

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF KAHANA

by
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Records on file in the State of Hawaii Bureau of Conveyances reveal an *ahupua'a* consisting of 5050 acres in Kahana was awarded to Chieftess Ane Keohokalole (Mother of King Kalakaua) in 1848 (Land Court Award #8452 and Royal Patent #4387). These records are believed to be the first instruments of land ownership title in Kahana.

Much of the lower marshland surrounding the river was planted with taro by the *pu e pue e* method by subjects of the chieftess. The higher dryland area leading to the ridges on both sides of the river was planted with mango, breadfruit, guava, coconut, tapioca, sugar cane, banana and sweet potato. Groves of Hawaiian bamboo, ti leaves, kukui and hala trees at various locations indicate significant areas of ancient dwelling places.

On 15 May, 1857, a deed was settled from Keohokalole to a Chinese merchant named Ah Sing, containing 3,000 acres of marshland for \$2,000. The entire area was planted with rice by a small group of Chinese workers indicating the earliest known rice cultivation and migration of Chinese immigrants in Kahana. The harvested crops were tediously processed manually prior to establishment of a mechanical powered processing mill in the valley which not only trimmed process time in half but allowed the much needed labor to be utilized in the cultivation phase.

After eleven successful years of enterprising, Ah Sing, through his attorney, negotiated terms with one J.A. Chuck of Macao, China, for sale of his thriving business property for \$6,000. Final transactions transpired on 17 October, 1868.

On 15 March, 1872, after a few unprofitable harvestings, Chuck sold his land ownership to H. Ah Mee, a Chinese merchant from Honolulu for \$5,000. Over the following two years, Ah Mee experienced a steady decline in production due to rising machinery repair costs and decreasing labor forces

coupled with competition from an increasing number of rice entrepreneurs in the surrounding communities along the Windward region and the fast growing pineapple and sugarcane industry which had begun in the valley.

On 1 August, 1874, Ah Mee negotiated a promissory agreement with *Hui Kua'i Aina*, (Church members' land company), to purchase his property for a sum of \$6,000. Leaders representing the *hui* included J.W. Puonui, J.W. Makuakane, Kamaka Niau and Chieftess Ane Keohokalole. Fulfillment of the promissory agreement terms between both parties finalized the conveyance of this *ahupua'a* on 15 March, 1875.

Hui Kua'i Aina had become an organized group of Saints who protested Hawaii Mission President Frederick Mitchell's announcement citing "further growing of awa in Laie would be punishable by law." This enraged group fled to Kahana in search of a new "promised land" to establish a self-sustaining settlement under guidance of their purchasing agreement with Ah Mee. This plight brought much attention to Church authorities in Utah and was later termed "The Hawaii Mission Crisis of 1874." From this episode came the birth of a new era in the history of the LDS Church in Kahana and Hawaii.

The trials and tribulations of these Saints were many as they contended with the daily challenges of a new lifestyle and environment. Together as a close knitted *ohana* they shared their *manawa* and endeavors. They labored countless hours cultivating their *ahupua'a* with *taro*, fruits, medicinal plants and herbs and other food staples. The long winding *kahawai* through the valley *awai* and nearby ocean, provided their source of seafood while the surrounding mountain harbored additional food to curb their appetites. They were jubilant for the harvesting and apportioning of their seasonal crops that occasionally had to grow under adverse weather conditions.

Fulfillment of their spiritual needs came under the guidance and leadership of the priesthood brethren in the community. This group was sustained a branch of the Laie Mission and later a dependent branch of the Hauula Branch.

The little chapel perched on the eastern slope near the entrance of the valley served the congregational activities and Sunday meeting from 1871. Services were discontinued in 1953 after deterioration rendered the chapel unsafe for further use. Repair and preservation efforts by Dan Bierne came to a temporary halt with his passing in the summer of 1986 although volunteer and community groups have been maintaining the ground and cemetery.

In 1889 and following, many Kahana Saints answered the call to colonize Iosepa in Skull Valley, Utah. These Saints relinquished their *kuleana* at the mercy of Mary Foster's unjust purchasing scheme that was to aid their fare for passage. She emerged a very wealthy individual after acquiring much of the *ahupua'a* in Kahana by 1930. She entertained (in her luxurious home), members of the royal family and dignitaries of the Kingdom during their trips around the island. Her estate was inherited by her family, the Ward Estate, following her death. At the closing of the Iosepa colony in 1917, many of the colonizers journeyed home and established residence in various places in Hawaii while others chose to remain and call the state of Utah home.

By 1927, a vast majority of the Kahana *kamaaina* land owners vacated their *kuleana* for other destinations in the territory of Hawaii. Some of them were never seen or heard from again and they took with them many fond memories of their ancestral and historical background. As the mounting departures continued, the *lo'i* image began disappearing from the scene of a once lush view of *kalo* being overgrown with heavy brush and foliage. The few remaining patches scattered throughout the valley became almost invisible at the close of an era characterized by half a century of productive activities and growth.

The *kalo* and rice flourished as a result of the combined departures of the *kamaaina* and Chinese populations seeking greener pastures, while pineapple began to thrive along the

slopes of the valley. A Japanese *hui* from Honolulu and two independent growers from Kahuku entered Kahana valley and established the pineapple plantations. The *hui* spearheaded by Shoso Tanaka started their operation under the name of Kahana Agriculture Company while the two independent growers established their plantations under their family names of Anzai and Furuya. They brought with them the first group of Japanese and Filipino immigrant laborers. The *hui* planted their crop on 80% of the eastern slope leased from the Foster estate while Furuya grew his crop on the western slope across the valley also leased from Foster. Anzai's lease of fifteen acres was comprised of the abandoned rice patches adjacent to the Agriculture Company acreage where he restored the rice growing chiefly for community consumption. The pineapple harvested by these growers were transported and sold to Libby, McNeill and Libby pineapple cannery at Wailau, the present site of St. John's By The Sea (Daycare Center) in Kahalu'u. These employers built for their laborers multiple single room houses that were synonymously identified as Tanaka and Furuya Camps.

By 1923, the escalating cost of operation resulted in a decision by the Agriculture Company and their counterpart across the way to terminate the pineapple production and engage in the more lucrative sugar can industry. The Anzai clan acquired an additional lease and extended their farming venture into sugar cane. The cane produced in the valley was sold to Kahuku Plantation which transported the harvested crops to Kahuku mill aboard their recently purchased railroad system established by James Castle's Koolau Railway Company. However, by 1935, the Sugar Cane industry had dissolved its operations due to expensive competition with mainland grown sugar beets and cane.

Tanaka moved to Marconi near Turtle Bay, and established a general merchandise store that is still in operation today while the Anzai clan established permanent residence in neighboring Kaaawa and grew vegetables that were sold to the produce markets in Honolulu. They established the Anzai General Store a few years later across from Kaaawa Park and sold out to the present 7-11 chain store in 1985. The

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Furuya's, after terminating their sugar planting, also began growing vegetables that were sold to the Honolulu produce markets. They remained in the valley throughout the second world war, later moving to Honolulu. The majority of their laborers moved to Laie and Kahuku Plantation camps at the end of the sugar cane era in Kahana. Some of the Japanese workers in the valley included the Kurata, Ueno, Nozawa, Uichi, and Gorai, while the Filipinos who remained in Kahana married into the native clans included the Asintista, Domingues, Canape, Dela Cerna, and Garvida who reared a great number of children in this quiet village, some of whom still reside here today.

In 1942, the U.S. Army Engineer Corp erected a Jungle Warfare Training Center in the valley. This facility and another similar one built in neighboring Punaluu (Green) Valley, was continually used by the Armed Forces throughout the duration of World War II to train servicemen prior to their commitment to the Pacific war zone. A tour of the valley following the closing of the training facility disclosed numerous landmarks destroyed or damaged beyond recognition and replaced by a number of man-made features that gave the entire area a new look. Taro thus had a dim possibility of resurfacing ever again in the valley until the early eighties when two determined families planted a few patches that have since, fared very well.

Like other places in the history of Hawaii nei, Kahana has its own unique historical background, landmarks and legends. Very few of these landmarks remain visible, most having succumbed to the destructive forces of man and Mother Nature. Among the oldest landmark to be observed, although partially damaged, is the *huilua* fishpond situated at the eastern entrance of the Kahana stream. This pond was used to raise mullet for the residents since being built in the ancient days. It is believed that *huilua* was built by the *menehunes* and was fed by a number of fresh water springs. Damages inflicted by two tsunamis made repairs very difficult and costly to pursue as witnessed by its fallen walls.

Kahana has also contributed its share of talented individuals in both the ancient and modern hula profession, *taro* cultivation experts and akamai fishermen.

Since condemnation by the State of Hawaii in 1970, the residents of Kahana have grouped themselves together as the Kahana Ohana Unity Council. Segments within the council are assigned with responsibilities for various projects that will become a part of the living park concept. Proposed phases of the park have yet to be initiated by the State, which has inconveniently burdened the residents with a month to month lease of their *kuleana*. This hardship has restricted them from making major repairs to their dilapidating homes or from rebuilding. It is hopeful that the bill before the legislature proposing a sixty-five year lease for these tenants will be passed and supported by Governor John Waihee who has declared this year "The Year of the Hawaiian."

One of the two restoration and historical landmark registration proposals being pursued by a segment of the Kahana Ohana Unity Council is the chapel and cemetery. The Mormon Pacific Historical Society also shares a common interest in this projected goal. The *Huilua* fishpond is the second landmark under proposal.

In February 1986 the Hauula Second Ward of the Laie Hawaii Stake began holding Sunday School classes in the Kahana Youth Center under the direction of Brother Joe and Sister Lee Pouha. This reactivation program was prompted by the low attendance record of children from the Kahana area, due to lack of transportation to the Hauula Chapel. The classes has gained tremendous progress with favorable results, and noted especially by frequent attendance of some elderly Saints.