

at the site of the menehune fort on Rocky Hill. This heiau was
A Short History of Manoa Valley from 1800 to Present

The story of Manoa is not very dissimilar to the story of Oahu. It is the story of the decline of the Hawaiian population and the growth of Honolulu into a true metropolitan center. It is the story of the development of the agricultural economy that came to dominate the islands until the Second World War. Manoa was first a supplier of wetland taro and then, as the population in its vicinity grew, became a major dairy and vegetable growing center for urban Honolulu. As the population grew explosively in the late 1940's it looked for new places to build homes. In the face of this explosion, the agricultural base on Oahu slipped drastically. Agriculture in Manoa Valley was one of its early victims.

In the Early Days

Under the Hawaiian land division system, the island of Oahu was divided into six portions or Moku. Manoa was part of the Moku of Kona, which comprised most of what is now urban Honolulu. Kona was further divided into smaller divisions that ran from the mountains to the sea, called Ahupu'a. Manoa belonged to the Ahupu'a of Waikiki.¹

The earliest knowledge of Manoa was from legend. The menehune, or the small people who were known for their industrious character, were the first occupants of the valley. They controlled the entrance to the valley from a fort that was situated at Rocky Hill overlooking what is now Punahou School. They were supposedly defeated by a great leader by the name of Kualii, whose historical existence is judged to be around the year 1700. Kualii defeated the menehune and built a temple or heiau, called Kukao

at the site of the menehune fort on Rocky Hill. This heiau was the center piece of a string of heiaus that strung across the Kona District. The existence of such an important haiau at the mouth of the valley could be taken as an indication of the early importance of Manoa.²

Also according to legend to the right and rear of the Rocky Hill there is another hill known as Puu Pueo. This was where the Owl God, Pueo, resided. Hillside Drive is located there today.³

The earliest agreed upon historical fact relating to the area concerns itself with the naming of the mountain now called Round Top. Its earlier name was Ualakaa or the "rolling potato" because Kamehameha the Great had ordered that the whole area be planted in sweet potato.

Because the plain that Honolulu proper is situated on tends to be a hot, dry environment, the Alii or Hawaiian Royalty of the early 1800's were known to make use of Manoa as a retreat to get away from the hustle and bustle of the town's dusty streets. Of course, there are numerous references to the

conquerer, Kamehameha, passing through the valley, much in the same way one finds signs all over the East Coast saying that George Washington slept here or there. The highest ranking Alii to make Manoa a frequent residence was Kamehameha's favorite wife and later the dowager rule of the islands, Kaahumanu. She had a house on the Tantalus side of the valley, in which one writer places in the area of what is now Olopuu Street, about a mile up Oahu Avenue from the Waioli Tea Room. In the vicinity of Kaahumanu's thatched house a small community of Alii developed. Kaahumanu died in this house in 1832.⁴



The Alii tended to support the work of the missionaries and periodically gave them grants of land to work on for the support of their missions. In 1829 Chief Boki, the first Governor of Oahu, gave to Hiram Bingham a piece of land at the mouth of the valley called Kapunahou after the stream that flowed from the ground in that area. This was to become the institution that first was the Oahu College and later became Punahou School. It was also the site of the first recorded dairy in the valley, started in 1844 by William Harrison Rice.

One of the early Europeans to live in the valley was John Wilkenson. This Australian is credited with starting the islands' first sugar plantation in 1825 in Manoa Valley. This is also where he made the first orderly planting of coffee in the islands. This farmer died just two years after his arrival in Hawaii and no one picked up the work of his plantation. Manoa continued to be a source of coffee for many years, and stunted coffee trees were reported to be found in the valley as late as 1956.

These were the exotic, out of the ordinary happenings in the valley. For the most part the valley of Manoa was heavily wooded in the beginning of the 19th century with ohia and other native trees. The valley floor was particularly suited for the growing of wetland taro or kalo, and by all reports Manoa was extensively planted in this crop. In 1846 the Royal government opened the land in the valley for sale at a dollar an acre.⁵ Manoa already had a Chinese population, as indicated by the opening of a Chinese cemetery in 1845.⁶ The number of people living in the

valley was first recorded in 1853 and was put at 350. This figure must have been affected by the fact that the Hawaiian population was already in drastic decline.

By 1890 Manoa Valley was no longer the place it had been. Full scale agriculture had taken over and put the land to use. The taro farming was as extensive as ever but the farmers were now Chinese and not Hawaiian. The Chinese had come to the valley after leaving their employment with the sugar plantations. While there were Chinese in Manoa before, the majority of these people moved into the valley around 1880. This is a rough judgement based on this group's movement off the plantations and acceptance of being in Hawaii to stay. In 1882 they made an attempt to turn the taro patches into rice paddies, but were unsuccessful due a strong wind that destroyed a majority of their crop. Because of Manoa's configuration, gusty winds that could do this were common in the valley. The Chinese farmers returned to taro, which was much more wind resistant and very profitable at the time.

Dairy farming became an important factor in Manoa during this period. The sides of the mountains were stripped of their tree cover to provide pasture land for cows. The biggest of these farms was the Woodlawn Dairy and Stock Company, Limited, which started out with 10 cows in 1879 and had become the largest dairy in the Kingdom by 1890 with its herd of 700 head of cattle.

Around the world at his farm in the south of the valley, in the vicinity of what is now the University of Hawaii. The outcome, as a result of Hillebrand's work, became the basis of the Hawaiian pineapple industry.

A description of the valley as it was in 1890 was given by
The 1890's were a time of political turmoil in the islands.

Thomas Thrum:

The Haole class of sugar planters and merchants were attempting
"...For nearly a mile the road leads by or along pasture fields
to reach their economic control of the islands with a new political
with no vista of tree or shrub other than the lantana pest
one. This was done with force but with little bloodshed. Manoa
and an occasional algeroba (kiaawe), and passes along Round top
was the site of one the few battles fought during this period
(sic) or Ualakaa...

of political turmoil. Robert Wilcox and a band of 50 Hawaiian
loyalists, who were attempting overthrow the new Haole government,
view, the extensive flat area set out in taro, looking like a
were camped in the rear of the valley in an area described as
huge checker-board, with its symmetrical emerald squares in the
belonging to John Kna. This is now the lower part of the water
middle ground, surrounded by pasture fields on the slopes at
conservation district where Paradise Park is located. The government's
the base of the guarding hills. Here and there 'mid sheltering
forces spotted Wilcox's band on January 9, 1895, and dispatched
trees, humble dwellings dot the scene around, while up the rugged
two units of riflemen totaling 120 men which soon engaged the
slopes the almost endless shades of green, with black worn seams
Hawaiians in a skirmish. The government sent in an artillery
of rock oft times lightened up by 'silvery thread of torrent',
piece, which began to blast the Hawaiians' positions. Eventually
forms the background to one of the most charming pictures..."

the out numbered Hawaiians retreated, leaving two dead behind.
"It is a matter of deep regret that the evidences of decline
Five others were taken prisoners by the government forces. The
are so apparent, not only of people, but in the condition of
Battle of Manoa was the last of the Wilcox Rebellion. Oddly it
their dwellings. The former residents of the valley have passed
is also the last reference to a large group of Hawaiians being
away, and few of the present inhabitants are living on the land
in the valley.

of their fathers, or continuing their industries. These are now
No longer after this event but after things had quieted down
almost wholly in the hands of the Chinese..."⁷

again in Honolulu, a portion of the mouth of the valley was
During this period Captain John Kidwell brought to the islands
subdivided for residential use. The first subdivision in Manoa
a variety of pineapple called the Smooth Cayenne in 1885. He
was the Seaview tract (in Lower Manoa near Seaview Street),
conducted experiments with this variety and 31 others from
which was layed out in 1886. It was followed by the Doran-Schnack
around the world at his farm in the mouth of the valley, in
subdivision (on the Tantalus side of the Manoa Road Triangle) in
the vicinity of what is now the University of Hawaii. The cayenne,
1899.

as a result of Kidwell's work, became the basis of the Hawaiian
pineapple industry.

In 1901 the change to residential character of the front of the valley began in earnest when Oahu College subdivided its upper pasture land, an extensive piece of land that was to be called College Hills (from Rocky Hill to about Armstrong Street.) The Haole class of sugar planters and merchants were attempting to match their economic control of the islands with a new political one. This was done with force but with little bloodshed. Manoa was the site of one the few battles fought during this period were built, attesting to the social and economic standing of of political turmoil. Robert Wilcox and a band of 50 Hawaiian the new residents. This area was to become known as one of the loyalists, who were attempting overthrow the new Haole government, main communities of the noble elite. were camped in the rear of the valley in an area described as belonging to John Ena. This is now the lower part of the water conservation district where Paradise Park is located. The government's forces spotted Wilcox's band on January 9, 1895, and dispatched two units of riflemen totaling 120 men which soon engaged the two more institutions joined the Oahu College (Punahou) here. Hawaiians in a skirmish. The government sent in an artillery piece, which began to blast the Hawaiians' positions. Eventually the out numbered Hawaiians retreated, leaving two dead behind. Five others were taken prisoners by the government forces. The Battle of Manoa was the last of the Wilcox Rebellion. Oddly it is also the last reference to a large group of Hawaiians being in the valley.

No longer after this event but after things had quieted down again in Honolulu, a portion of the mouth of the valley was subdivided for residential use. The first subdivision in Manoa was the Seaview tract (in Lower Manoa near Seaview Street), which was layed out in 1886. It was followed by the Dorch-Schnack subdivision (on the Tantalus side of the Manoa Road Triangle) in 1899.

From 1900

In 1901 the change to residential character of the front of the valley began in earnest when Oahu College subdivided its upper pasture land, an extensive piece of land that was to be called College Hills (from Rocky Hill to about Armstrong Street.)

In this area some of the most fashionable homes in the city were built, attesting to the social and economic standing of the new residents. This area was to become known as one of the main communities of the Haole elite.

The mouth of the valley seemed to have changed more quickly due to its relative closeness to the center of the city. Besides the formulation of a new residential community, this area also became the seat of learning for the Territory of Hawaii when two more institutions joined the Oahu College (Punahou) here. Two schools, the Kawaiahao Seminary, which was for Hawaiian girls, and the Mills School for Boys, which taught mainly oriental youngsters, combined to become the multi-racial Mid-Pacific Institute. At the same time, 1906, the new school settled into its new campus.

In 1912 the College of Hawaii moved on to the land just in front of the Mid-Pacific Institute, on the eastern edge of the front of the valley. The first permanent building was constructed that year. The school was a restricted agricultural college which maintained a farm with cattle, hogs, and poultry. The farm was to continue into existence into the 1950's. In 1920 the college was renamed as the University of Hawaii.

If change seemed the quickest at the mouth of the valley, it did not mean that there was no change going on in its interior. Slowly the population had begun to change again with more and more Japanese moving into the valley. With the Japanese came a different style of farming and different crops. The Japanese who moved into Manoa were mainly vegetable and flower gardeners, making their living chiefly by growing and marketing their crops.

The Chinese residents were to remain numerous just in the upper valley. They continued to grow mainly taro. There was an attempt by some of the Chinese farmers to grow pineapple in the valley for a while. It was first grown near the Chinese Cemetery and later in the rear area near Puu Pia. This ended around the early 1920's.

Also during this period dairy farming became more difficult. The Territory had extended the watershed forest reserve and residential development was creeping up from the coastal plain. Soon the dairies were looking for greener pastures.

In 1919 the Hawaii Sugar Planters' Association established an experimental substation in the rear of the valley. Here sugar cane was raised for experimental purposes. Trees from all over the Pacific were also brought to the substation to see how they would adapt to the Hawaiian environment. The substation became Lyon Arboretum, which is part of the University of Hawaii. It is continuing its work with foreign trees.

In 1911 in Honolulu branch of the Salvation Army moved some district are associated with the business concerns in the city of its activities to Manoa. It acquired lands called Punawai, of Honolulu and the nearness of their homes to their offices known for its beauty and for having been the country estate is an advantage. The business district of the city can be reached of Kamehameha III. In 1921 the Waioli Tea Room, the present from most of the homes in about fifteen minutes by automobile, tourist facility, was built.

or a little more by electric trolley," the study read. The main access to the valley was by Punahou Street which The trolley line ran up Manoa Road into the mouth of the divided into Manoa and East Manoa Road as it does today. In valley. It connected with another line that ran into the city. 1927 University Avenue was constructed to provide direct access

The status of the Caucasians was also evident by the fact that from Moiliili. Before that access to the eastern side of the they hired some of the Japanese residents to tend their gardens valley was by way of a road called Vancouver Highway, which and lawns. Also the fact that no Haole children attended the most likely is today's Vancouver Drive, a narrow residential Manoa Public School, which at the time had an enrollment of street.

388, spoke for itself.

In 1932 the first comprehensive study of the valley was published Fuchs in Hawaii Pono is more blunt, saying that Manoa Valley, in the Bulletin of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia meaning this neighborhood in Lower Manoa, was one of a group by John Wesley Coulter and Alfred Gomes Serrao.⁹ Billed as a of self-segregated, high prestige Haole districts on Oahu.

"Study in Economic and Social Geography" the work looked at While the Chinese were still growing wetland taro in the the valley's residents and their daily activities. It focused central plain of the valley, the number of these farms were much of its energy on the Japanese residents, the second most decreasing. This was due to the falling price of taro which numerous group in the valley. The Caucasian population, which had begun to make its production unprofitable. Overproduction was the largest ethnics group, probably did not interest the had brought the price down. The lands were mostly leased, and researchers as much because they were not exotic to them. themselves, located along the Manoa Stream. Many of these rice fields were worn

The Haole community was comprised of 800 homes situated mainly in China and were familiar with wetland because they worked in the College Hills area west and north of Mid-Pacific Institute. in the rice paddies when they were young. In Manoa their homes The area was divided into a neatly intersecting network of streets. were near the taro patches but not segregated to a "Chinese only"

"Nearly all the heads of families in the Caucasian residential area. In one case a group of 12 Chinese bachelors had formed

themselves into a "hui" or company to produce taro. They leased a large tract of land where they worked "from sunrise to sunset."

But the fact that the Chinese were no longer the dominant district are associated with the business concerns in the city of Honolulu and the nearness of their homes to their offices is an advantage. The business district of the city can be reached from most of the homes in about fifteen minutes by automobile, or a little more by electric trolley," the study read.

The trolley line ran up Manoa Road into the mouth of the valley. It connected with another line that ran into the city.

The status of the Caucasians was also evident by the fact that they hired some of the Japanese residents to tend their gardens and lawns. Also the fact that no Haole children attended the Manoa Public School, which at the time had an enrollment of 388, spoke for itself.

Fuchs in Hawaii Pono is more blunt, saying that Manoa Valley, meaning this neighborhood in Lower Manoa, was one of a group of self-segregated, high prestige Haole districts on Oahu.

While the Chinese were still growing wetland taro in the central plain of the valley, the number of these farms were decreasing. This was due to the falling price of taro which had begun to make its production unprofitable. Overproduction had brought the price down. The lands were mostly leased, and located along the Manoa Stream. Many of these farmers were born in China and were familiar with wetland because they worked in the rice paddies when they were young. In Manoa their homes were near the taro patches but not segregated to a "Chinese only" area. In one case a group of 12 Chinese bachelors had formed themselves into a "hui" or company to produce taro. They leased a large tract of land where they worked "from sunrise to sunset."

But the fact that the Chinese were no longer the dominant ethnic group in the upper valley was shown by that there were only 22 Chinese children attending Manoa School at the time of the study and only 10 homes with Chinese occupants.

The Japanese community was stretched along the two main valley thoroughfares, Manoa and East Manoa Roads, and near their three gardens. Most of these families seemed able to squeeze a living out truck farming small one to four acre plots of vegetables and flowers. It was estimated that it took two arces in vegetables or one half arce in flower gardening to support one family.

The vegetables raised by these farmers were mostly those and that would not be injured by the valley's frequent high winds. These included Japanese dry land taro, burdock, radish, sweet potato, and carrots. Other varieties, like Soy beans, were grown in less exposed areas. There were usually four crops a year which were sold to wholesalers or green grocers in the city.

Flower gardening became profitable because of the Hawaiian custom of giving "leis" or garlands of flowers on special occasions. The flowers identified as being grown in Manoa, were asters, gardenias, marigolds, african daisies, easter lilies, carnations, and maiden hair ferns. The flowers were generally sold to the city's florists.

The Japanese also ran the valley's three banana plantations, which had 75, 40 and 35 acres respectively. They produced a total of 9,000 to 10,000 bunches of a Chinese variety of banana annually. While most of these were sold in Honolulu, about a third of their crop was being shipped to San Francisco.

There were also three dairies in the valley, again operated by the Japanese. They averaged about 30 acres a piece. Two of the dairies sold their milk to valley residents only while the third took theirs to Honolulu.

There was a small business district in the center of the valley that catered mainly to the oriental population. There were three general stores, a laundry, a barber shop, and two gasoline stations all owned by Japanese. A Chinese ran another general store.

Who were these people who suddenly were playing such an important role in Manoa? That was the question that Coulter and Serrao set out to answer. With the help of an University student named Yukiso Yamamoto, the study delved into the social background of lives of the Japanese of Manoa. Almost every family had as its head a person who had been born in Japan. About sixty percent were from the southern Japanese Island of Kyuushuu, and another fifteen percent were from the province of Yamaguchi. Most of them had been farmers of small lots in their homeland when they were recruited to work on the sugar plantations in Hawaii. After they left the plantations they went back to the way of life that was natural to them. They were bothered, however, by the fact that most of them did not own the land that they worked.

Another major problem for these people was that the older generation of the Japanese still had a strong desire to return to their homeland in the future. Their children, however, were growing up as Americans and were not interested in going to Japan to live.

Many of the first generation Japanese did not speak English.¹¹ Their children, however, were learning to use it as their first language at school. The principal of the Manoa School was forced to use an interpreter to communicate with the school's PTA. According to Emery, there was some small growth in the

The fact that the language barrier was developing between the parents and children was answered in part by the two Japanese Language Schools that were maintained in the valley at the time of the study. For two hours a day after regular school hours children from 176 families attended these schools, which their parents maintained from their meager income. So it was that these students spent a large portion of their day learning about America and its culture in their regular school and then two more hours a day learning about Japan and things Japanese. Considerable change was that only 52 percent of the

There were 293 Japanese school children attending Manoa School.

The Hawaiian population of the valley was by now nearly non-existing. There were only six homes identified as Hawaiian.

Other nationalities represented by number of homes were ten Portuguese, five Porto Rican, two Filipino, and one Spanish.

The study gives the student enrollment of the University of Hawaii at the time as 1046. Of these 395 were Japanese.

No other racial breakdown was given. The district grew to its present boundaries. The amount of other land available for farming continued to decrease yearly. The taro patches that followed the stream bed down the center of the valley were now

Another study was done of the valley in 1956 by Bryon Emery.¹¹ It dealt with the natural history and the modern settlement pattern in Manoa, with a special section devoted to the period after the Coulter and Serrao study.

According to Emery, there was some small growth in the residential district before World War II. After the war, however, the population exploded, resulting in 21 new housing tracts opened before 1955. The population jumped from 5,000 in 1930 to 15,000 in 1955, an increase of three times in a 25 year span. This increase was partly due to a public housing project that was situated between what is now the beginning of Woodlawn Drive and Kahaloa Drive. This project, known as the Manoa War Homes, provided 1,000 housing units to military families, families of war veterans, and low income families.

Another considerable change was that only 52 percent of the homes in the once exclusively Caucasian neighborhood in Lower Manoa continued to be occupied by whites. According to one source, the sloped area that once was the original housing tract in the valley in the area of Seaview Avenue became known as the "Chinese Beverly Hills" due to the high percentage of people of that ethnic group buying into the neighborhood.¹²

As the population grew, the importance of agriculture declined in the valley. The watershed conservation district grew to its present boundaries. The amount of other land available for farming continued to decrease yearly. The taro patches that followed the stream bed down the center of the valley were now of the valley with the other.

either vegetable gardens, pasture land, or abandoned. The low price of taro had continued to be a problem. Also much of the stream's water had been diverted for the use of the island's increasing population. The taro farms that were in the valley from the time the first foreign observer stepped into it were gone for good. Agriculture as whole had taken a less important role in the valley, but was still healthy. Only 3.2 percent of the valley's land was now used in agriculture as opposed to the 19.8 percent used for residential purposes. There were 52 full time farming families in the valley, however, And banana output had actually increased.

The business center in the middle of the valley on East Manoa Road had already taken the shape it has today. There were four general stores, a couple of gasoline stations, a laundry, a bakery, a barber shop, an office structure, and the Manoa Japanese Language School all located in the same general manner they are today. This is with the exception of three of the general stores, which are no longer in existence. In the early 1950's there was even a tofu factory in operation.

Transportation in and out of the valley had taken its present shape. East Manoa Road had been a narrow, difficult to travel road until it was improved twice, once in 1935 and again in 1950. This improved it greatly. All of the main thoroughfares were cited by Emery as being too narrow for the traffic that flowed on them. Lowrey Avenue was singled out as needing to be widened to handle its role as the main thoroughfare connecting one side of the valley with the other.

Public transportation improved. In 1933 the rail-trolley line that ran up Punahou Street was replaced by bus service.

In 1934 the Punahou-Nuuanu bus line was rerouted to the University so the students could be included in its service.

And in 1941 bus service was provided to Woodlawn from King

Street. *ibid.*

After this period ended, Manoa had taken the shape it was

to maintain to present. The public housing was torn down in

the late 1950's and a major supermarket, the Safeway chain,

moved onto this land. In the upper western half of the valley

the vegetable farming land continued to shrink until it

disappeared. On the other side of the valley some small

garden-farms remain. In the conservation district banana farming

continues. For the most part, however, Manoa is a very pleasant

residential community with a suburban character.

10. Pach, p.66.

11. Emery, *ibid.*

12. Based on a conversation with Herb Mark, a planner in the City Department of General Planning.

Footnotes

1. Emery, Bryon, "Intensification of Settlement and Land Utilization Since 1930 in Manoa Valley, Honolulu", University of Hawaii, Aug. 1956. All the material in this short history is based on this study, unless otherwise cited.
2. Thrum, Thomas, "Manoa Valley: Descriptive, Historic and Legendary," Hawaiian Annual for 1892, p.110-116.
3. Thrum, *ibid.*
4. Damon, Ethel, "From Manoa to Punahou," Hawaiian Historical Society, 1940, p.5.
5. Fuchs, Lawrence, Hawaii Pono, Alarcourt, Brace, and World, N.Y., p.15.
6. Thrum, *ibid.*
7. Thrum, *ibid.*
8. Towse, Edward, "The Battle of Manoa," in Paradise of the Pacific, May, 1963, p.5-8.
9. Coulter, John Wesley and Serrao, Alfred Gomes, "Manoa Valley, Honolulu: A Study in Economic and Social Geography," in The Bulletin of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia, April, 1932, p.109-130.
10. Fuch, p.66.
11. Emery, *ibid.*
12. Based on a conversation with Herb Mark, a planner in the City Department of General Planning.