


water. They have a reservoir now but it's still hard. When there's no rain, they go into the church all in a body and they pray. And sure enough the rain comes. They are very religious. Everyone goes to church regularly.

"The Robinsons are wonderful. They love the Hawaiians. They care. Of course, they are strict. Not every Tom, Dick and Harry can go there. That's why you hear a lot of stories, but don't believe them, because these people (the Robinsons) want to conserve their island. They want to keep the Hawaiians happy, and not let them become commercialized like the Hawaiians in Honolulu. The people are very respectful and appreciative of their bosses. They just really love the Robinsons. If they want to have a holiday they ask the Robinsons if it is okay, then everybody has a holiday.

"Their way of showing love and respect is by putting a shell lei on you, like we do with flower leis. This is why I have my collection. It is worth \$250,000. But I would not sell one. When they know I'm going home, they come down along the side of the road with leis in their hands. They stop the truck and kiss me and present me with the leis. It's their way of saying they love me. Making shell leis is very important on Niihau. Women get up very early, at 6 a.m. They make breakfast and cook and fix lunches for the men. The men leave the house around seven. Then when the women are through with their housework, they make leis.

"Niihau never changes much. I noticed little change during the first 20 years I visited there. Always the same happy, wonderful people. The families there are so kind. If they're having dinner, they call out when you're walking along the street, whether they know you or not. You enter the house without any questions being asked. They're so open-hearted. If I were to walk the roads of Niihau and fall asleep on one of those roads, nobody would harm me. I would feel safe. That was the oath of Kamehameha and his *mamala hoa* law — "the broken paddle." In other words, he said, the elder people, the children and the women are safe to walk the Islands and lie down and go to sleep, and his word was that no one would molest or harm them in any way for fear of death. But of course today in Honolulu...

"On Niihau, the people feel safe. They are protected. They have love and happiness." 



## "Moe" Keale

*"Toloa ame ka pu'uwai hamama o kanaka o Niihau."*

"The men of Niihau grow very tall, and their hearts are very big."

*One of the largest is Wilfred Nalani "Moe" Keale. Although born in Honolulu, his father came from Niihau and Moe spent every summer of his youth on Niihau. He once told his friend Carl Lindquist, "I'll never forget that first year on Niihau. What really threw me was how happy everybody was, and how they went out of their way to help each other. Right then I figured that heaven must be something like Niihau." At the end of each summer, Moe was reluctant to leave: "A couple of times I thought about running away, but everybody knows everybody else, and I knew my father would give me a good licking." A member for years of the Sons of Hawaii, he now has his own musical group, Moe Keale and Anuehue.*

"Our family lived outside the village. We rode horseback and we also used Army trucks to run cattle. In our spare time we would play music, fish, hunt. Good hunting and fishing! We cooked outside over an open fire. They're getting classy now with kerosene stoves from Sears.

"We have luaus you wouldn't believe! Some last two or three weeks. When my oldest brother got married I had to dig six imus. The men go hunting and the women go fishing and looking for opihi for the luau. The whole island works on the luau. We worked very slowly getting ready. Never rush on Niihau. When we run out of food, we go hunt and fish and the luau continues. Until finally someone says, 'Okay — enough.'

"Sunday, we go to church, pray, go home and eat. Stay in the house all

day. After sundown everyone goes bananas again. Everything stays the same on Niihau. A guy fishes, he gets a lot of fish, more than he can handle. He splits them among the village. Lot of surf and spear fishing. Lobster, too. Big lobsters!

"We chase the pigs on horseback. When the pig gets tired, he turns and charges. Then you kick 'em with your feet and tie 'em up. Kill 'em at home. I remember one time I was chasing this buggah — weighed 300 pounds! — and he finally got tired and stopped and charged. I got off my horse and kicked it — and I missed and fell down. My father kicked me in the butt! All the men on the island go hunting. They tie up pigs and leave them on the trail. On the way back they pick 'em up. Never run short of pigs. They have everything they need to eat there. Except candy! I send candies and cookies and Chinese moon cakes for the kids over there. You know what they eat for candy? Keawe beans.

"There's no crime. The law says if you are caught stealing, you be kicked off the island. No one does that over there. You can hunt turkeys at Thanksgiving but that's all. The law says you must leave the chickens and turkeys alone. I don't know why but Robinsons say don't touch. There's a tree in the front yard and the chickens and turkeys sit in it screaming all the time — the buggahs know you can't touch 'em!

"There's no place to go for dates. No theater. No dating. Maybe sneak over to one girl's house and pick her up. Not much to do unless she like to

*Please turn to page 173*





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## "Moe" Keale

Continued from page 54

hunt and fish. Little kids play marbles, spin tops, and have Yo-Yo's. They learn English in school but outside of school they talk Hawaiian.

"They have calendars, but who pays attention to them? When I go to Niihau, all time stands still. Eighty per cent of the people don't want to ever leave. They're scared. They are very aware of what has happened to the rest of the islands. They are starting to feel threatened.

"In October, when the surf comes in, people move down to the beaches for two weeks. Surf and hold luaus. They sing a surfing song with one verse for every family on Niihau." 

## John Keale

*The late John Kamanahila Keale was born on Niihau in 1920. His father, also born on Niihau, caught a cattle ship leaving Niihau and brought his family to Honolulu, where he worked in shipping yards. John Keale returned to Niihau in 1945 and was married to a woman who teaches school on Niihau. Before his death last year, John Kamanahila Keale talked of his love for his birthplace.*

"When my father was a boy Niihau wasn't like it is today. I mean, in one village. It was separated. People were all over the island at that time. Now everybody is together in one village.

"Hunting and fishing are beautiful there. It's a fisherman's paradise. Great surf fishing. They have boats now — skiffs for deep-sea fishing and drop-lines for okole. How they get the boat is they find it on the beach, probably some fisherman's who lost it. Even surfboards they find on the beach. Beautiful surfboards. Kids do a lot of surfing. Beautiful waves. About a mile out.

"No guns on Niihau. They have horses trained just for pigs and cattle. You don't see the pigs. The horse sees them. He smells or sees them. When the horse gets kind of frisky, you know. You let go of the reins and he'll go directly to the pig. Then you start making noise so the pigs run out of the bush. They run out in the clearing and that's when you chase after them. The horse is well trained. Sometimes he runs them down. Sometimes the pig goes until he's tired and turns around



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