

## Charles Henry Thomas

November 17, 1998

My name is **Charles Thomas**. I am Peter Stanup's Great Grandson

I was named Charles Henry Kubota at birth; changed to Thomas in 1942. I was born in Honolulu, Hawaii - May 24, 1936. I was named after my father, reversing the first and middle names.

We grew up on the Island of Oahu (Hawaiian Islands), knowing we had some Indian blood, but didn't know what tribe. Later, we thought we were descendents of Chief Joseph. But he was a Nez Perce. It was just 10 years ago that we first learned that we were Puyallup [Indians].

I am third generation Hawaiian. My Grandma, Grace Stanup, married a Hawaiian (Thomas L. Andrews). My mother was raised in Hawaii and so was I.

I have three daughters: Ann Moanikeala, Lynn Kauinohea and Susan Kahaopuna. They all live in Hawaii.

### **How do you identify your heritage?**

I grew up as an Hawaiian. I first learned about my Puyallup heritage at an Andrews family reunion in Hawaii. Andrews is my mother's family. My uncle mentioned the Nez Perce and an article in National Geographic about Chief Joseph (Nez Perce chief). My uncle's name is Peter Stanup Andrews. His middle name is Stanup. He is my mother's brother. They were the only kids in her family. They were both born and raised in Hawaii. I have cousins in Hawaii.

Peter Stanup was not mentioned at the Andrews reunion. It was after the reunion that we started digging up family history. The first I heard about Peter Stanup was when I got all of this (referring to extensive genealogy) from Susan Thomas, my stepmother. Susan researched. She started by writing to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to Washington State to see what she could find out. My father knew some of it. Peter Stanup is my Great Grandfather. He died in the Puyallup River. Jonas Stanup was his father. His mother was Mary Scho-wash-ni.

When I first heard about Peter Stanup, I thought he had been a warrior. Jonas was a warrior. Peter was a diplomat. He was a community leader. He was involved as a Reverend in the Presbyterian Church. Highly educated for that time, and especially so for an Indian. Peter's wife [Anna Kahama] was also educated.

When I moved here (Federal Way, Washington) two and a half years ago was the first time I had ever seen the Puyallup Reservation. When we came to visit Annie's son, he showed us around and we liked it. We traded property between here and Hawaii. That was in 1989. I retired from the Honolulu Fire Department as a rescue helicopter pilot in 1990, after 25 years and two months. We planned to move soon after retirement, but didn't move until 1996.

We went to the cemetery on the Puyallup Reservation. Judy Wright<sup>16</sup> took us there. We saw Peter Stanup's headstone and his children's headstone. But when we tried to take a photo, the camera wouldn't work. It worked before and after though. Judy Wright said it's not considered right to take photos of graves.

**Do you recall any stories that were told to you as a youngster?**

Only Hawaiian stories. My Puyallup Grandmother passed away when I was only a few months old. So I never knew her.

In old Hawaii the stories were passed along with dance and chants. The dances refer to the words in the songs. It's still done in some places. They have competition every year on the Big Island (Hawaii). The tradition is learned when young and passed along by family members. The modern hula is what it became after the missionaries. All the swishing and swaying is just to entertain the tourist. The old time hula, clothes weren't important, just a skirt and lei. But the missionaries said that was taboo. We still pass Hawaiian culture from one generation to another by song, dance, chants and storytelling.

**Charley Thomas resides in Federal Way, Washington with his wife, Annie.**

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<sup>16</sup> Judy Wright is a Puyallup Tribal Historian. Her interview is included with this research project