



# NĀ MEA HOU

News and Stories from the Maui Historical Society

Something New

Winter 2022 | Wailuku, Hawai'i

VOLUME III, No. 4

## Welina Mai Me Ke Aloha my MHS 'ohana,

2022 is coming to a close very quickly, and it is with gratitude and appreciation that I recap significant MHS events of this year. To begin, we are happy to say that our museum is OPEN Tuesday through Friday from 10-2pm. We are doing a reduced schedule, but OPEN never the less. We are hoping in 2023 to be open weekdays, Monday through Friday from 10-2 pm. Be on the lookout when we add Monday to our schedule. Mahalo to our staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees for their commitment and hardwork that contributes to the management and caretaking of our sweet, lovely museum.

Thank you to the LH Dorcy Hawaiian Foundation for the help and funding of our roofing project. With the coming of the rainy season, rest assured we have a dry interior within the museum. In regards to the commitment and growth of our MHS Board of Trustees, we have completed the following projects: MHS Strategic Plan 2022-2027, Board training and bonding, and the reinstating of the 7 standing committees for our Board of Trustees: Executive, Historic Preservation, Nomination, Development, Personnel, Budget and Finance, and Programs. Each committee is looking for members to serve, if you are interested in getting involved, please give us a call at the office and we can get you connected.

This year we were given great opportunities to expand and reach out to the Maui Community and beyond. Here are a few of the exciting projects that we were able to coordinate and be a part of:

- Collaborator for the Small Town, Big Art Project: Wailuku: Worked with local and visiting artists to create public art throughout Wailuku in the redevelopment project. MHS serves as the cultural and historical expert in the program.
- Various Publications and TV programs: Forbes Magazine, Maui Nō Ka 'O'i Magazine, and Hawaii Magazine. Hōkū Nights Special, The Peek-a bows childrens' video, Wake Up Matt: YouTube channel, and various news specials featuring artists: John Cruz, Kalani Pe'a, Keali'i Reichel, and Anuheā, to name a few.
- Outreach programs to promote MHS: Support of Maui Public Art Corp, Bishop Museum collaboration to promote Kapae Mahu Exhibit, Kepā Maly event in collaboration with archaeology firms: 'Āina Archaeology and Honua Consulting, Book signing with Cody Pueo Pata, 'Ohu'ohu nā Mauna 'o 'E'eka: Place Names of Maui Komohana: Place Names of Maui Komohana, and Agnes Mililani Terao-Guiala's Fashion Exhibit at the Four Seasons Hotel for 2022 Aloha Festivals.
- Keeping to our traditions by sharing the following events with the community: 2022 Heritage Lei Day Festival, MHS Annual Membership Meeting and Lā Kū'oko'a event in celebration of Hawaiian independence.

As the caretakers of MHS, we are blessed and excited to continue this amazing work. We are so grateful to all of you for your kind donations and memberships. Please continue to stay connected with us via our website: [www.mauiuseum.org](http://www.mauiuseum.org) and through our social media platforms: Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Wishing you all a Mele Kalikimaka Me Ka Hau'oli Makahiki Hou.

My sincerest aloha,

*Sissy Lake-Farm*

Executive Director  
Maui Historical Society/ Hale Hō'ike'ike at the Bailey House



Mele Kalikimaka Me Ka  
Hau'oli Makahiki Hou



# What is Kapa?

We've all seen the magnificent feather capes and helmets worn by early Hawaiians of high rank. Not everyone dressed that way all the time. The mild climate made minimal clothing appropriate; a malo (loin cloth) for men, a pā'ū (body wrap from below the breast to the knee) for women, and a kīhei (shawl). These items were made of kapa.



Description: Kapa from the 1700s

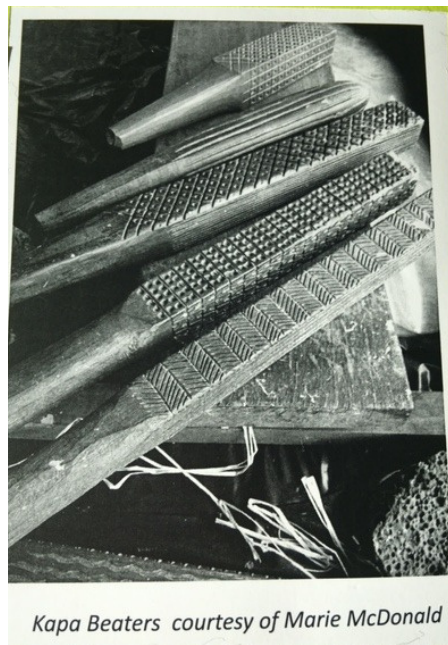
What is kapa? Kapa is a textile. The creator, typically a woman, turns the inner bark of certain plants into a cloth-like material. The plants most often used were wauke (paper mulberry), and mamaki (native nettle). This cloth is often referred to as bark-cloth, and its rich patterns and designs are replicated in cotton and other materials today. In addition to clothing, kapa was used for kapa moe (blankets), gifts, and certain ceremonies.

As with most processes in early Hawai'i, there are mo'olelo (stories or legends) involved in the making of kapa. The most famous of these is the story of the god Māui roping the sun to slow its progress across the sky so his mother, Hina, could dry her kapa. Another common story tells of Maikohā, a dutiful farmer and father in Nu'uano, on O'ahu, who wanted to arm his daughters against the cold winds in the valley. He told them to watch for a wauke tree that would spring from his gravesite. Before he died, he told them how to turn the bark of wauke tree into kapa. Maikohā and his daughters, Lauhuiki and La'ahana, are 'aumākua (deified ancestors) of kapa makers. Wauke, as we know, was a "canoe plant" (brought with first settlers), and cultivated in most family gardens, as well as in some farms. Individual families and entire communities made their own kapa.

Some of the instructions for the technical process of kapa making are available online, in books, or in classes. You should do some research before embarking on this process. Basically, the outer and inner bark of the wauke stalk is stripped off in one piece. The outer bark is scraped away, leaving the white, fibrous inner bark, which is soaked in salt water. Next, the first beating with a hohoa (round mallet) on a kua pōhaku (stone anvil) or a kua lā'au (wood anvil) loosens and separates the fibers, making them pliable. At this point the mo'omo'o (strip of once beaten bark) can be dried and stored. Kapa can also go

through a process called retting, in which mo'omo'o are wrapped in ti or banana leaves and soaked again, further breaking down the fibers into a pulpy mass, and making Hawaiian kapa softer than Polynesian kapa.

A second beating, with an i'e kuku (square incised beater) on a kua lā'au results in a strip of soft, pliable kapa four times its original width. This second beating with the intricately incised tool leaves a subtle pattern, called a watermark, on the kapa. These strips are sewn together for the desired size, dyed with natural dyes gathered and prepared by men, and decorated by women with 'ohe kākkpala (carved bamboo stamps). The decoration of kapa is an area of study far too vast to take up here, but the motifs, interpretations, and influences were complex and far reaching. Variations of the process described above were used for hundreds of years, and the sound of the kapa beater was part of the music of a Hawaiian village.



Kapa making continued through the 1800s but gradually changed with the arrival of missionaries and other settlers. In addition to new dyes, newcomers brought new ideas about clothing, which dramatically altered the demand and production of kapa. Kapa making had all but disappeared by the end of the 1800s.

Interest in kapa and many other early Hawaiian arts, crafts, and practices are part of what has been called the second Hawaiian renaissance. The first Hawaiian renaissance began at the time of King Kamehameha V and King Kalākaua, who followed him. The goal of the first was to create a government with a strong national identity, and not to duplicate the European models. The second started in the late 1960s and early 1970s and was led by music, choosing to look back at traditional sources rather than catering to the growing tourist industry. Language, dance, and arts were rediscovered and practiced with the passion of a people finding greater identity, pride and meaning in their remarkable history, and bringing it into their lives.

Examples of renaissance influences are The Merry Monarch Festival, the Hōkūle'a, University courses in Hawaiian studies, and maybe most importantly, because you cannot have a culture without a language, the teaching and use of the Hawaiian language. The production of kapa is on the rise again, and artists are creating it with great respect for the past, acknowledging the times they live in. Their work is traditional and modern, blending both beautifully.



The Maui Historical Society is grateful to the Paul Niess 'ohana of Chico, CA for their second vintage kapa donation. On their October 4, 2022 visit to Hale Ho'ike'ike, the Niess family presented the kapa in honor of their beloved Uncle Ezekiel Wong who graciously signed the MHS Deed of Gift that day.

The first kapa, gifted in the mid 2000's, was authenticated by the late kapa master, Pua Van Dorpe, as being of Hawaiian origin and more than 200 years old. We look forward to learning more about the recent gift of kapa and other interesting backstories from the Niess family including its journey from HI to CA and back.

MHS has artifacts and photos in its archives related to the ancient art of kapa making. Mahalo nui loa to the Niess family for its continued generosity.



From left to right. **MHS Staff** - Executive Director Sissy Lake-Farm, Kimo Guiquierre, Scott Dixon and trustee Aunty Walleto Pellegrino  
**Niess Family Members** - Paul Niess, Lauren Wong, Makena Niess Amy Niess, Lily Niess, Ezekiel Wong, and Linda Wong



# Talk Story with Kapa Makers



## Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond



Lisa's journey with kapa began with dyes. With an ethnobotanist for a mother, Lisa was immersed in the world of Hawaiian plants and dyes at a young age. Her mother would sometimes pull onto the side of the road to collect or observe various plants. In 2000 Lisa became the director of the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, She used her knowledge of dyes for the benefit of the community – putting on classes on Easter egg dyeing with the resources she had available to her, Hawaiian fruits, flowers, etc.

In 2003, Lisa took her first kapa making class, an intense workshop that spanned five days. That class was the beginning. When Lisa met artist Marie McDonald, she showed Marie her dye work. Later Marie called Lisa and said, "I'm doing an art show/ kapa show and I want you to put some pieces in." Lisa, surprised, told her that she had only taken the one class. To which Marie replied, "Well, you have a year to learn."

Learn she did. Lisa said she "beat kapa, and cried over her poor results," she began to intensively study the kapa-making process. By the end of the year, she got a couple of her pieces into Marie's show. From there, Lisa's kapa skills continued to blossom and she would go on to outfit kapa at Merrie Monarch. This spurred her down a path of kapa research. Whenever Lisa went to a museum with kapa displays, she always noticed "that it's all so fantastic, so thin, so amazing" with no holes or gaps. She knew there must have been a standardized process to make kapa which took Lisa through years and years of study. She has written extensively on the techniques used to produce different textures of kapa, depending on its intended use and purpose.

In the future, Lisa hopes to see more people wearing kapa, especially malo. Now, Lisa regularly teaches kapa and dye classes at the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens for anyone interested in signing up.

## Kekai Kahōkūka'alani Daunhauer



Kekai, founder of Kapa Curious, grew up making kapa but her real kapa journey began in 2018. After Kekai's daughter left for college, Kekai's mother flew from Moloka'i to Maui for a visit and brought with her various kapa pieces of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Kekai "saw them and touched them..." and knew she wanted to create kapa.

Kekai "was just curious about what else [she] could do with it – curious about kapa," hence the name of her company: Kapa Curious.

Despite the name, Kekai also works with a variety of other materials – hau, bamboo, shells, etc. – and she stressed that she considers herself a fiber artist with an emphasis on kapa rather than a "kapa artist." When starting a new piece of kapa, she prefers to listen to fibers and "create fibers that will make what [she] needs them to," whether that is earrings, a baby blanket, an art piece, or something entirely different.

Although Kekai believes in the strict protocols surrounding the ceremonial uses of kapa, overall, Kekai "isn't a huge traditionalist." Regularly, she experiments with different methods, dyes, and tools because "our ancestors were very creative, constantly experimenting and problem solving...this translated into their kapa." Kekai draws a lot of inspiration from this mentality whenever she makes kapa or teaches her students.

In the future, she hopes that more people in Hawai'i take an interest in kapa making. Kekai hopes to see kapa woven into the day-to-day life of visitors, locals, and Hawaiians. Sometimes "people only see [kapa] as art but there's so many uses – making a tiny kapa piece for the birth of a baby, adding it to your clothes or a cuff. Or a pendant. Or a hair piece. Or a hat. All things possible to make out of kapa."

To that end, Kekai hopes to see more people growing wauke to make expansion of kapa possible. To learn more about Kekai, visit her website <https://www.kapacurious.com/>.

# Recipe Contest Winners

## Gordon M. Fernandez, Jr.



### Winning Recipe: Poi Pancakes

Born and raised on Maui, Gordon lives in Makawao with his wife, daughter, dog, and three cats. Typically, Gordon is the cook in the family and enjoys making both sweet and savory foods. Whenever anyone comes over, Gordon always makes sure they leave with a full belly of food. In his free time, he also likes to hunt and fish.

## Dixie Burg



### Winning Recipe: Banana Bread

Every year, Dixie splits her time between Iowa and Hawai'i. During her time in Hawai'i, Dixie spends lots of time with her daughter and granddaughter. In both Iowa and Hawai'i, Dixie is an avid baker and raised five children on her various recipes.

Both Gordon and Dixie's recipes are available on our website [mauimuseum.org/newsletter](https://www.mauimuseum.org/newsletter).



2022-2023

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**A Hui Hou:**

We hope that you enjoyed our final newsletter of 2022. We look forward to the new year and exploring many new topics with our beloved community in 2023. If you are looking for gifts for the holidays, we invite you to visit the Maui Historical Society website (mauimuseum.org) to see our online gift shop or stop into the museum and do some holiday shopping in person. We support and highlight local designers and local artists. We offer special and unique items that are found exclusively at Hale Ho'ike'ike. We offer a discount in the gift shop and online for MHS members. Becoming a new member or renewing your membership online is available too.

**Upcoming Events:**

Saturday, January 14, 2023 - Kapa Event  
Fitting with the theme of our Winter Newsletter, the Maui Historical Society invites you to come to Hale Ho'ike'ike for a day to celebrate Kapa and all that surrounds it. There will be a kapa making demonstration by local artist, Kekai Kahōkūka'alani Daunhauer. There will also be live music, food, and various kapa items available for purchase from local vendors. More details to come in the following weeks. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to keep up with the most recent updates and events. We hope to see you there!

**Contact Us**






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

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