



NĀ MEA HOU

News and Stories from the Maui Historical Society

Something New

Autumn 2023 | Wailuku, Hawai'i

VOLUME IV, No. 3

Aloha,

Let's continue to protect and preserve Maui. The Maui Historical Society would like to send a heartfelt aloha to all those who have been impacted by the horrific damage that has overcome our beautiful Maui. We are a community of people that are resilient, strong, and resourceful. Let's continue to come to the aid of one another, aloha ke kahi i ke kahi, and band together as one. Let's stay focused on preserving Maui No ka 'oi. Mahalo nui and aloha,

Sissy Lake-Farm, Executive Director, Maui Historical Society

A Message from the MHS Board

Aloha Friends and Community Members ,

We extend our deepest sympathies to all those affected by the tragic fire that swept through Lahaina. Our hearts go out to the families who have lost their homes, businesses, and cherished memories in the wake of this devastating event. The spirit of resilience that defines our island community will undoubtedly guide us through these challenging times.

As guardians of Maui's rich history, we understand the importance of preserving not just our past, but also the present and future that we share. The recent fire has reminded us of the fragility of these connections and the need to come together as a united force of hope and restoration.

The Maui Historical Society, in partnership with local organizations and concerned individuals, is committed to supporting the recovery efforts in Lahaina. We urge everyone who can to contribute to these efforts by donating what they can. Every act of generosity will help heal the wounds inflicted upon our beloved Lahaina and help its people rebuild their lives.

Your donations will be used to provide immediate assistance to those affected, as well as contribute to the long-term recovery and rebuilding projects. Together, we can rebuild not just structures, but the sense of community and shared identity that makes Lahaina a special place for all.

To donate directly to families, please visit <https://www.kaainamomona.org/maui> or visit our website to find a link. Your support will make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who have lost so much.

With heartfelt condolences and unwavering unity,

Maui Historical Society Board of Directors

Lahaina

In early August of this year, devastating wildfires swept through Lahaina, consuming nearly 96% of the historic Lahaina town. The flames not only ravaged centuries-old buildings and cultural landmarks but also claimed numerous lives, leaving the community in shock and mourning.

Lahaina's strength and resilience shone through in the aftermath of the disaster. The community united, demonstrating an unwavering determination to rebuild and reclaim its identity. Volunteers, residents, and local authorities rallied together to support one another and initiate the arduous process of reconstruction. As recovery projects take shape, Lahaina's commitment to preserving its historical heritage remains unwavering, even as it adapts to modern needs and practices.

The history of Lahaina, a picturesque town nestled on the western coast of Maui, is a tapestry woven with threads of culture, commerce, and calamity. From its days as the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom to its role as a vibrant tourist hub, Lahaina's journey has been marked by transformation and resilience.



Lahaina Waterfront, 1913

Lahaina's historical roots trace back to the early 19th century when it served as the capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom under King Kamehameha III, reflecting its newfound importance as a political, economic, and cultural hub. The capital was eventually relocated to Oahu in 1845 but the Lahaina town continued to flourish with its bustling harbor and thriving commerce, drawing international traders and visitors from across the globe.

Lahaina was a focal point of interaction between native Hawaiians and foreign cultures. As whaling ships arrived in the mid-1800s, Lahaina's harbor became a magnet for traders, sailors, and merchants, contributing to a rich blend of cultural influences that remain evident in the town's character to this day.

During the height of the whaling industry, Lahaina's waterfront bustled with activity, as whaling ships from various nations docked in its harbor. The town's landscape transformed as diverse cultures converged, leaving an indelible mark on its social fabric. Although the whaling industry eventually waned, Lahaina's trajectory took another turn with the rise of sugarcane plantations.



Lahaina Front Street, 1923

Sugarcane cultivation brought about an influx of immigrants, primarily from China, Japan, the Philippines, and Portugal. These communities played a vital role in the growth of the sugar industry, as their labor contributed to the plantations' success. This influx of cultures transformed Lahaina into a vibrant melting pot, with each community contributing to the town's unique identity.



Pioneer Inn and Lahaina Courthouse, 1959

The late 19th century witnessed the illegal overthrow of Hawai'i's government by the United States, sparking a period of modernization in Lahaina. Infrastructure development, including the construction of schools, roads, and hospitals, reshaped the town's urban landscape. The allure of Lahaina's natural beauty and historical significance gradually attracted tourists, sowing the seeds for its future role as a renowned tourist destination.

Recognizing the significance of its heritage, Lahaina took steps to preserve its historical landmarks. In 1962, the town was designated as a National Historic Landmark District, affording it protection against unchecked development. The Lahaina Restoration Foundation emerged as a key player, committed to preserving and restoring the town's architectural and cultural treasures. The iconic Banyan Tree, planted in 1873, stands as a living testament to Lahaina's growth and adaptability.

The history of Lahaina is a testament to its enduring spirit and ability to navigate through the currents of time. From its foundation as a capital of the Hawaiian Kingdom to its transformation during the whaling and plantation eras, the town has withstood countless challenges while embracing the diverse influences that shaped its character. The recent wildfires are a tragic chapter that Hawai'i will be handling for decades to come. As Lahaina rebuilds, it remains a beacon of hope and an embodiment of the strength that emerges from communities facing adversity together.



Lahaina Banyan Tree, 1988

President's Message:

Aloha e ka hui 'o Hale Hō'ike'ike,

It's been a full cycle around the sun on the journey serving as president with Maui Historical Society (MHS), and a productive one at that. In a year much has been accomplished by our staff, board of directors and volunteers who have contributed much of their time and resources to strengthen the foundation of our organization and move towards pursuing and forming opportunities that will further the mission of MHS.

This past year MHS has been successful in implementing our strategic plan that was created by an adhoc committee in 2022. One of the most notable implementations thus far has been the boards' active engagement in our standing committees. Through our standing committees we have been able to engage in community outreach through multiple events which included a book signing, kapa event, lei day event, and more. We are proud to have been able to offer educational opportunities to our guests after being closed for a couple of years during the pandemic. We're ecstatic to offer a calendar of events planned ahead of us as we move into the new year. MHS is also beginning the exciting process towards a new archive building and planned renovations on existing structures and grounds. With the projects and events up ahead, we are offering an opportunity to our members to join a committee(s) if you are interested in further engagement in our organization. MHS has always been successful because of the support from our kaiāulu (community) who believe and support the work we do.

Our guiding 'ōlelo no'ēau for 2022-2023 was "E lauhoē mai na wa'a, i ke kā, i ka hoe; i ka hoe, i ke kā; pae aku i ka 'āina. Everbody paddle the canoes together, bail and paddle, paddle and bail; and the shore is reached." In essence, the 'ōlelo no'ēau was meant to inspire a productive year and I'm very proud of our team. We have built pilina (closeness) and a healthy working group, in which I'd like to recognize our staff, volunteers and board for their commitment in perpetuating our mission. Our officers are looking forward to serving this organization together for another year. As we move into the new year we would like to thank two of our board members as they have fulfilled their full term with our organization. I'd like to thank Cindy Lawrence and Andree-Michelle Conley-Kapoi for their time serving on our board. They have contributed largely to our organization and we appreciate their time and dedication. We also are welcoming two (technically three) incoming members to our board. I'd like to welcome Jasmine Joao and Mechelle Lindsay as they join us. Finally, I'd like to recognize all of our members for your trust in us.

To begin the new year, we begin with a new guiding 'ōlelo no'ēau: "He hūewai ola ke kanaka na Kāne. Man is Kāne's living water gourd. Water is life and Kāne is the keeper of water." The vision I have for this year has to do with wai (water) and the movement of wai. I view wai as wealth, in fact, wealth in 'ōlelo Hawai'i is waiwai. In our organization, the wealth that we possess is the artifacts, the 'ike (knowledge), our archival collection. Our leadership (staff, volunteers, board) represent Kāne's living water gourd as we are responsible for protecting the wai. The understanding that wai is indeed living, we understand that it revitalizes and awakens the earth and its people. In the same way that our mission to collect, preserve, and perpetuate the heritage and history of Maui does for our community throughout time. I also want to acknowledge the movement of wai from the heavens through the mountains and to the sea, through all parts of the 'ahupua'a which must be mentioned as this is a representation of how through passing time our archival collection moves through generations. I hope with this 'ōlelo no'ēau to highlight the value of MHS and to inspire and attract those who feel called to be a part of a kuleana (responsibility) that is of utmost importance to our past, present and future as wai will always be.

Me ka 'oia'io,

Kayla Shaw

Our New Board Members



Trisha Kehau Watson



Jasmine Joao



Mechelle Lindsey



2023-2024

Board of Trustees

Kayla Shaw, **President**; Terri Gavagan, **Past President**;
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Jasmine Joao, Trisha Kehaulani Watson

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Suzan Wood
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Maui Historical Society

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Consider joining an MHS Committee

- **Personnel Committee**
- **Development and Fundraising Committee**
 - **Grant Writing Committee**
- **Historic Preservation & Programs Committee**
- **Budget & Finance Committee**
- **Membership & Nominating Committee**
 - **Newsletter Committee**

If you're interested in joining one or more of these committees, please email communications@mauihistoricalsociety.org

Contact Us



Give us a call for more information about our services and products.

Maui Historical Society

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Visit us on the web at
mauimuseum.org

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