

Honoring Kalama Elders

The Bell on One Hundred Eighty Years of History Rang

A little over one hundred eighty years ago, in 1837 a 26 year-old man from Kula Maui, Hawaii tells his wife, Keaka Jack, "I am leaving. I will be back in one year. If I do not return in that time, I will be dead." He never returned to Hawaii remaining in the Pacific Northwest Territories and started instead a dynasty.

December 20, 2017 was the day the dynasty was greatly impacted: the last of 21 grandchildren of this Hawaiian man died. While this passing was dramatic in the family, it signifies the strength of family.

The power of the family continues through their children and generations yet to come. To honor the future of these next generations a **John Kalama Family Reunion** will be held June 29-30, 2018, in Kalama, Washington.

John Kalama and his brother Sam arrived from Hawaii in 1837 in the Northwest as employees of the Hudson Bay Company. Sam eventually returned to Hawaii. John remained in the Hudson Bay Company employ until 1850 working as a "Middleman" or "Laborer." He was posted at the Nez Perce, Snake River, Nisqually, Fort Vancouver and Cowlitz Farms company sites. After paying a high price for Mary Martin, daughter of the Nisqually Tribal chief Sulkadin (Henry) Martin he married and fathered a son, Peter Kalama. A daughter died as a child. John died in 1870 and is buried "just below Cascade Locks on the Washington side."

Peter followed his father in laying the groundwork for the John Kalama family dynasty. At age 19 he left his Yelm, Washington home to expand his formal education. He attended the Forest Grove Indian Training School, then Tualatin Academy, a college preparatory school affiliated with Pacific University. Peter lived in Warm Springs, Oregon for a time with his first wife. He later returned to Yelm and served as a tribal governmental leader. He spoke fluent Nisqually, negotiated with federal and state governmental agencies and taught many how to use the tribal natural resources.

For John through Peter dynasty is family. Peter's heritage is ½ Hawaiian and ½ Indian. He eventually had 21 children. With Lillie Pitt he had 4 sons and 4 daughters. With Sophie Skamink he had a daughter. With Alice Jackson he had 7 daughters and 5 sons. These children are ¼ Hawaiian and ¾ Indian. Peter's children became tribal council members, highly educated officials, and well respected tribal leaders. These children are all now gone with the passing of the last of Peter's children, Zelma Kalama McCloud's in December 2017. But they live on through their children. Family is strong.

The John Kalama Family Reunion will celebrate the dynasty!