

Lahainaluna

West Maui has played an important role in the history of Maui and the neighboring islands of Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi and Kahoʻolawe, with West Maui serving as the Royal Center, selected for its abundance of resources and recreation opportunities, with good surfing and canoe-landing sites being favored.

Probably there is no portion of our Valley Isle, around which gathers so much historic value as West Maui. It was the former capital and favorite residence of kings and chiefs. After serving for centuries as home to ruling chiefs, West Maui was selected by Kamehameha III and his chiefs to be the seat of government; here the first Hawaiian constitution was drafted and the first legislature was convened.

“The town of Lāhainā is built along the beach for a distance of three quarters of a mile; it is principally composed of grass-houses, situated as near the beach as possible; it has one principal street, with a few others running at right angles

“West Maui has many sharp peaks and ridges, which are divided by deep valleys, and which in descending towards the sea open out and form sloping plains on the north and south sides of considerable extent. The highest peak of West Maui was found, by triangulation, to be six thousand one hundred and thirty feet.” (Commander Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition, February 16, 1841)

“If a visitor goes up (the hill and) looks down to the town of Lahaina, its expansive beauty will be seen by you. Since Lahaina is like a platform (plateau) which lifts up the town of Lahaina high above, therefore one part is called Lahainaluna (Upper Lahaina). Sometimes it has been called, ‘The shining star of the Pacific Ocean.’ And the town of Lahaina is Lahainalalo (lower Lahaina). These are the first two divisions of Lahaina.” (Kahaulelio, translated by Maly)



Coming of the Missionaries to Lāhainā

“The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions sent the first group of Protestant missionaries to the Hawaiian Islands in 1820 with instructions to raise up ‘the whole people to an elevated state of Christian civilization...”

“The three methods to be used to fulfill this lofty goal were preaching, teaching and printing. All three of these powerful influences came together at Lahainaluna Seminary.

“Initial success converting aliʻi through private audiences led the mission to move on to a plan for mass conversion through Christian-based education.”

“Mission teaching groups soon proliferated.” (Bishop Museum Archives)



In November 1822, the 2nd Company from the American Protestant missionaries set sail on the ‘Thames’ from New Haven, Connecticut for the Hawaiian Islands; they arrived on April 23, 1823 (included in this Company were missionaries Charles Stewart, William Richards and Betsey Stockton – they were the first to settle and set up a mission in West Maui.)

The Christian religion really caught on when High Chiefess Keōpūolani (widow of Kamehameha I and mother of future kings) is said to have been the first convert of the missionaries in the islands, receiving baptism from Rev. William Ellis in West Maui on September 16, 1823, just before her death.

Per the requests of the chiefs, the American Protestant missionaries began teaching the maka'āinana (commoners.) Literacy levels exploded. By 1831, in just eleven years from the first arrival of the missionaries, Hawaiians had built over 1,100-schoolhouses. This covered every district throughout the eight major islands and serviced an estimated 53,000-students. (Laimana)

From 1820 to 1832, in which Hawaiian literacy grew by 91 percent, the literacy rate on the US continent grew by only 6 percent and did not exceed the 90 percent level until 1902 - three hundred years after the first settlers landed in Jamestown - overall European literacy rates in 1850 had not been much above 50 percent.

Need for Better-Trained Teachers

However, it soon was apparent to the missionaries that the future of the Congregational Mission in Hawai'i would be largely dependent upon the success of its schools. They needed more teachers. However, existing schools taught by some of the early learners were focused on basic literacy and only taught from a limited curriculum.

"The incompetency of the 500 or 600 native teachers now employed in the schools at the Sandwich Islands, and the importance of training a supply of such as possess higher qualifications, have long been felt by the missionaries; but various difficulties have stood in the way of making any systematic and thorough improvement in this respect."

"There was no series of books in the language, in any department of science or literature, adapted to conduct the opening minds of a people, before utterly uninstructed, up from the lower to the higher graduations of knowledge."

"The first object with the missionaries, in this department of their labors, was to prepare elementary books, and to multiply copies, so that the ability to read intelligibly might become as extensive as possible. Their next object was to translate the Scriptures, and thus put it within the power of the whole population, who would take the trouble to learn, to read the word of God in their own language. But when these objects were accomplished, much still remained to be done. "

"The work of educating the whole nation was to be performed. The minds of the people must be nourished, strengthened, and taught to act. The fields of knowledge must be opened and the people encouraged to range through them. To this task the teachers which had been employed were altogether incompetent."

"Their own stock of knowledge was soon exhausted, and as they could teach the pupils little more than to spell and read, and had no power to awaken deep and continued interest, it was seriously feared that, without some new measures on their part, the attention to the schools would be diminished and the progress of the people in knowledge would be checked."

"At the general meeting of the missionaries at Honolulu in June, 1831, the following resolutions were adopted."

"Resolved, That we consider the education of the natives of these islands generally, and the preparation of some of them in particular for becoming teachers of religion, as holding a place of great importance in our missionary labors."

“Resolved, That, though we consider the present situation of this people as requiring all our efforts in the way heretofore directed; yet we believe this subject of sufficient importance to demand the exclusive time, attention, and labors of one of our number.”

“Resolved, That, relying on the strength of the Great Head of the Church, we agree to establish a High School, for the purposes above mentioned, and on a plan hereafter to be submitted.”

“Resolved, That the school go into operation as soon as suitable accommodations for the principal and scholars shall be ready; and that we show a plan of the school to the chiefs, and invite them to co-operate with us.”

“The design of the school is thus stated.”

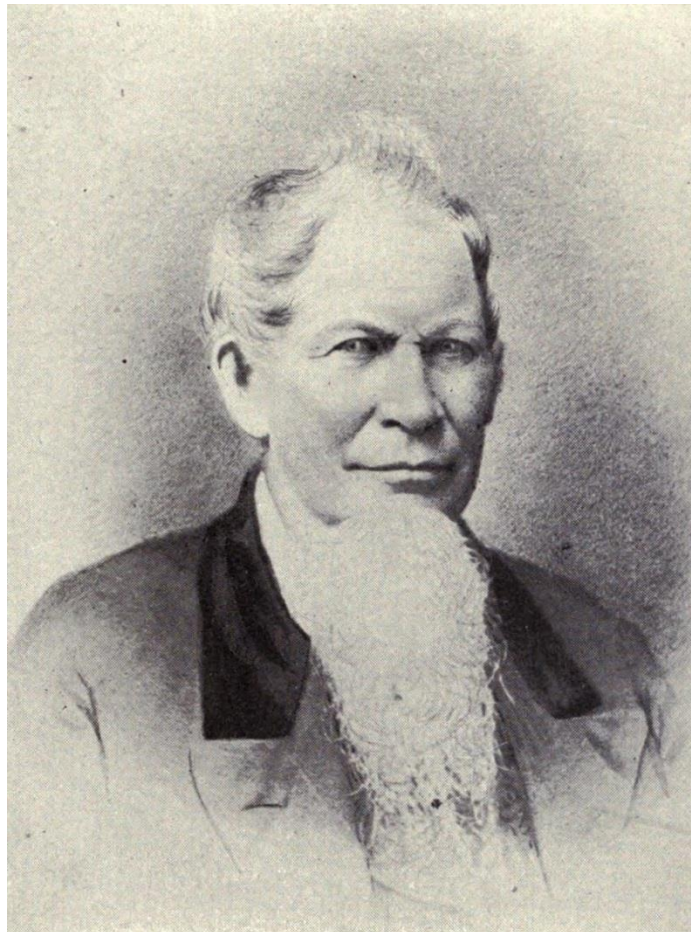
“It is the design of the High School to instruct young men of piety and promising talents; in order that they may become assistant teachers of religion, or fellow-laborers with us in disseminating the gospel of Jesus Christ to their dying fellow-men.”

“In connection with the foregoing, it is also the design of this institution to disseminate sound knowledge throughout these islands, embracing literature and the sciences, and whatever may tend eventually to elevate the whole mass of the people from their present ignorance; that they may become a thinking, enlightened and virtuous people.”

“Another design of the High School is to qualify native school teachers for their respective duties; to teach them, theoretically and practically, the best methods of communicating instruction to others.”

“The school is placed under the superintendence of five directors, ‘whose duty it shall be to watch over the interests of the school; to point out the course of instruction to be pursued; and to make an annual report to the mission, of the state and progress of the school,’ who are also to examine the school, the plan of instruction, the progress and the qualifications of such as seek admittance to it, and annually report on these several points to the mission.”

“Messrs. Richards, Bingham, Thurston, and Whitney were appointed directors, with Mr. (Lorrin) Andrews, who was also appointed the principal.” (Missionary Herald, June 1832)



Lahainaluna is Established

“Mr. Green, Mr. Richards and Mr. Tinker had gained some proficiency in the Hawaiian language, and were teaching the Hawaiians about the good things they should do in leading their lives. They were teaching in the Hawaiian language, and they got together to discuss the making of a school for the islands, where they could quickly instruct the students. These discussions had been going on for some years, as at their assemblies.”

“They determined that it would be best to build a large school in these islands, and that certain ones of their number would be chosen to teach the students about the right way of living, in both body and spirit. They were taken of the thought that they should build a large school at which they could teach selected people, and prepare them to do this good work throughout the islands. That the students would be the ones to go out and teach other Hawaiians about those things which were good for them.”

“Therefore, they chose the Island of Maui, the site called by the name of auwai o Auwaiawao (the water way-ditch of Auwaiawao), as the place to build the school, and that Andrews would be the teacher there. Andrews began the school. Afterwards each of those who had attended the conference, began to send their students to enter into the school. The High School began in the year of our Lord, 1831. The first students built the school house, and it was they who thatched it.” (Ka Nonanona, Ianuali 30, 1839; Maly translator)

“A shed or booth made of poles and grass was thrown together as a screen from the sun to answer for a time as a school house. A house for the teacher and his family was constructed in the usual native way with poles and sticks and thatched with grass. With merely these preparations, the school went into operation as early as the 5th of September. A selection of scholars, from the different islands constituted the school. They had been for the most part, teachers of common schools, and were the best of that class of persons, and yet their qualifications were exceedingly scanty. They were very poor readers, could write only a miserable hand and had been taught only the ground rules of Arithmetic and those very imperfectly. They were all adults, and most of them married men.”

“In a few weeks the scholars, under the direction of their teacher, commenced building a more permanent school house. Great embarrassment was experienced for the want of proper facilities and means to carry forward the work, and of skill in the workmen. After some accidents which occasioned considerable delay, the walls of a stone house 50 feet by 26 inside were finished, and a roof put on, which was covered with ti leaf. It was just enclosed before the General Meeting in June 1832. The building was erected entirely by the scholars. The workmanship was rude but substantial.”

“During the time of building the house, the scholars attended school regularly except a few weeks when they were absent in the mountains for timber. The first great object was to teach them to read with proper pauses and inflections, and to gain ideas from what they read. Thorough drilling in the exercise of reading occupied most of the time. The average number of scholars during the year was about 40.”

“The next school year, from June 1832, the prospect was more encouraging. The scholars had a house in which to meet. A Geography had been prepared and printed, and with the aid of large maps and a set of topographical questions, could be used to advantage Fowle's Child's Arithmetic and Colburn's Intellectual Arithmetic were also ready for use. To Reading, then, Geography and Arithmetic were added. Writing, too, was introduced, but, not till toward the close of the year, for want of proper fixtures.”

“The scholars went to the mountains and hewed plank from large trees of which they made seats and also forms on which to commence writing. They improved their house also in various other respects. They procured wood and coral with much labor, and burnt lime; and they brought the lime and sand from the sea shore and plastered the house. They also laid a stone floor, made rude window blinds and also a door.”

“Their house being thus fitted they began the exercise of writing and drawing maps about the first of April. At the close of the year in June, the missionaries being assembled for General Meeting at Lahaina, an examination of the school took place, at which it was allowed that the scholars did themselves much credit in the several branches of study to which they had attended. The number of scholars during the first half of the year was 63; during the latter half, it was increased to 85.”

“At the General Meeting immediately succeeding the examination, in June 1833, an increased interest was manifested by the brethren generally in the school. The interest was excited in part by the pleasing progress already made, and in part by the pressing necessity every day becoming more and more urgent for properly qualified teachers to take charge of schools at the various stations. The former superficial school system had accomplished all that it was capable of effecting, and had now, on account of the change in national affairs and for others reasons, nearly crumbled into ruins. It was deemed neither practicable nor expedient to resuscitate that system. The only hope consisted in obtaining better qualified teachers to instruct schools on a more thorough plan. It was natural therefore for all to turn their thoughts with increased interest to the Mission Seminary.” (Dibble)

School Grounds

“When the high school at Lahainaluna was built the chiefs consented to the erecting of the schoolhouse and the houses for teachers and pupils, and to the pupils’ cultivating potatoes on the land of the school and on the hill, but the rich lands above and below the stream were for the natives of the places. In 1835 the missionaries at the yearly council appealed to the king and chiefs for more land, for the pupils often went hungry.”

“The king consented and left it to (Hoapili) to give whatever land was right in his judgment. He gave, under protest of the natives who owned the land, the taro land by the stream of Kanaha on the side toward the sea to the taro land of Kelawea cutting the water taro patches of Kaukahoku, running straight down to Kumu’ula and down to the stream and rising and cutting the land of Ho’olulu (Hoapili’s brother) and ascending to the pali. This was the boundary toward the sea. The mauka boundary was the stone mauka of Rev. Lorrin Andrews’ place and straight down to the brook and running straight along and rising to the pali.”

“All the taro cultivations were below Makaili’i and adjoining Kukuikapu. And there were two cattle pastures: the plain of Ku’ia to Kaua’ula turning upward as far as Kahili, and the plain of Pana’ewa between Kanaha and Kahoma where is the plain of Pahalona.”

“These were the lands given by (Hoapili), and when the chiefs complained and said that these were their lands given by Kamehameha, and that all their taro land had been taken away and nothing left but a few breadfruit trees, (Hoapili) answered ‘It is a fine thing; do not get excited about the land. Give your land to those who are seeking knowledge. This is the thing which will establish the government of your chiefs ... Knowledge is fundamental to living as a chief.’ When Elizabeth Kina’u visited Lahainaluna in 1837 she gave more land extending to the creek of Wao.” (Kamakau)



“(T)he school grounds comprise a thousand acres on the plateau above the town and ten acres in the ravine for the cultivation of taro, bananas, etc. With instruction, the schoolboys did all the work— farming, carpentering, printing, cooking and housework. At the same time the academic work fitted them to be teachers, preachers or government clerks.” (JS Emerson; Maly)

With the main facility at Lahainaluna, the Mission then established ‘feeder schools’ that would transmit to their students’ fundamental reading, writing, and arithmetic skills, and religious training, before admission to the Lahainaluna.

In addition to the rigorous academic drills (Head), the schools provided religious/moral (Heart) and manual/vocational (Hand) training. It is the oldest high school west of the Mississippi River.

Hale Pa’i (House of Printing)

A notable structure on the campus is Hale Pa’i (the house of printing,) a small coral and timber building. Starting in 1834, it served as the home of Hawai’i’s first printing press. Hale Pa’i is associated with a number of ‘firsts’ in Hawaii.

The first actual publishing in Hawai’i was done in Honolulu in 1822. It was at Lahainaluna, however, that the first newspaper ever printed in the Hawaiian Islands was published on February 14, 1834. This paper, called Ka Lama Hawai’i (The Hawaiian, Luminary) was also the first newspaper published anywhere in the United States or its territories west of the Rocky Mountains.



Also published at Hale Pa'i for the first time were many portions of the first Hawaiian translation of the Bible, the first English translation of the first Hawaiian Declaration of Rights, the first Hawaiian Constitution, the first set of Hawaiian laws on property and taxation, the first Hawaiian school laws, the first paper money engraved and printed in Hawai'i, the first history of Hawai'i printed in Hawaiian and the first history of Hawai'i printed in English appearing in the Islands.

In 1834, Lahainaluna students first began engraving on copper plates. The initial purpose of this engraving was to provide maps for study, not only at the Seminary, but at schools throughout the Islands.

The mastermind and energizing force behind the project was the Rev. Lorrin Andrews, an assistant cleric at Lahaina Mission and one of the seminary's educators, who recognized the growing need for maps, atlases, and books in the Hawaiian language.



Although he had no artistic training, Andrews was tenacious and resourceful—armed only with how-to manuals on printmaking, he mastered the arts of woodcut illustration and engraving. Andrews in turn taught printmaking to the seminary's students, who, following original sketches by Edward Bailey, Persis Thurston, and other members of the Lahaina Mission, published the first pictures in and of Hawai'i.

The Lahainaluna Seminary press produced maps, atlases, charts, tracts, newspapers, scrip, and illustrations for textbooks and pamphlets. It also

generated a body of extraordinary views of Hawai'i - the first known documentation of the natural landmarks and early missionary settlements on O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i Island.

Impartial, unromanticized, and entirely unschooled, these scenes not only illustrate the incursion of Western civilization in the islands, but they also lay bare the fragility of human existence in rugged, largely uncharted terrain. (Honolulu Museum of Art)

Lahainaluna Boarding Program

In September 1836, thirty-two boys between the ages of 10 and 20 were admitted as the first boarding students, from the neighbor islands, as well as from the 'other side of the island'; thus, the beginning of the boarding school at Lahainaluna.

The boarding program became coed in 1980. The two dorms are David Malo Dormitory for the boys and Hoapili Dormitory for the girls. Previously, Hoapili housed both genders. Lahainaluna is one of only a few public boarding schools in the nation.



Lahainaluna Transferred to Hawaiian Kingdom in 1849

Lahainaluna was transferred from being operated by the American missionaries to the control of the Hawaiian Monarchy in 1849. By 1864, only Lahainaluna graduates were considered qualified to hold government positions such as lawyers, teachers, district magistrates and other important posts.

In 1903, Lahainaluna became a vocational trade school and, in 1923, a technical high school, admitting both girls and boys as day students. It continues today as Lāhainā's public high school.

'Missionary Period'

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 in the Hawaiian Islands. Collaboration between Native Hawaiians and 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)