Mānoa Valley

The Hawaiian Islands were formed as the Pacific Plate moved westward over a geologic hot spot. Oʻahu is dominated by two large shield volcanoes, Waiʻanae and Koʻolau. Koʻolau volcano started as a seamount above the Hawaiian hotspot around 4-million years ago. It broke sea level some time prior to 2.9-million years ago.

About 2-million years ago, much of the northeast flank of Koʻolau volcano was sheared off and material was swept more than 140-miles north of Oʻahu and Molokai onto the ocean floor (named the Nuʻuanu Avalanche) - one of the largest landslides on Earth. Koʻolau's eroded remnants make up the Koʻolau Mountain Range.

Mountains are one of ʻāina's most enduring bodies, not as easily leveled as hills or forests; Kōnāhuanui (among others on the Koʻolau) capture rain clouds coming in on the trade winds, and silvery shimmering steams of water tumbling down their pali have come to symbolize the sky father Wākea bringing new life to the earth mother Papa. (Kawaharada)

Ku luna ʻo Kōnāhuanui i ka luku wale e, "Mountainous Kōnāhuanui reveals the onslaught" is the tallest on Koʻolau; Kōnāhuanui is actually two peaks (3,150 feet and 3,105 feet.) It forms the northwest corner of the Mānoa Valley boundary. It was the home of the gods Kāne and Kanaloa.

It was where their parents came on their way to and from the east from above and from the right (mai kahiki a mai ka hiwamai), meaning it was the starting and resting point of the gods since the formation of the islands. (Cultural Surveys)

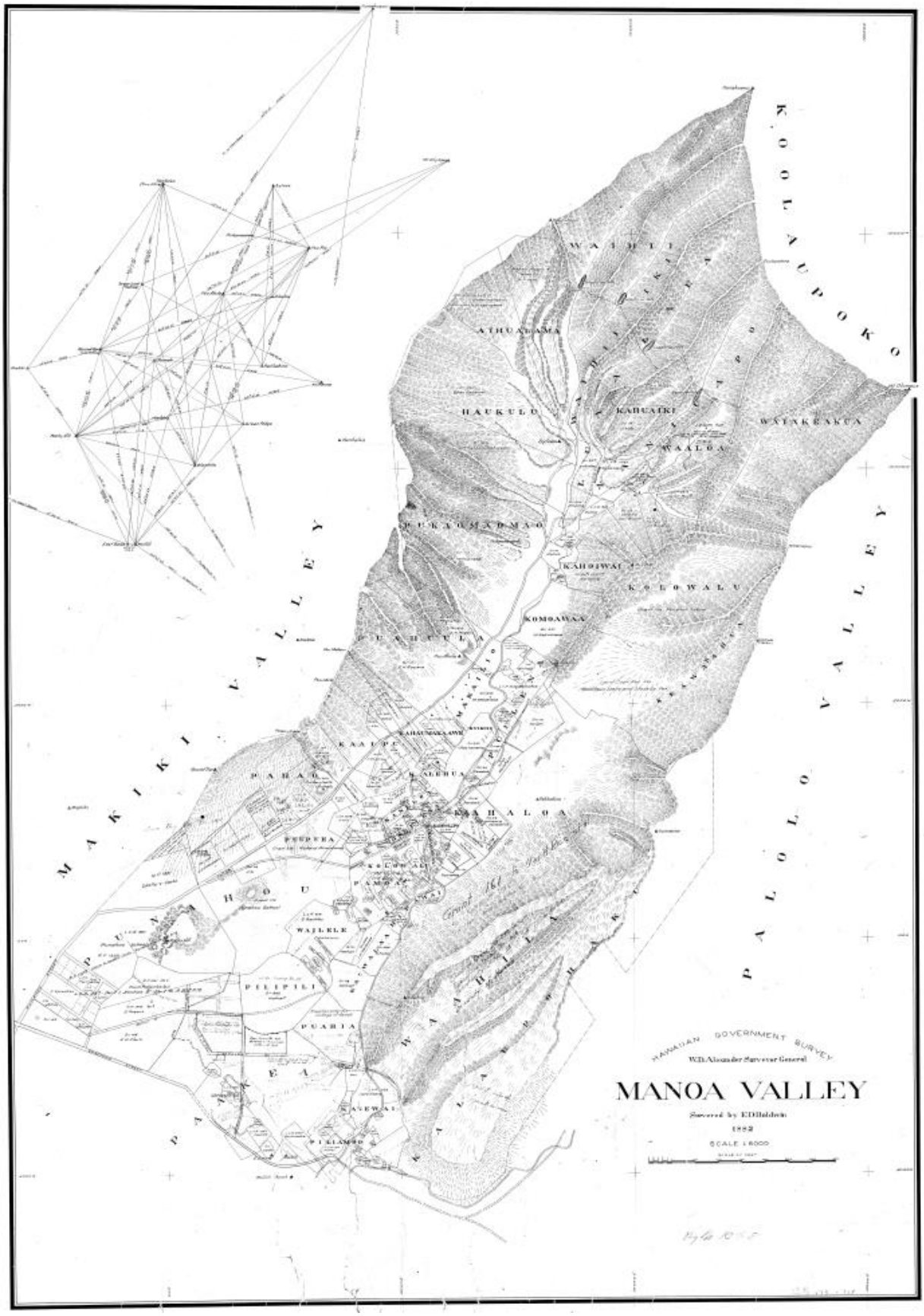
To the northwest of Konahuanui is Lanihuli (swirling heavens,) a name suggesting rain clouds moving in the wind around the peak; northwest of Lanihuli is Kahuauli, the dark seed. Uli may refer to the dark rain clouds, their shadows on the land below, and the dark green vegetation along the summit and below it. (Kawaharada)

Mānoa

Mānoa translates as "wide or vast" and is descriptive of the wide valley that makes up the inland portion of this ahupuaʻa. It has been a well-populated place. The existence of heiau and trails leading to/from Honolulu indicate it was an important and frequently traversed land.

John Papa ʻI'i wrote of the many trails leading into and throughout Honolulu and the surrounding areas. A trail led out of town at the south side of the coconut grove of Honuakaha and went on to Kalia. From Kalia it ran eastward along the borders of the fish ponds and met the trail from lower Waikīkī. The trail went above the stream to Puʻu o Mānoa (what many now call Rocky Hill).

The evidence of numerous agricultural terraces indicates an abundant food source, probably to support a fairly large population. Its inclusion in many legends and tales also suggests Mānoa was a significant and well-loved area.



Kahalaopuna

One legend explains Mānoa misty rain, the weeping in grief by a mother for the death of her beautiful daughter Kahalaopuna ("Ka Ua Kuahine O Mānoa" (the Kuahine rain of Mānoa.))

Hanohano wale noʻoe
E ke anuenue o Mānoa
Ku kamahaʻo ʻo Kahalaopuna
Pua lei a ka ua me ka makani

Famous is the story of
The Rainbow Goddess of Mānoa
Kahalaopuna, the sacred one
Born of the wind and the rain
(Cabral, Boyd & Makuakane)

During the days of Kākuhihewa, ruling chief of Oʻahu from about 1640 to 1660, Kahaukani ((K) Mānoa wind) and Kaʻaukuahine ((W) Mānoa rain) were brother and sister twins. When the children were grown up, their foster parents decided they should be united; they were married and Kahalaopuna was born to them – a uniting of the Mānoa wind and rain. She is deemed of semi-supernatural descent.

Kahalaopuna "was so beautiful that a rainbow followed her wherever she went." "Her cheeks were so red and her face so bright that a glow emanated therefrom which shone through the thatch of her house when she was in. A rosy light seemed to envelop the house, and bright rays seemed to play over it constantly. When she went to bathe in the spring below her house, the rays of light surrounded her like a halo."

'Rainbow above Taro Patch in Mānoa Valley' by D Howard Hitchcock, 1910

Kahalaopuna was betrothed in childhood to Kauhi, a young chief of Kailua.

When she was grown to young womanhood, she was so exquisitely beautiful that the people of the valley would make visits to the outer puloulou at the sacred precinct of Lua‘alaea, the land adjoining Kahaiamano, just to get a glimpse of the beauty.

Two men, Kumauna and Keawa‘a, had never seen Kahalaopuna, but they fell in love with her from the stories told of her. They would weave and deck themselves lei of maile, ginger and ferns and go bathing at Waikīkī and boast of their conquest of the famous beauty.

When the surf was up, it would attract people from all parts of the island. Kauhi, the betrothed of Kahalaopuna, was one of these. The time set for his marriage to Kahalaopuna was drawing near, and as yet he had not seen her, when he heard the assertions of the two men.

“How strange indeed was the behavior of your intended wife, Kahalaopuna! She went dancing two nights now, and on each night had a separate lover.” Kauhi eventually believed them and he went into a jealous rage, stating he would kill Kahalaopuna.

He took her to the back of the valley; Kauhi struck her across the temple with a heavy bunch of hala nuts. The blow killed the girl instantly, and Kauhi hastily dug a hole under the side of the rock and buried her; then he started down the valley toward Waikiki.

As soon as he was gone, a large pueo (owl - a god and a relative of Kahalaopuna) immediately started digging out the body and restored life back to Kahalaopuna.

Kauhi then took Kahalaopuna to the ridge between Mānoa Valley and Nu‘uanu and killed her again. The owl, again, scratched her out and revived her. This was repeated again and again at Nu‘uanu and then in Kalihi. Finally, at Pōhākea, on the ‘Ewa slope of Mount Ka‘ala, he killed her again; this time the owl was not able to free and revive her and the owl left.

There had been another witness to Kauhi’s cruelties, ‘Elepaio, a little green bird (a cousin to Kahalaopuna.) As soon as this bird saw that the owl had deserted the body of Kahalaopuna, it flew straight to her parent, Kahaukani and Kauakuahine, and told them all that had happened.

There was disbelief that anyone in his senses, including Kauhi, could be guilty of such cruelty to such a lovely, innocent being, and one, too, belonging entirely to himself.

In the meantime, the spirit of Kahalaopuna discovered itself to a party who were passing by; and one of them, a young man, moved with compassion, went to the tree indicated by the spirit, and, removing the dirt and roots, found the body.

He wrapped it in his kihei (shoulder scarf), and then covered it entirely with maile, ferns and ginger, and carried it to his home at Mō‘ili‘ili. There, he submitted the body to his elder brother, who called upon two spirit sisters of theirs, with whose aid they finally succeeded in restoring her to life. They kept her last resurrection secret.

Kauhi was caught and subjected to a test. He lost and he and the two false accusers are put to death. His spirit, however, enters a man-eating shark, which lurks along the coast until it catches the girl out sea-bathing and finally consumes her body so that resuscitation is impossible.

Kumauna and Keawa‘a were, through the power of their family gods, transformed into the mountain peaks on the eastern side of Mānoa Valley.

Just above Pu‘u o Manoa (Rocky Hill at the top of Punahou School) is another hill known as Pu‘u Pueo. This was where the Owl God, Pueo, resided.

Today, you can still find the spirit of Kahalaopuna (the Princess of Mānoa) in the ānuenue (rainbows) spanning Mānoa Valley. (Information here is from Nakuina, Beckwith, Fornander, Thrum, Westervelt and Kalākaua.)

Waikīkī

Mānoa is part of the Waikīkī ahupua‘a. Waikīkī was once a vast marshland whose boundaries encompassed more than 2,000-acres (as compared to its present 500-acres we call Waikīkī, today).

Traditions on the island of O‘ahu note Mā‘ilikūkahi was a ruling chief around 1500 (about the time Columbus crossed the Atlantic.) Mā‘ilikūkahi is said to have enacted a code of laws in which theft from the people by chiefs was forbidden.

Makiki (L) Mānoa (C) and Palolo (R) Streams lead out of the respective valleys and water the Taro Lo‘i (Green)

A son of Mā'ilikūkahi was Kalona-nui, who in turn had a son called Kalamakua. Kalamakua is said to have been responsible for developing a large system of taro planting across the Waikīkī-Kapahulu-Mōʻiliʻili-Mānoa area. The extensive loʻi kalo were irrigated by water drawn from the Mānoa and Pālolo Valley streams and large springs in the area.

The name Waikīkī, which means "water spurting from many sources," was well adapted to the character of the swampy land of ancient Waikīkī, where water from the upland valleys would gush forth from underground. Three main valleys Makiki, Mānoa, and Pālolo are mauka of Waikīkī and through them their respective streams (and springs in Mānoa (Punahou and Kānewai)) watered the marshland below.

While at the upper elevations, the streams have the valley names, at lower elevations, after merging/ dividing, they have different names, as they enter the ocean, Piʻinaio, ʻĀpuakēhau and Kuekaunahi.

The Piʻinaio (Makiki) entered the sea at Kālia (near what is now Fort DeRussy as a wide delta (kahawai,) the ʻĀpuakēhau (Mānoa and Kālia,) also called the Muliwai o Kawehewehe ("the stream that opens the way" on some maps,) emptied in the ocean at Helumoa (between the Royal Hawaiian and Moana Hotels) and the Kuekaunahi (Pālolo) once emptied into the sea at Hamohamo (near the intersection of ʻŌhua and Kalākaua Avenues.) The land between these three streams was called Waikolu, meaning "three waters."

Waikīkī was once one of the most productive agricultural areas in old Hawaiʻi. Beginning in the 1400s, a vast system of irrigated taro fields and fish ponds were constructed. This field system took advantage of streams descending from Makiki, Mānoa and Pālolo valleys which also provided ample fresh water for the Hawaiians living in the ahupuaʻa.

Waikīkī, by the time of the arrival of Europeans in the Hawaiian Islands during the late eighteenth century, had long been a center of population and political power on Oʻahu. The preeminence of Waikīkī continued into the eighteenth century and is illustrated by Kamehameha's decision to reside there after taking control of Oʻahu by defeating the island's chief, Kalanikūpule.

Tantalus, Round Top & Sugar Loaf

Tantalus is located in the Koʻolau mountain range on the western side of Mānoa Valley. The ridges that carry Tantalus Drive and Round Top Drive surround Makiki Valley. Puʻu ʻŌhiʻa, its traditional name, had been given the name "Tantalus" during a hiking excursion by the Punahou student hiking club, the Clan Alpine (mid-1800s.)

The students began their hike at Puʻu ʻUalakaʻa (Round Top). As night approached, they found themselves at the edge of the ridge overlooking Poloke Valley. Unable to continue due to the thick undergrowth, the boys were forced to give up their ascent. Versed in Greek mythology, the students named the mountain 'Tantalus'. (National Register)

(The mythological Tantalus was condemned to an afterlife of insatiable hunger and thirst due to unreachable pools of water and overhanging fruit.)

'Round Top' and 'Sugar Loaf' were also named by early Punahou students; these names appear on an 1873 'Map of Makiki Valley' surveyed by William De Witt Alexander.

Moʻolelo (Hawaiian stories) indicate that Puʻu ʻUalakaʻa was a favored locality for sweet potato cultivation and King Kamehameha I established his personal sweet potato plantation here. ʻPuʻu translates as "hill" and ʻualakaʻa means "rolling sweet potato", so named for the steepness of the terrain.

The Tantalus-Round Top stretch is the first roadway on Oʻahu to be placed on the state historic register. (According to Historic Roads, a national group dedicated to preserving old thoroughfares, there are 97 roads in the nation listed as historic.) (Info from Historic Hawaiʻi Foundation and National Register.)

Round Top – Sugar Loaf – Tantalus (University of Hawaii Museum)

Mānoa, Home of the Aliʻi

Mānoa Valley was a favored spot of the Aliʻi, including Kamehameha I, Chief Boki (Governor of Oʻahu), Kaʻahumanu, Haʻalilio (an advisor to King Kamehameha III), Princess Victoria, Kanaʻina (father of King Lunalilo), Lunalilo, Keʻelikōlani (half-sister of Kamehameha IV) and Queen Liliʻuokalani.

Mānoa was given to the Maui chief Kameʻeiamoku by Kamehameha I after his conquest of Oʻahu. After Kameʻeiamoku death, the land was inherited by his son Ulumāheihie (or Hoapili), who became the governor of Maui during the reigns of Kamehameha II and Kamehameha III.

Liliha, the daughter of Hoapili, inherited the lands in 1811 and brought them with her to her marriage with the high chief Boki, governor of Oʻahu.

In early times Mānoa Valley was socially divided into “Mānoa-Aliʻi” or “Royal Mānoa” on the high, cooler western (left) slopes, and “Mānoa-Kanaka” or “commoners” (makaʻāinana) Mānoa” on the warmer eastern (right) slopes and on the valley floor, where they farmed.

An imaginary line was said to have been drawn from Puʻu O Mānoa (Rocky Hill) to Pali Luahine. The Aliʻi lived on the high, cooler western (left) slopes; the makaʻāinana (commoners) lived on the warmer eastern (right) slopes and on the valley floor where they farmed.

Pukaʻōmaʻomaʻo – Kaʻahumanu’s Home

Queen Kaʻahumanu lived there; her home, called Pukaʻōmaʻomaʻo (Green Gateway), was situated deep in the valley (lit., green opening; referring to its green painted doors and blinds - It is alternatively referred to as Pukaʻōmaʻo.)

“Her residence is beautifully situated and the selection of the spot quite in taste. The house … stands on the height of a gently swelling knoll, commanding, in front, an open and extensive view of all the rich plantations of the valley; of the mountain streams meandering through them … of the district of Waititi; and of Diamond Hill, and a considerable part of the plain, with the ocean far beyond.” (Stewart; Sterling & Summers)

It was doubtless the same sort of grass house which was in general use, although probably more spacious and elaborate as befitted a queen. The dimension in one direction was 60 feet. The place name of the area was known as Kahoiwai, or "Returning Waters."

“Immediately behind the house, and partially flanking it on either side, is a delightful grove of the dark leaved and crimson blossomed ʻōhiʻa, so thick and so shady … filled with cool and retired walks and natural retreats, and echoing to the cheerful notes of the little songsters, who find security in its shades to build their nests and lay their young.”

“The view of the head of the valley inland, from the clumps and single trees edging this copse, is very rich and beautiful; presenting a circuit of two or three miles delightfully variegated by hill and dale, wood and lawn, and enclosed in a sweep of splendid mountains, one of which in the centre rises to a height of three thousand feet.”

“In one edge of this grove, a few rods from the house, stands a little cottage built by Kaahumanu, for the accommodation of the missionaries who visit her when at this residence. … (It) is very frequently occupied a day or two at a time, by one and another of the families most enervated by the heat and dust, the toil, and various exhausting cares of the establishment at the sea-shore.” (Stewart; Sterling & Summers)

“Not far makai … High Chief Kalanimōku, had very early allotted to the Mission the use of farm plots thus noted in its journal of June, 1823: "On Monday the 2d, Krimakoo and the king's mother granted to the brethren three small pieces of land cultivated with taro, potatoes, bananas, melons, &c. and containing nineteen bread-fruit trees, from which they may derive no small portion of the fruit and vegetables needed by the family.” (Damon)

Then, in mid-1832, Kaʻahumanu became ill and was taken to her house in Mānoa, where a bed of maile and leaves of ginger was prepared. “Her strength failed daily. She was gentle as a lamb, and treated

her attendants with great tenderness. She would say to her waiting women, 'Do sit down; you are very tired; I make you weary.'" (Bingham)

"The king, his sister, other members of the aliʻi and many retainers had already arrived at Pukaomaomao and had dressed the large grass house for the dying queen's last homecoming. The walls of the main room had been hung with ropes of sweet maile and decorated with lehua blossoms and great stalks of fragrant mountain ginger."

"The couch upon which Kaahumanu was to rest had been prepared with loving care. Spread first with sweet-scented made and ginger leaves, it was then covered with a golden velvet coverlet. At the head and foot stood towering leather kahilis."

"Over a chair nearby was draped the Kamehameha feather cloak which had been worn by Kaahumanu since the monarch's death." (Mellon; Sterling & Summers)

Her death took place at ten minutes past 3 o'clock on the morning of June 5, 1832, "after an illness of about 3 weeks in which she exhibited her unabated attachment to the Christian teachers and reliance on Christ, her Saviour." (Hiram Bingham)

Mānoa, Home of Hawaiʻi's Commercial Agricultural Ventures

Mānoa is watered by five streams that merge into the lower Mānoa Stream: ʻAihualama (lit. eat the fruit of the lama tree), Waihī (lit. trickling water), Nāniuʻapo (lit. the grasped coconuts), Luaʻalaea (lit. pit [of] red earth) and Waiakeakua (lit. water provided by a god). (Cultural Surveys)

Kalo - Taro

In 1792, Captain George Vancouver described Mānoa Valley on a hike from Waikīkī in search of drinking water: “We found the land in a high state of cultivation, mostly under immediate crops of taro; and abounding with a variety of wild fowl chiefly of the duck kind …”

“The sides of the hills, which were in some distance, seemed rocky and barren; the intermediate vallies, which were all inhabited, produced some large trees and made a pleasing appearance. The plains, however, if we may judge from the labour bestowed on their cultivation, seem to afford the principal proportion of the different vegetable productions …” (Edinburgh Gazetteer)

One century later, before it was urbanized, Mānoa Valley was described by Thrum (1892:) “Mānoa is both broad and low, with towering hills on both sides that join the forest clad mountain range at the head, whose summits are often hid in cloud land, gathering moisture there from to feed the springs in the various recesses that in turn supply the streams winding through the valley, or watering the vast fields of growing taro, to which industry the valley is devoted. The higher portions and foot hills also give pasturage to the stock of more than one dairy enterprise.”

Handy (in his book Hawaiian Planter) writes that in ancient days, all of the level land in upper Mānoa was developed into taro flats and was well-watered, level land that was better adapted to terracing than neighboring Nu‘uanu. The entire floor of Mānoa Valley was a “checkerboard of taro patches.”

The well-watered, fertile and relatively level lands of Mānoa Valley supported extensive wet taro cultivation well into the twentieth century. Handy and Handy estimated that in 1931 “there were still

about 100 terraces in which wet taro was planted, although these represented less than a tenth of the area that was once planted by Hawaiians." (Cultural Surveys)

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Japanese began to move in to the upper valley to start truck farms, growing strawberries, vegetables, such as Japanese dryland taro, Japanese burdock, radishes, sweet potatoes, lettuce, carrots, soy beans and flowers to sell to the Honolulu markets.

"Though the valley is under almost complete cultivation of taro, largely by Chinese companies, an effort was made by them in 1882 to divert it to the growth of rice, but after two years struggle with high winds, cold rains and myriads of rice birds it was abandoned." (Thrum, 1892)

Sugar

In 1825 an English agriculturist named John Wilkinson, who in his younger years had been a planter in the West Indies, arrived at Honolulu on the frigate Blonde. He had made some arrangement with Governor Boki, while the latter was in England, to go out and engage in cultivating sugar cane … and, probably, rum. (Kuykendall)

Although sugar cane had grown in Hawai'i for many centuries, its commercial cultivation for the production of sugar did not occur until 1825. In that year, Wilkinson and Boki started a plantation in Mānoa Valley. Within six months they had seven acres of cane growing and processing. The sugar mill was later converted into a distillery for rum. (Schmitt)

Over the years, sugar-cane farming soon proved to be the only available crop that could be grown profitably under the severe conditions imposed upon plants grown on the lands which were available for cultivation. (HSPA 1947)

At the industry's peak a little over a century later (1930s,) Hawaii's sugar plantations employed more than 50,000 workers and produced more than 1-million tons of sugar a year; over 254,500-acres were planted in sugar.

The sugar industry is at the center of Hawai'i's modern diversity of races and ethnic cultures. Of the nearly 385,000 workers that came as contract workers on the sugar plantations, many thousands stayed to become a part of Hawai'i's unique ethnic mix.

Hawai'i continues to be one of the most culturally-diverse and racially-integrated places on the globe. Commercial-scale sugar production started in Mānoa.

Pineapple

Sugar was not the only plantation-scale agriculture started in Mānoa. In 1885, John Kidwell started a pineapple farm with locally available plants, but their fruit was of poor quality. That prompted him to search for better cultivars; he later imported 12 'Smooth Cayenne' plants.

An additional 1,000 plants were obtained from Jamaica in 1886, and an additional 31 cultivars, including 'Smooth Cayenne', were imported from various locations around the world. 'Smooth Cayenne' was reported to be the best of the introductions.

Kidwell is credited with starting Hawai'i's pineapple industry; after his initial planting, others soon realized the potential of growing pineapples in Hawaii and consequently, started their own pineapple plantations.

The "development of the (Hawaiian) pineapple industry is founded on his selection of the Smooth Cayenne variety and on his conviction that the future lay in the canned product, rather than in shipping the fruit in the green state." (Canning Trade; Hawkins)

The commercial Hawaiian pineapple canning industry began in 1889 when Kidwell's business associate, John Emmeluth, a Honolulu hardware merchant and plumber, produced commercial quantities of canned pineapple.

Emmeluth refined his pineapple canning process between 1889 and 1891, and around 1891 packed and shipped 50 dozen cans of pineapple to Boston, 80 dozen to New York, and 250 dozen to San Francisco.

By 1930 Hawai'i led the world in the production of canned pineapple and had the world's largest canneries. The first commercial cultivation of pineapple and subsequent canning of pineapple started in Mānoa.

Coffee

Other smaller scale agriculture activities across the Islands also started in Mānoa. Wilkinson, noted for starting commercial sugar in Mānoa, also started commercial coffee in the Islands in Mānoa Valley.

Coffee was planted in Mānoa Valley in the vicinity of the present UH-Mānoa campus; from a small field, trees were introduced to other areas of O'ahu and neighbor islands.

In 1828, American missionary Samuel Ruggles took cuttings of this same kind of coffee from Hilo and brought them to Kona. Henry Nicholas Greenwell grew and marketed coffee and is recognized for putting "Kona Coffee" on the world markets.

At Weltausstellung 1873 Wien (World Exhibition in Vienna, Austria (1873,)) Greenwell was awarded a "Recognition Diploma" for his Kona Coffee. (Greenwell Farms)

Writer Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) seemed to concur with this when he noted in his Letters from Hawai'i, "The ride through the district of Kona to Kealakekua Bay took us through the famous coffee and orange section. I think the Kona coffee has a richer flavor than any other, be it grown where it may and call it what you please."

By the 1930s there were more than 1,000 farms and, as late as the 1950s, there were 6,000-acres of coffee in Kona. The only place in the United States where coffee is grown commercially is in Hawai'i. 'Kona Coffee' is the same as that in Mānoa Valley.

Macadamia Nuts

Another commercial crop, macadamia nuts, also has its Island roots in Mānoa. Macadamia seeds were first imported into Hawai‘i in 1882 by William Purvis; he planted them in Kapulena on the Hāmākua Coast. A second introduction into Hawai‘i was made in 1892 by Robert and Edward Jordan who planted the trees at the former's home in Nu‘uanu Honolulu. (Storey)

“Brought in ‘solely as an addition to the natural beauty of Paradise’ (Hawaiian Annual, 1940,) it was not until ES (Ernest Sheldon) Van Tassel started some plantings at Nutridge in 1921 that the commercial growing of the plant began. On June 1, 1922, the Hawaiian Macadamia Nut Company Ltd. was formed.” (NPS)

The Van Tassel plantings were at ‘Ualaka‘a on a grassy hillside of former pasture land (what we call Round Top on the western slope of Mānoa Valley.)

In order to stimulate interest in macadamia culture, beginning January 1, 1927, a Territorial law exempted properties in the Territory, used solely for the culture or production of macadamia nuts, from taxation for a period of 5 years.

In just over 10-years (1933,) “the Hawaiian Macadamia Nut Company has about 7,000 trees in its groves at Keauhou, Kona District, Hawaii, which are now coming into profitable bearing. The company has also approximately 2,000 trees growing and producing in the Nutridge grove on Round Top, Honolulu, or a total of 9,000 trees.” (Mid-Pacific, October 1933)

Macadamia nut candies became commercially available a few years later. Two well-known confectioners, Ellen Dye Candies and the Alexander Young Hotel candy shop, began making and selling chocolate-covered macadamia nuts in the middle or late-1930s. Another early maker was Hawaiian Candies & Nuts Ltd., established in 1939 and originators of the Menehune Mac brand. (Schmitt)

In 1962, MacFarms established one of the world’s largest single macadamia nut orchards with approximately 3,900-acres on the South Kona coast of the Big Island of Hawai‘i.

Today, about 570 growers farm 17,000 acres of macadamia trees, producing 40 million pounds of in-shell nuts, valued at over $30 million. Additionally, nuts are imported from South Africa and Australia, who currently lead the world market, with Hawai‘i at #3. (hawnnut)

ʻUala - Sweet Potato

Moʻolelo (Hawaiian stories) indicate that Puʻu ʻUalakaʻa was a favored locality for sweet potato cultivation and King Kamehameha I established his personal sweet potato plantation here. ʻPuʻu translates as “hill” and ʻualakaʻa means “rolling sweet potato”, so named for the steepness of the terrain.

What became significant commercial-scale agricultural ventures in the Islands – Sugar, Pineapple, Coffee and Macadamia Nuts – all had their start in the Islands, in Mānoa.

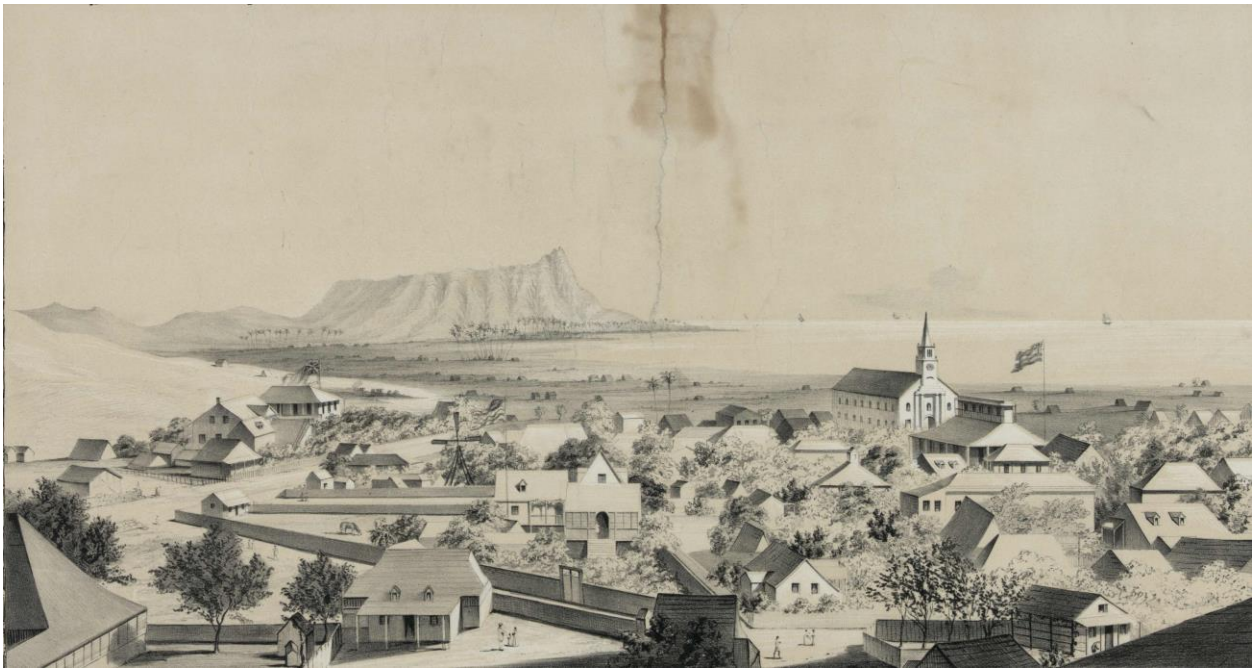
The Beginning of Mānoa Residential Development

Nuʻuanu Valley was the first of the valleys to undergo residential development because it was convenient to the town (when most people walked from town up into the valley.)

"(Y)ou lived downtown because you worked downtown, you couldn't live in Kaimuki or in Mānoa." (star-bulletin)

On January 9, 1847, the Polynesian reported there were 1,386 buildings in Honolulu, 1,337 of these were residences: 875 made of grass; 345 adobe; 49 coral; 49 wood and 29 stone/coral below, wood above. Excluding visiting sailors, foreigners made up only some 6 per cent of Honolulu's approximately 10,000-residents.

Beyond Honolulu's limits there were few residences other than the grass houses of Hawaiians. The population was growing toward and up Nuʻuanu, but Honolulu was hemmed on the Diamond Head end by the barren plains called Kulaokahuʻa.



No. 2. View of Honolulu from the Catholic church (c. 1854) Honolulu to Waikiki

Kulaokahuʻa translates as “the plain of the boundary.” It was the comparatively level ground below Makiki Valley (between the mauka fertile valleys and the makai wetlands.) This included areas such as Kakaʻako, Kewalo, Makiki, Pawaʻa and Mōʻiliʻili.

"It was so empty that after Punahou School opened in July 1842, mothers upstairs in the mission house could see children leave that institution and begin their trek across the barren waste. Trees shunned the place; only straggling livestock inhabited it." (Greer)

There were several horse paths criss-crossing the Kulaokahuʻa Plains. In the 1840s, it was described as “nothing but a most exceedingly dreary parcel of land with here and there a horse trail as path-way." (Gilman) The flat plains were also perfect for horse racing, and the area between present-day Piʻikoi and Makiki Streets was a race track.

The Plains were described as dry and dusty, without a shrub to relieve its barrenness. There was enough water around Makiki Stream to grow taro in loʻi (irrigated fields,) and there was at least one major ʻauwai, or irrigation ditch.

From 1840 to 1875, only a few unpaved roads were in the area, generally along the present course of King, Young, Beretania and Punahou Streets. These roads or horse paths “ran a straggling course which changed as often as the dust piled up deep”. (Clark)

“As early as 1847 a number of sales took place of lots in Honolulu, Kulaokahuʻa plain, Mānoa and Makawao." (Interior Department, Surveyor’s Report, 1882)

Clark noted that “the settling of the Plains did not come until the 1880s, after water was brought from Makiki Valley.” Kulaokahuʻa became more hospitable when water became available from springs and artesian wells, and would gradually be transformed into an attractive residential district in the 1880s.

In marketing material advertised in the Pacific Commercial in 1881, the area is described as, Beretania, King, Young, Victoria, Lunalilo and Kīnaʻu Streets, no taro patches, good roads, plenty of water, best of soil, beautiful scenery and pure air. (Krauss)

When looking at renaming the place in 1883, names suggested were Artesia, because of wells sunk there, also Bore-dumville, and Algarroba (kiawe) because the area was then covered with trees, thickly shaded. (Krauss)

Never-the-less, in 1892, Thrum noted that to get to Mānoa “for nearly a mile the road leads by or along pasture fields with no visage of tree or shrub other than the lantana pest ... and passes along Round Top of Ualakaʻa”.

The earliest residential subdivisions in the Islands appear to have been laid out by the government on the level areas between Thomas Square and Pawaʻa, initially under governmental auspices, during the 1880s.

"Unlike today, when we build a community, we send out a bus to service the people, but in those days they'd put a streetcar out there with nobody there. It was one of those 'if you build it, they will come' things." “The streetcars created neighborhoods. People could suddenly live elsewhere and find a way into town." (star-bulletin)

The first subdivision in Mānoa was the Seaview tract, in Lower Mānoa near Seaview Street, which was laid out in 1886 (this area in the valley became known as the "Chinese Beverly Hills" due to the high percentage of people of that ethnic group buying into the neighborhood (1950s.)) (DeLeon)

In 1888, the animal-powered tramcar service of Hawaiian Tramways ran track from downtown to Waikīkī. In 1900, the Tramway was taken over by the Honolulu Rapid Transit & Land Co (HRT.)

In addition to service to the core Honolulu communities, HRT expanded to serve other opportunities. In the fall of 1901, a line was also sent up into central Mānoa.

The new Mānoa trolley opened the valley to development and rushed it into the expansive new century. In particular, it would help to sell a very new hilltop subdivision, "College Hills," (part of former Oʻahu College - Punahou School - property) and also expand an unplanned little "village" along the only other road, East Mānoa. (Bouslog)

Originally numerous large, well-designed houses lined Vancouver Drive; however with the passing of the years many of these dwellings have disappeared. One of approximately a half dozen remnants of the earlier time which are scattered in the area is the subject of this summary.

Today, Mānoa is primarily a residential community in Honolulu's Primary Urban Center. It is home to over 20,000 permanent residents and University of Hawaiʻi-Mānoa (with a student body population of around 20,000) (and several other schools, businesses, etc.)

School for the Children of the Missionaries (Oʻahu College – Punahou)

Over the course of a little over 40-years (1820-1863 - the "Missionary Period",) about 180-men and women in twelve Companies served in Hawaiʻi to carry out the mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission (ABCFM) in the Hawaiian Islands.

One of the first things the first missionaries did was begin to learn the Hawaiian language and create an alphabet for a written format of the language. Their emphasis was on preaching and teaching.

The missionaries established schools associated with their missions across the Islands. This marked the beginning of Hawaiʻi's phenomenal rise to literacy. The chiefs became proponents for education and edicts were enacted by the King and the council of Chiefs to stimulate the people to reading and writing.

However, the education of their children was a concern of missionaries.

There were two major dilemmas, (1) there were a limited number of missionary children and (2) existing schools (which the missionaries taught) served adult Hawaiians (who were taught from a limited curriculum in the Hawaiian language.)

“During the period from infancy to the age of ten or twelve years, children in the almost isolated family of a missionary could be well provided for and instructed in the rudiments of education without a regular school … But after that period, difficulties in most cases multiplied.” (Hiram Bingham)

Missionaries were torn between preaching the gospel and teaching their kids. “(M)ission parents were busy translating, preaching and teaching. Usually parents only had a couple of hours each day to spare with their children.” (Schultz)

“(I)t was the general opinion of the missionaries there that their children over eight or ten years of age, notwithstanding the trial that might be involved, ought to be sent or carried to the United States, if there were friends who would assume a proper guardianship over them”. (Bingham)

“This was the darkest day in the life history of the mission child. Peculiarly dependent upon the family life, at the age of eight to twelve years, they were suddenly torn from the only intimates they had ever known, and banished, lonely and homesick, to a mythical country on the other side of the world …”

“… where they could receive letters but once or twice a year; where they must remain isolated from friends and relatives for years and from which they might never return.” (Bishop)

During the first 21-years of the missionary period, no fewer than 33 children were either sent or taken back to the continent by their parents. (Seven-year-old Sophia Bingham, the first Caucasian girl born on Oʻahu, daughter of Hiram and Sybil, was sent to the continent in 1828.)

Resolution 14 of the 1841 General Meeting of the Sandwich Islands Mission changed that; it established a school for the children of the missionaries (May 12, 1841.) Meeting minutes note, “This subject occupied much time in discussion, and excited much interest.”

On July 11, 1842, fifteen children met for the first time in Punahou’s original E-shaped building. The first Board of Trustees (1841) included Rev. Daniel Dole, Rev. Richard Armstrong, Levi Chamberlain, Rev. John S Emerson and Gerrit P Judd. (Hawaiian Gazette, June 17, 1916)

By the end of that first year, 34-children from Sandwich Islands and Oregon missions were enrolled, only one over 12-years old. Tuition was $12 per term, and the school year covered three terms. (Punahou)

Students from Oregon, California and Tahiti were welcomed from 1841 – 1849. By 1851, Punahou officially opened its doors to all races and religions.

December 15 of that year, Old School Hall, "the new spacious school house," opened officially to receive its first students. The building is still there and in use by the school.

“The founding of Punahou as a school for missionary children not only provided means of instruction for the children, of the Mission, but also gave a trend to the education and history of the Islands. In 1841, at Punahou the Mission established this school and built for it simple halls of adobe. From this

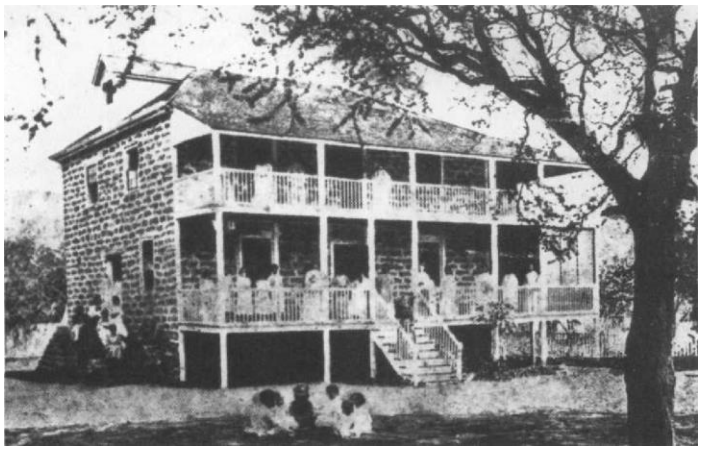
unpretentious beginning, the school has grown to its present prosperous condition." (Report of the Superintendent of Public Education, 1900)

Some of Punahou's early buildings include, Old School Hall (1852,) music studios; Bingham Hall (1882,) Bishop Hall of Science (1884,) Pauahi Hall (1894,) Charles R. Bishop Hall (1902,) recitation halls; Dole Hall and Rice Hall (1906,) dormitories; Cooke Library (1908) and Castle Hall (1913,) dormitory.

Dole Street, laid out in 1880 and part of the development of the lower Punahou pasture was named after Daniel Dole (other nearby streets were named after other Punahou presidents.)

Mid-Pacific Institute

Mid-Pacific traces its beginnings to 1864; the present school was established in 1908 with the merger of Kawaiahaʻo Seminary (1864) and Mills School for Boys (1892.)



In 1863, Mr. and Mrs. Luther Gulick started a boarding school for girls in Kaʻū. This was continued at Waiohinu for two years, but was moved to Oʻahu. The Gulicks' school was established "to teach the principles of Christianity, domestic science, and the ways and usages of western civilization."

Mrs. Gulick's school was the humble beginning of Kawaiahaʻo Seminary on Oʻahu. Kawaiahaʻo Seminary continued to grow over the years and the student body

was drawn from all over the islands and from all racial groups; some of the scholars included members of the royal family. (Attendance averaged over a hundred per year, with the largest number of pupils appears to have been in 1889, when 144 names were on the rolls.)

Then, in 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Francis Damon opened their home to six Chinese boys to teach them English and some of the fundamentals of Christianity (their home was on the edge of Honolulu's Chinatown.)

Damon (fluent in Chinese) recognized the need for special educational opportunities for the young Chinese, who were barred from public schools because of their inability to speak English.

This new school was named Mills Institute (named after Samuel J Mills, a founder of the American Board of Foreign Missions.) Among the Chinese, it was known as Chum Chun Shu Shat (The Searching after Truth Institute.) Later, because of growing enrollment by Japanese and Korean boys, courses in Japanese and Korean were added to the curriculum.

Kawaiahaʻo Seminary and Mills School had much in common - they were home schools; founded by missionary couples; and had boarding of students. With these commonalities, in 1905, a merger of the two was suggested, forming a co-educational institution in the same facility.

In order to accommodate a combined school, the Hawaiian Board of Foreign Missions purchased the Kidwell estate, about 35-acres of land in Mānoa valley.

"The site forms an ideal location within one block of the Rapid Transit line. The ground commands a beautiful view of mountain and sea, and there is ample room for the agricultural features which have been planned. The land contains a fine spring of water yielding some 100,000 gallons a day, and is further supplied with the use of an auwai for part of the time." (Hawaiian Mission Children's Society)

Through gifts by GN Wilcox, JB Atherton and others, on May 31, 1906, a ceremony was held in Mānoa Valley for the new school campus - just above what is now the University of Hawai‘i (the UH campus was not started in the Mānoa location until 1912.)

By 1908, the first building was completed and the school was officially operated as Mid-Pacific Institute, consisting of Kawaiaha‘o School for Girls and Damon School for Boys.

Initially, while the two schools moved to the same campus, they essentially went their separate ways there for years; they had different curricula, different academic standards and different policies.

Finally, in the fall of 1922, a new coeducational plan went into effect - likewise, 'Mills' and 'Kawaiaha‘o' were dropped and by June 1923, Mid-Pacific became the common, shared name.

In November 2003, the school decided to terminate its on-campus dormitory (which had existed since 1908). Epiphany School, established in 1937 as a small mission school by the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, merged with Mid-Pacific Institute in 2004.

University of Hawai‘i – Mānoa

“An act to establish the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts of the Territory of Hawai‘i” was passed by the Hawai‘i’s Territorial Legislature and was signed into law by Governor George Carter on March 25th, 1907.

The University of Hawai‘i began as a land-grant college, initiated out of the 1862 US Federal Morrill Act funding for “land grant” colleges.

The Morrill Act funded educational institutions by granting federally-controlled land to the states for them to develop or sell to raise funds to establish and endow "land-grant" colleges. Since the federal government could not "grant" land in Hawai‘i as it did for most states, it provided a guarantee of $30,000 a year for several years, which increased to $50,000 for a time.

Regular classes began in September 1908 with ten students (five freshmen, five preparatory students) and thirteen faculty members at a temporary Young Street facility in the William Maertens' house near Thomas Square.

The Territory had just acquired the Maertens' property as a potential site for a new high school. Instead, it became temporary quarters for the new college. Planning for a permanent University campus originally called for Lahainaluna on Maui as the site; Mountain View, above Hilo, was also considered.

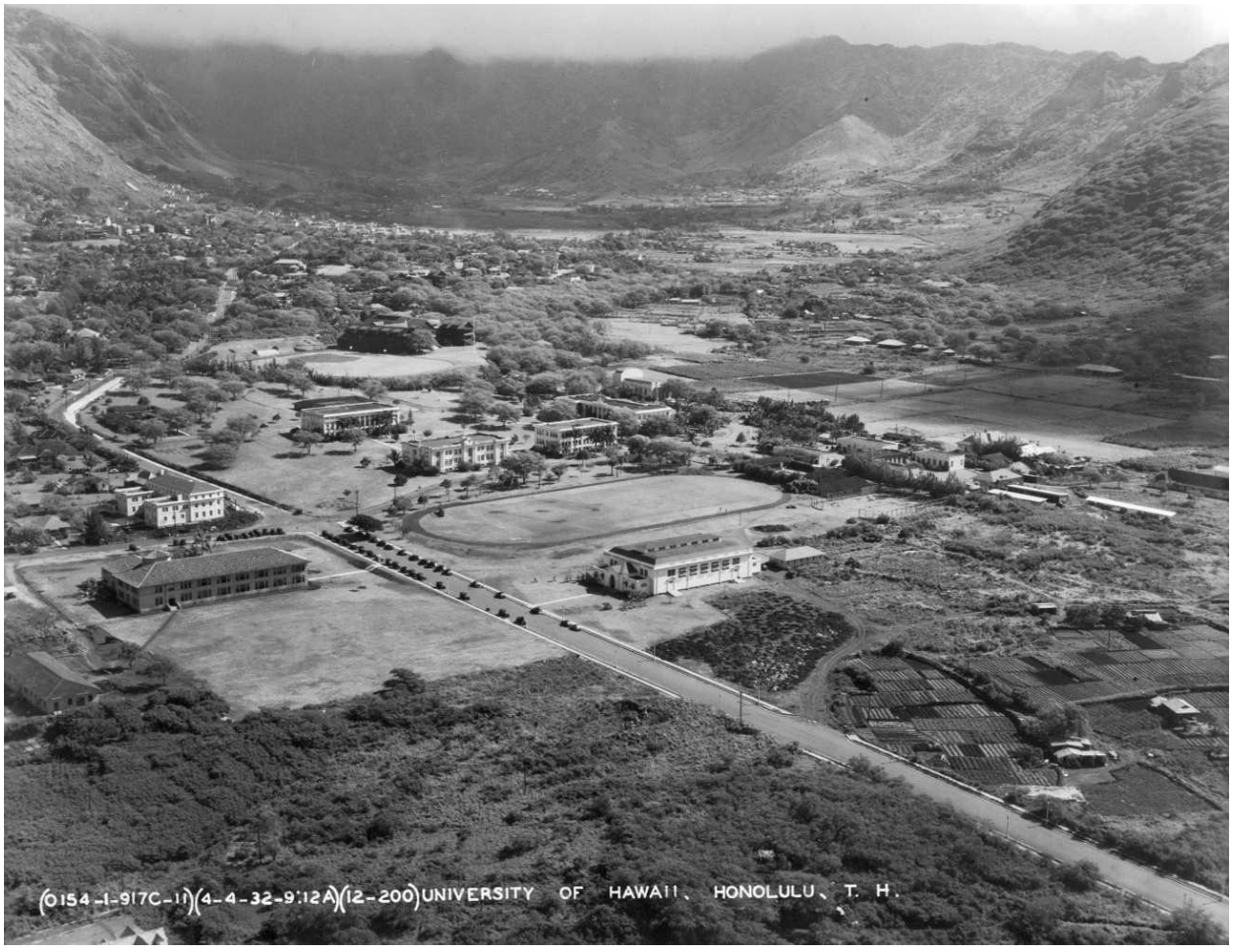
The regents chose the present campus location in lower Mānoa on June 19, 1907. In 1911, the name of the school was changed to the “College of Hawai‘i.”

The campus was a relatively dry and scruffy place, “The early Mānoa campus was covered with a tangle of kiawe trees (algarroba), wild lantana and panini cactus”. It appears the first structures built were a poultry shed and a dairy barn.

In 1912, the college moved to the present Mānoa location (the first permanent building is known today as Hawai‘i Hall.) The first Commencement was June 3, 1912.

The "orienting" of the new campus was determined by the Morrill Act, which saw "land grant" colleges as occupying large squares or rectangles, arranged by surveyors along the cardinal points of the compass. Thus the original quadrangle of so many campuses (including UH) is laid out on a true compass base, ignoring in the process our mauka/makai orientations, ignoring the flow of the trade winds.

With the addition of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1920, the school became known as the University of Hawai‘i. The Territorial Normal and Training School (now the College of Education) joined the University in 1931.



In the 1950s, after three years of offering UH Extension Division courses at the old Hilo Boarding School, the University of Hawai‘i, Hilo Branch, was approved; the UH Community Colleges system was established in 1964.

Today, the University of Hawai‘i System includes 3 universities (Mānoa, Hilo and West O‘ahu,) 7 community colleges (Kaua‘i, Leeward, Honolulu, Kapi‘olani, Windward, Maui and Hawai‘i) and community-based learning centers across Hawai‘i. The fall 2012 opening enrollment for the University of Hawai‘i System reached yet another high in the institution’s history with over 60,600 students.