

Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives Bicentennial Reflection and Rejuvenation Activities - 2018-2020

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was formed in 1810; it initially sent missions to India (1812), Ceylon (Sri Lanka – 1816) and to the Cherokee and Choctaw (1817 & 1818).

The coming of Henry ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia and other young Hawaiians to the United States moved the ABCFM to establish a mission in the Hawaiian Islands. ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia left Hawai‘i in 1809; he latched upon the Christian religion, converted to Christianity in 1815 and in 1817 became the first student at the Foreign Mission School established at Cornwall, Connecticut by the ABCFM. ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia yearned “with great earnestness that he would (return to Hawai‘i) and preach the Gospel to his poor countrymen.”

‘Ōpūkaha‘ia died of typhus fever on February 17, 1818. Edwin Welles Dwight put together a book, ‘Memoirs of Henry Obookiah’ - it is an edited collection of ‘Ōpūkaha‘ia’s letters and journals/diaries; this served as an inspiration for missionaries to volunteer to carry his message to Hawai‘i.

When asked “Who will return with these boys to their native land to teach the truths of salvation?” Hiram Bingham and his classmate, Asa Thurston, were the first to offer their services to the Board.

The Prudential Committee of the ABCFM, in giving instructions to these pioneers, said: “Your mission is a mission of mercy, and your work is to be wholly a labor of love. Your views are not to be limited to a low, narrow scale, but you are to open your hearts wide, and set your marks high. You are to aim at nothing short of covering these islands with fruitful fields, and pleasant dwellings and schools and churches, and of Christian civilization.”

On October 23, 1819, seven American couples, that made up the Pioneer Company of American Protestant missionaries from the northeast US, set sail from Boston on the Thaddeus for the Hawaiian Islands. With the missionaries were four Hawaiian students from the Foreign Mission School, Thomas Hopu, William Kanui, John Honoli‘i and Prince Humehume (son of Kaua‘i’s King Kaumuali‘i).

By the time the Pioneer Company arrived, Kamehameha I had died and the centuries-old kapu system had been abolished. Through the actions of King Kamehameha II (Liholiho), with encouragement by former Queens Ka‘ahumanu and Keōpūolani (Liholiho’s mother), the Hawaiian people had already dismantled their heiau and had rejected their religious beliefs.

On March 30, 1820, the missionaries first sighted the Islands and anchored off-shore of Kawaihae. A few days later, they sailed to Kailua-Kona and anchored in Kailua Bay (April 4, 1820). On April 11, King Kamehameha II gave the missionaries permission to stay.

One of the earliest efforts of the missionaries was the identification and selection of important communities (generally near ports and ali‘i residences) as ‘stations’ for a regional meeting house (that also served as church and school). By 1850, eighteen mission stations had been established; six on Hawai‘i, four on Maui, four on O‘ahu, three on Kauai and one on Molokai; other meeting houses, churches and schools were built across the Islands.

Over the course of a little over 40-years (1820-1863 - the ‘Missionary Period,’) about 180-men and women in twelve Companies served in Hawai‘i to carry out the mission of the ABCFM.

Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives Bicentennial Activities

Today, the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society (parent to Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives (Hawaiian Mission Houses), a nonprofit educational institution and genealogical society, exists to promote an understanding of the social history of nineteenth-century Hawai'i and its critical role in the formation of modern Hawai'i.

Hawaiian Mission Houses preserves the heritage and interprets the stories of the American Protestant Missionaries, their descendants and their relationships with the people and cultures of Hawai'i, connecting with contemporary life and encouraging a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complex history of Hawai'i.

Hawaiian Mission Houses (in downtown Honolulu, at the corner of King and Kawaiaha'o) includes Hawai'i's two oldest houses: the 1821 Mission House (wood frame) and the 1831 Chamberlain House (coral block;) in addition, the 1841 bedroom annex is interpreted as the Print Shop. The site also has the Mission Memorial Cemetery, and a building which houses collections and archives (including the largest collection of Hawaiian-language books,) a reading room, a visitors' store and staff offices.

Hawaiian Mission Bicentennial – Some Critical Dates

'Ōpūkaha'ia's Death	February 17, 1818	(Saturday, February 17, 2018)
Pioneer Company Departure	October 23, 1819	(Wednesday, October 23, 2019)
Pioneer Company First Anchors at Kawaihae	March 30, 1820	(Monday, March 30, 2020)
Pioneer Company Landing at Kailua-Kona	April 4, 1820	(Saturday, April 4, 2020)

The following summarize some of the bicentennial activities planned by Hawaiian Mission Houses:

Partners in Change Book

Essentially, this is a re-visioning of the 'Missionary Album' (also referred to as 'Portraits of American Protestant Missionaries to Hawai'i,' initially published in 1901, with the last update in 1969). This new version will include a heading and focus on 'A Biographical Dictionary of American Protestant Missionaries in Hawai'i, and their Hawaiian and Tahitian Colleagues, 1820-1900.'

5 Themes Book

This is a proposed book that describes the major themes and the cooperation, and reasons for it, that led to success between the missionaries, the ali'i and the maka'āinana (common people).

Collaboration between Native Hawaiians and the American Protestant missionaries resulted in, among other things, the:

- Introduction of Christianity;
- Development of a written Hawaiian language and establishment of schools that resulted in widespread literacy;
- Promulgation of the concept of constitutional government;
- Combination of Hawaiian with Western medicine; and
- Evolution of a new and distinctive musical tradition (with harmony and choral singing)

No Ke Kalaiaina (translation of William Richards' Book)

William Richards was a member of the Second Company, arriving in the Islands on April 27, 1823. In the spring of 1838, the king and chiefs, who felt the need of reform in their government, asked Richards to become their teacher, chaplain and interpreter. With the consent of the ABCFM, he accepted this position and resigned his appointment as missionary and then spent his time urging the improvement of the political system.

Richards translated portions of Dr Francis Wayland's 'Elements of Political Economy' into Hawaiian and organized discussions with the Chiefs on constitutional governance. Richards was instrumental in helping to transform Hawai'i into a modern constitutional state with a bill of rights (1839) and a constitution (1840). The project involves translating the Hawaiian text into English and research William Richards and process of constitution in Hawaiian language sources.

Letters from the Ali'i

Mission Houses has what is believed to be the largest collection of Hawaiian Chiefs' letters. Over 225-letters written by 33-Chiefs have been translated and indexed, and posted on-line.

The letters, written between 1823 and 1887, are assembled from three different collections: the ABCFM Collection held by Harvard's Houghton Library, the Hawaiian Evangelical Association Collection of the Hawaii Conference-United Church of Christ and the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society. These letters provide insight into what the Chiefs were doing and thinking at the time, as well as demonstrate the close working relationship and collaboration between the ali'i and the missionaries.

Here is a link to a discussion of the Chiefs' letters by Kapali Lyon:

<https://youtu.be/H-BqfQvuMD4>

Here is a link to view the Chiefs' Letters:

<http://hmha.missionhouses.org/collections/show/178>

Hale Pili at Hawaiian Mission Houses (The Hale Pili o na Mikanele)

Arriving missionaries were typically assigned a hale pili (thatched home) on Missionary Row. Missionary Row was Diamond Head side of the present wood frame building at Hawaiian Mission Houses – it fronted along what is now King Street.

The proposed hale pili will be a reproduction of a hale that Chief Boki ordered built for the new missionaries arriving in the Second Company in 1823; it was first occupied by William and Clarissa Richards. The hale represents a bridge between cultures and represents support given to the missionaries by the host culture, and the cooperative relationship that existed between the chiefs and the missionaries.

Clarissa Richards dimensioned her house with "one room – 22 feet long and 12 feet wide" with a height of "12 feet from the ground to the ridge pole. ... (It) had three windows, or rather holes cut through the thatching with close wooden shutters." The door was "too small to admit a person walking in without stooping."

Other Events

Create a series of coordinated events with partners who recognize the significance of the historical cooperation and its legacies.

- Conference (Hawai'i Book and Music Festival (May 2020))
- Travelling Exhibition with local content (Spring 2018 – 2020)
- Curriculum (multi-media and project oriented) (December 2019)
- Lecture series (focus on 5 themes) - 6 total 2019 and 2020 in Honolulu; traveling program to churches (all Islands) (2019 – 2020)
- History theatre ((6 performances O'ahu, 2 Hawai'i Island (Kona & Hilo), 1 Kauai and 2 on Maui (Lāhainā and Wailuku)- focus on people involved with 5 themes--consider dialog form) (October 2019 - October 2020)

Hawaiian Mission Stations – Some of the Associated Churches

Kauai

Waimea (1820)	Waimea United Church of Christ
Kōloa (1834)	Kōloa Union Christ
Wai'oli (1834)	Wai'oli Hui'ia Church

O'ahu

Honolulu (1820)	Kawaiaha'o Church
Waialua (1832)	Lili'uokalani Protestant Church
'Ewa (1834)	'Ewa Community Church
Kāne'ohe (1834)	Kāne'ohe Congregational Church

Molokai

Kalua'aha (1832)	Kalua'aha Congregational Church
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Maui

Lāhainā (1823)	Wai'ola Church (Waine'e)
Wailuku (1832)	Ka'ahumanu Church
Hāna (1837)	Wānanalua Congregational Church

Hawai'i

Kailua (1820)	Mokuaikaua Church
Ka'awaloa (1824)	Kahikolu Congregational Church
Hilo (1824)	Haili Congregational Church
Waimea (1832)	'Imiloa Congregational Church
Kohala (1837)	Kālahikiola Congregational Church
Waiohinu (1841)	Kauaha'ao Congregational Church

Associated Entities

Lahainaluna School (1831)
Kaumakapili Church (1838)
O'ahu College (Punahou School) (1841)