

Interview 8 with Kini Pe`a. 8/6/89

by C. Langlas

(Note: Interview done at Kini's house in Kehena. Kini's wife Luella Pe`a also present.)

C: What date did you come back to the Big Island, to live here?

K: I know my brother passed away, and my two boys and I came home. [Ponders.]

C: You were on Oahu?

K: Yeah. Was that before I retired? In 71?

I was still on active duty when my brother passed away, came. Only Turner and I came home for that.

C: You stayed on Oahu for a while after you retired, yeah?

K: Oh, yeah. Casue my last kitty-cruise was, I was assigned on a O, navy oiler, Chipola. That was two years I was there before I retired. June 71 when I retired. The date he died was before 71 I think.

C: You moved over here quite a bit later then?

K: See, my first wife, she pass away in Honolulu. Oh yeah, we were living up, at the last was, we were at the [Pe`a's] Kaimu house. finally, she agreed to go back to the hospital. Tripler. Cause a lady in Kailua say, I'll take care of you. Well, she was worried about me and Lehua, my little girl at that time. And I say, well, we can take care of ourselves. So she went back and pass away in Honolulu. So I had to go back over there and make arrangements to bring her body back over here.

L: She died in 74.

K: 74. So. I'd say that we moved back here in 73.

C: So when you moved over here, did you live in the Kaimu house?

K: Well, was temporary.

L: You lived there for a while didn't you? Cause all your things were there, you were living there when we met.

K: Except, oh yeah, we had an apartment in Hilo. Oh yeah, I had the Kaimu house that time.

C: So then you and Lu married...

K: When did we get married sweetheart?

L: 76 (or 77).

C: What made you decide to come back to the Big Island? When did you decide?

K: Well, when we were still in Honolulu, with my first wife, we talk of coming back here. Cause she was from here too. She was a Hilo girl. She was Robert Keli`iho`omalua's cousin. So. We had decided to come back here, but we were waiting for the boys goin to school in Honolulu. At that time we were living over at Kailua. Then I retired. Well, we were gonna stay there for a while, then move back here when the boys got going. They did.

C: When you were still in Florida had you thought about moving back here to Puna?

K: We had decided way before went to Florida to come back.

That's what I had planned my duty [in the Pacific for]. xxx

C: When you joined the navy, had you always planned to come back here?

K: Well, there was no plans at that time. Free wheelin. When I was workin at Pan-American, Pacific division, well, figure I was gonna be home, anyway. xxx

C: I kinda had the impression tht when you were young you wanted to get outta here.

K: I worked on Young Brothers Tugs, interisland. _____ so I had my mind to be home here. Someplace. Of course, the states was nice, but still...Too far to travel.

C: I know your foster-mother died while you were on Canton I. After you went to Kam schools, did you have a chance to come back here?

K: Oh yeah. I did off and on, when I had a chance to I came back.

C: In the summers?

K: Well, when I finally got into Pan-American, I stayed down for several years. I came back the week before the war broke out.

C: While you were going to Kam schools did you come home for the summers?

K: Except the last two years. 36-37 I stayed. But the others I had to, cause there was no way I was old enough to go to work.

C: So actually you were around Kalapanaa up to...

K: 35. xxx

[We are talking about building the Mauna Kea church.]

C: Would that have been before you went to Kam school?

K: Oh yeah, way before. Cause my oldest brother helped us too, and my uncle William. But I always say, my dad wanted me cause I'm tall, with the paint-brush.

C: After you joined the navy, did you come back to Puna?

K: No. Never did till I retired. Never came home, cause I was always on the roll.

C: So when Kini Aki remarried, you wouldn't have seen him?

No, I never did see...him at all. No.

C: You did come back though when your [real] mother died. I wonder if he died before that?

K: Yeah, he died before that.

C: Did you write letters back and forth?

K: Oh yeah. Always did. Always in Hawaiian though. Even to my real mother.

C: So you knew that he had remarried.

K: No, to be honest I didn't. Till, I guess when I came home for my mother's funeral.

C: Could you tell me a little bit about that trip back?

K: Well, only had two weeks vacation. No even that, a week, because the other week was taken in travelling.

C: How did things look here when you came back that time?

K: Well, Kalapana area was the same. Hardly any changes. Pahoa was not as developed as it is. Was just small.

C: When you moved back here, when did you move to Kehena Beach

here?

K: You better ask Lu that.

L: When we got married.

C: Why this area particularly?

K: Well, was her place. This is her house.

L: I had been married, and my husband passed away.

K: Same time as my wife.

C: Oh. Now it all makes sense. I always wondered why you were living here instead of Kaimu.

K: I was her hitch-hiker.

L: The Kaimu house (wasn't available) because its all part of the family. All the family shares it. And at that time, some of them would stay there for a while. Came down weekends.

K; That's right. I had the apartment in Hilo, cause Lehua going to school in Hilo there too, wasn't she? Yeah. St. Joe's... She was grade school. She was about Kindergarten.

L: Well, when we got married, she was eight.

K: So be, second grade then. What happened to Leyton, wasn't he here then too?

L: He went over and lived with Turner, in Honolulu.

[part omitted/ transcribe later]

C: There's one other thing. About your mother being a kahuna, I want to clarify. You said there were two kinds of kahunas, one that cures (ho`oponoono) and one that harms. What would that be?

K: (can't remember the Hawaiian word)

Trying to figure that night we saw the shootin star. What my dad say. He was throwin net over by the canoe landing. He saw it, and start walkin home. Say, well, go home.

C: Was he worried?

K: Well, yeah. It's landed on our house. Then, after that, we're still alongside the Protestant church, then it took off again from our house.

C: When you go up to the church?

[tape ended]

K: Yeah. See, I believe she was in line for it too--the punishment.

Side B

K: Well, yeah, there's some, like my adopted mother. One night while they were drinkin. Well, they were both drinkers. Both, they like their booze, and, ____, all of a sudden she started takin off. And you know, she dug our yard with her nose. Next day we went out there, look, and it look like pig was in the yard. But then, the good kahuna was in the back of the house. John Makua. So. My father told me run up there, get him. Came down and then finish.

C: He took care of it.

K: yeah. And a...well, as course, the one that akualele was

trying to get to her I think, then, but... got this other guy.

C: Think that was just accident that it got the other guy?

K: I don't think so. I think it was sent out--you get there [to his mother], you rest. Then, if you don't, ok, you go to the next one. I've seen so much of it. It's kinda hard to believe that people do that to each other.

C: Did you ever see a akualele at any other time?

K: That's when we up there at Opihikao. My dad was buildin the church, Opihikao church, we were up there. That's when I saw that thing. was just going.

C: Couldn't see where it was heading.

K: No. The other one was. Well I don know. It happened to me, but probably, just Mother madness. She wanted to hurt me, or somethin. My real mother that is. I was going with this girl. Kam graduate, same class with me. My car stopped as soon as I turned to go down the pali. I couldn't move. It tried everythign. Low gear, and first. No way. Then, I don know why, I just say "Momma. Damn you." I could move. You know, it's hard to believe that that could happen.

And when I go married to my wife, Thelma, why, she never did come. I sent her a ticket. She didn't come, my brother came. Well, she say, oh, you enough for use. That's her excuse I guess.

C: you think she was upset?

K: Well, her thought was, we married a relative.

C: Too close.

K: Well, no, second cousin. But I guess with the family system, they don't believe in it. I didn't know, cause I wasn't brought up in their environment.

C: Anyway, she didn't like.

K: But, the thing we looked for was... our children. Because first wife's family, Robert's family and that, they all had that kukuma, twisted ankles, club feet.

C: What about on your Grandma's side, Keake li'ili'i?

K: Keake li'ili'is yeah, she was that way, she had club foot. And ah, lotta people feel that when you marry family, that happens. Well, we were worried for a while, cause my motehr thought that. She might put that spooks on us. But didn't.

C: Did your mother say she didn't like the marriage, or you just heard?

K: Well, she told me. Cause I went home to ask her whether it's alright. She say no.

C: The time your mother was punished and dug in the ground, you said it was because she had cured someone.

K: Could have been. We didn't know. I'm just thinkin that she had helped somebody out. And whoever put the spooks on this other person is trying to make it fall on her. In fact, John Makua say that the people did that. Cause that's what he fixed it up to go through, that's what released her from that.

C: So he thought he knew who had done it?

K: Yeah.

C: Do you know who she had cured?

K: No, that's between those two. Yo know, just sittin there in the chair, and they can be doin it.

C: But the person that she would cure, wouldn't they come to her?

K: Oh yeah, that yes. Like, I went up to get John Makua, brought him down to the house for that. Casue I guess she could have stayed there all night, diggin up the ground. Unbelievable.

C: How far away did he live?

K: Just back of our house. Next lot. Fact, they come through our yard to go to church.

[we talk about Lee's]

C: Talkin about John Makua, one time you said he could cure and also punish. But then you said you didn't think he punished.

K: Well, I haven't seen him, heard [of] him. But, my mother said he could too.

C: Oh, I was wondering how you knew.

K: Because, some of those kahunas could. When everything's settled, why, they turn around and punish the people. Like my mother, if she wanted, he could have done it too. Because I heard him ask her if she wanted.

Finally she say, no, cause there was something about family. She said no. I don't know whether it was my uncle Bill, or what. He was going with Aunt Kanoa at that time. I don't know whether there was something in that Kaheiki family. My mother said no, cause brother was goin with the Kaheiki girl.

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