

Pauline Kekahuna AND HER HAU'OLI GIRLS

Vintage
Recordings
1953-1955

Liner Notes by Harry B. Soria, Jr.
and Nina Keali'iwahamana

 Cord International

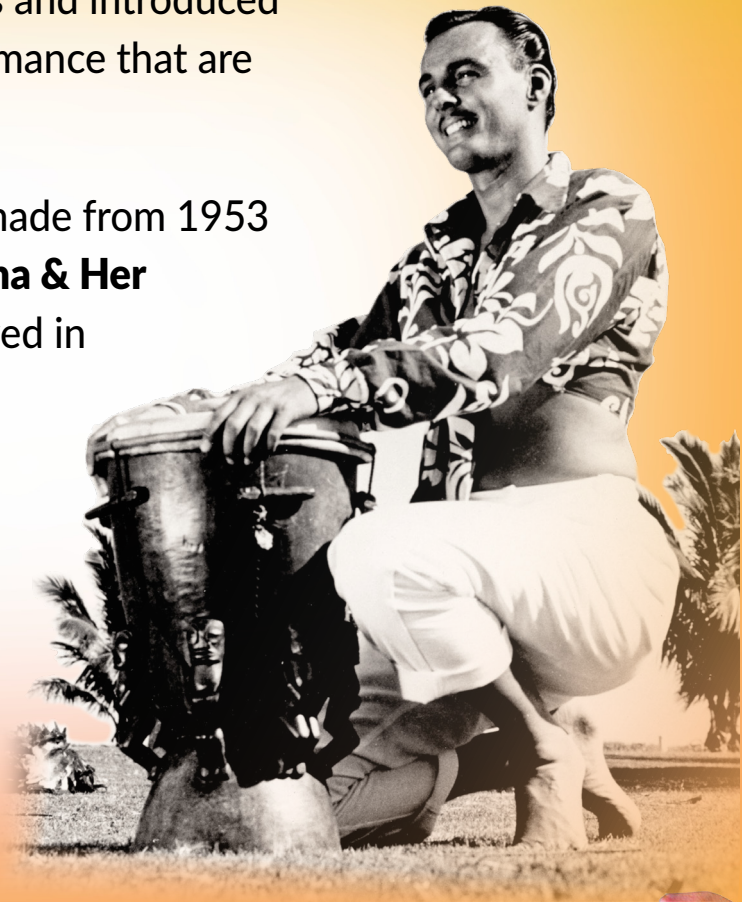
 HANAOLA[®]
RECORDS

Kent Ghirard has never been fully appreciated or acknowledged for his contributions to Hawaiian music and hula. As a *malihini* newcomer in the 1940s, he quickly endeared himself to Hawaiian music's elite performers and introduced innovations in synchronization, costuming, and performance that are accepted norms today.

These rare instantaneous home recordings that Kent made from 1953 through 1955 capture the majesty of **Pauline Kekahuna & Her Hau'oli Girls**, a unique all-women enterprise that thrived in Waikiki prior to Hawaii's statehood.

Nina Keali'iwahamana, the final remaining survivor of these extraordinary sessions, has graciously shared her memories of these historic sessions with us. These one-of-a-kind recordings celebrate the early empowerment of the Hawaiian woman.

- *Harry B. Soria, Jr.*





Kapahulu began as a backyard community of Waikiki.

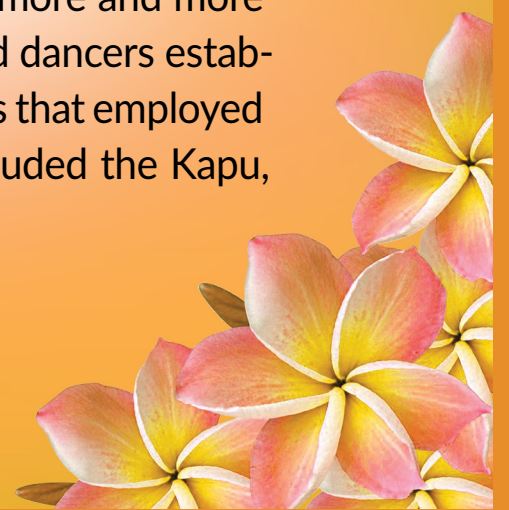
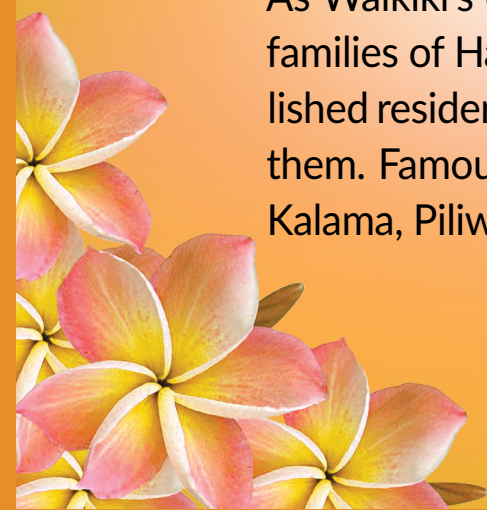
Waikiki was once part of an *ahupua'a*, a natural wetland that served as a breadbasket for early Hawaiians. The area was primarily a vast wedge of land running from the mountains to the sea with taro terraces fed by fresh water springs.


Kalamakua, son of *Kalona-nui*, is the chief that originally developed this immense area of aquaculture plains. Diamond Head, *Leahi*, the landmark volcanic tuff cone, stood at the eastern edge. *Kapahulu*, a slender strip of higher dry land, hugged the base of the 760-foot-high edifice.

In the *Great Mahele* of 1848, King Lunalilo received a 3,200 acre tract of land. In 1889, Charles Snodgrass Martin built one of the first private residences in *Kapahulu*. During the 1920s, land sold for 25 cents a square foot, and the subdivision of land established the residential and commercial mix of properties that *Kapahulu* is known for today.

In the mid-1920s, the three-mile-long, 250-foot-wide, 25-foot-deep Ala Wai Canal drained the wetlands, bringing permanent change to the area. Gradually, the dairy farms moved out, and the *Territorial Fair Grounds* evolved into the *Ala Wai Golf Course*.

As Waikiki's entertainment opportunities grew during the 1920s and 1930s, more and more families of Hawaiian entertainers settled in *Kapahulu*. Countless musicians and dancers established residences within walking distance of the hotels, restaurants, and taverns that employed them. Famous families of Hawaiian music history ensconced in *Kapahulu* included the Kapu, Kalama, Piliwale, Rodrigues, Veary, and many other ohana.



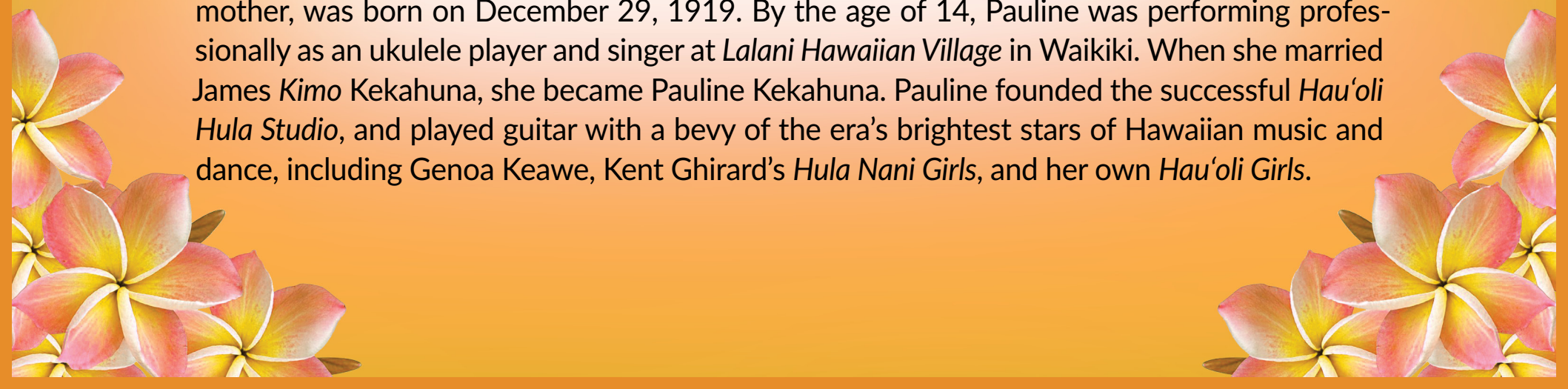


On September 1, 1918, in San Francisco, California, Domingo Kent Ghirardelli, was born. He was the grandson of Domingo Ghirardelli, the Italian-born founder of the world-famous *Ghirardelli Chocolate Company* in San Francisco.

In 1931, 12-year-old Kent Ghirardelli visited Hawaii for the first time, and fell in love with the island's music and hula. As an adult, he led a hula troupe and produced shows in San Francisco. He finally relocated permanently to Hawaii in 1947, adopting the name Kent Ghirard, and forming the highly successful troupe, the *Hula Nani Girls*. They were often supported by the popular all-women musical group, *Pauline Kekahuna & Her Hau'oli Girls*.

Kent Ghirard brought the 10-year-old acetate disc recording machine he had shipped from San Francisco to Pauline Kekahuna's home at 3138 Esther Street in *Kapahulu*. He set up a single microphone in the center of her parlor, and captured this music in five recording sessions between 1953 and 1955.

Esther Street was actually named to honor the family matriarch, Esther Ka'imimoku *Mama Deah* Kaleikini, born on November 29, 1896. Esther Pauline Ka'ilihao Kaleikini, named after her mother, was born on December 29, 1919. By the age of 14, Pauline was performing professionally as an ukulele player and singer at *Lalani Hawaiian Village* in Waikiki. When she married James *Kimo* Kekahuna, she became Pauline Kekahuna. Pauline founded the successful *Hau'oli Hula Studio*, and played guitar with a bevy of the era's brightest stars of Hawaiian music and dance, including Genoa Keawe, Kent Ghirard's *Hula Nani Girls*, and her own *Hau'oli Girls*.



Pauline Kekahuna was always the leader of the *Hau'oli Girls*. She adjusted the roster of the *Hau'oli Girls* according to the needs of the client or the venue. Pauline never took their style away from the women who performed in the group. She embraced their arrangements, and encouraged their compositions.

Personnel on these recordings include: Esther **Pauline** Ka'ilihao Kaleikini **Kekahuna**, guitar, (12/29/19–1/28/78); **Victoria** Keali'ika'apuaihonua **I'i Rodrigues**, guitar, (11/14/12–7/22/87); Emily **Shortie De Los Santos**, guitar/bass, (5/5/16–1/19/90); Elizabeth **Lovey Lui** Conn, piano/steel guitar, (9/2/24–10/1/85); **Nora** Kehienaenalapalapaikalua Kilauea **Keahi** Halstead **Santos**, ukulele, (11/28/18–2/3/13); Rose **Loke** **Kamaunu**, piano/ukulele, (1/27/23–8/15/00); **Alice** Angeline **Johnson**, piano/ukulele, (7/24/12–11/82); Lorraine Keaoululani **Lani Rodrigues** Custino, vocals, (10/29/32–4/14/98); and our source, Katherine **Nina** **Keali'iwahamana** Rodrigues Rapozo, vocals, (1938–).

These recordings were made on July 26, 1953; August 2, 1953; December 3, 1953; May 27, 1954; and January 19, 1955.



Front row: Emily "Shortie" De Los Santos, Vickie I'i Rodrigues, and Pauline Kekahuna with dancers, c. 1950.



Nina Keali'iwahamana, c. 1953

We are extremely grateful to Bill Lacey of Digital Sound & Picture, New York, for the extraordinary sound restoration and mastering efforts that brought these 60-year-old, instantaneous live home recordings to life. Finally, we are proud to have the contribution of Nina Keali'iwahamana, the only surviving participant of these sessions, who shared her detailed memories of each recording and the performers. We are thrilled to share this all-women enterprise, thriving decades before such organizations were the acceptable norm. We know you will enjoy this memorable look at post-WWII Hawaiian musical history.

It is so easy to recall the learning years spent with Mama at the Kaleikini/ Kekahuna residence in Kapahulu at 3138 Esther Street. It was the early fifties, and Mama (Vickie I'i Rodrigues) was being encouraged by Auntie Girlie (Mary K. Robinson) to document and share her musical and hula knowledge with all who would learn and listen. Auntie Pauline Kekahuna opened her home to musicians and dancers, both young and old... and they came.

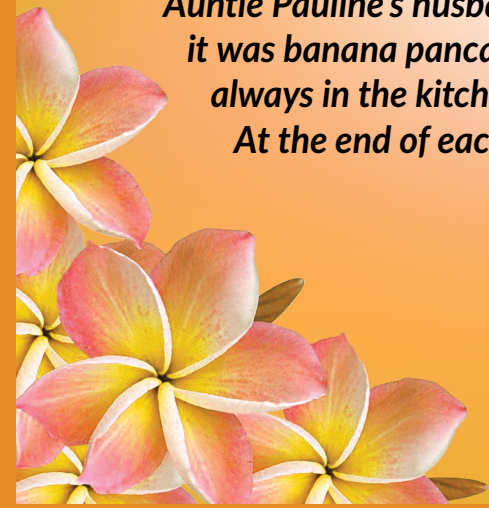
The summers of 1953 and 1954 were memorable for me. It was truly awesome to be in the company of The Hau'oli Girls – Mama, Auntie Pauline, Shortie De Los Santos, Lovey Lui, Loke Kamaunu, and extended family members Aunties Alice Johnson, Emma and Doreen Paishon, Agnes Malabey and more – listening and learning as they shared their mele with each other. The trio/ quartet was very popular in the Waikiki scene and constantly learning new mele for performances at the various clubs and hotels, as well as concerts with Auntie Iolani Luahine and Kent Ghirard. On occasion, the tall, handsome and talented Kent would bring his recording equipment and document the music of the day, for which we are thankful.

On the light side of those wonderful days, Uncle "KK" (James Kimo Kekahuna), Auntie Pauline's husband, prepared the most ono kaukau imaginable! Whether it was banana pancakes or stew and poi with all the trimmings, he was always in the kitchen preparing to feed the masses who had gathered. At the end of each day, everyone left nourished... in their minds and opu.

- Nina Keali'iwahamana



*Top: Nina Keali'iwahamana, c. 1953.
Bottom: Pauline Kekahuna, c. 1950.*





Pauline Kekahuna and Her Hau'oli Girls - The Tracks

1. **Kaulana Nâ Pua (Famous Are The Flowers)** – *Ellen Keho'ohiwaokalani Wright Prendergast.*

July 26, 1953. Vickie I'i Trio (Vickie, Nina, Lani) with the Hau'oli Girls. Just Vickie on Guitar, Pauline on ukulele, and Shortie on bass.

Nina was 16 years old. In January 1893, Ellen Wright Prendergast expressed in this *himeni* her unhappiness with the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarchy. The Prendergast family were pleased when Vickie revived the song.

2. **Kawohikûkapulani (Sacred Virgin Standing In Heaven)** – *Words & Music by Helen Desha Beamer.*

July 26, 1953. Vickie I'i Trio (Vickie, Nina, Lani) with the Hau'oli Girls.

Helen Desha Beamer honored Helen Elizabeth Kawohikû-kapulani Beamer with this *mele inoa* at her wedding on April 3, 1941 to Charles William Dahlberg. Vickie loved Helen's compositions.

3. **Nani Wale Ke'anae** – *Alice Johnson.*

July 26, 1953. Alice Johnson with the Hau'oli Girls. Alice Johnson sings the lead vocal on her own composition for Ke'anae, Maui.



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4. **Ku'u Ipo Ku'u Aloha Poina 'Ole (Ida's Hula)** – *Composed by Ida Alicante, Published by John Noble.*

August 2, 1953. Vickie I'i Rodrigues with the Hau'oli Girls.

Vickie loved this composition and also taught it to Iwalani Kahalewai. Vickie sings the lead vocal on the very first known recording of this *mele*.

5. **Ha'ili** – *Maddy Lam & Vickie I'i Rodrigues.*

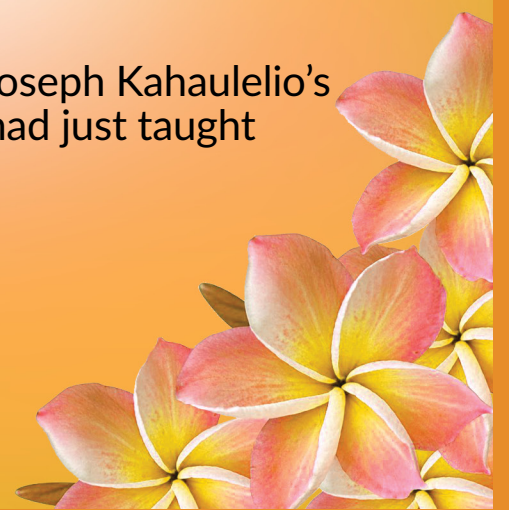

August 2, 1953. Vickie I'i Trio (Vickie, Nina, Lani) with the Hau'oli Girls. Harmony trio of Vickie, Nina, and Lani.

Maddy Lam first composed the music, Vickie then reciprocated with a *mele inoa* for Maddy, whose Hawaiian name is *Kaululehuaohaili*. They often called each other "cousin dear."

6. **Pō La'i La'i** – *Words by Mary Pukui, music by Maddy Lam.*

August 2, 1953. Nina Rodrigues with the Hau'oli Girls. Nina, age 16, sings lead on her first known recording, while still a student at Maryknoll School.

Nina was taking lessons at Aunty Maddy's studio on King Street, next to Joseph Kahalelio's studio. *Pō La'i La'i* was brand new at the time of this recording, as Maddy had just taught Nina this *mele*.



7. **Ku'u Lei** – *Bina Mossman*.

Aug 2, 1953. Vickie I'i Rodrigues with the Hau'oli Girls

Vickie shared this Bina Mossman *mele* of endearment with the Hau'oli Girls.

8. **E Mau (Let's Strive)** – *Alvin Kaleolani Isaacs*.

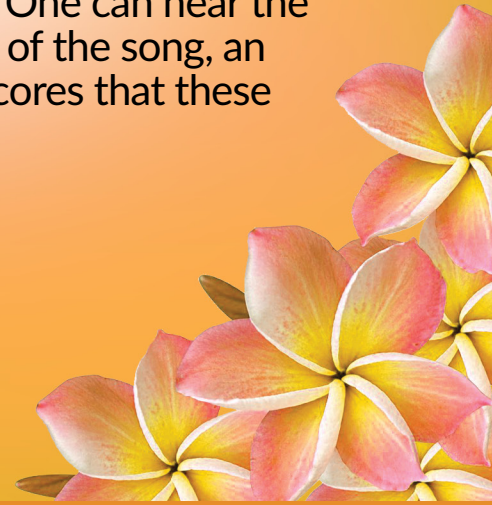
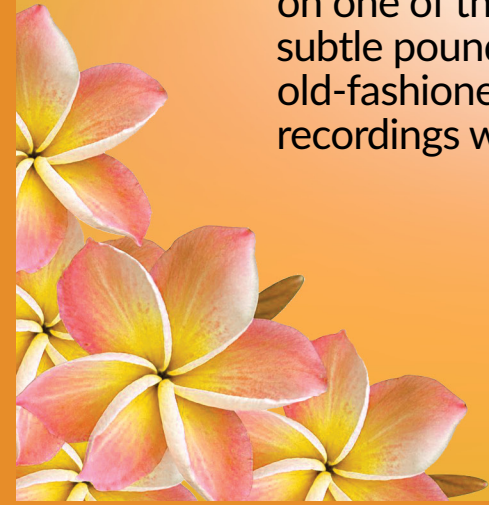
Dec 3, 1953. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Vickie, Shortie, Lovey Lui). Lovey Lui is playing the steel guitar. Shortie is the high voice heard on this recording.

Alvin Kaleolani Isaacs' 1941 *mele* professes *Aloha Aina*, a love of the land.

9. **Pili Aloha (Bond Of Love)** – *Jack Hani N'ae'a*.

Dec 3, 1953. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Vickie, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)).

These older lyrics are from Kauai. Aunty Lani Jim of Kauai shared this song with The Hau'oli Girls on one of their visitations to that Island. The phrasing heard is also different. One can hear the subtle pound on the upright bass to emphasize the lyric. Just before the end of the song, an old-fashioned car horn can be heard outside on Esther Street, which underscores that these recordings were indeed made in Pauline Kekahuna's parlor.



10. Haunani Hula – *Traditional.*

Dec 3, 1953. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Vickie, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)). Vickie sings the lead vocal on this *mele* from her collection that may be a poetic reference to either a sailing ship or a woman.

11. Na Ka Pueo – *Samuel Kalani Kaea.*

May 27, 1954. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Shortie, Lovey Lui). Lovey Lui is singing lead and playing the steel guitar. Shortie and Pauline are singing in harmony. This is the arrangement that they often played at their gig at the *Barbeque Inn* on Kalakaua Avenue.

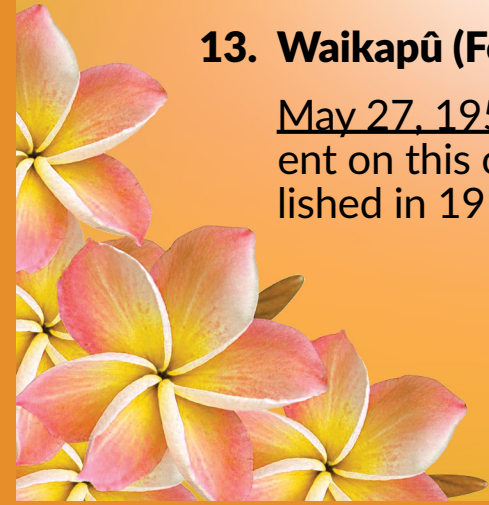
The *Pueo Kahi* was a ship named after a village near Hana, Maui, however a seafaring vessel was often a poetic reference in Hawaiian *mele* for a woman.

12. Mî Nei (How About Me?) – *Words and music by Charles E. King.*

May 27, 1954. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)). Shortie is singing the lead vocal in this 'modern' arrangement. Vickie is not playing on this selection.

13. Waikapû (Forbidden Waters) – *Words and music by James Kahele.*

May 27, 1954. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)). Vickie is not present on this one either, as there are minor lyric errors in the performance of this *mele* published in 1917 by Charles E. King, which Vickie would not have permitted to be recorded.



14. Moanalua (Two Encampments) – Traditional.

May 27, 1954. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)). Lovey Lui is singing the lead vocal. Lovey was the only one in the group who could sing with *ha'i*.

An adventurous day of travel for a young *wahine* and her friends begins in *Moanalua*.

15. Kani 'U'ina La (Na Molokama) – Alfred Unauna Alohikea.

May 27, 1954. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Shortie, Lovey Lui (steel guitar)).

Pauline is singing in the low voice, while Lovey and Shortie sing the harmony duet. Lovey Lui is also playing a flurry of great steel guitar licks. The *mele* describes the rumbling of the Hana-*lei*, Kaua'i waterfall of *Na Molokama*.

16. Hapa 'Ilikini (Half Indian) – Traditional.

Jan 19, 1955. Vickie I'i with the Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

Vickie I'i is singing the lead vocal on this *mele* about a young part-Indian man residing in the forests above Hilo.

17. KHBC – Vickie I'i Rodrigues & Kalei Aona.

Jan 19, 1955. Vickie I'i with the Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

This is the only known recording of Vickie singing the lead vocal on her own composition for the famed Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawaii radio station's inaugural broadcast. The Hau'oli Girls sing harmony.

18. Ku'ū Lei Hoku (My Wreath of Stars) – Traditional.

Jan 19, 1955. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

Nora Keahi Santos is singing the lead vocal on a *mele* with references to O'ahu locales, the Morning Star, and a special beloved one.

19. Aloha O'ahu (Beloved O'ahu) – Clarence Kinney.

Jan 19, 1955. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

Nora Keahi Santos is singing the lead vocal about a journey around the island of O'ahu.

20. Pō Mahina (Night Moon) (In The Moonlight) – Words and music by Charles E. King.

Jan 19, 1955. Vickie I'i with the Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

Vickie is singing the lead vocal on this *mele* celebrating the radiant moon in the dark sky.

21. Kō Ma'i Hō'eu'eu (Your Lively Ma'i) (Mele Ma'i) – Traditional.

Jan 19, 1955. The Hau'oli Girls (Pauline, Nora, Loke, Shortie).

The Hau'oli Girls share a *mele ma'i* for King David Kalakaua with an exceedingly large arrangement to end our collection.



Pauline Kekahuna and Her Hau'oli Girls

Anthology Produced by Harry B. Soria, Jr.

Historical Liner Notes by Harry B. Soria, Jr.
and Nina Keali'iwahamana

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78 RPM Acetate to Digital Transfer by Michael Cord

Digitally Remastered and Audio Restoration by:
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Audio Source Contributor/Original Recording
Engineer: Kent Ghirard

Photos: Kent Ghirard and Nina Keali'iwahamana

Director of Internet Communications: Aloha Joe

Executive Producer: Michael Cord

We would like to extend our warmest mahalo to the following friends for their valuable kokua: Kent Ghirard, Nina Keali'iwahamana, Kimo Alama Keaulana, Roberta Bishaw, Kihei De Silva, John Berger, Wayne Harada, and Ben Wood.

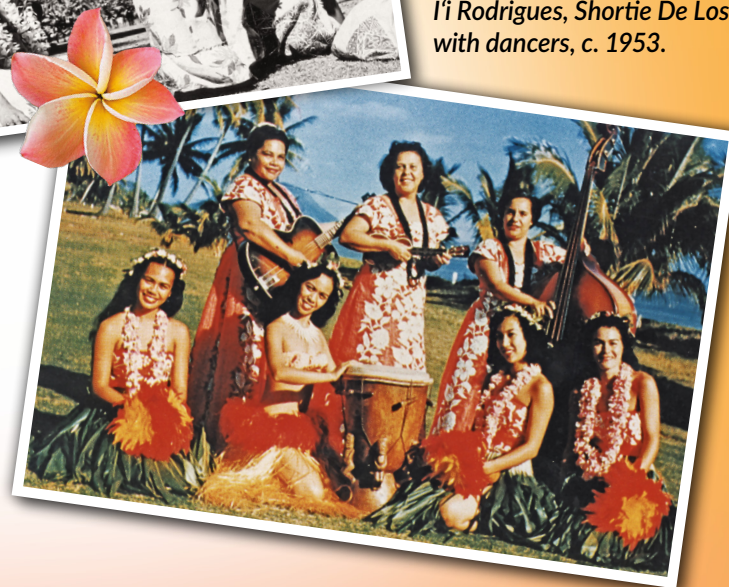
*These rare one-of-a-kind acetate recordings are
shared exclusively by Hana Ola Records.*



Top photo: Pauline Kekahuna with dancers, 1950's.

Bottom photo: (back row) Pauline Kekahuna, Nora Keahi Santos, Shortie De Los Santos with dancers, c. 1955.

Photo on page 1: (back row) Loke Kamaunu, Pauline Kekahuna, Vickie I'i Rodrigues, Shortie De Los Santos with dancers, c. 1953.



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