

HUI LIMA KOKUA NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

Hello to all Hui Lima Kokua friends. I hope this month's newsletter finds each in good health. I am Ruth Betts, the 8th child out of 11 children born to Enriquita Franco and Jacobo Elizondo. My mother was born in Chihuahua, Mexico, and my father was from Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico. They met and married in Santa Barbara, CA where I was born on August 30, 1930. They gave us a very loving home. I remember early Protestant upbringing, Baptist church attendance and singing in the choir. Because there were so many of us – 7 girls and 4 boys, I remember folding a lot of laundry and also taking turns getting the dining room and kitchen ready for the next day. We spoke mainly Spanish in our home which Papa insisted upon, and English in school and at home among the kids and also to help teach Mama.

The "island of Santa Barbara": West Beach, our backyard, grunion hunting, bon fires under tall palm trees, Cabrillo Boulevard for skating. Then World War II happened. My brothers, early morning selling newspapers declaring war, shouting, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" Highway 1 became another convoy of military vehicles going north, young men leaving addresses for letters. (My father wouldn't allow that. The four eldest were my beautiful sisters!)

All my early schooling was in my hometown, later some Santa Barbara city college classes spread throughout the then smaller town and also in Ventura at the high school which also offered college classes.

I got married in 1950. We had three sons. I continued "life at the beach." Our marriage was also my first change of address to Ventura, my husband's hometown. I did enjoy my young boys and all their friends. Of course I never did become a surfer as they did! My sons now reside on Kauai, the Big Island (my favorite) and northern CA. I've traveled many times to the Islands to visit them. I've also been to Spain (they kept trying to correct my Mexican Spanish), the beautiful countryside of France, Ireland (the people were so friendly and loved Americans), Switzerland, Brazil (loved the music) and Cuba (which was my most eye-opening experience). Because of Covid-19 I have not traveled anywhere.

About 2008 I was invited to join our Hawaiian Club by Bill and Kaimana Pendergrass. I had relocated from Sunnyvale, CA, to my home here in Ventura. Bill worked at the post office and saw my letters and packages being sent to the Islands and he recognized my son's name. Thus began my friendship with the Pengrasses and you all.

It has been pleasant to meet each of you and I've missed our "gathered group." It appears at this time we see signs of returning to some social planning? All our faith, shared hope, that soon we may greet one another. Our greeting circle of prayer, great eats, beautiful voices accompanying ukulele, that's Hui Lima Kokua!

Aloha, Ruth

