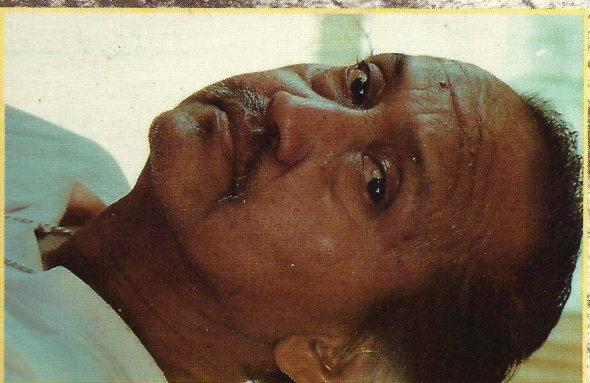
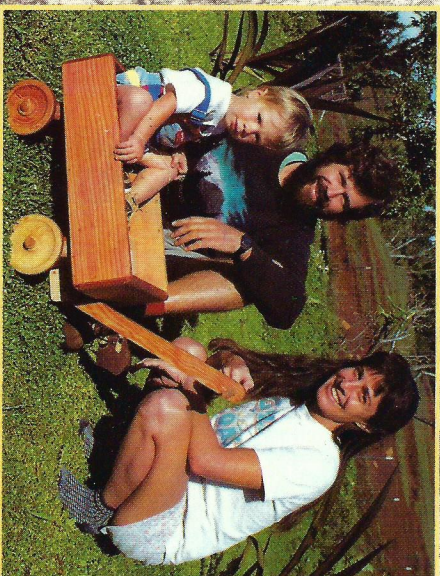
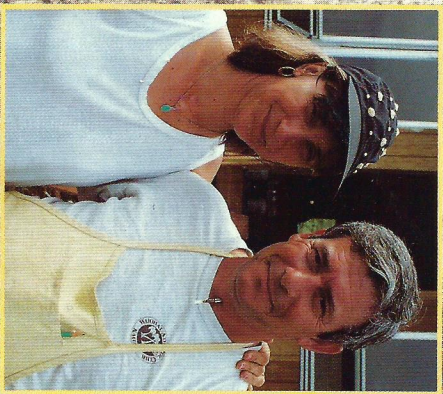
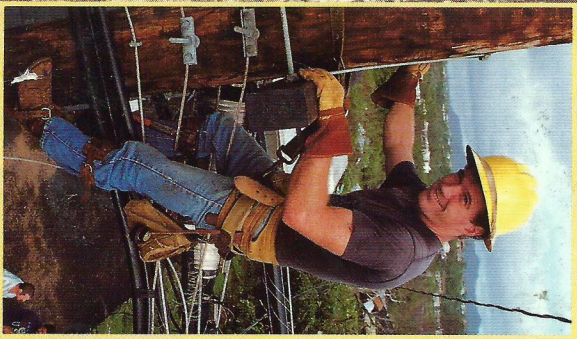
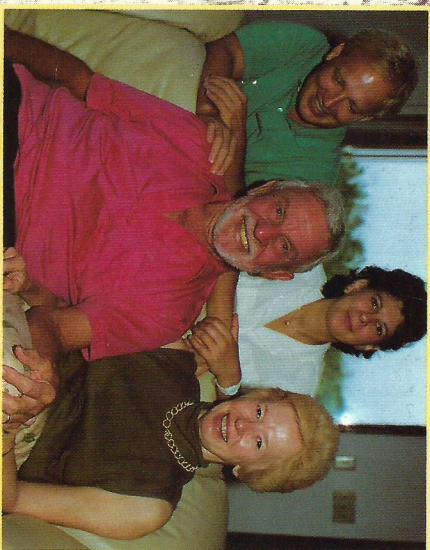
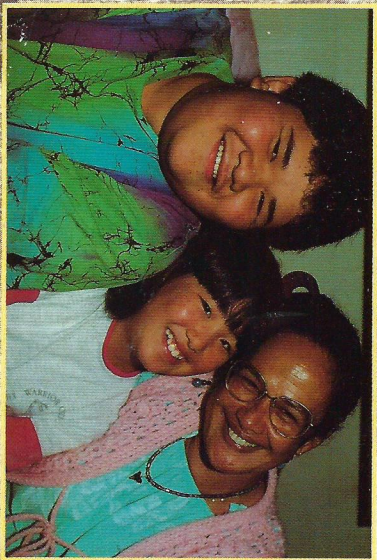


Miracle of Iniki

STORIES OF ALOHA
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OF KAUAI

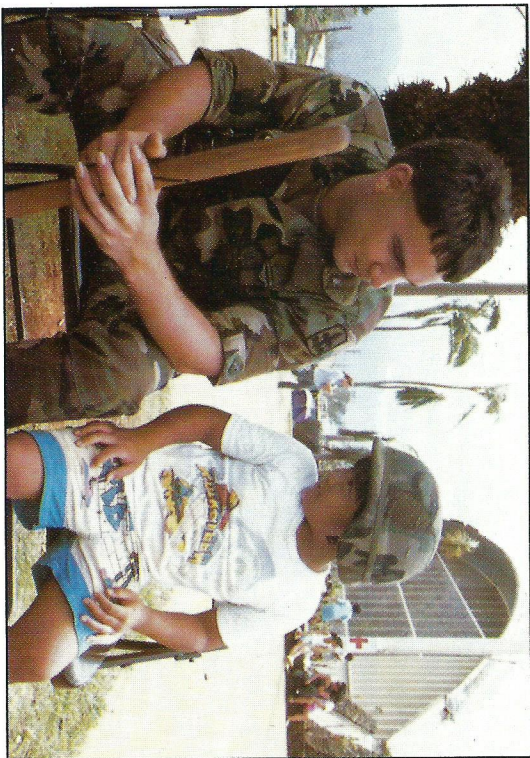


Anne E. O'Malley and Ellie Radke

Miracle of Iniki

STORIES OF ALOHA FROM THE HEART OF KAUA'I

Anne E. O'Malley and Ellie Radke



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Mahalo nui loa i na po'e o Kaula'i nei. Many helped us, and we offer mahalo to those who entrusted us with their stories; all who offered help and continue to do so; our publisher, Bess Press, whose editor, Revé Shepard, kept us on track, and marketing director Kiki Davis; our families and friends whose aloha throughout this project helped carry us through: Cara Callaway, Steve Faunce, Kalani Flores, Diane Girard, Gary Hooser, Margee Johnson, Moira Kalahiki, Carolyn Larson, Andy Melamed, Betty and Jim Scamahorn, Billi Smith, Mimi Snyder, Donna Stewart, Susan Dixon-Stong, Meph Wyeth, Carol Yotsuda, Jan Rudinoff and St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church, all of whose spirits are in this book.

Kaula'i No Ka Oi!

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INTRODUCTION

When Hurricane Iniki struck the tiny island of Kaua'i in the mid-Pacific on September 11, 1992, life as residents knew it stopped. Even the simplest of amenities, once taken for granted, became luxuries.

That night, after Iniki spent itself, a full moon rose over storm-battered Kaua'i. In the Wailua area, friends walked to Nathan Kalama's devastated house and found the inhabitants had been spared from falling beams by mattress shields. Quickly, the group gathered sodden furniture about the surviving piano. By the light of the full moon, they raised their voices in praise of our island and created new songs to honor the lessons of Iniki.

In photographs and words, *Miracle of Iniki* continues singing the praises of Kaua'i, and the courage of her people. It is a witness to their strength, love, humor and spirit. It recognizes that in the darkest hours, there is joy in life, and that from disaster springs hope, healing and an abundance of creativity.

Miracle of Iniki is not a comprehensive text about each bubble of joy or each heroic act witnessed, but rather, a representation of the spirit of Kaua'i's people in the face of incredible odds. No matter who we were or where we were, Iniki picked us up, spun us around, and plopped us down on a new foundation. Not only did Iniki's gusts of up to 225 miles per hour cause devastation, they also put us down in a different place with new world views. The Iniki experience offered us the opportunity to see the courage, joy and loving qualities in ourselves and others.

Time after time, Red Cross workers, military personnel, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other workers who came to help after Iniki remarked on how beautiful Kaua'i is and how incredibly polite, warm, spunky and friendly the people of Kaua'i are. We may be Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Portuguese and Caucasian, but Iniki reminded us that we are one in the aloha spirit. *Miracle of Iniki* is for us, the people of Kaua'i, to say a gentle thank you to ourselves for riding through Iniki and its aftermath so well together, and for maintaining grace under enormous odds.

HE MELE NO `O HURRICANE INIKI

Ua Ho`olohē Kaku i Keia mele

Maika`i no Kāua`i hemolele i ka malie

Let us listen to this chant

Fine is Kāua`i, perfect in the calm

Ilalo i ka nani`o Nonou, noho ana kāua

Aia i ku`u home, Hale o Maluhālanai

Neath the beauty of the Sleeping Giant, we two live

There is my home called the House of Heavenly Peace

E ala i ke kani o ka siren o Hurricane Iniki

Kepakemapa umi kumu kahi, 1992

We awake to the siren (warning us) of Hurricane Iniki on

September 11, 1992

Na manu lele o ka lani, i ka lani na manu Iwa

Ka leo o na manu o death, destruction and doom

The flying birds in the sky, in the heavens, are the Iwa birds

The voice of the birds tell of death, destruction and doom

Ho`olohē uwe no kokua no na pae aina

Ikaika i na po`e mai moku iloko o ka lani

Listen to the cries for help from one end to the other

The strength of the people comes from our heavenly father

Ke kani o helikapa i ka po me ke ao

Kaulana kou inoa na koa o Amelika

The sound of the helicopters in the night and day

Famous is your name, the soldiers of America

Ka hui lau lima, e alu like mai

Mahalo nui loa, mai na po`e `o Kāua`i nei

The cooperative agencies come and work together

Thank you very much from the people of Kāua`i

Haina mai ka puana, puana keia mele

Maikai no Kāua`i, hemolele i ka malie

This is the end of this chant

Fine is Kāua`i, perfect in the calm

--Nathan Liberato Kahikolu Kahapea Kalama



After Iniki, artists and performers waxed creative. Nathan Kalama wrote a chant that Kimō Auwae and Richard Moses performed hula to. The pair dressed in basic black and plastic--a material everybody on Kāua`i could relate to, post-Iniki.



Nathan Kalama sits in the remains of the new International Pentecostal Assembly Church that was founded by his father. "I had wanted my family and the Assembly Church people to see what had happened," says Nathan. "It never hit me until after the picture was taken--then I broke down."

The night after the hurricane, under a full moon, Nathan began composing the song *Iniki Moon*. The thought struck him to document the hurricane in chant form, as his ancestors had recorded events of their days. *He Mele No 'O Hurricane Iniki* is the result.

BRIDGE TO THE PAST

In the early morning hours pre-Iniki, Aletha Kaohi had a powerful, disturbing vision that still brings tears to her eyes in the telling. In the vision, she learned that while she and her family would be safe, she would lose her Waimaea home near the ocean to the powerful gusts of the hurricane. Prior to Iniki, Aletha had no premonition that her 122-year-old house would be destroyed. In fact, hearing of Iniki's approach, she reflected on Hurricane Iwa 10 years ago, after which coconuts still hung from the trees in her yard and her little rabbit was still out in its pen. "You think it's just another hurricane, and you're going to be OK," says Aletha.

On September 11, 1992, Aletha fell into bed and deep, immediate sleep. Suddenly, she saw a young Hawaiian girl in her bedroom. The girl's large, bright eyes compelled Aletha to look at her. As Aletha watched, the young girl grew into a wrinkled old woman whose body disappeared, leaving behind only a face. Where her body had been, the area was suffused with a flash of crimson, coloring the wizened face as well. The vision woke Aletha and frightened her.

Aletha knew it was a message, but did not know the meaning. She asked for help from God. Then, she turned to her ancestors. Immediately, she felt as if she were being hugged, and she grew calm. She heard a voice asking what happens when a person grows old. Death was the only answer she could think of. She asked, "Is somebody going to die--is it me?"

Listening for an answer, Aletha heard only the rustling of coconut trees. She felt strongly that nobody she knew was to die. Then she asked, "Is it the house?" In the moment she asked that question, she heard the wind echoing "ae, ae, ae, ae." In Hawaiian, ae means yes. "I wept," says Aletha. "I cried. I pulled myself together and I said, 'What do I do?'"

Communication with her ancestors is not new to Aletha. Her ancestors were spiritual leaders. Her own father was schooled in huna, but in the final days of his grandmother's life, that path was changed. As she neared



Aletha Kaohi says her path as a Hawaiian is to help her fellow Hawaiians. Under the guidance of her ancestors, she preserved artifacts from the past during Iniki.

death, his kupuna wahine told him that Ha-wai'i was rapidly changing, that to charge him with the mission of becoming a full-fledged huna by receiving her dying breath, or ha, was too big a burden. She feared that the Hawaiian religion would be misunderstood by the mahini, or newcomers, steeped as they were in their western, Christian culture. She encouraged her grandson to become a Christian. Aletha, in turn, was raised in a Christian home.

But the voices of Aletha's Hawaiian ancestors would not be stilled. Her birth, foretold four generations ago, was to result in a bridge between the Hawaiian and Christian religions. Her father was chosen to help her. On a spiritual quest, Aletha spent time with her father, learning to listen to inner guidance.

"To be a Hawaiian is not a choice," says Aletha. "I was born a Hawaiian. I was raised as a Hawaiian. The choice that I have of being a Hawaiian is the path that I take, using what gifts I have to help my other Hawaiian fellow man. It is very evident to me that I'm called to do that." All that she asks of her ancestors is that they not cause her to swerve from the Christian faith she has chosen. As for the rest, there is much work to be done.

"It's very clear to me that I will be a spokesperson for my ances-

tors," says Aletha. "They have been quiet too long. This is what they've told me. Their quietness is because Hawai'i was changing rapidly, and they were the minority. If you were Hawaiian, in the past, nobody paid attention to you. But now, it's important that the Hawaiian is heard and it's impor-

tant that what is said is really the thoughts of the ancestors," she says. Aletha has learned to read clouds, call the winds by name and ask them to flow in a different, less harmful direction. Perhaps, though, her biggest gift is to be that bridge from the past to the



Aletha sits on her stairs--the sole remainder of her 122-year-old home.

present, and it is certainly in this role that she once again was cast on the morning of Hurricane Iniki. On that morning, the message that came to Aletha from her ancestors was to save everything from the past. With a calm energy, she began to put her house in order. As she moved from room to room, she was pleading with her to leave. He told her that 30-foot waves were expected. Still, Aletha wasn't ready. By 10 a.m., Aletha felt satisfied, but her guides weren't. They told her to vacuum, wash and put away dishes and puff up the pillows.

Next, her guides told her to kiss the house good-bye on the four outside corners. When she reached the fourth corner, she found it difficult, for a shed had been added on. She went inside to get to the fourth corner of the house, and inside, she found a poi board and koa furniture, things from the past.

"I was crying by then," says Aletha. "I was very emotional." She gathered her family, thanked the house for the 122 years it had served as a shelter for many families--not just her own--placed it leaves in her catering kitchen and in the house, picked more ti leaves and was on her way to her son's new house in Waimea Valley. There, Aletha was instructed to place one ti leaf bow each in hers and her childrens' cars, all of which survived Iniki well.

In the hours during the hurricane, Aletha felt some moments of anxiety, though she knew she would be safe. At one point, she called the wind to blow objects away from the house where she, her family and friends, numbering about 50 altogether, were staying. In the end, Iniki ran its course, taking her home and all that was new with it, but the past was safely preserved.