



NĀ MEA HOU

Something New

News and Stories from the Maui Historical Society

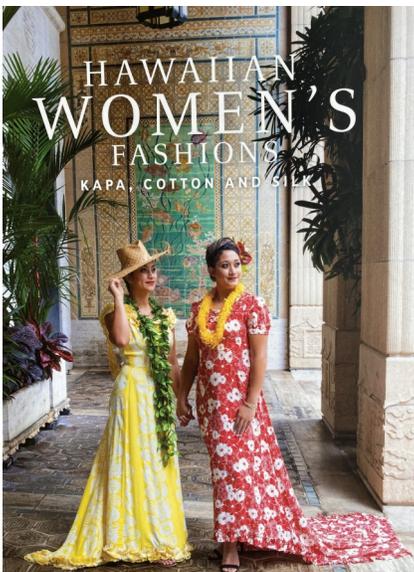
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E Komo Mai! Welcome to this very first quarterly newsletter of 2021! Although the museum remains temporarily closed due to the Covid-19, the board, staff and volunteers are working behind the scenes to maintain the museum, its artifacts and the 'āina until we can physically open the doors again. Meanwhile visit us on-line at mauimuseum.org. Download our mobile app for a virtual tour. Browse the gift shop.

Hawaiian Women's Fashions

Kapa, Cotton and Silk



From its striking cover to the very last page, Hawaiian Women's Fashions: Kapa, Cotton and Silk by Agnes Terao-Guiala is a feast for the eyes and mind. Tracing the history of the clothing worn by the women of Hawai'i through the decades, Mili, as she is more familiarly known states: "Fashion isn't a whim...It is a reflection of the culture and cultural changes of the time".

Mili provides detailed descriptions of the clothing worn by the ali'i as well as the maka'ainana in vintage black and white photos which appear in the book. Colorful contemporary images feature Maui wahine wearing garments created by Hawai'i's 20th and 21st century designers.

Each of the eighteen chapters includes the history of the period and how women's clothing evolved. Before the missionaries arrived, much of what was used for clothing and adornments came from native plants (wauke for kapa, plant dyes), native animals (birds, niho palaoa) or natural objects (stone, hair). It took some time for the native wahine to adapt to the new fashions which covered almost every part of the body.

Fashions from all eras are fascinating to Mili. She comments that they "make visual statements about the women who wore them and of the social and political situations of the time."

For a reader interested in the evolution of the many styles, Mili includes adaptations of older designs into today's fashions, some of which have been featured in the eye-catching MAMo productions created by Kumu Hula Vicky Holt-Takamine.

Her personal collection includes more than a hundred holokū and mu'umu'u. With a trained eye, she has found many at church rummage sales or from private sellers. Many of the items in the current exhibit at Hale Hō'ike'ike come from her collection and although closed to the public at the moment, photos from the current exhibit at Hale Hō'ike'ike may be viewed on the MHS webpage, mauimuseum.org.

Today's local designers are looking to vintage kapa designs as well as the arts and crafts of early Hawaiians (including petroglyphs, tattoo or kakau, natural elements) to provide inspiration for their work. It is Mili's hope that current fashions

and artwork will be a blend of traditional designs from the past moving gracefully and with strength into the 21st century. She also encourages designers to create clothing that will be worn more in the business world, perhaps even reviving the Aloha Friday tradition.

Hawaiian Women's Fashions: Kapa, Cotton and Silk is currently available directly from the author.

Contact Agnes Mililani Terao-Guiala by phone 808-281-5308 or by email naominani@yahoo.com



Author: Agnes Mililani Terao-Guiala



Talk Story



Executive Director Naomi "Sissy" Lake-Farm

We recently sat down with Sissy to learn about the direction and initiatives the museum has taken during this time of forced closure. At the same time, we were able to get better acquainted with the woman also known as Kahakuhaupiokamakani (Sissy's Hawaiian name) which translates as the lady of the cold piercing wind. Her inoa, she told us, came to her father in a dream that took place at 'Iao Valley.

Although born and raised on O'ahu, Sissy spent her summers and vacations in Wailuku a few blocks from Hale Hō'ike'ike where her father, grandparents and their ancestors lived dating back to the time of Kahekili.

"This land where the museum sits, 'Iao Valley and the four waters are in my DNA," Sissy declares. And one has only to witness Sissy dancing hula or instructing her students on the museum grounds and the hairs stand up. You feel that piercing wind from 'Iao and imagine her kupuna there watching and guiding her.

She tells us as much, saying that each day

she asks herself what would her kupuna do? She feels her parents, her grandparents and all her teachers have shown her a special path and that her work at the museum and in her Hālau (Nā Hanona Kūlike 'O Pi'ilani) is not just a job, it is her kuleana to both live and pass on those Hawaiian cultural values and practices bequeathed to her.

Sissy is gifted with a natural passion to educate and to ignite the fire to learn in others. This is also in her DNA as both her parents were teachers. Her late father Kumu John Lake was renowned locally, nationally and internationally for his work as a Hawaiian educator. He was a master kumu in the arts and traditions of hula, chanting and a perpetuator of 'ōlelo Hawai'i.

Sissy said she knew at a very early age she wanted to dance hula and by age 5 she was studying with her father's kumu and her very own Aunty, Maiki Aiu Lake, an influential kumu hula who many considered the most important hula teacher of the 20th century.

In her own hālau as kumu hula, Sissy extends the same "e komo mai" she offers at the museum. It is this inclusivity that best describes Sissy and has made her such a galvanizing force in this community. It has helped make the museum an important gathering place on Maui and even now, as the doors are closed, volunteers and staff buoyed by her enthusiasm and commitment continue to work (mostly on Zoom) to find innovative ways of achieving the museum's mandate: Collect, preserve, study, interpret and share the history and heritage of Maui.

Recently the neighboring Yokouchi estate was purchased by Imua Family Services, Maui's early childhood development agency. Their plan is to create a community space for outdoor nature-based learning for Island keiki.

Sissy sees this as a wonderful opportunity to partner with Imua as stewards of the land for the purpose of education. In the time of Kamehameha III this land was given to the missionaries for those "who were seeking knowledge." The ali'i knew the importance of education, saying "knowledge is fundamental to living as a chief."

You feel the winds of 'Iao again as Sissy shares her vision of Hale Hō'ike'ike and Imua working together. "Who better to share our history and heritage with than the keiki of today – they are our future generations. "

Covid-19 has been a challenge for many of us but Sissy has a forward thinking and positive message: First, look for the silver linings: for her personally she has been able to spend more time with her 'ohana both at home and at the museum. From this quality time at the museum new initiatives and innovative projects are underway to continue the work she, staff, volunteers and board members passionately believe in.

Her final message is an invitation. If you have a desire to learn, to pass on knowledge or just to be part of our 'ohana at Hale Hō'ike'ike now more than ever we need community and kōkua. Contact us through our website: mauimuseum.org to see how you can participate.

From the Archives



Hawaiian society under the 'ai kapu system was stratified according to rank. An individual's rank was not determined by wealth or gender, but by genealogy. One important symbol of rank for the highest ali'i, both men and women, was the lei niho palaoa, a whale tooth pendant. The curved hook pendant, symbolizing the tongue of Kū, one of the four great gods in the Hawaiian pantheon, is strung on thousands of finely braided strands of hair from the wearer's family and ancestors. This is one of four in our collection.

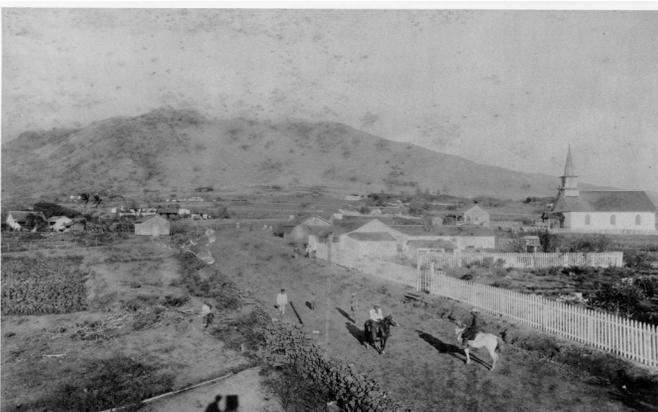
Nā Wai 'Ehā a ka La'i

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. Nā Wai 'Ehā is located in the moku of Wailuku and was known as being 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 Waikapū i ka makani kokololio – Waikapū of the gusty winds.

Waikapū means "waters of the conch", named after a sacred conch shell that was guarded in a cave within the Waikapū Valley. It was said that the pū was sounded regularly and even annoyed some, including the mischievous dog known as Puapualenalena. After many attempts, Puapualenalena was successful at stealing the pū and from that time on it no longer could be heard.

Waikapū is the southernmost ahupua'a in Nā Wai 'Ehā and consists of 15,684 acres from mauka to makai (mountain to the sea). The traditional palena 'āina (boundaries) of Waikapū commence on the Hana'ula Mountain Range (4,456 ft.) and traverse down slope along five prominent cinder cones: Pu'uuanu, Pu'umoe, Pu'ulū'au, Pu'uhona and Pu'uhele. Subsequently, the boundary line moves southward and connects to Kapoli, a once famous spring at Mā'alaea Harbor. From there, it moves along the Mā'alaea Bay coastline and Keālia wetlands to a boundary point called Kiheipūko'a, near the Sugar Beach Condominiums. The boundary line heads northwards through the Kama'oma'o plains to Ka'ōpala, located at the Central Maui Baseyard and then immediately west to Pōhāko'i, a famous adze grinding stone and boundary point near Ku'ikahi Road and Honoapi'ilani Highway. The boundary line then climbs up the lower ridge of Kalapaoka'ilio to the upper ridge of Kapilau. The Waikapū boundary line concludes by moving southerly along the upper Kapilau Ridge through the interior valley and stream of Waikapū until it returns to the Hana'ula Mountain Range.

Waikapū encompassed a diverse cultural landscape. The coastal region of Waikapū at Mā'alaea Bay once provided an abundance of fish and other marine resources along a long reef system. Adjacent to Mā'alaea Bay is Keālia, once Maui's largest wetland, an ancient inland fishpond and well-known wahi mo'o pa'akai or salt producing grounds.



Waikō Road, Waikapū, circa 1890. Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum



Water from lo'i kalo flows back into Waikapū Stream

Half of the central Maui desert plains called Ke Kula o Kama'oma'o resided in Waikapū and included a portion of the expansive pu'e one or sand dunes system that originates in Waihe'e. These dunes are important final resting places of iwi kūpuna (ancestral bones/burials). The alluvial fans and fertile soil that face outwards to Kama'oma'o were of great importance to Hawaiians for cultivating extensive dryland and wetland crops on what was later called kuleana lands. The water resources of the Waikapū Stream that flowed through the main village were utilized for irrigating over 1,400 documented lo'i kalo on an estimated 900 acres of land. The perennial stream then flowed into and filled Loko o Keālia (Keālia Estuary) and emptied into Mā'alaea Bay via the muliwai (estuary) of Palalau. The Waikapū stream was an important resource which allowed Hawaiians of this ahupua'a to cultivate extensive lo'i kalo (wetland taro patches), enabling them to sustain their community. It was also home to native stream life such as the 'o'opu, hīhīwai, and 'opae which also helped feed the populace. The upper watershed and forests once encompassed vast amounts of endemic and indigenous plants, birds, insects, mollusks, mammal and aquatic species.

The ahupua'a of Waikapū consisted of over 30 'ili (traditional subdivisions). Throughout the Great Māhele (1848-1850), Hawaiians of Waikapū were awarded over 100 kuleana parcels of land abutting the Waikapū Stream and along the coastline. The remaining lands were awarded to the Hawaiian Kingdom Board of Education. Kuleana lands included extensive traditional lo'i kalo and māla agricultural complexes (wetland and dryland systems), 'auwai (irrigation ditches), heiau (religious structures), kauhale (habitation sites), pūnāwai (springs), ko'a (fishing shrines), mo'o pa'akai (salt ponds), loko wai (inland fish ponds), alanui (trails), ana (caves), pu'e one (sand dunes), and lua kupapa'u (burial sites).

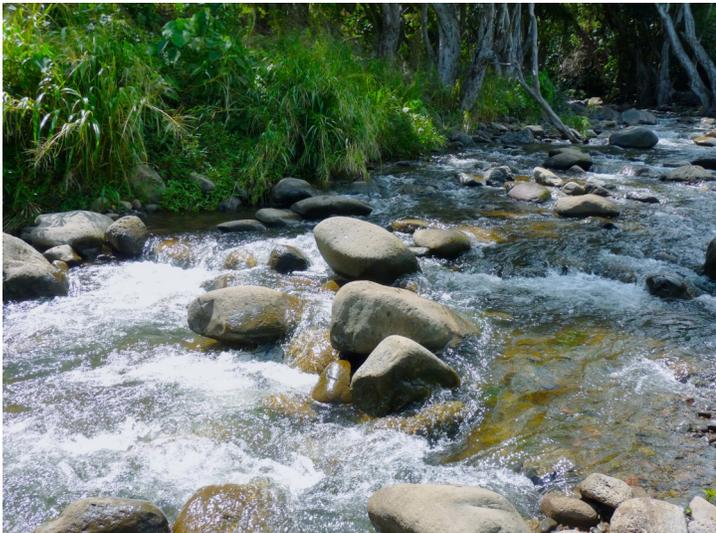
In more recent history, Waikapū was home to one of the earliest sugar plantations in Hawai'i beginning in the 1830s. The Waikapū Sugar Plantation Company was established by James Louzada and Henry Cornwell. The old sugar mill smokestack was a well-known landmark until it blew down in a 1918 Kona storm. There was a multitude of plantation camps such as Kimura, Pu'uhele, Hayashi whose residents later worked for Wailuku Sugar Company. Waikapū had a famous horse race track, an open air theater and a number of small family owned stores and businesses along Honoapi'ilani Highway such as Sakamoto Store and Furukawa Store as well as an old Chinese store on Waikō Road called S. Ahfat Store. There were also a number of farms, such as the Rogers Family Farm which raised cattle, pigs and chickens as well as running a slaughter house and butchery. The Vida Family also established a piggery early on and still continue to do so today. There were three known churches around the main portion of Waikapū Town: St. Joseph Catholic Church, Waikapū Protestant Church and the Waikapū Mormon Church.

Nā Wai 'Ehā cont.

Along the Old Waikapū Government Road off Waikō Road was the old Waikapū Elementary School. At the top of West Waikō Road was the former Cornwell Estate which both King Kalākaua and Queen Lili'uokalani would frequent during visits to Maui in the latter 1800s. Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) also paid a visit to the Cornwell family in Waikapū in the mid-1800s and fell in love with the quaint village lifestyle. Maui's first airport was built in 1929 near the coast of Mā'alaea but later condemned in 1938 due to dangerous conditions caused by the makani kokololio or gusty winds. Before its closing, Amelia Earhart landed there in the mid-1930s.

Today, the cultural and natural landscape has dramatically changed in Waikapū. The thriving fishing village at Mā'alaea has now turned into a harbor, condominiums, shopping and recreational centers. The once flourishing Kapoli Spring has been covered over by a public restroom. Keālia Wetlands does not swell with the same amount of water from Waikapū Stream due to private water company stream diversions. The 65 ft. Pu'uhele cinder cone has been excavated and turned into a commercial construction landfill. Most of the sand dunes have been leveled for former sugarcane cultivation or the construction of homes and businesses, many of which have disturbed countless ancient Native Hawaiian burial sites. Very few of the 1,400 documented lo'i kalo terraces that once dominated the Waikapū landscape for hundreds of years still exist. Fewer than 10 acres remain.

Currently, there is a resurgence happening in Waikapū in which Native Hawaiian lineal descendants that reside on kuleana lands as well as long standing community members/residents and the Waikapū Community Association are putting forth efforts to perpetuate the rich cultural history of Waikapū. Some examples of community-based projects are the restoration of Waikapū Stream, cultivation of historic lo'i kalo and native watershed and forest stewardship. Although much has changed, Waikapū continues to be an active community that is trying to bridge the once dominant plantation-country lifestyle with the many newcomers who are calling Waikapū home, in order to retain the cultural and historical identity of this ahupua'a. One thing remains strong and everlasting, the makani Kokololio (gusty wind) which has seen the many changes throughout the times. It is a fine example of the resiliency that is currently demonstrated by those who are kupa o ka 'āina – residents of this land.



In 2004, descendants of the 'aina with community members and friends restored ancient lo'i kalo, fallow since the 1950s.

Part I: Nā Wai 'Ehā a ka La'i - Waikapū

Researched & Authored (©2021) by Hōkūao Pellegrino,
Past President of the Maui Historical Society and
descendant of Edward and Caroline Bailey.



2020-2021

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*"To collect, preserve, study, interpret and
share the history and heritage of Maui"*

Contact Us

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