yeah; it's um ...

UTT

QVD: No doubt, it's a gift, wherever it came from.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah. However far it came from, for us to develop ... what we have.

UTT

QVD: My mother often told me that the hula in her time, in her days ... was not something she would ever want me to get into. It was totally different. Very ritual; very um ... she said it just—just took you to another world. You know. She says, And that's ... that's not what I wanted for you, even though you come from that line. I said—

ML: And times.

QVD: --Well, if it—if my—my Tutu Man can be as joyous and [CHUCKLE]-and oli like he does, that's for me.

ML: Must have been fun to watch them at parties and things.

QVD: Oh, it was—it was wonderful. Wonderful, wonderful. And they all ... they all had such deep, heavy voices, you know. So ... it—it was wonderful to ... I mean, all—as little guys, we would just be in ... awe, just to watch them and listen to them, you know. Because they just ... every fiber in their body was like movement, you know. It—it—it was wonderful. It was wonderful.

UTT

ML: Well, I feel like we get a little glimpse of that when we watch you dance.

QVD: Oh. [CHUCKLE]

ML: [CHUCKLE] 'Cause that's how I feel when—you know, what you just described, is—

UTT

ML: --watching you, so ...

QVD: Well ...

ML: It's a tribute to them.

QVD: I hope so. I hope so. I know that ... I know that my Tutu Man would—would even—even think that it was wonderful for me to be dancing in that two-piece ... [CHUCKLE] leopard outfit. [CHUCKLE]

ML: He never got to see that one, huh?

QVD: [CHUCKLE] And the cellophane. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Oh, gosh.

QVD: No. He was very much alive.

ML: Oh; so he did?

QVD: No.

ML: He knew about it?

QVD: No; my mother would not—

ML: Oh.

QVD: --allow me—

ML: She wouldn't tell him.

QVD: --to talk to him about that or--

UTT

QVD: --sh-h.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: I don't know why, Mama. And she'd say ...

ML: Trust me. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: You know, in—in—in those days, you can ... a parent would say ... Pau. And it was pau; no discussion. I don't want to hear it.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Today, you can say, Abby, stop. And she'd look at me and she'd say, But Tūtū. [CHUCKLE]

ML: Why? [CHUCKLE]



QVD: But Tūtū.

ML: Everything is, Why? But, but [CHUCKLE] I don't want to.

QVD: I hope they found Jamie. He's trying to get—

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

QVD: I—I think about all these things, and now I'm going, God, was I nice kid, or was I a junk kid, or what?  
[CHUCKLE]

ML: You must have been nice.

QVD: Oh.

ML: [CHUCKLE] Oh.

QVD: You know, and then in my life, there's, you know, people like Melveen and ...  
UTT

QVD: And um ... Keoha. All these—these wonderful—Haunani Kahalewai was my buddy.  
UTT

QVD: She was just ... so incredible; so incredible. Yeah; just ... so many wonderful people.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: In the music world. And still.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Still. When we went to the Makaha ... concert, and I saw you.

ML: Oh, yeah.

QVD: In Honolulu.

ML: At the—at the uh, Blaisdell; yeah.

(25:00)

QVD: Yeah. And watched those children dance and—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --sing. Oh.

ML: That was great.

QVD: That was great.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: That was wonderful. It's very much alive.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: It's alive.

ML: There's a lot of good things going on.

QVD: Good—good things going on.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: There's always going to be the questionable, but ... you know.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: But as long as there's good too.

QVD: Yeah. Yeah.

ML: Maybe um, in the future, we could look at pictures from—I mean, we've s—gone—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --through Bird of Paradise, but other pictures I can—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --kinda maybe make a little list of things you've mentioned, and then—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --we—you know, so you have a chance to look for it, or whatever, and ...

QVD: And I wanted to—to ... to uh ... uh, bring to you that—I don't know whether you can use it, but ...

ML: What's that?

QVD: It's that ... Princess Kaiulani replica, that ... that gown that I wore.

ML: Oh, yes.

QVD: In Ed Kenney's show.

ML: Right; you mentioned that.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: If you think you can make use of it—

ML: Yeah.

QVD: --or whatever.

ML: Yeah; I mean, we're—

QVD: Are you going to have a museum?

ML: Hoping—we're hoping to, actually.

QVD: [CHUCKLE] Are you?

ML: We have cellophane, uh, hula tops from the 1920s from Helen Desha Beamer.

QVD: Oh, my god; really?

ML: And the paper leis. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Oh, my gosh.

ML: And hula tops—

QVD: That's wonderful.

ML: --from the 20s; yeah. One of the ladies that—that used to hula—

QVD: Really?

ML: Helie Koehen. Well, Helie ... Rohner—which is her married name? Koehnen, I guess, is her maiden name. Helie Koehnen; yeah. Anyway—

QVD: Wow.

ML: Or Rohner; I don't know. But yeah, it—yeah, she's donated things, and then—

QVD: Oh, my.

ML: You know, so we'll—we'll have to have to have—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --a museum.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And so—

QVD: Okay.

ML: --that will be a showcase.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: It's a little yellow, though. [CHUCKLE]

ML: That's okay. We—we'll do wor—wonders with lighting.

QVD: You can—yeah; yeah. You can do that. You can do that.

ML: [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Did you find him?

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

ML: And then I can also make a um, a copy of that original Bird of Paradise, if you want—really wanted to do what Uncle Jamie was talking about.

QVD: Oh, yes.

ML: Would be to look at that one, and then—

QVD: Oh, that'd be—

ML: And watch yours—

QVD: --wonderful.

ML: --together. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: Yeah. That'd be wonderful.

ML: I'd love to—

QVD: Compare.

ML: --have your commentary. [CHUCKLE]

QVD: You know—

ML: Yeah. We'll have mo—

QVD: --that was—

ML: --movie day.

QVD: --such an experience.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Such an experience.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: Gosh.

ML: I—I—yeah; I—I—you know, in rereading our—

QVD: Yeah.

ML: --you know, talks, and a lot of it has been about the movie, it's just—just wonderful.

QVD: Oh.

ML: Wonderful that—yeah.

QVD: Well, I need to find—uh, in fact, a friend is gonna frame those Auntie Io—

ML: Oh, okay.

QVD: --pictures.

ML: Okay.

QVD: For me.

ML: Yeah.

QVD: And so he's gonna do it in koa. Hope-hopefully. Yeah. So—

ML: Beautiful.

QVD: --it'll be nice. Yeah.

ML: Oh, yeah; she—

QVD: Yeah; it'll be nice.

ML: She needs koa around her.

QVD: Yeah; she needs koa around her. [CHUCKLE]

ML: And make sure they use um—if they're gonna mat, use a matting, that it's acid free.

QVD: Yeah; okay.

ML: And the glass is UV glass, so that it's protected from the—

QVD: Okay.

ML: --sunlight and things like that.

QVD: Yeah; okay. I'll do that.

ML: 'Cause I just framed uh, a family—big family photo that I was given—like three feet. You know, but—

QVD: Ooh; yeah.

ML: --it's a 1937 um, and it was blown up. But um, I went in and asked, you know, 'cause I wanted to frame it for—  
forever kind.

QVD: Yes; yes.

ML: You know, and they said, Oh, you know—

QVD: Yes.

ML: --you have to use glass—not just any old glass, but glass that will protect you from—

QVD: Okay; UV.

ML: --the rays, UV protective glass—

QVD: Okay; okay.

ML: --and acid free matting.

QVD: Yeah.

ML: And—

QVD: Okay.

ML: Just tell 'em you want it for preservation, and—

QVD: Right.

ML: --you know, it's usually a little more, but—

QVD: Uh-huh.

ML: --it's worth it.

QVD: Oh.

ML: It's worth it; yeah.

QVD: Oh, yes.

ML: And then ... solid koa.

QVD: Yeah; solid koa. Wonderful.

ML: [CHUCKLE] Great.

QVD: Where are you two going now?

[GENERAL CONVERSATION]

[END]