"Talking Story Hawaii; Storytelling the Oral Histories of Island Folks"

Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto of the University of Hawai‘i’s Center for Oral History have spent more than 20 years recording the stories of Hawai‘i’s people and communities. Listen and participate in a “talk story” session with the Nishimotos as they share – through slides, videos, discussion, and actual recorded stories.

Request from the following programs:

Talking Story: Kona, Hawaii
Kona, like other Hawai‘i communities, is home to a multi-ethnic population composed of native Hawaiians and non-native kama‘aina, immigrants, and their descendants. During the sugar era, Kona hosted the largest single community in Hawai‘i outside the plantation system. In the late 19th century, it gained a reputation as a "haven" for immigrants who broke their labor contracts and left the plantations in search of a better life. Many came to grow, pick, or mill coffee in the area's rocky farmlands. These early immigrants and later settlers helped Kona acquire a distinction as the only area in the US that has grown coffee commercially for over 100 years. Kona has played a significant role in the state's history. Hear and "talk story" about people, places, lifestyles, and values associated with Kona during the last century.

Talking Story About Waikiki
Over the last century, Waikiki has undergone a tremendous transformation from one of taro fields and duck ponds, home-operated laundries, and bungalow-type hotels to one of nightclubs, curio shops, designer-wear salons, and high-rise hotels. Hear and “talk story” about the 1920s reclamation project; the construction of the Ala Wai Canal; childhood play on the beach, at the zoo, in the area called 'Ainahau; antics of the "Stonewall Gang"; workdays of hotel employees; beach boy activities; World War II and soldiers in Waikiki; visits by tourists; and sites and businesses of a bygone era.

1946 Tsunami Remembered: Oral Histories of Survivors and Eyewitnesses
On the morning of April 1, 1946, a massive earthquake jolted the sea floor near Alaska’s Aleutian Islands, generating a Pacific-wide tsunami with the Hawaiian Islands standing in its way. In all, the 1946 tsunami killed 159 people throughout the islands, 121 on Hawai‘i Island alone. Property damage totalled approximately $26 million. The days following the disaster were filled with the arduous tasks of identifying bodies, locating possessions, participating in the massive cleanup effort, and dealing with the hardships of sudden homelessness and lost livelihoods.

World War II in Paradise
Perhaps nowhere else on American soil were the World War II years more acutely felt and government’s influence more pervasive than in Hawai‘i. The territory prior to 1941 was ripe for change. The changes wrought by wartime policies and conditions were particularly pronounced given the islands’ geographic isolation, multiethnic population, plantation-based economy, and highly stratified social order.

"Women Workers in Hawaii's Pineapple Industry"
In the fields and canneries, from 1903 through the 1980s, the pineapple industry was one of the largest employers of women workers in Hawai‘i. Del Monte, Dole, Maui Land and Pineapple, and others provided women with a steady but seasonal source of employment. Students and working mothers found summer employment as pickers in the fields and packers and trimmers in the canneries.

Technical: Please inquire about each specific program.
Appropriate Age of Audience: Ages 12 – Senior citizens
Programs: Lecture/Demonstrations; short and long-term residency
Workshops and Residency available on Collecting Oral Histories