

DEC 9, 1999

TO: U.S. DEPT OF INTERIOR, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT
SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET;
WASHINGTON, DC.

FM: THOMAS T. SHIRAI JR

RE: TESTIMONY FOR RECONCILIATION HEARING HELD ON DEC 10-11

I AM AT LEAST A SEVENTH GENERATION OF A HAWAIIAN FAMILY ORIGINATING FROM KAWAIHAPAI, OAHU. THIS IS LOCATED IN THE DISTRICT OF WAIALUA. FOR THE MAJORITY OF MY LIFE I WAS RAISED ON MY MOTHER (THE LATE LAVERNA TAILOMI KEAO SHIRAI) SIDE WHICH IS HAWAIIAN. THIS IS BECAUSE MY FATHER HAD TUBERCULOSIS AND HAD TO STAY IN LEAHI HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT WHILE MY MOTHER AND I STAYED WITH MY GRANDPARENTS (DAVID PEAHI KEAO JR/ABIGAIL TAILOMI AKAU) IN MOKULEIA. WHEN MY FATHER WAS CURED I LIVED WITH MY PARENTS IN HONOLULU ON WEEKDAY AND WEEKENDS WITH MY GRANDPARENTS. AFTER GRADUATING FROM WAIALUA HIGH SCHOOL I SERVED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD FOR A THIRD OF MY LIFE. WHILE IN THE COAST GUARD I RECEIVED MY SHARE OF AWARDS INCLUDING THE HIGHEST LIFESAVING MEDAL GIVEN TO A COAST GUARDSMAN. THIS AWARD IS ONE OF THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS AWARD EQUIVALENT TO A BRONZE OR SILVER STAR. WHEN I GOT STATIONED IN HAWAII I EXPERIENCED BEING TREATED AS A MINORITY IN MY OWN HOMELAND AND AT TIME DISCRIMINATED UPON BECAUSE OF MY ETHNIC ORIGIN. I ALSO OBSERVED THIS TYPE OF TREATMENT WHILE STATIONED IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS. I ASKED MYSELF "ARE THESE THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE IN THE GOVERNMENT BRANCHES?" WITH THIS EXPERIENCE EMBEDDED IN MY MIND I STARTED TO REVITALIZE MY CULTURAL HERITAGE TAUGHT AND PRACTICED YOUNG WITH MY GRANDPARENTS. THIS INCLUDED GATHERING SEAFOOD SUBSISTANCE, LAND STEWARDSHIP, PERPETUAL CARE AND RECOGNITION OF ANCESTORS, ECT.) THESE THINGS ARE NOT TAUGHT THRU A BOOK AND ARE PRICELESS REMENANTS OF HAWAIIAN CULTURE. HAWAIIAN ANCESTORS ARE ONE WITH THE LAND AND SEA BECAUSE IT IS LIFE. WHEN THE MILITARY CAME TO HAWAII AND AQUIRED LANDS THRU EVICTION AND CONDEMNATION IT LED TO THE DISPOSITION AND DEPRESSION OF HAWAIIAN ELDERS WHO IN SOME CASES DIED FROM THIS ACTION. HOWEVER IT DIDN'T STOP THERE BECAUSE IT CONTINUED WHEN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY AND GOVERMENT AGENCIES WOULD DESECRATE BURIAL GROUNDS AND GEOGRAPHICALLY DEFACE THE LAND WHICH HAD BEEN TREASURED AND BOUNTIFUL TO HAWAIIANS.

THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR THIS ACTION BECAUSE OF DILIBERATELY LEAVING OUT ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT STATEMENTS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE PRIOR OF DURING WORLD WAR II WHEN

BISHOP MUSEUM PERSONEL CONDUCTED ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL SURVEYS IN THE 1930-40'S. COMPENSATION WAS FORCED AND OF LITTLE FINANCIAL VALUE SUBJECT TO NO NEGOTIABLE TERMS. THIS IS SIMILAR TO AQUISITION OF PEARL HARBOR THRU THE BAYONET CONSTITUTION DURING KING KALAKAUA'S REIGN. MY FAMILY IS ONE OF THOSE WHO WERE VICTIMIZED IN THAT PROCESS.

THIS IS WHY I AM SUBMITTING THIS TESTIMONY FOR RECONCILIATION. MY SUGGESTIONS FOR RECONCILIATION THAT I WILL BE SUGGESTING ARE:

1. AN "APOLOGY WITHIN AN APOLOGY" TO FAMILIES WHO SHARE SIMILAR EXPERIENCES. THIS WOULD INCLUDE RETURN OF LANDS THAT ANCESTORS ONCE RESIDED UPON PRIOR TO MILITARY OCCUPATION AND AQUISITION. THIS MEANS FINANCIAL COMPENSATION ALSO.
2. RESTORATION OF INHERITED NATIONAL RIGHTS.
3. FINANCIAL COMPENSATION SIMILAR TO WHAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT GAVE TO JAPANESE FOR ACTIONS DURING WORLD WAR II.

**OTHER SPEAKERS WILL GIVE MORE DETAILED DEMANDS HOWEVER ONE THING IS CERTAIN AND THAT IS TO EXPIDITE THESE REQUEST.

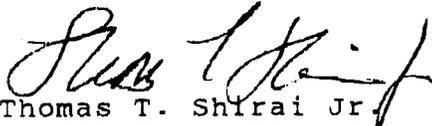
SIX YEARS HAVE PAST SINCE THE 1993 APOLOGY BILL AND NO FURTHER ACTION TAKEN UNTIL NOW. THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR UNITED STATES TO MAKE THING RIGHT WITH THE HAWAIIANS. THANK YOU FOR YOU TIME. SINCERILY,



THOMAS T. SHIRAI JR.

Enclosed are documents to support my testimony for the Reconciliation Hearings held on Dec 11-12 1999 at the University of Hawaii Manoa Campus. These documents support how my elders (~~Kaaemoku~~ Kakulu, David Maikai Keao, Clara Napuakekau Kakulu Keao, and my grandfather David Peahi Keao Jr) cared for the land that they owned prior to being evicted to the construction of Dillingham Airfield (secondary airfield for training only). The geographical features today does stand as a testament to desecration of a once productive and cherished land which also included numerous unmarked burials. Although a settlement was done, the rightful owners were never compensated because of family differences which includes jealousy and "political elimination" of the next heir (Clara Napuakekau Kakulu) who was sent to Kalihi Hospital and later Kalaupapa, Molokai. She contracted leprosy while in those institutions. There is a difference between diabetes and leprosy. I would like to mention that the public health nurse who was caucasian, had a personal and racial feeling for my family and if it were not for my grandmother (Abigail Tailomi Akau Keao) "stepping in" the remainder of my grandfather's (David Peahi Keao Jr) brothers and sisters would have been committed also.

Gentlemen it is my wish that you came to Hawaii to sincerely help resolve our interest and the story that I just mentioned is found all over these islands with different variations involving the U.S. Government. Please go with AKUA and look to him for guidance to make things right with those who welcomed your forefathers. MAHALO.


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