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Oral history interview with Katherine  
Kalehuapuakeaula "Lehua" Domingo, 2010  
April 24-25

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Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Katherine "Lehua" Domingo on April 24 and 25, 2010. The interview took place in Naalehu, Hawai'i, and was conducted by Mija Riedel for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Katherine "Lehua" Domingo has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art with Leahua Domingo at her son's home in Naalehu, Hawaii on April 24, 2010. This is disc number one.

Good morning.

KATHERINE "LEHUA" DOMINGO: Good morning.

MS. RIEDEL: So let's begin just with some background biographical information about your childhood. You were born here on the Big Island.

MS. DOMINGO: That's correct. I was born in the fishing village of Ho'okena.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It's in South Kona.

MS. RIEDEL: And what day were you born?

MS. DOMINGO: I was born on November 13, 1935.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

MS. DOMINGO: My mother was Katherine Leahua Kaai Kaeo.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And my father was Gabriel Pahia Kaeo.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And did you have siblings?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. I have a brother, and Brother was 15 years older than I. And I had a sister, Katie. She was 20 years older than I. Katie passed away, however, when she was three years old, from pneumonia.

And it was just Brother and I — Brother Sammy and I.

MS. RIEDEL: Sammy?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So he's quite a bit older.

MS. DOMINGO: He is.

MS. RIEDEL: Quite — yes.

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] I was his kid sister.

MS. RIEDEL: I'd say, yes.

Now, as I understand, your mother was a weaver, quite an accomplished weaver.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, and in those days many of the moms were weavers. It was a means of helping many families through life with the daily necessities. So many of the homes, the families of children would help their parents,

gathering the material, which is what I did with mom. We gathered the lauhala leaves and then I would help her prepare the leaves to get them ready for weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: And what did that involve, preparing the leaves?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, if you're familiar with the plant, after the plant is the puhala. And we gathered the leaves, which we call lauhala.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And the plants in those days, most of the leaves had the thorns. So we needed to remove the heads, the tail of each leaf, and the thorn from each side of the leaf before we could use the leaf for weaving. We needed to clean the leaf with a damp rag and the roll it in a roller to get them spread out so that they became flat.

And then our parents would use what they called a koe, a stripper [tool], and the strippers were of different widths —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — an inch, half an inch, quarter-inch or an eighth of an inch, depending on what they were going to use the material to make, if they were making a basket, a mat or a hat. Depending on what the product would be, that determined the width.

MS. RIEDEL: So, would you normally use thicker width for something like a mat, then, and thinner for a hat, something like that?

MS. DOMINGO: That's correct. That's correct. The mats, we usually use about an inch, maybe three-fourths of an inch, or a half an inch for mats. And then baskets would be the same concept, depending on how large the basket would be, if they were smaller coaster size or the large wastebasket size.

They made baskets that were used for picking coffee, what they call coffee baskets.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: So they were somewhere an inch and a half in width because the baskets were huge —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — and they were needed to be strong, because when you gathered the — picked the coffee, beans had liquid, yes, so it made the baskets wet.

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: So they had to be strong baskets.

MS. RIEDEL: Strong, right.

And did your mother work exclusively with hala, which is Pandanus, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Was it exclusively hala, or did she use other material as well?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, if mom did, I wasn't aware of it. But when I helped her, most of it was with lauhala leaves.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay. And she had a store. Is that correct?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. She and my aunt started a store at the junction of Napo 'opo'o Road. It went down to Kealakekua Bay. And then they moved up to the main road where the Little Grass Shack is today. And mom's shop was Lehua Puakea's Lauhala Shop.

And she had all her hats, her baskets; she had curtains that covered lauhala — curtains made out of lauhala that she used to hang by the window.

MS. RIEDEL: These were the pointed curtains we were looking at earlier.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Little fringe or —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — ornamental border curtains.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

I had an aunt who lived in Hilo, and I could have been fascinated also with weaving because of Auntie Eliza [Elizabeth Lee]. When I attended Kamehameha Schools, I had to go to Hilo on a Hilo-Kona bus — what we called a Hilo corner bus — stay overnight with Auntie Eliza, and then catch the plane the next morning to be able to get to Honolulu so that I could go to Kamehameha Schools.

MS. RIEDEL: How old were you when you started doing that?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I started at the 7th grade.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so about 12.

MS. DOMINGO: About 12, yes, and then graduated from Kamehameha in 1953.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But Auntie's house, everything, all of her furniture — her table, her chairs — everything was covered in lauhala.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: And, like I said, I'm not sure if that started the fascination. I enjoyed covering books, covering things because I knew that it could be done.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I've seen it done.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I'm sure when I first started I didn't know what I was doing, but I tried. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: And did you try from the time you were that age, from 12 or 13? Did you experiment, or were you —

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: No.

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so you noticed but you didn't have the desire —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — to make it.

MS. DOMINGO: And I'm thinking that mom probably tried to teach me. And being a typical young lady, it went in one ear and came out the other. But I was allowed to help her with the easy — doing the easy weaving on the hats, those areas where you didn't have to add to make them wider.

So it would be like the crown — crown of the hat. I could weave that part. And then when she got out to the brim, it was at the end because she didn't have to add anymore. She was ending it already.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I helped her with that, but I didn't know how to start and finish, really, a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: And those are the critical —

MS. DOMINGO: And that's right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: That's the critical part of weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Of course it was in 1995 when there was an announcement that came out that Auntie Elizabeth's first Ka Ulu Lauhala o Kona conference [Auntie Elizabeth Lee's group] was going to be held at the Keauhou Beach Hotel.

And by that time I already knew that when I retired — and I was planning on retiring in a few more years — that I wanted to weave, but knew that I didn't know how to weave. I knew how to make baskets, I knew how to make hats — I made mats but I didn't know how to make hats.

So I signed up for the conference and asked if I could be put into a class where I could learn to weave a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: So there was a long — there was 40 or 50 years between when you first — when you were a child watching your mother work and helping a little bit and your Auntie Eliza's house, and then the time you decided — well, you always knew you wanted to weave, but there was a lag time until you actually started. Why was that? Just no time or —

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure. In fact, I got hired at Pu'uuhonua [o Honaunau National Historic Park] because they wanted — the superintendent wanted to start a cultural program at the park.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And so I got a call from one of the rangers, Rose Fujimori, asked me if I would be interested in working at Pu'uuhonua.

MS. RIEDEL: As a cultural demonstrator?

MS. DOMINGO: As a cultural demonstrator. And I told her. "What kind of cultural demonstrator?" She said, "Weaving." I said, "I don't know how to weave." And she said, "But your mom was a weaver." I said, "That's right, but I don't know how to weave." She said, "Can you weave mats?" "I think I can." And I did.

They hired me as a — not as a federal employee; I was hired as a natural history employee, a cultural demonstrator. And my first assignment was to weave mats so that the cultural demonstrators could use the mats on the ground to do — demonstrate whatever they were doing.

MS. RIEDEL: And what sort of things did the cultural demonstrators do?

MS. DOMINGO: They had — Uncle Moke showed how the houses were thatched.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then Ako Grace was a woodcarver, and he showed how the canoes were made from the logs.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So they wanted to open up that position for weaving, and that's where I came in.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Was anybody doing leis at the time?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It was just the start.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: The program was just getting on its feet.

MS. RIEDEL: So the thatched, the woodcarving that went with the canoes, and weaving.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. No wood — well, I guess the carving.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, the carving.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: And from then it just expanded.

MS. RIEDEL: And that was 1972 — is that right — 1973, the early '70s, when you began to work there?

MS. DOMINGO: That's right. That's right. I started working there in 1972. Prior to that I was a bank teller, First Hawaiian Bank, and worked there 10 years. And then I just happened to be without a job when I got this call from the Park Service.

So I usually say it was just one of those things where I was at the right place at the right time. Then when a position for a ranger opened up, I was asked if I wanted to fill that position, and worked as a ranger for 25 years —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — until I retired in '97.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, and began to weave full time.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Good. Well, I think that's a really helpful encapsulation of the big picture here that we're going to cover. So I want to go back a little bit and look again — what you were talking about in Auntie Eliza's home.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: What in particular about that was compelling to you, and do you remember particular objects? You said everything was covered in hala. Were there just mats everywhere?

MS. DOMINGO: It was her furniture. She had, like, rattan furniture, and it was all covered with the mat, with the lauhala.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: Her table all covered with lauhala, and the picture frames were covered — they had frame of the lauhala. So whatever was in Auntie's house — the chairs — was all covered with lauhala.

And Auntie's — Uncle Bill, Auntie's husband — their trees were — because they lived in Keaukaha in Hilo, the trees were just behind the house. So he would go and gather the leaves, clean them, strip them and get them all ready for Auntie, and she just wove.

MS. RIEDEL: So she did the weaving herself.

MS. DOMINGO: She did the weaving herself.

MS. RIEDEL: Was she your mother's sister?

MS. DOMINGO: No. I don't know the relation as far as family, but it didn't matter where you went; everyone was Auntie.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. [They laugh.]

MS. DOMINGO: And she was Auntie. It was the same thing at the beach when we grew up. There must have been about 23 families. And it didn't matter where we were. If I was at Auntie's house and I needed to be disciplined, I was disciplined.

If I went home, I told Mom what she did, I got it again. [They laugh.] So that was the last time, you know? It didn't matter what the last names were; we were all family.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Everybody took care of each other. Our dads went fishing and we always had fish. My cousins would be sent to us from Oahu because there were naughty children there, and they would cry because all we

had — they had to eat was fish, fish, fish.

And when they got older, they would call, "Baby [ph], do you have any dry opelu? Can you send us some fish?" [They laugh.]

MS. RIEDEL: And so you would dry the fish.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, we had dried fish, we had raw fish, boiled fish, grilled fish. And it wasn't only fish; we had lobsters, we had crab, we had limpets, octopus, you know, and not the same type of fish. We had different kinds of fish — reef fish and meaty fish, like your ono, the tuna.

So when people say that, "Oh, your folks just ate fish," we did, but we had all kinds of fish.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, sure. Absolutely.

MS. DOMINGO: And we had a choice.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: In those days, my dad would go with his net to throw fish —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — for reef fish. He came home, the fire was going already — was ready. Today, when you go down to the beach, you're going to throw a net, you have to wait until he comes back, if he has fish. But make sure you bring along some hot dogs and weenies just in case you don't have fish.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Because it's not the same as it was in those days.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: He could just go down to the shore and cast a net —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and be sure to come home with plenty of fish.

MS. DOMINGO: You would come home with something, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. And was that what he did all the time, he was a fisherman?

MS. DOMINGO: My dad was a fisherman and a farmer.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: We had a farm.

MS. RIEDEL: And what — was it a coffee farm? Did he grow other things?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it wasn't coffee; it was taro farm.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Vegetable farm. And we also had other farmers who would come down to the beach and bring us a bag of taro, and then we would give them fish. It was a bartering kind of situation. But they always knew if they came down with something, they went home with something.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Everybody at the village — if Dad was sick and he couldn't go fishing, there would be fish. And even up to when Dad was 80 years old he still lived at the beach, and the generation that follows would come and bring him fish.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, he felt so special, because he couldn't go fishing anymore.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But it was a good — good feeling, you know.

MS. RIEDEL: Of course, yes, that somebody was watching out always to make sure he had fresh food.

MS. DOMINGO: They did. They always made sure that Papa had fish.

MS. RIEDEL: And how long ago did he pass away?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, Dad's been gone a while now. I cannot give you the year, but he's been gone a while.

MS. RIEDEL: And while he was fishing, was your mom working on the farm? Was she weaving things to sell? How did that work?

MS. DOMINGO: No. If you went up what we call mauka [toward the mountain], upland —

MS. RIEDEL: Towards the mountains, is that it?

MS. DOMINGO: We all went, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I went along with Mom and Dad. And then we did our thing, whatever — pulled some taro — and then went back down to the beach. And I guess Mom — they had — like, the ladies got together and they would weave, tell stories and laugh. They had a good time.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: It was like a sewing bee, of that concept.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, or quilting bee sort of thing.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And did she harvest her own material? Did your father harvest that? How did that work?

MS. DOMINGO: We all did.

MS. RIEDEL: And the children helped.

MS. DOMINGO: Dad and I helped, yeah, mom to gather the leaves, and then helped her get the leaves, clean the leaves, get them ready for her so that she could just weave.

And in those days they — they were such fast weavers, I guess because there was a need to, yeah, that they — the piko [navel, center of the hat], the beginning of the hat —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — and then when it came out to the end of the ipu [hat form], before they put it on the hat form, they called that part the pa [flat plate of hat], which is like a form of a plate.

MS. RIEDEL: Like a flat form part?

MS. DOMINGO: Flat, yes. So they would do several of those pa — 10, 15 of them — and get them all ready. And then we would — she would put them up to the ipu and then I'd do the easy part.

MS. RIEDEL: Is the ipu the hat form?

MS. DOMINGO: The hat form.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So you would —



MS. DOMINGO: And then she would start working with another.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then when I was through with the crown —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — she would pick it up and then she could do the —

MS. RIEDEL: Brim?

MS. DOMINGO: — the brim.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. And what's the — is there a Hawaiian term for the brim?

MS. DOMINGO: The brim is the ekeu.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then I would end it.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, you would end it.

MS. DOMINGO: The edge [hi'i].

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, really?

MS. DOMINGO: The outer edge.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But this edge, you didn't have to add.

MS. RIEDEL: I see. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But before — before the end, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So I didn't do that part.

MS. RIEDEL: Hard.

MS. DOMINGO: I did the end part.

MS. RIEDEL: I see. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But all those areas where you didn't have to add —

MS. RIEDEL: You would weave that.

MS. DOMINGO: — that's the one that I did. Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So you really did weave quite a bit as a child, only certain parts —

MS. DOMINGO: Only certain parts.

MS. RIEDEL: — but from the time you were very young, from the time you were 6 or 7, or a little older, 10, 12?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I'm not sure, you know, what age because I left home already about 12.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Was it considered a chore? Was it something you had to help with or was it something you enjoyed, or both?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure, you know. I don't know that I felt that it was a chore. I guess it was just something that we did. I'll take example — when we had — the mackerel was in season, what we called opelu, and there would be schools of that fish. And our dads would go out, but with respect for each fisherman, the first one to arrive, he would put his net first and then the others followed suit.

But when you brought the fish in, it went all into the buckets and everybody in the community helped. As children we would fill the buckets up with water because we had a wharf; throw the bucket on the side of the wharf, filled it with water, pulled it up and just fill up all the tubs with water. And everybody helped to clean all the fish, slice it, salt it, dry it. We were known — Kona was known for their dried opelu —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — dried mackerel, but it was a community. Everybody got together and worked on that. We had fun. All the kids had — it wasn't a job; it was fun. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, it sounds like it.

MS. DOMINGO: Even though we were working, we had fun. And that's how we learned, I guess.

Then after my parents left — were gone, you know, my husband and I would purchase a ka'au or two ka'au of opelu, mackerel, and clean them, salt them, dry them. And we would have dried fish for the family. That way then our children learn, learn how to do it. I guess that's how.

MS. RIEDEL: How did you do it? Do you hang it up and it literally dries?

MS. DOMINGO: No, we have dry boxes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Before the dry boxes, we would dry it on the coconut leaf — lay the coconut leaf on the — we don't lay it where you're going to walk. There were big rocks, stones that were near the ocean side. We would lay the leaf on top there because of the mongoose.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: We had to watch the mongoose.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then dry the fish there. One way, the back up first maybe four hours, and then turn it over, and then turn it over until, you know, it was dried.

MS. RIEDEL: Did it happen in a day or multiple days?

MS. DOMINGO: Usually two — two days.

MS. RIEDEL: And so at night you'd take it in —

MS. DOMINGO: Take it in,

MS. RIEDEL: — and in the morning you'd put it back out.

MS. DOMINGO: Yeah. And then it was also a snack. Dried fish was used for a snack. We didn't have candy.

MS. RIEDEL: Sort of like a jerky almost, yes, like a —

MS. DOMINGO: I guess of that concept.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: You know? And when they're in the school like that and caught from the school, they're — oh, what do they call them? Cigar size. You know, they weren't very big.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: They are maybe six inches in length. So you could just fold the body together and just bit into it. It worked.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. And portable.

MS. DOMINGO: Portable.

MS. RIEDEL: Did it need to be refrigerated?

MS. DOMINGO: You know, we didn't have refrigerators. We had ice —

MS. RIEDEL: An icebox?

MS. DOMINGO: Not today's type of icebox. They were like a chiller or a cooler concept, but huge, and ice in there that was in blocks. You could chip it. And we would ice fish if there was an abundance of fish, put it onto a truck, one of those ice — oh, what did we call it? I'm sorry. But one of those ice —

MS. RIEDEL: We can add it later.

MS. DOMINGO: — boxes, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: With your fish, ice on the top, another layer of fish, ice on the top.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha.

MS. DOMINGO: And then send it to Hilo to the fish market —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — and sell them.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It took them a while to get there from Kona, but —

MS. RIEDEL: I bet. Did it go by boat or did it fly?

MS. DOMINGO: No, they drove.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, they drove.

MS. DOMINGO: So where it takes two hours today probably took four hours then.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, I bet. Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Because the roads were narrow —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — narrow roads. Got the fish off. There would be one person or two persons — somebody in the village would be in charge of that, and he would take it in, all the fish.

MS. RIEDEL: So it was very communal.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Everybody worked as a community.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that — it sounds like that was true also of the weaving. You said it was treated almost like a quilting been, that the women would get together —

MS. DOMINGO: Sure, they would.

MS. RIEDEL: — and weave.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, and then at times, no, you know.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: They would weave their own, but if there was an opportunity — like I said, there was a wharf. Our home was the warehouse of the wharf. This is our village, Ho'okena. This is the wharf, and this was our home, the warehouse.

MS. RIEDEL: Wow, you were right on the beach.

MS. DOMINGO: Right on the beach.

MS. RIEDEL: You literally lived on the beach. The house is on the sand.

MS. DOMINGO: Lived on the beach, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: How did that — that was fine summer, winter? It was all seasons you were there?

MS. DOMINGO: I was there, except when I was off to school.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. When you said you lived on the beach, I didn't realize it was quite so literally on the beach.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And this is where, on the wharf, all the activities took place. When the ocean was rough, our dads would have all their nets on the floor of the wharf, and they were repairing — all the dads —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — were repairing the nets with the boys.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: That's their job.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Some of them would be repairing the canoe, but they had — they only fished with canoes.

MS. RIEDEL: So they fished from the shore with a net and they also fished by canoe.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Went out with canoes. We had sampan, larger boats. We didn't have that many, maybe two of them. But Dad was a canoe fisherman.. Those people that were in charge who took the fish to the market at Hilo, they were the ones that were with a sampan, the huge boats.

But, yes, this is our village. It was pretty then. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, it looks beautiful. And how many people, roughly, lived there?

MS. DOMINGO: Excuse me?

MS. RIEDEL: How many people?

MS. DOMINGO: People — oh, I'll say the families were about maybe over — 20, 23 families —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — that were there.

MS. RIEDEL: I'll try and take a picture of that later so perhaps people who are listening can see what we're talking about.

MS. DOMINGO: See the homes, the roofs? And then over here, the homes on this side. And they were great years.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, it sounds idyllic.

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Who bought your mother's hats? Were they sold among the community? Were they sold —

MS. DOMINGO: No, there was a gentleman that came from Hilo. They called him Fukuda [a man who bought hats]. I don't know what his full name was. He came from Hilo and he bought all the hats —

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: — of all the weavers.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And, like I say, they were, like, 35 cents a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: And this would have been in the early — the '50s, perhaps, or earlier than that — the 40s?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, '40s. Yeah, '40s, '30s — '30s too, I'm sure, you know? I was born in '35 but I'm sure that they were starting already weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: Thirty-five cents a hat —

MS. DOMINGO: Thirty-five cents a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: — all completely hand-woven. That's extraordinary.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And who did he sell them to? Do you know who the market was?

MS. DOMINGO: I have no idea.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: I have no idea.

MS. RIEDEL: So he would come how often?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure, you know, if he came weekly or monthly, because he bought from, I think, most of the weavers, the group of us that lived on the beach. And then there were people who lived up mauka, on the road, highway.

They wove too. You know, that was their means of providing for their daily necessities. They were able to buy sugar, flour, cracker, canned goods, and all from weaving like this.

I'm not sure if he — if he had others that helped him, but he was a well-known person. I think even Auntie Elizabeth mentions Fukuda.

MS. RIEDEL: And did he have a shop in Hilo, or did he send them elsewhere? Do you know what happened after he bought them?

MS. DOMINGO: I have no idea. I think I was too young to be curious. I have no idea.

Auntie Elizabeth folks also had the Kimura store.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, right, I've heard of that.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, so they had that other outlet.

MS. RIEDEL: And who did the Kimura's sell to when they bought the hats, or were those hats traded for coffee or things like that?

MS. DOMINGO: I cannot answer. I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. But I remember hearing about the Kimura store.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah. And that's still there.

MS. DOMINGO: And it's still there today.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: The granddaughter I believe is running the store.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. And where you were saying the little grass house is still, but now it's something different, where it used to be your mother's store, right, the Little Grass Shack, the Little Grass —

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, the Little Grass Shack.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, that's a store. That's the name of the store, Little Grass Shack.

MS. RIEDEL: And where is that?

MS. DOMINGO: It's in Kaelakekua.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: She has — the owner today has a shop, is running a shop and calls it by that name, Little Grass Shack in Kaelakekua.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

And so, would your mother weave almost exclusively hats? Would that be the main thing she wove? She would weave a few curtains and a few mats, but it was primarily hats, or did she weave a wide range of things?

MS. DOMINGO: I know she wove coasters.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: She wove baskets and hats.

MS. RIEDEL: And would anybody else buy these besides Fukuda?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm thinking yes because when she had the shop, I don't think Mr. Fukuda was in the picture. I think he was out —

MS. RIEDEL: Had he left —

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: — or he had not come yet.

MS. DOMINGO: I believe he had passed on.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so she started the shop afterwards.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And then who would come to the shop?

MS. DOMINGO: Visitors, people.

MS. RIEDEL: Primarily people from Hawaii or from visitors to the island?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I know that there were visitors outside. They even came down to the village, fishing village. In fact, mom was a mayor of the village. She would tell them that they cannot say they've been to Ho'okena unless they've gone swimming.

And so, they would say, oh, they don't have a bathing suit. And she said — she would tell them that didn't matter. We didn't mind it if they went in there with their clothes on. That's fine. [Laughs.] But she was such an ambassador.

MS. RIEDEL: What was the term you used? She was a something of the village?

MS. DOMINGO: I would say she was a mayor of the village.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Oh, the mayor.

MS. DOMINGO: A mayor of the village. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Your mother was a mayor of the village.

MS. DOMINGO: I would say that, because she was out there and if any visitor came by, she would be sure to tell them about the village, to make them feel comfortable, answer whatever questions they had, if she could help them, and then end up with — you know, people won't believe that they were at Ho'okena.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: If she told — if they told them that they were down at the village, they needed to go swimming. [Laughs.] And they would go swimming. But she loved them. She loved entertaining. They were entertainers, Mom and Dad.

MS. RIEDEL: How did you come to go to school in Honolulu? Was that normal to go so far away at such a young age?

MS. DOMINGO: I think for our family, to go to Kamehameha Schools I think — well, maybe for most Hawaiian families, to be able to go to Kamehameha Schools was such an advantage.

At that time it seemed like it was very, very important for us to learn the Western ways. The disadvantage was that — and it already started with our parents, where they couldn't speak Hawaiian. If they spoke Hawaiian, it was all among themselves. And for us, you know, they shouldn't speak to the children Hawaiian. The children should learn to speak English well.

So I am of that group that did not really — was not able to learn to speak the Hawaiian language. I learned only from hearing and putting whatever sentence they said and whatever was occurring at the time, putting it together to be able to learn what was said. And it was of that period where we were not allowed to learn Hawaiian.

MS. RIEDEL: From the time you were a child?

MS. DOMINGO: It was important for us to go off to school to learn the Western ways, to learn to be young ladies, the correct way to be ladies and to speak English well. And so, I think for people today, it's a goal for many families to be able to send their children Kamehameha Schools.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right. They're very prestigious.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Only now there's quite an emphasis on Hawaiian cultural —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, now they have learned studies as we learned, that what our people had was very, very important. And, you know, the reviving of weaving with makaloa [fine fiber/sedge used for weaving hats] is an example.

And I'm just thankful that the Bishop Museum has been able to preserve all of those makaloa mats that they have — beautiful mats. They have a mat that's called *The Protest Mat*.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, I've heard of this.

MS. DOMINGO: You've heard of it.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Where they wrote their protests in the makaloa weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Would you tell that story, as you know it, *The Protest Mat*, that story?

MS. DOMINGO: As I understand it, the state wanted to implement a tax on the little animals — the goat, the sheep — of that concept. And the people didn't want it.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: And so they wove this mat with their protests. And it starts from one corner, I believe, and goes around, and you read it like so, but all in Hawaiian.

MS. RIEDEL: In a spiral, in Hawaiian.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: It's a beautiful mat. And is it at the Bishop Museum?

MS. DOMINGO: It's at the Bishop Museum. They had it when we were with a program, reviving the art of weaving with makaloa. They had an exhibit and they had the mat out.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: It was such a feeling.

MS. RIEDEL: How large is it?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I would say 9-by-12.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, it's big.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Nine-by-12 feet.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: It's big. And most of those makaloa mats are huge.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Some are 10-by-10 — makaloa mats.

MS. RIEDEL: So very finely woven, incredibly —

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know how —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — they wove it. I'm thinking that maybe like the quilting bee, everybody wove a section. You know, wove a section from here to the — I don't know how it got straight, but it was just not very easy —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — to weave her straight. And then just put it together. And whoever was in charge of it probably was able to join in, so it looks like it's all one piece.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: But, I mean, when you look at those mats, one person to weave one mat, like we do with our mats today, it's hard to understand that, but maybe that's so.

MS. RIEDEL: And all the pieces — all the strips are incredibly narrow —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — what, a 16th of an inch, something like that.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And so fine, so flexible, very — hard to — much more difficult to weave with than hala.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, much more.

When we were part of that program, the requirement was that we were asked to do a 12-by-12 piece of mat.



MS. RIEDEL: Twelve inches?

MS. DOMINGO: Twelve inches.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And a 4-by-4 for the museum.

MS. RIEDEL: This was when you were working with the Greenwell Museum on the makaloa project?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It was not easy to do because it's curved.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And we did it on — they gave us a piece of board, 12-by-12, to do weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: And this was when you were trying to revive the tradition of makaloa weaving.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, the art.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. We will definitely get to that.

MS. DOMINGO: But we didn't get to the part of weaving with makaloa; I'm not sure. But Auntie Elizabeth was able to do a hat — beautiful hat in white.

MS. RIEDEL: That was the next question. So makaloa, is it ever two-toned or is it always a single color?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, the sheaths of the plant —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — is what they use for the markings.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But most of the makaloa is white. It's golden.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And as I understand it, it's — how it was dried —

MS. RIEDEL: Made the difference.

MS. DOMINGO: — made a difference.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Some of the students put their makaloa in their car and left it in Kailua, all that sun, and the pieces turned white.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha, bleached.

MS. DOMINGO: Bleached.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I left — not me — James Skibby left it on his dashboard and it didn't turn white.

MS. RIEDEL: It didn't? Hmm.

MS. DOMINGO: So it's hard to explain.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Does it have to do, perhaps, with the different plants?

MS. DOMINGO: Perhaps.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: It's hard to explain.

MS. RIEDEL: Moving back again just to speak briefly again about the Kamehameha School, while you were there what did you study? Did they teach any sort of art or craft, or was it strictly trying to understand more about Western studies?

MS. DOMINGO: I was a tomboy.

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.]

MS. DOMINGO: If you ask my classmates, they'll say the same thing. I excelled in sports.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I excelled in sports. I was a tomboy.

MS. RIEDEL: Tennis, soccer — which sports?

MS. DOMINGO: Soccer, hockey, volleyball, basketball. Oh my gosh, I was a tomboy. I was really a tomboy. And today, you know, speaking with my classmates, some of them will say, "Oh, I was scared of you."

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.]

MS. DOMINGO: I'm sure it was because I grew up in a fishing village and felt that I had to be tough.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, here I am in this school with all of these girls. I mean, we were all girls. In those days the girls were upper campus, the boys were lower campus.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: There was a line. We couldn't cross that line because then we would have detention and maybe expelled from school. They didn't have to worry about me. [Laughs.] I wouldn't cross that line. Oh, I was such a toughie, I can't believe it.

MS. RIEDEL: So that was your main interest was sports.

MS. DOMINGO: Apparently, you know. I wanted to be a teacher.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I wanted to come home and teach at Ho'okena School — elementary school. But when I was at Kamehameha, I knew it was hard on my parents to send me to —

MS. RIEDEL: It was hard for them to have you so far away.

MS. DOMINGO: It was. [Cries.]

MS. RIEDEL: We can stop and take a break anytime you want to.

Well, you were the youngest, right?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And they'd lost your older sister.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And so they just had the brother and now you, the baby, and here you are off hundreds of miles away on another island.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Had your brother gone to that school?

MS. DOMINGO: No. He quit when he was 16, I believe, and joined a CC group.

MS. RIEDEL: CC? What is that?

MS. DOMINGO: It was a construction corps group that was implemented by Roosevelt.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: CCC camps, if you've heard about it —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, I've heard of those, of course.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. DOMINGO: They did quite a bit of construction to help —

MS. RIEDEL: Construction and the national parks too, right?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes, yes, Civilian Conservation Corps, something like that.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: He apparently lied about his age and joined this group of men. And so he was working when he was a young man. And then when he got out, he enlisted in the Army. The war came by so he enlisted into the Army. But Brother sent home bonds.

MS. RIEDEL: So you wanted to come back and help your parents.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, when I got through school I thought I had better come back and help my parents. Of course, it didn't work out that way. I got married instead — [laughter] — and raised a family.

MS. RIEDEL: But you came back to the Big Island.

MS. DOMINGO: I came back, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So you were in Honolulu for six years, 7th grade —

MS. DOMINGO: Going to school.

MS. RIEDEL: — 8th and through high school.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. And when I got through school, after graduation I was to stay with an aunt and go to school in Honolulu. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: To be a teacher.

MS. DOMINGO: I was hoping to be a teacher. The first job I got, I got fired the first night. [They laugh.]

MS. RIEDEL: What were you doing? What were you hired to do?

MS. DOMINGO: It was at a Chinese restaurant and I didn't know Chinese dishes.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, he was so upset with me that he fired me. Okay, fine. And I got discouraged —

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: — and begged my dad, "Please let me come home. Please." "Okay, come home now and then go back to school." And you know how that is.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I never went back. But, anyway —

MS. RIEDEL: So you were happy to come back.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: It's what you wanted.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And what did you think you would do here? It didn't matter. You just wanted to be home.

MS. DOMINGO: I just wanted to be home. I just wanted to be home; no idea at all of plans. And I guess one of the main concerns that I had was that I knew my parents couldn't afford to send me to school. We didn't know about scholarships. So all the years that I was at Kamehameha they struggled hard —

MS. RIEDEL: I bet.

MS. DOMINGO: — to send me to school, \$117 a year, and I knew it was hard-earned money.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: My brother's bonds — because he was in the service he sent home bonds. He told my mom to use the bonds to help for my tuition. So I knew they were having a hard time.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. And so much of what they did seems to be barter system. They would barter fish or they would trade, so there wasn't necessarily a lot of money anyway.

MS. DOMINGO: There wasn't a lot of money.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. There wasn't a lot of money. I knew that. So I never pushed or, you know, made a fuss that I wanted to be a teacher.

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: In fact, when I became — when I started working for Park Service, I was part of a training group in the sense I worked with the superintendent and then Rose Fujimori, a few others of us from in the park, and we went out as a training team, an interpretation — Arizona Memorial was going to open up —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — so we went down and helped them with their interpretive program, and helped them —

MS. RIEDEL: Arizona Memorial — where — is that at the Grand Canyon or —

MS. DOMINGO: No, it's at Honolulu. That's where the —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, for the ship.

MS. DOMINGO: The ship, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, yes.

MS. DOMINGO: USS Arizona.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And it was a hard training session because part of the interpretive program was going to be handled by the Navy and then part of it by the Park Service. And we couldn't tell the Navy people what to do, so it was an uncomfortable situation, in a sense, but I was part of the training program, so I had that opportunity to teach.

MS. RIEDEL: And was the training program — I'm trying to understand — was it to go around to the different national park sites and help them set up cultural demonstrations? Or how — what exactly was the point?

MS. DOMINGO: No, we offered it here to state agencies —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — county agencies, tour groups, different Park Service style of interpreting so that visitors understand, you know? They have their style. We kind of shared it.

MS. RIEDEL: So, to interpret the local —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — the environment of Hawaii and the cultural tradition of Hawaii?

MS. DOMINGO: That's right.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Hotels —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — tour groups.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so this is when the three —

[Audio break.]

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art with Lehua Domingo at her son's home in Naalehu , Hawaii on April 24th, 2010, disc number two.

And when the last disc ended, we were talking about your work with the training team and —

KATHERINE DOMINGO: Oh, and then we held our classes usually up at the dorm of the park.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, and this is in —

MS. DOMINGO: Pu'uhonua. Pu'uhonua. That is correct. And we were there to help the classes for tour companies or state, county agencies, those that had an interest in interpreting — interpretation.

MS. RIEDEL: Understanding more about Hawaii, be it environment or culture.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes?

MS. DOMINGO: Of that concept.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Okay. So it was a broad interpretation of the word "interpretation." And so, you would interpret — help them interpret various historical, environmental and cultural aspects of the island.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So you were working in education.

MS. DOMINGO: In a sense —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: So even though I didn't become a teacher —

MS. RIEDEL: You did well as a cultural demonstrator and then a park ranger.

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: There's quite a bit of education involved.

So you came home, you married. Your husband was also from the island?

MS. DOMINGO: That's correct.

MS. RIEDEL: And what was his name?

MS. DOMINGO: Severino Domingo.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: He had a nickname. We called him Pancho.

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And the family called him Kunia.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Does that mean anything?

MS. DOMINGO: It meant junior.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah, Okay. And had you known him before you left the island?

MS. DOMINGO: That's right. We went to the same school, Ho'okena School, when we were young.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And of course there were only eight of us in 6th grade, I remember — about eight of us were in the 6th grade. But I don't know that there were thoughts that we would one day be married.

MS. RIEDEL: And so you came home and you really took up the life of working and being married, raising children, and there wasn't necessarily a lot of artwork in your life for a period of time.

MS. DOMINGO: No. Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Was your mother still making hats and weaving at this time?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: She was.

MS. DOMINGO: She was.

MS. RIEDEL: And you had no interest or no time.

MS. DOMINGO: And skill. Still it wasn't anything like that. Even when, you know, we started our family — got married and started our family — and at that time of course Mom and Dad were so happy to have grandchildren —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — because it was — for years it was just Brother and myself, just the two of us. At times I used to think that the children looked forward to going with Grandma and Grandpa down to the beach where they were just getting out of doing their chores. [They laugh.] And I believed that Grandma and Grandpa were in cahoots with the children —

MS. RIEDEL: Aha.

MS. DOMINGO: — to get them down to the beach.

MS. RIEDEL: I bet.

MS. DOMINGO: My husband was a cowboy, so we lived on a ranch. And listening to the children today when they talk about those days, they were good days, like living on the beach when I was a youngster. They enjoyed the ranch.

We used to take them up to the mountains and spend a weekend up there with them. And it seemed like, you know, that was the only type of entertainment we could provide for our children. It didn't cost us that much money.

We would take them riding at night just to see the lights that were coming up in Kailua town. And then we're satisfied. You know, we never can complain about the type of lifestyle. They knew that it was rough.

And when we got our farm, then he started working as a dog warden with the police department — my husband, rather.

MS. RIEDEL: Worked as a warden at the police department.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, he left the ranch and then started working with the police department as a dog warden.

MS. RIEDEL: And who was working the farm then?

MS. DOMINGO: We all were, children and myself. It wasn't — you know, he handled an eight-hour job, I had an eight-hour job, and in between we worked the farm.

MS. RIEDEL: What did you grow?

MS. DOMINGO: It was just coffee and macadamia nuts.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And we didn't have vegetables or anything like that. So it didn't take up, you know, extra time except during the weekends perhaps.

MS. RIEDEL: And did the children help harvest?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And this is when everything is still picked by hand, correct, the coffee and the nuts as well?

MS. DOMINGO: And the nuts.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. It's still being done today that way, picked by hand.

MS. RIEDEL: You had seven children.

MS. DOMINGO: We had seven children.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. And when we got the farm, we sat down with the children and told them the predicament we were in, because we were buying the farm. We had a mortgage, so we had to make payments, monthly payments, and we needed their help.

We had an agreement of sale and we had five years to pay back the loan. And so we asked them to help us. And so they did. They would come home after school, after they did their homework. Downstairs we had an area where they could husk the macadamia nuts, so then we could send it to the market in the shelled form. They didn't have to take the outer husk off.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right.

MS. DOMINGO: We already did it. So we actually were saving the costs of one step —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — having the children do that.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And then when it was coffee, when the coffee was in season, harvest, after school, after their homework, we would get out on the farm and pick whatever we could.

I didn't start working until 1962 or so. In those days, you know, I was available during the day. But after having a job, we all had to work even harder until we paid off our loan.

MS. RIEDEL: So, really your interest in weaving was rekindled in 1972 when you started working at the national park.

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know that you can say the interest was rekindled —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — because, actually, when they asked me to fill that position, as a weaver I didn't think I was qualified because I didn't really know how to weave.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I could make the mat, I could make baskets, but that was all. But the agreement of sale was satisfied and so — I think through all of the years there at the park — in 1975, I believe — it could have been 1975 — Park Service, national park was established in — no, no, something — 1776.

It was a Bicentennial celebration. The request went out to parks to come up with a program to commemorate the Bicentennial celebration — I want to say of our country but I'm not sure that that's the correct phrase — of that sense. And so we sat down and thought of doing a cultural festival, which would consist of a week of cultural activities.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And that probably started the growth of the cultural program in different directions —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — where we would do bracelet weaving, teaching visitors how to weave bracelets, weave fans —

MS. RIEDEL: Fans.

MS. DOMINGO: — besides the baskets. And then during the festival we brought in ideas of — I mean, not ideas but programs relating to how our ancestors lived, how they grilled their fish with the coral rocks, were able to also share in the different tastes of different types of Hawaiian foods — gathering seaweed, gathering the sea urchin, showing them how we clean the sea urchin in order to use it as food and use it as dye.

So from this Bicentennial, the cultural festival at Pu'uhonua was started.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: And that's when the culture program even more flourished.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: We offered canoe rides. They were building canoes, so we offered canoe rides. And visitors would come and did that. It was the only opportunity they got to ride a canoe.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: Which meant that we should continue to offer them canoe rides so that they would come down to the park. That's what the park is.

MS. RIEDEL: And these were ocean-faring canoes —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — that would head out from the coast.

MS. DOMINGO: Just right out in the bay —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — right outside of the park, the bay.

And also, at the same time, to introduce them to the different fishes they were able to see on the bottom —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — of the canoe.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Different coral life.



MS. RIEDEL: Aha.

MS. DOMINGO: And for a number of visitors, they can't swim.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So it afforded them an opportunity to see fishes.

MS. RIEDEL: Got you. And so the bottoms of the canoes were either open on the sides, or was there glass?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Or just they'd see over the side.

MS. DOMINGO: Just looking over the side.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: We started using what is called the glass box, and then we were reminded that the glass box — because Pu'uhonua is before missionary contact —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — that the glass box was introduced after missionaries came, so we had to take that away.

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: And they could just look. [They laugh.] But that really started the cultural program, I would say, at the park, when the Bicentennial Cultural Festival started. It opened up all of these different areas where visitors could learn about the lifestyle of our people, people that once lived here — the cloaks, the feather work —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: We didn't have it every year, but whenever we had the opportunity, you know, we would have somebody there.

MS. RIEDEL: So this was a one-time festival, but then many of the practices that came out of that festival you would continue when time or schedules permitted.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, at different times.

So it was a good thing. It started a good thing. I was very pleased with it. It afforded many a real opportunity to understand about the lifestyle of our people. It's what the park is all about.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Yes. The national parks have a history of that.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: Of course now with all the cutbacks —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: It's been harder.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm sure.

MS. DOMINGO: Yeah. Well, it's not only parks.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Everybody.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Everybody.

MS. RIEDEL: As a cultural demonstrator when you first started, what was important? What was your job? What did you want to — what did you — I assume you wove and taught — you talked to people about weaving, gathering material —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — how to weave certain mats. Was there information in particular that was important to you to convey?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, in the same time, you know, portrayed the park's story, why it was a national park, because there would always be that question —

MS. RIEDEL: Of course.

MS. DOMINGO: — of why was this a national park?

MS. RIEDEL: And it's a historic — it's a national historical park. Is that correct?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: That's right. They were good years.

MS. RIEDEL: And it's because it was a historical site here in the island and —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So would you — is that — your days were spent primarily weaving and demonstrating as a cultural demonstrator?

MS. DOMINGO: Of course I wasn't in that position very long.

MS. RIEDEL: A year or less?

MS. DOMINGO: The woman who got me into the park service, Rose Fujimori —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — she was assigned to Pu'ukohola in Kawaihae, because that became a national historic site. So she became the area manager there.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then her position opened up Pu'uuhonua as I became a park ranger.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: During the cultural festival, occasionally I would be a culture demonstrator, but usually I was in the ranger's uniform to see that everything went on smoothly. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Would you give guided tours through the site and talk about, yeah, the history?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Tourists — worked with tour groups — I mean school groups. They would — I would be in charge of setting the schedule for school groups and be sure that there was somebody there to talk to the young people about Pu'uuhonua. And if there was extra — if there was — help somebody to take them to the park.

MS. RIEDEL: And how — who prepared those programs, that information? It must have been a real education for you. How did that come about? Were you trained by someone at the park? Is this information that you already had from living here on the island?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, what programs?

MS. RIEDEL: In terms of speaking, the tours that you gave to school groups and students that came to the

national park, that came to P'u honua? Was there a training program so that you would learn about the information that should be taught about the park?

MS. DOMINGO: I guess when we became rangers, you know, there was — we had to know — we had to do research —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — and we had to know the park story.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And we did attend training classes. We have a training center in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, and a training center at Grand Canyon, Albright. We had that opportunity to go to one of the training centers and further training interpretation communication.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Speaking, writing.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you do that?

MS. DOMINGO: If there was something being offered, yes. If there was something being offered, and it would be of benefit not only to the employee but to the parks —

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: — then it would be a request. Or maybe the chief would come in and ask, "Would you be interested in going to" — whatever — "training class?" You had that choice if you could or you couldn't.

MS. RIEDEL: And in terms of doing the research about the park, how did you do that?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, we have an extensive library at the park.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so you would spend time at the library —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — on your own.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I think everybody did.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Or read — there's history books that, you know, should — suggested as should be read, especially if you're going to be down at Pu'u honua. Marion Kelly, she has a book on different priests of our village. Oh, Pukui's Hawaiian dictionary. It's a dictionary but she has lots of information — place names.

MS. RIEDEL: That's helpful.

MS. DOMINGO: And then there's archeology work.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, it wasn't just that you read these books. So there was information available. And then I think the same thing is happening today. As the years go on, you'll find out different additional information.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: Many of our scholars today are able to translate many of the older newspapers, books that were written in Hawaiian so that we have that additional information about islands, our people, the gods. So there is still that opportunity to learn.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you grow up speaking Hawaiian in your home?

MS. DOMINGO: My parents spoke Hawaiian. I didn't speak that much Hawaiian, no.

MS. RIEDEL: So they spoke English to you?

MS. DOMINGO: They spoke English.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Kilohana [Domingo] is much more versed in Hawaiian than I am.

MS. RIEDEL: Your son. And how did he learn?

MS. DOMINGO: Because Kilohana, when he attended Kamehameha School, it was of that renaissance year when they were trying to revive it.

MS. RIEDEL: Gotcha.

MS. DOMINGO: I was at the period when they were saying we couldn't do this, we couldn't do this. And Brother was there when they said, "No, we need to do it, revive it." So he is much more — I go to Kilohana and ask him advice and help in regards to Hawaiiana.

MS. RIEDEL: And you graduated in '53?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And he graduated in, what, '76, something like that?

MS. DOMINGO: '76 or '78. Something like that.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So by the time he came 20-plus years later, the curriculum had completely reversed from when there was no real emphasis in Hawaiian studies. Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And now even more.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. DOMINGO: They've done so much, the school. And they're going out to help those that are not able to attend the campus. They've opened up a school here —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, they have?

MS. DOMINGO: — on this island. They've opened up another on Maui. So they're —

MS. RIEDEL: So there are three now.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: Kamehameha Schools Kea'au campus, Kamehameha Schools Maui campus, Kamehameha Schools Kapalama campus.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And their curriculum is fantabulous — fantabulous. [Laughs.] Makes me want to go to school again.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, isn't it true? What in particular —

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. What about the curriculum in particular now impresses you?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, all kinds, you know. They have opportunity for all kinds of — I guess I like all the sports. There's cheerleading. They are going to contests for cheerleading.

MS. RIEDEL: Cheerleading?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, in our days, we were just a one, two — one, two —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And girls —

MS. RIEDEL: Now it's all athletic.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, all kinds —

MS. RIEDEL: Did they teach weaving and that sort of thing there now too? Do you think of Hawaiian craft? Is that part of the curriculum? I wonder if you ever go back — do you ever go back and offer a workshop or —

MS. DOMINGO: I've gone back during — no, not a workshop, but I've gone back to the reunion events. And last — the last visit there, they had a session on method of learning to speak Hawaiian, incorporating the sign language with the word. And I don't — it was — I wish it was being offered here.

It is being offered here but only at Volcanoes National Park. And that's because if you have attended the session, they go through a rigid, oh, whichever, to be tabbed a teacher. It takes a while to become a teacher in this format, learning to speak Hawaiian. But sign language, incorporating it with the language and — [inaudible] — and it was a very educational session.

MS. RIEDEL: I imagine.

MS. DOMINGO: We were all excited about it — colors and numbers. And one of my classmates is trying to self-teach herself to —

MS. RIEDEL: Teach herself.

MS. DOMINGO: She's done a good job. She just has to go slowly. She's not familiar.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right. There's a wonderful Hawaiian-English dictionary available online now, on the computer.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: I was trying to translate some of the names of some of the hats, and I could plug it into the dictionary online and it would pull up some pretty good interpretations. Yeah, a wonderful tool.

Is it fair to say that you really became re-engaged with lauhala and the weaving tradition through the project at the Greenwell Gardens with Auntie Elizabeth, or was there a re-introduction to this for you before that?

MS. DOMINGO: The Ulu Lauhala o Kona conference?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah — well, I'm thinking of the project I think in 1993 where they were — the makaloa project.

MS. DOMINGO: Makaloa project?

MS. RIEDEL: Remember, they were trying to —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, it was in '93. I thought it was after the Ulu Lauhala conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, let's talk about the conference. When was that?

MS. DOMINGO: I thought the first conference was held in 1995.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Maybe they started the project — this I have in 1993. It was a collaboration between the native Hawaiian culture and arts program and the Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden to examine the possibilities of reviving the makaloa weaving tradition by growing makaloa in areas I think where there was gray water involved. And it was a way to try and —

MS. DOMINGO: They were trying to get the plant growing.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, exactly, long enough blades to be —

MS. DOMINGO: Before the weaving —

MS. RIEDEL: Conference.

MS. DOMINGO: Before the weaving makaloa —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — grow.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah. Okay, so that was 1993, I believe, is when they began that project. It was part of the — I don't think it was part of the park service. It was under — it was something else.

MS. DOMINGO: No, it wasn't the park service.

MS. RIEDEL: I want to say USGS but I don't think that's right either. Well, I can look that up.

MS. DOMINGO: Because I think I was selected because I have been to the Kona conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — and that's why I was selected to be a part of that group of weavers to do — revive the weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So let's talk about how you first went to the conference. And this was the conference where Auntie Gladys Grace was demonstrating.

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Is this correct?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so where and when was that conference?

MS. DOMINGO: That was a conference that was in 1995 —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: [Coughs.] Excuse me — at the Keauhou Beach Hotel.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I was a haumana, or student, to my cousin [Auntie] Gladys Grace. She had with her another student, Frank Masagatani.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And there were three of us that were students for Auntie. She was tied up with two, and Frank came at supper and asked me if I was ready, and I said yeah, but I was waiting for Auntie. So he started to help me get ready, and put the pieces together to make the piko.

MS. RIEDEL: Which is the navel that started the hat, correct?

MS. DOMINGO: That's right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: The start of the hat.

MS. RIEDEL: And we ended up about five of us that Frank was helping because — I don't know how that happened but there were five of us eventually. And so we all completed our hats.

MS. RIEDEL: Over what period of time?

MS. DOMINGO: I would say it was Thursday — Thursday, Friday, Saturday. It could've been Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday because Saturday evening was graduation. You would have been finished with your product.

MS. RIEDEL: In four days, a hat.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: That seems so speedy.

MS. DOMINGO: That's why I was elated.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you sleep? You must have just worked constantly.

MS. DOMINGO: I did.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And Kilohana went with me to that first conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And his remark after was he doesn't think he wants to be my roommate again. [They laugh.] He said, "Because you sleep late and you get up early." [Laughs.] Because I was so excited.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And I knew at that conference I was at one point and I knew something was wrong. I knew something was wrong. And Cousin Gladys wasn't there. Frank wasn't there.

MS. RIEDEL: With the hat? Something was wrong with the weaving?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Something was wrong with my weaving. I knew that something was wrong but I didn't know what was wrong. And I saw Lynn Ham Young in the elevator, and mustered up the courage to ask her if she was to be — you know, she was a kumu teacher. And she said yes.

I said, "I need help. I'm thinking that something's wrong with my hat," if she could help me. She said, "I cannot help you now." She had a daughter with her, I believe. "But I can meet you" — I'm not sure if it was 7:00 — in one of the grass houses, the halau [school]. She would meet me there. I said, "Okay."

I waited for her, and she came. I dropped a stitch. She took it off. I wanted to cry because it kept getting back and back. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Shorter and shorter and shorter.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, my gosh, I thought I'm going back to the part where I was just starting.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And, you know, she apologized. I said, "That's all right," because I was determined to learn.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I grew up learning that we learn by our mistakes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: And she told me what happened. I dropped a stitch. And she said it was one of the additions.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha.

MS. DOMINGO: So the next time to be careful when you add, to be sure it's locked in —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — so that it doesn't come out.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So that was a good lesson.

MS. RIEDEL: You never forgot that again, I'm sure.

MS. DOMINGO: And I never forgot Lynn Ham Young.

MS. RIEDEL: How generous.

MS. DOMINGO: How generous.

MS. RIEDEL: So what was your first hat?

MS. DOMINGO: My first hat was just a plain hat.

MS. RIEDEL: It's hala, all single color, right?

MS. DOMINGO: All one color.

MS. RIEDEL: One color.

MS. DOMINGO: It was a light color. And I was the proudest, proudest student that night. I had to tell everyone that I learned. And I'm so happy I learned because Cousin Gladys came from Kona and I'm from Kona.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: So happy. In fact, Frank had asked me if I knew who she was, and I said, "No, I haven't met her."

MS. RIEDEL: So growing up you had no idea.

MS. DOMINGO: No, I had never met Cousin Gladys. And he said, "She's a Kona girl." I said, "Oh, I don't know her." Well, we're talking with Auntie and we're doing the session. You know, she would come and check and tell a story, see that I was Okay. And Frank was doing a good job helping her. He was helping her help us.

And we were okay, fine, the five of us. I believe I still have that picture with the five of us and Frank. The five of us were so proud.

MS. RIEDEL: So it was you and Gladys Grace.

MS. DOMINGO: Myself. And actually the others were not assigned to Cousin Gladys. They were — like, I guess my position — you know, waiting on the side because she was tied up.

MS. RIEDEL: She was working with other students.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, and we were — the three of us were assigned to her.

MS. RIEDEL: How many people were at this conference?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I cannot say.

MS. RIEDEL: A few dozen, a hundred?

MS. DOMINGO: Quite a bit. There were quite a bit. It was — maybe Kilohana remembers how many there were, but there were quite a number of us that were there.

MS. RIEDEL: And it sounds like Kilohana has been interested in Hawaiian traditions — lei-making and hula, the halau. You two were almost exploring this together.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, actually I think Brother is the one that influenced the involvement for both of us in that moment.

MS. RIEDEL: Your brother Sam?

MS. DOMINGO: No, this brother, Kilohana.

MS. RIEDEL: Kilohana's brother?

MS. DOMINGO: No, Kilohana himself.

MS. RIEDEL: Kilohana himself. Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: He attended because we actually became involved with craft. He was going out with his feather



leis, and then he would ask me, "Can I use one of your — can I use one of your hats to put — so I can showcase this feather lei?"

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: And wherever he was going to. I said, "Sure." And then each time it got — I would say, "Kilohana, why don't you take this hat and use this hat?" Like I said, I was just weaving. I was so happy that I knew how to weave. And I just wove. "Take this hat and use this hat."

MS. RIEDEL: So he was doing feather leis even before you started weaving. Did he encourage you to start weaving, or this was just something that you decided to do, and then when you went up to the conference —

MS. DOMINGO: I had learned —

MS. RIEDEL: — he came along because that was something he was interested in?

MS. DOMINGO: He came along, yes, because he wanted to learn how to weave.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, he did? Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But they had assigned him to make a hat. He didn't know nothing about weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: And you already did from the years as a cultural demonstrator and from your mother.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And so he had a hard time. And so they put him into another class, I believe, and it was kind of discouraging. But he had always — I could be wrong. We need to check with Kilohana how it was, but I believe he had already started a hat. And he either went back to another Ka Ulu Lauhala conference and worked with Margaret, and Margaret helped him.

MS. RIEDEL: What was Margaret's — what's Margaret's last name?

MS. DOMINGO: Lovett.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Margaret helped him to complete the hat. But where is his hat? They changed their displays.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Kenny has woven a hat too.

MS. RIEDEL: Pardon?

MS. DOMINGO: Kenny has woven a hat too.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, he has? Kenny has.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

[Cross talk.]

MS. DOMINGO: Kenny was with a Seattle group.

MS. RIEDEL: The halau?

MS. DOMINGO: The halau.

MS. RIEDEL: The lomilomi halau? Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: We were up in Seattle for a hat lesson — making lesson. There was — I mean, there were five of them was hat and lei-making. Kenny, the only one that finished his hat at that session, he started after everybody else got started. They were having a hard time.

About three of them all — Kenny and Lehua [ph], two of them — two of them finished a hat and two of them was just about completed. If we had one more day, they would have finished their hat, but we had to leave already.

And I cannot remember — oh, the last one skipped. No, he didn't. He wasn't near — he got discouraged because it was too hard.

MS. RIEDEL: So this was a class that you and Kilohana were teaching in Seattle.

MS. DOMINGO: In Seattle.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Kilohana was teaching feather lei-making.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I was teaching hats.

MS. RIEDEL: And when did you start — well, we're jumping ahead a little bit, but when did you start teaching? And then we'll go back to your actual making, but when did you begin teaching weaving?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know that you can say that I really —

MS. RIEDEL: "Sharing" perhaps is a better word.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: I've used the word "sharing" —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — because I've never felt that because I didn't graduate from the Ka Ulu Lauhala conference to become a teacher. I've always attended it as a student.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah, you can apply to be a teacher, to be certified as a teacher?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I think it's the person, if they feel that they can teach. I had two experiences that didn't help in that direction.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So I just never thought I wanted to become a teacher at the Ka Ulu Lauhala conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Whenever I was asked, I said, "Please excuse me." Then I felt that I hadn't learned everything, that I was still a student. So the teaching that I've done, I've used the word "sharing" what I've learned. And the few that I've worked with refer to me as kumu, as their teacher —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — which is fine, yeah, but I'm much more comfortable doing it that way. Even here, when we come here to teach, the same concept. I usually have them come out and work with the lauhala, getting the lauhala ready, so that they know which lauhala leaves are good leaves for weaving.

And I'm fine there. I've done the baskets class — baskets and — oh, they had a houseguest and he joined us. Oh, we had a great time.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: We had a great time. Cousin Gladys was here and she said, "I love your laugh." And I said, "Oh, Okay." [Laughs.] Because we were having a good time.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And I enjoyed every —

MS. RIEDEL: I notice that the hala trees out here, they're very young, but they don't have any sharp edges along the leaves. Is that a certain kind of hala? Is it because it's young? What is that?

MS. DOMINGO: No, they're thornless.

MS. RIEDEL: They're thornless hala.

MS. DOMINGO: I work with thornless.

MS. RIEDEL: And is that something that's found naturally in the environment, or is that something that's been cultivated to grow a certain hala without the thorns?

MS. DOMINGO: No, you can find quite a number of the trees.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, without thorns.

MS. DOMINGO: For me, I have the thornless growing in my coffee land.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: That's what my husband had to —

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And our son has both — no, he got rid of — I'm sorry, he got rid of the one that had thorns, because not all lauhala trees are good trees. Some trees are not good for weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: And what is that you look for? Why are some good and some aren't?

MS. DOMINGO: Qualitative — the feel. Kilohana has two trees to the back here, and he pruned one of them. And when he mentioned to me that he had pruned it, I said, "Oh, that's a good tree." He said, "Yeah." He had pulled down one of the dried leaves — we get dried leaves from the tree — and he said it had a good feeling. And it has the feeling —

MS. RIEDEL: Can you describe it? Is it flexibility? Is it a certain softness? Is it a certain stiffness? What is it that you look for?

MS. DOMINGO: It's not stiff. It has — oh, it's a good feeling. It has — when you — it has body. It has body to it and it feels good. It feels good. And some of them — all look pretty. Some of them are white or lighter color, and some of them are dark, darker. Ours is not as dark. Some of them are darker in color.

MS. RIEDEL: Do they call that the red hala or —

MS. DOMINGO: The red, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Yeah, this is red, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And there is —

MS. DOMINGO: Ula ula.

MS. RIEDEL: Ula ula —

MS. DOMINGO: Ula ula.

MS. RIEDEL: — is the red hala.

MS. DOMINGO: The red, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It has good body, a good feeling.

MS. RIEDEL: And it bends but it doesn't — not break, but it doesn't pinch, or it doesn't — it seems like it bends but it doesn't —

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I guess if you — if you, you know, press it, it will bend like that. But usually we — [inaudible] — and bend it to that — we know the difference between good leaf and bad leaf, usable leaf and not usable leaf.

MS. RIEDEL: So it has just the right thickness. I think — is that what you mean by body too?

MS. DOMINGO: Not thickness; it's body but, see, this is not thickness but it has body to it. And if you — this is thick. This is thick and this is not thick.

MS. RIEDEL: And are both usable?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Is it an evenness in consistency too, perhaps?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, you mean the good leaves?

MS. RIEDEL: Mm-hm. [Affirmation.]

MS. DOMINGO: I guess, yes. And, you know, they won't crack.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. That was the word I was looking for.

MS. DOMINGO: A friend said she just cleaned a tree that's growing in the niece's yard. And she said gather just the leaves. Usually you gather the dried leaves from the tree, not the ones that have fallen on the ground —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — like fruit. Once they've fallen on the ground then they're kind of —

MS. RIEDEL: They're past.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, past.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Occasionally there will be a good fruit —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — if it just fell.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And occasionally there will be a good leaf —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — if she just fell —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — but to determine.

And so she said, "I gathered just the leaves from the tree, but they're so hard they're cracking and I don't know why." So I suggested that she maybe put it into a bag, a plastic bag, and just spray a little bit just to give it some kind of dampness, wait a little while and then work with her leaf again. And if they're still dry and cracked, then maybe — you know, not all trees are good trees. And maybe not. Maybe it will soften.

And then, too, with the tree, you take care of the tree; the tree will take care of you. So you clean your tree. When you gather, clean her clean.

MS. RIEDEL: By that you mean take off all the dry leaves?

MS. DOMINGO: All the dry leaves.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And get them all — when you have a bunch of leaves, then you should clean them, soften them,

roll them, and get them into what we call kuka'a.

MS. RIEDEL: A roll —

MS. DOMINGO: This is just a small — small bundle. But if we're not going to use it, roll it into a kuka'a, a roll. And usually there are 50 leaves in one roll.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: And if it's odd, then identify and — you know, so that you know how much it is.

MS. RIEDEL: And are they — they're not — there are leaves and then you add another one and another one and another one, right?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And how long will they last like this?

MS. DOMINGO: They last a long time.

MS. RIEDEL: A few months? A few years?

MS. DOMINGO: Years.

MS. RIEDEL: Really? Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I have a friend that her mother-in-law — her mother-in-law was a lauhala weaver. And I would say maybe two years ago they just found a bundle of rolls. And the mother-in-law has been gone — she doesn't even know what the mother-in-law looks like. She's been married to the son for a while now. I don't know how many years. But she believes that for 25 years they have been in the roll.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh.

MS. DOMINGO: And that's what she uses for weaving. It's just as good.

MS. RIEDEL: Extraordinary. But no insects or anything are eating them? They're not mildewing?

MS. DOMINGO: So, wherever they were stored, they were in a good storage place. But that's what my mom's folks did. We gathered the leaves, got them into rolls, and they stored it into boxes —

MS. RIEDEL: Really.

MS. DOMINGO: — until they were ready to use. If you are going to do a mat, you get all your rolls first because you're going to need lots —

MS. RIEDEL: Lots, right.

MS. DOMINGO: — to build it up, more than enough on both rolls. So they last a long time but that's how you can keep your lauhala.

MS. RIEDEL: And then after you have your rolls, you strip them. You make them into thin strips after they're rolls, when you decide what you're going to make —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and how thick the strips need to be.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Then you take your lauhala, whatever you're going to weave. You strip it for hat or for baskets or for the fan.

MS. RIEDEL: Is there anything that you weave that uses strips of uneven width, width that changes, or is it always symmetrical, so it's always a 16th of an inch, an 8th of an inch, a half an inch? Are there any designs that intentionally use —

MS. DOMINGO: I don't, but I've seen maybe purses where they do — maybe they start with one inch and then they're going to do a design, so before they can build a strip, the other piece, and then do the design so that it's — it's from the same leaf.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, but they strip it only partway and then they leave it whole —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and then they'll strip maybe further down?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, interesting. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: But I don't. You know, I'm usually uniform. Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So let's go back to your first hat.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, my first hat.

MS. RIEDEL: It was 1995?

MS. DOMINGO: I should have brought my first hat.

MS. RIEDEL: And was there a particular style that you made?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it was just plain, common. See, I brought a picture, I think. I have to look for it.

MS. RIEDEL: And when did you begin to weave — I think it's called anoni? Is this the first hat? Oh, you have to tell me —

[Cross talk.]

MS. DOMINGO: That's my first hat. I was so proud. I was so proud of my first hat.

MS. RIEDEL: That's pretty amazing for a first hat.

MS. DOMINGO: One girl said that I must have made a hat before. I tell her, "I didn't make a hat from start to finish. My mom make."

MS. RIEDEL: Now this is you with the hat, yeah?

MS. DOMINGO: This is Auntie Gladys.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, that's Auntie Gladys. This is you.

[Doorbell rings.]

[Audio break.]

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art with Lehua Domingo at her son's home in Naalehu, Hawaii on April 24th, 2010 — Disc number 3.

When the last disc ended, we had just begun to talk about your first hat.

KATHERINE DOMINGO: Oh.

MS. RIEDEL: And we have now here on the hassock beside us nine or so of the different hats that you've made. Most of these were in the late '90s, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And these —

MS. DOMINGO: That's because I became haumana, was student for Cousin Gladys Grace under the State Foundation in Culture and Arts Program.

MS. RIEDEL: State Foundation in Culture and Arts Program.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And what is that?

MS. DOMINGO: It's a program where a student will work with a resource person to learn that craft or whatever the resource person had to share. And I was just one, I understand, of many students of Cousin Gladys.

MS. RIEDEL: And is it a formal program? Do you meet every so often and you graduate? Or is just an ongoing way of exchanging information?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it's a program that is for a specified time, length of time. And it afforded — like in our case, because I lived in Kona, Cousin Gladys lived in Oahu, it afforded her transportation —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — to travel from Oahu to come to Kona. We also had the opportunity to travel together to Kauai to visit other weavers and see what projects they were working on.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And it afforded us to travel in the direction to look for material to work with. I was fortunate in that I had the trees growing in my coffee land, so we didn't have to travel that far to gather the leaves. It would just be Cousin Gladys coming from Oahu to Kona, where we would now gather leaves.

MS. RIEDEL: It was just the two of you?

MS. DOMINGO: Just the two of us.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: And I also had the opportunity — the program also afforded me that opportunity to acquire my own working tools —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — like the stripper. Through that program I got a stripper.

MS. RIEDEL: Does someone make those strippers? Do they have to be custom done? It's a very unusual tool. I don't imagine you go down to the hardware store to pick on up.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, the weaving group is very fortunate in where they have Herb Kaneko, who helps to provide the weavers with working tools.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Does he live here on the island?

MS. DOMINGO: No, he lives on Oahu.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And has he been doing it for a long time? Has he been making these tools for a long time?

MS. DOMINGO: Apparently.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I understand he has been able to provide Cousin Gladys and her students in Honolulu with the tools. It was before I became involved in weaving — that far back.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. And so you started studying with — I notice you call her sometimes Auntie Gladys and sometimes Cousin Gladys.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Most of the weavers refer to her as Auntie Gladys. Because we are both from Kona, she says I should call her cousin.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So I often have to remind myself —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — to call her Cousin Gladys. She says we all a family.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So you began studying with her and working with her in 1995. And how long did that go on for? Or does it still go on?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it's all completed. I was required to — at the end of the program to at least go out maybe to the library and do a show, or, if possible, to do a program to talk about the hats, the process —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — demonstration program.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I was able to fulfill both of those areas. The one thing — oh, and we had to account for the number of volunteer hours.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: They referred to the time together as volunteer hours. And so I kept a record of what we did and how many hours we worked together. The program ended in about a year —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — and maybe a few months, and then we were through with that. Then she would have another student for the same program.

MS. RIEDEL: So it was a one-on-one —

MS. DOMINGO: It was a one-on-one.

MS. RIEDEL: — teacher and student program. That's extraordinary.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And how often did you meet?

MS. DOMINGO: I would say Auntie would — Cousin Gladys would come by maybe — it depended on her schedule — oh, maybe twice a week or —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, that often?

MS. DOMINGO: — two or three times a month. If we could, three times a month, fine. Otherwise we tried it twice a month.

But what Cousin did was she would leave me with homework.

MS. RIEDEL: I was going to ask.

MS. DOMINGO: And I'm sorry I didn't bring a hat that I refer to as my error hat. But she says, "No, it's not an error hat." She left me with instructions on how to make that hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Era, E-R-A or arro, A-R-R-O?

MS. DOMINGO: E-R-R-O-R.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, error hat. [They laugh.] Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. And I thought I was following the instructions, but as I was progressing I knew that I had done something wrong. The design did not come out as it should have. And I believe it was either in counting and twist —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — but she insisted that it's not a hat that was woven wrong; it's just a new design. [They laugh.] It doesn't have a name to it because — at one time I thought it was maybe flock of birds, but if you look at it very closely, no, maybe not flock of birds.



MS. RIEDEL: I'd like to see that.

MS. DOMINGO: Maybe robots. [They laugh.]

But she left — she would say, "Next time I come, I want you to have three pa ready."

MS. RIEDEL: And pa, again remind me, is the top of the hat?

MS. DOMINGO: It was the start, yeah, the top.

MS. RIEDEL: So the piko and then the — before the crown starts.

MS. DOMINGO: That's right, before the crown, just the top section.

And so I would be ready for her. And if she came, she would start me with some design, whichever, gave me instructions, and then she would leave. And when she came back it should be all done and — I would have the design done. If I had a question, I always called her.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But it seemed to work out.

MS. RIEDEL: So she would leave you with specific designs to practice, some of the ones that we were naming earlier. Can you talk about some of the very early ones that — some of the ones she asked you to make?

MS. DOMINGO: This is one of the early ones, the kili pu'u. And they referred to this as ke'e ke'e because it's crooked.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, like a zigzag.

MS. DOMINGO: They're zigzagged.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Auntie refers to this as the Hae Hawai'i.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, the Hawaiian flag.

[Cross talk.]

MS. DOMINGO: The Hawaiian flag, because of the piko.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And what about the piko is the Hawaiian flag?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, she says that this is our flag, our Hawaiian flag —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, really?

MS. DOMINGO: — so she calls it Hae Hawai'i.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. And is there a reason for that that she shared that for you? Is there a reason she calls that — she thinks that's the Hawaii flag?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know the reason. She just refers to it as Hae Hawai'i.

MS. RIEDEL: That's how she — Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And this is the huila makani, the windmill.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And this —

MS. RIEDEL: Is it "windmill" or is it "pinwheel?" I can't remember. We can look it up. Huila makani.

MS. DOMINGO: Huila makani, windmill.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: "Makani" is wind.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, then it sounds like windmill.

MS. DOMINGO: "Huila" is mill. And this is the niho niho.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, the — and how does niho niho — it's not zigzag but it's jagged or sawtooth, I think.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, pointed.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, the pointed — yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: So this is one of the first designs, or this is another of them. This is piko alele.

MS. RIEDEL: Piko alele. And what does that mean?

MS. DOMINGO: Piko — this is the piko.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So it's piko. Alele is "wherever" — here and there.

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, I see. I see. So you repeat the same pattern —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — on the crown or on the brim.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Piko alele.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So that's one of the few — first ones.

MS. RIEDEL: And, Lehua, is there — we're talking about the patterns now. Are there different terms for talking about the different shapes, the different forms of the hats? I think of cup and saucer —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — as describing more of a form.

MS. DOMINGO: And that is a specific type of cup and saucer.

MS. RIEDEL: But do these shapes have different names, or not so much, because you have very wide rims, narrow rims.

MS. DOMINGO: Not this one here.

MS. RIEDEL: You have squared-off crowns or rounded crowns. There's quite a bit of variation in the shapes themselves.

MS. DOMINGO: There is. And I think I'm more of the flat top versus the —

MS. RIEDEL: Rounded top?

MS. DOMINGO: The rounded top.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Somehow I seem to lean in that direction.

MS. RIEDEL: More towards the flat top than the rounded top. And is there a term for flat top?

MS. DOMINGO: No, not that I'm aware of.

MS. RIEDEL: No? Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: So, while you were working with Auntie Gladys, how many hats did you complete during that year, year and a half?

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] You know, I —

MS. RIEDEL: Three hats? Twenty hats? Is it a lot? Did you sleep is, I guess, the question. Did you work constantly?

MS. DOMINGO: I was very, very fortunate that my husband supported my interest. He retired two years before me, in '95. I retired in '97. And he was already starting to gather the lauhala leaves.

He would clean the tops, remove the tops and the bottoms, remove the thorns, wipe them clean, roll them. All I had to do was get them into rolls. He had a hard time doing the kuka'a, getting them into these rolls. He rolled them to soften them but he had a hard time getting them into the rolls.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So that was my job.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And then strip — whatever I needed for my weaving. And then cook — I was still working. I didn't have to worry about supper. I would come home; I could sit down and weave. Get up early — I would get up early in the morning, at 3:00 in the morning, and weave —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, my goodness.

MS. DOMINGO: — before I left for work. He had breakfast all ready.

MS. RIEDEL: Cousin Gladys will tell you that he spoiled us, especially during her visits.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: He made sure we were well taken care of. He was very, very supportive.

MS. RIEDEL: How wonderful.

MS. DOMINGO: I swear. So I would mention it to other weavers, "Take care of your husbands. They are the ones that are helping." Some girls it's their father. "Take care of your dad."

MS. RIEDEL: So it was very much a two-person process in that often one person would gather and prepare the material and then the weaver would make the pieces.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. And I think another factor behind the support was that Dad — my husband — enjoyed wearing the hats. He had — well, I would say, a good friend — you know, friends that you grow up with become buddies. Well, his mother always made sure that my husband had a lauhala hat.

And if she noticed that for a while he wasn't wearing a hat, she would ask him, "Where's your hat?" And he would say, oh, whatever happened — because he was a cowboy. You know, they got wet and whatever. Okay, the next day she got a hat for him. She made sure he always had a lauhala hat. So he was the best model.

When I started weaving —

MS. RIEDEL: Would these be gifts? Would she —

MS. DOMINGO: She gave to him as gifts.

MS. RIEDEL: How extraordinary.

MS. DOMINGO: And when I started weaving — this hat is Dad's hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Which one?

MS. DOMINGO: This one here.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that piko alele we were talking about?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: He gave that to Kilohana.

MS. RIEDEL: And this was your father's hat?

MS. DOMINGO: No, my —

MS. RIEDEL: Your husband's; sorry.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, my husband's hat.

MS. RIEDEL: It's beautiful.

MS. DOMINGO: He enjoyed it. He enjoyed wearing it. He was — what a model. And he would have on his hat and he would meet up with a friend. And you could see it from his face; he wants to know if he can give his friend his hat, if I would make him another. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: You could tell from his face.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. He had — after he stopped working as a dog warden — he worked at the police department.

MS. RIEDEL: Sorry, as a dog warden?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So he was in charge of dogs, wild dogs or lost dogs?

MS. DOMINGO: He was an animal warden.

MS. RIEDEL: Animal control.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: When he stopped — when he went out of that position he became a stock clerk at the police department. And he worked with young ladies, and they would spoil him rotten. And he would do the same favor to — he loved his girls. I had to make them bracelets for Christmas.

I did covers for lighters for his — the male policemen friends. Endless. [Laughs.] He has a list, endless list, always something that he wanted. But he was always so helpful.

MS. RIEDEL: This leads to, I think, a very important and interesting point about your hats, and that's that you don't sell them.

MS. DOMINGO: No, I do.

MS. RIEDEL: You do?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: You do not, right. That was my understanding. And would you talk about that little bit, because in the art and craft world that's unusual.

MS. DOMINGO: I guess there's quite a number of factors behind that. I just never thought of weaving to sell. I wouldn't be able to price one of the hats. I wouldn't know where to start. I do, however, donate hats —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — to the American society — Cancer Society and to schools, especially Kamehameha Schools because I attended Kamehameha Schools. And they have a campus on the island of Hawaii in Kea'au. And they have an annual — Ho'olaule'a is like a festival.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I try to have a hat ready for them for silent auction.

I donate also at my class reunions. It's one way of how we raise money so that we don't have to pay annual dues. And the auction is held just among us graduates.

I just enjoy weaving, so — I do sell rolls of lauhala, however. [They laugh.] I can do that.

MS. RIEDEL: In case one wants to make their own hat.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: And, you know — or I donate to Ka Ulu Lauhala conference, the kuka'a, the rolls of lauhala for them in their silent auction, a way for them of raising money for the conference, whatever extra expenses for the year coming, if they have any expenses.

I just, I guess, wouldn't know how to start. I have agreed, if Kilohana wants to sell a hat from here, it's okay if it goes with a feather lei. And I guess it's because, in a sense, that's how we both got involved.

He used to go out with his feather leis, and then occasionally he would ask for a hat so that he could put the lei on. And then after a while he invited me to join him because people would ask about the hats. He couldn't answer.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So he would say, "I think you should come along with me." And that's how we both got involved in cultural demonstration programs.

MS. RIEDEL: And when did that start, the cultural demonstration programs?

MS. DOMINGO: A while now.

MS. RIEDEL: 2000? That long ago do you think?

MS. DOMINGO: It began before, probably.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Or thereabouts.

MS. RIEDEL: And these are demonstrations where you will go to different national parks or different —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — venues and demonstrate your hat-making and his lei-making —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and sell the leis and/or a hat with a lei. Is that correct?

MS. DOMINGO: We offer it for — like, if they're going to have auction —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — they will offer a lei and a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: We're informed of the auction before we get there. And they'll say if we wouldn't mind donating, so we'll get ready.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I'll do it that way.

We've done it here. They used to have hula festivals here in Kau and Waiohinu a number of years, and they always invited us for demonstration programs.

MS. RIEDEL: And how often does that happen? Does that happen a few times a year? Does it happen every few years?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, a few times a year.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. They just had one at Volcanoes National Park.

MS. DOMINGO: We do quite a few at Volcanoes National Park. I go down to the cultural festival at Pu'uuhonua but not as a demonstration program, just as a demonstrator. Either I'll have weaving or assist somebody who needs help working with lauhala. I do it that way, or do something else.

One year our daughter and I, she did the brooms that's done out of the midriff of the coconut leaf.

MS. RIEDEL: She makes hats from the coconut leaf?

MS. DOMINGO: No, she made a broom.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, brooms from coconut leaves. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: While I sat on the side and wove.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So we've done it that way.

MS. RIEDEL: Has anyone spoken to you about selling the hats? Or do other people that make hats sell them? And is there a reason that you have just decided not to do that?

MS. DOMINGO: To sell?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I just never thought that way. I just never thought of selling.

MS. RIEDEL: Is it something that you just really don't want to do, or is it something that just never happened and so there's no reason to start now?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, there have been inquiries, you know —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — about selling.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm sure.

MS. DOMINGO: So I say, "I don't sell." And I guess maybe — I don't price my hat. So it's easier to just — I don't sell — just use them as design hats, make them available for whomever that are interested in learning to weave the design.

MS. RIEDEL: So they become teaching tools. They're teaching tools, primarily, these hats. They travel with you and you show people the different forms and patterns that are possible.

MS. DOMINGO: We take different ones different times. You know, it's not the whole batch that goes.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: It's just different ones. It depends on what it is. And I guess, like I said, I just never, never thought of selling hats. I don't, you know, feel that I'm weaving to selling. I weave because I enjoy the weaving. And the hat will probably go to an auction. I've definite — you know, been woven on a friend's ipu, and if she wants —

MS. RIEDEL: The mold, or the form.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and if she wants a hat, you know, that's fine, she can have it. And I've mentioned it to her and she says, no, no, she doesn't want a hat. She just wants to see how the hat looks on her grandmother's hat form. So she asks me to weave a hat on her grandmother's hat form. So if she doesn't want it, then I'll just give this to Kamehameha Schools for their auction in July. They have one coming up.

MS. RIEDEL: You said something on the phone that I thought was interesting when we first talked about this selling or not selling hats, and you said that it would be hard to know how to price them, and that by putting them at someplace like an auction, someone can choose —

MS. DOMINGO: That's right.

MS. RIEDEL: — their own hat.

MS. DOMINGO: That's right.

MS. RIEDEL: And it seems to be that there's a very strong sense of a hat belongs to a certain person.

MS. DOMINGO: That's right, and I definitely believe that. I've woven hats at festivals, completed a hat. Auntie Pele from Kau will come by, "Oh, Baby, let me try this hat." And I look at Kilohana. She puts it on her head. It's her hat. It's her hat.

And I look again at Kilohana. He agrees. "Oh, how much is this hat? Let me buy this hat from you." "Auntie, you can have this hat." And, you know, "No, I pay for this hat." "No, it's your hat, Auntie. You can have this hat." And I feel good.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, I don't have to put a price on it. And that's one thing about going in the direction of auctions. I feel that, you know, if they can't afford to and they want it, they can bid for whatever. But that came from them and I didn't put a price on it.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And then, if it is their hat, they'll put it on; they'll know if it's their hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I encourage people to try it before they buy it —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — to be sure that that's their hat. "And if it is your hat, you will know it's your hat."

MS. RIEDEL: How do you know when it's someone's hat?

MS. DOMINGO: It just — it's their hat. It sits on their head, you know, and says, you know, this is my home. [Laughs.] And I like that part, that it's their hat.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems like there is a very important quality of gifting involved here. An important part of the process is giving it away.

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure.

MS. RIEDEL: No?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know. [Laughs.] I don't mind, you know, giving — maybe of bringing — you know, my parents would say, "The more you give, the more you receive." And it was better to give than to receive. So I don't know if maybe upbringing that I'm fine, you know, if I have to give.

I've had, yeah, incidences like that where it's their hat. A few times that we have been together and we have had a hat there, and it's going to go for auction, and somebody will come and pick it up and put it on. Oh, my gosh. And usually Kilohana is with me, and we both look at each other and know that that's their hat.

So he'll mention it to whomever — especially if they ask how much they want to buy — "You know, it's going to be up there in auction. Whatever you feel it's worth, you know, bid for it." And they do, and they end up with the hat. We've had that happen quite often.

MS. RIEDEL: That is very interesting, different than the usual gallery experience.

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] Are you an artist?

MS. RIEDEL: I've worked in a lot of different art media, to be sure, but I write primarily. I used to work in ceramics for years and years and years.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: So I have a great appreciation for form and technique —

MS. DOMINGO: It must be — yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: — and the time involved.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Time.

MS. RIEDEL: And what goes into making the piece, and clearly that's very significant, the way you work. Is that true? Would you say so? Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] Yes, that's true.

MS. RIEDEL: Are all the hats woven on forms — mostly?

MS. DOMINGO: Most of them, I would say. It would depend on the style, yeah, but most of them are done in forms, like grandma's hat up here.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure if it is on the form because it seems like the basket, you know, it's four, four, four, four.

MS. RIEDEL: It's a very unusual hat because it has that ripple brim.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: It has all those — oh, it's all open all around to the parts of the crown and the brim. What did you call that style, piko piko?

MS. DOMINGO: Puka puka [ph].

MS. RIEDEL: Puka puka. Okay. [They laugh.] And that hat was your grandmother's?

MS. DOMINGO: No, my mom.

MS. RIEDEL: Your mother's.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: She made that hat.

MS. DOMINGO: She made that hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. It's very lacy and open and —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — very feminine.

MS. DOMINGO: And at that time, that period, that was the style of hats.

We have, I think, Auntie Westmoreland — I think she's passed on, but she used to offer us lessons at the Ka Ulu Lauhala conference, that style.

MS. RIEDEL: How to make that style.

MS. DOMINGO: It wasn't more the hat as much as it was barrette — it was the barrette concept.



MS. RIEDEL: Braiding?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, that style.

MS. RIEDEL: So it's more of a braiding than a weaving.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, with a pin?

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: B-A-R-R-E-T-T-E.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, like a barrette.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: She offered that for lessons.

MS. RIEDEL: That's called a barrette?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it's a style.

MS. RIEDEL: Style, Okay. And she would offer that style, the barrette style.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Barrette, yes, with that —

MS. RIEDEL: The puka puka?

MS. DOMINGO: The puka puka.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. She was a genius — all kinds.

MS. RIEDEL: Have you made that style too?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Not yet.

MS. DOMINGO: Not yet. Not yet.

MS. RIEDEL: It looks like it would be very different to make a brim that ripples like that as opposed to the narrower straight — narrower wide brim.

MS. DOMINGO: I'm thinking, yeah. Cousin Gladys — sometimes just as a trick — like as kumu, as teachers, they have what we call kumu trick.

Sometimes when a student has done an error, and you know that you've done an error, but you know that — but it's still okay — and if you go and show it to auntie folks, and she'll say, "Oh, yeah, right here." And she'll, whatever, and it's all corrected. "What did you do?" She'll say, "That's kumu trick. Only kumu can do that." [They laugh.] Oh, by golly. So I used to watch those kumu tricks.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right. Did you learn?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh. Can you do them?

MS. DOMINGO: Occasionally, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: And it's just a matter of looking at, you know, where you are and what the situation is at the time. And, oh, there it is; then you'll see it. But as students, you know, you don't notice those little things because it's all basic.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So it just takes a while. So I've shared — like with halau at Seattle —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — oh, you know, whatever, whatever, whatever. "Kumu, I need a kumu trick." [Laughs.] "Okay, now remember, only kumu can do that. You cannot do that."

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] Not yet.

MS. DOMINGO: Not yet, yes. But, oh, they are masters. Auntie folks are masters.

MS. RIEDEL: I want to talk a little bit more about your — would you call that an apprenticeship that you did with Auntie Gladys?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I would think so. And so, over that period of a year, maybe a little more, do you have any idea how many hats you made? I mean, you had a show of them afterwards. So were there six? Were there 12?

MS. DOMINGO: Lots.

MS. RIEDEL: More than 12.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Twenty?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: You made 20 hats or more in a year?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, the first year Ka Ulu Lauhala to the second year. Or, say, maybe it was September-August, thereabouts. And Auntie asked how many hats lauhala. And I was with somebody — I think one of the boys — and I have no idea. And then the answer was there's number 16 already.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So, I know that in a year, yeah, I've made 20.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Like I said, I was so elated; I was so happy that I learned. The boys weave — I'd finish one hat. The boys would — Kilohana probably had number seven, I would say off the top of my head.

One of them would come by, "Oh, Mom." "Yes?" "Can I have it?" "Well, sure." That's his hat. I'd say, "Yes, you can have it." "I can have it?" "Yes, you can have it." It's good. So they would try to always be around when —

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] When you were finishing up. Did it have to be finished before someone could ask for it?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Well, usually it was. You know, if it was at this stage, not finished, yeah. And I don't know that I've had a request, "Well, can I have that — have when it's finished?" I think if I did get the request I would try to discourage the person —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — because I think it would take me even longer to finish —

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.]

MS. DOMINGO: Because —

MS. RIEDEL: Someone's waiting.

MS. DOMINGO: — I have to finish.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I found that I don't feel comfortable when I have to finish. So even for the auctions, silent auctions, before I commit it I said that I would — "I know I have a hat that can go if I'm not finished."

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: So I know I'm Okay. But if this was finished, and it — you know, I thought of it for going, Okay. And I still have a hat, you know, if something else comes up.

MS. RIEDEL: Exactly, one in reserve.

During that apprenticeship with Auntie Gladys, would she say, Okay, make a piko alili hat or make a niho niho hat, and that would be your assignment? Were you working primarily on patterns?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. It wasn't per se nihoneho. You know, she would say, "Make some kind of a pattern." And then she will start me off on moe over 5, whatever ladder, you know, to give me an idea of what the design would be like. And I would try to get started. "Okay, now let's look at the other one." And then look at the other. "Okay, now let's do this," you know, something else — centipede.

MS. RIEDEL: Centipede.

MS. DOMINGO: Centipede.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: "Okay, moe over 3," maybe. "Okay." And then whatever the directions. And when she came back, it would have been finished. It would have been done. Or the eke. I didn't bring the eke. Eke is backwards — you know, moe over 3/1 — next one but weaving backwards.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: That's eke.

MS. RIEDEL: And she taught you that as well.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And as far as she was concerned, whatever the shape of the hat, that was your choice.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: What she was teaching you was the pattern.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: So if you wanted to make rounded top of flat top, wide brim, narrow brim, that's all your choice.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I understand that I am one of the few that would do the design on both the brim and the crown.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. That's true actually. When I think of the hats —

MS. DOMINGO: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: — that I've seen so far at the Bishop Museum, that big exhibit of hats —

MS. DOMINGO: It's just on the top.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Or on the crown, but, you're right, not on all.

MS. DOMINGO: But not — yeah. And both Cousin Lily, she said, "It's harder when you do on the rim." I said, "Well, I'm just thinking of matching the top with the bottom. That's why I do it." She would discourage me: "It's harder when you do that." But you have to understand that I'm one of the few that do it on the brim and the crown.

MS. RIEDEL: And why do you do that?

MS. DOMINGO: I have — I said, like, matching.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I guess I've always just felt that if, you know, there was one up here, that they would match if there was one on the bottom. You know, I just carried that concept. Of course I've done it something like Dad's hat here. You know this is piko alili here and there.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I just continued —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — on the bottom here. So, I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: When did you start to do the two-tone? "Anoni" is how you call it, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: When I became a student for Cousin Gladys.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, because that's what she was known for too was the two-tone, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: Because — yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. That's what she learned from her grandmother.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. DOMINGO: And Auntie Elizabeth was not very keen at that time for Auntie to teach anoni —

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Why is that?

MS. DOMINGO: She felt that — I guess her thoughts were to just learn to weave the hats one color. She wasn't very keen on two colors. So after a while — I think, like, now — I think now it's all right for the anoni lessons to be offered.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that because she wanted to keep it secret?

MS. DOMINGO: No. You mean Auntie —

MS. RIEDEL: Auntie Elizabeth.

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Why didn't she want it to be taught?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, she wasn't into weaving the two-tone. Her weaving was usually just the one color. So I'm thinking that, you know, she felt that that was the basic of learning to weave hats, which was the idea of Ka Ulu Lauhala was, learning to weave hats, or bracelets, whatever, baskets. And maybe she just wanted to keep it all uniform. I'm not sure.

MS. RIEDEL: And were there patterns in the single-tone hats as well; they were just more subtle?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't usually notice that much patterns.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I do. I put patterns, you know, in single tones. Yes, I do. I put patterns —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. And some you can see them.

MS. DOMINGO: But, yes — but I think generally, no, I don't think they — I don't think they do. So I believe that's why Auntie didn't want that, because I think they do generally.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that because she was trying to keep with what traditionally had been done?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm wondering if that's why, you know, or maybe she just never wove the anoni. I have no idea.

MS. RIEDEL: Did she mind that Auntie Grace was doing that and teaching it?

MS. DOMINGO: No, she didn't mind.

MS. RIEDEL: She just didn't want to do it herself.

MS. DOMINGO: And, you know, she would — Auntie would do — somebody would ask, you know, if she would — can Auntie just show her one pattern, one of the patterns. And they had already — were ready to go into a pattern. So Auntie would show them.

And I guess maybe that's also why I was concerned that there wasn't anything to show the different designs, look at the hats, design hats. So most — well, I guess all of the design hats I've just kept.

MS. RIEDEL: And so, when did you begin to experiment yourself? You went through a period of time where Auntie Gladys was teaching you patterns and things that she knew how to do that she had learned, but at some point you began to experiment yourself, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know when, but I think this hat was one of the first ones.

MS. RIEDEL: That you made for your husband, the piko —

MS. DOMINGO: I found — well, because of experience with the figure 8 —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Yes. Yes. Let's talk about that. I don't think we've talked about that on the disc yet.

MS. DOMINGO: It dawned on me that — actually it's the piko that determined the pattern. And so I tried and would get something else.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. So the figure 8 was something that had been done traditionally only on purses —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and you decided to do it on a hat.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And then it made the hat — I'll let you tell the story. It made the first hat larger —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and so you decided to take the gauge of the strips narrower.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, strip it smaller. And she came out perfect. And so that's when, you know, I think it really dawned on me that the piko again determined the design. And you can do it like how Margaret does hers up here. You know, she — and it's because of the piko, the way it's — Margaret —

MS. RIEDEL: So much depends on how it starts.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, yes.

MS. DOMINGO: She just puts a tool in the center and she gets — and this is expert —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, absolutely. And that's a very unusual —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — asymmetrical design.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, that's very unusual.

MS. DOMINGO: And it was just fine, so we do that.

MS. RIEDEL: Is there a name for that?

MS. DOMINGO: I have no idea.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. I'll have to try and take some photos.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. I don't know. But this is Margaret. This is Margaret. She made these hats for the boys. Do you see; it's how you set —

MS. RIEDEL: So it's how the piko — how it starts determines the rest of the hat.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, especially if you have it with a design. She twists it there. She twists it there. And Margaret will have lots of this — I mean, these — among this style. When you see a hat like that you know who it's from. Beautiful.

Lynn has done — Lynn and Margaret — the recent hat is the Eddie Kamae hat. It's like a golfer's cap.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I finished one of those. My visor part is kind of off-center. [Laughs.] And that's from one of the retreats. You know, "Get this ready, Lehua." And then the son that's in Seattle, he enjoys golfing. So I thought, oh, I will do him a golfer's cap, but it didn't come out so good. [Laughs.] I'm so glad I didn't mention it.

MS. RIEDEL: I'd like to talk about your work with Auntie Elizabeth and the makaloa and the botanical garden. Would you like to do that this afternoon or would you like to talk about — start with that tomorrow?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, we can do it tomorrow.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: So shall we call it a day today and then we can pick it up again tomorrow?

MS. DOMINGO: It's up to you. How much time do we have?

MS. RIEDEL: Let me pause this.

[Audio break.]

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art with Lehua Domingo at her son Kilohana Domingo's home in Naalehu, Hawaii on April 25th, 2010. This is Disc number 4.

Good morning.

KATHERINE DOMINGO: Good morning.

MS. RIEDEL: We're going to — we're going to go slowly today and see how your voice holds out.

So, let's start this morning with a conversation about your experience in the makaloa project. I looked that up — we made reference to it yesterday — and it was — it was with the USGS.

It was the U.S. Geological Survey grant, and it was growing makaloa in constructed wetlands for weaving and treating wastewater at the Greenwell Gardens — Greenwell Botanical Gardens — Ethnobotanical Gardens, in conjunction with the Bishop Museum and a Hawaiian cultural institution, I think.

And that — Auntie Elizabeth Lee was working on that project. And it was 1993, I believe, 1995, somewhere in the '90s.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, in that area.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Yes, I think the report came out in 2001. So, would you explain what you did as part of that project and what the —

MS. DOMINGO: I was one of the participants selected to be involved in reviving the weaving portion of makaloa. We were volunteers, and at the time I was working at Pu'uuhonua, the national park at Honaunau. So I arranged with the park to be able to do it on park time.

And it would benefit the park —

[Microphone feedback.]

MS. RIEDEL: It's fine.

MS. DOMINGO: — in that I would catalogue what we were doing. There's no information that's written that's available on makaloa, so it was a large asset for the park to have that type of information.

And so I logged a journal concept of what we did, where we went, and also tried to do a grid on the size of the makaloa. Pu'uuhonua — the ponds at Pu'uuhonua has makaloa growing in them already. And so it was an even added benefit for the park to have that information available. And so, that's my involvement.

We were asked to weave — we gathered the makaloa — went to Kanaha Ponds on Maui and gathered the makaloa from the ponds and brought it home to Kailua-Kona, washed them and then dried them out on the lava rocks down at — oh, it's now known as the Natural Energy Lab. That's the road leading to the Natural Energy Lab. And that's where we worked, those ponds nearby. There were about 12 of us that worked with Auntie.

After we dried them, we brought them up to Greenwell Gardens, and they had a drying shed up there also. So the dried makaloa was left there and we were each given a bundle to work with. The requirement was to fulfill a mat 12-by-12, and a smaller piece about 4-by-4 for the Bishop Museum.

And I also did a 12-by-12 and a 4-by-4 for Pu'uuhonua, the national park in Honaunau, to be included with the material that I was able to gather during that — I don't know if you would call it a workshop, but it was experiments working with makaloa.

I've been able to weave a few hats. The first hats haven't held up very well. They seem to be mildewed. And the consensus was that there was still moisture in the makaloa. Not all of it was removed. The makaloa hat that I now have is about — say, maybe about a year-and-a-half, two years now.

MS. RIEDEL: This is the one we photographed that we're looking at. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And that's the one we photographed.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And she's been holding up very well.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: I have her here because she does well at Kilohana's home. And we're not sure; it may be because of the hat form. It's a wooden hat form.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Maybe that helps to retain the moisture so that it keeps the hat dry. She has been doing well, however, here. So we take her out on our demonstrations to show people what it's like to weave a makaloa hat, what she would look like.

MS. RIEDEL: And what — as a weaver, how do you find the makaloa in comparison to the lauhala?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I personally felt that the makaloa was very different to work with in comparison to the lauhala. The lauhala has a definite form. When you use a stripper for your one-fourth inch, your one-eighth inch, that's the exact width of your material —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — that you work with.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Whereas with the makaloa, because it's a reed —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — some are smaller and some are larger.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: And if your weaving is smaller, then you would have to strip the larger reeds —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — so that they become a uniform width.

And because the makaloa gives — and you know, she can slim down, she can expand by herself — it becomes an even challenge — even more a challenge to work with makaloa.

I felt that I couldn't rush to finish whatever, the hat or the mat that I was doing. I felt like I couldn't force the makaloa to work with me. I had to be patient and work with the makaloa. I don't know if that makes any sense.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, absolutely.

MS. DOMINGO: A big difference.

MS. RIEDEL: What did you feel — were there strengths to working with the makaloa? Were there reasons to work with it that made it seem a more desirable material? And if so, what were they? Or do you much prefer the lauhala?

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, I actually enjoy — I mentioned about the lauhala; the feel has a lot to do with it being a good lauhala leaf to work with. And the makaloa is the same concept. It has that good feeling to work with makaloa. I enjoyed it.

MS. RIEDEL: Have you worked with any other fibers?

MS. DOMINGO: I've worked with the palm, the loulu palm.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I encountered the same problems. They're not easy to work with. I tried to prepare my own loulu leaves. I didn't do a good job. The first few that I — leaves that I got, I was told how to clean it and how to prepare it, washing it out in the water then drying it out under the sun — out in the sun, and the leaves still mildewed on me.

So a hat that I completed was loulu [palm] that I got from Kaohu Seto at the gathering of the artists at HPA.

MS. RIEDEL: HBA?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, Hawaii Preparatory Academy in Waimea.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: It was a few years back, where local artists gathered on the campus and shared our crafts with each other.

MS. RIEDEL: The loulu, again, is palm?



MS. DOMINGO: Is palm, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Is it a particular kind of palm?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, it's a Hawaiian — well, what they call Hawaiian palm.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: You cannot — well, I've never experienced working with other palm leaves. They do the coconut leaves for making hats. I tried weaving with coconut leaves forever and making hats, but I didn't do a very good job. So —

MS. RIEDEL: The coconut leaves are much thicker, aren't they?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure — yes. And I didn't have an easy time. It took me — I was struggling, you know, to make a coconut hat. So I abandoned the idea. It was felt that because I was a weaver I could weave coconut hats, but I don't do a good job. So I've left that to those who do a better job than I.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you experiment ever with banana or with maidenhair ferns, some of the other things we were looking at in photos today?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So lauhala is really your preference.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And just moving back to the constructed wetlands project at the Greenwell garden, how long did you work on that?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, until the project was ended.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Was it a year or two years?

MS. DOMINGO: I would say — I would say maybe a year.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I don't think it was that long, although, you know, after it ended, I still would check on the makaloa. And then there were others on the staff who were interested in weaving bracelets with the makaloa, and the makaloa that we gathered from Pu'uohonua, it was short, but they still could be used for a purpose.

MS. RIEDEL: And that's problematic because normally you want, what, a fairly long —

MS. DOMINGO: Well, usually —

MS. RIEDEL: — 45 centimeters or 90 centimeters, something —

MS. DOMINGO: Usually, yes, for bracelets it would be nice if it's long.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Then you don't have to join.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But we made do with what we had.

MS. RIEDEL: The thing with the makaloa is it makes an extremely fine weave.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, very flexible, very pliable —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — very dense.

MS. DOMINGO: Very nice, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Very nice. Very nice to work with.

MS. RIEDEL: And the thing about makaloa is the supply. You know, now, today, there's makaloa on Molokai'i besides the Kanaha Ponds on Maui. There's makaloa also here. We still have a lot of ponds in Kona.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I've had an invitation to go down to Liliuokalani Garden — Liliuokalani down at Pawai in Kailua-Kona to gather makaloa. They have makaloa there, and they're willing, you know, for us to come and gather what we need to work with. It's just that there hasn't been the time.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. I think we mentioned this in passing yesterday, yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, to do this. So I've never continued.

This last hat is the balance that I had at my home. I didn't want, you know, after I'm gone, my children to look at this grass and not know what to do with it and just throw it away. So I thought I better use it and try to make something, and I did the hat and finished the hat.

MS. RIEDEL: The colors are different too than the lauhala, and the sheen.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: There's a little bit of a shine to it.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. It's a golden color. And yet some other hats that are from the makaloa, made from the makaloa, are white — white, white, white. And I've had friends who have gathered makaloa to use it for weaving and they've dried it on their dashboard of their car —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — and dried it in the sun. It turned white. But I understand they had the same problem with mildews.

MS. RIEDEL: So no matter how dry it gets, there's still something in the reed —

MS. DOMINGO: Apparently something we're not doing correctly. I'm thinking something we're not doing correctly. So there still needs to do some research —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — to work with makaloa. Every generation following us, somebody will pick it up. At least from the information we have left behind —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — they can start from there.

MS. RIEDEL: Some of the most famous makaloa mats came from Niihau. Is that correct?

MS. DOMINGO: That was my understanding as a child.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I used to hear my parents say that only the women from Niihau wove makaloa mats.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And my understanding was because the other islands didn't have makaloa. It only grew on Niihau. But when we started the project, the Greenwell project —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — we found makaloa was growing on this island —

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: — in our saltwater ponds, like the makaloa at Pu'uhonua. I was working there and didn't realize that makaloa was there.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So I became like — like, as somebody said, a keeper. I would always go down to check to see that they were doing okay, they were fine. They somehow didn't grow much taller than a foot or a foot-and-a-half in the ponds.

They were inside of the Pu'uhonua and on the outside of the large wall — ponds on the outside of the large wall. They were growing there too. So there was a quite a bit of makaloa there.

MS. RIEDEL: It sounds like there was nobody that you were aware of, or Auntie Grace or — sorry, Auntie Gladys or Auntie Elizabeth, on Niihau that still understood how they might have worked with makaloa. There was no one around who remembered the drying technique or what might have kept it from mildewing.

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure if that type of research was done by auntie folks before we really got involved, because we were like the weavers.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So I'm thinking the research was done by others. So I cannot answer that question.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

When did you begin teaching? And where have you taught? And how do those — how do those workshops or demonstrations come together? I know some have happened here on the Big Island and on the islands, and oftentimes they're associated with the national park — Volcanoes maybe, or Pu'uhonua. But you mentioned that you've also taught in Seattle and in New York.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, I've attended the Ka Ulu Lauhala conference at Kona since it first started, and always attended.

MS. RIEDEL: That's Auntie Elizabeth's —

MS. DOMINGO: That's Auntie Elizabeth's —

MS. RIEDEL: Auntie Elizabeth, right. Okay, thanks.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Always attended it as a student. And the main reason was that there was so many resource people — Cousin Gladys, Auntie Lily — Cousin Lily — Auntie Elizabeth, Auntie Esther Westmoreland. Oh, and some of them have passed on — Auntie Hannah Kawaauhau and her daughter.

There were many resource people, and they each had — they each had a lesson on working with lauhala. So each year I would request, you know, to work with a different kumu. It wasn't with the same kumu.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: It was always — I tried to always request a different kumu. I learned from Lynn Ham Young on Kaua'i on the piko purse. I learned from Margaret Lovett the cap.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, right, that we were talking about.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, from Auntie Josephine Fergerstom, the topless. And she even used the topless to do the lampshades.

So there were many, many lessons. And I always felt that, you know, even though I learned to do a hat, which was the object of my first attending because I wanted to learn to weave a hat from the start to the finish, to me there was always a lesson.

Every year I would learn — I would incorporate lessons to put them together to make something else. I incorporated the topless and the cap lesson from Margaret Lovett to do the visor.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I always felt there were many, many lessons, and that was the object. If we could learn the different lessons, use the ones that applied to us, and then share it with others, giving them these extra tips on how they could improve on their weaving. I never felt that I knew it all. I didn't feel like I knew it all.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. So you always attended as a student. When did —

MS. DOMINGO: I've always been a student.

MS. RIEDEL: But you have —

MS. DOMINGO: I've always said that I'm the student that never graduated — [laughter] — because Auntie Elizabeth would ask about thinking about being a teacher.

MS. RIEDEL: She would ask you?

MS. DOMINGO: She would ask if I would consider being a teacher, which was another objective of the conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: Those that learned could teach others.

MS. RIEDEL: Of course.

MS. DOMINGO: And I somehow felt that I couldn't really be a teacher in that conference because the teachers, the kumus, that were there were very confident of themselves. They knew what they were teaching. And I always felt that I still didn't know, so how can I teach others if I didn't know?

I've gone along with Kilohana — we've gone to New York, we've gone to Seattle, and we've done teaching. Kilohana has done feather lei-making and I've tried to teach some of them how to make the hats. The request apparently — it was always that they wanted to make hats.

We did the fans, and I've taught them to do the bracelets, baskets. And then they would ask to learn to do hats, and I would, you know, try to explain that the hat is not an easy task to learn, but they insisted.

MS. RIEDEL: And these were — was this associated with halau on the Mainland, or where were you going to teach?

MS. DOMINGO: Both halau and other than the halau in New York. It was halau and a mixture of some members of the halau. The halau that we're talking about is lomilomi, a massage halau. And we have been working with this massage halau for a number of years now.

MS. RIEDEL: Is this in Manhattan in New York City, or where is it in New York?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, we went to New York; we stayed in Manhattan because Kenny's brother lives in Manhattan, and he put us up during our visit there. We have been to the museum — American —

MS. RIEDEL: Museum of the American Indian, the Museum of Modern Art?

MS. DOMINGO: Art — yes, modern art.

MS. RIEDEL: The Metropolitan Museum?

MS. DOMINGO: And we had a display there, and also —

MS. RIEDEL: At the Museum of Modern Art?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, I believe that's where it was.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And American Natural History —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, American Natural History Museum.

MS. DOMINGO: We did a program there —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, up by Central Park?

MS. DOMINGO: — a demonstration program. Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Okay. And at the Metropolitan Museum at all, on Park Avenue, on the other side of the park? Okay. Probably the Natural History Museum then.

MS. DOMINGO: That's what it sounds like, like the Natural History.

MS. RIEDEL: On which street?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm sorry. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: We'll ask Kilohana.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: We'll confirm. Okay. But you did a demonstration there.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, demonstration at the two —

MS. RIEDEL: At two museums.

MS. DOMINGO: — two museums.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And it also incorporated a teaching class of both feather lei-making and lauhala weaving. And so it went on and off. We've been to Seattle and have classes there with the lomilomi halau.

MS. RIEDEL: And then do you bring materials with you? You bring the hala so they have something —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: How does this work? It must be very difficult to —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, very, very difficult.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: We started with the halau on Molokai, first lesson in hat-making. They only got to the piko, putting it together. There were 24 of them in the class. And I just had — because it's three sets of four is the rule of thumb for the piko, I divided all of them into groups of four so they would be working together.

So the just got through that first step of putting their piko together, but there was no time after that to continue.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: We had feather lei-making at that — fresh flower lei-making also during the time of the class for the hat weaving on Molokai.

But other than that, we've had classes here at Kilohana's twice a year where several of us weavers will come. And then the word goes out that we're here, and whoever wants to come in here stops by to learn.

We teach them from the tree because Kilohana has trees growing here. We go out to the trees so that they could learn what leaves are good leaves. If we don't have — if Kilohana's trees are not ready for us to work with the trees, then I'll usually come with a bundle of dried lauhala so that they can learn how to tell — determine good leaves from not good leaves. And I take them through the starting process before they start to weave.

We've held Christmas ornaments workshops here — Christmas ornaments, baskets. Lynn has done the piko purse. Auntie Gladys joins us — Cousin Gladys joins us. And she'll have bracelet for beginners. And then if

anybody wants to learn to do that, she'll get them started.

MS. RIEDEL: And how long does the conference go on for here?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, for here is usually Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and then we leave on Monday.

MS. RIEDEL: And anyone is welcome to come.

MS. DOMINGO: Anyone is welcome to come, yeah, to join us. And we usually have people from within the community, which objective — one of the other objectives was that we could get the community interested and maybe find new weavers that might be interested and go on further —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — to learn to do hat — one way of doing it. But I don't really have classes for — weaving classes. I hold them, you know, monthly or whichever. I prefer a one-on-one.

I had a gentleman from Waimea, Kimo, who met me in Hilo Hattie's one day, and I was wearing Dad's hat. And he asked me who wove the hat. I said, "I did." So he asked if I could teach him. I told him I wasn't a teacher, you know, that I just am learning. And he said, oh, he really wants to learn to make a hat for his wife.

So we talked story, and I found out that he was coming to Kona every week on Tuesday to attend literacy classes. And so I asked him if he wants to stop by my home. I don't — you know, I couldn't say that I would teach him, but I would share with him what I've learned and then perhaps he can learn to make a hat.

Kimo came for three years. He made three hats. His third hat was the anoni hat. And that was his goal. He completed the hat. His wife wears the hat today proudly. And he stands on the side also proudly because he made the hat for his wife.

Kimo is not well now. Kimo is a shell lei-maker, seed lei-maker — beautiful leis. He does beautiful leis. And I'm not sure if he still does his lei-making, but I understand he's on an oxygen tank. So occasionally I'll call and see how he's doing — "Okay, Auntie." He's fine. But I enjoy that kind of teaching.

MS. RIEDEL: So that's the way you prefer to work, one student at a time.

MS. DOMINGO: One, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Or one-on-one.

Have you done that many times, or does that happen frequently?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, Kimo was one, and then there was a lady that kept saying that she was coming, and she never did. It was the same thing. She wanted to do a feather lei. I kept telling Kilohana that she was coming but she never came.

And there's another lady here, Sojah, I just had. She wants a one-on-one. And just this morning — I've noticed my visit this time, Kilohana has been so interested in watching me weave. So I asked him this morning if he wanted to make a hat, and he said yes. So we checked our calendar and we're going to try and see if I can work with him and Sojah.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha. And that's exciting —

MS. DOMINGO: I'll try.

MS. RIEDEL: — because he's never made a hat, right? He does the feather leis, but has he made a hat too?

MS. DOMINGO: He has made a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, he's made one and now —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, he's made a hat.

MS. RIEDEL: — he'd like to make another.

MS. DOMINGO: He went to the first Ka Ulu Lauhala conference with me.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And they put him with hat-makers. He didn't know what he was doing.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, you mentioned that.

MS. DOMINGO: But I think because he was with me, they assumed that he could weave. And he started but had a hard time. And then Margaret helped him finish his hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So, yes, that's —

MS. RIEDEL: That's really a change too in the period of time from when you were younger, because primarily women were the weavers the last generation, yes?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, some of the best weavers today are men.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and that's — but that is a change, yes, or do you remember men weaving when you were younger?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm not sure about men, but in our research, you know, like there's some craft that the men did. And I'm thinking of feather, maybe. I may be wrong. But I don't recall about weaving.

There were canoe builders, made the images, woodcarvers, fishermen, of that concept. And maybe I'm — I don't know for certain.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know. I've never seen a man weave when I was a child —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — although Uncle Peter Park, he learned to weave when he was a child —

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, really?

MS. DOMINGO: — along with Auntie Lily — I mean Auntie Elizabeth Lee, and he was a teacher.

MS. RIEDEL: He was a teacher of weaving.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah, Okay. Interesting.

MS. DOMINGO: At Ka Ulu Lauhala conference.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And he made beautiful hats. Frank Masagatani —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — makes beautiful hats.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. And Frank —

MS. DOMINGO: And Michael.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, right. We were looking at his photos. Michael — what's his last name? Do you remember? I can look it up.

MS. DOMINGO: Michael — oh, not — that's Pohaku [Kahòohanohano]. Pohaku is —

MS. RIEDEL: I'm going to pause this for a minute.

[Audio break.]

MS. RIEDEL: Michael — sorry, what was it?

MS. DOMINGO: Michael is, now, Nahoopii, I believe.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. That sounds right.

MS. DOMINGO: And Pohaku is Kahòohanohano. Pohaku has a beautiful Hawaiian name.

MS. RIEDEL: What is his name?

MS. DOMINGO: I can't remember the entire name. Pohaku.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. I think we can look. It might be on the slide from the Bishop Museum.

MS. DOMINGO: Perhaps.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, he has beautiful work.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: A young man — gifted, great asset.

MS. RIEDEL: What changes have you seen in weaving over your lifetime?

MS. DOMINGO: I'm thinking that there's maybe styles.

MS. RIEDEL: We were talking about the — I think a couple of young women from Kauai, yes, who did the —

MS. DOMINGO: Men —

MS. RIEDEL: — pikos on the side of the hat. Is that right?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, and then the anoni today. 'Anoni, as I understand it, only a few people did this type of weaving, 'anoni weaving. Some kept secret their designs, so they didn't want to share it. And today, you know, it's open.

And so, I think the change — the biggest change is that 'anoni hats have really become popular.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: It used to be just the one color, but today you have a variety of — some of the styles, you know, that were forgotten have been revived. So you see the different styles available. I remember the holo lio.

A friend stopped by the house during one of Cousin Gladys's visits for our lesson. He had with him a hat form, an ipu, that had the top slim and just cut flat on the top. He didn't know what kind of ipu it was. His mom was a weaver but he had never seen that type of ipu before.

So he asked Cousin Gladys and she was elated. She knew what that ipu — what kind of hat was woven on that ipu.

MS. RIEDEL: She did?

MS. DOMINGO: And she took it home to — he gave it to her. She took it back to Honolulu, and I believe either took it to Bishop Museum because of its rarity —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — but at the same time she had a friend who does — who is a friend of lauhala weavers and does various hat forms —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — and tools.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: She shared with him that ipu and asked him if he could make more, because this one was going to the Bishop Museum.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.



MS. DOMINGO: And he did. And so that hat came out. Because of that ipu —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — the hat came out.

MS. RIEDEL: And does that hat have a name? Are you aware —

MS. DOMINGO: The hat is hololio.

MS. RIEDEL: Holo lio. Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So I didn't bring it.

MS. RIEDEL: That must have been very exciting.

MS. DOMINGO: It was. She was very excited. She was asked if she could weave a holo lio hat, but she didn't know how to weave it because there wasn't any ipu.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And as I understand it, like 15 years after their request, there's the ipu. She was able to fulfill that request. She was very excited.

MS. RIEDEL: Do your kumus — do Auntie Gladys and Auntie Elizabeth — did they sell their hats?

MS. DOMINGO: I think so.

MS. RIEDEL: I thought so too, but —

MS. DOMINGO: I never asked. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Is it common among the hat-makers, then, to sell their work, or is it very individual choice, whether one chooses to sell it or not?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I shouldn't be the one to answer that question. I never —

MS. RIEDEL: It's never discussed.

MS. DOMINGO: I just never discussed or never enquired, you know, if everybody sells their hats or not.

MS. RIEDEL: It's not part of a conference to figure out —

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] I guess.

MS. RIEDEL: — how to sell or to market the hats. That's not an important part it.

MS. DOMINGO: I guess maybe to me, you know —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — that I've never asked if they weave to sell, because I've heard of weavers who learn to weave a hat because they tried to buy a hat; they couldn't buy a hat because there weren't that many being sold.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So they learned so that they could sell.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But I cannot say if all the weavers sell their hats.

Myself as an example, I'm comfortable in — I enjoy weaving the hats. I'm comfortable in doing baskets also.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And I've never sold baskets but I volunteered at the park when they were looking for containers to put all of the bones into.

MS. RIEDEL: The bones?

MS. DOMINGO: At the park, yes, from the burials. And they wanted to remove them out of boxes. There was a period where it was felt that they wanted — with respect to our ancestors, we wanted to put their remains in baskets instead of putting them in boxes and putting them on shelves.

So the request went out to weavers, who would assist in making baskets so that they could use those as containers. And I volunteered then. I enjoyed doing the baskets.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: So, you know, I don't mind weaving baskets also or teaching doing baskets. I learned basket-weaving from Auntie Pikane Elizabeth Akana. She's passed on now.

But she could do those baskets like — I mean, she was very, very fast at weaving baskets. And she taught me her method, which I enjoy doing. And that's the method I teach others when I do basket-making workshop. I find it easier, simpler, versus —

MS. RIEDEL: Does the basket have the equivalent of a piko, a place where you — nothing like that at all?

MS. DOMINGO: No.

MS. RIEDEL: I didn't think so, but —

MS. DOMINGO: No. The importance of the basket is the corners.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, they're 4-by-4-by-4 or 4-by-6-by-4-by-6. That's the importance of the basket. Well, I shouldn't say the only importance, because if they're tall baskets, they can sway out of shape. So you need to be sure that you have them in alignment from the bottom to the top so that they are straight. But I enjoy the baskets also.

MS. RIEDEL: At what point did you begin to experiment and make your own designs? What is the balance between reviving traditional designs and then coming up with new designs?

MS. DOMINGO: On hats? You mean on hats?

MS. RIEDEL: On hats or in general.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I found out that with anoni, the piko could determine the style. And it depended on the placement of your strips, the brown and the white, for them to have — for you to have a certain kind of a design. And at times sometimes I would just try it to see what happens.

MS. RIEDEL: So this is where an artist could really experiment —

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — and begin to —

MS. DOMINGO: I feel —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: In fact, when I was first weaving, it was just a pretty color that's — because I just learned how to weave, I enjoyed weaving and I just wove.

But after I completed one hat and I had it on the floor, and my husband pointed my attention to the hat it looked like there were petals on the hat. It was plain-colored hat, but there on the floor it looked like she had petals. She reminded me of the plumeria flower with all of her petals all along the brim. And we both stood in awe, looking at the hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that due to the pattern of the weave?

MS. DOMINGO: I have no idea. Apparently, because now I have some sense of the placement of the brown and the white and the piko if I want this to happen.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I know that this will happen if I did this. And I guess it started way back then without my realizing it.

MS. RIEDEL: From the very start.

MS. DOMINGO: From the very start.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And that — I think that evening more I was inspired to learn to weave anoni from Cousin Gladys. She was the master. And so she shared all of these designs. Of course she shared with others also.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But I was thrilled that, you know, I was learning to do this type of weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: And is the pattern more significant to you than the form, than the shape of the hat in general, or does the pattern have a lot to do with the form? Does the pattern — you think about a particular pattern and how it will work with a rounded top or a flat?

MS. DOMINGO: I think — it's said that all weavers have a signature, which means that I can look at this hat and I know that that's Suzi's hat. I can look at that hat and say that that's Margaret's hat. They can look at my hats and they'll say, "That's Lehua's hat."

And I'm not sure — I don't think it's the design. It's the weave. And for myself, I find that I've tended to weave more the style that I often feel comfortable with is the flat top —

MS. RIEDEL: The flat top.

MS. DOMINGO: — versus the one —

MS. RIEDEL: The rounded.

MS. DOMINGO: — rounded one. And maybe — you know, you're looking at Margaret's two hats there. Can you see her style?

MS. RIEDEL: I can see elements of it.

MS. DOMINGO: Do they look —

MS. RIEDEL: I mean, if you've lined them all up in a row — [laughter] — I don't know that I would be able to distinguish yet one from another.

So it sounds —

MS. DOMINGO: Short brim.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, definitely the short brim. Oh, and that's pretty much exclusively what she does is the short brim?

MS. DOMINGO: Usually, yeah, that's her style. And then with Susie, yeah, these two hats are Susie's hats.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. Much broader brim.

MS. DOMINGO: Much broader brim.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems to have the ridge down the center. Yes. But when I look at your hats, there's a lot more variety in them. They have the flat top for the most part but then there's a lot of variety. For example, the one that's your very own hat, that looks different to me significantly than the hat you just made from 2009 —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — or Kilohana's hat. So there's a lot of variety. And the hats that we had laid out yesterday, they felt quite different, some of them.

MS. DOMINGO: [Laughs.] So I guess it doesn't matter on the style.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, you did mention yesterday that you like to weave very detailed, very small work, and that

certainly could be one way that one would distinguish your work from someone else's.

MS. DOMINGO: And I find that — I find that as a challenge.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: The smaller, I'm even more inspired. I have — you know, Cousin Lily will say, "Oh, that's dangerous," because it takes longer, but I guess because, you know —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — I'm not making the hats to sell; I make them because I want to make them, then I don't feel that stress. It's fine with me if it takes longer.

MS. RIEDEL: It's the challenge of making exactly what you'd like to make.

MS. DOMINGO: I guess. And I'm not sure about the other weavers, but, you know, when I'm thinking of a hat, sometimes I'm thinking, oh, maybe I'll do one like this. And I don't want to do — I find that I don't care too much for repetition. I want to try one little bit something different. I want to put one brown in there and just give her a swirl, or whichever — you know, that concept —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — so that she is — so you can say, "That's my hat."

MS. RIEDEL: And before you start, do you have a sense of exactly how it's going to come out, the design and the form are clear, the pattern are clear in your mind before you start? Or does it evolve as you work?

MS. DOMINGO: Sometimes I start with a thought, and then sometimes, no, I don't think so. Then I'll change my mind. So it depends. It depends I guess on how you feel and how the whole weaving goes.

MS. RIEDEL: Can you make adjustments as you're working or do you have to go back and take things out and start again?

MS. DOMINGO: If I know — I don't think that I've come to that situation. Once I've decided what, I'll just go on and finish it. You know, if I felt that, oh, I should have done something else, well, that's all right; finish this one first, then start the next one and do that. You know, I'll get that feeling. But, no, I don't adjust.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: I just, what we say, go forward. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Move forward.

And that leads, actually, to another question, which is where do you get the ideas for the next hat? Does one hat suggest the next, suggest the next, or do you see other types of weaving that suggest ideas for a hat you'd like to make? How do you decide? Where do the ideas for the hats come from?

MS. DOMINGO: I look — I fan through — I have books. And sometimes I want to do something different, and I'll look through the books. I have books that have flax designs from New Zealand.

MS. RIEDEL: From New Zealand?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Ah.

MS. DOMINGO: They have pictures of their various designs of fur or — there's a story behind their designs usually.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. DOMINGO: And I don't really pick a design, but it gives me some kind of an idea maybe I can incorporate, because I'm thinking that, you know, it's their culture. And when you read about that design family, it speaks of family or there's some kind of story behind all of them — most of them. Some are known.

But I don't really look at them to use something from the book but to get an idea of —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — what I can do. And then I would have to, you know, understand that I can weave it so that it comes out — [inaudible]. Or I don't know that I've really looked at — well, sometimes Margaret's hats — I'll ask Margaret, "Margaret, how did you do that design," and she'll —

[Audio break.]

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art with Lehua Domingo at her son's home in Naalehu, Hawaii on April 25th, 2010. This is Disc number 5.

Lehua, we were talking about where your ideas come from when the last disc ended, and you were mentioning Margaret Lovett and her piko, and asking her, "How did you do that design?"

KATHERINE DOMINGO: I think that's a connection the weavers had that's a good connection —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — because of the sharing. You can always ask a question and they'll tell you, you know, whatever.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that true for pretty much all the weavers today, because it didn't used to be, right?

MS. DOMINGO: I think so.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, at least the group that I'm with.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Margaret and Lynn will come up with — they'll do a type of hat, and we'll all get involved, we'll all try to make one of those hats.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: So it is — you know, I think it's a good rapport that we're able to do that. I guess it's like family.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Not being competitive.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, we share. We love what we're doing. And I think that goes first, you know. That gives us a good showing to others. You know, these are ladies that are willing to help you whatever your question is, if we can.

If I cannot, I can go to you, you know, and ask just a question I cannot answer. And that's fine. It doesn't mean that I don't know. It's just that I need a little help over here. We work together and I think it works out nicely.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems like there is a very important — the community, the sense of community and family, is an important part of making hats. I know you said you work sometimes on your own as well, but the community is significant in the process.

MS. DOMINGO: And maybe it's because of our heritage. You know, that's how we grew up. In fact, you know, I say today some of our problems are because the neighbors don't know each other. They should know each other, and then we can help each other, you know, when you need help.

They're not at home and, you know, they will come across the street and say, "We're not going to be home for the week. You can have our newspaper." You know, that concept. In the meantime, we know they're not going to be home; we kind of watch out for their house.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Right.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, in growing up in a village, a fishing village, we all were family. We were different last names; we're still family.

If my mom and dad, you know, were kind of tied up and I was at Auntie's house and, you know, it's time to have supper or whatever, they'll make me supper. They're not going to tell me, "You better go home to eat." That's fine. And it was polite. It was polite to, you know, ask the visitor to come, "Come sit down and eat with us."

That was important. But that's the type of feeling I think we have here, and maybe because we grew up like that, that, you know, we know whichever — you know, we can talk openly and help each other.

It was a good sense, and I think it's all part of our heritage, all a part of being who we are. It's a part of — to be sure that, you know, whomever is okay and everything that they need to be helped — whichever, we go and help. If we can, we go and help — watching each other's children, discipline.

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] Plenty of that.

MS. DOMINGO: Plenty of that. Plenty of that. "You must have been naughty." [They laugh.] "For her to do that, you must have been naughty." "Oh, no, no, no." Then you're better.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

Do you think of religion or spirituality in some form playing a role in your work?

MS. DOMINGO: I think for when we gather the leaves —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — the tree, it's important to thank the Lord for making — that we can go and we have a tree to go gather from, take care of the tree. I learned that if you take care of your tree, your tree will take care of you, provide you with your leaves, however much you want.

I used to have a big demand, request for weavers that need leaves. And I have trees in my yard, so I'm trying — because to do, you know, just a few rolls and offer them for Ulu Lauhala conference, a way of them, you know, making money for the club, additional funds for the club. So I've tried to see if I could, you know, help others get the leaves into rolls. It's a hard job to do that. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. So you would gather and prepare the leaves and then they would be sold at a benefit for the club? That's a lot of work.

MS. DOMINGO: It's a lot of work but, you know, maybe one day they're going to help me if I would need it. They would — they would come and help me, so — I guess my mom's folks always said that, you know: "Be thankful for what you have. The more you give, the more you receive." [Speaks in Hawaiian.] "Don't grumble. If you're going to grumble, don't give in" — [laughter] — which makes sense.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, religion is very important in daily life. In whatever you are doing, you ought to be thankful.

MS. RIEDEL: And do you have those thoughts as you're weaving too? I was talking with another artist in Arizona, a ceramic artist, and he's a mechanical engineer. He's also a Hopi Indian. And he was saying that when he works, he prays. He prays as he works. That's just a part of his process. And do you have any sort of sense like that, or, no, it's more related to the trade?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, it's just — I guess throughout, yeah. When you start what you're doing, you remember that the Lord is with you. If you do good, He'll do good to you. [Laughs.] But, yeah, I don't have any kind of a ritual or whichever, just have respect.

MS. RIEDEL: When you say take care of the tree, is there anything in particular that needs to be done to maintain the tree?

MS. DOMINGO: We teach potential weavers what we learn, and I learned that, oh, when you go out to the tree to gather leaves, clean the whole tree. And if you're not going to use all of the leaves, put it in rolls, put it away, and then just have available what you're going to use, because the next time it ripens, they're all going to be good leaves.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha. I see.

MS. DOMINGO: So we do that. And then grandma folks and mom folks says to — the rubbish on the ground, put it up towards the tree for mulch so that it gets energy, goes back into the tree. And so all of your rubbish, you rake it up towards the tree. So you take care of the tree.

MS. RIEDEL: How many trees do you have?

MS. DOMINGO: At home I have three trees that I work with now. I have two trees extra that — one tree is enough.

MS. RIEDEL: One tree is — sorry?

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: What is it?

MS. DOMINGO: One tree is more than ample for a weaver.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I see.

MS. DOMINGO: So I don't need five trees.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I mean, that means you have to go and clean all the trees.

MS. RIEDEL: So you're responsible for taking care of all those trees.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, I just take care of two in particular. The third tree I've offered to the Seattle halau. I'm getting on in years, and by offering them the leaves, they are helping me clean my trees. So last year they came and — it's a new tree. You know, it's not an old tree. It's a new tree.

MS. RIEDEL: And that would be — what's a new tree? How many years old would that be?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, it's about 10 years.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: Or maybe it's just 12. Dad's been gone about 10 years. But she's where — about 10 years then they're ready to be harvested. Three years for weaving.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: And so last year they stopped by the house. I worked with them for a little while. And then they came up to the house and cleaned the tree. So the next time when they come back, the leaves — they can have the leaves.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. And do they come maybe once a year?

MS. DOMINGO: Once a year.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that something you have to do?

MS. DOMINGO: Once a year, August-September. We used to come here and then go to Honaunau to gather the leaves and bring the leaves up here. And then we would clean them, get it into rolls for them to ship it home, send it home by mail.

But last year they stayed down at Kailua and came up the road and picked me up. And I stayed with them two or three evenings and helped them as much as we could so they could get those leaves sent home, and then they can continue, because they were a massage halau.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Lomi lomi. Their kumu introduces them to the Hawaiian culture in different aspects to help them with the performance of the halau. There were different types of lomi that they learned too. So they learned Hawaiian history and then get to visit the different areas and pay respects.

You know, we believe that, you know, their coming like that, they're performing a Hawaiian concept, so to be respectful to our ancestors and the temples, they go to visit temples, offer a ho'okupu, an offering. It would help them with their learning.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you think of your work as having a kind of environmental commentary?

MS. DOMINGO: As an example?

MS. RIEDEL: Environmental commentary, making a statement about natural resources, about respect for the Earth.

MS. DOMINGO: I think it directly does, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I would think so.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: I wondered if you thought so.

MS. DOMINGO: I guess not conscious of it —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — but I think just because we're doing it, we do it with that in mind without realizing that we are being environmental conscious.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: You know, it's just that that's how we learn. And, you know, our people were very respectful of the land — the land, the ocean and each other. And so I guess it's instilled in us that when we do, you know, gather from the land in a respectful way — you know, not wasteful —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — just gather what we need. And the same thing when you gather to the leis, just gather what you need so the next time you go back there's plenty more.

So I think indirectly, yeah. You're not conscious of it but it's a part of our upbringing.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: We do it without thinking about it.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes, it just comes naturally. I think it doesn't matter if it's for the land, from the ocean. You just gather what you need and then — and you always have — tomorrow you always have —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — the fish, you know, so that they're there. When one gets certain types of fish —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — you knew you would be able to get them. I mean, it's what I learned as a child: Be respectful of our resources. If not, we're not going to have anything left.

MS. RIEDEL: Have your sources of inspiration changed over the years; what inspires you to work, what inspires you to keep working?

MS. DOMINGO: Enjoyment. [They laugh.] I don't know that I need inspired. I just enjoy doing it. I have a friend, he said, "Oh, Auntie, you remind me so much of my mom." I said, "Why?" "Every time I see you, you're weaving."

And if I'm going to baby-sit, if we're going out to the beach or to the park, I'm taking my weaving. I'm sitting on the table there while the kids are playing basketball. I'm weaving. I enjoy it. I don't know — I mean, you know, I don't have to weave —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — but I take her along with me — brought her along with me here.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.



MS. DOMINGO: I don't know that I could go without bringing along my weaving. Sometimes I'll just take strips, like if I'm going to Honolulu. And I've taken a hat, just some strips of lauhala, and maybe I can make a bracelet in the hotel room or whichever when I'm not doing anything. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: What did you do before you were weaving? Do you remember?

MS. DOMINGO: I think maybe because we had our family there were many other things that needed our attention. Our children were growing up. They needed to have their ears pulled, behind warmed. We had the farm.

Then my parents were living and I tried to take care of my parents, brought them up from the beach to come and stay with me. I thought television and live up, you know, near to whatever — I don't know if we had McDonald's at that time, but — until one day my mom sat both of us down, my husband and myself, and with my dad, and told us that they wanted to go back home.

They missed the ocean. They missed the smell of the ocean, sound of the waves. It wasn't that they didn't appreciate — you know, they had TV, watched TV, and the grandchildren are right here. They don't have to come and get the grandchildren, take them down to the beach with them. They wanted to go home, so they went home.

And I think you cannot take your parents away. I tried to take them away, but they were fine at the beach. My mom passed away first, and then my dad. Our oldest daughter stayed with our dad. He was about — on in years, and I think he was in his 80s. So she went down to stay with him with her family, and she took care of him.

MS. RIEDEL: So you didn't have to worry; they were well cared for and they were where they wanted to be, yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: She took good care of him. And I looked at the move as an asset also for her family because they didn't have electricity. They lived with lamps. So the boys had to fill the lamps with kerosene, clean the chimneys. The girls had to wash clothes by hand.

MS. RIEDEL: My goodness.

MS. DOMINGO: Everything — most of the things I did as a child.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: I walked to school, but they were fortunate enough where their dad worked up the road, so they got a ride up the road to school. [They laugh.] But I thought, oh, what an asset these children have, because if they ever come to a period where, you know, they don't have the modern necessities of the electric light, they knew what to do.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: So I thought they were in — same thing with the girls, you know. They don't have a washing machine, they knew how to wash clothes. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: In fact, we still have — we still dry our clothes out in the sun today. Those dryers take so much energy.

MS. RIEDEL: And it smells so good when they dry outside anyway.

MS. DOMINGO: So I dry my clothes outside. And now this oldest daughter stays with me. Her children are all grown, but she stays with me and she's going to school to become a nurse. She just got on the list of the availability for the nursing program. It's so long that she wasn't sure if she would get into the program.

You know, they have slots I believe only for eight or 10 of them. And on the day we left to go on our trip, she called and said she was selected. She was — there was nobody at home for her to tell her good news.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: She should have called her brother.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: "Oh, I just could think of you." [Laughs.] She was so happy.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: So she graduates liberal arts this semester and then will start the nursing program.

MS. RIEDEL: Do any of your children or your grandchildren weave? I know we talked about Kilohana —

MS. DOMINGO: Kilohana. I have a son who does, and Shane — Shane can teach. He's helped us with classes we held for the halau — lomilomi halau, one of the sessions we had here in Kona. He taught them the bracelet class. He's taught the fan class. He started to weave a hat. He has his weaving on the block. He's ready to go from there. I'm just waiting for his call.

But he does baskets. He weaves baskets. I think he started weaving way before Kilohana took interest, little and little things. But, yes. He doesn't do it — he does it when he wants to.

He sells his bracelets. In fact, sometimes he's at the school. He works at the Ho'okena School. And sometimes the teachers would ask him if he has the bracelets during Christmas, or whichever, so he'll make some and then he'll get it ready for that. But other than that, no, nobody else.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you think of yourself as part of a particular tradition, a Hawaiian tradition or a Kona tradition, an international tradition? Do you think of it in those terms?

MS. DOMINGO: Tradition — maybe Hawaiian tradition more, because I think I try very — I try to share as much of the lessons I learned as a child, not only with my children but with the grandchildren.

The great-grandchildren are a little hard to reach at times. And I'm not sure if because of it's today's world where all electronics concept. I'm not sure if that's why the hearing — they can turn it on, turn it off much faster I believe than — I think I could do that too, turn it off, turn it on if I wanted to hear my mom. If I didn't want to hear her, I could turn it off.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: But I think they do it oftener. Then at times you have to kind of set them — [inaudible].

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And he'll chuckle.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: See, the oldest great-grandson is 11 and he stays with us. It's good. He's a young man that I need to get to school on Friday and Mondays —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. DOMINGO: — because his grandma is on the nightshift so she cannot get him to school on time. So oftentimes — [inaudible]. [Laughs.] Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And there's nine of them.

MS. RIEDEL: Nine great-grandchildren?

MS. DOMINGO: Great-grandchildren.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, my goodness.

MS. DOMINGO: The girls — or one girl is home here with the boys — five boys — and then three girls are in Seattle. So six of them are home and three of them are in Seattle. But they're treasures. I never thought that I would have grandchildren, but they're treasures.

Our little girl at home is a year-and-a-half. She knows she's a little girl. [Laughs.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: But because she's with the boys, she can be a toughie.

MS. RIEDEL: Like a tomboy.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Like somebody else we talked about. [They laugh.] Aha.

What do you see as the similarities and the differences in your work, from your early work to your most recent work?

MS. DOMINGO: I don't know that — the difference is, is I've tried very hard to try to improve myself.

MS. RIEDEL: And does that mean a lot of experimenting? Does that mean making a lot of different hats? When you say you've tried to improve, what does that mean?

MS. DOMINGO: No, it's not a number. It's in style, yeah. Trying —

MS. RIEDEL: Experimenting?

MS. DOMINGO: Trying to remember the lessons. I don't know that I think there's that much of a difference in style or —

MS. RIEDEL: Have they gotten much more complicated? Have they gotten much more complex?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, they seem like, I believe, but in actuality it's understanding the basics: counting, addition. I learned that you can decrease.

MS. RIEDEL: Aha.

MS. DOMINGO: I never — and just recently, about decreasing, so making it tighter. And I wondered how they do that. So you see, every day we learn. So I don't know that there's that much differences, but learning is still there.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: There's much more to learn, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Lots more to learn.

MS. RIEDEL: Have you seen many changes in weaving in Hawaii in your lifetime? Have you seen a lot of — I mean, certainly there's a better revival of the traditions. We've talked about increasing experimentation. And it seems like the younger generation is beginning to experiment even more so. They're taking what they've learned.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. Yes. I think we didn't see that many different styles when I was young, and I guess because they wove for necessity. So if they got fancy, whichever, it was probably just for within the family —

MS. RIEDEL: I see.

MS. DOMINGO: — or of that concept, not that much for selling —

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: — as much as, you know, just putting them out, whereas today, oh, you have a wide variety, many weavers, many new ones that are interested and do beautiful work — beautiful work. It's grown.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: It's grown, yes. And I think it's a huge asset that it has, because at one time it was felt that it was going to be lost, the art of weaving, so we've got to be thankful to Cousin Gladys, Auntie Esther, Auntie Elizabeth for reviving it, and really sitting down and making — you know, sharing the knowledge with as many as they could share it with, teaching others, having them become teachers — very, very fortunate.

MS. RIEDEL: I have a question about sharing the tradition with others so it wouldn't be lost. Something that you mentioned was that Auntie Gladys, at one point, was going to write a book, and then she decided not to because she didn't want the tradition to be lost in another way beyond people of Hawaii, is my understanding of it.

That seems like a difficult middle ground to navigate. How does one choose how to share that tradition and help it grow but there was, at the same time, a decision not to make a book?

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I thought of that myself too. It's going to be hard, but I can understand why it's important.

MS. RIEDEL: Why is it important, do you think?

MS. DOMINGO: Because it belongs to our culture. I guess it's like the Hopis and their weaving their blankets. It's a part of their culture.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: And I only wish that, you know, people throughout the world can be respectful of that. But they want — they want to take it. So I can understand the importance. We don't have very many things left. So many things were taken away from us.

So if, you know, we can keep something really belong to us, then I can understand the factor behind it. It is food for thought, because, you know, our fishing methods, our — you know, we had fishing laws which helped.

[Background conversation.]

MS. RIEDEL: Sorry. You were saying?

MS. DOMINGO: No, those are things that — you know, they decided that, oh, no, we don't need to have that kind of laws, made it open to everybody, and look what's happening to our fishing grounds. They've become lost.

I mean, you know, our people did things because of — there's a reason behind those things. They were here many years before us. They tried several things. They knew that it didn't work, that if they continued being spendthrift, whichever, they could one day be without.

So I think the whole world needs to learn to be respectful of each other. Respecting our culture is a very, very important word. And we definitely try to teach our children that, grandchildren, the generations that follow: Be respectful of the land, ocean and others. So I can understand the reasoning behind that. We don't have very many things left that are ours.

MS. RIEDEL: So it's a different way of passing the tradition on and maintaining the tradition. It happens one-on-one or face-to-face with a group of people, but it's not — the information is not passed on through a book or through any sort of material like that.

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, indirectly it's being passed on to others —

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: — because of the conferences.

MS. RIEDEL: Exactly. That's — yes. So it happens through that face-to-face — those conferences, that contact, person-to-person as opposed to written.

MS. DOMINGO: But I think — and I guess maybe that's why the different feeling. I think that they've only learned how to make the hat, but they haven't learned, you know, the entire concept of weaving a hat, being respectful of the tree, taking care of the tree. You know, it starts back then, not just making the hat.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. DOMINGO: Yes. I think, in a sense, maybe that helps us identify ourselves as, you know, this group of people, this type of weaving process. You know — [inaudible]. But it's kind of hard.

MS. RIEDEL: It sounds like you think about the entire process as being part of the final hat. It's not just about coming up with a hat. It's about harvesting the leaves. It's about caring for the tree. It's the entire process that matters.

MS. DOMINGO: That's right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: And I think it comes from inside — inside. And that's what shows on the hats. I think somehow the weavers, the person, is in their hat. You know, "I wove this hat. I'm a part of this hat" — or that hat, you know? You can see Margaret in that hat. The same thing with Susie. I think that makes the difference.

MS. RIEDEL: In the same way you were describing looking at the book of designs from New Zealand, that you wouldn't — you don't want to work just with that design, but if that inspires you to think of something —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — that would be —

MS. DOMINGO: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: — a place to be in.

MS. DOMINGO: Looking at different things, you know, that gets you to thinking, well, what if I do this? [They laugh.] What would happen?

MS. RIEDEL: What would happen? Right.

Well, I think we've done an extremely good job of covering these questions.

MS. DOMINGO: We've done a good job.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I think so. I think we can maybe have one more question.

MS. DOMINGO: You have done a good job.

MS. RIEDEL: Thank you.

MS. DOMINGO: You are just starting out with your work.

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] And I'm so thankful that your voice has held up, yeah.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, I am too.

MS. RIEDEL: A final question for me — and then any final thoughts you might have are welcome — but what in particular about the weaving is important to you? What about the process — the hats, the community — what in general about it matters to you? What do you think is significant?

MS. DOMINGO: Oh, you know, Auntie — Cousin Gladys — we're taught to, when we start to weave, to treat our work as you would take care of a baby: "Don't just, you know, discard her or leave her on the ground, or whichever. Take good care of it.

And I think — and this — [inaudible] — that bit of advice, is when you — like I always say, when you take care of the tree, the tree takes care of you. When you take care of your child, the child will grow up and take care of you.

And I think that holds true of weaving, again the word "respect." When you're respectful, whichever way, you know, good things come back to you. That's good. Those things happen. Just take care of it, you know.

MS. RIEDEL: [Laughs.] I can see, too — the people listening won't be able to see, but how you're patting the hat as you're talking. [They laugh.] And it's been — the hat has been with us the entire time. It's moved up from the porch with you and here with you. I really haven't seen you without the hat, but — maybe at dinner you left the hat at home, but other than that, this hat has been with us the entire time.

MS. DOMINGO: Well, now that you mention it, that's right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. DOMINGO: Maybe that's why she came along.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, thank you very, very much.

MS. DOMINGO: You're welcome. Thank you. Thank you very much for making me cry.

MS. RIEDEL: I am sorry about that.

MS. DOMINGO: It's been good. You made me feel very comfortable.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, good.

MS. DOMINGO: And, definitely, I've heard so many stories about doing oral histories, I was concerned. But thank you very much; you made me feel very comfortable.

MS. RIEDEL: Good. Thank you so much for being so willing to share it all.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]