

Tape No. k-kp-2

Oral History Interview for the Kalapana Project

with

Kini Pea (kp)

September 24, 1987

Kalapana, Hawaii

By: Johnnie Jovanovich (jj)

jj: This is the second interview I had with Kini Pea at the Star Of The Sea Catholic Church in Kalapana, Hawaii.

Today I would like to learn what it was like to be a youngster in Kalapana during the time you were growing up here. I want to know what it was like as a youngster to play, fish, swim, eat, work, surf anything that you did as a youngster in kalapana, okay?

kp: No we didn't surf (in Kalapana) in those days. Waikiki is the only place.

jj: They surfed in those days, ha?

kp: Waikiki, not out here, never. Of course canoe surfing when you come towards the canoe landing, that's about all when you come in with a canoe after you go out fishing. As a youngster I used to go to school here at Kalapana School. Spend a lot of time, actually, we just went swimming, thats about one of the things we had in those days to occupy time. That was at Wai o Kolea, Harry k. Brown Park now. Well used to be two big ponds one on the upper side and one where the kid pond used to be a pretty big area, infact where the drainpipes are you see in the ocean, the pond used to go way out there and the sands since then they come in there and move back, move back and now it's all covered. Another thing was going up to Punuluu swimming, of cour

at that time there was no roads beyond where Kalapana Gardens is, the road you see ended and just a trail to go to queens bath area is now and if you wanted to go swim up there to Punaluu, I used to walk, well of course all the kids here walked, way up there what we call mokuhulu which back right back you know where the treatment of papayas well way on up there, miles above there youngsters used to walk to school to kalapana.

jj: From there down? *Kapalaka?* *Keokea?* *Waihata Kai* *Waiholokai*

kp: And from Kapuau they use to walk to school. [Myself, I spent more time back back in what do you call the kilkea uka and the wai hua kui area when

50 the folks used to have a truck farm used to raise watermelon, tomatoes and all of that and then just come down here on weekends to come to the house here. I used to ride a horse from there down to school (wide grin) ride a horse to the property there (motions to the land across from the church) and let him loose in the yard, I come to school a lot of times I meet the kids when I come down, then go back the same thing. 50 Swimming is mostly done, well were down here on the weekdays well we go, that's our bathing place over there Harry K. Brown Park because all we had was catchment tanks, no freshwater plumbing like they are now on the city system. We did most our bathing in Harry K. Brown Park. I mean even them never had fresh water, but in the pond itself. My dad, like I said on the weekends we came down here. 50 When were down here when father Everest was building this (Star Of The Sea) I used to come down here at night and watch him paint inside the church itself. Right back here in those days (behind the church) there was big hall, father Everest had a hall put back here where the new bathrooms (are now) volleyball and basketball, that's the sports thing we had down here and of course you play softball and things in school. After hours that's the only place we had down here (the hall) then everyevery so often at weekends father Everest used to bring movies here

to show the people down here in that big hall. Of course the power
used to come from generators. We, because there was a lot of fishing
in those days, during the morning we go out for what do you call, up
like Milolii is favorite for now. At that time I would say there was
up here in the canoe landing there was about eight canoes set out there.
My dad had one, my guardian dad that is adopted dad. He had one, then
when we build another one, carve out of Monkeypod, we had two sitting
there (laugh) the people used to go out, well like the men folks used
to go out fishing then when they come back, they divided up the
catch among the people and if they had a big catch well they take it
and sell it up in Pahoa, just out of the car selling, no particular
market. Truck farming like I say we raised tomato, watermelon, sweet
potato and take them to Hilo. And I know my dad, when I say my dad
that is my adopted dad, dealt with the Kawamoto store in Hilo. He
tried to get the men folks down here interested in truck farming, they
weren't interested in truck farming. My oldest brother did (referring
to his kin brother) he took up truck farming, my dad did all he could
to help him out. Besides that he had, went into a old model T station
wagon with the sides only about that high (one meter). The cars were
scarce, at that time I think there were only two cars here, what we
had and the Kaina family. He was the deacon of the Mauna Kea church
and he was a mailman down here. Like I said sports wasn't too much
except when the hall was open down here, and most of the times it was
only on weekends, except when the kids come over to play at night, they
have to do it by themselves because none of them was supervised, in fact
there was no supervised (sports) just ganged together play ball. and
a lot of times on the weekends, the youngsters we use to spend time on
the Kaimu black sand beach at night with bon-fire sit around and show
you know chew the fat and all that kind of stuff. And of course the

summertime a lot of the families were scattered, some go to different islands. Hardly any of the youngsters were back here. ... thee a oh darn it I tried to look for those pictures a couple of days ago, well anyway I got to look again (pictures of old Kalapana showing the storm that just about wiped out the whole area, 1920 or so) The growth here as far as vegetation is tremendous, well of course that was sixty years ago. I went to Kamehameha School when I was 14. I couldn't go to Kamehameha school from here because they didn't have room they told me so had to go to Hilo junior high school one year before I could go. (laughs)

jj: So you lived in Hilo that year?

kp: Well one year, well it was family all my brothers and sisters. ... the a regrettable the education, well the teachers tried their best, like said I was handicapped from the beginning; I talk Hawaiian to the teacher she answers me, you know don't correct me, so when I went to Kamehameha school I was ?(quite)?. Like I mentioned a lot of times that if wasn't been with Pan American and in the Navy I probably still be pidgin english. (big laugh) I don't know maybe not.

jj: Do you speak pidgin english to a now?

kp: very seldom.

jj: Really, even to someone who speaks it mostly?

kp: Well I understand it, and I use it when I have to. Two occasions I find that it was very useful, and that was in Philippines and in Japan they picked up the Pidgin better than the straight english. Fishing out here in the old days used to be darn good. Milolii is the only place that I know of that goes great for that opilo fishing, were here they used to do it oh just about twice a week. Well as a livelihood, as well as there was an abundant of catch and they would sell them and get money for them. Of course a lot of it is take it home salt if and dried

fish like Milolii is doing now. They go fishing at night too, for papachi, call it now, used ot call uu and ^{Kawale'a} cavalei I still can't find the the English word for it , that's a night fish; people used to go fr here , paddle all th way up even past opihikau almost up to pohiki, of course when they paddle up it kind of easy coming you come with the current and the wind. they had a few canoes in Kaimu too, Kaimu beach kailuamaus had canoes there ... my family I know didn't have one (ki n family) because they were actually land people because during those days we had that a ranch up there in a paunau where you know the kamoamo area is (HVNP now) of course of ...

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That was the family that a?
My real family yeah. As far as I know they started out in that area they had a... in those days they had a factory up here you know the hapuu (a fern) they get that a shiny thing they make mattress and pillow and they were harvesting that up here(?) Then back of Kaimu I don't know if you have heard of black sand sub-division, well up there the family had ,I think, 75 acer plot and they were raising awa (a root) that was for shipment to Germany for gunpoder.
Wow! They made gun powder out of it?
they used to take it and chop blocks about that square (10sq cm) and bag it and ship it out. Some agent in Hilo I did'nt know as far as those time a youngster is not interested in what is going on except for fun and prowling. my real dad had two Japanese people I finally saw that in the records he has, I think I still have those records to Tehre was a lot of awa farming here. The cousins or relatives, you know where the spatter cone is? Up on the hill where they go steam bath. ok just in that area they raised awa too; dried it and shipped it out. OUT side of truck farming there was one thing they always did down her during the summer and that was goat drive; every summer they had one. My real dad and brother was in charge of it all the time, because the National Park had them head drive of course getting the people

from up and down here to go and a he used to go way below the volcano there and drive the goats up to where Wahaula is (heaiu) . They always had a pen there. People can come and help themselves to the goats if they want to. one of the things when they come for meat my dad get sth hides from them and each tail is clipped and sent to the Nat. Park for the count, that used to be a lot of fun. Of course in those days

jj: (I cut in) He had a farm up above there.

kp: Well yeah in that area. But they had the Kaimu house and the one up in the the forest, black sand beach subdivision. My dad had a truck farm in between those areas here, we had a truck farm. We had some property up in kupuhua too just across from the kalapana gardens raised sweet potatoes there. Most of the people raised their own Taro well over here the old thing they used to have of morning they go fishing , afternoon they go up to the mountain for their Taro patch way up in the forest. That has been the standard thing around here for a long time. Of course people always look forward for the goat goat drive people down here and it has been known I don't know for why, but the best cowboys are from Kalapana-Puna area. Shipman a had it, Parker Ranch had it; lot of the old-timer at Parker Ranch they came from here. Back up in volcano, where volcano golf course is a big horse ranch, buster brown ranch back up in there, he had all w these cowboys from down here. He was raising horse back in there. Part of the time I used to go spend time up there with folks from here. Like my dad he was a carpenter and sometimes he had to work up there. Most of the time he oversee the county road work that's in the area; lower Puna. My dad he built that church there Mauna Kea church, he built the Ophikau church and (pula) church. (now he talked about the moving of that church and the plan to move painted church for fear of volcano) That cross there (points to the cross high on the bluff between the pond and the ocean, near church) everybody thought there was some significance to it, parish just a the Mauna

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kea church or what, I wasn't here at that time put that up for sunrise services Easter. They thought it was for some significant reason, it isn't. All this area sunk down two feet in 1975 during an earthquake. All this area the canoe landing and down to kaimu.

jj: What did it look like at Wai o kolea (hkb park) when you used to swim there.

kp well it's a there was hardly anything there but ponds no bathrooms the two ponds were pretty deep above the road and below the road towards the ocean. I would say it was over nine feet deep, but that the you see that wall there around the kiddy pond behind the church my brother when he was president of the lions club built that to prevent the sand from filling the pond full, once the ocean starts coming ther is nothing you can do. (think he said that as the old ponds at hkb park are now filled)

jj: Now the ponds you are talking about, they are no longer there?

kp: nope the ocean side one is all covered with where those coconuts are planeted in, that used to be the kiddy pond. now the mountain side of the road the same thing used to be little bit bigger but it kept filling in , filling in of course growth has taken a lot of it. The spring (fresh water outlet at the bottom of the pond) and drink (the fresh water) the one down here too at regular queens bath had a spring. *ope*

F [We used to take our nets like the opilo nets after we come in after everthing is tied down well you take the nets down there and rinse it of in the fresh water and then come back we used to have poles with ohia wood across for runners and we used to hang our nets on them.

jj: now the road that ran between the ponds, is that the road that is still there.

kp: still there yes.

kp: So the road hasn't been changed at all?

Well it was widened some. Then with the subsidence, the two foot they raised it right above the old one.

jj: How big were these ponds like in relation to the size of this room here? (The outdoor gathering place behind the church that is described in other notes)

kp: O Wai o kolea was I say three times the width of this , no about the same , but like I say it extended out towards the ocean are where the drain pipes are. Upper side not to much. We used to swim on the Mak side more because of the distance. the black sand the high hill used to be a lot higher then what it is now and a under that road there is a tunnel that used to be the sports we used to have dive from one side of the road to the other.

jj: So you would swim underneath the road?

kp: Yeah, I have a feeling it's not open any more. I think the tunnel was put in so ht e water could go from one side of the road to the other. and there used to be a lot of gold fish in there. There was a lot of alge in there too, it didn't bother us in those days.

jj: this would be both a place for you to swim and to play and also to take a bath in .

kp: yeah a ha. Well like a lot of people are using Queens bath that water up there is almost fresh, but it is a little brackish.

jj: Did the waves break like they do now out by drain pipes, are was it different?

kp: Well the sand was higher almost five to seven feet sand dune out there you can't see it from the pond, you got to climb over (to see the ocean) one of the things people used to like about waikolea the big pond onthe ocean side was a lot of people would break in their horses run them on the sand right form here over. then take them in the water and swima round , swim around. It's a darn good way to break horses

kp: ~~Yeah~~ that's neat (dad) cowboys down here that's what they did. Like all the

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horses I had down here the fellows would use the pond to break the
the horses in. After long trips people would always put their horse
in the pond.

jj: Did you swim in the Ocean?

kp: Well the best place for swimming in those days was kaimu.

jj: Better than at Waiokolea?

kp: oh yeah well Kaimu, well now you know where the coconut trees are use
to be from there out was a sand hill. Where the road is now, no ,
that has gone in the back you see how it goes where it goes on this
side of black sand beach (behind it) Well the road used to go almost
straight across and the sand pile used to be outside of that. We had
a two story house in Kaimu and you cant see the ocean from the house

jj: (i cut in on him) because the sand would be so high.

kp: yeah the sand was very high

jj: so you would go swimming in the ocean down there, well the sand would
stretch out in the ocean for a long ways. It (the water) would
go gradually out. my brother used to swim out there, kalapana kids
used to come over there go swimming and the other pond this end of
Kaimu(?) that used to be our rinsing spot. Also that used to produce
little red shrimps that we used for the opilo fishing. of course they
papaya those days we called it nikana mashed up coconut and mashed up
mixed with the shrimp for chum for the opilo. Right here just when
you go pst these flats and down used to be a washing pond on that side
of the road where the ladys washed their cloths on the other side
used to b'a long pond that goes almost to HKB. Park , you can see the
swampy like area on this side of the road by the sand hill. The sand
hill used to go way back there used to be another pond too, but shall
that is where the kids swam most of the time. and we used to go over
to where the ladys wash cloths to rinse off. Because that water was
kind of half brackish. (Laugh)

kp: *Long Way*

jj: So it has really changed quite a bit?

kp: oh yeah

jj: So you didn't surf, but would they body surf?

kp: oh yeah lot of body surfing and of course diving, lot of diving, of course off Kaimu ther it is good sea urchin spots. we used to go diving for the sea urchins and the time for that is when the lau hal plant is in bloom that is when the sea urchins are good what they ca the meat is full. (laugh) there used to be quite a lot, I wish I could count or know the amount of people that were living here, ther was quite a few. Between Mokuhulu and kapaahu

jj: More than there are now do you think?

kp: Oh yeah, Well now mostly influx ,but what I mean is the people actually born and raised here, there was quite a few, because like my family hell there was ten of us plus relatives around us and so forth like htat then the parties which were almost occansional that thre were always parties going on birthdays, weddings, sometime just luau for the heck of it, just to get everybody together and enjoy themself. the atmosphere down here at that time was like that.

jj: What were luaus like?

kp: Well just food and drink like they are now but now they go for that hard stuff those days they used to have potato swipe and home brew (beer) Pineapple swipe was not know here they used to try it but grow enough to make it. Famous drink in those days oka???

jj How do you spell that?

kp: okole-hao you know what that means?

jj: Well (laugh) does it means it will put you on your okole?

kp hao is iron, iron but is what they call that drink it was made out ti root. We used to have a factory here that manufactured it but I don't know what happened to it.

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So the luaus in those days were of... now of course we have rice well rice and salad (mac salad) in those days no there were sweet potato, bread fruit -- whole not ground up into poi just sliced, and Taro same thing sliced, halopia of course thats coconut pudding made out of starch and well that I think it's a common when people started coming to the islands they brought corn starch cause thats part of the ingridiant coconut milk and sugar ... well kololo the pudding itself is never for a regular luau if it's a special like wedding birhtday parties then they do make it. of course now too in those days fruits were unknown on the table you eat fruits when you want not as part of the meal like how it is now you have fruits in the morning or something like that in thsoe days never had that youe eat it when you want to pineapple or apple or orange not as part of the meal depending on..... sweet stuff wasn't too much because a oh I don't know well it's about once a week that happens, lot of them go to town for that to get cookies ofr all that kind of stuff, sweets. As a home thing no very seldom see it around.

jj: would there be a kalua pig

kp: Kalua pig ,,raw fish, poke, sea weed like ? you get over here the a halopia almost standard in the luau thee well that's about tthe main staple there is all the time well of course drinking (laugh) is the part that is always on the go.

jj: so would the kids partake in any of the drinking?

kp: Not at that time. there was sodas stuff like that juice was never in those days it was never introduced at that time. Of course you had the young coconuts, as you wanted you go get it not as part iof the set up. Crackers was kind of a salon piolt and cream was kind of popular with the old folks and kids too. Of course bread was kind of popular too bread and butter and jelly. then

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of course down here the Lee, Lee's had the bakery place of theirs we used to go down there and eat fresh bake stuff and have coffee down there, but it use to be ourt families thing to do when they go to Hilo to stop in Pahoa and have breakfast because it took hours to get from here to Hilo in the old model T. Then they had luch in Hilo and when they come home eat the goodies from Hilo what they bought in town I guess.

jj: So you had the model A

kp: Well no at first we had the chevy but the others had my brother had the model t Ford and Carlie kaima had a Model T Ford that's about all that the three vechies were in the lower Puna area.

jj: That's when in ...?

kp: almost in the 1930's quite a few of them of the reidents here had cars but up until then there was maybe 1925 there about why transportation was kind of limited and yamaguchi here was one thing we used to call him tanaka well I say almost all the old buildings in this area he and his dad deliverd all the lumber down here for

jj: Did they have a truck?

kp: yeah that use to be there job they use to have an old dimond T truck, hard rubber tires. (from Hilo)

jj: was he one of he few japanese people in the area?

kp: No he didn't live here, he lived in Pahoa. Because Pahoa was like the business town that is where the train use to come.

jj: would the train come to here?

kp: Yeah come to Pahoa. Not down here no. At that time see they had a track you know that break water in Hilo? All the rocks from that break water came form Kapoho. Trained from KAPOHA TO Hilo. Train track track went were railroad ave in Paridise Park is.

TRain station (in Pahoa) was above where the Akibono is now

jj: Well this has been great, because I wanted some (he breaks out in a laugh and I'm talking with a laugh in my voice at this) more information on your childhood and I would like to talk about some other things but maybe another time we'll cover a little bit at a time. Also what you said today will give me some other question to ask.

kp: You know in forums and question and answer like this you learn more from that than you do (laugh) I do I know anyway.
that
jj: that's great.

kp: ok.

jj: It's great meeting you I like getting to do this, so I look forward to continuing our meeting if it's ok with you.

kp: Oh, it's alright, ... lets see I should ... next thursday will be alright and I hope I don't get interrupted.

jj: ok we will see you on are you coming monday

kp: oh the meeting

No Transcript Set #2