



NĀ MEA HOU

News and Stories from the Maui Historical Society

Something New

September 2021 | Wailuku, Hawaii

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Aloha mai kākou, I hope everyone is enjoying their summertime. We have great news to share. On July 15, 2021 we re-opened our doors to the public. It has been almost a year and a half since our closing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are pleased to announce we resumed in-person tours two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am-2 pm. Visitors can reserve a tour by visiting our website at www.mauimuseum.org. Admission includes access to the museum, gift shop, exhibition hall and garden. We look forward to seeing you soon. Hele mai.....

Small Town Big Art and Mary Kawena Pukui



Mural by artist Amanda Joy Bowers, "E Noho iho i ke ʻōpū weuweu, mai ho'oki'eki'e." (Remain among the clumps of grasses and do not elevate yourself.)

In the May 2021 issue of Nā Mea Hou we featured the work of Mary Kawena Pukui and her book **'Ōlelo No'ēau Hawaiian Proverbs and Poetical Sayings**. These proverbs, like native flora and fauna, have been popping up in and around Wailuku in the forms of performance, painting, sculpture, light shows and murals.

Small Town Big Art Wailuku was developed through a 2018-2020 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts as a collaborative, community-driven public art project.

When Maui Historical Society executive director Sissy Lake-Farm was asked to be the cultural consultant on this project she suggested artists choose a metaphor from 'Ōlelo No'ēau" as a starting point in their creative process.

The art projects, now 15 in total, have been varied, inspired and thought provoking, all with common threads to the Wailuku community past and present.

Mary Kawena Pukui believed that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i could survive through dynamic, practical ways. She stressed the importance of learning the meaning of the words, often multi-layered kaona, and of course, correct pronunciation without which meaning

changes significantly. And then to be said out loud. She understood that 'Ōlelo Hawai'i once an oral language, must be set free in the air like a bird for the alchemy of sounds and meaning to take place.

Mary Kawena Pukui encouraged Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian to learn and think deeply about the concepts found in the phrases and philosophies of the 'Ōlelo No'ēau. By incorporating these concepts into everyday encounters and actions the 'ike kupuna is honored and passed down to the keiki of today so culture and a language not only survive but thrive.

Consider the following proverbs which were chosen as metaphors by a hui of four Maui-grown women artists.

"E Noho iho i ke ʻōpū weuweu, mai ho'oki'eki'e."

(Remain among the clumps of grasses and do not elevate yourself.)

"Mōhala i ka wai ka maka o ka pua."

(Unfolded by the water are the faces of flowers.)

"Wailuku i ka malu he kuawa."

(Wailuku in the shelter of the Valley.)

These artists have painted a collection of three murals that will serve as a temporary

construction wall at the corner of Market and Vineyard Streets, the literal epicenter of downtown historic Wailuku.

You can meet all the artists and listen to their poetical and practical musings about the metaphors they have chosen at www.smalltownbig.org

This website itself is a work of art; a synergetic mosaic of artists, community leaders, consultants and coordinators inspired by local history and culture and talking story peppered with so many words, phrases and concepts from the 'Ōlelo No'ēau. We are certain Mary Kawena Pukui would be delighted.



Photo of Mary Kawena Pukui courtesy of the Bishop Museum

Talk Story



Terri Gavagan, President, Maui Historical Society Board of Trustees

Terri Gavagan is taking on the job of president of the Maui Historical Society Board of Trustees. A wife and mother, and full time commission coordinator of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC), she brings her experience to our own Hale Hō'ike'ike where we care for the second largest collection of pre-contact artifacts in the state.

Terri is dedicated and knowledgeable about Kaho'olawe, the Maui Historical Society, archiving and anthropology. Yet she is respectful and sensitive to the challenges and responsibilities of preserving, maintaining, cataloguing and providing access to artifacts and materials in her charge.

Terri graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor's Degree and from the University of Hawaii at Mānoa with a Master's degree both in Anthropology. One of her first jobs when she moved to Maui was working on the library bus for the Wailuku Public Library. Where better to learn about the island, its residents and culture than from the front of the bus? She learned streets and backroads. and met people, learning their reading habits and "where to find the best plate lunches on island."

Those library skills have been put to good use in her work at KIRC where a part of her

job has been to organize primary source artifacts in a searchable publicly accessible database. Digitizing the museum archival collection of Kaho'olawe is critical because physical access to the Island is limited even for professionals and volunteers who access the reserve for restoration, education and cultural purposes. (Kaho'olawe and its surrounding waters contain quantities of unexploded ordnance (UXO) courtesy of the U.S. Navy.) Volunteers interested in visiting the island and helping in the restoration sometimes face up to a two-year waiting list to help in bringing the 'āina back to life.

Creating digital access for the public is one of the components of the KIRC's current strategic plan, I Ola Kanaloa, and the KIRC website is the portal for all online KIRC information past and present.

Once revered by the ancient Hawaiians as a sacred island used for spiritual practices Kaho'olawe is now being restored as a cultural reserve for future generations. On the website are glimpses of ceremonies brought to life in the restored heiau and shrines that the indigenous people of Hawaii practiced in hundreds of years ago. The Kaho'olawe Living Library is a separate webpage which is linked to the KIRC webpage where visitors can search for archived photos and archaeological artifacts, by name, category and year. Only a few clicks of my mouse show remnants of an adze quarry, sacred petroglyphs, rain koa shrines, and dancers embracing after a contemporary ceremony.

Terri talked of the implications of showing culturally sensitive materials of Hawaiians to a broader museum audience through digitization. She stressed the importance of establishing new paradigms in museum information systems to provide a more integrated approach using cultural consultants.

The KIRC and the Maui Historical Society have always had a good working relationship. We were asked to be stewards of some of the artifacts from Kaho'olawe given in trust from the US Navy and the State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources. When the KIRC moved from O'ahu to Maui these artifacts were rehoused by the Maui Historical Society and returned to the KIRC in 2011 where it forms the foundation of the KIRC archive.

Which brings the conversation around to the Maui Historical Society and Hale Hō'ike'ike housing the second largest

collection of pre-contact artifacts in the state. Terri has been volunteer chair of the historic preservation committee at MHS, a standing committee in charge of preservation, restoration and archiving artifacts. Her wish is that this committee could work under the direction of a paid professional archivist trained in Hawaiian and local history and materials.

Her second wish is that a future KIRC educational and operational center could possibly house an area dedicated to restoring and processing archival/museum objects. Now, when our local museums need specialists such as technicians and conservators for cleaning, repairing or restoring artifacts, they must be sent to O'ahu or the mainland.

Terri Gavagan has vision and drive with the super hero skills of a librarian. This brand new president arrives at an exciting time for the Maui Historical Society - the re-opening of Hale Hō'ike'ike, and the long awaited and much needed new roof. Auspicious beginnings on the grounds of what once was the Royal Compound of the Chiefs of Maui.

From the Archives



Pōhaku Ku'i 'Ai

This unique metal pōhaku ku'i 'ai, or poi pounder, was in the likely possession of a Hawaiian ali'i due to its composition of the, then, rare and expensive metal.

Nā Wai ‘Ehā a ka La‘i



Waiehu Valley. (Early photo courtesy of MHS archives)

Nā Wai ‘Ehā a ka La‘i is a four part series that honors the unique cultural history of the four great waters and ahupua‘a of Waikapū, Wailuku, Waiehu and Waihe‘e, poetically known as Nā Wai ‘Ehā. Located in the moku of Wailuku, Nā Wai ‘Ehā was recognized as the largest contiguous lo‘i kalo (taro) growing region in Hawai‘i. The vast water resources of Mauna o ‘E‘eka (West Maui Mountains) supplied these four streams and rivers with the life-giving waters of Kāne, in turn, allowing this district to be the primary ritual, political and population center of Maui. In this newsletter, we will explore Waiehu, mai ka pali o Kapulehua a ka pali ‘o ‘A‘alaloa – Waiehu, from the cliff of Kapulehua to the cliff of ‘A‘alaloa.

The name of Waiehu refers to the mist or spray that comes forth from freshwater falls or even from the ocean. Waiehu is the third ahupua‘a situated in Nā Wai ‘Ehā and, similar to that of its neighbors, was known for its rich fertile soil for agriculture, abundance of water and marine and aquatic resources. The wind in this area is called Hō‘eha ‘ili, the wind that hurts the skins. The rain of this area is called Līlīlehua, or chilling lehua rain. Waiehu also includes a portion of the extensive pu‘e one or lithified sand dunes system of Nā Wai ‘Ehā that traverses across the great isthmus of Kama‘oma‘o. One particular area of the sand dunes is called Kauahea, which was a staging ground for Maui warriors to hone their skills. The dunes were also used as burial grounds for kūpuna of this region and utilized as an adze quarry.

Waiehu Stream is comprised of two streams known as the North and South Waiehu Streams, both of which merge into one in the lower reaches of the valley. The stream is comparable in flow and size to that of Waikapū Stream and flows mauka to makai. Both streams were extremely important for the development of extensive lo‘i kalo systems as well as water sources for inland fishponds such as Kaehu a ka Moi in the ‘ili of Paukūkalo.

Kuleana land awards during the Great Māhele around 1848 described vast acreage of both wetland and dryland cultivation of kalo. Unfortunately, the sugar plantation industry, too, dominated

the cultural landscape, severely impacting the traditional food systems and near-shore fisheries. Following the closure of the Wailuku Sugar Co., Wailuku Agribusiness transformed their fields with thousands of macadamia nut trees for another monocrop industry that only lasted for several decades. Large swaths of lands were sold in the early 2000s which allowed for newer housing developments to be produced. Fortunately, there are remnant kuleana lands which are being restored specifically for lo‘i kalo and diversified agricultural purposes. In the ‘ili of Kou, near the ocean, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands built four integrated housing developments for Native Hawaiian families, many of whom play an active role in the greater ‘āina stewardship of the ahupua‘a of Waiehu.

In the ‘ili of Paukūkalo, there lies Kaehu a ka Moi, which is a natural and partially man-made wetland and loko i‘a pu‘e one or inland fishpond. According to numerous accounts from kūpuna of that area, Kaehu was famous for the raising and gathering of moi, a type of threadfish that was considered a delicacy and eaten mainly by high ranking ali‘i. The wetlands and smaller surrounding ponds that included lo‘i kalo were all spring-fed which sourced water from both Wailuku River to the south and Waiehu Stream to the north. It was said that some of the loko wai or ponds were to have healing properties, while others were known to be home to a mo‘owahine, or lizard goddess. Auntie Kahili Cummings, a respected Hawaiian informant of this area, talked about a particular mo‘o of the ponds and said that her grandmother would tell her that, “if you see the pond is dirty or muddy, then the mo‘owahine is there. Don’t drink the water or go near the edge.” She also said that further north, near the current macadamia nut fields, was another mo‘o, named Wahinepe‘eloko (Woman who hides in ponds), because the mo‘o is often seen hiding there one day and then is hiding in another pond the next day. The nearshore fisheries of Kaehu were Kalauiki, Kālepa, Waioeo, Kalua and Papamuku/Papamoku. The reef system of Waiehu is one of the longest in Hawai‘i and provided a large amount of fish, limu and other marine life for feeding the populace of not only Waiehu but the greater Nā Wai ‘Ehā region. Kaehu at one point was on the brink of being destroyed to make way for a luxury hotel and high-end homes. The County of Maui along with the Trust for Public Lands acquired the property in 2012 for preservation. Today, there is an amazing non-profit organization called Ka‘ehu, who through their ‘āina-based education programs are helping to restore and steward this important cultural resource for the island of Maui.



Ocean view from Waiehu shore towards Kahului. (Photo courtesy of MHS archives)



Kwong Fook Tong Chinese Cemetery (intersection of Old Kahului Beach Road and Kahekili Highway). Ancestors of many Mauians are buried there; descendants and friends are committed to restoring the cemetery.

**Part III: Nā Wai 'Ehā a ka La'i – Waiehu
Researched & Authored (©2021) by Hōkūao Pellegrino, Past President of the Maui Historical Society and descendant of Edward and Caroline Bailey.**



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A HUI HOU

Mahalo for joining us for the third edition of the Maui Historical Society August 2021 newsletter, Nā Mea Hou. Here are some updates:

Starting the new MHS fiscal year 2021-2022:

On August 22, 2021 we will welcome and install the new officers of the Board of Trustees at the MHS virtual Annual Membership meeting: Terri Gavagan (President), Kauanoë Batangan (Past President), Ben Lowenthal (Vice President), and Annalise Kehler (Secretary).

New trustee: Scott Keolahou Hinau

Trustees elected for a second term:

- Kauanoë Batangan
- Terri Gavagan
- Walette Pellegrino

Roof Renovation: MHS will undergo a roof renovation in three phases.

- Phase 1: Caretaker's Cottage
- Phase 2: Main Museum Building
- Phase 3: Exhibition Hall and Canoe Hale

We would like to extend our gratitude and aloha to the LH Dorcy Hawaiian Foundation for the funding for capital improvements to help us with this much needed project, and aloha to Haleakalā Solar for being the renovation team. Be on the lookout for our new ROOF.

Mahalo

Contact Us

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

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