

Hālawa School, Church & Community

The Hawaiian community of Hālawa goes back a multitude of generations. During the 19th century, the valley's taro farmers provided for the poi needs of Moloka'i and beyond. Hālawa school, the first English school in Hālawa and Moloka'i, was founded in the autumn of 1886, and its first principal, Henry van Giesen, taught a little over 100 students in 3 classrooms with the help of 2 assistants. The 1st to 6th graders came from as far away as Kaunakakai, Kamalō, Kalua'aha, Waialua, Honouliwai and even Wailau of the north shore. The arts and music program was very impressive. There was an orchestra, as well choral singing and dancing classes. The orchestra achieved fame throughout the islands for its wonderful concerts. Possibly as early as 1890, Solomon Fuller joined the faculty (see following), the first Moloka'i born teacher there. Another Moloka'i-born teacher joined the faculty as principal in 1906, Matthew H. Kāne. Both Fuller, Kāne and other composers/arrangers maintained a remarkable choral tradition at the school, and the school choir garnered many awards in Congregational Church ho'ike (concerts/competitions.) Until 1958 both the school and church were staffed by a succession of extraordinarily dedicated and talented teachers who instructed the children of this close-knit community. The isolation and nature's current reclamation of the valley underscore the extraordinary contrast with the old days; still, the glorious music rings, thanks to the remarkable efforts and vision of Hālawa's 'ohana and the fame they brought to Moloka'i.

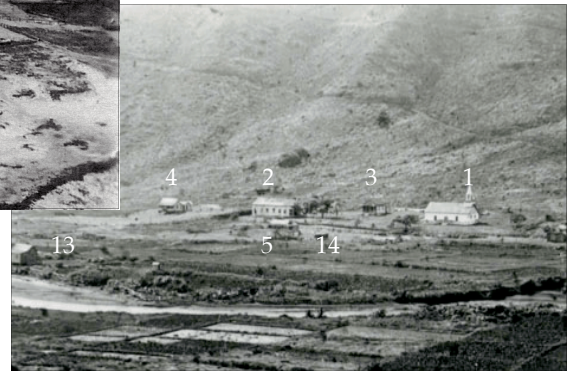


Hālawa Congregational Church Sunday School, ca. 1920 (Courtesy Bishop Museum Archives)

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Mrs. Loe Ka'ilikalakala | 15. Mrs. Mileka Kālā'au | 29. Dorothy Kālā'au...a boy here? |
| 2. Mrs. William Nu'eku | 16. | 30. |
| 3. Hattie K. Kanaka'ole | 17. Luynard Ka'alouahi | 31. David L. Kālā'au, Jr.? |
| 4. Mrs. Walter K. Kawa'a | 18. Joseph Kamana'o | 32. Louisa Kealoha Kamakahi |
| 5. Sarah Ka'alouahi | 19. Rose A. Kamana'o | 33. Walter Kawa'a |
| 6. Olivia Kamakahi | 20. | 34. Pauline Kawa'a |
| 7. Mrs Robert Wm. Kamakahi, Sr. | 21. Kini Kawa'a | 35. Lui Kamakahi |
| 8. Mrs. Paahao Naho'opili | 22. Lucy K. Kamana'o | 36. Robert Wm. Kamakahi, Jr. |
| 9. Victoria Kawa'a | 23. Victoria Morinaga | 37. Bole Kolomaio |
| 10. Solomon K. Fuller | 24. Helen Kawa'a | |
| 11. Lily Akina | 25. | |
| 12. Mrs. Kamela Kamana'o | 26. William Poha Naho'opili | |
| 13. | 27. | |
| 14. Hannah Morinaga | 28. Levi Ka'alouahi | |

Left: Hālawā Valley, Moloka'i, ca. 1913. (J. F. Rock photo, courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives)

Below: Another view of Hālawā's primary community buildings. This 1915-1920 photo is taken from atop Mana Heiau, facing southeast. (Source: research pending, a Maui News article)



1. Hālawā Congregational Church; sadly, the church burned down in the 1960s. 2. Hālawā School. 3. Teacher's cottage. 4. James Nanila'a Kaoupuiki home. 5. James Kawa'a home. 6. Unknown. 7. Poi factory, run by James Kaoupuiki. 8. Walter Kawa'a home. 9. Robert Ka'alouahi home. 10. Matthew Kāne home (before 1920.) 11. Kamani grove planted by Kamehameha III. 12. David Kāla'au home (1910-1934); temporarily after 1946 tsunami: Robert Ka'alouahi family. 13, 14, 15. Unknown. 16. (top photo) St. Ann Church, built by Fr. Damien in the 1870s; de-commissioning date unknown. 17. Fishponds. 18. Suspension Bridge, first built by R.W. Meyer in the 1880s.



Hālawā Valley ca. 1940, before the tsunami of 1946. (courtesy Walter Kawa'a, Jr.)

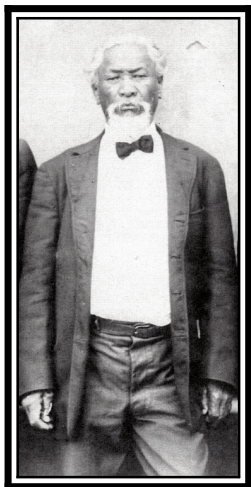
Matthew H. Kāne [1872 - 15 February 1920] was born and grew up in Hālawā valley. A graduate of Kamehameha School for Boys in 1893, he counted among his older schoolmates Charles E. King, who graduated in 1891.⁹ He stands in the accompanying graduation photo in the back row, 4th from the left, the tallest fellow. After a few years touring and singing world-wide, he attended and graduated from the Normal School for teachers. In 1902-1903 he was a teacher at Kīpahulu. In 1906 he assumed the job as principal at Hālawā School. He was known for his work with the school and church choir.



(Photo courtesy of Kamehameha Alumni Association)

“We rode to Hālawā, the beautiful valley at the extreme eastern end of the island. After lunch (we) visited the school and were greatly impressed by the splendid singing of the children under the able leadership of Mr. Matthew Kane. Rarely has such singing been heard anywhere. These rich Hawaiian voices respond readily to able instruction. The musical treat alone was well worth the day's ride....(at a subsequent church service) Mr. Kane conducted a song service... (with the preacher's remarks) being interpreted into Hawaiian by Mr. Kane.” [The Friend, March 1909]

He departed Hālawā in 1910, and served as principle at Napo'opo'o School in Hōnaunau, Hawai'i until his death in 1920. He composed “Ka Makani Ka'ili Aloha” in 1916, a song made famous throughout America in its time by Tandy MacKenzie, a nationally famous Hawaii-born (and Kamehameha graduate as well) opera singer who often performed it as his final number in his recitals. Kāne wrote the song for Tandy's mother, Nellie Reuter MacKenzie; their family originally lived in Hāna, Maui.¹⁰



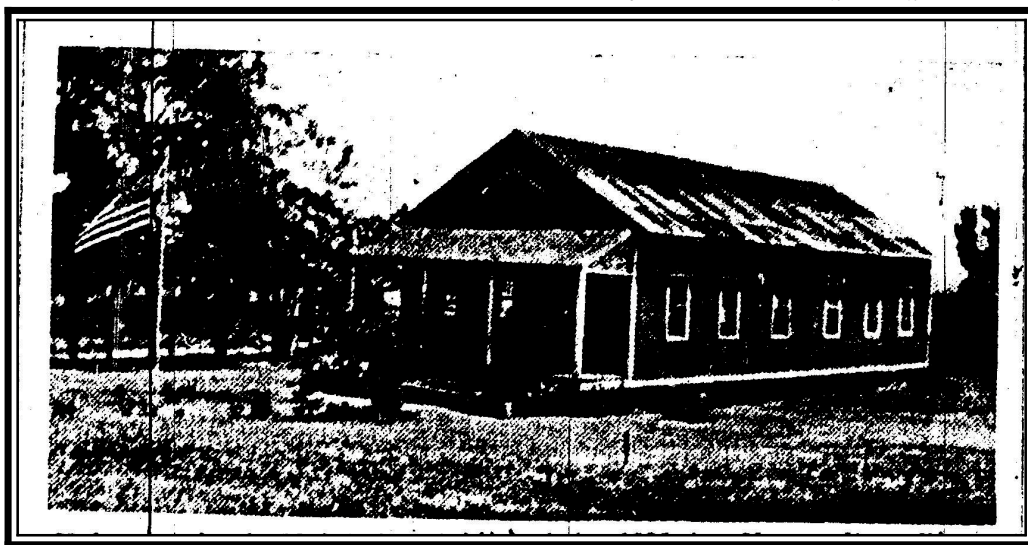
(Courtesy Bishop Museum Archives)



Solomon Ka'alouahi Fuller [1854-193-?] According to George P. Cooke in “Moolelo O Molokai” (pg. 129) Solomon lived a part of his youth at Kawakiu, Moloka'i, and was educated at 'Iolani School (Cooke: the “Royal School”) and probably counted among his instructors Bishop Willis of the Anglican Church, who served in Hawai'i from 1873 to 1902. He might have graduated from 'Iolani around 1888, and eventually returned to Moloka'i. He could speak English very well. The **Hawaiian Gazette** (21 July 1891) lists him as the one teacher alongside Hālawā principal Henry van Giesen (whose tenure was 1886-1896). In a 1908 edition of **The Friend**, Solomon is described as having led the Hālawā Sunday school in a presentation at Kalua'aha Church (having

walked with 30 other men, women, and children from Hālawā Valley). Matthew H. Kāne was the principal there by 1906, and the two contemporaries were probably key figures in the musical life of both the school and church, with Solomon remaining after Matthew Kāne's principalship ended. Another news article in **The Friend** indicates Solomon Fuller as in charge of the boy's Sunday School at Hālawā Church in 1925. The 1930 Hālawā census lists him as an “invalid, aged 76” residing with his nephew David K. Kālā'au and his family.

David K. Kālā'au (1891-1934), Solomon Fuller's nephew, assumed principalship from around 1910 until his death in 1934. A gifted composer as well, he arranged much music for the school and church chorus, and was highly respected by all Moloka'i residents. David grew up in Hālawā and had previously studied at the old Lāhaianaluna School on Maui and pursued his education studies at the Normal School in Honolulu.¹¹ Edward K. Kaupu (1893-1965), a former teacher at Kalua'aha School, was his successor and the tiny school's final principal.



Hālawā School, its 50th anniversary (*Star Bulletin*, 4/14/1936)

Principal Edward Kaupu and students (*Star Bulletin*, 12/26/1956)

Students' names TBD:



The families of Hālawā valley in the 1930s and 1940s may have been few, but they were a tightly-knit community. Life was centered on taro cultivation and the production and sale of poi. Children and parents often worked the lo'i (taro ponds) in the cool of the morning before school started, and kept a watchful eye out to see the principal's car lights coming down the winding road to time the start of classes.¹² There was a dearth of textbooks in those days; the chalkboard and a world map were the primary learning accoutrement.¹³ At the end of the school day the boys either worked the lo'i or played outdoors, while the girls hung out at home with their mothers; in Walter Kawa'a, Jr.'s family the girls were therefore more adept with Hawaiian language. Most of the songs that originated from the valley were sung in 4-part harmony *a capella*. Many families spent the lantern-lit evenings regularly reviewing the music learned in church and school, shoring up their memory of both Hawaiian lyrics and choral parts.¹⁴ Sadly, as folks passed on, the memory of those choral parts died with them. This songbook collection attempts to preserve those songs that survived. Nevertheless, the memory of the people and lifestyle of the Hālawā 'ohana continue to inspire many kama'āina and malihini alike; a special valley possessing a rich history and an open-heartedness of its inhabitants that defines in no small part what Moloka'i was and still is.