

The Tragic Story of Kalaupapa

He ahupua'a 'o Moloka'i

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O Hina I Ka Malama

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8,000 plus people killed by a single disease. Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, was a sickness that separated families and banished them into isolation at the island of Moloka'i down in Kalaupapa. Kalaupapa is an isolated place with vast sea cliffs located within the Kalawao County. It's said to be 10,779 acres, which made it so secluded. It was a good way to isolate/imprison people with Hansen's disease. Options for preventing the spread of contagious diseases were few. Isolation for leprosy seemed like the best solution but came at a high personal price. And so Kamehameha the fifth, Lota Kapuāiwa made the decision to banish them and start an act to prevent the disease of leprosy from starting.



*Kamehameha V, Lot Kapuāiwa (December 11th, 1830 - December 11th, 1872),
photo taken by Menzies Dickson, a photographer of the Hawaiian Royal Family.
Published Aug. 14th, 2014 (hawaiiankingdomblog.org)*

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In 1965, the Kingdom of Hawaii passed an act to help prevent the spread of leprosy. The Prevent the Spread of Leprosy Act of 1965 was intended to protect the general population from contracting leprosy by segregating the population, separating those with leprosy from those who did not. But to decrease the risk even more, those that were suspected of having isolating those that were already diagnosed for the people who had leprosy and suspected to have it as well. 800 acres of land were bought on the peninsula of Kalaupapa by the kingdom of Hawai'i. They started to force people, mainly native Hawaiians to live out the rest of their days of their life in Kalaupapa. In 1866, 12 Hawaiian citizens arrived at Kalaupapa, over time it began to grow to 8,000 people who were forcibly taken from their families and homes, and forced into isolation. "Housing, supplies, and facilities improved over the years, with hospital facilities, dormitories, and other things being built, but life at Kalaupapa was never easy, as limited medical resources, lack of supplies, and isolation made things difficult" (Ogle, 2021).

Between the years of 1866 to 1969, the people with leprosy started coming and staying in Kalaupapa. "The land in Kalaupapa supports the growing of food crops such as fruit, taro, and sweet potatoes, so the Board of Health was hopeful that the settlement could sustain itself. Archeological evidence indicates that the peninsula has had people living there for 900 years," said an article of the National Park Services. "Vegetables such as sweet potatoes, taro, and fruits could be grown in the valleys and on the flatlands. The ocean and tidal pools provided seafood. Fresh water was available from Waikolu and

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Waihanau valleys,” said the National Park Services of Kalaupapa (National Historical Park, 2015).

Over the years they discovered that there are three different types of leprosy. Tuberculoid; the less severe form of leprosy. People that have this type of leprosy only have one or a few patches of flat, pale-colored skin (paucibacillary leprosy). The affected area becomes numb due to the nerve damage underneath. The tuberculoid leprosy is less contagious than the other forms of leprosy. The lepromatous is a more severe form of leprosy, it makes skin bumps and rashes (multibacillary leprosy), numbness, and muscle weakness. The area's that can also be affected are the nose, kidneys, and male reproductive organs. It is more contagious than tuberculoid leprosy. The borderline is the leprosy that has both the tuberculoid and the lepromatous leprosy (Miller, 2020).

Jozef De Veuster also known as Father Damien was born on January 3rd, 1840, in Tremelo, Belgium. When he was younger he was named “Silent Joseph” because he would help his father on the farm, and “the Little Shepherd” because he was also intensely calm and contemplative. And so he received these nicknames from his neighbors and family members. He attended college at Braine-le-Comte, and entered into the novation of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Leuven. “Taking the name of Damianus (Damiaan in Dutch) in his first vows (probably after Saint Damian). He took this name in conscious imitation of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, ancient

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"physician-saints," who "went among the sick and were martyred for Christ." said a reporter on *New World Encyclopedia* on March 26, 2017.

Pamphile, Jozef's older brother was to serve as a missionary in the far distant "Sandwich Islands," but when it came time for him to depart he was too ill to go, and so Jozef took his place. He landed in Honolulu on March 19th, 1864, there in Honolulu, he was ordained in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace on May 21, 1864 and took the name of Damien. For his first calling, he spent eight years on Big Island, Hawai'i. "He often traveled great distances to minister to the people of his districts of Puna, followed by Kohala and Hamakua," said an article on Father Damien on June 15, 2019.



Father Damien (January 3rd 1840 - April 15th 1889) Photo: The Catholic World Report.

In 1873, he learned that there was a need for priests to serve for the 700 Hansen's disease victims confined in Kalaupapa on the island of Moloka'i. He and three other volunteers went to Kalaupapa to help with the lepers. Louis Lambert Conrardyl, an

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American Civil War soldier, who left behind a marriage which had been broken by his alcoholism. James Sinnett a male nurse from Chicago, and Mother (now Saint) Marianne Cope, head of the Franciscan-run St Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, New York. Damien, being the first volunteer to go to Kalaupapa, he was carried onto a boat carrying cattle and 50 patients bound for Kalawao.

In 1873, major improvements happened shortly after Father Damien's arrival and the interest and support of the next two Hawaiian Kings, William Charles Lunalilo and David Kalakaua. Between the years of 1888 to 1902 the isolation laws in Hawai'i were strictly enforced and the population at Kalawao swelled to over 1,100 people. In 1893-1894, the Board of Health took steps with the last remaining non-patient Hawaiians living in Kalaupapa and on the peninsula. The isolation settlement didn't just stop in Kalawao, it expanded to not just the entire peninsula but to all the trails and lands to the top of the pali. The last remaining private property was purchased and all non-patients removed. The habitation of the Kalaupapa Peninsula by non-patient Hawaiian people came to an end.

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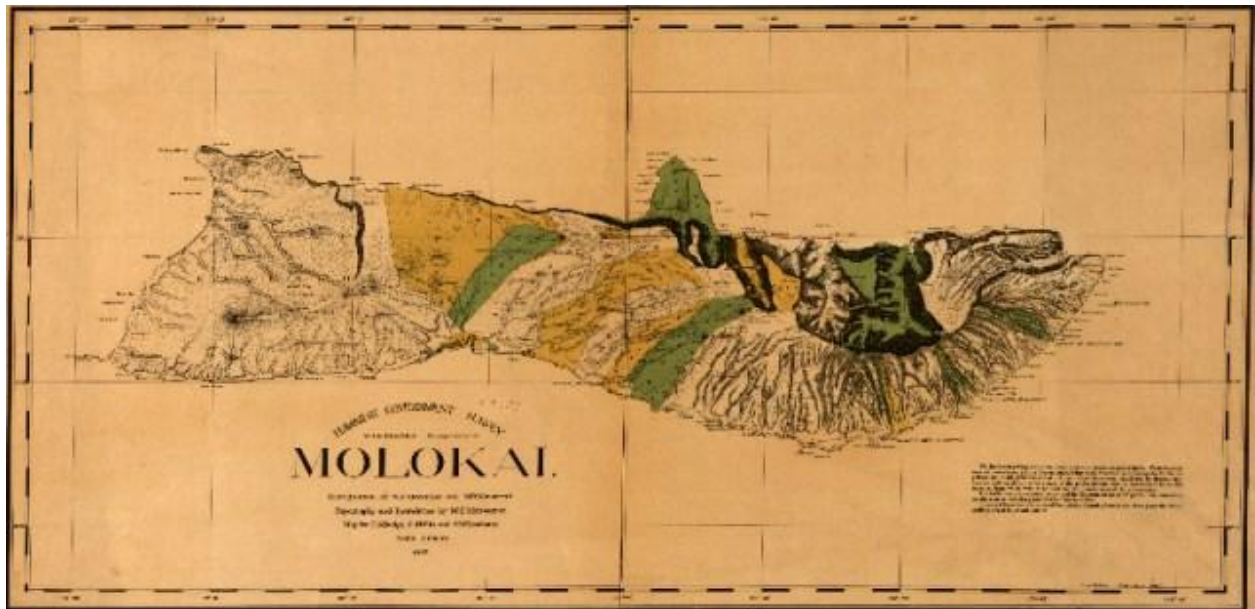
April 15, 1889 Damien of Molokai - (Photo: Cape Cod Curmudgeon) Categories; Humanitarian, Religion, Today in History

The Board of Health began relocating patients to the Kalaupapa side of the peninsula, because the climate was warmer and dryer, and the shipment and passengers could be landed more easily. Water lines were extended from Waikolu Valley to bring Kalaupapa a fresh supply of water. Speaking of the waters, the different winds of Kalaupapa is Kōkī – wind at Kalaupapa. (Nak:66; see PE:161 for definition of kōkī), Kōkī Lae – wind at Kalaupapa. (Nak:66), and Makakuapo – wind at Nihoa, Kalaupapa. (Nak:66; MC:46).

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Hawaiian King Kamehameha V decided to build the Hansen's disease colony on the north shore of Molokai. (Photo: Buyenlarge)

As the disease unfolded, husbands were separated from their wives and children, diseased children were removed from their mothers and fathers, and babies born to patients were immediately taken by health officials to be placed in the care of relatives or taken to orphanages. Although Hawai'i did more for its people with Hansen's disease than any country in history up to that time, it was still a frightening experience for the patients and difficult for the health care workers and the holy order who ministered to the sick.

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Kalaupapa Settlement now has buildings after 20 years of leaving the patients to fend for themselves (Photo: A Broad Abroad)

In the beginning of 1900, the Board of Health (BOH) was appointed to provide high qualities, facilities, utilities, and medical care for patients at Kalaupapa. A large construction program began, with individual cottages, dormitories, hospital facilities and other buildings being built.

In 1902, Dr. William J. Goodhue became resident physician and John D. McVeigh became the settlement's superintendent. The two men worked to improve the quality of life within isolation by promoting sports and other activities, improving medical

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procedures, and by treating patients with respect and human decency. The Board of Health records over the years reveal how the disease knew no racial or ethnic boundaries. In the Board of Health's annual report for 1903, the records show the total patient population at Kalaupapa to be 888 people: 541 males and 347 females. Of that number, 459 males and 338 females were Hawaiian. Among the other major racial groups were 40 Chinese men and 3 Chinese women; 12 Portuguese men and 2 Portuguese women; and seven "American" men and one "American" woman.

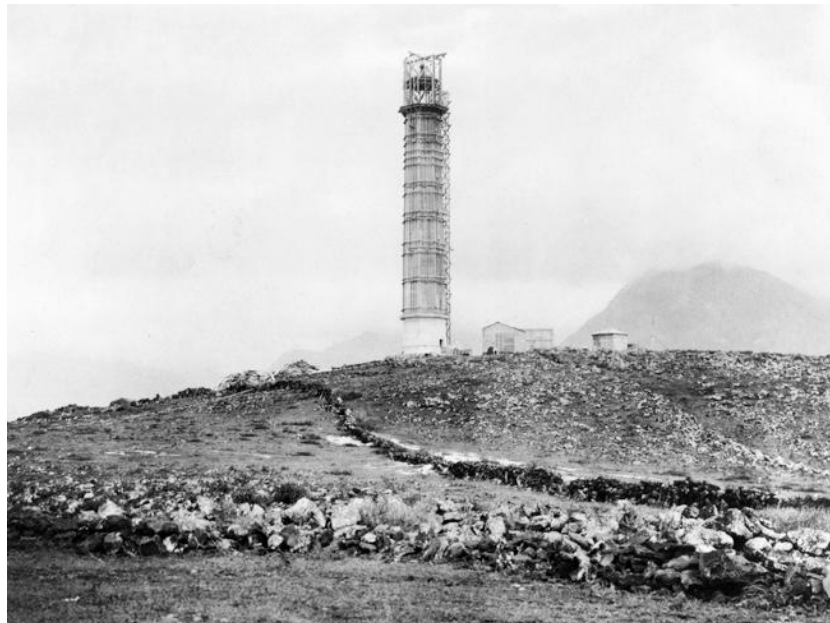
There were two facilities that were built in the peninsula by the Federal Government of the United States of America in the 1900. The Molokai Light was built on the northern tip of the peninsula to help guide westbound vessels into Honolulu Harbor on O'ahu. The Public Health and Marine Hospital Service operated the US Leprosy Investigation Station from 1909 – 1913. By 1919 treatments of chaulmoogra oil, derived from seeds of trees found in India and Southeast Asia, people hoped it to be a cure for Hansen's disease. People dared to think Kalaupapa settlement could be closed. After 10 years however, belief in the curative powers of the oil weakened. Despite the years of medical research a cure still seemed as remote as ever.

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By 1924, the patient population was reduced by almost half. There were now 169 Hawaiian men and 101 Hawaiian women; 53 part-Hawaiian men and 43 part-Hawaiian women; 28 Japanese men and 4 Japanese women; and 24 Filipino men and one Filipino woman. By the 1930s Kalaupapa's physical base was in need of an overhaul. Territory of Hawai'i Governor Lawrence M. Judd reorganized the leprosy control program in the early 1930s and undertook ambitious construction and rehabilitation projects. State-of-the-art water and power systems were installed; roads were paved; and facilities such as a hospital, store, service station, and houses were built.



The Molokai Lighthouse under construction in 1909, (lighthouseandfriends).

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After World War II, the changes in both the treatment of Hansen's disease and in social attitudes towards patients occurred with the discovery of sulfone drugs. A sulfone is a chemical compound containing a sulfonyl functional group attached to two carbon atoms. Essentially a cure for the disease, the drugs were introduced into Hawaii in 1946. The new medications brought almost immediate reductions of symptoms and vast improvements in the quality of health and life. In 1947, Former Governor Lawrence M. Judd became Kalaupapa's resident administrator and he and his wife Eva Marie were promoted social activities and adult education classes. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Lion's Club, American Legion, and other organizations opened Kalaupapa to the wider world. Many of the physical barriers separating patients from workers were removed.

Hansen's disease patients were no longer contagious because of the new drug that was introduced in 1947. There was no further need for isolation. In 1969 the century-old laws of forced quarantine were broken. Former patients living in Kalaupapa today have chosen to remain here, most for the rest of their lives.

Today, in 2021, a population of 10 will remain in Kalaupapa. People that were once forced away into isolation are now choosing to live the rest of their days in Kalaupapa. As the world continues to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, the people exiled so long ago and shuttered from the public, are now doing everything they can to protect themselves from the world and the novel coronavirus. Kalaupapa National Historical

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Park stopped allowing visitors to enter last year after the pandemic hit. Residents have not been able to see their families and have only had the company of one another and workers for over a year. The staff cuts and strict no-visitors policy have been effective in keeping the Kalaupapa patients safe. None of the patients has contracted COVID-19.

As of right now, Kalaupapa National Historical Park is still closed to the public. A reopening date hasn't been discussed yet. "Isolation has taken on a whole new meaning for people who are stuck in Kalaupapa," says Miki'ala Pescaia, interpretive park ranger at Kalaupapa National Historical Park. "It's a blessing, because it's a safe and beautiful place and there's so much to enjoy. But we miss people."

For more than 100 years, Kalaupapa has been home to the people that were once banished from society, to a place that a population of 10 leprosy survivors live today and choose to live the rest of their days. The settlement is much quieter than it once was. There are fewer buildings. Life today is lived at a somewhat slower pace. But Kalaupapa remains to be a remarkable place and an amazing history, a place that experienced the worst and the best of human responses to the challenge of sickness.

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The Sunset of Kalaupapa - Moloka'i Trio

The sunset of Kalaupapa

Smiles thru the evening rain

The tradewinds of Kalaupapa

Sing like an old refrain

There's music of romancing

Moonlight and stars above

Your magic charms, your dancing

Fill every night with love

My island of dreams

Means so much to me

When you're in my arms

Sighing so tenderly

So hold me close, my darling

Kiss me as lovers do

Then sunset of Kalaupapa

Will be a dream come true

By Samson Kuahine, 1950, (huapala.org)

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Na Pua O Kalaupapa - Stephen Inglis

Hāla'i Nō Ka Anemoku O Kalaupapa The peninsula of Kalaupapa is serene, calm indeed

Ho'omaika'i au i kipa ai I am grateful and blessed for my visits

nēia 'āina waiwai loa me ke aloha lā To this land rich with love

Mahalo, mahalo iā 'oukou Many thanks to you all

Chorus-

Mai nā Pali uluwehi i ka 'ehu o ke kai From the lush, verdant cliffs to the misty sea spray

Kō 'Oukou mau leo e mau ai Your voices will forever live

He makana iā kākou, he mau pua mae 'ole These never fading flowers are a gift to us all

Mahalo, Mahalo iā 'oukou Many Thanks to you all

I kēia huliau ke nalowale nei In this period of change and transition,

ka nohona i ka wā kahiko The lifestyle of old is slipping away

Ua hala ke kualau The sea showers have passed

e kinai ai i nā pua o Kalaupapa And have quenched the flowers of Kalaupapa

Stephen Inglis' and Dennis Kamakahi's CD, Waimaka Helelei, won the Na Hoku Hanohano Award for Slack Key Album of the Year in May 2012. (waimaka-helelei.com)

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The story I will be sharing with you is a note that my great grandmother, Luana Akana Palapala has actually written about her father and a little about her grandfather. It talks about her



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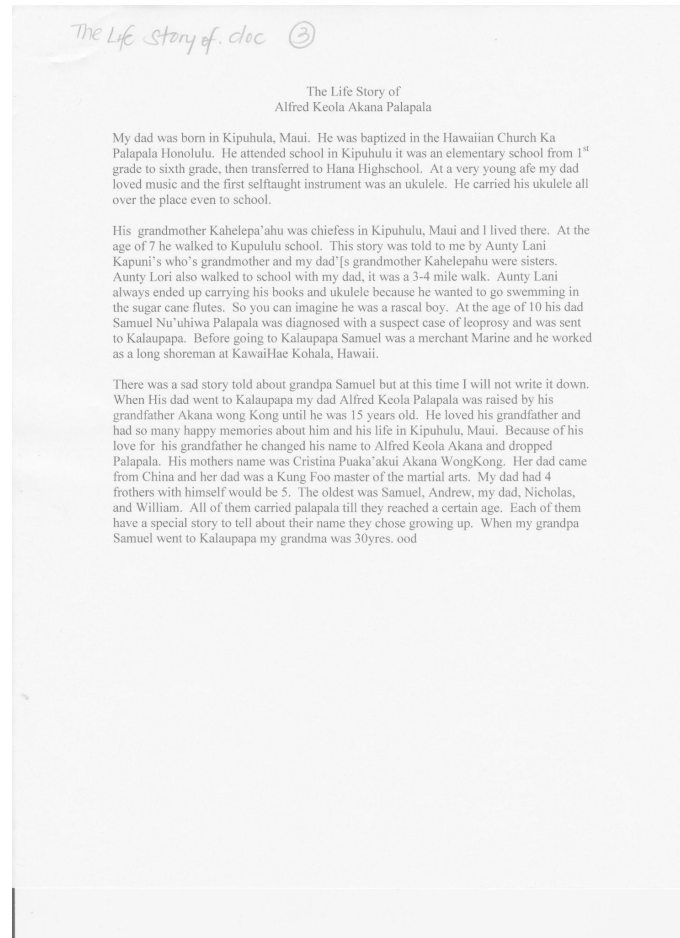


childhood and about her grandfather, Samuel Palapala and her father, Alfred Keola Palapala. Samuel Palapala was the oldest of his siblings. When Samuel was diagnosed with Hansen's disease, his son, Alfred Keola Akana Palapala was only 10 years old. First a merchant Marine that worked as a longshoreman at KawaiHae Kohala, Hawaii, now a prisoner of Kalaupapa. He died on November 3rd, 1926.

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Luana Akana Palapala's paper on her father and grandfather.

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My Family weeding Samuel Palapala and D. Kahalekahue's grave. (2011).



My Family after they weeded Samuel Palapala, my great, great, great grandfather's grave in Kalaupapa (2011).

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Samuel Nu'uhiwa Palapala buried a close distance away from Father Damien and Father Damien's church (2011).

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