

Tape No. k-kp-5

Oral History Interview for the Kalapana Project

with

Kini Pea

November 5, 1987

Kalapana, Hawaii

By: Johnnie Jovanovich

j before we start today I have a few questions that I would like to clear up from previous times. One was, in class the other day, someone was talking of gunpowder made out of awa root. People started laughing they said gunpowder out of awa root? And someone said maybe it was gum, like you put in your mouth, but it actually was gunpowder?

k yeah we dried it harvested, dried it, it was the roots. Then they put it bags and sent it to Germany. I don't know what part of the powder section it was, but that is what it is for.

j was it ever used here?

k no.

j Well that is cleared up, now I can tell them all on Monday. (laugh)

k ofcourse locally it is made for ceromonies or when you want a big kick, why it is a good way to go. It makes you go fast. (laugh) and of course across the South Pacific it is the main drink, except in Guam they have a young shoot of the coconut, used to go up there and cut it off like we did with the pineapple in Molokai, is we would take the top off and put sugar in it and let it sit put the top of the pineapple on and g
go back latter and squeeze it out.

read about a storm in 1920, of course you were only four years old at that time, possible a sunami or something, do you remember anything?
k I still trying to look for those pictures because that is about that time that those pictures were taken. because the clean ??? blow there well it just wasn't in. Because it just came in 27 or 28. It showed a different buildings, but like I said I will have to get that darn picture I looked twice already. Now this a family, the parents were teachers in this area and a the daughter came back to see if anyone knew anything about it then she left copies about it (pictures)

j so you do have some pictures of kalapana?

k I'm quite sure that is the one you are talking about.. (the storm)

j if you think of it sometime it would be nice to look at those.

k Yeah I will go back and ask my wife she probably put it away, i know.

j we are thinking about getting pictures, we need pictures that we can look at, and makes copies of, it depends if the people are comfortable with that. You refered to terms for your parents as a. pause Like what did you refer to your parents as when you were younger, compared as to know, would you call them.

k which one my real family, my real parent, or --

j how would you, well first of all your adopted family, Kini Aki?

k I used to call them father and mother. Well in Hawaiian papa or mama, and until I knew the Peas was my real family I used to call my real mother auntie. I mean that was what I was told she was I don't know.

j then as you got older did you refer to them as the same thing?

k Well father and mother, my real parents and at that time my grandmother, my mother mother was still alive. staying with my mother and dad, I mean my real mother and dad.

j So once you found out they weren't auntie and uncle, did you stat calling

k well I never did call my father uncle at all, I just called him

j so when you were a young boy you would call him that?

k um (yes plus a short comment ??)

j so how old were you when you found out they were your.

k I can't figure out what grade it was. (verbal counting relating to his brothers in sisters being in kalapana or off to school at Hilo.) below ten somewhere, I was in grade school.

(found out when he teased his sister at school and the principal called him and said don't you know that that is your sister?)

j So what was your relationship like with your brothers and sisters

k Well after that it was brothers and sisters. I talked to the folks and they said hey that is their problem for not telling you.

j It was their problem? (who)

k yeah, because they kept me ignorant until something happened. Although I used to go over there as a youngster and get milk. (laugh)

j so the rest of your brother and sisters, did they all live pretty much in this kalapana, kaimu area.

k no see the last one Kalani. He was the last one that stayed home until he went to the CCC camp and then went in the army, WWII. There was a girl between him and my other brother that is in Honolulu now. He was adopted by my uncle, my mothers brother, the one just below me. And the girl below him was adopted by medahime ???? that girl passed away. (unclear) and I was adopted out. the sister above me was adopted out, so and Peter was home with the parents and Elen, but Elen was adopted by my grandmother my grandmother was staying in the house (the pea house) so I mean it is hard to believe, but it is one of those things. my sisters name sake was after my grandmother (elen) and then my brother above my sister elen she was adopted out too. I think it was a lady on my dad's side relation, mo it was my dad's brother, JOhn alumai Pua, was adopted, that is how my brother got his name. Then sister above him, stayed home here, went to highschool in Hilo and then went to Honolulu to Normal school at that time that is where all the gails go to school, to be teachers and things like that. Then a my oldest brother, Gaberial, he was home here all almost all his life. exrent when he went to church conventions and things like

that. Before he died of course he was a minister at Mauna Kea Church.

j So once you realized they were your brother and sisters did you play with them or did you always play with them?

k we all played together and there was no you know particular, I don't know what you would call it a barracade or what, I used to go and spend time with them too. Sometime even stay over with them my real mother and dad for me to come over and stay with them. I was one of those who never was, my adopted parents was on the go too. he has a job in Hilo or in Volcano or at Keaau, why we move up there. Of course still farming in between. Then there is my grandmother in Waimea she always wants me to stay with her and I go up there.

j you mean your blood grandmother?

k no it was some relation to my dad and she was grandmother, my dad said she was my grandmother (????) she lived in waimea and her husband was a cowboy at Parker Ranch. I used to go up there sometimes, summer times and vacation periods. like I said my adopted parent when there was a job in a certain place , why we went with him.

j Did you used to refer to them as your adopted parents?

k Well no I just call them papa and mama. Well of course knowing that they were adopted parents, what more can I do?

j Now I've heard the word hanai,

k that is the Hawaiian word for adopted.

j is there difference between adopted to a relative and adopted to a non-relative?

k no.

j Both still Hanai, a ha.

k I mean when my uncle adopted my brother it was still hanai.

j so in those days was it pretty common to hanai parents?

k Well like brothers of the parents like a lot of them don't have any youngsters. They always take one of the youngsters and raise them. Some of them they take two or three. It is almost common with Hawaiian people to help families.

j How did you feel about being adopted?

k Then it was too late. I mean actually I don't think so
at all. If I was adopted or I was still with them. There was no
strain with them, the Pea family. Because my oldest brother was the lively
hood for the family. (he ??) educated all my brothers and sisters except
me I was with these people here.

j your name, when Kini Lebi Pea, How now Kini was the same first name
as your adopted father, is that common then that the first adopted.
k some of them they always named their son normally their name although
my dad didn't name my oldest brother but he did name one of the boys, but th
ey did name one of the boys Peter. My brother two above me was Peter
Clyde Kine Pea which is my dad's name too, So I would say it is almost
it would happen, and the girls too.

j so them as a kid your name was Kini Aki.
k Well yeah Kini Aki when I was until I went to Kamehameha schools. I went
there in eighth grade. I didn't know my name was changed, the principal
here went she submitted my application she had that name Kini Aki Lebi Pea
now my classmates at school well it used to be Aki Kini, I don't know how
she got it reversed like that .had Aki Lebi Kini Pea. I guess to keep the
Kini Lebi Pea together I don't know.

j Now does a name mean anything, I mean there are certain name that I hear
people are given a name, but they sort of have to live up to their name.
k Well yes in certain respects yes, like they expected me to live up like
my adopted father, I mean to be like him and all that. That is hard to
come by. And a, like I said in those days some of the girls were given
their mothers name, but like mine I always wondered where that Lebi came
from well until not too long ago. A cousin of mine had some relatives from
Niihau come over here and we were sitting there talking about names then
my cousin was telling this old lady about my name and I was part of
the family and her dad was my hanaid mothers brother. Then we were
talking talking and I said who was it on that side that had that name
Lebi? she popped right up and said oh yeah it was the youngest brother
of those two my adopted mother and brother the youngest brother was

j can you remember your earliest, what is the earliest thing you remember
k Well it is kind of hard to say the only thing I remember back is when
I was talking about that dog running at the waters edge and all of that and
my mother digging in the ground.

j your mother was planting something?

k no, one of these kahuna things, shooting star. Akualele, but when
she was doing that digging in the ground it wasn't form that she was,
somebody just a wanted to punish her for clearing someone elses happening
(i think happening that is what it sounds like) it was a family or somethi
ng that had problems from this one party (another group of people) putting
the curse on but mother cured and then this person that did that wanted to
punish my mother for relieving that parties punishment, because of I
that distintly. It is where that light brown house is there behind
mauna kea church there was an old red building like the hall of the
church there. and my adopted parents were heavy drinkers, they liked to
drink and a in that something went wrong and she started walding out into
the yard and she got down on her hands and knees and started digging in the
ground with her nose(??) the next day there was nothing there. That was
the

first thing I did the next morning was go down there and see.

J it wasm't there? (the hole)

k it was there and look at her no scars, no scratches, no nothing. This
kahuna, this one man who lived behind us and my dad said run up and get
uncle John, Makua. He was actually one of the strongest kahunas in this
area.

j medical?

k no talk prayer and whatever. My dad told me to run up and get him he
came down and my mother was all right he took her in the house and every
thing was alright.

j so what type of things did Johm Makua do?

k It was mostly prayer and chanting. some people say what is it the chinese
had taht tea , the portugese had something.

him doing.

k no that is the only one well he did many of them I heard but never scene
he has done a lot of fixing (unclear phrase about kahuna) Kamelamela famil
over here.

j kahuna fixing, is that to put a spell on someone or is it
k just relieve punishment he never the hawaiians do that too some
of the kahunas when they clear a person or make a person well makes that
punishment go back to that one who put it out, I have known that to happen
and well Johm Makua I never heard of him doing that, he is , I guess
a pretty good church man too. He don't believe in punishing teh
others .

j Is your mother too a kahuna of sorts?

k well she too has that power also, a lot of people come to here to
clear different things, about their punishment, not by physical, but by
some kinds of means of mental and something like that.

j I read something, I think in Joe chum fats book about this women her
husband was saying theses things to her so she put this certain grip
on him, he was paralyzed temporaraly, do you know what that is?

k Oh yeah it is the what we call a common thing a lua. It almost is like
getting to the nerves and paralyze the person, although the person that
does it can also undo it.

j did you ever see someone do it?

k no I did not but I did hear of it. That is a nastly, well actually
two person get up to wrestle in a square(end of tape gap)

j what were your parents like?

k in what way?

j well I know your father a truck farmer and did a lot of fishing and
did other carpentry work.

k well my mother was always weaving lau hala mats, taht is what paid
my way through Kamehameha school the lau hala mats. (many people would
come to his mother for mats)

k I would say not too strong they were kind of. (gap) they liked to go
to parties, to drink. I know my dad was we used to go up to pahoa and
okolehau, the japanese up there used to make it. Yeah almost every week
and they would drink wheter it was at home a party or what ever.

j did a lot of people drink?

k down here oh yeah, a lot of them made their own swipe, there own potato an
pineapple swipe and of course of buying alcohah they would by okolehau from
the japanese or go in to Hilo and buy regular liquor, but a lot of them woul
rather have this. home brew or swipe and most of the parties or luaus taht
was teh beverage.. When I was a youngster I used to drink potato swipe.

it is filling too but of course it can knock you out too. (laugh)

j so you would go around getting sort of knocked out on it?

k oh yeah. when, well several times I spose, my oldest brother I know
one church thing we had here We just got a generator for that church so he
put it outside so he made me resposible for the genertor make sure it is ok
I used to swipe his alcohah and go in there and drink my brother caught me
and he said "You no good god no good kid" because I drank, he didn't drink

j who would you dreink with?

k jsut myself, I don't want someone to tell on me. (laugh) and at parties
a lot of folks, not my folks used to coax me to drink, in those times to te
kids was a lot of fun. Get inebreated. (laugh)

j (laugh) that's great. What was the descipline like, did people yell
a lot or was it more spankings or

k there was some spankings, that I remember, at times though it is more wh
they are inebreated. Other parents teh same thing you hear kids screaming
from all over teh place. Something maybe they didn't like well they would t

it out on teh kids. (said at that time it was not considered child abuse)

j what were, what was the first thing you remember doing with your father?
early memories of your father kini aki?

(discussed in earlier interview)

j any other memories of family life?

k one my oldest brother gaberial they claim that he got this one gall in the toilet and seduced her, but there was claim he didn't because the baby came and the parents sent her to Maui and of course my brother stayed single the rest of his life.

j You left to go to school at Hilo and Oahu when you were about 15, did parents encourage that kind of thing to go for school?

k Oh yeah, that is sort of a prestigious thing to have one of your kids go to a school like Kamehameha. There not a lot of kids who had the chance so there wasn't a lot of pressure to stay here and work on the farm and be a farmer and keep up the tradition.

k no. well not if the youngster would want to go to school. But of course the income was shared

j so if you would make good money you would send some home.

k oh yeah.

j Do you remember celebrations at all like thanksgiving or christmas?

k the only things we ever celebrated was birthdays and christmas and kamehameha day, but never halloween, but just christmas, oh big deal christmas.

j what was christmas like?

k oh like any country home in the mainland I guess. Christmas tree and decoration, well we never used candles, we put ornaments and all that on that is about it. At school we always had some sort of christmas party.

j would you spend christmas with your family?

k It all depends where I am at sometime I'm up in Waimea, or I might be in Hilo or Kau with friends of the family. Depend sometime they would say oh let the boy come over and spend the holidays with us.

j so these were relatives of yours?

k Well yeah my adopted parents like in Kau, was adopted mother's family and well Waimea was the Pea family and Kona, I used to spend time in Kona too as a youngster. When it come time for vacation time I could spend a lot of times I spent up at the volcano the buster