

Mid-Pacific Institute

"Mid-Pacific Institute is unqualifiedly Christian. It is the fruitage of missionary enterprise and cherishes the legacy which the mission fathers and mothers have passed on to it."

"Even possible educational advantage such as good teachers, supervised study, small classes, and an uplifting home environment, are afforded its pupils but its real claim for its right to exist and receive the support of its friends is the emphasis it places upon Christian character-building."

"The land, buildings and endowment are the gifts of Christian men and women; the love, vision and faith which gave it birth are Christian; its purpose and ideals are Christian. Many of the students come from non-Christian homes and their first introduction to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ is received here."

"All students attend Sunday School and Church services in the city churches. Daily chapel services are held in each department while live Christian Endeavor and Mission societies give the students ample opportunity for self-expression."

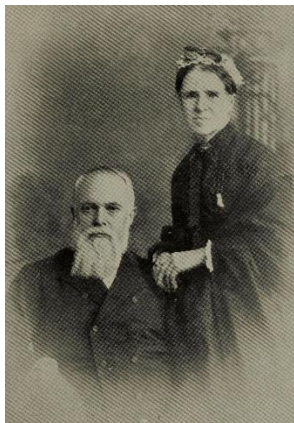
"Mid-Pacific Institute owes its birth to the vision, enthusiasm and tireless energy of Francis W Damon. With an abiding faith in the need of such an institution he persistently and patiently urged its claims until others caught his spirit and in 1905 the Hawaiian Board of Missions sanctioned it and appointed the first Board of Managers."

"Unlike most institutions Mid-Pacific came into life full-grown, for it was made up of schools which had already made valuable contributions to the education of Hawaii's youth - Kawaiaha'o Seminary for girls and Mills School for boys."

"Mills School came into being through the efforts of Mr. Damon, who was then Superintendent of Chinese work for the Hawaiian Board, to make it possible for worthy Chinese boys from the country districts to find both a school and a home." (John Hopwood, Mid-Pacific President, April 1923)

Kawaiaha'o Female Seminary

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



Mrs. Gulick felt that her opportunity had come. No one else could begin the school. She had been longing for more missionary work to do, and now the door was open. She writes: "Opened school this morning with eight scholars." (The Friend)

From month to month, the enrollment numbers increased, boarders were received and aid in teaching was rendered by neighbors. In 1867, the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society (HMCS - an organization consisting of the children of the missionaries and adopted supporters) decided to support a girls' boarding school. An early advertisement (April 13, 1867) notes it was called Honolulu Female Academy.

HMCS invited Miss Lydia Bingham (daughter of Reverend Hiram Bingham, leader of the Pioneer Company of missionaries to Hawai'i) to return to Honolulu to be a teacher in this family school; she was then principal of the Ohio Female College, at College Hill, Ohio.

"Her love for the land of her birth and Interest for the children of the people to whom her father and mother had given their early lives, led her to accept the position, and in March, 1867, she arrived on the Morning Star via Cape Horn." (Hawaiian Gazette, March 23, 1897)

"Every Sunday one of the teachers accompanied the Girls to Kawaiaha'o Church diagonally across the street to the morning service." (Sutherland Journal)

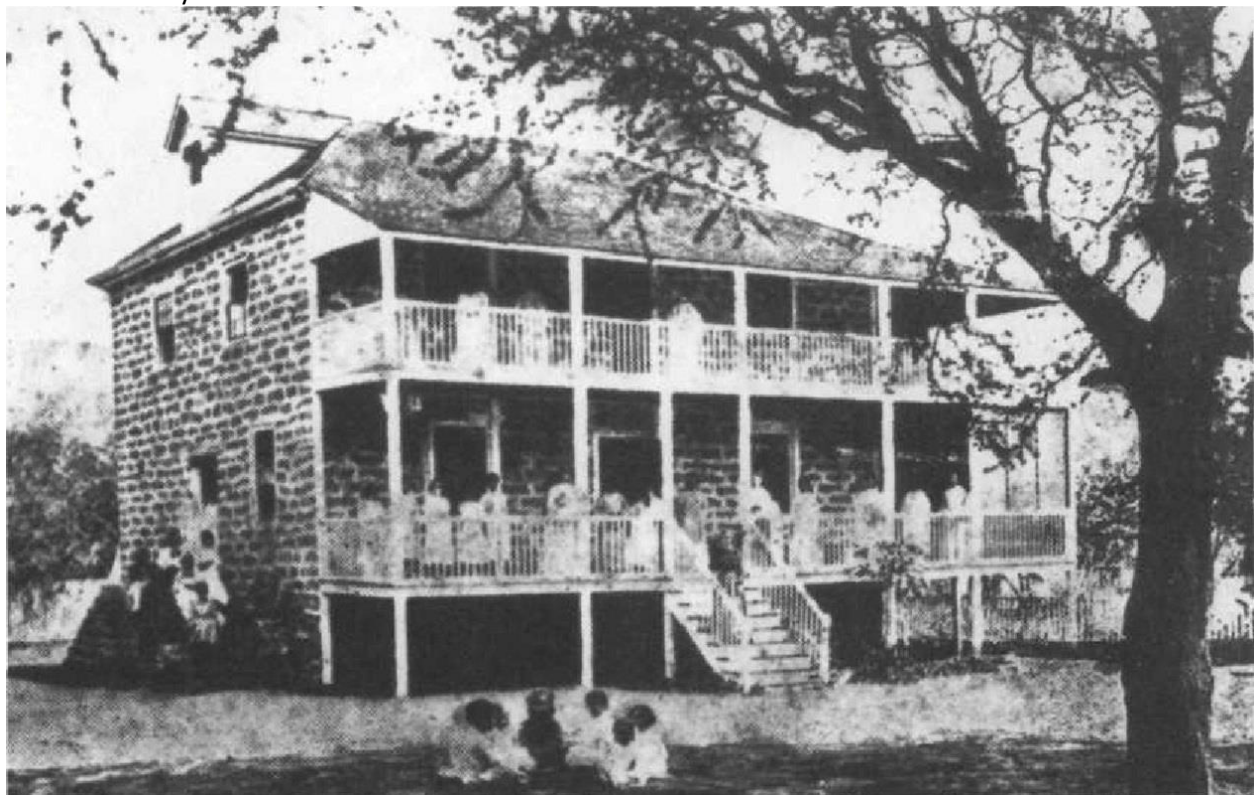


It started with boarders and day students, but after 1871 it has been exclusively a boarding school. "Under her patient energy and tact, with the help of her assistants, it prospered greatly, and became a success." (Coan)

At first the school was designed to prepare Hawaiian girls to become 'suitable' wives for men who were at the same time preparing to become missionaries and work in the South Seas.

This objective took the back seat to industrial education as new industrial departments were added. This included sewing, washing and ironing, dressmaking, domestic arts and nursing.

The mainstay of the curriculum involved furnishing complete elementary courses, including music, both vocal and instrumental, and training in the household arts. Concerts given by the girls helped the school to make money.



In January 1869, Hawai'i-born Elizabeth Ka'ahumanu (Lizzie) Bingham arrived from the continent to be an assistant to her sister. Lizzie was a graduate of Mount Holyoke and, when she was recruited, was a teacher at Rockford Female Seminary. (Beyer)

Lydia Bingham left the school in 1873 when she married Reverend Titus Coan of Hilo. She was followed by her sister, Miss Lizzie Bingham, who was principal for nearly seven years.

HMCS appropriated funds for repairs and additions to the buildings; "(t)he old stone buildings which had formerly been used as printing office and bindery by the mission, with the house of Rev EW Clark, then occupied by Dr. H. Gulick, were repaired and remodelled, to enlarge and make more comfortable the necessary rooms for the school now successfully started."

"It would be impossible to tell those of you who only know the present building, how crowded and uncomfortable some of those rooms were but we rejoiced, for it was improvement! Miss Bingham soon became principal of the school." (Hawaiian Gazette, March 23, 1897) It was later named Kawaiaha'o Female Seminary.

Kawaiaha'o 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.)

Mills School for Boys (Mills Institute)

Mills School for Boys was started as a small downtown missionary school in 1892, by Mr. and Mrs. Francis W Damon (descendant of missionary Rev Samuel C Damon), who took into their home a number of Chinese boys with the aim of giving them a Christian education.

Frank Damon, who was born in Hawai'i, toured the world with Henry Carter, and married Mary Happer, a missionary's daughter, who had been born and reared in Kuangzhou, China, and spoke fluent Cantonese. Frank Damon was appointed by the Hawaiian Evangelical Association as the superintendent of Chinese work in 1881. (Fan)

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.

"Frank Damon, the superintendent of the Chinese Mission, who was the most serious and tireless worker, traveled all over the Islands, wherever there were Chinese. His footsteps reached to Hilo, Ka'ū, Kona, Hāmākua, Kohala, Wailuku, Pa'ia, Makawao, Lahaina, Kula, Waimea, Hanapepe, and Kekaha." (Fan)

Then, "six Chinese youths fired with the passion for knowledge, knocked at the door of the Damon home in Honolulu and asked to be taken in and taught. A room was found, instruction began, the six multiplied slowly until they have become more than four hundred who have found Mills a blessed home of light and truth."

"The influence of this school upon our Territory can never be told. Its graduates are found in all walks of life, occupying positions of influence here, on the Pacific coast and in China." (The Friend, October 1905)



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.

"At the time we were boys, we thought the rules and regulations promulgated by our beloved teachers rather strict, but as we grow older, after having tasted bitter lessons in life, we value the ideas of Mr. Damon more and more. I do not know a single Chinese who has not a good word for the valuable work which Mr. Damon and you have done in uplifting the standards not only in the living, but also in the morals of all those who have come into contact with both of you."

"Ever since I left Mills Institute, it was my ambition to commemorate Mr. Damon with some kind of fitting remembrance for his entire unselfish life spent for the benefit of the Chinese of Honolulu, or rather of Hawaii, and I am happy to inform you that some of the old Mills Institute boys here in Shanghai have pledged themselves with me to raise a subscription for a memorial to Mr. Damon." (Former Students; The Friend)

Bringing The Two Together

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 Hawaiʻi (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 Kawaiahaʻo 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.

“(I)t was decided to continue the names of its constituent parts, Mills School and Kawaiaha’o Seminary. For several years this plan was satisfactory but with the development of new policies it became more and more confusing and unwieldy.

With the new coeducational policy which went into effect this year in the grammar grades as well as in the high school the old names became misleading.” (The Friend)

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.

Mid-Pacific introduced a one-to-one all-school technology program designed to foster creativity, global awareness, critical thinking and collaboration. During the 2012-2013 school year iPads were distributed to every student from grades 3-12; students in Kindergarten and grades 1-2 had access to iPad carts during the school day (the One-to-One program was covered in Mid-Pacific Institute’s Tuition and Fees.)

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 American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (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)