

Kawaiahao Church
Punchbowl & King Streets
Honolulu
Honolulu County
Hawaii

HABS No. HI-14

HABS
HI,
2-HONLU,
13-

PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS
HI,
2-HONOLU,
13-

KAWAIAHAO CHURCH

HABS No. HI-14

ADDRESS: Punchbowl and King Streets, Honolulu, Honolulu Co., Hawaii

OWNER: Kawaiahao Church and the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society

OCCUPANT: Congregation of Kawaiahao Church

USE: Church Services

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:

The church is revered as the "Mother" Protestant Church of Hawaii and since its dedication on July 21, 1842 it has been the scene of important events in Hawaiian history including christening, inaugurations and burials of Hawaiian monarches. Constructed of indigenous coral blocks from ocean reefs and of timbers from the Pacific Coast of North America, from plans prepared by Rev. Bingham, this edifice dominated the scene of man-built structures with its austere architectural dignity.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

Kawaiahao Church, as an institution, goes back to a meeting in the Park Street Church of Boston, in October of 1819 when the first band of missionaries organized their new church. This group arrived in Hawaii in April 1820; their first Sabbath, three days later, was celebrated in a borrowed, thatched house.

The church remained in thatched houses, four of them, until the young King, Kamehameha III, indicated in 1835 that there were three things he greatly desired: a royal yacht, a royal palace, and a new church. His advisors thought it wise to secure the church first and a meeting of chiefs was called in January 1836 to discuss the project. The Rev. Bingham presented plans he had prepared for a stone building of two stories with cellar, galleries, pillars in front, and

a bell tower. The final dimensions were 144 feet long by 78 feet wide, large enough to accomodate thousands.

A subscription list was passed around, the King pledging \$3000.00 and other chiefs lesser amounts. The work was divided among the district chiefs who set their people to digging a foundation through the cinder to coral bedrock; cutting some 14,000 coral blocks from the reef and dragging them to the building site; burning coral in huge pits for lime; and providing ohia wood for the interior of the structure. The large timbers were from California and the N.W. coast; boards, nails, glass, sashes and lamps came from Boston. Donations from New England included cash, a clock from James Hunnewell, and a pulpit, table and other material from the Centre Church in New Haven.

The foundation was started September 18, 1838 and work had progressed far enough by June 8, 1839, for the cornerstone to be laid. This immense sandstone block was provided by the chief Paki, quarried at Waianae and floated to Honolulu. Beneath it were placed a brass plate engraved with the appropriate dates, a newly printed Hawaiian Bible, and two other text books printed on the Mission press.

The lower walls, 12 feet high, were 44 inches thick. At this point the floor was laid, six feet above the ground. Above the basement, the walls were narrowed 5 inches outside and 6 within, then carried up 33 inches thick to the sill of the gallery windows. Here they were narrowed six inches more inside and carried up 27 inches thick to the plate. Huge cranes were used to place the blocks which weighed from 200 to 1500 pounds. The immense roof, having an extended span, and the ceiling supported by king and queen posts, rested on the walls without the support of pillars.

The fitting of the long ridge pole was an anxious time and provided the only near fatality when a ship's carpenter - the nearest thing to a master mechanic then available in Honolulu - fell from one of the stringers. Fortunately, the floor of the audience room, extended gradually as the roof was completed, had been laid, or he would have fallen clear to the stone cellar and instant death.

The four walls were up in 1840 and are shown in sketches made by members of the U.S. Exploring Expedition. The stone pillars were cut from patterns, four feet in diameter and twenty-six in length, about

two thirds of their shaft projecting from the wall, with which they were firmly united. The windows were put in late in October; a contract for the roof was let in August 1841. Roofing timbers probably were spruce, pine or cedar from California, as local woods were not long enough to span the distance. Shingles may have come from the N.W. Coast, but Judd reports in his diary going to Waialua to hire 100,000 made.

The new church was dedicated July 21, 1842, before the steeple and gallery had been completed. Its architect, the Rev. Hiram Bingham, was not there to see it. Arriving with the first company in April 1820, he had left for the United States August 3, 1840, hoping to recover his health and return; he never came back to see the finished church. The structure of 1842 resembled his original drawings except for the bell tower, which was topped by "an absurd wooden spire" looking for all the world like a lamp extinguisher. Bingham was honored with a commemorative tablet during the 1889 centennial ceremonies.

A Danish visitor, Captain Steen Billie of the corvette Galatea, described the "Stone Church" in 1845: "It is situated at the east side of Honolulu, rather out of town proper; it has a small blunt steeple on one end, otherwise without any architectural beauty, resembling on its outside a store or warehouse; within, without an arch, not a picture nor altar nor any such thing to relieve the large empty place, or afford the eye an agreeable resting point. We must remember, however, that we are among Independents, to whom nothing lies farther than art and taste. In the place of the altar stood a pulpit; on its right side the pew of the King, covered with red satin curtains; a little farther off, that of the chiefs."

In 1850 the town's first clock, presented by the King, was installed in the Kawaiahao tower, having come around the Horn from Boston. It cost \$1000.00 and commenced running January 10, 1851. This was not the clock donated by James Hunnewell, which found its way to the Moiliili church and was later repaired and restored to Kawaiahao in 1927. The tower clock has continued in operation to this date, with only an occasional interruption. In 1944, pigeons sitting on the hands at quarter to and quarter after the hour were heavy enough to cause it to lose 5 or 10 minutes a day. In 1947 it gave up completely, registering 11:45 for nearly six months until repaired. In 1966, as part of the renovation of Kawaiahao, the clock was stopped so that its works could be oiled and its face repainted.

Kawaiahao Church ordered an organ in 1867 to replace the melodion then in use. To prepare for its installation, the pulpit was moved forward some twenty or thirty feet to nearly the center of the auditorium, and a new choir loft built behind the pulpit. This change provided extra Sunday school rooms in the partitioned area, brought the preacher closer to his audience, and provided the choir with its first permanent location. Music was under the leadership of Mrs. Lydia Dominis and Mrs. Bernice Pauahi Bishop. The new organ was a popular attraction - one story has it that no one knew how to play the instrument, until a sailor off a whaling vessel was found and carefully kept from the "square bottle" - gin - until he had taught others. That year the Simmons Co. sent out two organs to Honolulu, the second for the Fort Street Church.

In 1870 Kawaiahao Church had its 50th Jubilee; in 1873 it was the scene of King Lunalilo's inauguration (for which event some renovation was necessary, including new mats and securing the galleries with iron bolts as they were decidedly unsafe); and a year later, King Lunalilo was buried in a Royal Mausoleum in the church grounds. The first popularly elected King, Lunalilo preferred to be buried near his people. The church deeded a portion of their lands for the site and the King's father, Charles Kanaina, had a gothic mausoleum built, surrounded with an iron fence, the whole planted with exotics. He also built the surrounding church wall up to a height of six feet, and added some new gateways. It was hoped that he might also finish the church bell tower and install some chimes as a memorial to his son, but this was not done. The high wall remained until 1899, when A.S. Cleghorn, at the death of his daughter, Princess Kaiulani, provided the funds to lower the wall to two feet. In 1889, during the Wilcox revolution, the Honolulu Rifles had forceably taken possession of Kawaiahao and from its tower commanded all the makai portion of the Palace grounds. At that time the Palace also had high walls, which barricades were quickly lowered after the revolution, and it was hoped Kawaiahao would follow by lowering theirs, thereby making a "park" out of the grounds.

By 1893 Kawaiahao needed better lighting, and the church was organizing benefits to raise funds for new electric lights. At the concert on April 9, 1894, minutes before the program was to start, a large lamp came loose and fell with a crash onto the bench usually occupied by the organist. The resulting fire badly scorched the organ. During this excitement, a second lamp over the pulpit also fell, starting a fire which was quickly smothered with coconut matting from the aisle.

It is reported that the program then went on as scheduled. Electric lights were turned on for the first time late in October 1895, giving Kawaiahao one of the "best lighted interiors in the city".

In the meantime, however, the electricians had gone under the roof to lay the wires and found that the tie beams were badly eaten by termites and the roof was ready to fall. The 10 to 12 - inch square N.W. Coast timbers were destroyed, but the ohia rafters and floor beams were still sound. The worst area was next to the tower, directly over the royal pews. The building was condemned, another subscription was started, and the interior refitted and repaired during 1894-95.

In 1900, as part of Kawaiahao's 75th anniversary, a new organ was ordered, the 1867 instrument being repaired for use in Moiliili Church, where it joined the old Hunnewell clock.

Twenty years later, the entire community celebrated a centennial with two weeks of pageants, plays, parades, and prayers.

1925 saw another condemnation which resulted in almost complete reconstruction of the old building. On October 3 of that year it was closed, not to be re-opened and re-dedicated until July 12, 1927. The termites had now destroyed all the interior wood, including the ohia. All wood was removed, leaving only the coral walls standing, and the building was rebuilt from the the basement up. The auditorium was restored to its full length, the galleries were widened and extended. Concrete pillars provided an aisle effect within. The reconstruction attempted to return the building to its original New England simplicity. The pulpit, with furniture made from salvaged ohia slabs and kauila logs, was designed with wide steps leading up to it and a simple cross on the wall behind. The original arched windows on either side of the pulpit and the crescent opening above the cross were retained. New, insect-proof redwood seats were installed, and the old royal pews were closed to visitors. The roof was covered with imported slates, put on with copper nails. The outer walls were spray-coated with a cement plaster to preserve the coral blocks from damage by birds pecking at them. Inside, a new organ, funded in part by C. Brewer and Co. to commemorate their 100th anniversary, replaced the 1901 instrument. For the new, longer hall, an echo section was donated by the organ manufacturer. The organ was placed in the ewa (tower) end of the building. The display pipes are visible, but the music mechanism was enclosed in four concrete rooms.

To complete the new setting, the grounds were replanted - little had been done since Lunalilo's time, except in 1899 when A.S. Cleghorn pulled down the high wall, dug an artesian well, planted a lawn, and set out the line of royal palms mauka of the building as a memorial to his daughter, Princess Kaiulani. A fountain pool was built with some coral block to commemorate the old spring at King and South Streets which had given the land, and the church, its name: Ka wai a Hao - the water of Hao.

Since 1927, a new Sunday school and office building has been put up (in 1928) and a new social hall was built in 1940. The war interrupted plans for the centennial celebration of the church building in 1942.

In 1965, Kawaiahao underwent additional refurbishing by way of repainting and repairing the interior, repairing the slate roof, replacing the windows, and removing the 1927 cement finish from the exterior coral blocks. Outside, the grounds were replanted and the fountain rebuilt. Other improvements are planned for the future.

Since completion in 1842, Kawaiahao Church has been the scene of important events in Hawaiian history. Known in the early days as the "King's Chapel" (the name "Kawaiahao" was first used in 1853), Kamehameha III worshipped there in a ground floor pew, breaking the old tradition of anyone sitting above a chief. The King wanted a place near the pulpit and near a window, and said it did not matter who was in the galleries as long as they did not break through. In 1843, on the restoration of the islands by Thomas, the same King spoke, at a memorial service in Kawaiahao, the phrase that was to become Hawaii's motto: Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono - The life of the land is preserved in righteousness. And in 1855 he was buried from the church.

Here, Kamehameha IV took his oath of office in 1854, and married Emma Rooke in 1856 (though soon thereafter they requested Episcopal clergy from England and helped to set up that church in Honolulu, some say because protestant Kawaiahao had been used for meetings by annexationists in 1854). Ministers reported, a Constitutional Convention met, the Fourth of July was celebrated, all in Kawaiahao. Some visitors felt the missionaries were too strict about time and not strict enough about place when they allowed the church building to be used for such secular activities.

King Lunalilo was inaugurated here in 1873, and buried here in 1874, Queen Emma in 1885; Princess Kaiulani in 1899; Queen Liliuokalani in 1917 were buried from Kawaiahao. Memorials to early missionaries, the church's pastors, and to honored Hawaiians grace the walls. The church was refuge during the plague and fire of 1900, and again during World War II. In 1965, Kawaiahao was honored, by the National Park Service, with a plaque and the designation of National Historic Landmark.

It still continues as the "mother" Protestant church in Hawaii, often called the "Westminster Abbey" of Hawaii. The Church choir is an acknowledged attraction, as it has been since the days of Lydia Dominis. The Church today is a peaceful place, retaining the devotional dedication it received in 1927, and the pulpit remains an area to be trodden only by unshod feet.

KAWAIAHAO CHURCH

HABS No. HI-14

Page 8

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Good, single sources:

Damon, Ethel M. The Stone Church at Kawaiahao. Honolulu 1945.
152 p. Prepared as a centennial history.

Kawaiahao Church. 11 p. Pamphlet. Brief information to 1955.

Kawaiahao Church. A Visitors Guide to A Registered National Historic Landmark. 11 p. Pamphlet. Issued in 1966.

NEWSPAPER HISTORIES:

PCA	1894	Dec	8	p. 1
		Dec	12	
		Dec	14	p. 1
P of P	1901	Jan		p. 8, 11-14
	1902	Dec		p. 53-54
THA	1914			p. 59
PCA	1911	June	25	feature section
Adv.	1942	July	18	p. 13-15 Photos

REPAIRS: 1894-95:

PCA	1893	Aug	18	
		Aug	19	p. 3
		Aug	21	p. 2
PCA	1894	April	9	p. 4 Fire damages the organ
Haw Gaz	1894	Oct	16	p. 5 Kawaiahao decayed. Word for
				word, same article in PCA of Oct 16 p. 3.
Friend	1894	Nov		p. 86 Decay in Kawaiahao roof.
PCA	1895	March	18	p. 2 Funds for repairs.
	1895	Oct	21	p. 7 Electric lights on for first
				time.

Abbreviation:

PCA - Pacific Commerical Advertiser
P of P - Paradise of the Pacific
Haw Gaz - Haw Gazette
Adv. - Advertiser

REPAIRS: 1925-27:

PCA	1925	Oct	4	p. 1	
		Oct	11	p. 3	Condemned again.
THA	1926			p. 131	Appeal for funds.
PCA	1926	Aug	30	p. 5	Repairs under way/photos of interior.
	1927	June	13	p. 11	
		June	13	p. 1-11	
		June	18	p. 10	Restoration.
PCA	1927	June	8	p. 1	
THA	1928			p. 74-75	Rededication.

OTHER REPAIRS, REBUILDING AND ADDITIONS:

PCA	1865	Sept	23	p. 2	Ownership of the cemetery.
	1867	May	18	p. 2	Internal changes.
SWCA	1873	Jan	14	p. 1	Repairs for Lunaliilo's inauguration.
Haw Gaz	1875	Oct	13	p. 3	Lunaliilo mausoleum.
PCA	1879	March	1	p. 3	Ownership of Lunaliilo mausoleum.
Haw Gaz	1889	Dec	31	p. 2	High walls should come down.
Haw Gaz	1899	Oct	15	p. 1	Recent repairs, suggests fountain.
PCA	1928	July	20	p. 1	New Sunday school & office bldg.
PCA	1940	May	18	p. 12	New Parish Hall
		July	6	p. 13	" " "

THE CLOCK:

THA	1882			p. 6	Tower clock arrived in 1850.
PCA	1927	April	20	p. 7	Runnewell clock restored to Kawaiahaeo
Adv.	1944	July	31	p. 5	Pigeons slowing hands.
Adv.	1947	July	25	p. 1	Clock stops
Star Bull	1966	Jan	19	p. C-1	Clock cleaning.

THE ORGAN:

PCA	1867	May	18	p. 2	New organ & choir loft.
-----	------	-----	----	------	-------------------------

THE ORGAN:

Haw Gaz	1867	Oct	9	p. 3	New organ due.
PCA	1868	July	4	p. 3	Honolulu receives two organs in one year.
PCA	1894	May	7	p. 7	Organ repaired after the fire.
Haw Gaz	1901	Aug	2	p. 1	New organ being purchased.
PCA	1925	Jan	25	p. 1	Subscription for new organ.
PCA	1927	April	20	p. 1	Brewer organ received.
PCA	1926	March	25	p. 1	Brewer organ installation
		Sept	9	p. 1	Came--

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

AH-Hist & Misc	1838	Jan	27		Decree of Kaahumamu II on streets.
Friend	1844	Dec		p. 19	Use
Friend	1863	March		p. 19	Report of Steen Billie, corvette Galatea.
PCA	1858	March	18	p. 2	Descr. from Jarves' "Confession."
PCA	1867	July	6	p. 2	4th of July celebration.
PCA	1868	July	4	p. 3	" " " "
		July	11		" " " "
PCA	1867	Aug	3	p. 2	Wm Livingston dies; mason on 'Stone Church'
Haw Gaz	1889	Nov	5	p. 3	Centennial, Bingham Tablet.
Friend	1889	Nov		p. 87-88	" " "
PCA	1900	July	31	p. 1	
		Aug	7	p. 6	
		Aug	14	p. 5	Kawaiahao Diamond Jubilee.
		Sept	4	p. 9	
		Dec	3	p. 1	
PCA	1917	Feb	13	p. 11	
			14	p. 9	
		Oct	8	p. B-1	Dissension in the church: Parker vs the Christian
	1918	Jan	28	p. B-1	Endeavor.
THA	1917			p. 70	Reburial in Kawaiahao from Waikiki
PCA	1919	Oct	23	p. 6, p. B-1	Centennial of sailing of missionaries.
PCA	1920	March	28		

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: (continued)

PCA	April	9-21	Extensive coverage of centennial celebration.
PCA	1934 March	p. 279	Memorial tablets to Revs Parker and Akana.

Prepared by,



Frances Jackson
State Archives
Honolulu, Hawaii

August 1966

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

Architectural Character: Protestant church building of basilican plan with tetrastyle portico surmounted by a clock and belfry tower with castellated parapet erected over the narthex. Constructed of indigenous coral blocks in undulating range courses of approximate equal height. Church is of great historical and sentimental value as "mother church" of Hawaii.

Condition of Frabric: In excellent condition as, due to termite destruction, building has been restored and altered several times since first erected 1838-42. It was completely reconstructed 1925-27, when all structural wood was replaced with reinforced concrete and steel and interior redesigned. The latest restoration was in 1965 when the exterior cement plaster applied in 1927 was removed, metal windows installed, and termite damaged wood work repaired.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

Overall dimension: 143'-6" long by 78'-10" wide with eaves line approximately 35' above grade.

Foundations: Coral block with basement walls 44" thick to water table at first floor level. Exterior plastered with rough texture to water table.

Wall constructions: Walls to balcony levels are coral block 33" thick centered on basement wall, and above, they are 27" thick with 6" ledger on inside. Coral block routh cut to approximate equal height and variable length are laid with undulating range courses with mortor joints. Wall terminates with simple cornice of classic design at eaves line.

Portico and Tower: The main church entrance which is a tetrastyle portico of engaged austere stone doric columns and entablature, with center bay wider than side bays, projects slightly from the facade. This is surmounted by a belfry and clock tower with a castellated parapet erected over the narthex. A clock with a face approximately 12 feet in diameter on

three sides of the tower below the belfry dwarfs the scale of the building. Clock face on fourth side over roof ridge is smaller in diameter. The belfry has one arched opening in each of four sides protected from weather by louvers. The portico is approached by a pyramidal range of steps terminating at a platform approximately 33 feet wide by 11 feet deep.

Doorways and doors: The main entrance doorway is a semicircular arched opening with cement plaster reveals set in the center bay of the portico and is approximately 7'-6" wide by 13' high. Double wood doors with raised panels and mouldings and a lunette fill the opening. This opening is flanked by similar but smaller semicircular arches and single doors in side bays of the tetrastyle portico.

Windows: All windows are modern replacements of anodized aluminum. Basement window openings are rectangular with variable head heights, windows at main floor are rectangular with dressed stone lintels and sash are awning type. Windows at balcony level are semicircular arched openings and awning type sash with muntins terminating in gothic forms in the lunettes. All windows have plaster reveals.

Roof Shape .: Gable roof covered with slate shingles and supported by reinforced concrete trusses and purlins exposed to the nave.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

Floor plan: Basilican church plan with one aisle on each side and a balcony in the manner of contemporary New England churches, whence the missionaries came. Five square plaster finish columns range down each side of the nave at the face of the balconies surmounted by a run-plaster entablature. The balconies step down between columns toward the sanctuary.

Sanctuary: The alter reposes on a dais five steps up from the main floor, protected by a railing, approximately 16 feet ewa of the rear wall. The reredos of panelled wood erected between large arched windows in the Waikiki wall of the church shealds the sacristy.

Pews: Pews of redwood are arranged for center aisle and side aisles which are along outside of the nave columns. The upholstred Royal Pews located at either side of main entrance against the ewa wall are handsomely guarded by panelled Koa wood railings and back boards.

Stairways: Stairways of reinforced concrete occupy the mauka and makai corners at either side of the narthex and lead to the balcony. That on the mauka side, also, leads to the basement.

Choir Loft: The choir and organ loft occupy the balcony across the ewa end of the nave and the tower room.

D. Site:

General setting and orientation: Church is set in a walled enclosure at the Waikiki-makai corner of Punchbowl and South King Street with church entrance to ewa. Surrounding area is landscaped with native plantings. At the rear of the church is the original Mission Cemetery and makai of the Punchbowl Street entrance is the Gothic tomb of Lunalilo.

Enclosure: The 6 foot high coral block wall erected around the church site ca 1875 was reduced to 2 feet in 1899 to avoid repetition of the Wilcox revolution of 1889 when Honolulu Rifles fortified themselves on the church grounds and commanded the makai portion of the Palace grounds.

Lighting: Electric illumination was installed in 1895 replacing lamps, two of which fell in 1894 and started fires.

Heating: In the balmy climate of Hawaii no heating is required.

Prepared by

A. Lewis Koue

A. Lewis Koue, FAIA

February 1967

APPROVED:

A. Lewis Koue

A. Lewis Koue, FAIA
Supervising Architect
Historic Structures and HABS
San Francisco Planning and Service Center
National Park Service

DATE:

6/8/67