

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: King Peterson, 75, retired business manager

*"I used to get on a streetcar, go down to the Kekaulike Street [market] to buy the poi for the family. In those times, the poi was real 'expensive'--thirty pounds for one dollar."*

Peterson, Hawaiian-Caucasian, was born on June 22, 1911 in Honolulu. His parents were David and Harriet Peterson. In 1919, the family moved to Waikiki where they built their house on the corner of Koa and Uluniu Avenues. His mother remained there until her death in 1970.

Peterson attended Ka'ahumanu School through the seventh grade, then continued his education at Punahou. As a senior in high school he traveled to Dayton, Ohio to train with the National Cash Register Company, where he stayed for the next three years.

Shortly after his return to Hawai'i, Peterson married Jane Tollisen. They had three children. The Petersons remained in Waikiki for a while then moved to Palolo in 1945 and Kane'ohe in 1951.

Peterson worked for the National Cash Register Company for forty-four years. Since his retirement, he enjoys being with his family in Kane'ohe and keeps busy maintaining his home. He also enjoys socializing and loves to throw a good party.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

King Peterson (KP)

April 11, 1986

Kāne'ohe, O'ahu

BY: 'Iwalani Hodges (IH)

IH: This is an interview with King Peterson at his home in Kāne'ohe, Hawai'i on April 11, 1986. The interviewer is 'Iwalani Hodges.

Okay, Mr. Peterson, can we start out by asking you when you were born?

KP: Yeah. I was born June 22, 1911.

IH: And where was this?

KP: At O'ahu Place, which is on South King Street. And I don't think that place is there anymore.

IH: O'ahu Place?

KP: Yeah.

IH: Was that a hospital or something?

KP: No, no. I don't know whether it was a home birth or whether it was in the hospital, but didn't make too much difference. I came out in one piece, so. . . .

IH: Oh, O'ahu Place was a street?

KP: Yeah.

IH: Okay. And can you tell me something about your mother? What was her name?

KP: Her name was Harriet Jones before she married my dear father, then changed to Harriet Hi'ilani Peterson.

IH: Where was she from?

KP: I believe my mother was born in (Waiāluā, O'ahu). Yeah. She lived a nice, full life. She was about eighty-six when she died. She

was graduated from Kamehameha School for Girls. She graduated in 1904 with quite a few other gals. Some of them were, you know, kind of well known around town. Like Aoe McGregor, for instance, and all that gang. She [i.e., KP's mother] used to play basketball. She was the head of her team. She was a captain of a team. That was in the good old days at Kamehameha. And she was associated, in her lifetime, with a lot of the different Hawaiian organizations. Well, at one time, I can remember when we stayed in Waikiki, she portrayed Queen Lili'uokalani down at the Mission Memorial Hall [i.e., Mission Houses Museum]. They had a tableau or pageant over there, and she. . . Well, actually, she knew Queen Lili'uokalani.

IH: Oh, she did?

KP: Mm hmm [Yes]. And as a matter of fact, my brother above me, Richard, he sang for her at one time in his life. Yeah, mm hmm.

IH: And how was it that your mother knew the queen?

KP: Oh . . .

IH: Socially or something?

KP: Yeah. So all in all, why, she was pretty well acquainted with most things in Honolulu from the days when they used to ride around in hacks. You know, horse and buggy, until the cars came in. That's a long time ago. I remember those old hacks.

IH: Oh, yeah?

KP: Yeah. Down at the piers. We used to go down there. Yeah. When we stayed in Waikiki, Koa and Uluniu [Avenues], my grandfather lived with us then. He used to be great on making these Hawaiian brooms from the coconut leaves, you know? He used to . . .

IH: Oh, the ni'au brooms?

KP: Yeah, he used to make hundreds of those things. He used to go down the beach and sit down, and talk to all the Haole tourists. He was a very amusing guy. He could relate about many things.

IH: What was his name, your grandfather?

KP: Eddie. Eddie Jones.

IH: Eddie Jones.

KP: Mm hmm, yeah. He was an expert when it came to kāluai pig and all that. Oh, he knew that thing frontwards, backwards, and upside down. Those were the days when, you know, after they'd killed the pig, they go to clean the hair off the pig. They'd break bottles. And the sharp edge, that's what they used to shave the pig with.

IH: Oh!

KP: Of course, in-between time, I guess they used to have a few little sips of 'okolehao.

(Laughter)

KP: The main thing was, as long as they get the pig in the imu and covered it up with those (wet burlap) bags, and then the dirt. Yeah. Oh, he used to make delicious kind. He knew the thing.

IH: Did he make it at your house in Waikīkī?

KP: Yeah, right.

IH: So, you had an imu right there on your property . . .

KP: Waikīkī, and also when we stayed at Diamond Head. He used to kālua pig out there, too.

IH: Was that still a customary practice to have an imu on your property at that time?

KP: No, no. One would have a party.

IH: Oh, just when you had the party? You just dig it?

KP: Yeah. And my mother was famous for those party things. Oh, my goodness. She used to get all of her old cronies, you know, come out to the house at Koa and Uluniu [Avenues] then. And one thing she was a stickler about, was time. If she told you to be there by twelve [o'clock], you better be there by twelve. And I don't mean five minutes past twelve. Oh, she was fussy about that. Oh, yeah. And all these old babes, they knew that, you know. Like Mrs. Thurston, and Mrs. Lucy Barber, and Aoe McGregor, and all those old bucks. They used to just love to come over there because my mother'd have so much food on the table. If you just look at the thing, you're full already. But these old babes would come sit down and talk story. And get the fish, and pick each bone and make a nice little bone pile out of it, talking. They talk about boys and, you know, all this stuff. You know how girls are. No, I don't, but. . . .

IH: (Laughs) What kind of foods did she prepare for the party?

KP: A lot of the raw stuff. Like the crab. Make it so that the fat of the crab is showing on the top, and whether it was a black crab or the white crab. And then, fish, the raw fish. Not the sashimi type. You know, the regular kind that you lomi, and put the limu and the chili pepper and the 'inamona in there, and all that stuff. My mother, in her day, when we stayed up Diamond Head, she used to go and catch squid. Oh, she was an expert. She knows how to find those things, you know. Yeah, yeah. And limu, the green kind, the

wāwae'iole or whatever. And then, the hot kind. You ever eat that hot kind?

IH: Ah, that's the 'opihi limu?

KP: Oh, chee, I don't know whether 'opihi or . . .

IH: They call it 'opihi limu, but it's kind of hot, yeah? It's crunchy?

KP: No, that's 'opihi moemoe. No, not the sleepy one. (I think it's limu lipe'epe'e).

IH: It's kind of hot. Yeah, I've had that.

KP: Well, we stayed out at Diamond Head. You walk right down to the sand, you know. No problem at all. And, gee, we lived at Diamond Head quite a few years during the war, the First World War. There were two houses in the yard. One was the McKinneys'. Kenneth McKinney, Kainoa McKinney, Pearl McKinney, Minnie McKinney, Fred McKinney, all of that. And, oh God, I was only about four or five years old then. Old Man McKinney used to tell me that I was a slacker because I didn't go and fight the Huns, which were the Germans, you know.

(Laughter)

KP: And me, just able to walk.

(Laughter)

KP: Yeah. He used to always tell me I was a slacker. But that was a nice family. The old lady, Old Lady McKinney was a good cook. She used to make all kinds of goodies, and chocolate cakes, and all that kind of stuff.

IH: So how long did you live at Diamond Head?

KP: Well, we lived there, oh, about five or six years. And then, we moved to a place on Koa and Uluniu [Avenues] about 1918.

IH: Why did you move from Diamond Head to Waikīkī?

KP: Well, because we'd purchased this lot to build a house. So that tract was Pualeilani Tract. We were one of the first houses there on Koa [Avenue].

IH: Do you know who he purchased that from?

KP: No. No, I don't. I remember their real estate man or the man handling the whole deal was a guy by the name of Beadle, I believe his name was.

IH: You folks had your own house built?

KP: Yeah, mm hmm. Right.

IH: Did your father help in building it or was it contracted?

KP: Contract. Yeah. That was the guy that ran the bar down at--the Rialto Bar? Neves and the other guy was Fernandez. Two of these guys. They're the ones that built the house.

IH: Mm hmm, and can you describe the house?

KP: Yeah. The house had, let's see, one, two, three, four, five bedrooms. Then the fifth bedroom, my mother--it was taking up a good portion of the house, so my mother had my grandfather--her father--tear the walls down, and that was her party area. One of those parties, I remember, my grandfather built a table to house about fifty people. He curlicued the thing around. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

IH: One table seated fifty?

KP: One continuous table, he built inside there. Grandfather was---he was connected with the OR&L [Oahu Railway and Land Company], you know, O'ahu Railroad. He used to fix the air brakes on those trains that went from Honolulu to Ka'ena Point, Kahuku, and all that. My mother's brother--my grandfather's son--was Oliver Jones, and he was a conductor on one of those trains. He was a big fellow. Strong man. Not like "Strong Man" Khadafy, but he was a strong man. He used to throw net. They'd stop the train down at Ka'ena. He'd get off. This throw net was a 100-pound net. They don't have those kind of animals anymore. But this guy was big and he could throw that thing, you know, catch 'em. (KP jokes.) Blind mullet and all.

(Laughter)

IH: And so, how did your grandfather come to stay with you in Waikīkī?

KP: Oh, he used to stay out at Pālama, then my mother told him to come out and stay with us. So he was out there at Diamond Head. When we moved to Koa Avenue, why, he moved with us.

IH: Whereabouts on Diamond Head did you folks stay?

KP: At 316--I even remember the number--3165 Diamond Head Road. As a matter of fact, when we stayed out at Diamond Head Road, I remember when they put the cement down for the road. Yeah. I can also remember the Love's Bakery truck coming out there. It was a chain drive affair. And this guy that used to sell the bread and whatnot, he used to have long sleeves and he had rubber bands around his wrists here to hold his sleeves down. Bread, at that time, was five cents a loaf. It wasn't wrapped or it was not

sliced. But that's what they did in the old days. But it was good bread for a nickel. These days, with all the automation and with all the improvements in the way to do things, bread is still about sixty-nine cents a loaf or something like that. Of course, if you get the better kind, that's \$1.09 or whatever.

IH: So did the bread man deliver?

KP: No, he used to come out there and whoever wanted bread used to go to his truck.

IH: Did he come around daily?

KP: Yeah, yeah. Because it doesn't take a bunch of kids long to eat up a loaf of bread, you know.

IH: Yeah. (Chuckles) What other peddlers came around?

KP: Well, this guy wasn't a peddler, but he had a long gray beard, and his name was Sanford B. Dole. Yeah, he used to walk up right by our place. You remember Sanford B. Dole?

IH: Uh huh, uh huh.

KP: Yeah, I've seen that guy. Yeah.

IH: Did he live in your area?

KP: Well, I don't know, but he used to walk past going up towards the lighthouse. I saw that old character. (Chuckles) I don't know if they made Gillette razor blades then, but his beard was pretty long. Reminds me of my son. He's got a beard down that long, too. Yeah, my boy Ed is in Simi Valley, California. He works for the phone company, and I don't know how they let him get by with it. But he says, "If you think I'm bad, you ought to see some of these other characters that work here." So, I don't know. A beard is kind of a dangerous thing because, you know, it's true maybe you can hide something in there, but you can also get it caught in machinery. If you bend down, gee. Like a washing machine or a dryer. If you stuck your head in there and the thing's whizzing around, why, it'd pull you in with it. (Chuckles) Nice warm place to be, though, on the other hand.

IH: When you were living at Diamond Head, did you folks do a lot of fishing?

KP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I wasn't too much on that fishing bit, but my brother Mel and my brother Reuben--my oldest brother Reuben--they used to go out fishing. Mel was pretty good with a throw net and a spear gun. And my brother Reuben went with a surrounding net. That was his bag of tea. Mm hmm, yeah.

IH: Was fish plentiful at the time?

KP: Well, let's put it this way, my mother used to tell my brother Mel, "I want some of this kind of fish," and he used to catch it. But nowadays, you know, all you have is a vacant ocean out there. Because, well, lot of the---like the Filipino people for instance, they go out, they catch fish that are one inch, two inches, three inches, like that. And that way, the fish have a hard time expanding. The population gets less and less and less.

IH: So at that time, you could still choose what kind of fish you wanted?

KP: Yeah, yeah.

IH: Oh, that's pretty good.

KP: Whether it was kala, or whether you want manini or weke or whatever.

IH: Okay. What about your father? Can you tell us something about your father?

KP: Yeah. My father was a customs broker. I don't know where he met my mother, probably up Kamehameha School. My father looks like a Haole, but actually he's part-Hawaiian. And he went to the old Fort Street School. Then he went to the St. Louis School that was down on River Street. Oh, he'd been in the custom brokerage field for a long time. He was a president of the American Brokerage firm there. He was a man that enjoyed cigars. He used to smoke cigars by the carload, at least ten a day. You always saw him with a cigar in his mouth. My mother (chuckles) was never too fond of cigars but what could she say? Here was a guy bringing home what--bacon, money, like that. So . . .

IH: And what was his name?

KP: David Louis Peterson. Nice man. He was a kind man and wasn't the noisy type. But he used to do, in his younger day, mischievous things, like all boys, I guess. He had several brothers. One of his brothers was a judge in this town, Fred Peterson. Of course, he's been long gone. And he had another brother, William Peterson, Willie Peterson, who was an artist and a real estate man.

So, we lived a nice life out at Diamond Head. Big yard, lot of coconut trees, lot of parties, and like that. So, I must have inherited the party instinct from my mother because I have a few over here, this house. People that come in here walking on two legs walk home on one. You know.

(Laughter)

KP: So, we gather around here and we get the instruments out. I invite one gal here, she plays the piano. I'm just a one-finger piano player. I can't play the bass with my left hand because I'm

paralyzed in this hand. I can only drink beer with this hand. Oh, well, we'll have one coming up on the twenty-first of June. We'll have a few . . .

IH: Is that for your birthday?

KP: Yeah. This friend of mine, Clifford Awana, he has a birthday on the twenty-third. So, actually, my birthday's on the twenty-second. So we join hands and have our party all one time.

IH: When you were living on Diamond Head, did you folks go down to Kapi'olani Park much?

KP: Oh, yeah. See, the streetcar used to come down to where Diamond Head Road begins from Kalākaua [Avenue] right into Diamond Head. It used to end right there. Right as you get off the streetcar there's a little---there was a Japanese man that had a pushcart who used to serve shave ice and candy and all that stuff. Yeah, this old guy. After pau hana he used to push this thing down the street, take it home. Next morning, push it all the way back.

IH: Oh, did he live in Waikīkī?

KP: He lived in Waikīkī, I believe, yeah. Streetcars, of course, you don't see those anymore. I used to ride those things when I used to go down to the fish market. This is when we stayed at Koa and Uluniu [Avenues]. I used to get on a streetcar, go down to the Kekaulike Street [market] to buy the poi for the family. In those times, the poi was real "expensive"--thirty pounds for one dollar.

IH: Thirty pounds?

KP: Thirty pounds for one dollar.

IH: Is that how you bought it? In thirty-pound bags?

KP: Yeah, yeah. I know because I used to drag the stuff home on the streetcar. And I mixed all the poi for the family.

IH: Mmm, you must have a strong arm. (Laughs)

KP: Well, in those days, the poi was not pre-strained like it is now. And there's only one secret to mixing poi. When you start off with the water, put a little bit, then increase it as you go along. You know, put a little water and mix it, when that disappears, then put a little bit more water. Then the other task was, after you got it to the right consistency, then strain it. We had regular poi strainers. Poi is strained in another bowl, see. Then pour all this stuff inside there, wrap 'em around, then squeeze the bugger.

IH: You mixed it before you strained it?

KP: Sure. Otherwise, it's too pākīkī. You couldn't---oh, yeah, you

got to get it soft, edible. So if you get some people with two fingers, three-finger poi, like that. Yeah. I mixed all the poi for the family.

IH: So that was a job, then, mixing poi.

KP: Yeah. Well, I never liked to mix small amounts. You got usually this big--you know, well, thirty pounds at one whack. Yeah, that's the way I used to mix it.

IH: And did your family serve poi daily?

KP: Sure. Yeah, yeah. I wasn't too much of a poi eater. As a matter of fact, even to this day, even like fish for instance, sashimi, I haven't eaten one piece of sashimi to this minute. That's why I like Budweiser. It's got no bones in it, you know.

(Laughter)

KP: But I do like the dried fish, especially aku. Well, some people like the dried aku just like that, cut it and eat it, but I don't. I like to cut it up and put it in ti leaves and steam it for half an hour, forty-five minutes, and then. I like that better. To me, there's more taste to it.

IH: Did your mother used to do that?

KP: Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. She was great with this food business. My mother was a great cake maker, too. But she hated to cook. Good cook, but she used to always say, "Oh, I hate to cook." Well, she cook for seven. There were seven of us kids. There's four boys--I'm the youngest of the boys--and there were three girls. My oldest brother's named Reuben, and my next brother was Mel, my next brother was Richard, then what's left, me, King--only about half an inch left. Then, my sisters were Moana, and Nani, and Harriet. So, there's actually, out of the family, there's only two of us left. Me and my sister Harriet.

IH: Is "King" your given name?

KP: It's funny how I got that name. I was born in the period of coronation of England. You know, King George V? So, they couldn't figure what to name this funny-looking guy. So, they said, "Well, why don't we name him after the king of England?" So, my name is King George. And my Hawaiian name K-O-N-I, my uncle came on horseback all the way from Waialua to Honolulu to tell my mother, "I want that child to have my Hawaiian name." And that's how I get my name, K-O-N-I. Yes. So, right now, there's three of us, actually. There's King Jr.; he has my name, the whole thing; and that boy that just walked out of here, he's number three. Yeah, so, there are three of us. So, if the telephone rings, they say, "Can I speak to King Peterson?"

And I say, "Well, which one do you want? Senior, junior, or sophomore?"

(Laughter)

KP: Yeah, confusing world, isn't it?

(Laughter)

IH: Okay, so when you moved to Koa and Uluniu, you said you were in one of the first houses there. What did the rest of the area look like?

KP: Well, it was kind of vacant. Right across the street was a Hustace family. The old man drove a Chalmers automobile. He was one of the previous fire chiefs. There were three . . .

IH: That's not the Hustace on the beach, though, is it? The one you're talking about?

KP: All of those Hustaces are holding hands someplace along the line. The kids, there were three kids over there. There was Waldimer, and Tommy, and the sister. . . . What was her name? Anyway, she was--Thelma, that was her name.

IH: And they lived across the street from you?

KP: Yeah, right across the street from . . .

IH: Is that on Koa?

KP: On Koa. Yeah. In years that went by, they had, in the same place, they had the Florentine Gardens where they served da kine Italian food? Da kine spaghett[i]. Yeah. And they had bottles of wine hanging on the trees. You know, bottles. At least, the empty bottles. The kind with the straw covering outside.

IH: When did they put that in?

KP: Oh, chee, I don't remember the year. But it was there for quite a while.

IH: And was there anyone else on the block when you moved in?

KP: On that block?

IH: Uh huh [Yes].

KP: Well, right next door to us in time, Freddy McNamara, Gordon McNamara. Would you know those names? And Mrs. Weild. Mrs. Weild owned the Palm Tree (Inn, located on Kalākaua Avenue near Fort DeRussy) and right next door was the Island Liquor. They owned that little moneymaker down there. I used to go down there, sit

down, spend what little money I had in my pockets. I used to open and close the doors down there. Oh, I used to have a great time. Yeah. The old guy that ran the place was Tony Tavares. Yeah, it was a funny thing about that guy, you know. As much money as I spent in there, the guy never ever gave me a free drink. Isn't that funny? Yeah, if I were running a bar and somebody spent some nickels, I'd tell the bartender, "Ey, send that guy a little giggle water." Sure. Some of these people, everything's business.

IH: The part of your block that was vacant, did that have any type of distinctive vegetation like kiawe trees or anything like that?

KP: No. Well, it took a little while for them to build houses here and there, and there and there, till they finally filled the place up. I remember, well, it was us on the corner. Then next was Weilds, and next was Bill Charlock. He and his wife Gertie and his boy William Charlock, Jr. And then, next to that on the same side of the street was the Pualeilani Hotel run by a guy named Mr. Harris. But those things have all been knocked down, replaced with blocks of cement that look just like high-rises.

IH: Well, there's a Pualeilani Hotel now. Is that different?

KP: They might have renamed the new hotel Pualeilani, but the other one, they must have knocked down. It's been a few moons since I've been out in that neighborhood, you know. [The present Pualeilani Hotel is located on Ka'iulani Avenue near Ala Wai Boulevard.]

IH: And what school did you go to?

KP: Well, I went to two schools. The first was Ka'ahumanu School. And then, from there, I went to Punahou School. I went to Punahou School from the seventh grade. I didn't graduate from Punahou School because the year I was supposed to graduate, I went to Dayton, Ohio, to the National Cash Register School. By the time I got over there was just about the time that loud noise they heard around the world which was the 1929 crash. And why they kept me on there, I don't know, but coming from such a distance, why, they kept me on. I was one of the few that they did keep on. They closed everything up, more or less, because everything was in tough shape. So let's see, I was there for, oh, about three years. So, in time, why, they finally hired people back. But I saw many of them go. Every once in a while the job boss would say, "Mr. so-and-so, pack your tools. Out."

IH: Was that the first time you were off the island?

KP: First time I went to Mainland, yes.

IH: What was that like?

KP: Well, it was quite an experience. We went across on the train. Not airplane. I left Honolulu here on the Calawai'i, and it took

us seven days to go across and enjoy all the ups and downs of the boat. Seven days on that water. We got off in Los Angeles-- rather, Wilmington, I should say. Then we caught the train and went to Dayton, Ohio.

IH: What was it like when you got there to Dayton? You were still in school . . .

KP: First time I saw snow. (Chuckles) Yeah. I was a young guy. I was about nineteen then. I was one of the youngest guys that went through the school.

IH: Was it hard for you to fit in over there at the beginning, coming from here?

KP: No, I didn't have too much trouble. Of course, these guys look at your complexion, see you're a little bit more sunburned than they are, and they think you're a Spic or something, you know. They used to kid me all the time. But after you get to know 'em, well, they're fine.

IH: So if we can go back a little bit, can you tell me something about Punahou School at that time that you were going?

KP: Well, yeah. Of course, Punahou School has changed a lot. The building that I was in, was a building called Rice Hall. I don't know whether that Rice Hall has been torn down. I think it has been, replaced with a newer-type building. The teachers were very nice. Smart, you know, akamai. So they had all these kids on their hands to pound knowledge into their papales. So, Punahou had some pretty good football teams. My brother Mel, he was on the '24 and '25 teams--1924 and 1925.

IH: Did you folks wear uniforms to school?

KP: Well, no, no. See, there's junior academy and senior academy. When I got over in senior academy, why, we had ROTC [Reserved Officers' Training Corps]. You had to put on a nice brown appearing. . . .

IH: Was that mandatory? ROTC?

KP: Yeah. Well, ROTC, yeah, right.

IH: Were the teachers strict in those days?

KP: Ah, pretty strict, yeah. They didn't actually come around and crack your knuckles with a ruler if you disobeyed, but they were good teachers. They knew what it was all about. I don't know of the teachers these days 'cause the teachers these days could care less, huh? At least, some of them. Of course, some of them are dedicated, but. . . . And some students, they're very studious and they want to learn every little thing. But to be honest about it,

I wasn't the best student in the world because I never studied, which is nothing to brag about. But kids did that thing in those days. I was in classes with Harry Fields. You remember Harry Fields? He used to play football for Punahou. Harry Fields, Kirky (Kirkwood) Clarke, and, well, at that time there was Pierre Bowman, and Buster McGuire, he was there. Francis White. I see he just died here about four or five months ago. Yeah. Golly.

And furthermore, they sent me a little notice that they're having a get-together on the 24th of April. So I decided I'd go and join 'em. So, the other day when I went to a chop suey [restaurant] with my sister, she told me, yeah, she got one of those notices and she's going. So I said, "Well, I'll come up to where you live up Queen Emma Gardens, and I'll park that little racer of mine, and we'll all go together." Woody Fern is my sister Nani's boy. My sister Nani is gone. But he's going to go, so we're all going to go in one ka'a uila.

IH: So did most of your family go to Punahou?

KP: Yeah, right. Yeah, as a matter of fact, my whole family went to Punahou. My oldest brother Reuben, Mel, my brother Richard, myself, my sister Harriet, my sister Nani, and my sister Moana. Yeah.

IH: Was it expensive in those days . . .

KP: Oh, yes, yes. And then, talking about expensive, I understand the fees have just gone up again. Because if you don't give it to them, you got to give it to the IRS [Internal Revenue Service], you know.

(Laughter)

KP: That's what the Hawaiians call "give 'em." Yeah.

IH: (Laughs) So, you were living in Waikīkī, then, when you attended Punahou?

KP: Yeah. Right, right.

IH: How did you get to school?

KP: Well, sometimes we were dropped off by my father; sometimes, streetcar.

IH: Your brother Mel played music. Did anyone else in your family play music?

KP: Yeah, my brother Richard played the ukulele. My brother Reuben, he just sang. My brother Mel sang. My brother Richard would sing after a couple of drinks and I'd sing after fifteen drinks, you know.

(Laughter)

IH: Was music pretty standard at your mom's parties?

KP: Mm hmm, yeah, yeah.

IH: Is that how they picked it up, your brothers?

KP: No, no. It just come forth. Like they say, doing what comes naturally.

IH: And when did they start going out professionally?

KP: Oh, my brother was the only one.

IH: Mel?

KP: Yeah. My brother used to play in San Francisco, Los Angeles, like that, at the nightclubs. Oh, yeah.

IH: Did he ever play around Waikīkī?

KP: I believe he did, yeah. As a matter of fact, Mel was on the---he used to play down at KGU [radio station] on the "Mynah Bird Hour." Gee, that's about a hundred years ago. Yeah, old Mel. He could play guitar, ukulele, like that. Not steel guitar, the regular guitar.

IH: Did you ever go to watch him when he was playing around Waikīkī?

KP: Ah, no. To be honest, no. But when I came back from Dayton in 1932, I went to San Francisco and I was with my brother Mel for about a week. He used to take me up to the Top of the Mark (a nightclub in the Mark Hopkins Hotel), like that, and have a few drinks and see a few movie stars. One of those old birds that I saw was a guy named Wallace Beery. Yeah, he was still kicking around that time. He was quite an actor. Do you remember him?

IH: No. (Laughs) Okay, if we can go back to your house now on Koa and Uluniu [Avenues], when you were living there, did you folks have any type of delivery people that came to your house, like milkman, or did you have to buy everything from the grocery store?

KP: No, we had milk delivery, ice man, too. Yeah, the Hawaiian Electric ice man. He used to deliver ice. Some of the girls up there used to wait for the ice man because their husbands would be gone to work.

(Laughter)

KP: Yeah, milk delivery. And milk, of course, those days, was in bottles. Of course, these days, everything is in the carton, the paper cartons. Some of those people that collect bottles, some of

those old bottles. Well, when we stayed there at Koa Avenue, my Uncle Johnny used to stay over there. He was a shoe salesman. He used to just love to drink alcohol, 'okolehao, and that. We had bottles in our refrigerator that were gin bottles that tapered. Square bottles. They used to put Palm Tree gin in it. That was the water bottle, Palm Tree gin bottle. They were about this high (i.e., twelve inches). Yeah, they used to have gin in there. And that was a favorite drink, gin.

IH: Gin?

KP: Yeah, in the old days. Yeah, yeah. When we used to stay out at Diamond Head, I can remember these old wahines coming from Nu'uaniu. Mrs. Cook. They'd come down this driveway everyday. They used to visit the McKinneys. These wahines used to drink gin. And I mean those gals could drink, oh! You know, they'd pour gins and count the bubbles around the glass. Then they'd toast and down the hatch. And they used to do that every day, all day. Some of those old babes could drink, wow.

(Laughter)

KP: My father, he used to drink. This was around 1922 when we stayed at Koa Avenue. This old Ford would drive up and this Japanese guy would get out. He'd get these gunny sacks and bring it inside to my father. He'd hide it behind the house. There was a room back there. That's where he used to have his little still. He used to get this 'okolehao and put distilled water in there. Tame it down a little bit because at the proof the thing was at, it'd take all the fillings out of your teeth. So my father had quite a thing going back then. He used to take these bottles after he doctored it up, take it into his front room there. There was one guy who used to come over who was the city and county treasurer. His name was David Lloyd Conklin. He used to come over. And my father. . . . He used to walk in there on two feet. God, when he'd walk out of there, he'd walk out on one leg, you know. Oh, boy, some of those drinks, boy, I tell you, they'd curl your hair.

(Laughter)

KP: My father used to drink all day long, you know, these straight drinks. But you never knew he had a drink. Until one time, he got sick. And the doctor raised his left hand. He said, "Dave, that's it. I don't want you to drink anymore." So, that was the end of his drinking career. Yeah.

Not the end of his smoking career, but. He smoked every damn day. Yeah, old Dave, he enjoyed those cigars. One of the types that he enjoyed, they used to come from the Philippines. It was what they call Presidentes. Now, it didn't have any Marcos on there. But he used to smoke those things by the carload. Then, in his later life, he smoked Roi Tan--El Roi Tan Bankers. He seemed to enjoy that. Then, it got so he would wait till a certain time in the

morning, like nine o'clock before he'd have his first cigar.

IH: Were there any other peddlers that used to come around that area besides. . . . Well, the milkman delivered, but any other deliveries or peddlers? You know, like they had those Japanese grocery stores . . . .

KP: Not that I can remember. Of course, they had flower guys. You know, used to put the basket . . . .

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

IH: We were talking about your younger brother? Your brother who died?

KP: Yeah, well, he was only about a year and a half old. But I think he must have picked up something poisonous out in the yard. And the worst part, I was the last one to feed him. Gee, he got sick there. So my mother had four doctors at the house. One of them was Dr. Hanchett. I don't remember the other three, what their names were. But they couldn't do anything for this boy. Guy came in with a bunch of hypos. He had a whole box full of these things. And I can remember making strong coffee to keep the boy awake. So they finally took the child to the hospital and that was the end of chapter two. I can remember my mother, God, she never got over that. Never did. So that was the only family loss up to that time. But those things come and go, I guess, in the best of regulated families.

IH: How big was your house lot?

KP: Oh, this was a pretty good--like I say--five bedrooms, with a downstairs eating area.

IH: Oh, was two levels? Up and down?

KP: Yes, mm hmm. By a matter of two steps. Step, step, then you're on the other level. I don't know whether it's still like that. You see, that's a restaurant now. When we moved out of there, they revamped the house but they didn't tear the house down. And that house was built in 1918. I can even remember the name of the. . . . The lumber company was Allen and Robinson. That was the name of the lumber company that furnished the lumber for the house.

IH: And did it have a big yard around it?

KP: Well, actually, the measurements of the yard were about fifty-seven by ninety [feet], which was not very big. But there was enough there to grow weeds--not paka lōlō, but do other things.

We had a Japanese cook, guy by the name of Saiki that had been with our family for--oh, he'd been with the family for sixty some-odd years. He came over on the second boat from Japan. He used to be our cook. Oh, this guy used to love to sit down and get drunk. Oh, man.

(Laughter)

KP: Oh, he was comical when he got drunk. He was a good cook. He knew how to raise vegetables. As a matter of fact, right in the front yard on the right side, right alongside the sidewalk, he dug up all the grass and he planted these vegetables. He used to grow some of the biggest, like mustard cabbage and Chinese cabbage, all that stuff. Oh, he knew how to do that thing, like most Oriental people do, you know. They know how to make rock gardens, and rock candy, and all the rest of it.

IH: Were there other Orientals living on your block?

KP: No, no. No, he was merely our cook over there.

IH: Do you remember any of the people closer to Ka'iulani [Avenue] side?

KP: Well, right across the street from us lived. . . . You remember Sandy Sundstrom? He used to run the place on the. . . . You know, the eatery there (i.e., Kau Kau Korner), right on the corner of Kapi'olani [Boulevard] and Kalākaua [Avenue]? Well, he used to live right across the street from us. Diagonally across from us was a lady named Mrs. Smead who used to ride around Koa Avenue and up and down the streets in an electric car. She had plenty of money. Her husband used to visit her once in a great long while. He used to, I think, operate out of California. But this old babe used to wear diamonds. Oh, boy, I tell you, those things really sparkle. I had a cousin that lived with us on Koa Avenue. His name was Mel Jones. He used to go over there and he used to be quite friendly with this old gal. Gee, they used to talk about everything from this to that.

IH: Were most of the people on the block pretty well-to-do?

KP: No. Regular, regular. But this gal, she was a well-to-do, this Mrs. Smead. Yeah. Oh, she had plenty money. Of course, those electric cars, you don't see 'em anymore, except on a golf course, I guess. But this kind was like one of those old-style cabs housed by glass. You know, had glass all around. This old gal used to have the lever, go-stop-go.

IH: What kinds of activities did you folks do as children?

KP: Oh, baseball, swimming. Well, swimming, you know, we were just a block from the beach. The regular things that kids do.

- IH: Did you do much fishing when you were living in Waikīkī?
- KP: Me, I used to go crabbing.
- IH: What kind of crabs?
- KP: The market crabs (i.e., kūhonu) down by the Moana Pier. You ever see the Moana Pier?
- IH: I've seen pictures, yes.
- KP: Yeah, I used to go crabbing right there. And they had some nice, big fellows. Like I told you before, the biggest crab I ever caught there, I was over there swimming one day and something bit the bottom part of my foot. So I reached down there and grabbed this crab and took it on the beach. With the pinchers extended, it was seventeen inches from pincher to pincher. Underneath the arms were all purple. So I don't know how old that was, but. Do you know how they tell between a kāne crab and a wahine crab?
- IH: Mm mm [No].
- KP: Well, on the bottom side of the crab, the wahine crab comes down in a shape of a pyramid. But the kāne crab comes down like a ule makou and then down. My record was 179 crabs without net.
- IH: In one day?
- KP: Yeah. Down at Kālia. I used to go down Kālia. You know, the tide was low then. Yeah, that was the home of limu'ele'ele. You ever eat that?
- IH: Mm hmm [Yes].
- KP: Yeah, we used to go down there and pull that stuff. Oh, gosh. That stuff was good with stew.
- IH: Kālia was the place for [limu'ele'ele]?
- KP: Yeah. Kālia, mm hmm. The most [crab] I ever caught was 179. Some big, some small, some medium like that.
- IH: And you just catch 'em by hand?
- KP: Yeah, yeah.
- IH: So must have been real plentiful then, those days.
- KP: Yeah. It's been years since I've been down that area. Of course, you get all hotels now and like that.
- IH: Okay. How long did you stay at that house on Koa and Uluniu [Avenues]?

KP: Well, we moved there in 1918, the latter part, and we stayed there till--well, at least my family was there--till about 1974 when my father died. My mother died in 1970. They were still there. My father, like I say, I don't know whether his long life was due to the fact that he smoked cigars every day, but in eighteen days he would have been ninety-six years of age. But he enjoyed that tobacco, oh, gosh. And my sister Moana who was my oldest sister, she didn't smoke cigars but she smoked a hell of a lot of cigarettes. That was part of her diet. She just loved smoking cigarettes. Later, that develops into emphysema which isn't the most healthy type of disease to get because you can't get rid of it. She used to come over here, sit down over--I used to have a white settee over here. I used to tell her, "Moana, why don't you knock this smoking thing off?" But talking to her was like me talking to that wall over there. I guess, most tobaccolaires do that. And my sister Nani wasn't too much different. She's gone, too. She---with this cigarette business. But then, many people, they can't give that up. No, no. So, my sister Nani had four boys. She was married to Elwood Fern and she had four boys. Gee, they're giants now.

IH: Okay. If I can go back to, again, in Waikīkī. Do you remember, when you were small, what stores your mother used to shop at?

KP: Yeah. Aoki Store. N. Aoki Store.

IH: Oh, she did?

KP: Yeah, that's right. They were near Lemon Lane at one time, but then they finally moved to the corner 'Ōhūa and Kalākaua [Avenues]. So that was quite a popular store.

IH: What kind of things did they offer? Was it just groceries?

KP: Yeah. Groceries and general household-type things. Of course, way different than a supermarket now. You know, supermarket, they sell you everything but girls now. But at one time, they used to deliver. But they got out of that habit. Have the customer do the work.

IH: Did you folks pay cash or were there monthly accounts?

KP: No, no. My father had a monthly account there. We used to go with him when he'd go to pay the bill. And then, the Aoki help would give us a package of gum or candy or like that. It was a come-on to keep trading, you know.

IH: So, was it known for being a pretty friendly store?

KP: Oh, yes.

IH: Did the owners work the store? The Aokis?

KP: Yeah, yeah. Old Man Aoki and the wife.

IH: What were they like?

KP: Well, Old Man [Niro] Aoki was a---well, he wasn't too high, not too short as far as that goes, but he was fairly heavy. But a very nice guy. Then he finally passed on. But the Hawaiians are good. They made that song "No Pass On," you remember that song? But the wife [Mizuno Aoki] carried on after he died, along with the son. Their one son that also went to Punahou [Harold Aoki]. He carried on for a long time for the Aoki Store. I don't know whether the Aoki Store is still on 'Ōhūa and Kalākāua. [It closed in 1968]. But I do know that they have an Aoki superette [i.e., Aoki Mini Mart] or a smaller-type operation down by Fort DeRussy on Kalākāua [Avenue].

IH: What other stores were on that block? What other stores do you remember?

KP: Oh, well, they were just Japanese like Ibaraki Store and the little place where you get your ears lowered [i.e., barber shop]. Not too much in the way of store things. Of course, service stations here and there stuck along to help the motoring public.

IH: Were there any homes on the ma kai side of Kalākāua [Avenue]?

KP: Well, there was the. . . . Can't think of the name of it. There was an annex. I nearly had it, I can't think. . . .

IH: Roselawn?

KP: Yeah, Roselawn [Annex]. They had a place there and also one on King Street opposite Sheridan.

IH: And what was that?

KP: A place where they take in people who needed a place to stay and like that. I used to know those girls that stayed there, couple of those sisters. Gee, I can't even think of their names now.

IH: So, it was like a shelter or something?

KP: Yeah. Well, you know, regular house.

IH: But a shelter for needy people?

KP: Not needy people. Regular people that need someplace to stay.

IH: Oh, oh. Like a motel or something like that.

KP: Yeah. Not like the IHS [Institute of Human Services] or anything like that.

IH: Was there anything else on that side? On the ma kai side?

KP: You mean, Waikīkī?

IH: Mm hmm [Yes].

KP: Well, farther down towards Lili'uokalani Avenue, there was Prince Kuhio's house.

IH: Yeah, he had a home there. What was that like?

KP: I never went in his house, but he and his wife, I think they called her Kahanu, they stayed there. They used to come up to my mother's house, Prince Kuhio's wife [Princess Elizabeth Kahanu Kaleiwohi-Ka'auwai Kalani'ana'ole] was a good friend of my mother's.

IH: Oh, yeah?

KP: Yeah. I remember, one time, they came up to call and they brought a big calabash, big one. Big fella, like that. (KP connects his hands to form a circle with his arms.) I don't know whatever happened to that thing, you know, when we took off out of Waikīkī. But this guy, Kuhio, he was well liked and a nice fellow. Then, coming towards town on the same side of the street, well, there was an empty space there. And then, the Kanakanui family--Annie Kanakanui. And she had a son Willie Kanakanui that went to Annapolis. They had company there all the time. The Beers family from Hilo, and the Friels from Moloka'i, and all that. Then, of course, farther down, you had the Waikīkī Tavern, the Heine's Tavern, and like that.

IH: Were those in the same place? Waikīkī Tavern and Heine's Tavern?

KP: Well, Heine's Tavern was to the left of the Waikīkī Tavern.

IH: Were they both restaurants?

KP: The Heine's Tavern, to be honest about it, I was never in that place. But it was still there known as the Heine's Tavern when I was there. But the Waikīkī Tavern was a more popular place. People went in there to eat and all that. At that time--gee, that was around 1925--that was run by Mr. Ross who was the father of Kammy Ross who was a football player for Punahou. This guy, he used to place kick football. He was known as the guy with the educated toe. Yeah, as a matter of fact, he'd place kick fifty, sixty, seventy yards, right over those uprights. I've never seen any of these Mainland players do that consistently. This guy'd kick it on angles, straight, all the time. Right over that goal post. He could really kick 'em.

IH: What happened to all those places, like Kanakanui's place, and . . .

KP: Well, right next to the Kanakanui's place, was where Kammy Ross and

his father lived. Next door was the Waikīkī Inn bathhouse. People used to come down there and rent bathing suits and surfboards and stuff for the blue Pacific.

IH: When they developed that beach area, what did they do with all the homes? They just took 'em down?

KP: Yeah. When they developed it finally, yeah. I very seldom go to Waikīkī anymore. Well, once in a while when somebody wants me to go out to the Outrigger [Canoe Club] there, have a few slugs, and a little chow, like that.

IH: Did you ever belong to that Outrigger?

KP: No, no, no. I was never a member of the Outrigger, no. My brother was. My brother Richard, the one above me. He belonged to the Outrigger. The Outrigger, that is, the one by Diamond Head. You know, that Outrigger. Nice place. People go out there every day for lunch and all that. They have these people that play music and go around and sing you a song; then go over there, sing them a song.

IH: You know, around in the 1930s, tourism started building up. What kind of noticeable changes did you see in Waikīkī?

KP: Well, to be honest with you, I wasn't here. I was in Dayton, Ohio. I didn't get back till 1932. And the day I came back, I went down to the beach, I went for a swim, and that's the last time I've been in the water since then--1932.

IH: Oh, really?

KP: Yeah. And before, we used to go every day, every day.

IH: Why was that?

KP: I don't know. Just never got back there.

IH: But you were still living in Waikīkī when you came home?

KP: Mm hmm, yeah.

IH: But did you notice much change in the three years that you had left?

KP: Not too much. The Steiners' place was still there. You know, there were surfboards here and there. Waikīkī Tavern was still there.

IH: What about your neighborhood? Had it grown? Were there new people on the block?

KP: Ah, yeah. Here and there. You know, houses filling in, like that.

IH: So when you came back home, then what did you do?

KP: Well, I was with National Cash Register Company. The outfit that was the agent for NCR was Waterhouse Company. I started in with them. They actually were the people that sent me to Dayton, Ohio. Maybe it was to get rid of me, I don't know. But that Waterhouse Company was located on Bishop Street. But that thing came to a close. So the president of the company who was a guy named Hayselden--there were two of them. The son was Don and the old man was Harold. And we moved from there to a place on Merchant Street, 221 Merchant Street. So we set up office and shop over there. We were there for quite a few years. Then finally, National Cash Register Company decided to open their own branch here. That took place, oh, around 1940. And then, we moved to Beretania Street very near Schumann Carriage. As a matter of fact, it was 1218 South Beretania. We were over there, oh, till about 1950 when we moved down to Kapi'olani Boulevard. Mr. Hayselden's son, Don, was our branch manager down there on Kapi'olani.

IH: So how many years were you with this company?

KP: Well, totally, about forty-four. You know, just a few years. They see you so long, they said, "By God, I've always wondered what that front door was. See that front door? Out, goodbye, farewell." Yeah, about forty-four years. So, I retired in 1973. Well, I'm glad I did get out of that rat race. I used to listen to people's complaints. They'd call up and yak-yak-yak. My son Ed taught me one word. The word, like First Hawaiian Bank, "yes." Yes, yes, yes, yes. Just say yes 'em to death, you know.

(Laughter)

IH: What position did you hold with the company?

KP: Well, I was service manager for a few moons. Then years later, quite a few years later, I got tired of that rat race. I stepped down. I was their stock manager. I used to order parts, and put 'em away, and dish 'em out, and all that stuff. I used to repair a few machines, too, when I first came back. I used to repair a few bookkeeping machines. I used to go to Kaua'i, and Maui, Hawai'i, like that. The boss, Don, he and I used to go. He used to sell these bookkeeping machines for the plantations. We'd get up there. And he'd want to change the construction of things. So I used to handle all of that for him. I used to go over on the Hualālai, Wai'ale'ale, you know, in those days. I had quite a few incidents there.

I remember, one time, I went to Kaua'i, worked all day long. The boats left at ten [p.m.], got over here at seven [a.m.]. And they left here at ten [p.m.] and got over there at seven in the morning. So, this one day, gee, I just worked all day long and I was kinda tired. So I went down to the ship and I got on about 9:30. And I thought, "Oh, heck. I might as well go to bed." Which I did. So,

the boat took off from Nāwiliwili. Here we're outside, bouncing around, and there's a knock-knock-knock on my door. I go to the door and here's the purser. He says, "Peterson?"

I said, "Yes."

He says, "Can I see your steamer ticket?" So I gave him my steamer ticket. And he said, "Oh, you're in the wrong room. You're in 120. You belong in 126."

So I said, "All right." So I grabbed my stuff, my steamer ticket, I went down to 126. So I went to open the door and flip the light on. And this hand grabs my hand. Out goes the light. They had bunks then. You know, bunk A is the bottom one, then the one over your head is bunk B.

So this guy says to me, "How about taking bunk B?"

So I said, "All right." So it was dark. He stood there by the light, wouldn't turn it on. So he had a friend with him. So I climbed up on bunk B. And that was one of the roughest trips to Honolulu I'd. . . . Actually not. What actually happened, gee, I could see this figure in the night. You know, in the corner of the cabin was this wash basin. I could see this figure like that, come back. So, gee, this went on, seems to me, it was all night long. And about four o'clock in the morning, I see the door open and these two figures disappear out in the hallway. Oh, that was funny.

(Laughter)

KP: Another time, gee, got a late call. I was down on Waiakamilo Road at a place they call the "Barn." Auntie Rosie's house. We're over there, sitting down drinking beer, all of that. Gee, the phone rang. It was the office calling me and said, "Ey, you got to go to Kaua'i tonight."

I said, "Gee, I don't have a ticket."

They said, "That's all right. Go down there."

So, this Auntie Rosie, she was a character. You ought to see her do the "Mauna Loa" dance. And those things that fall down to the floor. Oh, she says, "Don't worry about it." She says, "I know the captain." She called him up. She told him my name was Peterson.

He said, "Come on, get on the ship."

So, I went down there and got on the ship. Here, I'm out in the front lounge there, sitting down. We got to the point about Barber's Point. And this guy comes to me and says, "Your name Peterson?"

I said, "Yes."

He said, "Auntie Rosie called me." He said, "Now, I want you to have my room upstairs, up on the top."

So I told him, "No, no, no, I don't want to . . ."

"Yeah. I want you to have my room."

So I slept in the captain's bed going to Kaua'i. (Chuckles) It's funny how things happen.

IH: Did all the interisland ships go at night?

KP: They left here at ten, Pier 13.

IH: Is that to all the islands?

KP: To Kaua'i, anyway.

IH: Oh, just Kaua'i?

KP: Yeah. But usually, they left over here at four o'clock. Get over there (i.e., Hilo) seven. In the morning, that is. The four o'clock (p.m.) ones went to the other islands, like Moloka'i and Maui, (then on to Hilo).

IH: So only Kaua'i because it was so far?

KP: Yeah, Kaua'i. I used to tell these people, "You know, I spent a whole month one day on Kaua'i."

They say, "Month one day?"

"Yeah." I never used to like Kaua'i too much because, God, I worked all day and never got to. . . . You know. I used to travel all around--the guy, the mechanic up there, used to come pick me up and we used to go to these different spots. I had to make time because the boat leaving. I used to try and show him how to fix some of these things. Just so I wouldn't have to make the trip back there. But any little thing wrong, call Honolulu. I made my share of trips to the outer islands. Maui and Kaua'i. We didn't have any on Moloka'i or Lana'i. But Hawai'i, we had. We had some of those.

IH: Was that also a night trip to the Big Island?

KP: That was in the afternoon, four o'clock. Because you went to Moloka'i, then Maui, then. . . . It landed over in Hilo next morning about seven o'clock.

IH: Okay. I think you said you were married in 1942?

KP: Yeah.

IH: So up until that time, you were still living in the same house in Waikīkī?

KP: Yeah, mm hmm.

IH: And then, where did you move to after that?

KP: Well, I moved up on the Ala Wai [Boulevard]. We used to listen to the fish jump out of the water. You know, the mullets and all of that. Yeah, on the Ala Wai. Then from the Ala Wai, I moved to Kapuni Street, which is right off of Kūhiō [Avenue], a little short street.

IH: When did that area start building up? That area of Kapuni Street?

KP: Well, they had houses here and there. Of course, that place is all different now. They have high-rises over there now.

IH: But when you first moved to Waikīkī, was that area already . . .

KP: Yeah, it had houses, yeah. Here and there. Yeah, there were houses.

IH: Did you remember any of those people?

KP: Well, on the corner of Kūhiō and Kapuni there was a lady named Mrs. Cushingam. She was quite an old gal. She had a daughter named Inez who was married to Buster Andrews, I remember that. This old gal I think she used to like to tap the old bottle, too. So, at one time, I think she fell down the back stairs. (Chuckles) Oh, yeah, Old Lady Cushingam.

IH: Do you remember anyone else in that area when you first moved in there?

KP: Well, of course, where I moved, the thing was owned by Flora Hayes who happened to be a . . . She worked for the House of Representatives. She was a representative. Yeah, she owned the lot where I stayed.

IH: Oh, on Kapuni Street?

KP: Yeah. It was a duplex-type thing. We stayed in the front house. She and my mother were old aikānes, so I got a good house. The back ones were new houses, but they were smaller. The duplex type. Yeah. We used to have good fun over there. We used to have parties over there.

IH: I know that you just moved into Waikīkī about, you said, 1918. That's just before the Ala Wai [Canal] was started. Do you

remember what it was like before the Ala Wai went in? Do you remember any of that . . .

KP: Well, all of that thing was just like duck pond things till they ran the dredges through there. They had a flood there, gee. I had a 1924 Starr car then, and I can remember racing through the water that was coming down. You see, they had a cloudburst in Pālolo. All that water came down, flooded the whole joint. And all those streets. God, there were fish jumping around and ducks and people's trunks coming down the waterways there.

IH: Was that during the construction of the Ala Wai?

KP: No. That was before. That's why they put the Ala Wai in. Yeah.

IH: So, in 1924, they still hadn't put in that end of the Ala Wai?

KP: No, no. I forget what year they dug that thing. But when I moved on the Ala Wai in 1942, all that thing was all there. You see, all that area was filled in from the canal. They filled it all in with this coral business. God, like I told you, my brother Mel and I, we used to go aquaplaning on the Ala Wai [Canal]. Before the road was paved. Used to get a long rope, throw it out to him. He's in the water there on his surfboard. And chee, he'd zig-zag back and forth. He got pretty good speed--thirty-five, forty, forty-five miles an hour out of that.

IH: Oh, wow.

KP: Oh, yeah, we're going along like a surfer. At that time, they hadn't planted any trees on the Ala Wai [Boulevard] side. So we had the full range of the thing. We could have a little fun.

IH: You did that on the Waikīkī side of the Ala Wai or the other side, the ma uka side?

KP: The ma kai side.

IH: Oh, so you just drive your car?

KP: Right alongside the alanui there and, oh, we used to get pretty good speed out of that. Yeah.

IH: (Laughs) Did you folks ever do any fishing in the Ala Wai?

KP: No, no. But there was fish in there because they used to jump out. You used to see 'em jump out there all the time.

IH: Okay. You lived on Kapuni Street for about how long?

KP: Well, we lived there during the war. After the war, why, a gal in the yard--the gal's name was Irene Gentry--she was in real estate. She asked me, "Why don't you---I have a nice lot up by the quarry, up on Wai'oma'o Road up Pālolo."

So, with my father's good help, we put a down payment over there. We were over there until we moved out here in Kāne'ohe in 1951. Then I had one of those beautiful things they call a wife during then. My wife went bye-bye in 1953. I'm still friendly with her. When I took my trip the end of last year, why, we caught up with each other. My daughter and her husband and me. Gee, we went down the chop suey house and (chuckles) revived old times.

IH: After Pālolo, then you just came to Kāne'ohe?

KP: Yeah. Been here ever since. I was the first guy on this road. As a matter of fact, this house is the first house on this road, this house right here. This house is thirty-five years old. Of course, where the blue rug is over there, (KP points across the room), why, my boy put that in, 1977. Only him.

IH: Yeah, this is a nice big house. Was your Waikīkī house real spacious like this, too?

KP: Oh, we had a lot of space in the Waikīkī house, yes. We had five bedrooms. But this house, I think, has a little bit more usable space. Like this house when it was built, just three bedrooms. But I guess that's enough to have fun in. Master bedroom here and two more in the back here, with a bath and a half in the back. So this house has actually a full basement. This house. With a lua downstairs. My boy put in upstairs on this one. So there's a lua upstairs and downstairs. Get you coming and going.

(Laughter)

KP: Sometimes, when you got to go, you got to go. Yeah. So makes it actually convenient when you have a gang of people here because half the time, you don't know what they're doing anyway.

(Laughter)

KP: I think we have more fun than anybody on this block. My friend Billy Peterson comes over here. We sit down and have a few beers and talk about this. Then he wants me to get the guitar out. And first thing you know, he's playing music and like that. I don't play the guitar or the ukulele, but I can find just about any chord that I want to on the piano. But

like I say, I'm paralyzed in this hand. I can only drink beer with this hand, I can't play the bass, which is pupule, but that's the way it goes sometimes.

IH: Did your family home have a piano? Your mother's . . .

KP: Yeah, had a Gull Bransen. That's where my sister Moana learned to play the piano. She took lessons from a guy named Rodrigues who finally moved to the Mainland. I guess he's a kind of ancient man now. Chee, one of those days, about two years ago, I get this letter from this guy named Rodrigues. And he tells me how he remembers me and he's staying in a place called Milipitas, something like that, in California. I don't know how he got my address, but anyway, he did. He says he remembers my sister Moana and all of that.

IH: Oh, how nice.

KP: Yeah, yeah. My sister Moana was a fair piano player. The gal that comes here every time we have a party is a gal named Buddy Vasconcellos. I think she was married to the coach from Roosevelt [High School]. But she's a good piano player. She can play with her left hand and right hand. I'm just halfway there.

So I brought my three kids up. I had the custody after our little divorce session. My chief spokesman was lawyer Arthur Trask. Some people call him "Arthur Trash," but he comes here every once in a while. He stays on Kaua'i now. At least, he's been up there for over a year now. So, sometimes, when he comes over, we sit down and drink a few drinks and a few drinks more. Then he gallops out of here in his little buggy. He and his wife. He's married to a gal named Muriel.

IH: So you raised all your three children yourself, then?

KP: I did, yeah. They were small then. Yeah, wash diapers I'm expert, boy. No more Pampers then, you know. Like these three wise men that were going to take gifts to the Christ child? You know what the last guy had, you know, the box he had? He had a box of Pampers.

(Laughter)

KP: Yeah, but I did my share of wash diapers, and clean house, and all that, take care of the kids.

IH: I think the tape is almost finished. Did you want to say anything else?

KP: Like aloha?

(Laughter)

END OF INTERVIEW

# **WAIKĪKĪ, 1900 - 1985: ORAL HISTORIES**

## **Volume I**

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