DISPOSSESSION AND DEFIANCE:
KALAUPAPA PATIENTS, HALE MOHALU, AND HAWAIIAN RESISTANCE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Ellen Rose and John Gerald McAleavey, and to the patients of Kalaupapa, in their struggle for justice, especially Bernard Punikai‘a and Paul and Winnie Harada.
ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the Hale Mohalu struggle of 1978-1983, while placing it in the larger context of more than a century of Hawaiian resistance against injustice. Native Hawaiians defied the colonial, paternalistic attitude of the Hawai‘i State Department of Health in a standoff for self-determination at Hale Mohalu, the residential leprosy facility in Pearl City, Honolulu. This resistance played an important role in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement and the ramifications from that conflict resonate today in questions over the future use of the Kalaupapa Settlement as well as the controversial issue of land development in Hawai‘i. Although the State had shut off their water, food, and medicine, Bernard Punikai‘a, Chairman of the Kalaupapa Patients Council, refused to allow State authorities to run roughshod over patients’ civil rights at Hale Mohalu. The patient resistance Punikai‘a led against the State’s power marked a turning point in both public and patient consciousness. This dissertation gives voice to the patients in their compelling fight. It is a remarkable story not only for its broad base of community support and for the length of time it lasted, but also because it is part of a much larger history of struggle against Native Hawaiian injustice that reaches back over a hundred years into the 19th century and resonates into the late 20th and 21st century with the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.
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PREFACE

In the summer of 2005, as a graduate student, I had the privilege of going to live at Kalaupapa, hired for the summer to do historical preservation work for the National Park Service. Previous to this job, I had been very fortunate to travel to Kalaupapa on two separate occasions, several years earlier. On each of those visits, I took the tour given by Damien Tour owner and patient Richard Marks. The knowledge gained from those prior sojourns helped me to realize that I was going to spend my summer at a very unique place. Living there, however, brought new insights I never imagined.

My employment at Kalaupapa in 2005 was scheduled for only two weeks. Instead the work at the Settlement lasted six weeks and the experience proved to be transformative. The vivid beauty of the land in its pristine splendor, sans any major development, and the chance to meet the patients with their heartfelt aloha and strength of character touched my life in ways that continue to resonate.

I have had the opportunity to go back to Kalaupapa to work for the National Park in 2006 for 4 weeks, in 2007 for 2 weeks, and in 2010 for 8 weeks. In addition, I traveled there as a visitor on my own several times over the years to visit the patients. The people that I met at Kalaupapa showed me the real meaning of aloha and of aloha ʻāina.

Bernard Punikai’a had been a hero of mine from seeing him on television as spokesperson for the patients during the Hale Mohalu conflict. When I had the opportunity to meet him in person at Kalaupapa, I was thrilled and could hardly believe it. I found him to be a gentle but fierce warrior even in his later years. After my work at Kalaupapa, I returned to my graduate studies in the fall of 2005, and as I had signed up for a graduate writing class, I decided to write about the patients at Kalaupapa. The chair of American Studies, David Stannard, suggested the story of the Hale Mohalu struggle as an ideal project to undertake.

Professor Stannard referred me to John Witeck who had been actively involved in the Save Hale Mohalu campaign. John graciously shared his Hale Mohalu archives and referred me to others in the struggle, such as Wally Inglis, Ed Gerlock, and Gigi Cocquio. When I called Wally to make an appointment, it turned out that he recognized my voice
on the phone. We were acquainted through a mutual friend and had met several times, but
only on a first-name basis. I had no idea of his long-term involvement with Hale Mohalu
or of his friendship with Bernard Punikaiʻa. Wally, like John Witeck, kindly shared with
me his archive of material on Hale Mohalu, which included newspaper clippings,
documents, and objects such as large banners from the struggle. With all the information
I had been given (almost literally thrust in my lap), it seemed as if I was being guided to
write this story by a power greater than myself. With gratitude, I took it as my kuleana –
a responsibility and a privilege. Indeed, it has been a privilege to document the resistance
of the patients and to share the Hale Mohalu struggle with a wider audience.

Note on Diacritical Marks

Diacritical marks, the kahakō and the ‘okina are used whenever appropriate in current
usage. Accounts where these symbols were not used remain as originally recorded. For
that reason, Leahi is written without any marks. For consistency, the word State has been
capitalized with the exception of quoted material. The reference used in the spelling and
definition of Hawaiian words was the Hawaiian Dictionary, edited by Mary Kawena
The value of resistance inheres in the challenge to authority. Unmasking state or other institutional power is part of the value of resistance.

Haunani-Kay Trask

Leprosy in Hawai‘i was far more than a disease; it was a political, as much as a medical, phenomenon; and the way it was handled by the authorities and experienced by the – mostly – Hawaiian victims furnishes crucial evidence of a racial and cultural conflict that went far beyond contagionist and anti-contagionist arguments about the nature of the malady and was more about controlling undesirable ‘deviants’ than treating – let alone attempting to cure – ordinary people who happened to be suffering from a debilitating and disfiguring disease.

Tony Gould

But ultimately, this is a story of violence, in which that colonialism literally and figuratively dismembered the lahui (the people) from their traditions, their lands and ultimately their government. The mutilations were not physical only, but also psychological and spiritual. Death came not only through infection and disease, but through racial and legal discourse that crippled the will, confidence, and trust of the Kanaka Maoli as surely as leprosy and smallpox claimed their limbs and lives.

Jonathan Osorio

The current population is a precious resource. In terms of the Hawaiian leprosy experience, they are the last of their kind.

Linda Greene

Anybody who comes here [Hawai‘i] is right away struck by both the beauty and the prostitution of the place and the heavy emphasis on the military.

John Witeck

We, the leprosy patients of Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa would like to thank the people of Hawai‘i for their concern and their warm support of our cause as we are being involuntarily torn from the ‘āina, which through our suffering and dying has now become the property of the state. We ask for your continued support in our struggle for dignity.

Mahalo nui loa a me kealoha pumehana.

Bernard Punikai‘a

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1 Haunani-Kay Trask, From a Native Daughter, Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai‘i. (Honolulu: Common Courage Press, 1993) 187.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

With the sweet fragrance of flowers in the early morning Hawaiian air, the day began like any other except for the persistent rumble of police vans. As dawn slowly opened the darkened skies over Pearl City on the island of O‘ahu on September 21, 1983, police cordons steadily advanced under the landscape’s foliage to encircle a dilapidated, wood-frame home of two vulnerable Hawaiian leprosy patients. Overhead a police helicopter circled, its whirring blades growing louder as the offensive began. Armed deputies from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, State Sheriffs, Attorney General special investigators, officials from the state Department of Health, and Honolulu Police, in uniform and plainclothes, led the early morning assault against the property. Newspaper photographers and television camera crews tracked the police as they fanned out over the grounds of the eleven-acre residential site. Inside the termite-damaged dwelling known as Hale Mohalu were the resident/patients: two Native Hawaiian men, Bernard Punikai‘a and Clarence Nai‘a, along with friends and supporters. Committed to nonviolence, the group sang Hawaiian songs as they stood together in solidarity to fight for the patients’ home; meanwhile, law enforcement agents surrounded the property, prepared to evict and arrest anyone unwilling to vacate the premises.

As the police helicopter moved closer over the site, its whirring blades drowned out the Hawaiian music. Neither Punikai‘a nor Nai‘a had committed any crime nor had they ever been arrested, but as victims of leprosy in Hawai‘i, they had experienced treatment far worse than criminals.7 Crippled by illness, with their fingers reduced to mere stumps, Punikai‘a (age 53) and Nai‘a (age 55) were no match for the police force that came to arrest them.8

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7 In 1865 Hawai‘i established a law to prevent the spread of leprosy, which stipulated that anyone with the disease would be isolated on the island of Moloka‘i. Leprosy victims were segregated from the rest of society under conditions of great emotional/physical hardship. At that time, leprosy was believed to be highly contagious. Laws were passed which provided for police arrest of anyone diagnosed or even only suspected of having the disease. Bounties were paid for the arrest and capture of anyone with leprosy. Greene, Exile in Paradise 12-20.
8 KGMB Television Video, September 21, 1983.
What would lead the state to act this way toward its most fragile people? Given the century-old history of leprosy patients’ mistreatment and discrimination in Hawai‘i, why would the state take such a hard line with a crippled, diseased community? Why did it require a massive police coalition to arrest two weak men, who were not well? The leprosy victims had no weapons, no ammunition, nothing - only their worn-out bodies singing Hawaiian songs. Why were armed police needed? Did the authorities expect the patients and their supporters to resist, firing weapons they did not possess? What were the forces that would lead to this type of bizarre confrontation? How could a situation like Hale Mohalu take place?

ARGUMENT and OBJECTIVES

To answer those questions requires an examination of several issues that I explore in this dissertation. September 21, 1983 was the culmination of a very long struggle – one with roots buried deep in the 19th century. It also was the beginning of new struggle, one that was entwined in the Native Hawaiian sovereignty efforts of the late 20th and early 21st century. This dissertation describes and, for the first time closely analyzes the Hale Mohalu struggle of 1978-1983, while placing it in the larger context of more than a century of Hawaiian resistance against injustice.

Issues examined include the relationship of Hale Mohalu to a number of external circumstances at the time, such as the resurgence of Hawaiian pride, known as the Hawaiian Renaissance, as well as a general sense of opposition to injustice that the modern civil rights movement had helped to foster. Other areas of concern involve the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i, the role of colonization in the settlement of the Islands, especially the far-reaching influence of sugar plantations in Island economic life, and finally, the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy -- its ramifications and resonance in modern Hawai‘i.

The chronicle of the battle for Hale Mohalu mirrors the larger narrative of dispossession in Hawaiian history. In this particular struggle, multiple positions and discourses were being expressed, including attachment to home, to land, the meaning of community, vulnerable patients and their rights, the agency of the infirm, their relationship to the state, human rights, responsibility, language, legitimacy, economic
development, anti-colonialism, and Hawaiian sovereignty. The discursive content of anti-colonialism intersected and contested all aspects of this protest, challenging assumptions long held as natural and appropriate.

In order to appreciate what happened at Hale Mohalu, it also is essential to understand some of the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i and the creation of the settlement at Kalaupapa. Hale Mohalu is an integral part of the overall story of Kalaupapa and the chronicle of Hansen’s Disease in Hawai‘i. The Pearl City patient protest gave voice to the most marginal of the marginalized. Although the state had pursued its paternalistic pattern in dealing with leprosy patients over the years, the struggle for Hale Mohalu marked a historic turning point. Under Bernard Punikai‘a’s leadership, as chairman of the Kalaupapa Patients Council, a major transformation took place in patient consciousness, creating a new sense of agency, which empowered Punikai‘a and his fellow patients to demand the right of self-determination.

Like African Americans at the beginning of the modern civil rights era, wherein a change in consciousness meant that they would no longer sit at the back of the bus or endure segregation, and like American Indian activists who occupied Alcatraz to demand its use as a cultural center, leprosy patients at Hale Mohalu defied the relocation orders of the governor in order to claim their rights to self-determination. With the resistance at Hale Mohalu, patients declared they would no longer obediently submit to orders from the state without a fight for their individual rights and human dignity. Bernard Punikai‘a, their spokesperson, explained the struggle for Hale Mohalu:

We are fighting for a principle, for our rights, for some basic human benefits. That’s what the fight against the move from Hale Mohalu to Leahi is all about. No agency of Government has the right to fritter away our rights, our benefits, and our needs.\(^\text{10}\)

The battle they waged not only helped leprosy victims in Hawai‘i, but also advanced psychologically the momentum of the Native Hawaiian fight for justice.

Regrettably, most young people have never heard of Hale Mohalu, while many others who are older have forgotten about it. As one of the patients at Kalaupapa said

\(^9\)Since 1865, Molokai’s northern peninsula (first at Kalawao and later at Kalaupapa) has been the site of Hawai‘i Leprosy Settlement. When patients come from Kalaupapa, Molokai‘i to Honolulu for medical treatment, they stay at Hale Mohalu.

regarding the narrative of leprosy in Hawai‘i, “it is important that the public know what it was like for us, the patients.” In order that future generations may understand the importance of the Hale Mohalu conflict, I will explore what happened during this pivotal struggle in Hawaiian history and document the resultant changes in consciousness for social justice that took place. My purpose is to give voice to the patients and to position their fight contextually in the history of Native Hawaiian resistance against colonialism in Hawai‘i.

I use interviews, oral histories, newspaper articles, and historical texts as my primary sources of inquiry. My theoretical foundations consist of a review of colonial theory, relying on the works of Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, and Antonio Gramsci, followed by an examination of sources on the modern civil rights era and the black power movement. I also look to scholarship on non-violence, especially the writings of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as Catholic liberation theology.

I particularly rely on the work of Native Hawaiian writers, such as Haunani-Kay Trask, Noenoe Silva, and Jonathan Osorio; in addition, I am indebted to the scholarship of Candace Fujikane and Patrick Wolfe on settler-colonialism. I am also grateful to the work of Daniel Berrigan and Thomas Merton for their insight on nonviolent resistance.

My argument demonstrates that while different movements of the 1960s and 1970s influenced the Hawaiian reawakening, the nationalist cause arose as an unique expression of the Native Hawaiian people, born out of a resistance that predates the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, and that the Hale Mohalu protest aided in the articulation and advancement of the Lahui’s nationalistic, anti-colonial voice. The Hale Mohalu conflict, part of Native resistance to dispossession from the land, is an expression of Hawaiian nationalism and the struggle for independence. It is a microcosm of the larger Hawaiian independence struggle.

The patients at Hale Mohalu under the leadership of Bernard Punikai‘a fought alongside their Hawaiian brothers and sisters at numerous other land struggles, such as Mākua Valley, Waiāhole/Waikāne, Sand Island, Waimanalo, and Nukoli‘i during the nineteen seventies and eighties.  

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Hale Mohalu is a story of resistance, defeat, and triumph. While Hale Mohalu is a unique story of the late 20th century, its iteration in the Native Hawaiian refusal to accept foreign domination echoes the past and continues into the present. Hawaiians have never surrendered their sovereignty. In *Aloha Betrayed* Noenoe Silva documented Native opposition to annexation - the Hawaiian people, including leprosy patients at Kalaupapa, signed petitions of protest against annexation. They also wrote letters to the Hawaiian newspapers to express their disapproval. Today, knowledge of the illegal annexation and the resultant American occupation has become increasingly evident, due to the research of historians like Noenoe Silva and Tom Coffman. Young Hawaiians today, many of whom are fluent in their Native tongue, commonly subscribe to the 1970s words of Native sovereignty activist, Soli Niheu, who passed away in December 2012. More than forty years earlier, Niheu expressed the feelings of many Hawaiians when he said:

Listen, state of Hawai‘i, Democratic Party, and all you non-Natives, we are the Native people here. And we say, this land belongs to Hawaiians, not developers, not land owners, not tourists, but to Hawaiians, Natives of this land.

His passionate words echo contemporary Hawaiian voices of resistance, like those of ‘Īmaikalani Kalāhele, Momiala Kamahele, and Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui, who argue against settler colonialism and call for the establishment of their beloved nation. Kamahele, Ho‘omanawanui, and Kalāhele are only three of the many who reject American occupation. In addition, artist and poet Kalāhele fought alongside Bernard Punikai‘a at Hale Mohalu and at Sand Island.

Bernard Punikai‘a, as leader of the Hansen Disease patients, defended his people’s rights in the tradition of Koʻolau, the famous resistance fighter at Kaua‘i, who, despite his illness with leprosy, stood fast at Kalalau Valley with his wife and son against the authorities’ efforts to force him into exile on Moloka‘i.

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15 Soli Niheu’s two-day funeral on the grounds of ‘Iolani Palace on January 5, 2013 brought together young and old leaders in the Hawaiian community.
16 Trask and Greery Kī'i #2.
19 Ku‘ualoha Ho‘omanawanui, “This Land Is Your Land, This Land Was My Land,” Fujikane and Okamura 116-154.
21 Francis N. Frazier, *The True Story of Kaluaikoalau As Told By His Wife, Pili‘a* (Lihue, Hawai‘i: The Kaua‘i Historical Society, 2001) + Hawaiian Journal of History, Vol. 21, 1987. Shortly after the overthrow of Queen Lili‘okalani in 1893, a Hawaiian man from Kaua‘i, named Kaluaiko‘olau or Ko‘olau the leper, as he was known, refused to leave his family when the authorities sought to
considered immoral. Punikai‘a, like Ko‘olau, defied the government to fight for justice, and Hale Mohalu in Pearl City was Punikai‘a’s Kalalau Valley.

Resistance in colonialism is crucial: to resist with every fiber of one’s being – to refuse to accept domination by those in power, from the smallest gesture to the most blatant manifestation of counterattack - reaffirms the inherent rights of the oppressed. The fact that resistance is primary has special resonance for indigenous people, like Hawaiians who have a worldview different from their colonizer’s. This is most evident in regard to the importance of the land. Native Hawaiians maintain a genealogical relationship to the land, which involves the principles of aloha ʻāina (reciprocal love) and mālama ʻāina, the necessity of reciprocal caring for the land. In the concept of aloha ʻāina, a particular sensibility colors Hawaiian thinking as John Charlot describes it in *Chanting the Universe*.

The Hawaiian thinks transparently about the world he lives in. His culture is experiential. Conversely, the accumulated, transmitted experience and thinking of previous generations influence actual perceptions. No experience is bare. Every object is endowed with the symbolism distilled from it and resonates in its historical and cosmic setting.

Naturally, like most indigenous peoples, Hawaiians have an especially intense relationship to the land, to the past, and to their ancestors. The patients, nearly all Native Hawaiian, shared a special connection to the land where they lived – both at Kalaupapa and at Hale Mohalu. The bones of their ancestors, iwi, literally lie buried at Kalaupapa. At Hale Mohalu, their bodily illness had been the basis for the purchase of the land in Pearl City – it was iwi in another sense, but just as essential. Charlot elaborates on this important point: “Hawaiians recognize a formative influence in the land. Each locality develops a population with a distinctive general character and cultural style.” So important is this sense of place and belonging that it is one of the first exchanges of conversation. “Hawaiians even today begin to make the acquaintance of someone by

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23 According to the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, edited by Pukui and Elbert, the word iwi is defined as “bone” with the following explanation: “The bones of the dead were hidden, and hence there are many figurative expressions with iwi meaning life, old age: Na wai e hoʻola i nā iwi? Who will save the bones? [Who will care for one in old age and in death?].”
asking about place of origin and family.” It is important to know where a person is from in order to locate his family of origination and to learn of any possible familial connection. Charlot further explains this idea, “This relationship - in which a person continually deepens his knowledge of the land that is simultaneously forming him – is expressed in the word kamaʻāina, literally ‘child of the land;’ a word used both for a person who is native-born and for one who is intimately familiar with something or someone.”

The patients understood this sense of place and its importance to their home in Pearl City as did the Hawaiians at Kalama Valley, at Kahoʻolawe, at Mākua, at Waiāhole/Waikāne, and at Sand Island and everywhere else they have fought to protect the ʻāina. “This special sense of place,” Charlot emphasizes, “is a pervasive element at every level of Hawaiian culture.”

In contrast to this intimate relationship and deep reverence for the land, newcomers to the Islands have little understanding of the meaning Hawaiians accord the ʻāina and the environment. Kepa Maly has interviewed Hawaiians on Kauaʻi about historic fishing methods and the changes to that way of life that have occurred over the years. One long-time resident/interviewee, whose family has lived in Hāʻena for generations, expressed her sadness about the newcomer’s lack of regard for the locale; there was no connection, the feeling of aloha was gone, as she said, “aloha nō” (aloha indeed, truly). Maly responded, “Because all these malihini (newcomer) come in they [have] no more attachment, no aloha for the land. It’s a possession not something that’s close to them.”

In sum, Hawaiians are one with the land –there is no separation. But when the State decided to evict the patients from Hale Mohalu and move them to Leahi, it gave no allowance for the Hawaiian cultural value of wahi pana, a sacred place. The patients understood from within their inner core that Hale Mohalu was such a place.

24 Charlot 56.
25 Charlot, 56-57.
In 1949 Hale Mohalu became the official leprosy facility on O‘ahu and the “home away from home for Kalaupapa patients,” who needed medical treatment in Honolulu. Previously Kalihi Hospital, founded in 1865, had been the Honolulu leprosy receiving station. The Federal Government deeded title of the Hale Mohalu property (former Naval barracks in Pearl City) to Hawai‘i over a period of twenty years, beginning in 1956, on the stipulation that Hale Mohalu remain a leprosarium in perpetuity. With the passage of time, residents created a home at Hale Mohalu - a refuge where outcast leprosy patients felt comfortable. However, the state Health Department, charged with oversight for the Hansen’s Disease program, failed to maintain the buildings properly. Despite patients’ requests, only minimal, if any, repairs were done. At the same time, each year the state increased its legal possession. In 1977, shortly after receiving clear title to the land, the state decided to close Hale Mohalu due to its deteriorated buildings. The residents were immediately ordered to relocate to institutional-type wards at Leahi Hospital in Kaimuki near Diamond Head. Feeling that the compulsory move was bitterly reminiscent of involuntary leprosy separations during the past century, the Hale Mohalu residents protested vehemently. Nonetheless, the state, using threats and intimidation, forced some elderly patients to transfer on January 26, 1978. Determined to maintain their community and sense of family, several patients, including Bernard Punikai‘a and Clarence Nai‘a refused to leave Hale Mohalu. They sought to negotiate a compromise solution to remain on a small portion of the land, their home for nearly thirty years. Most

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27 Since 1865, Molokai’s northern peninsula (first at Kalawao and later at Kalaupapa) has been the site of Hawai‘i Leprosy Settlement. When patients come from Molokai to Honolulu for medical treatment, they stay at Hale Mohalu.

28 Worried about the fact they were living on land that was only leased from the military and that the lease could be revoked at any time, the patients initiated the agreement with the Federal Government to purchase the property and transfer title to the Territory of Hawai‘i over a 20-year period in 5-year increments with the special proviso that the land remain a leprosarium as long as the patients lived. Perpetuity meant it would always be designated as land for the leprosy patients. When the Territory transitioned to the State, all the provisions of the agreement carried over.

29 Until 1969 the law of separation was the law of the land. People found to have the disease were sent to Kalaupapa; some cases were treated initially in Honolulu, but those cases deemed after testing to be positive were forced to go to Moloka‘i. After 1969, no one was sent to Kalaupapa; new cases were treated as out-patients. The pre-1969 patients are considered a special group as they were forced into isolation.

30 Anyone found to have the disease was banished from his or her family, and sent to Moloka‘i.

31 Patients were told that there would be no more food served and that they would no longer have medical care at Pearl City; if they needed to have insulin shots, they would have to do it themselves.
of the patients did not require the intense level of care that the sterile hospital rooms of Leahi offered.

From the patients’ perspective, the facilities at Leahi were unacceptable.32 Forcibly separated from their families, involuntarily sent to Kalaupapa years earlier, and historically kept isolated, the patients felt a similar pattern of coercion taking place with the move to Leahi. It wasn’t a matter of all things being equal with a simple transfer from one facility to another. Compulsory relocation to Leahi meant living in wards, institutional-style, without any privacy except for a mere curtain. Moreover, the involuntary transfer aroused patients’ fears of social rejection and/or childish taunts: Leahi Hospital, located in a quiet residential area, far from easily accessible stores required living among strangers, whose dread of leprosy might reignite age-old ostracism associated with the stigma of the disease. Past experiences of being branded as lepers and shunned by society had left the patients fearful that they would not be able to go outside in the Diamond Head neighborhood, but instead would have to remain secluded behind hospital walls as virtual prisoners.

In contrast, residential life at Hale Mohalu was characterized by an easy acceptance among the Pearl City community. It was a commonplace occurrence to see patients shopping or running errands among friendly neighbors who viewed the long-established facility as a familiar part of their neighborhood. Desirous of remaining in Pearl City, the Hale Mohalu patients tried to negotiate a compromise with the state, asking for a reconstructed home on one acre of the eleven-acre plot.

The Hawai‘i State Legislature in 1979 authorized $600,000 in its budget to rebuild Hale Mohalu. However, Governor George Ariyoshi refused to release the money, arguing it was insufficient and the money could be better spent elsewhere.33 Stating that there were no immediate plans for the site, but that it would cost too much to rebuild Hale Mohalu, Governor Ariyoshi repeatedly denied the patients’ requests. The governor saw the situation strictly in terms of economics. According to his statistics, it was cheaper to move the patients to another facility than reconstruct a smaller home on the present site. While the patients might object, it was the state’s sole decision to make; the opinions of

33 Kathryn Braun, “The Road to Hale Mohalu” Impulse Magazine, Fall 1979, Volume 6, Number 2, p. 52.
leprosy sufferers were simply not part of a fiscal decision, which would be made on their behalf without their input. “State officials believe the land can be put to better use than as a leprosy facility.” Moreover, in light of numerous Native Hawaiian land struggles taking place throughout the state in the 1970s such as Kalama Valley and Waiahole/Waikane, Governor Ariyoshi was not about to capitulate to the demands of leprosy outcasts who were already wards of the State.

Throughout the proceedings, the State maintained it had no plans for the large undeveloped parcel located in the midst of the rapidly growing Pearl City area. While public support for the patients gathered momentum, the State decided to force the patients to vacate Hale Mohalu. On September 1, 1978, the State ordered the utilities shut off and all food and medical services terminated. As a result, the Hale Mohalu residents had no electricity, no water, no food, and no medical care. The patients, mostly over fifty years of age and in need of medications for various health problems, were shocked at the government’s hardline actions. Devastated by this major setback, the residents, nonetheless, stood their ground and refused to leave. They filed suit in court as they pursued every legal avenue to maintain their beloved home. Mayor Frank Fasi came to their aid with a generator and a water-hook-up from a city hydrant. Governor Ariyoshi, a political opponent of Mayor Fasi, backed his state Health Director, George Yuen, and supported Yuen’s tough stance against the leprosy victims. Despite the lack of utilities, the patients defiantly continued to live at Hale Mohalu for a period of five years, while the litigation battle played out in the courts. Buoyed by the aid of numerous friends, the patients managed to resist the State’s callousness from one year to the next, hoping that their cause would prevail.

Many members of the community, including several political figures, however, disagreed with the Governor’s stance. Speaking out in support of maintaining Hale Mohalu, sympathetic individuals and various organizations joined forces to form the group Save Hale Mohalu Ohana, which provided grassroots assistance to the patients’

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35 Kalama Valley is on the eastern portion of the island of O‘ahu, part of a planned development called Hawai‘i-Kai, while Waiāhole-Waikāne is on the windward side of O‘ahu and is an agricultural area. The battle to save the farming community at Kalma Valley has been called the beginning of the modern Hawaiian movement; Waiāhole-Waikāne was the site of one of the largest demonstrations where protestors physically blocked the highway to protect the ‘āina and to stop development.
36 Initially in Circuit Court of the First Circuit, State of Hawai‘i, and later in Federal District Court.
protest. The Save Hale Mohalu Ohana conducted fundraising events, such as luau(s), garage sales, and concerts to enable the residents (in spite of ill health and lack of utilities) to sustain a protracted struggle against State power. In addition to fundraisers, they held rallies, organized petition drives, and protested weekly at the State Capitol; they filed suit in court, lobbied the Legislature, and in general garnered widespread community support. One of their backers, Robert T. Wong, a medical doctor and a professor at the University of Hawai‘i School of Medicine, said:

The leprosy patient’s fight to retain an adequate facility on the Hale Mohalu grounds is more than just willful protest. They had been involuntarily confined by the State and forced to exist as patients for most of their lives; they seek now an affirmation of their humanity. They are deserving of support from all of us in this fight.

The protest was not without huge sacrifices, as three patients died during the struggle. They were regarded as martyrs who died in the patients’ fight for recognition of their human dignity. The battle in the courts, with success and setbacks, dragged on until finally, in September 1983, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the State.

From the Governor’s perspective, the State had been more than tolerant with the trespassers during the five-year ordeal. For the patients’ own welfare, Governor Ariyoshi had ordered the utilities turned off and the facility closed in 1978. The buildings were falling apart - so unsafe, he said, that he would not allow his own mother to stay there.

Conversely, according to the patients, numerous requests for repairs went unheeded year after year, apparently due to the State’s policy of neglect, which had deliberately allowed the facility to become run-down. “Various reasons were given for the deterioration – no funds, plans for a new facility, pressure to move to Leahi Hospital – but as time went by without adequate decision-making or planning, the patients and the

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37 State Legislator Neil Abercrombie, the Council of Churches, Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi, university professors, Hawaiian activists, Catholic nuns, and ordinary, everyday people, including students, nurses, and senior citizens.
40 David Tong, “Church Hypocrisy Cited by Yuen in Hale Mohalu Case,” Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, June 11, 1978, A-6, “I wouldn’t want my mother to stay in these facilities,” he said. “I walked in and out. I was so disturbed.”
buildings grew old together.”⁴² In this conflict, bureaucratic wrangling over future use of the buildings meant that necessary maintenance work was neglected.⁴³

For their part, the leprosy victims had spent thirty years working hard to make a real home out of the former military barracks by planting trees, arranging furniture, and decorating the walls with pictures of Father Damien and personal mementos. Regardless of the sense of community created at Hale Mohalu, the government contended its only responsibility to the residents lay in abiding by minimum legal requirements: it was not required to care for the patients beyond the letter of the law. As far as the Governor was concerned, the state had met its obligation to the patients by providing beds for them at Leahi Hospital, despite its institutional setting.

Shortly after the court ruling, the State acted quickly to obtain the land and remove the residents. In anticipation of the eviction of the last two remaining patients, dozens of Hale Mohalu supporters stood outside while several inside joined Punikai’a and Nai’a in nonviolent protest that September morning. It was the climax of the five-year struggle of resistance at the Pearl City facility.

When the authorities arrived at dawn, they declared the occupants to be trespassers; they warned everyone to vacate the premises within ten minutes or face arrest for “interfering with a government operation.” Punikai’a and Nai’a refused to leave Hale Mohalu, claiming it was their home, purchased by the blood of leprosy patients. In response, officers forcibly picked up the two men, carried them outside and dumped the infirm patients on the ground. Both men lay helpless on the earth next to one another. The police also forcibly removed the rest of their supporters and arrested them. Punikai’a and Nai’a were arrested, loaded into paddy wagons, driven to police headquarters and booked on trespassing charges. No sooner had the occupants been removed from Hale Mohalu than bulldozers proceeded to destroy all the buildings, flattening everything, including tall coconut trees, whose seeds the residents, thirty years earlier, had carried from Kalaupapa. By early afternoon, Hale Mohalu was nothing but an empty lot.⁴⁴

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⁴³ Pat Guy, “Leprosy Patients Seek Another Hearing,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Thursday, October 5, 1978, C-12, “Toshio Kagehiro, Hale Mohalu, maintenance foreman, stated in an affidavit that when he requested authorization in 1966 to make necessary repairs of the facility, he was told by supervisory personnel that ‘the building was going to be closed within two years and replaced with a new structure to be built in the same area.’”
Pictures of the patients being forcibly removed from their home, cast onto the ground like discarded trash, made front-page headlines in the newspapers and led as the premier story on the evening television news. Images of the two leprosy victims, “the most wretched of the earth’s wretched,” lying vulnerable in the dirt, pointed out the disparity of the State’s power with a striking, visual impact that captured the public eye. The pictures horrified Hawaiian society whose cultural values esteem the elderly. To see their kupuna, leprosy patients, lifelong victims of disease, without the strength to harm anyone physically, surrounded by armed law officers, then evicted and arrested, their home demolished by bulldozers, was beyond comprehension. Public fury at the state’s hostile treatment of these frail citizens generated widespread reaction not only in Hawai‘i but nationally as well. Such forceful treatment for Hansen’s Disease patients resulted in problematic publicity for the State, portraying not a benevolent government agency, caring for the sick and the weak, but instead the Governor’s hard line attitude toward trespassers on State land.

The stand-off represented a classic battle: diseased outcasts, gentle, self-effacing men and women, defending their legal right to stay on the land versus a determined government – a confrontation that lasted not just for a month but over an exhaustive five-year period. When the ultimate showdown took place, the arrest of the physically handicapped victims became not only a demonstration of superior police force but also a decisive statement on governmental authority.

At the same time, the Hale Mohalu struggle also demonstrated the power of the patients and their willingness to fight for their principles, including the right of self-determination. Their battle was part of the larger independence struggle of the Hawaiian people. This dispute was not a willful protest by individuals wanting a free-ride at government expense as some authorities at the time tried to imply.

Although it was site specific, it had far reaching implications reflective of Hawaiian history and the disspossession of the Hawaiian people. Colonial ideology, which has dominated so much of life in Hawai‘i, affected every aspect of the Hale Mohalu conflict, impacting the ability of the patients to have their rights and humanity.

45 David Stannard, personal interview, September 26, 2005.
recognized. While those in power maintained their chillingly firm grip throughout the struggle, this fight ended in ultimate victory for the patients, the very people historically denied agency in the colonial context. Their resistance succeeded in saving the site to create a more just resolution closer to their hearts. The patients were forced off the land and Hale Mohalu was destroyed, but in the end, like a phoenix arising from the ashes, Hale Mohalu was rebuilt as elderly and patient housing, with buildings named in their honor, and every inch of the land and its sacred memory preserved forever. Having won the long battle for the ‘āina, the Hale Mohalu conflict offers hope for restorative justice on many levels, in particular for Native Hawaiian self-determination.
CHAPTER 2
LEPROSY IN HAWAI‘I - KALAUPAPA AND HONOLULU

The pristine beauty of Kalaupapa, Moloka‘i, protected by its inaccessibility, makes it among the loveliest places in the Hawaiian Islands. During more than a hundred years, thousands of people have been sequestered on this remote area of Moloka‘i. So isolated is this part of Hawai‘i, the land stands apart as poet Frank Stewart describes it.

Along the northeast coast, the traveler will encounter twelve miles of breathtaking fluted cliffs, the highest plunging more than 3,500 feet into the sea. A flat, rocky peninsula—shaped like the head of a shark—juts out from the island at the base of this line of cliffs. Its name is Makanalua, though it is commonly called Kalaupapa, which is also the name of a village on the western side of the peninsula. Few places in the Hawaiian Archipelago seem as isolated and desolate as this volcanic headland.  

Because of its seclusion, Kalaupapa was chosen to quarantine those with leprosy from the rest of society. As a result, separated from family and home, Hawaiians called the disease Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale, meaning the “Separating Sickness.” Little thought was given to the effect such intense isolation had on the patients. The chief concern was the welfare of the larger population. Those quarantined comprise a unique group in Hawaiian history. The anguish they experienced in being removed from their families must have been nearly impossible to endure.

The patients involved in the Hale Mohalu struggle had been sent to Kalaupapa when they were very young. According to historian Linda W. Greene, “the significance of Kalaupapa settlement cannot be overstated. The residents are among the last remaining survivors worldwide of an international public health policy that decreed the social and physical isolation of leprosy victims.” The psychological impact of that forced separation framed the core of the patients’ struggle for their Pearl City home. They fought for the right to be treated as human beings and not merely a disease. In the effort to have their humanity recognized, they battled for their land, as kama‘āina, children of the land. To better understand what happened at Hale Mohalu, it is necessary briefly to

48 Greene, Exile in Paradise: 567.
examine the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i and the establishment of the Kalaupapa settlement.

Background on Leprosy

In 1873 Norwegian scientist Gerhard Hansen discovered a virus, related to tuberculosis, called Mycobacterium leprae, which is the cause of leprosy. Because of his research, the ailment is also known as Hansen’s Disease. “The two major forms of leprosy are called “Lepromatous” (a progressive form in people with little resistance to it) and “Tuberculoid” (a self-limited form in those with more resistance). It is the Lepromatous form, which causes skin lesions containing large number of bacteria, thus facilitating transmission of the disease to others.”^49 Leprosy can spread all over the body, but primarily attacks the skin, in particular, the peripheral nerves. In the 21st century leprosy still occurs, principally in third world countries and some Pacific islands, but it can easily be treated with drugs and is one of the least contagious of infectious diseases. However, this modern understanding about the nature of the illness has not always been the case. From earliest biblical references about the disease, leprosy has engendered unparalleled social repulsion.

In contrast to other illnesses, western society has had such a particular aversion to leprosy that it assigned the malady a special stigma. “Of all the diseases that afflicted medieval man, leprosy especially came to be understood as divine punishment for sinfulness and to be viewed as no other sickness known to man.”^50 Since people associated the disease with moral implications, those who had the illness were considered not merely physically ill, but also possessed of more sinister qualities. “The fear of Hansen’s disease stemmed not only from the physical effects of the disease on the human body, but from ideological beliefs about skin diseases, cleanliness, and morality.”^51 Leprosy victims bore such a potent stigma that society required them to be physically isolated from everyone else. In order to protect the well-being of the entire community, individuals who were ill had to be physically shunned. “The leper,” observes author Susan Sontag, “was a social text in which corruption was made visible: an exemplum, an

^49 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, The Separating Sickness 6.
emblem of decay." In her book, *Illness as Metaphor*, Sontag illustrates how the horror of such a disease becomes adjectival. Sontag writes, “Something is said to be disease-like, meaning that it is disgusting or ugly. In French, a moldering stone façade is still *lepreuse*.” Thus, imagery associated with the illness dominated language in such a powerful way that leprosy became symbolic of physical deterioration as such - not only in terms of people - but inanimate objects as well.

The disease affects various parts of the body, particularly the hands and feet as well as areas of cartilage, such as the nose. Because of damage to the nasal cartilage, leprosy patients often have a uniform “snub” nose appearance. Initially, loss of feeling occurs in the extremities; fingers and toes frequently become “claw-like” with their digits curved inward or even partially missing. Visible signs of the disease before it was treatable would include “scars, nodules, shortened fingers and crippled limbs.” Ordinary activities such as grasping objects or holding a spoon may prove to be awkward if not impossible. Sometimes, commonplace implements have been adapted so patients can use these objects in daily life, such as spoons with special curved handles, which can be held by gnarled fingers. Also, water faucets with “wing-type” handles, pushed rather than twisted, make for easy operation. Invariably, through daily trial and error on their own, patients have learned to be quite skillful in dealing with routine household objects. In addition to the hands, the disease affects the feet, which may result in damage to the joints; the loss of joints can create misshapen feet, which leads to difficulty in walking, requiring customized shoes. Later on, amputation of the leg may be necessary.

Since the illness usually begins with a loss of sensation in the extremities, the resultant lack of feeling leads to a host of ensuing problems. For example, if the leprosy victim should injure himself/herself in some way (such as a burn on the stove), the person does not feel pain because the nerves are deadened. Unaware of his/her injury, the individual may continue to act as if nothing happened, thereby incurring secondary infections, and further injury. It becomes a vicious cycle of progressive injury and infection. According to patient Paul Harada, the sickness affects every aspect of the body. “When you suffer from leprosy, you suffer from extreme chills and fevers. You get cold,
then you perspire. The disease affects your kidney, and as you know if your kidney gets
bad, not much could be done in the old days.”55 The breakdown of the immune system
and the resultant infections caused serious health problems, making survival difficult.
Leprosy, in itself, did not kill the patients, but the secondary health problems associated
with the illness shortened their life expectancy. For present-day Kalaupapa patients, a
constant list of physical difficulties seems to occur, from eye or knee problems to an
amputated first joint on a toe. Patient Barbara Marks smiled demurely as she explained in
a voice tinged with both acceptance and resignation, “With us, it’s always something.”56
Despite continual battles with medical concerns, some more severe than others, the
remaining Kalaupapa patients exhibit a sense of inner peace and joy manifested by their
frequent laughter and surprising sense of vitality.

Maʻi Pākē

When Captain James Cook arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in 1778, it marked the
beginning of Western contact; it also meant the introduction of certain diseases to the
Hawaiian people for which no immunity existed. Numerous diseases spread rapidly and
by the middle of the following century, the Native Hawaiian population had declined
substantially. The continued outbreak of diphtheria, small pox, measles, influenza, and
leprosy in the mid-nineteenth century led the authorities to take action; this was
especially true with regard to leprosy and the hysteria associated with that disease.57
Exactly how leprosy began in the Hawaiian Islands remains a mystery. Authors Laura E.
Soulliere and Henry G Law observe, “Leprosy was known to exist in the Islands as early
as 1830,”58 but Pennie Moblo, in her dissertation, “Defamation by Disease: Leprosy, Myth
and Ideology in Nineteenth Century Hawai‘i,” cites Arthur Mouritz to note, “Leprosy
may have been in Hawai‘i as early as 1823.”59 According to historian Edward Joesting,
“It is not known how leprosy came to Hawai‘i.” However, one name used to describe the
disease was Maʻi Pākē.60 “At some early time the Hawaiians began to call the disease

56 Barbara Marks, personal patient interview, Honolulu, Hale Mohalu at Leahi, Wednesday, 5 October 2011.
57 The spread of AIDS in the latter half of the 20th century along with society’s initial fearful response may be a modern correlation.
60 In Hawaiian, Maʻi denotes sickness, especially a serious illness and Pākē translates as Chinese.
Maʻi Pake, which means Chinese sickness.61 Some believed that the disease had originated in China and that it arrived in Hawaiʻi with the introduction of Chinese laborers to work the sugar plantations. However, no definite link has been established to prove that connection; moreover, the disease may have been brought by sailors aboard numerous ships that were part of the whaling industry in Hawaiʻi at that time. In her research, Kerri Inglis reports on the names given to the disease and the associated dates.

Called maʻi lepera (leprosy), maʻi pākē (Chinese sickness), maʻi aliʻi (chiefly sickness), and eventually maʻi hoʻokaʻawale ʻohana (disease that separates family) by Kānaka Maoli, it is thought that leprosy came to the islands in the early 1800s, but it did not attain levels of great concern until the 1850s and 1860s.62

Since the traditional solution for dealing with those with leprosy had been isolation, when leprosy became a problem in Hawaiʻi in the mid 1800s, the ensuing fear of contagion led the government to adopt a policy of segregation.63 In 1865, King Kamehameha V signed into law the creation of a leprosy settlement on the island of Molokaʻi. The new law stipulated that anyone found to have the disease would be banished for life to the remote Kalaupapa peninsula. Not only were the ill segregated, but later on, the illness became criminalized when bounty hunters were used to chase down the sick. This shift in the severity of punishment, from segregation to criminalization, mirrored changes taking place in the Hawaiian government as the haole or foreign element gained greater control. In her dissertation, Pennie Moblo states,

As the island economy grew, primarily through the success of the sugar industry, foreigners dominated commercial enterprises and increasingly took charge of state affairs. Leprosy, which afflicted Hawaiians in greater numbers than it did other races, was politicized by whites to confirm their conviction that natives were physically and morally inferior to Euro-Americans; while the oppressive measures taken in segregating its victims signaled to the Hawaiians a loss of control over land, resources, families, and ultimately, their lives.64

Moblo illuminates the correlation between political events associated with the government of Hawaiʻi and the way the incidence of leprosy was handled. “The campaign against leprosy can be seen not only as one of Western medicine against the

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63 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, The Separating Sickness 10.
micro-organism which caused the disease, but of ‘civilization’ over the ‘savage’ morals and cultural traits which were believed to render Hawaiians unfit to rule themselves.”

With its visible scars, this debilitating disease seems to me to symbolize a similar external mark embodying the sense of loss that the Hawaiian people experienced as they increasingly lost control of their lands and government. In the nineteenth century, the Mahele, the Bayonet Constitution, along with the Reciprocity Treaty of 1887 represent three historical events that greatly accelerated Native Hawaiians’ dispossession.

Beginning in 1848 through 1850 a division of Hawaiian lands took place known as the Great Mahele, which allowed foreigners to be able to own land. “Traditional lands were quickly transferred to foreign ownership and burgeoning sugar plantations.”

Regarding this historic land distribution, Jonathan Osorio states, “The Mahele was a foreign solution to the problem of managing lands increasingly emptied of people.” Its impact was tremendous as it changed the face of Hawai‘i by redistributing not only lands but also influence. “The foundation for the ‘successful’ results of the Mahele was the redefinition of power and political relationships that took place in the society even as the legislature, in 1850, began discussing the need for a new constitution.” In a lopsided imbalance, as the Hawaiian population continued to decline (due to various diseases) the control of Native government increasingly came under greater haole influence.

King Kalākaua struggled to hold on to his power, but suffered a substantial loss when the missionary descendants forced him in 1887 to sign the Bayonet Constitution. Noenoe Silva summed up their attitude and approach. “They were the sons of the missionaries who were determined to eradicate Kanaka culture because it was savage, dark, and inferior.” Silva elaborates on their mind-set. “The missionary sons and grandsons had been imbued from birth with a sense of their own superiority to the natives; their parents and grandparents had come to Hawai‘i in order to bring enlightenment and civilization.” Kalākaua and the monarchy were not fit to rule in the minds of these businessmen who saw Hawai‘i’s future completely devoid of Native rule. “The Bayonet

65 Pennie Moblo, 54.
66 Trask, Native Daughter 6-7.
67 Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui 49.
68 Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui 50.
69 Silva, Aloha Betrayed 126.
Constitution created an oligarchy of the haole planters and businessmen.” Ordinary Hawaiian citizens quickly became outraged at the injustice created by the Bayonet Constitution, which took away the executive powers of the monarch and instead gave them to the cabinet. It also provided that white foreigners could vote without becoming naturalized citizens, when it granted the right to vote to any European or Hawaiian who could read Hawaiian, English, or any European language and who also possessed property valued at three thousand dollars, or whose annual income was six hundred dollars. This meant that any newly arrived Europeans with sufficient cash, but no relational ties to Hawai‘i were automatically entitled to vote, while Native-born Hawaiians, who could not qualify in terms of property or income, were excluded. The new constitution disenfranchised not only Hawaiians who could not qualify financially, but it also meant that long-time Chinese residents who were citizens of the kingdom were no longer able to vote.

The burgeoning haole role in government spurred Native Hawaiians’ resistance; various forms of protests arose, including mass meetings, petitions, and “the founding of the first Kanaka Maoli political organization, the Hui Kālai ‘Āina.” While Native Hawaiians fought back, haole businessmen, eager to take over control of the government, wielded the economic club of sugar against the financial debts of the monarchy; in so doing, the sugar planters achieved a key victory over King Kalākaua. “Finally, American military and economic interests triumphed in the Reciprocity Treaty of 1887 when Pearl River Lagoon was ceded to the United States in exchange for duty-free sugar.” Sugar from Hawai‘i could now gain access to the mainland American markets, with the result that haole businessmen, who controlled the Island’s economy by means of the profitable sugar industry, grew even richer and more powerful.

Along with the expanding power of foreigners in the Kingdom, the growing fear of contagion from leprosy, especially among non-Hawaiians, led the government to intensify its steps to round up those identified as leprous and have them sent to Kalaupapa. This was particularly true for Native Hawaiians who were removed from their homes to the settlement on Moloka‘i. In *Leprosy and Empire*, Rod Edmond explains

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70 Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 126.
71 Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 126.
72 Silva, *Aloha Betrayed* 127.
73 Trask, *Native Daughter* 11.
the correlation. “From the point of view of the settlers the leprous body of the Hawaiian threatened their own clean form with contamination and death.”

The disease of leprosy and the subsequent elimination of afflicted Hawaiians worked hand-in-glove with those businessmen who wanted to control the monarchy and to enjoy a closer relationship with the United States - men like missionary descendant, Reverend Sereno E. Bishop. Editor of the Protestant newspaper, The Friend, Bishop, an ardent American annexationist, described leprosy as “something of a scourge;” he noted “the lepers are nearly all natives” and felt pleased with their removal to Kalaupapa. “For more than a year, or since the end of 1887, there has been a radical improvement in the work of segregating the lepers,” he reported. “There seems reason to believe that soon nearly every leper will have been removed to the excellent asylum at Molokai.”

Certainly, it suited the purposes of haole elites who viewed Hawaiians as inferior, to remove leprous Natives from society, isolate them at Kalaupapa, and take whatever lands or property they might have. Scholars Noenoe Silva and Pualeilani Fernandez note the work of first Moblo and R.D K. Herman in regard to increased dispossession.

Moblo and R D K. Herman found that the quarantining of people with leprosy fits into a political-economic pattern that vilifies a targeted and dispossed group, and segregated infected persons for a purported public good. In Hawai‘i, the start of the quarantine coincided with the rise of sugar plantations and the numbers of patients peaked with the Bayonet Constitution when (the illegitimately formed) government was most anxious about its stablility. Other spikes in the numbers of patients sent to Molokai accompanied the coup of 1893 and the resistance to annexation in 1897.

Anwei Skinsnes Law in her latest book, Kalaupapa, A Collective Memory published in 2012, elaborates on this association between political events and removal. “In 1888, the number of people sent to Kalawao jumped drastically to 558, which represented the largest number of people ever sent to Kalaupapa in one year.” In oral presentations about her work, Skinsnes Law has expressed hope that research into Hawaiian language sources would reveal more Native voices in the story of leprosy, given the fact that to

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74 Rod Edmond, Leprosy and Empire: A Medical and Cultural History (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 147.
75 Silva, Aloha Betrayed 173.
76 Reverend Sereno Bishop, “Why are the Hawaiians Dying Out? Or, Elements of Disability for Survival Among the Hawaiian People” (Honolulu Social Science Association, November 1888) 10.
date, the haole perspective has been dominant. Since the majority of those sent to Kalaupapa were Hawaiian, the calculated effort to destroy the Hawaiian lifestyle had a profound effect, as expected, on the nation and Kerri Inglis points out in her dissertation the harm it created.

The result of this separation of families, as a result of leprosy, was to alter the fabric of Hawaiian society. The 'ohana was the basic unit of the community and the 'ohana was connected to the Land. With the introduction of each new epidemic, Hawaiian lives were lost, opportunities to claim Land and power were open to haole, and the 'ohana's connection to the Land was diminishing. Leprosy played an integral role in the loss of this most important connection and its reciprocal loss of Hawaiian identity.

Moreover, while Sereno Bishop might describe Kalaupapa as a place of refuge, few of those actually sent to Molokaʻi characterized the settlement in that way - especially in the beginning when various attempts at management failed. Moblo details the initial period at Kalaupapa as a time of increasing friction between the two opposing groups. “Tension between the haole (foreign, white) administrations and the Hawaiian patients continued to escalate.” Moblo’s research documents the patients’ lives in order to give voice to the Hawaiian community at Kalaupapa whose story has been overshadowed by the attention given to the work of Father Damien, now St. Damien. Moblo states the purpose of her work is to “show how the Western ideology of presumed racial and cultural superiority persists in twentieth-century accounts to perpetuate the image of a morally weak and physical vulnerable native.”

When people were sent initially to Kalawao in the nineteenth century, the name given to that place in Hawaiian was “ka luakupapau kanu ola, the grave where one is buried alive.” Because removal to the isolated settlement meant lasting separation, the mere mention of the word Kalaupapa became synonymous with the disease and the

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80 Kerri Inglis, “A Land Set Apart”: Disease, Displacement, & Death at Makanalua, Moloka‘i,” diss., University of Hawai‘i, 2004, 236; + Osorio, Dismembering Lāhui also documented the connection between disease and the loss of land and identity, 47.
81 Moblo, 74.
82 Damien, born in Belgium as Joseph DeVuester, was a Sacred Heart priest who came to Kalaupapa in 1873 to care for the patients. Before his arrival, no member of any religion ever stayed permanently. Damien was the first. He died in 1889 after he contracted leprosy. Damien was declared a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in 2009. While Moblo is critical of Damien, the patients at Kalaupapa revere him as their savior and protector. Mother Marianne Cope, a Franciscan nun from Syracuse, New York, came in 1883 to Hawai‘i to assist with the care of leprosy patients. Mother Marianne also went to Kalaupapa, shortly before Damien died. Along with other Franciscan sisters, she cared for the patients until her death in 1918. In October 2012, Mother Marianne was canonized a saint. For the patients at Kalaupapa, they are overjoyed that the only two American saints are from Kalaupapa.
83 Moblo, vi.
84 Frazier, The True Story of Kaluaikoolau As Told by His Wife, Pilani, ix.
resultant panic implicitly associated with it. This visceral apprehension persisted into the mid 20th century. Prior to sulfone drugs, it was generally understood that a sentence to Kalaupapa implied a lifetime of isolation and eventual death; thus, if the term, Kalaupapa, was used in conjunction with a particular individual, it indicated the person was already dead. According to Marcia Gaudet in *Carville, Remembering Leprosy in America*, the living dead were separated not only in life but also when they were buried.

In the Middle Ages, leprosy patients were not only banned from living among the non-afflicted but could not even share a church or cemetery with them. In most parts of Europe, they were buried in separate cemeteries. In some parts of the Christian world, the Leper Mass was performed, with the living victim present, where priests filled an empty grave to symbolize their ‘death.’ They were then given a bell or clapper to warn others of their approach and their status as ‘the living dead.’ In thirteenth century Europe, it was a civil crime for a leprosy patient to live among the healthy.\(^{85}\)

As a result, shame and secrecy surrounded the illness. Many families hid the fact that one of their members had the disease, particularly since it meant the family’s separation. It was a subject to be avoided at all costs. Even into the twentieth and twenty-first century, people in Hawai‘i have often been unaware that some of their family had been incarcerated at Kalaupapa.

**Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale**

In addition to the name Ma‘i Pāke for leprosy, Native Hawaiians called the disease Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale, meaning the “Separating Sickness,” a reference to the devastating effects caused by the break-up of families.\(^{86}\) The real tragedy to Native Hawaiians was not the illness per se, but rather the heartbreaking, forcible separations that took place because of it. Natives did not share the same Western repulsion to leprosy or to sickness of any kind. In their non-Western way of thinking/behaving, the idea of relationship to the person was primary - not the sickness. “Thus, the Hawaiian people feared the compulsory banishment and rough treatment by European and Hawaiian public health agents more than the disease itself.”\(^{87}\) Moreover, rather than have ill family members hunted down and incarcerated, many Native people hid those who were sick or accompanied them into exile. A family member known as a kōkua (helper) would attend

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\(^{87}\) Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 10.
the ill person on the journey to Kalaupapa, and live there in banishment, helping to care for his/her loved one.

In her dissertation, “‘A Land Set Apart’: Disease, Displacement, & Death at Makanalua, Moloka‘i,” Kerri A. Inglis elaborates on the cultural impact the disease had on the Hawaiian community. The strikingly different views of Hawaiians and haoles toward the illness aided in the colonization of the Native “as leprosy provided rich metaphoric possibilities to express the innate corruption of indigenous culture.”

Moblo emphasizes this aspect and Inglis expands upon the theme. Not only did leprosy afford the means to advance the colonial agenda, but also it framed such powerful control over the Native population in terms of a greater societal good. Domination by the elite ruling structure had an accompanying rhetoric of noble purpose. Although purportedly concerned with the overall health of the public, many of the measures instituted were really designed more to safeguarded haole welfare rather than native. “Colonizers privileged the health of foreigners over the health of the indigenous populations.”

Honolulu: Receiving Station

To deal with the leprosy problem, government authorities under the jurisdiction of the Board of Health set up a receiving station in Honolulu, O‘ahu to meet administrative requirements and the medical needs of patients. The Hawaiian government built Kalihi Hospital for lepers in 1865, where less severe cases were initially treated, while more advanced cases were sent to Kalaupapa. The first patients to the Settlement arrived at Kalawao on January 6, 1866. In Honolulu, Kalihi Hospital remained in operation for ten years until its closure in 1875. When a leprosy detention center opened next to the police station near the harbor, suspected individuals were held there for examination before being sent to Kalaupapa. “At that time, no treatment was offered and people were simply locked up until the next boat was ready to leave.”

The detention center operated for six years until a royal gift provided for a new hospital. “Princess Ruth Keelikolani donated five acres near Fisherman’s Point for 25 years for a leper hospital.”

\[88\] Inglis, “A Land Set Apart” 103-104.
\[89\] Inglis “A Land Set Apart” 249.
\[92\] Anwei Skinsnes Law, Kalaupapa 127.
The Kaka‘ako Hospital opened on December 12, 1881. The facility at Kaka‘ako not only treated the less severe cases, but also conducted experiments hoping to find a cure. The location near the waterfront at Kaka‘ako proved to be problematic (flooding and too visible to passing ships) and about 1889 the hospital buildings were moved to a site at or near the old Kalihi hospital. This latest incarnation of the leprosy facility was located at the makai end of Puuhale Road on a large compound of land, close to the ocean. For the next ninety years, it functioned as the first place new patients were sent. Located not far from OCCC, O‘ahu Community Correctonal Center, the Hospital’s location and setting seemed like a prison to the residents. Sent to Kalihi Hospital in 1936, when he was ten years old, patient Henry Nalaielua wrote a memoir about his incarceration. He described the rules that regulated every aspect of life and the feeling of being condemned to prison. In No Footprints in the Sand, Nalaielua states, “The place looked like a prison too. An eight foot high chain-link fence with barbed wire at the top encircled the whole compound of just over 11 acres, keeping us in and everyone else out.” Separation was the approach taken locally in the Islands and by federal authorities at the beginning of the twentieth century at Kalawao.

**Federal Experiment at Kalawao**

In addition to the efforts of the monarchy and the territory of Hawai‘i to deal with the disease, the federal government built an experimental treatment station at Kalawao, Moloka‘i, the foundational ruins of which are still in evidence today. “In 1905 the United States Congress passed an act that provided for investigation of leprosy in Hawaii and appropriated $100,000 for a hospital at Kalawao,” but the patients were afraid of the facility, which was elaborately built and furnished. As a result “the patients would not use that hospital.” The federal experiment lasted from 1909 to 1913 but it was considered as a failure. A monumental waste of money, the hospital closed on August 7, 1913. That was not the case with the facility at Kalihi.

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95 Mobilo 149.
96 Mouritz, The Path 66.
Kalihi Hospital

Kalihi Hospital provided treatment not merely temporary confinement. In her history of Kalaupapa, Anwei Skinsnes Law notes that important research was conducted at Kalihi Hospital, research which the U. S. Public Health Service published as part of a series entitled “Studies upon Leprosy.” Kalihi Hospital also had a public school that originally had been under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health, but later became part of the regular school system. Certified teacher, Albert Nawahi Like, the first teacher to work at Kalihi Hospital, recalled his early days in the one-room school, known as Mount Happy. Nawahi Like explained that he went there in September 1927, “got my certification to teach, and … became what they call a ‘teacher-principal’ for the school. They had students of all ages – school ages.” Later in the mid-twentieth century, leprosy facilities were established at Hale Mohalu in Pearl City and a school started there was also called “Mount Happy.”

In the mid-twentieth century, the federal government’s financial contribution once again to leprosy care in Hawai’i meant it provided the major share. On the continent, the United States government took control of the leprosy facility at Carville, Louisiana in 1921 and operated it until it closed in 1999. Originally opened in 1864 at Carville the hospital was known as the Louisiana Leper Home, where “it occupied the abandoned slave cabins and plantation home of Indian Camp Plantation, a 395-acre plantation located along the banks of the Mississippi River in Iberville Parish, between New Orleans and Baton Rouge.” On the continent anyone diagnosed with leprosy during the period 1921 until 1960 had to go to Carville for treatment.

In the second half of the twentieth century, several Hawai’i patients from Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu went to Carville for additional leprosy treatment that was

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101 Law, Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory 327.
102 Law, Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory 327.
104 Law, Kalaupapa 396.
107 Gaudet, Carville 9 +167.
108 Gaudet, Carville 6.
109 Gaudet, Carville 10.
not available in the Islands at the time.\textsuperscript{110} Kalaupapa patients Richard Marks and his brother Eddie Marks, Bernard Punikai‘a and Norbert Palea as well as Henry Nalaielua all stayed at Carville at one time or another. Henry Nalaielua explained in his memoir how the Hawaiian patients came to know about the Louisiana facility. “Eddie Marks told us how the National Hansen’s Disease Center at Carville was better than Kalaupapa - the hospital had more nurses and doctors, and each patient was assigned a particular doctor.”\textsuperscript{111} Later in 1984 the center at Carville became known as Gillis W. Long National Hansen’s Disease Center, named for a Louisiana congressman.\textsuperscript{112}

**Attempts to find a cure**

Initially, there was no cure or effective treatment for the disease. Various experimental procedures were tried, including the use of chaulmoogra oil, dry ice applications, and contrast baths. Injections of chaulmoogra oil were extremely painful. “The women fainted and the men trembled.”\textsuperscript{113} In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, numerous attempts to find a cure for leprosy (often a painful process) were tested and tried out on the patients, both at Kalaupapa and in Honolulu. When Father Damien on Kalaupapa contracted the disease, he came to Honolulu for treatment at Kaka‘ako Hospital through the use of Japanese medicine and baths, as prescribed by the Japanese doctor, Masanao Goto. Damien later brought the treatment to Kalawao.\textsuperscript{114} It may have provided some temporary relief but nothing more than that.

In the early part of the twentieth century other types of treatments were tried, but often the so-called therapy left the patients feeling worse. One patient said, “She felt like a guinea pig in the underfunded and sometimes desperately experimental efforts to find the cause and cure of leprosy.”\textsuperscript{115} Another patient, Olivia Breitha, spoke of the treatment process she received in her book, *Olivia: My Life of Exile in Kalaupapa*. She had to endure contrast baths in which her feet were put in hot water and then into a pail of ice. “It was almost unbearable.” The foot contrast treatment lasted 20 minutes with four

\textsuperscript{110} Henry Nalaielua went to Carville in 1972 to get medical attention for his foot. (Nalaielua, *No Footprints* 90) Bernard Punikai‘a went to Carville in 1973 for foot surgery.\textsuperscript{111} Nalaielua, *No Footprints* 92.
\textsuperscript{112} “In 1984 it became the Gillis W. Long National Hansen’s Disease Center, named for the Louisiana congressman, who supported the wishes of patients by sponsoring a bill to keep the hospital open long after there was any clear medical or fiscal justification for doing so.” (Gaudet, *Carville* 10).
\textsuperscript{113} Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 103.
minutes of ice, followed by contrast baths, in which she was showered with hot and then cold water. “I had the contrast baths three times a week and that was the only treatment I received.”116 Other patients received various other kinds of treatments, including some with dry ice applied to their skin.117 In addition to the experiments conducted on them, one of the worst experiences involved “Progress,” the physical examinations patients regularly underwent each month. The doctors termed the exams “Progress,” but for those examined, it seemed more like torture. The patients, completely naked, had to wait individually in narrow cubicles before their turn was called. Then they had to walk into a room of doctors and a nurse where the doctors had them stand on a pedestal in the middle of the room. The pedestal rotated as a doctor with a pointer pointed to different parts of the patient’s body, to lesions or sores, etc. In No Footprints in the Sand, Henry Nalaielua describes his experience at Kalihi Hospital.

He [the doctor] turned me on the pedestal and the other doctors encircled it, asking questions. The chief doctor told me to look away. Then he tested my reaction to heat and cold. To see what I could feel, he touched me with a feather, and cotton, and pricked me with a needle. It lasted 10 or 15 minutes. It felt like hours. It would happen again in a month, when the doctors would once again look for progress. It took me a few years to realize that this was all a study for the doctors. It wasn’t for us. But it only took me a time or two to hate the degrading, humiliating, shaming ‘Progress,’ where I was stared at, poked and prodded like a bug you then step on.118

Troublemakers who refused to partake of “Progress” were punished by the denial of movies or some other recreational activity. If they repeatedly refused to participate, they were soon sent to Kalaupapa. If “Progress” was not humiliating enough, there was another exam conducted on a larger scale called the “Monkey Show.” This examination was held once or twice a year in the theater. Nalaielua states what took place.

We patients were the monkeys on the stage. The men and boys wore only their shorts. Women and girls wore bra and panties under a hospital gown open in the back. Any number of people were in the audience, all training to be doctors, nurses or physical therapists. The presiding doctor used the ‘Progress’ pointer to give his lecture. He paraded us across the stage, calling us out one by one.119

117 Breitha 12.
118 Nalaielua, No Footprints 19.
119 Nalaielua 25.
Nalaielua said the doctor never called anyone by name or even by his/her number. In a style similar to the way a prisoner is handled, every patient was photographed when he/she was admitted and given a number to hold under his/her face in the photo. Henry Nalaielua explained that the “Monkey Show” was an exam similar to the “Progress” one. “He [the doctor] pointed to my various nodules or scars or other symptoms, lecturing about these as if I weren’t even there. It would have been better to be a real monkey.”

Frustrated with the problems associated with the disease, many patients sought to run away, both at Kalaupapa and at Kalihi. At Kalaupapa, surrounded by the ocean and high cliffs (pali), escape was virtually impossible. On O‘ahu, prior to World War II, those at Kalihi Hospital would often flee, but without much success. “With the other rules, daily life at Kalihi came down to incarceration, a life sentence with no prospect for parole,” Nalaielua explains. “It was a death sentence, too, because you would carry the stigma of the disease until the day you died. No matter what, you would always be known as a ‘leper.’” If the patients were able to run away from Kalihi, they inevitably got caught and were returned.

Strict rules at Kalihi regulated every aspect of life, from bedtime to meals to which room you slept in or which room you could or could not enter; moreover, patients had to accept whatever treatment the doctor recommended. Nalaielua reflected on the control exerted over the patients.

For many years, I didn’t realize that Federal and Territorial laws of the time, as well as the policies of the Hawai‘i Board of Health and the procedures of the hospital, violated our human rights. We were denied the right to question our medication, even to ask if it had negative side effects, or what it was expected to accomplish.

Even if their disease were not in the advanced stage, patients at Kalihi who repeatedly ran away would be sent to Kalaupapa as a punishment. In My Life of Exile in Kalaupapa, Olivia Breitha recounts her adventures in seeking to escape her confinement at Kalihi. She and a friend went to see a movie and the next day they received letters that they were going to Kalaupapa. They had run away too many times. On this occasion, Olivia Breitha

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120 Nalaielua 25.
121 Nalaielua 19-20.
122 Nalaielua 19.
123 Breitha 14.
got a reprieve, thanks to the help of an attorney whom she happened to meet at Kalihi, but not long after in June 1937, she was sent to Molokaʻi. Similarly Nancy Brede (the oldest patient at age 92 who presently resides at Hale Mohalu at Leahi) recalled that she too ran away from Kalihi every chance she got. Nancy Brede was sent to Kalaupapa in 1936. When patient John Arruda, who was born and raised on Kauaʻi, was diagnosed with the disease, he was sent to Kalihi. Because Arruda missed his fiancée back on Kauaʻi so much, he took every chance he could to flee in order to see her. Finally, to prevent any further escapes, he was taken out of Kalihi permanently and put on a boat for Kalaupapa. Unfortunately, when he arrived there, his father, who had been a patient at Kalaupapa, had passed away a few months before young Arruda’s incarceration.

20th Century Rules at Kalaupapa

After banishment to Molokaʻi, life at Kalaupapa was marked by additional isolation within the leprosy colony. Large, gated fences separated patients and non-patients, delineating the two disparate worlds each inhabited. Strict rules spelled out further segregation. Patients and staff were not allowed to drink or dine together. Patients could not ride in non-patient cars. Patient mail was fumigated with formaldehyde. The children born to leprosy parents at the settlement were immediately taken away at birth, to be raised by relatives or by the State. When visitors came to Kalaupapa, patients were told to keep back, with arms down at their sides, never to reach out to touch visitors, and never to offer a hug, not even to their own children who had come to visit.

Within the single designated Meeting Hall, visitors could encounter patients only via a chain-link fence (later a screened partition) that ran, floor to ceiling, along the length of the visible barrier (prison-style) between the clean and contaminated. Laid out in a regular pattern according to a 1890 plan, the buildings are architecturally significant as prime examples of Hawaiian plantation style architecture; there are over 400 buildings including small houses, administrative buildings, as well as garages, and tool sheds. The settlement is also significant as an example of an intact community, of what is called a historical district.

124 Breitha 18-20.
125 Nancy Brede, personal patient interview, Hale Mohalu at Leahi, 2 October 2009.
127 Ivy Kahilihiwa, personal patient interview, Kalaupapa 7 June 2005.
The village fabric of Kalaupapa Settlement is composed of single one-and one-half story cottages, most with well-kept gardens, manicured lawns, and small outbuildings, surrounding a core area of larger structures, such as the hospital, the meeting hall, the administrative building, the library, staff and guest quarters, and wharf buildings.\textsuperscript{129}

The settlement’s location at the base of towering cliffs, which rise up to over 1,600 feet, and its intact village character, replicated architecturally the physical division between patient and staff.

Rules spelled out patient conduct at all times. According to patient Olivia Breitha, “Wherever we went in Kalaupapa, or in Kalihi Hospital, there were signs telling us where we could or could not go and what we could not touch or whom we must not touch.”\textsuperscript{130} Visitors to Kalaupapa were only permitted to stay in one building, designated solely for them, known as the Visitor’s Quarters. “The visitor was not permitted to walk around the Settlement without a police escort.”\textsuperscript{131} Strict regulations helped to maintain Kalaupapa as a leprosy colony with all the psychological problems inherent in such a power differential. Olivia Breitha stated: “…patients at Kalaupapa were not only haunted by what was happening to them physically, but were also held down to the ground by the rocky fists of rules and regulations, which often seemed to be a result of sheer whim rather than medical necessity.”\textsuperscript{132} Patients were made to know their place in the colony, and physical barriers such as fences ensured that they did not forget it. Remnants of those fences remain today at Kalaupapa – but only barely. Almost all are gone.

Former Governor Lawrence M. Judd, director of the settlement from 1947 through 1949, felt that changes in the leprosy program were long overdue.\textsuperscript{133} “Our goal is less institutionalism and less colonization, for I feel that Hansen’s disease should be considered, not as a special and awful disease, but just another disease.”\textsuperscript{134} During his administration, Judd sought to correct the colony’s psychological abuses by eliminating physical barriers like fences. His order to take down the six-foot chain link fence in the Meeting House, which separated patients and visitors, made a deep impact on patient

\textsuperscript{129} Soulliere, and Law, \textit{Architectural Evaluation: Kalaupapa-Hawaii} 2.
\textsuperscript{130} Breitha 25.
\textsuperscript{131} Breitha 47.
\textsuperscript{132} Breitha 47.
\textsuperscript{133} Descendent of missionary Gerrit P. Judd, Lawrence M. Judd was Territorial Governor from 1929 to 1934; Judd’s role in the famous Massie Case is infamous as he commuted the sentence of the defendants found guilty to one hour in custody.
morale. “That gave us a feeling that we, the patients, almost belonged to the human race again.”

Patient Olivia Breith said of Judd. “He was a man ahead of his time. He helped to lessen the sense of separateness I felt as a patient.” Judd’s innovative policies set the groundwork for additional changes in the leprosy program, brought on by the discovery of sulfone drugs, but it would be twenty more years before the official end of segregation.

Sulfone drugs were developed in 1943 as a result of research done to assist the war effort. Their discovery in the use of treatment for leprosy meant that the once incurable disease could now be cured. The U.S. Leprosy Station at Carville received the drugs before Hawai‘i. When sulfone drugs became available in Hawai‘i in 1946, the disease was finally able to be arrested and physical disfigurement halted. Although this was a monumental breakthrough, involuntary separation still continued as the Hawai‘i government’s official leprosy policy.

Incredibly, it would not be until 1969 that forced segregation was declared no longer necessary. While the policy of isolation may have been officially abandoned, administratively, its pervasive influence still prevailed emotionally in the residents’ attitudes and the staff’s demeanor toward the patients. Generally speaking, the patients are very acquiescent when it comes to following doctor’s orders and the Department of Health has had control for so long over every aspect of patient life that the authorities often demonstrate a supercilious attitude toward their unwell charges.

**Psychological Impact**

Long-term institutionalization with its proscribed roles had formed the skeletal backbone of the leprosy colony for nearly a century. For the patients, a lifetime of endless examinations, of being poked and prodded for reoccurring signs of disease, of being looked at askance, treated as a curiosity, and derogatorily called lepers, had left them wary, compliant, and rather reticent, with a kind of internalized timid reserve. Colonization’s impact had maintained fences, no longer physically in existence, but nonetheless still tangible emotionally. In a newspaper article from 1968, several

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135 Breitha 40-1.
136 Breitha 40-1.
137 “Carville’s patients can come and go as they please, just like patients in any general hospital. What keeps them confined is not the law, but their desire to be cured, or, in the case of the older and more disfigured patients, an unwillingness to face the community at large.” (A. A. Smyser, Honolulu Star-Bulletin, August 20, 1968, A-4.)
Kalaupapa patients were interviewed and one of them, Ed Bell, stated, “After living in a place so long, our roots are embedded here. It is hard to move and hard to make one’s way in a strange society, a society that is very cruel as far as leprosy patients are concerned.” Bernard Punikai‘a, thirty-eight years old at the time, and incarcerated since he was six years old agreed with that statement. “Most of us came in as young kids. We have no education. We aren’t dropouts. We had nothing to drop out of. Let’s face it. I’ve been institutionalized already. I agree with that.” Banished to a lifetime of confinement, the patients could not help but be bound by their prescriptive lifestyle.

In 1969, the State Legislature finally passed a law that did away with the policy of segregation and isolation for leprosy patients. More than one hundred years after the segregation law of 1865, it was officially declared no longer necessary to isolate anyone with leprosy. New cases were to be treated strictly on an outpatient basis at Hale Mohalu with no new patients admitted to Kalaupapa. While leprosy sufferers were free to live anywhere they wanted, most patients were afraid to leave Kalaupapa or Hale Mohalu. Both places were the only homes that they had ever known. Faced with the choice of leaving Kalaupapa to live on the outside, one patient, Minerva Siu, expressed her concerns. “Many of us came here when we were young. We don’t have schooling. We don’t have friends on the outside. We don’t think we could compete. It was terrible when we had to come here but now this is our life. We don’t want to leave.”

In addition to this initial timidity regarding life on the outside, isolation had also left another psychological mark on the patients in terms of their being intimidated by authority. Bernard Punikai‘a described the mindset for many of the patients.

We have been conditioned, we have been told, hey, do not do this, do not touch, do not breathe on other people. Do not associate. Visitors were advised to stay upwind of us in the old days. So that kind of conditioning makes our people shy. They avoid confronting the government. All their lives they have been dependent, and did what they were told to do. You can see why they are frightened.

Physically confined year after year, without power of choice in the most mundane matters of their lives, the patients generally found it easier to comply, even if they resented the

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141 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 110.
regulations they had to follow. Numerous rules regulating behavior resulted in a patient who manifested a “curious combination of rebel and submissive dependent.” Patients saw no reason to buck the system that they could not change. As part of the long-standing tradition of acceptance and respect for authority, it was simply easier to comply. Bernard Punikai‘a explained, “There is humility and respect among our people, so sometimes they do not say what they really have on their minds.” The struggle for Hale Mohalu would change that timidity to an outspoken singleness of purpose.

**Bernard Punikai‘a: the early years**

The history of Hansen’s disease in Hawai‘i and Hale Mohalu can best be told by focusing on Bernard Punikai‘a, whose story is typical of many leprosy patients. Born August 29, 1930 on Oahu, Bernard Punikai‘a grew up in a family that had never experienced leprosy. Lacking such a history, Punikai‘a had no idea how he got the disease or even that he had it, until “one ordinary day when the visiting school nurse noticed a red spot on my cheek.” Diagnosed as a leper, he was immediately taken from his family and sent to Kalihi Hospital Receiving Station on February 15, 1937. He was only six and one half years old, at the time, the youngest child admitted to Kalihi Hospital. In the past, people of all ages had been ordered to Moloka‘i, but in the early twentieth century, only the most severe adult cases and incorrigible runaways were sent to Kalaupapa. In contrast, children were kept at Kalihi as long as possible.

For several days prior to December 7, 1941, Punikai‘a had not been feeling well due to the effects of his disease; that morning, however, he felt better and went out into the Kalihi Hospital yard. The hospital, located next to Honolulu harbor afforded clear vistas of the surrounding the area. In fact, for those there that day, it would be a time they would never forget. Punikai‘a recalled what happened: “But that Sunday morning, I was in the hospital yard, and we saw the airplanes come down. They were flying low over Kalihi.” Even years later, he said, “I remember so vividly the planes passing directly

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142 Gould, *A Disease Apart* 240.
143 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 115.
144 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 100-01.
overhead. Bernard Punikaiʻa, along with others, including patients Jimmy Brede and Edwin Lelepali watched as Japanese planes flew low on their way to Pearl Harbor.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor in the morning, martial law in the Islands was initiated at 3:30 PM the same day. The start of the war brought tremendous changes to Hawaiʻi, including not only the imposition of martial law, but also seizure by the military of large tracts of Hawaiian land. The takeover of some areas, such as Mākua Valley, was ostensibly only temporary, and the land was to be returned to civilian control after the war. However, that has not turned out to be the case, as military control continues over much of Oʻahu. Immediately following the offensive strike on Pearl Harbor, there was a pervasive fear in Honolulu that there would be another assault on Oahu at any moment. In addition to the constant threat of further Japanese invasion, the constraints of martial law made it increasingly difficult for the Territorial government to operate Kalihi Hospital.

Because of these concerns, the Territory decided to transfer the patients, especially all the children at Kalihi Hospital, to Kalaupapa in May 1942. At the time Punikaiʻa was eleven and a half, having been incarcerated at Kalihi Hospital for the preceding five years. Kalihi was a place of familiarity, but Kalaupapa, in contrast, was notorious for its history as a place of exile. The Kalihi Hospital patients were frightened at the thought of being transferred there. Bernard Punikaiʻa explained how the patients felt. “At that time, Kalaupapa had a dreaded reputation. It was a place where people were sent to die. It was a place without hope, a final solution, a final place of isolation from which there was no return.” Now, because of the war emergency and also the nineteenth-century laws that regulated leprosy, there was no other option. No matter how terrified those at Kalihi Hospital might be of going to Molokaʻi, they had no choice except to obey the authorities. The patients were wards of the state without any civil rights. As a result, in order to protect them in the event of another aerial attack, the government ordered the children at Kalihi Hospital sent to Kalaupapa. Bound together by

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145 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 104.
146 Jimmy Brede, personal patient interview, Honolulu, 2 October 2009.
150 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness* 105.
their common illness and now the experience of witnessing the Pearl Harbor attack, they would go to their new life at Kalaupapa and grow increasingly closer as family.

On May 15, 1942, thirty-five patients, adults and children, including Bernard Punikaiʻa, disembarked from the ship Hawaiʻi onto the shores of Molokaʻi at the Settlement. There were twenty-five young people between the ages of 10 and 15, and Edwin Lelepali was 14, Bernard Punikaiʻa age 11, and Jimmy Brede, age 13. Since there hadn’t been any children at Kalaupapa in a long time, their arrival was a big event; everyone came out to greet the ship. Initially, the young children were terribly frightened when they saw the severe disfigurement of the older Kalaupapa patients, who eagerly rushed to greet them. Because many of these adults had been forced to give up at birth their own children, these young ones now became substitutes for their own. Similarly, for the small children, separated from their families, these adult patients became surrogate parents; over time, the children gradually grew accustomed to the people and the place, and they matured into adulthood as part of a tight-knit community, completely isolated, within the boundaries of the leprosy settlement.

The children, such as Jimmy Brede, Daniel Hashimoto, Lucy Kaona, Edwin Lelepali, Cathrine Puahala, Richard Pupule, Bernard Punikaiʻa, and the others who arrived in May of 1942 felt such a special bond with one another that they became known in Kalaupapa as the “Gang of ‘42.” Their name served both as a badge of honor, a point of pride in the “who’s who” of Kalaupapa patient history and a mark of respect for revered elders. One of those from the original gang, Jimmy Brede now lives with his wife Nancy at Hale Mohalu at Leahi Hospital. When Lucy Kaona passed away on July 21, 2011, she was one of the last three original members at Kalaupapa; now only two remain: Edwin Lelepali and Daniel Hashimoto, both in their eighties.

Strong sense of community

Isolated over many years on Kalaupapa, the residents formed their own social networks and relationships that centered on activities such as baseball games, parties with

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151 Law, Kalaupapa 438.
155 Lelepali known affectionately as “Pali” organizes the weekly volleyball games every Wednesday and Saturday afternoons; Pali supervises the games, keeping score in his inimitable style, sometimes seated on the floorboard of his opened VW van, which is filled with numerous stuffed animals and assorted guitars. Danny or Hash, as he is also known, served for many years as a sheriff in the settlement and also as the person who picked up the mail at the airport and delivered it to the post office in town.
Hawaiian entertainment, and once a week movies put on by the Health Department. The movies were shown at Paschoal Hall, a large Hawaiian vernacular style building built in 1920 that is striking for its many attractive features, most especially its enormous Hawaiian hip roof. “The interior consists of a large auditorium with tiers of seating which rise up to the balcony. The audience was originally separated so that kokua (Settlement workers or ‘helpers’) sat in the balcony, separated from the patients by a railing.”

Baseball games were played on the expansive field located next to Paschoal Hall and across from the area known as Staff Row. Bernard Punikai‘a and the other patient players had their own uniforms and teams. Removed from their loved ones, the patients turned inward for support, creating a family of their own. According to patient Lucy Kaona, “We [the patients] were like brothers and sisters.”

Since most of the patients were Hawaiian, they formed an extremely tight-knit community, aligned in similar values and beliefs. At the time patient Gertrude Kaauwai came to Kalaupapa on September 27, 1944 at the age of 11, there were 528 patients living at Kalaupapa and the settlement had five bars or taverns. When the Settlement began in 1866 there were 142 admissions but that significantly increased in 1888 when the largest number admitted was 558. Today (2013) in contrast, out of twelve remaining patients, only eight actually live at Kalaupapa full time and there is only one bar, which is opened only a few days a week.

Schooling at Kalaupapa

For the young people at the Moloka‘i settlement, there was only a limited amount of formal schooling. Patient Winnie Harada, sister of fellow patient, Richard Marks, recalls finally being able to go to class for four hours in the morning and then having to work in the afternoon, doing chores like weeding in yards or picking up trash, whatever was needed, for another two hours. School was held at the building now called Mother Marianne Library and also at the Protestant Church, Ka‘ana‘ana Social Hall. Within the confines of the settlement, their chances for advancement in terms of education were nil. Life at Kalaupapa centered primarily on community events like church and such

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158 Gertrude Kaauwai, personal patient interview, Kalaupapa, 12 July 2010.
159 Law, Kalaupapa 35 and 192.
160 Another patient Kay Costales passed away in the spring of 2013.
161 Winnie Harada, personal patient interview, Kalaupapa, 19 February 2010.
social activities as movies at Paschoal Hall, playing cards or at McVeigh Social Hall. Community life was the main focus and social interaction with one another was part of everyday contact, as in any small town. In 1948 the Kalaupapa Lions Club started and opened the world to the patients and vice versa. With new drugs to arrest the disease, the promise of living healthier and longer lives finally emerged, providing new energy. “Softball teams were all the rage, as were water sports and weekend dances.”

When the Kalaupapa Lions Club held a baseball game against their topside rivals, the leprosy patients decided that the best way to draw a crowd would be to play in mu‘umu‘u (s). Since it was all for a good cause, there was a great deal of laughter and fun. “As you might guess with a field full of dressed-up hams, there was plenty of clowning around. Herbert Hayase was the Kalaupapa coach and had his work cut out for him keeping everyone’s mind on serious softball, especially after all the parties the night before.” Bernard Punikai‘a caught the ball when he used his mu‘umu‘u as a catcher’s mitt. “Although the impact sent Punikai‘a skidding on his rear end, he apparently looked good falling: He was later awarded a trophy for ‘Best Form.’”

Overall, the buildings and the physical layout of the settlement at Kalaupapa changed little over the years, remaining in many ways as it was prior to World War II. “The very physical and social isolation that kept Kalaupapa peninsula from developing a modern suburban sprawl has helped preserve rare examples of older Hawaiian architecture as well as excellent examples of Hawaiian institutional architecture of the 1930s.” Within the formality of the structures, there was freedom to explore the landscape, and for a child, that was an adventure. The children could roam all about, and there was a kind of independence in the midst of all these other types of constraints.

When Kalaupapa became a National Park in 1980, the State of Hawai‘i under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health agreed to share administrative oversight of the Settlement with the federal government, with the understanding that over time, the State’s role would gradually decrease, as the federal government assumed greater responsibility. However, in medical matters, the State of Hawai‘i continues to have complete jurisdiction, with the Department of Health retaining primary responsibility for the

163 Topside is the term given to the land at Molokai‘i, the area above the peninsula’s tall cliffs, where the major population resides.
165 Green, Exile 569.
medical care of the patients. Public Law 96-565 of December 22, 1980 was the enabling legislation that created the National Park at Kalaupapa; it provided that the patients can spend the remainder of their lives at Kalaupapa. The Park is charged with maintaining the Leprosy Settlement and telling the story of what happened there since 1866, as well as caring for the archeological sites that go back to pre-haole days when the peninsula contained Hawaiians’ homes and agricultural sites.166

Prior to the arrival of Captain Cook in the Islands in 1778, Hawaiians had a complex system of farming and fishing that enabled the Hawaiian people to thrive. At the time of Cook’s arrival, the population has been estimated at “roughly between 800,000 and a million.”167 The introduction of foreign disease resulted in the tremendous decline of the population, killing “as many as one out of every eight Hawaiians in the first five decades after contact.”168 Leprosy was part of the massive die-off that haoles often regarded as the inevitable extinction of a weak race. In pre-haole Hawai‘i, the land on each Island was divided into districts (moku). Within the moku were further divisions known as ahupua‘a. These were sections of land that stretched from the mountains to the sea and were agriculturally self-sufficient. The settlement at Kalaupapa consists of three ahupua‘a known as Makanalua.169 Unlike most other places in the Hawaiian Islands where development has covered over those boundaries, the demarcation of the ahupua‘a at Kalaupapa can still be seen clearly today in 2013. Both the ahupua‘a and the patients’ history are fragile parts of Hawaiian history entrusted to the care of the federal park.

166 Green, Exile 719.
169 Kalawao is on the eastern shore of the peninsula, Makanalua is in the middle, and Kalaupapa on the western side.
CHAPTER 3
HISTORY OF HALE MOHALU

To understand what happened at the Pearl City facility, it is necessary to look at how it came to be established, including its physical location, initial community opposition, transition into a model of inclusive treatment within society, and decline. As with any Hawaiian history, this story begins with the place of origin.

Puʻuloa, Mānana, and Waimano

The land that eventually became Hale Mohalu in Pearl City was located on a coastal plain, not far from Pearl Harbor or Puʻuloa in the ‘Ewa moku (district) on Oʻahu, approximately 12 miles west of Honolulu. During the reign of Kamehameha I, the Native people had already been well established in Puʻuloa, noted for its rich fishponds and diversified agriculture. Unlike the polluted waters of present day Pearl Harbor, Puʻuloa was once an idyllic place. In 1892 Queen Liliʻuokalani had a summer residence on its shores at Waipio, as well as one on the Pearl City peninsula. “Modern Pearl City is located on the leeward side of the island of Oahu and is spread over portions of four traditional Hawaiian ahupua’a: Waiawa (bitter water), Mānana (the place where two lava flows converge), Waimano (many waters) and Waiau (swirling water).”

In the 19th century, as the sugar industry grew, Benjamin F. Dillingham wanted to transport sugar from his ‘Ewa and Kahuku plantations directly into Honolulu for shipment to different markets. He started to build a railroad in 1888 that would run out toward ‘Ewa and by 1890, the Oahu Railway and Land Company (OR&L) began service, reaching to Manana. To encourage people to travel on his railroad from Honolulu to Pearl City, Dillingham built a hotel, the Grove Hotel, on a twenty-two acre site named Remond Grove. Located makai of today’s Kamehameha Highway

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171Ellis 23.
172Ellis 12.
175October 22, 2005, ‘Ōlelo Makuahine Conference, Hawaii Pacific University, Kihei DeSilva presented his research on a mele about Queen Liliʻuokalani riding the train to Remond Grove and beyond to Haleiwa; in DeSilva’s research, (depending on the different levels of meaning given to the reading) the mele can be interpreted as a protest against haole colonial control of the kingdom. Remond Grove is today an unknown name, part of Hawaiʻi’s forgotten history until DeSilva referenced it in the mele.
(formerly Government Road), the extensive grounds and large shade trees of Remond Grove would later become Hale Mohalu.176

To further drum up peoples’ interest in traveling from town to his hotel, Dillingham actively promoted the region’s development. In an example of Native erasure, he held a contest to name the area and what had been Manana became Pearl City.177 Dillingham planned various developments, even to the way the streets were laid out in Pearl City as well as on the peninsula. The area along the peninsula, close to the water was especially desirable for housing among the wealthy.178 Plantation towns like Waipahu had camps, but the peaceful setting on the shores of Puʻu‘uola served as a lovely place for affluent summer homes.179

Sheila Nonaka Ellis, editor of Where Pearls Flourished, Moʻolelo o Manana: The Story of Pearl City, recounted the area’s many oral histories, including Remond Grove, which later became known as Diamond Grove, Die Man Grove and Dead Man Grove.180 Closer to the mauka end of the peninsula, Remond Grove or Deadman’s Grove had lots of tall trees, including palms, mango, and avocado. One person interviewed recalled a hilly area with tall trees that was kind of scary to walk through alone.181 Pearl City and the peninsula retained its relaxed lifestyle until the start of World War II, when everything was transformed. Because of military expansion over Pearl Harbor, the government condemned nearly 1,000 private homes on the peninsula for use as naval housing.182 What was once a peaceful neighborhood quickly disappeared along with a genteel way of life.183

Huge numbers of military personnel arrived, as well as civilians from the continent hired to do construction work at Pearl Harbor. On the site of what was once Remond Grove, Hale Mohalu was built in 1942-1943 and served as housing for the Navy’s construction workers.184 These men built everything they needed, from a theater to a bowling alley.185 When no longer needed for construction workers, the buildings

176 Ellis 16.
177 Ellis 23.
178 Ellis 28.
179 Ellis 28.
180 Ellis 64.
181 Ellis 66.
182 Ching 10.
183 Ellis 54-55.
185 Ellis 66.
housed military tenants. The site covered 11.5 acres, a few blocks makai of Kamehameha Avenue in Pearl City and mauka of Pearl Harbor.\textsuperscript{186} At one time, the Navy moved its WAVES into the barracks, and when the war ended, the Navy leased some of the buildings to the Territory to accommodate additional TB patients from Leahi Hospital.\textsuperscript{187} Known as the Waimano annex, Leahi Hospital had been using the former barracks as an annex for its tuberculosis patients since 1946; by 1949 instead of three hundred patients, there were only thirty patients who were scheduled either for discharge or transfer to Leahi. In March 1949, the president of the Territorial Board of Health Dr. Charles L. Wilbar, Jr. reported that the Navy would likely allow the Board to continue use of the site if the Board found another use for the building.\textsuperscript{188} In May 1949 the territory discussed the idea of using the former naval barracks for Hansen’s Disease patients. One proposal put forth by Dr. Edwin K. Chung-Hoon, who worked with leprosy patients, was to close Kalaupapa over time and allow each county to take care of its cases while keeping Kalihi open as the city facility in Honolulu.\textsuperscript{189} In years past, it had been suggested to have hospitals on each island look after leprosy cases, so that families could maintain closer ties.\textsuperscript{190} No action was ever taken on that proposal or on Dr. Chung-Hoon’s suggestion. Instead the Board of Health focused on the Pearl City site, since the Navy was willing to let the Territory use the property. The Board said it would decide at their June 7, 1949 meeting.\textsuperscript{191} Later in June the Territorial Board of Health appointed several doctors as Hansen’s Disease consultants for one year effective July 1, 1949.\textsuperscript{192} Finally the Board decided to lease the site from the Navy on a monthly basis and move the Hansen Disease program from Kalihi Hospital to Pearl City.\textsuperscript{193}

From Kalihi to Pearl City

The selection of Hale Mohalu was a matter of controversy for the Pearl City community. Although the spread of the disease had been arrested earlier in the 1940s by means of sulfone drugs, the general public still felt extremely fearful about those with

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\textsuperscript{188} “Leahi Hospital Annex Will Stop Patient Care,” \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin}, Wednesday March 30, 1949, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{190} In a presentation at the University of Hawaii at Manoa on September 27, 2012 leprosy historian Anwei Skinsnes Law explained that the idea of putting hospitals on each island so families could easily visit (instead of sending everyone to Molokaʻi) had been suggested as far back as 1884, but nothing ever came from that idea.
\textsuperscript{191} “Hansen’s Disease Hospital Is Not Dangerous in City, Doctor Says,” \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} Friday May 27, 1949, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{193} Aotani and Associates, Inc. \textit{Hale Mohalu} 1.
leprosy. Members of the Pearl City Community Association in June 1949 spoke out against the hospital being in their neighborhood.\textsuperscript{194} Later in August 1949 in an appeal to Governor Stainback the association again argued, “We feel that this action is an injustice to this community which should not be allowed to happen. As citizens and taxpayers, we urgently suggest that this plan be dropped in favor of any one of many, more suitable places elsewhere.”\textsuperscript{195} The community association had earlier presented a petition signed by close to 700 residents opposed to the leprosy hospital. Their objections, they stated, had nothing to do with fear of the illness, but rather with financial concerns over repair of the old buildings; since the buildings could be taken back anytime by the Navy, the community association expressed doubt about paying for renovations when they might not possess the buildings in the first place. The association felt that the decision to go ahead and move the leprosy program to Pearl City despite the community’s objections was wrong, and their letter to the governor explained their feelings: “The institution will be an eyesore in every way, a blot on the landscape, a fire trap, and certain to send property values plummeting.”\textsuperscript{196} In solidarity with the Pearl City Community Association, the Waipahu Community Council added its opposition to the Kalihi leprosy transfer.\textsuperscript{197} The Waialua Community Association also voted against the relocation of the Kalihi Hospital to Pearl City.\textsuperscript{198}

Nevertheless, their pleas went unheeded as eighteen patients were moved from Kalihi Hospital to Hale Mohalu on Monday afternoon September 19, 1949 with sixty-one additional patients scheduled for transfer later in the month.\textsuperscript{199} Dr. Wilbar met with the residents of the communities in Pearl City, Waipahu, and Aiea on Thursday September 22 to discuss the transfer. “Dr. Wilbar explained that the move is being made as an economy measure. More than $125, 000 worth of equipment has been obtained free from the navy by taking over the former barracks.”\textsuperscript{200} By November 1949, the Pearl City facility was already well established and able to hold a luau for a visiting doctor from the leprosarium in Carville, Louisiana.\textsuperscript{201} The doctors at Carville congratulated Hawai‘i on

\textsuperscript{194} Poster on Hale Mohalu at Hale Mālama, (Curatorial Building) Kalaupapa, June 2010.
\textsuperscript{195} “Pearl City Again Protests Leprosy Hospital There,” Honolulu Advertiser, Monday August 22, 1949, p.11.
\textsuperscript{196} “Pearl City Again Protests Leprosy Hospital There,” Honolulu Advertiser, Monday August 22, 1949, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{197} “Waipahu Joins Opposition to Hospital Change,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Wednesday September 21, 1949, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{198} “Waialuans Oppose Hansen’s Disease Hospital at P.C.” Honolulu Advertiser, Monday September 26, 1949, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{200} “Wilbar Tells Pearl City People Reasons for Kalihi Hospital Move,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Friday September 23, 1949, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{201} “Carville Leprosarium Director Speaks at Pearl City Hospital,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Monday November 21, 1949, p. 3.
its far-sightedness in the treatment of the disease, especially in two key ways. First, they applauded the Territory’s adoption of the term Hansen’s Disease instead of leprosy. Secondly, they congratulated the community for establishing the leprosarium in the middle of an urban environment at Pearl City. The latest conference on leprosy held in Havana had recommended “Hansen’s disease patients be housed near an urban center and not banished as formerly.”

With Hale Mohalu’s increasing acceptance as part of the Pearl City community, the luau became a yearly event.

Along with the many tall trees already on the property, the patients planted more trees, including a historic chaulmoogra oil tree they had brought with them from Kalihi Hospital, and seedlings from Kalaupapa. In addition to several metal Quonset huts, the structures were typical military-style institutional wooden buildings, approximately ten in number. Three were original barracks: one was three-story, while the remaining were two-stories. Other buildings served as the laundry, theater, kitchen and dining area, the sewing school, and the physical therapy building. Nearly all the buildings were “painted a uniform palm green including the roofs,” so the overall appearance made for a peaceful setting, with the offset spacing of the buildings along the curved road, enabling the breezes to flow easily. A concrete bridge and two wooden footbridges provided access over Waimano Stream, which flowed through the middle of the property in a channel that bisected the site into two distinct areas.

The name Hale Mohalu held special meaning and reflected a more modern approach toward the disease. Hale translates as house or building, while the Hawaiian dictionary defines the word mōhalu (with a macron or kahakō) as “loose, at ease, unrestrained, at liberty: comfortable. Hale mōhalu, house of relaxation.” In an article written by Anwei Skinsnes (before she married Henry Law in July 1985), Anwei Skinsnes explained the thinking that lay behind the establishment of the Pearl City facility. “Rehabilitation rather than simple custodial care was the philosophy at Hale Mohalu, whose name was translated by some as ‘Freedom from Restraint.’ From 1949 to

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202 “Carville Leprosarium Director Speaks at Pearl City Hospital,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Monday November 21, 1949, p. 3.
1969, only 32 patients were sent to Kalaupapa.” She also spoke of the work of Lawrence M. Judd who had not only been governor of Hawaii from 1929 to 1934 but also administered Kalaupapa for two years (1947-1949), saying that Hale Mohalu had been Judd’s dream because he had witnessed the heartbreak of families forced to leave one another for shipment to Kalaupapa.

The President of the Board of Health, Dr. Charles Wilbar said Hale Mohalu represented “the desire to go ahead, to get well, to improve the situation, to go back into the community and educate people as to what Hansen’s Disease really is.” From the beginning, Hale Mohalu embraced an innovative approach - using the latest scientific information regarding the illness to create an atmosphere of a less institutional type of care. (Ironically this is exactly what the patients were fighting for when they did not want to go to Leahi in 1978).

To maintain their traditions in their new home, “the chapel built in 1931 at Kalihi Hospital was moved to Hale Mohalu. In addition, there were five buildings at Hale Mohalu that were named in honor of people who were deeply associated with the history of Hansen’s Disease in Hawai‘i.” The Clinton Building was designated for Bessie “Ma” Clinton, who for over twenty-five years was the hospital administrator at Kalihi Hospital. The Wayson building name was chosen on behalf of Dr. James T. Wayson, Board of Health physician and medical superintendent at Kalihi Hospital, while the Mouritz Theater was named in honor of Dr. Arthur Mouritz, physician at Kalawao from 1884 to 1887, when Father Damien was there. Dr. Mouritz wrote about his experiences working with Damien at Kalawao. Trotter Dining Hall was named for Dr. F. E. Trotter, former Board of Health President, while McInerny Social Hall was selected for William McInerny, who worked as a Senator in the Legislature to better conditions for the patients at Kalaupapa and at Kalihi.

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210 Ma Clinton was very strict, but she cared deeply for the patients as Henry Nalaielu recalled in his memoir. “Later I realized that Ma Clinton was a good woman. She really cared for the patients. At the time, she gave us a headache, but really, it was us who gave her the headache. She had to punish us because we were wrong, so we hated her.” (Henry Nalaielu, No Footprints, 30). Years later, patient Edmund K. Lelepali remembered Ma Clinton and the fear she instilled in the patients. “She was so tough, she used to make us all go to church.” Pali roared with laughter when he told the story of how she had shipped over some big package to Kalaupapa, but when Pali saw who had sent it, he was tempted to send it back. He didn’t however. (Edwin K. Lelepali, personal patient interview, Kalaupapa, 25 June 2010.)
211 Poster on Hale Mohalu at Hale Mālama, (Curatorial Building) Kalaupapa, June 2010.
Not only were the buildings designated with special meaning, but every aspect of the grounds was honored as well. The plants and trees had significance for the patients because some of their past association with Kalihi and Kalaupapa, including the chaulmoogra tree, which was once used as a treatment for leprosy. It marked a continuation in a bodily sense of their years at Kalihi. The patients had invested themselves physically and spiritually in their new home.

By July 1950 the newspaper reported that leprosy cases were declining, but the problem still remained a vital concern for Hawai‘i. Quoting a memorandum by Kalaupapa Director, Lawrence M. Judd, the paper stated: “In 1890 Hawaii had 1, 200 active cases of Hansen’s disease. Today there are only 264, 205 at Kalaupapa on the island of Molokai, and 59 at Hale Mohalu.” Judd also reported on the people who had been tested and given temporary release. “There are 235 inactive cases on ‘temporary release,’ 65 of this number have elected to remain at Kalaupapa which will not be closed.” Judd noted that many improvements had taken place in the care of Hansen’s Disease patients and that even more changes should be expected in the future. “‘There is no reason why the ignorance and superstitions of the dark ages should be continued today.’” He also emphasized that the separations of the patients from family members had created problems that should not be discounted and for that reason, everything should be done to improve their circumstances. “We must not be indifferent to the mental suffering of persons who are forcibly separated from their families, homes and interest for long periods of time. The psychological and social implications are formidable and cannot be overstressed.”

Hale Mohalu School

By November 1951, after Hale Mohalu had been established for a full two years, the newspaper reported on its status. “Whether the cases are light or severe, all are now being referred to Hale Mohalu. No new cases are being sent to Kalaupapa for treatment.” Since Hale Mohalu sought to emphasize the importance of rehabilitation

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212 In a related note, there is also a chaulmoogra tree planted on the grounds of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa near Bachman Hall in honor of the research done there by African American scientist, Alice Ball whose work aided in the attempt to find a cure via the use of chaulmoogra oil.
214 “Hansen’s Disease Is On Decrease In Territory,” Honolulu Advertiser, July 23, 1950, p.14. (Note: Unfortunately, twenty years later, this understanding did not characterize the administration of Governor Ariyoshi).
over purely custodial care, part of this fresh approach included educational opportunities. Not only were there recreational as well as occupational therapy programs but Hale Mohalu also offered classes in grades three through twelve.\textsuperscript{216} For both academic subjects and non-academic courses, the instruction was considered to be part of the regular school system.\textsuperscript{217} Some of the additional courses included air conditioning and refrigeration, general woodwork, automotive mechanics, as well as dressmaking.\textsuperscript{218} Patients were encouraged to learn new vocational skills in order to obtain employment.

The public school at Hale Mohalu started in the fall of 1951. “Mrs. Mae Keaka is the teacher at Hale Mohalu School which was dedicated on September 10,” the newspaper reported. “As of December 1, there were 24 students in the school. There is no school at Kalaupapa.”\textsuperscript{219} Having the chance to go to school was an opportunity that many residents sought. Albert Nawahi Like, one of the teachers who taught at Mount Happy School at Kalihi Hospital, came to Hale Mohalu to teach high school classes.\textsuperscript{220} Patient Makia Malo went to Hale Mohalu from Kalaupapa specifically so he could attend school.\textsuperscript{221} He later went to the University of Hawaii and got his degree.

Public Health Subsidy

During the 1950s, two important developments happened in Hawai‘i regarding the State’s leprosy program -- namely the public health subsidy by the federal government and the transfer of Hale Mohalu from the Navy to the Territory.

In 1894 the Louisiana Leper Home was established at Carville, Mississippi and in 1921 the Louisiana Leper Home at Carville became known by its new federal name: the National Leprosarium. From 1894 until 1999, it served as the only in-patient leprosy facility on the continent.\textsuperscript{222} In order to relieve any pressure for services on the National Leprosarium at Carville, the U.S. Public Health Service in 1954 began to subsidize the

\textsuperscript{217} Application for Purchase of Real Property w. Health Discount, 1955, article 14.
\textsuperscript{218} Application for Purchase of Real Property w. Health Discount, 1955, article 14.
\textsuperscript{220} Ethnic Studies Oral History Project. Kalihi: Place of Transition, Vol. II, “Oral History Interview with Albert Nawahi Like, January 24, 1984,” 717. (Like recalled his experiences as a high school teacher and how he held a graduation ceremony straightaway. “So, I went back to Hale Mohalu in 1955, I think. Then I taught a whole year. I had that graduation class. But when I got down there, we have these seniors there, and we had a grand program that night. Graduation.”) Young people with the disease wanted to get on with their lives in a way not previously possible. By mid-century, there were now fewer instances of the disease reported, but incidents of the illness still occurred.
\textsuperscript{221} Makia Malo and Pamela Young, My Name is Makia: A Memoir of Kalaupapa (Honolulu: Watermark Publishing, 2011) 51.
\textsuperscript{222} Gaudet, Carville 3.
leprosy program in Hawaiʻi.\textsuperscript{223} The federal government, which had intermittently lent its financial assistance to the Territory for the care of leprosy victims in the past, once again assumed that role. “Under the terms of Public Law 411, Hawaii received a grant of $500,000 for fiscal year 1953 and $1,000,000 annually for fiscal years 1954 and 1955 to reimburse her for treatment and care provided the Hansen’s disease patients of the Territory.”\textsuperscript{224} Public Law 411 was approved on June 25, 1952 and the Territory and later the State continued to receive millions of dollars for the leprosy program in Hawaiʻi.

Transfer of Hale Mohalu

In 1955 the Navy and the Department of Health for the Territory of Health entered into discussions about the transfer of the Hale Mohalu property from the Navy to the Territory.\textsuperscript{225} The Application declared that there was nothing new in this application – that this facility has been used as a Hansen’s Disease facility since October 12, 1949. It stated,

This real property will be used by the Territory of Hawaii on a permanent basis for a Hansen’s Disease hospital facility. Based on the Territory’s current registry of 464 patients and experience in our case finding program, we believe that it is safe to say that this facility will be operated for at least another twenty years.\textsuperscript{226}

The Application was signed by Paul J. Thurston, Territorial Director of the Bureau of the Budget and by Richard K. D. Lee, M.D., President, Board of Health, Territory of Health.

Acquisition of Title

By the following year the negotiations to purchase the Hale Mohalu property were completed. Hawaiʻi continued its monthly lease arrangement at Hale Mohalu until March 1956 when the federal government agreed to turn over full title to Hale Mohalu via a quitclaim deed. This was truly a significant event regarding the leprosy program. The quitclaim deed between the United States and the Territory of Hawaii was signed March 23, 1956.\textsuperscript{227} The deed stipulated that every five years over a period of twenty years, the federal government beginning in 1956 agreed to turn over title of the property to the Territory of Hawaii with the explicit proviso that the property would continue to be used

\textsuperscript{223} Worth, Robert M., M. D., Ph. D. Paper on “Background Material on Leprosy Care in Hawaiʻi,” 1979.


\textsuperscript{225} The document entitled: “Application for Purchase of Real Property with Health Discount is dated June 24, 1955” and stated: “The location of this installation is Waimano, Ewa, Oahu, territory of Hawaii, tax map key 9-7-19-35.”

\textsuperscript{226} Quitclaim Deed, Dated 23 March 1956 between United States and the Territory of Hawaii, Liber 3096, p. 240.
as a leprosy facility. In the midst of the conflict over Hale Mohalu in 1979 leprosy expert, Dr. Robert Worth, explained the importance of this document.

The U. S. Navy and the G. S. A. sign[ed] an agreement with the Health department to turn over to the Territory the title to the 11 acres at Hale Mohalu in a phased arrangement over the next 20 years. The Territory agrees to maintain a leprosy treatment center up to U. S. Public Health Service standards. Acute hospital services are supplied at Honolulu community hospitals, with chronic and custodial care given at Hale Mohalu.228

Special Proviso

Various hospitals in the Honolulu community provided acute services for the patients but Hale Mohalu, with its U. S. Public Health Service standards, furnished “chronic and custodial care.”229 Hale Mohalu was the facility that took care of any new cases of leprosy in the Islands. Patients were treated here initially and later if necessary permanently transferred to Kalaupapa (prior to the new law of 1969). When medical care of a certain type or nature was not available to them on Moloka‘i, patients from Kalaupapa came to Hale Mohalu, where they might stay for several days or weeks. In fact, some moved, including a few elderly patients, who went to live there on a full-time basis. “At least the patients had the impression that it was a permanent arrangement.”230

At one time the Hale Mohalu community was about 120 people and “the area supported its own theatre, photography studio, craft areas and a mechanics shop.”231 For those in Honolulu from Moloka‘i, Hale Mohalu became a kind of “home away from home.” Over time, as the years passed into decades, the patients became well known in the Pearl City community. They were in fact an integral aspect of the neighborhood, often seen walking to the various shops in the area. Because they were part of the local landscape for so many years, the patients were not made fun of or ostracized; instead, important to the patients’ sense of self-worth, they were accepted members of the community. They did not have to feel apprehensive (as in other areas of Honolulu) that their physical deformities might be feared or criticized.

228 Worth, Robert M., M. D., Ph.D. “Background Material on Leprosy Care in Hawai‘i,” Honolulu, 1979, p. 2.
230 Breitha, Olivia: My Life of Exile in Kalaupapa, 81.
Title Passed

When Hawai‘i became a state in 1959, title transferred to the State of Hawai‘i, but the leprosy provisions at Hale Mohalu remained intact, and the change was seamless. In fact, nothing really changed at all. The relationship between the federal government and Hale Mohalu brought some improvements in the level of professional care, but it also led to problems of oversight for repairs. At first, the Territory had responsibility for maintenance, but when Statehood took effect, the obligation fell to the State. Since accountability was loosely monitored, repair work got sidelined.

Each year, the presence of the leprosy patients helped buy time for the Hawai‘i government to obtain possession of the land by fulfilling the leprosarium stipulation of the quitclaim deed. Every five years, as long as the patients remained at Hale Mohalu, first the Territory and later the State gained increased possession to title of the site. The local government needed the patients, but only temporary fixes were made to repair their wooden frame housing. Even though the patients brought complaints, little was done. The Hale Mohalu buildings continued to deteriorate, passed by one temporary license after another. Deferred maintenance meant that the old wooden structures rapidly started to decline and became increasingly unsafe for the patients.

Citizens’ Committee

By 1968 the buildings at Hale Mohalu were badly deteriorating. The Department of Health sought funds to build a new one hundred bed concrete hospital to replace the old wooden structures. A Citizens’ Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Thomas Hitch, was set up to consider this proposal; Bernard Punikai‘a represented Kalaupapa as the patient representative to this Citizens’ Committee. It was remarkable in the fact that it was the first time the patients were formally involved in reviewing policies, which directly affected their lives. “Understanding and acceptance were among the many things Hansen’s Disease patients talked about as about 100 of them met with the newly formed

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232 By fulfilling the passage of time requirements, and the public health leprosy program purpose, and by filing an annual status report, the stipulations of the quitclaim deed were met. No formal handover ceremony as such took place every five years but the title increasingly passed as these provisions continued unchanged. Every year in the spring, the Territory and then the State sent a letter to the federal authorities at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to report on the condition and status of the leprosy program, noting that repairs has been made to some of the buildings and that care of the leprosy patients continued. This report known as the Annual Utilization Report covered the previous year. The May 5, 1975 report letter from George Yuen pointed out that since 1949 Hale Mohalu had been a leprosy facility and therefore “1974 was a year of special significance for Hale Mohalu because in that year it completed twenty-five years of operation in the present facilities and site.” George Yuen, Letter to Charles H. Fuller, Chief, Real Property Division, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, May 5, 1975.
group of doctors and laymen visiting the hospital last night,” the Star-Bulletin reported.\footnote{233 Janos Gereben, “Hale Mohalu Patients’ Plea,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, November 15, 1968, A-1 + A-4.} Having been isolated for so long at Kalaupapa in an atmosphere of shame as far as the outside world was concerned, the patients sought to be accepted by the larger society. One of the patients asked the Committee “to educate people so that my children would not have to be ashamed that their mother is a leprosy patient.”\footnote{234 Janos Gereben, “Hale Mohalu Patients’ Plea,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, November 15, 1968, A-1 + A-4.} The Committee met for a year and heard testimony from various leprosy experts. The conclusions of the Committee were that instead of a hundred bed hospital, they “recommended that a 20 bed Care Home be built, with patient involvement in its planning, and suggested that it be located adjacent to (but not on the grounds of) Leahi Hospital, which was then being turned over to the University of Hawaii Medical School to develop as a base for its clinical activities.”\footnote{235 Worth, Robert M., M.D., Ph.D. “Background Material,” p. 3.} The Citizens’ Committee also recommended investigating the possibility of rebuilding at Hale Mohalu. However, no action was taken and nothing really changed.

In the late sixties, the Honolulu newspapers reported that Kalaupapa patients worried that they would be forced to leave their Moloka‘i home. It would be a recurring motif of concern that colored their experience of life at the Settlement for many years, even into the 21st century. Hawai‘i’s leprosy history has intrigued and fascinated the public; at the same time, intense secrecy has often engulfed the families that have been affected. Some people have had relatives at Kalaupapa they never knew existed; others were instructed by their elders not to mention to anyone that they had family at Kalaupapa. It was often a well-guarded family secret because of the tremendous shame associated with the illness.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin editor A. A. Smyser frequently wrote about Kalaupapa, and in one article in 1968, he noted, “Most of the 173 patients here (only 49 of them are active cases and only 15 are hospitalized) have been here for years, a few for more than half a century. Most could leave but they choose not to.”\footnote{236 A. A. Smyser, “Kalaupapa – It’s Home to Old Leprosy Patients Who Don’t Want It Closed,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Saturday, October 12, 1968, B-1.} Kalaupapa has been the only home they have known. They feel comfortable and safe. Smyser explained about the disfiguration of the disease: “It is the presence of these signs – scars, nodules, shortened
fingers and crippled limbs – that makes most of the older patients reluctant to face the outer world.”

In November 1968, Smyser’s wife, Betty Smyser, hosted on her half hour Sunday morning television show on KHVH-TV a groundbreaking conversation about Hawai‘i’s leprosy isolation policy. Mrs. Smyser had as her guests the administrator of the State’s Hansen’s Disease program, Dr. Ira Hirschy, and Dr. Robert M. Worth, a Public Health professor, who also worked with the patients, and two patients from Kalaupapa. The two patients were Richard Marks and Bernard Punika’a. They would become the spokespersons for Kalaupapa and the public face of leprosy, which had been hidden from the general view. The newspaper noted the historic event. “It is believed that yesterday’s show marks the first time leprosy patients have appeared on television here. Marks and Punikaia, as long-time patients, show scars from the disease that could be avoided by virtually all new patients found and treated in time.”

In December 1968, more news on developments regarding leprosy was reported in the press. “A vaccine that promises earlier release of Hansen’s Disease patients from hospital confinement in Hawaii has been used here before only for tuberculosis.” Although relapses do occur after a patient has been given temporary release, it was hoped that this new vaccine would prove helpful and would “lead to the release of two adult leprosy patients now confined at Hale Mohalu.”

1969 End of Segregation

More changes to the leprosy program took place in 1969; in fact, these transformations were the most significant to take place in over a hundred years. In April the Honolulu Advertiser reported on two Hansen’s Disease bills that later became law under the guidance of Governor Burns. “ [The words] “Treatment” and “rehabilitation” will replace “segregation” and “confinement” in the dictionary of Hansen’s disease in Hawaii if new recommendations by the State Department of Health are approved by the

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Legislature.” So many civil rights advancements had taken place in the 1960s that it was a period of openness to new ideas and a re-ordering of the old, established orders. This was true of every aspect of life, including leprosy treatment in Hawaii. “The Burns Administration yesterday (April 2, 1969) introduced a bill in the House and Senate which would completely overhaul Hawaii’s approach to Hansen’s disease (leprosy),” the paper reported. The bill called for the Department of Health to be responsible only for the care and treatment of Hansen’s Disease patients, but no longer their segregation. With the bill’s Legislative passage and Governor Burns’ signature, the policy of segregation was officially over effective June 1969.

Changes during the 1970s

The number of older patients at both Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu continued to diminish due to death. By 1974, although the Citizens’ Committee meetings still took place, the importance of patient representation at those meetings evaporated, since patients were no longer notified of the meetings. In addition, after years of proposals and discussions, the state finally decided that instead of having the medical school located at Leahi, it would be based at various hospitals in Honolulu.

A Place of Community

In spite of obstacles and the continued deterioration of the buildings, the patients had worked hard to make Hale Mohalu a real home and a place of community. They had given the name, Hale Mohalu, meaning House of Relaxation/Comfort, to the site. They had planted seedlings in order to put their personal stamp on the place, by sealing their connection with the ‘āina and their fellow patients at Kalaupapa and Kalihi. Thirty years later, numerous large lush trees planted by the patients covered the grounds, including tall palms and the famous chaulmoogra tree. “Located in the suburban community of Pearl City, Hale Mohalu is an oasis of vegetation, trees and flowers, surrounded by concrete freeways,” a newspaper reported in 1978, “The tiny community, no more than an eighth of a mile wide by an eighth of a mile long, is filled with gardens, tree-lined streets, and familiar faces.”

were forever bound by their commonality as sufferers of the same disease that left them ostracized from society. They knew each other intimately, better in some cases, than their own blood relatives from whom they had been separated years ago. It was truly a puʻuhonua, a place of refugee, where they could be themselves, just as they were, without any fear.

**Progress Report Letters: 1975**

Charles Fuller of the Division of Surplus Property Programs for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare wrote to the Department of Health, State of Hawaii on April 14, 1975 as part of the Quitclaim Deed to make sure that the terms were followed and to ask for a progress report on the program. George Yuen, who had become Director of Health only in December 1974, responded to Charles Fuller’s letter on May 5, 1975. Yuen’s letter noted that the maintenance crews had been kept busy making repairs to the wooden structures, which had considerable termite damage. Yuen further explained, “The Institution [Hale Mohalu] provides specialty care for leprosy patients. It is not an accredited hospital but its operation closely follows accepted medical standards.” The four-page letter went on to state that although the formal agreement had been entered into on March 23, 1956, the leprosy facility had been in operation on the same site since 1949. Yuen elaborated about the role of the Pearl City facility.

Hale Mohalu Hospital’s primary mission is to provide hospital care and treatment for patients with leprosy to render them non-infectious in as short a time as possible and at the same time provide many ancillary services designed to help the patient adjust to his situation; and to prepare him to be medically, emotionally and physically suitable for release from further hospital care when his medical condition permits such release.

Yuen’s letter, which was signed for him by Audrey Mertz, M.D., commented on the fact that 1974 marked the 25th year that the leprosy facility had been in operation and that it “is now in its 26th year of operation on these premises.” The letter also discussed the patients from Kalaupapa who come to Hale Mohalu.

In addition to providing care and treatment for its own patients, Hale Mohalu Hospital also provides medical support to Kalaupapa Settlement through care and

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treatment of patients transferred temporarily from the Settlement when the more limited resources there are not adequate for the situation. This support service has become a major assignment for the Hale Mohalu medical and nursing staff.\textsuperscript{248}

Forty-five percent of the patient days were devoted to the care of Hale Mohalu patients while 55 percent were for Kalaupapa patients. The letter seemed to celebrate the work done in caring for the patients, but it also hinted that due to the decreasing number of patients and the advances made in drug treatment, it might be best to close Hale Mohalu in the not too distant future. It stated that there had been a Special Study in early 1975, which had recommended that Hale Mohalu be closed effective June 30, 1975, but since the Legislature had adjourned until January 1976, Yuen said, “Hale Mohalu may have gained a reprieve for a few more months.” The State’s main concern was to make sure HEW (the Federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare) knew that the State had lived up to its end of the bargain in terms of the 20-year timetable. It was clear the State was marking time to get possession of the land and to get rid of the patients. Part of the overall strategy included removal of Leahi Hospital from under the umbrella of the University of Hawai‘i, as Yuen explained in a 1978 letter to Senator Anson Chong. “Plans to renovate Leahi were accelerated in July 1976, when Leahi was formally transferred to the Department of Health.”\textsuperscript{249} In this way the State could easily move the leprosy program to Leahi and still collect the federal money allocated for the care of leprosy patients.

\textbf{Full Title}

March 23, 1977 signaled the end of the twenty-first year of the arrangement whereby the federal government turned over title to the land at Hale Mohalu. The State felt it now had complete control over that property.\textsuperscript{250} During the twenty-year period, the federal government could have reclaimed the land if the local authorities had not met the conditions. “However,” the Aotani \textit{Project Report} noted, “since the stipulated conditions were met and the twenty-one year period expired, the State now has permanent ownership of the land.”\textsuperscript{251}

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\textsuperscript{249} George Yuen, Director of Health, Letter to Senator Anson Chong, Chairperson, Committee on Health, January 27, 1978, (David Lassner, personal collection).
\textsuperscript{250} Aotani and Associates, \textit{Hale Mohalu Project 2}.
\textsuperscript{251} Aotani and Associates, \textit{Hale Mohalu Project 2}.
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The patients disputed this claim because the land had been set aside as a leprosarium – it had been promised to them in the application to purchase and in the quitclaim deed; in addition, the conditions had not been satisfactorily met because the repairs had not been made. The State glossed over those concerns and concentrated on the fact that the time period had elapsed and that meant that it was now the owner.

Following assumption of title in March 1977, the State soon (less than sixty days) began the process to take physical possession of the site sans patients; its tactic was to have the property declared unsafe. In May 1977 the State held a meeting on the plan to move the patients from Hale Mohalu to Leahi Hospital. Although George Yuen said that an open meeting was held at Leahi Hospital in May 1977, Bernard Punikaiʻa stated that no invitation had been extended for a representative from the Kalaupapa Patients’ Advisory Council to attend the May 4, 1977 meeting, and the only notice was same day to members of the surrounding community, who also objected that they were not given advance notification.

In September 1977 the Health Department requested a Certificate of Need from the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) in order to relocate its leprosy program to Leahi, renovating a building there that would be given the name Hale Mohalu. In the meantime, the buildings in Pearl City continued to deteriorate; at the same time, the city fire department issued its reports regarding the various unsafe conditions that needed attention.

In his November 1977 letter to James Swenson of the State Health Planning and Development Agency regarding the Certificate of Need to Relocate Hale Mohalu to Leahi Hospital, Bernard Punikaiʻa made it clear how the patients felt, saying,

It is my intent at the very outset to indicate to you and all others who may review the application for a Certificate of Need by the Department of Health, to renovate

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252 Hale Mohalu Ohana member Emmett Cahill disputed that claim on Punikaiʻa’s personal copy of the Aotani and Associates Report, noting “*Not True*” at the bottom of the page: “1. Buildings were allowed to deteriorate” and “2. Hospital was not built.” (p. 2). The Aotani and Associates Report was done on March 1978 but kept quiet by the State until Neil Abercrombie discovered it and made it public. The March 1978 Aotani and Associates Report on Hale Mohalu documented what the State had really intended to do with the property from the very beginning: Page 2 of the Report stated: “Jurisdiction of the Hale Mohalu site will revert to the Department of Land and Natural Resources in the event the Department of Health declares they have no further use of the site.” (That was exactly what happened five years later after the State evicted the patients and destroyed their home).


Bernard Punikaiʻa went on to explain “all patients concerned have received a folder with a copy of the application and its attachments” and he wanted “to refute some of the statements and make a comment on others.” His letter was a four-page comment on various aspects of the State’s position. Punikaiʻa suggested that instead of renovating Leahi, the money should be spent at Pearl City to make Hale Mohalu the leprosy center and to incorporate other health care agencies “in a multiple use facility.” However, at the very outset of his letter, he stated what the patients desired from the authorities. “We, the patients who will be the ones affected by the move, request that the Certificate of Need be denied.”

In the meantime, the fire department continued with its inspection of the dilapidated facility. Inspections were conducted on November 15, 1977, noting that on that date, there were four patients at the facility. The Hospital Fire Inspection Report dated December 9, 1977 reported that the “census has 5 people with a daily average of 5 and 31 employees.” It also stated that the only means by which fires were reported to the local fire department was by telephone, and that there was no nearby fire alarm box. The State did not take any corrective steps to meet the deficiencies cited by the Fire inspection report.

**December 1977 Petition**

When they learned of the State’s efforts to move them to Leahi, the patients were very concerned. As their leader of the Patients Council, Bernard Punikaiʻa polled everyone at Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu to see how they felt about the news. In two days, seventy-seven patients (out of approximately 100 overall) signed a petition in opposition to the Leahi transfer. The patients stated their case in a three-page petition signed on December 12, 1977 in which they wrote,

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257 The November 15, 1977 Hospital Fire Inspection Report for the “2-story frame building, Clinton Building, 15 Kalaupapa patients” listed “33 beds with a present census of 4 with 31 employees.” It also reported that the last time a “fire drill was held was on October 28, 1977.” Hospital Fire Inspection Report, November 15, 1977.
We the leprosy patients who are directly affected by the closing of Hale Mohalu by order and the forced move to Leahi Hospital do hereby state: We are unequivocally opposed to being uprooted again and imprisoned at Leahi Hospital. We call into question the expenditure of Federal Funds in furtherance of this crime against our freedom.\textsuperscript{259}

The next two paragraphs quoted “Section G of Chapter 27, Public Health Regulations,” which stated that transfers had to be done with the consent of the patients and that they would take legal action to protect their rights.

Next they asked for support from the people of Hawaii and the United States “in our struggle for dignity.” They stated that leprosy patients have had a long history of oppression but Hawaiian attitudes had been different. “Hawaii is unique in its humanitarian recognition of the leprosy victim as a human being first, a patient second. In this era of renewed concern for human rights, are we to be denied in our state by our own government?” It was a powerful question, plaintive in its yearning for just treatment.

Before the list of signatures, the last sentence had a simple request. “We seek only such assistance morally and financially as may meet our minimal needs.” Some of the patients who signed the petition included “Bernard K. Punikaia, Rosie Lelepali, Jack Sing, Anita Una, Justo Remigio, Peter Keola, Ed Kato, David Kupele, Mary Kailiwai as well as Mary Duarte, Mariano Rea, Paul Harada, Nellie McCarthy, John Arruda, Olivia Breitha, Barbara Marks, and Kuulei Bell.”\textsuperscript{260} The patients sought every avenue possible to voice their opposition to the closure of Hale Mohalu.

Another effort to save the buildings at Hale Mohalu in December involved the firm of Martin and Early who wrote a letter to James L. Swenson, Administrator, State Health Planning Agency regarding the structural review of Hale Mohalu that they had done. Martin and Early stated in their letter to Swenson that on a short-time basis, the building was reasonably safe. Martin and Early explained that certain steps could be taken that would help, so “the life of this building could be extended.” They concluded their letter in the hope “that some reasonable solution may be found so that those people that live there can remain in their already found comfortable surroundings.”\textsuperscript{261}

\textsuperscript{259} Petition of Patients, Opposed to Move to Leahi Hospital, December 12, 1977.
\textsuperscript{260} Petition of Patients, Opposed to Move to Leahi Hospital, December 12, 1977.
A follow-up inspection to the earlier one on December 9, 1977 was made on December 28, 1977 and a final notice, No. 132 a, was given. Two days later on December 30, 1977 George Yuen sent a letter to the Fire Marshall, Wayne Minami, in regard to the final notice. Yuen requested an extension of the period of compliance until January 23, 1978, so that the Department of Health would have time to secure a Certificate of Need and move the residents to the North Wing, Trotter Building, Leahi Hospital.

“Originally, the health department had hoped to close Hale Mohalu by December 31, 1977 and repeatedly petitioned SHPDA to grant the emergency certificate of need to effect an immediate transfer.” However, previous attempts for the emergency application had always been denied. But in early January 1978 the extension the Health Department had sought at the end of December 1977 was granted. On January 3, 1978 the State of Hawaii, Fire Marshall Division sent a letter to Director of Health George Yuen entitled “Final Decision – Honolulu Fire Department Final Notice (132a) dated December 28, 1977, deadline for deficiencies that need to be corrected extended to January 23, 1978.” Fire Marshall Lawrence S. Dunbar signed the letter, with a copy to Boniface X. Aiu, the Fire Chief, with the recommendation that the State needed to “provide 2 unit-type smoke detectors for 1st floor level.”

In pursuit of their goal to get rid of the Pearl City facility, State officials got the extension they wanted; they bought time, but soon thereafter, they declared their inability to make the necessary repairs required by the extended January deadline. Thus, they created an opening to declare that they had no choice but to close Hale Mohalu and proceed with the move to Leahi. In other words, the removal of the patients could ensue unimpeded.

CHAPTER 4

KŪʻĒ

For several centuries, foreigners to the Hawaiian Islands have sought to possess the Native land they found attractive not only for its physical beauty but also its strategic Pacific position. Years of land struggles have ensued as a result of these conflicts, replete with implications for Hawaiian identity as Native Hawaiians fought for their ‘āina. The battle for Hale Mohalu played a key role in the enduring narrative of Hawaiian dispossession and resistance (kūʻē). To provide context to the overall account of displacement necessitates an examination of its foundation and some specific examples of land struggles taking place at the time and in which the patients participated.

Legacy of Shame

The effort to eviscerate any sense of Native pride has had a long history in Hawaiʻi. While colonial history has been more recent, British imperialism dates to the arrival in 1778 of Captain Cook. When the missionaries arrived in 1820, these religious zealots criticized the Hawaiians as savages and denounced their way of life as uncivilized. From the missionaries’ perspective, by giving them Christ’s message, they were bringing civilization and salvation to the heathens. That attitude of superiority gained even greater momentum with the Overthrow in January 1893 and the establishment of the Republic in July 1894. From the time of the Overthrow, haoles (foreigners) in Hawaiʻi, who had seized governmental power, sought to increase greater control over the Native population. In ways subtle and overt, within the imposed colonial system, those in authority made clear that Hawaiian identity was not a highly valued quality: in fact, to be Hawaiian meant you were “less than.” In addition to the usurpation of Native lands and the esteem accorded Western ways, haole leaders, mainly of missionary descent, persistently denigrated Hawaiian principles. They sought to assert a superior position, not only politically, but also socially and economically. The most effective way to do that was systematically to strip the Hawaiian people of their language and culture.

In 1896 a new law required all subjects to be taught in the English language.265 The law functioned to ban the Hawaiian language in the schools. Because Kānaka were

punished if caught speaking their native tongue, seeds of shame and disgrace began to infiltrate the consciousness of the Hawaiian people. When she was a child in school, cultural historian and scholar Mary Kawena Pukui remembered being “slapped on the hands” for offering to help another child speak Hawaiian in response to a question from the teacher. Pukui was severely reprimanded and told never to speak in her mother tongue again or face greater punishment. “It was a lesson Pukui never forgot.”\textsuperscript{266} The message was unambiguous - to succeed you had to abandon your own language. Many parents would speak Hawaiian to each other, but in the desire to help their children get ahead in the new colonial Hawai‘i world, they spoke only English to their children.\textsuperscript{267}

After Hawai‘i became a Territory in 1900, the way children were taught and the books used in schools advocated a Western point of view and in various ways disparaged Hawaiian values. Dr. Kū Kahakalau, founder of the Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance in Waimea, Hawai‘i, described how the earliest school texts promoted these principles in a cunning indoctrination, which served to poison the child’s mind against his/her own culture.\textsuperscript{268} Indicative of numerous psychological condemnations, which began at a young age, such assaults tore away at the fabric of the Hawaiian way of life.

With both insidious and blatant censure of their culture, Hawaiians had almost no choice but to grow up viewing themselves inferior in every sense. These views persisted into the middle of the twentieth century. In order to survive, some Natives sought to minimize or deny their Hawaiian background.\textsuperscript{269} Describing the changes that occurred, Native writer, Pōkā Laenui states, “They [Americans] gained power in Hawaii, controlled greater chunks of the economy, controlled the public media, entrenched themselves in politics, and joined in the brainwashing of the Hawaiians to believe they were

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\item[267] The real life story of Colonel Oliver Homealani Kupau documents this reluctance to speak Hawaiian. Born in 1899, Kupau grew up in the beginning of the 20th century; his parents spoke to each in Hawaiian, but only English to their children. Homealani, documentary, producer, Anne Mark Kirk, 2009; in No Footprints, Henry Nalaielua recalled: “At home my mother and father spoke Hawaiian to each other, but never to us. That was in the days when a lot of Hawaiians thought it was foolish or even dangerous to speak our own language.” (Nalaielua, No Footprints, 6).
\item[268] Dr. Kū Kahakalau, personal interview, Honolulu, 11 February 2011.
\item[269] My friend, Native Hawaiian Ben Bright, born in 1942, told me that when he was a teenager in the 1950s, he and his close friend, in an effort to be anything other than Hawaiian, would frequently argue over who was more haole; the disagreement would be settled momentarily with one or the other of them, shouting out loudly: “I more haole!”
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Dogged efforts of the sugar barons toward closer ties with American life eventually culminated in statehood.

Although many welcomed the declaration of statehood in 1959, others rejected it. These latter opinions were overshadowed by waves of enthusiasm orchestrated by the media, which purposefully diminished voices of opposition. Those who objected saw the U.S.’s acquisition of Hawai‘i as increased forfeiture of autonomy. The overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States brought heartbreak to most Native Hawaiians. It represented the loss of their nation and independence. This new statehood status reinforced that defeat. Instead of a happy outcome, many viewed it with deep despair, fearfully aware that the Islands would undergo changes that would forever impact the landscape. The path was now open for further large-scale development.

World War II had brought increased numbers to these shores, but this new relationship would “up the ante” to a level previously unknown. Statehood transformed the Hawaiian economy.\textsuperscript{271} After statehood, the economy shifted from one based on agriculture, namely sugar and pineapple, to sweeping development based on “tourism and land speculation.”\textsuperscript{272} In contrast to the limited visitation afforded by luxury liners and prop planes, the introduction of jet travel in 1959 tremendously increased the number of people arriving in the Islands. Concurrently, multi-national corporations, feeling a sense of security in statehood status, became willing to move their operations to markets that the state of Hawai‘i could provide. As a result, tourism and airline travel intensified, creating massive changes seemingly overnight. If World War II had left its mark on the islands with an expanded population and the loss of large tracts of land to military appropriation, the next two decades following statehood created additional seismic shifts.

\textbf{Seeds of Change}

The sixties, of course, were a period of unprecedented transformation, not only locally but also on the continent and worldwide. African countries long held as colonies gained independence. In the United States, African Americans agitated non-violently for rights they had been denied. The influence of the Modern Civil Rights Movement was
far-reaching, not only domestically but also internationally. For example, it helped to inspire Bernadette Devlin to lead the first civil right march in Northern Ireland in 1968 in Dungannon, County Tyrone.\textsuperscript{273} Not only did African Americans fight centuries of discrimination in America but also Native Americans organized AIM, the American Indian Movement, occupying not only Alcatraz, but also the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office in Washington D.C. as well as Wounded Knee. These claims for rights long denied resonated with the Hawaiian people, who could identify with being treated as second-class citizens. Several prominent African American fighters for civil rights, including Stokely Carmichael, visited the campus of the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the sixties.\textsuperscript{274} The Modern Civil Rights Movement, the American Indian Movement, along with the Women’s Movement and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement influenced the consciousness of those in Hawai‘i regarding matters of social justice. Activism at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in opposition to the Vietnam War and to the firing of Professor Oliver Lee helped to mobilize students in a way not previously seen on the Hawaiian campus, where docility of the student body usually prevailed. When the students took over Bachman Hall and staged a “sit-in” that lasted several days in 1968, they were in solidarity with other students on the continent who were protesting the war.\textsuperscript{275} This type of resistance was widespread in the sixties, a kind of dissent and disapproval in the air that helped to disturb the status quo.

Among the Hawaiian people new viewpoints and insights began to emerge. For example, the mindset of “shamed to be Hawaiian” slowly started to change in 1964 when Native Hawaiian John Dominis Holt published his groundbreaking work, \textit{On Being Hawaiian}. Written in response to an article in the local paper about Hawaiians and the issue of land, Holt expressed what many Hawaiians felt, but previously had never stated, especially in such a public forum. Holt disclosed that for many years he had “felt troubled concern over the loss of Hawaiianness or ethnic consciousness among people like ourselves.”\textsuperscript{276} Views of Hawaiians as a people who “didn’t really care,” were “happy-go-lucky,” or inherently lazy, not to be trusted, too child-like to know what was good for

\textsuperscript{274} “Panther Applauded by UH Audience,” Honolulu Advertiser Thursday October 31, 1968, D-1.
them or how to take care of themselves, had been characterizations so often repeated that they had become well ingrained. Many Hawaiians had internalized this racism, mistakenly believing the lies. Holt described the result. “Undeniably the wreckage of the 19th century had provided us a legacy of shame, regret, consternation, disgust, anomie, or contemptuous disinterest.”

In addition to Holt’s *On Being Hawaiian*, the seeds for this change of consciousness included the work of Gail Kawaipuna Prejean, and the writings of Francine du Plessix Gray; the latter’s book, *Hawaii: The Sugar-Coated Fortress*, articulated the battle lines over Native Hawaiian dispossession by sugar planters’ control of the land. Holt’s and du Plessix Gray’s writings captured the frustration felt by the Native people as outcasts in their own country.

This new consciousness in the Islands created a sense of agency for these marginalized individuals and gave voice to the Hawaiian Sovereignty movement. Among the most peripheral in Hawaiian society at that time and still today are indigenous Native Hawaiians and Hansen disease patients, the majority of whom have also been Native Hawaiian. Relegated to the social fringes, strangers in their own land, the “political, economic, and cultural reality for most Hawaiians is hard, ugly, and cruel.”

Post-contact displacement and dispossession of Native Hawaiians can be viewed, moreover, in my opinion, as a visual metaphor encapsulated in the tragic history of Hawai‘i’s Hansen’s Disease sufferers. Stricken with disease, forced to endure loss of home, land, loved ones, while colonized by a haole elite, each story of alienation, mirrors the other.

In the 1970s dissension over Native Hawaiian land evictions coalesced into concerted resistance at a time of immense transition in the Islands; the pace of development had dramatically escalated as evidenced by the ubiquitous image of the high-rise crane. Developers, aided by State support, pursued one building project after another with unprecedented speed. “As a result, large communities of the poor and the dispossessed, particularly Native Hawaiians, were systematically removed from the land.”

Agricultural lands became sizeable housing and condominium sites, as “the shift from plantation agriculture to mass-based, corporate-controlled tourism resulted in the

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279 Trask, *Native Daughter* 137.
280 Trask, *Native Daughter* 137.
grotesque disfigurement of beach areas and rural enclaves throughout the archipelago.”

Widespread development conflicted with land use issues, for example, questions regarding the lack of affordable housing and the need for appropriate long-range planning. This ideological clash resulted in political turmoil and unprecedented confrontation in the modern era because “they [Native Hawaiians] did not go without resistance.” Conflicts like Kalama Valley, Save Our Surf, Kaho‘olawe, Mākua Valley, Waiāhole-Waikāne Valley, Heʻeia Kea, Chinatown, and the H-3 in Hālawa Valley, as well as Sand Island and Nukoliʻi, are evidence of their courageous fight, to name only a few. Bernard Punikaiʻa and the Save Haleʻōhana participated in most of these movements. The battle for Hale Mohalu and Bernard Punikaiʻa’s determined stand to fight State injustice was also, as I argue, part of that larger independence struggle to stop Native Hawaiian land dispossession.

Kalama Valley

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the inciting incident in the resistance narrative of Native Hawaiians occurred in the battle for Kalama Valley in 1970. The conflict began when Bishop Estate, the State’s largest single private landowner, “evicted farmers for an upper-income residential development by Kaiser-Aetna.” The face of George Santos, the pig farmer of Kalama Valley, who took a stand against Bishop Estate, became the iconic image that symbolized this battle. Kōkua Hawaiʻi was an organization formed at the time to support the farmers’ fight and Kōkua’s “young people were greatly influenced by the Black Panther Party, on the American continent, which supported self-determination of Black communities. In Hawaiʻi, the local version supported Hawaiian control of Hawaiian communities.” When Panther Eldridge Cleaver visited Hawaiʻi, he spoke about the colonization of Blacks and Hawaiians. The theme of “Black is Beautiful,” an important rallying cry of Black Power, sought to counter racial stereotypes of shame and had a direct counterpart in the Hawaiian cultural renewal. Adopting the wearing of berets (like the Black Panthers) Kōkua Hawaiʻi members wore brown berets

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281 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 1.
282 Ironically, more than forty years later, these same problems remain still unresolved.
283 Trask, Native Daughter 137.
284 Trask, Native Daughter 67.
and had as their symbol a raised poi pounder. “The berets worn by the group were meant to convey a kind of radical politics grounded in community control. An upheld poi pounder symbolized Hawaiian resistance, joining a Hawaiian cultural focus with radical-left organizing.” Along with their distinctive brown berets, the slogan of Kōkua Hawai‘i was the Hawaiian word “Huli,” meaning to “Overturn!” The movement begun at Kalama Valley resonated within the Hawaiian people, especially young people, whose consciousness became politicized in militaristic fashion. No more were they the docile students willing to obey the rules. In the *Hawaiian Journal of History*, Haunani-Kay Trask provides an excellent analysis of this pivotal battle, noting its crucial significance. “As the first major struggle of the Movement, Kalama Valley was a precursor, a dress rehearsal for successful struggles a few years later.” Kalama participants, armed with sharpened skills in organizing and resistance went on to fight in other land battles. What had started at Kalama Valley grew into a call for sovereignty. “Beginning in 1970, the Hawaiian Movement evolved from a series of protests against land abuses, through various demonstrations and occupations to dramatize the exploitative conditions of Hawaiians, to assertions of Native forms of sovereignty based on indigenous birthrights to land and sea.”

**Save Our Surf**

Kōkua Hawai‘i also supported another activist group, Save Our Surf (SOS). John Kelley, an avid surfer, organized Save Our Surf in order to protect the shoreline, and prevent the destruction of surfing spots. Seeing the threats to traditional surfing spots and determined to resist this threat to this iconic Hawaiian lifestyle, Kelley’s “organization came to prominence just as development spread around O‘ahu’s coastline.” Kōkua Hawai‘i and SOS joined together to hold protest rallies at the Hawai‘i State Capitol in Honolulu, where they demonstrated their opposition, as they displayed large hand-painted banners; one sign said “Huli! Kōkua Hawai‘i” and another with the demand “People not Profits – Huli!” The fight to save surfing spots generated some victories over the years.

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289 Trask, *Native Daughter* 66.
290 Trask and Greevy, *Kāʻē* 17.
but the struggle to aid George Santos and to keep Kalama Valley as agricultural land did not succeed.

In the end, large landholder Kamehameha Schools evicted the farmers and the valley became a massive housing tract development. Although it seemed as if “the organizing core, Kōkua Hawaiʻi, lost the battle for residents’ rights, the issue of land use and land claims would characterize public debate for the next thirty years.” Native Hawaiians view the ʻāina as sacred, but many pro-development transplants from the continent saw it as simply real estate and regretably, as with Bishop Estate in this case, so did some of those born and bred here. A majority of local-born state Democratic legislators equated it with monetary gain and used their legislative position to achieve big profits. Authors George Cooper and Gavan Daws in Land and Power in Hawaiʻi analyze the profitable legislative journey.

The Democrats ... stayed in power after statehood and on through the 1960s and 1970s into the 1980s – a long, long time in politics. They came to office young, most of them, and they grew middle-aged and older in power. Youthful ideals waned, and near-term personnel interests took precedence, things like getting re-elected, getting established financially, getting ahead.

Where once the majority of wealth in the Hawaiian Islands belonged to sugar barons, in the latter half of the twentieth century, government officials claimed their share of prosperity. “And on the evidence of the public record the higher the rank in government, generally speaking, the more likely a politician or official is to have profited,” Cooper and Daws note. Patent sweetheart deals in land ownership and massive developments met with growing opposition.

Various expansion projects resulted in more evictions, as the poor, living on agricultural land, were considered in the way of so-called progress. However, the

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292 “On October 31, 1883, Bernice Pauahi Bishop, great-granddaughter of Kamehameha I, signed and sealed her will, creating what is known today as the Kamehameha Schools. This important will was drafted with the assistance of her husband, Charles Reed Bishop, a prominent Honolulu banker and entrepreneur, who helped to administer the Bishop Estate after her death [October 16, 1884] and who tried throughout his life to promote his wife’s vision of a better life for her people.” Jon M. Van Dyke, Who Owns the Crown Lands of Hawai‘i? (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008) 307. Over time, Bishop Estate increased in size to become “America’s largest charitable trust,” but it also suffered from gross mismanagement and greed. See Samuel P. King and Randall W. Roth, Broken Trust (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press).

293 Trask, Native Daughter 67.

294 Bishop Estate Trustees, hewed to a similar “land as property only” outlook. “The trustees, even with recent appointments of Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians to their board, maintain the capitalist model of making as much money as possible for the Estate. Kalama Valley’s conversion [1970-71] was very profitable.” Helen Geracimos Chapin, Shaping History: The Role of Newspapers in Hawai‘i (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1996) 340-341.


296 Cooper and Daws, Land and Power 12.
reawakened consciousness of Hawaiians to assert their primacy continued to gain in strength as they protested the desecration of the ʻāina. The period of the seventies, according to the Advertiser, blended civil disobedience with Native Hawaiian culture to champion “the growing ranks of the dispossessed – fishermen, pig farmers, taro growers, the elderly and the poor, many of them Native Hawaiians.”

The push for development and tourist dollars continued to advance as big business saw huge profits to be made in developing the land. Large resorts, condominiums, and golf courses resulted when “the merging of land-rich but capital-poor landowners with out-of-state corporations became a familiar pattern.” On the neighbor islands, development mushroomed, such as on the Big Island’s Kona Coast at Waikaloa, on Maui at Lahaina-Kāʻanapali, on the west-end of Molokaʻi with the Sheration Molokaʻi, and on the east side of Kauaʻi at Niumalu, on the north at Princeville, and in the south at Poʻipu. “Such resort and residential development spurred antidevelopment battles wherever it occurred.”

There was no going back: the genie was out of the bottle and the resistance of Hawaiians to the destruction of their ʻāina garnered renewed strength with each struggle. A resurgence of all things Hawaiian emerged in music, the arts, and politics that came to be known as the Hawaiian Renaissance. Speaking to the Honolulu Rotary Club in March, 1977, George Kanahele assessed what was taking place.

What is happening among Hawaiians today is probably the most significant chapter in their modern history since the overthrow of the monarchy and loss of their nationhood in 1893. For, concomitant with this cultural rebirth, is a new political awareness which is gradually being transformed into an articulate, organized but unmonolithic movement.

He later gave other talks on the Hawaiian Renaissance, but this first one has been called “the ‘seminal’ document” for his description of the new spirit among the Hawaiian people. The fight to save Kahoʻolawe became symbolic of all that was meant by the Renaissance and also captured the concept of aloha ʻāina as Stephen T. Boggs explains,

*Aloha ʻāina* has many meanings. One is love of nation. At the first trial of the Kahoʻolawe protestors in 1976, the Navy argued that this was the meaning it had in the 1890’s, at the time of the Overthrow of the Monarchy, rather than what the

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298 Trask, *Native Daughter* 67.
protestors claimed that it meant: love and care for the land. But they are the same. Love and care for the land means love of nation, as in the famous phrase about eating the stones of the land. This meaning of *aloha ʻāina* long antedates the existence of Hawaiʻi as a nation in the Western sense. It is anchored, moreover, in the attitudes, actions, sentiments, and the very lives of the *makaʻainana*. It did not disappear with the Overthrow, but continued to the end of the 20th century.³⁰¹

Aloha ʻāina, central to Hawaiian cosmology, has not disappeared in the 21st century by any means, but its reemergence in the 1970s was integral to the ongoing change in consciousness taking place at that time.

*Kahoʻolawe*

Aloha ʻāina and the fight to save Kahoʻolawe are particularly linked because the principle came into popular awareness. During the Second World War, the U.S. military assumed temporary control over much of the Islands, but that possession has continued into the present. Military use of Hawaiian land had been a source of conflict for years, but it erupted into disagreement in a dramatically different way regarding one of the smaller Hawaiian Islands located near Maui, known as Kahoʻolawe. Since 1941, the military, claiming it to be vitally essential to national security and military training, had used the tiny island of Kahoʻolawe for target practice. Once an important place of learning navigational skills in pre-contact Hawaiʻi, the island became off-limits to everyone but the Navy who used it as a site of constant bombardment. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, increased resentment against the noise and the destruction grew as the military’s devastating impact on the land came to light.³⁰² Native Hawaiians, in particular, questioned the jurisdiction of the military over their lands and the total lack of respect for the ʻāina demonstrated by the bombing. Anger over the violation of the land and denial of access recalled Hawaiian views of mutual respect and love, aloha ʻāina.

When residents of Molokaʻi were excluded from access to traditional lands used for hunting and fishing, they fought back. That resistance “led to the founding of Hui Alaloa, which in turn was instrumental in originating the Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana, or PKO – the most successful statewide Hawaiian movement of recent times.”³⁰³ The

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³⁰² In 1969 Mayor Elmer Cravalho on Maui complained about the noise from the bombing that awoke him one night. “The Honolulu papers followed up on the story as Maui residents became more and more distressed over the dangerous, noisy intrusion of sea barrages, aerial bombing, sea to surface missiles, and high caliber gunfire.” Chapin, Shaping History, 342.
Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana, with George Helm as its founder, advocated the end of bombing. According to Stephen Boggs: “The Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana (PKO) formed in 1976 became the most effective statewide movement in modern times.” The PKO included leaders such as Emmet Aluli, Davianna McGregor, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Walter Ritte. Spokesperson for the PKO, George Helm, a talented musician and activist from Molokaʻi, was a charismatic leader who epitomized the passionate dedication Hawaiians have for the land. To this day, Helm’s falsetto voice and his songs are associated with aloha ʻāina and the fight for Kahoʻolawe. Helm, Ritte, Aluli, Richard Sawyer, Kawaipuna Prejean, and Ian Lind were among those at the forefront of the effort to land on Kahoʻolawe in order to disrupt the military operation and stop the bombing.

On January 3, 1976 nine people went ashore secretly at Kahoʻolawe but seven were quickly caught while the others held out for two days before giving themselves up. Not long after, Ritte and Aluli went again to the island but were arrested a second time for trespassing. The struggle for Kahoʻolawe became a rallying symbol of Native unity against the military’s appropriation of Hawaiian land as Trask explains.

In their effort to draw greater attention to the relentless bombing and destruction of the ʻāina, Walter Ritte, Richard Sawyer, and three others went secretly to Kahoʻolawe on January 30, 1977. The other three gave themselves up to the Coast Guard, but Ritte and Sawyer planned on staying indefinitely. With the passage of time and the nonstop bombing, concern for their safety increased. In a failed attempt to rescue Ritte and Sawyer from possible danger on Kahoʻolawe one night in March 1977, George Helm and fellow activist Kimo Mitchell were lost at sea and never found. Speculation remains as to what happened to them, whether they were lost accidentally or because of foul play. Most

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305 Rodney Morales, ed., Hoʻihoʻiho: A Tribute to George Helm & Kimo Mitchell (Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge Press, 1984) 18. “The nine included Helm, Ritte, and Aluli of Hui Alaloa, who had been asked to go along by Charles Maxwell, the organizer of the landing because of their success on Molokai. Also in the landing were Ellen Miles, Karla Villalba, Kimo Aluli, Ian Lind, and members of the Hawaiian Coalition for Native Claims (HCNC) Gail Prejean and Stephen Morse.” Ritte and Aluli were the not caught initially.
306 Trask, Native Daughter 68.
307 Morales, Hoʻihoʻiho 23-24. The other three were Helm, Charles Warrington, and Francis Kauhane.
Kānaka Maoli believe the latter, that “both men were murdered.” Many Hawaiians view them as martyrs to the cause of Native independence: “As a statewide organization espousing Hawaiian cultural values of aloha ʻāina (love of the land) and aloha ka poʻe (love of the people), the ‘Ohana focused Native Hawaiian concerns regarding protection of the land, the people, and the culture of Native Hawaiians.” The issue of Kahoʻolawe, along with the resurgence of pride engendered by the launching of the Hokuleʻa in 1976, made for a dramatic shift in how Native Hawaiians viewed their position in the world, furthering the Hawaiian sense of empowerment. The primacy of land as seen through Native eyes became established as a central tenet of modern Hawaiian life, as the success of Kahoʻolawe affirmed.

Wide support for the work of the PKO resulted in the Hawaiian Congressional delegation taking actions that finally returned Kahoʻolawe to the State. Because of Native protests, the bombing of Kahoʻolawe stopped in 1990, and the island, whose water-table had been broken because of the continual bombing, has been returned to the people of Hawaiʻi. Former Governor John Waihee described it as “the first piece of sovereign soil” for the newly-established Hawaiian nation, whenever it is formed.

According to Boggs,

Because aloha ʻāina originated as a symbol of patriotism in the 19th Century, its use by the PKO in a memorable series of court contests in the 1970’s helped to reawaken memory of Hawaiians’ loss of control over their national government in 1893, when the Hawaiian monarchy was overthrown. The ground was thus prepared for the development in the 1980’s of the movement to restore the sovereignty of the Hawaiian nation.

The Protect Kahoʻolawe ‘Ohana continues today to advocate on behalf of the island and the restoration of the nation. The fight for Kahoʻolawe took decades, but the Hawaiian people, like the Hale Mohalu resisters, never abandoned their goal.

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308 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 19.
309 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 95.
310 The Hawaiian Renaissance focused on Native culture, including the skills of navigation; as a result, the building of the outrigger canoe, and its launching in 1976 symbolized the resurgence of the Native people, a transformational experience for kanaka.
312 Former Governor, John Waihee, testifying before the Hawaii State Senate legislative committee meeting hearing re: Kahoʻolawe and Senate Bill 609 on February 12, 2011.
314 Part of their work is to help educate young people about its importance by bringing individuals and groups of students to mālama the ʻāina.
Mākua Valley

That steadfast singleness of purpose has also characterized long-term opposition to military occupation of several thousand acres on O‘ahu’s leeward coast at Mākua Valley. Mākua in Hawaiian means parent and the enormity of the emerald landscape with its outstretched arms powerfully conveys that all-embracing sensibility. Prior to the military’s possession of the valley, Mākua had been inhabited by Hawaiians for centuries; it contains the remains of numerous house sites, heiau, petroglyphs, and it is home to plants and birds found only within its boundaries. Located on the Wai‘anae Coast of O‘ahu, Mākua is breathtakingly majestic in its broad sweep of over 4,000 acres. During World War II, the military took control of the valley: “World War II changed the use of the valley dramatically. It was transformed from a relatively peaceful cattle ranch into a busy garrison.” Originally the land was to be returned after the War but the military held onto it, and Mākua remains a military possession to this day. For that reason, Mākua Valley has been the site of numerous conflicts between Hawaiians and the Army, who claim the land is essential for training purposes. This was the same argument put forth by the Navy in regard to Kaho‘olawe. “The destructive, day-to-day activities of the military in Hawai‘i have been in place since the United States took Pearl Harbor in 1887,” as Trask elucidates. Indicative of their mutual bond, members of Protect Kaho‘olawe came in the 1970s to inspect the military damage done at Mākua. In a video of an eviction at Mākua, Bernard Punikai‘a can be seen as part of the group offering support to his fellow Hawaiians as they faced the military police.

Houselessness, a major problem in Hawai‘i, is especially evident today on the Wai‘anae Coast. Along the length of the coastline, innumerable blue tarp canopies and tents of houseless line the ribbon of land makai of the highway. Nearby, the pristine valley of Mākua, richly verdant, stands empty in its vastness, devoid of development but for the military’s field exercises on the earth, littered with unexploded ordinances. More than 4,000 acres are designated for military games and testing while the indigenous

317 Trask and Greevy, Kā‘e 98.
318 Trask and Greevy, Kā‘e 98
319 Mākua Homecoming, documentary, DVD, Nā Maka o ka ‘Āina, 1983.
320 Native Hawaiians, as children of the land are at home in Hawai‘i, but they often do not have a house, hence use of the term houseless as opposed to homeless.
people of the valley crowd together in makeshift shelters along Farrington Highway.

“Dispossessed and dismissed, the Hawaiians of the Waianae coast suffer dramatically higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, unemployment, and poverty” writes Dan Kois, “than the people on the rest of the island.” While the Native people sleep by the side of the road, barely surviving, the military possesses in this one valley not merely hundreds of acres but thousands upon thousands. Given the limited land base of an island like O‘ahu, the immorality of such imbalance demands restorative justice.

For years, the Army used Mākua Valley for active live firing. Only through court battles have the Hawaiian people won any victories regarding its usage. Based on religious reasons, Hawaiians are allowed access to worship in the valley twice a month – as long as the military can spare an ordinance specialist to accompany them. Today in 2013 because of unexploded ordinances on the valley floor, there are limited areas for civilian use. From personal experience on visits into Mākua, I saw firsthand how an ordinance specialist escorts visitors every step along proscribed paths for fear of possible explosions. What you see and where you go are strictly controlled. As with other large land owners in the Hawaiian Islands, the U.S. military has assumed a sense of entitlement over this land, but Hawaiians have resolutely refused to succumb to these encroachments.

Building on the work of Haunani-Kay Trask, Neal Milner delineates how the issue of home evolved into the subject of homelessness and ultimately nationhood. Milner argues the history of home and homelessness persuasively, but his referent has as its basis a western perspective, given that he speaks solely in terms of home as property; as such, he leaves out the Hawaiian concept of aloha ‘āina. However, his critical point on the ultimate emphasis of sovereignty is well taken. Milner notes: “The Kalama Valley protests triggered broader and more militant concerns about land, race, ownership, and ultimately autonomy and sovereignty for Kanaka Maoli.” These concerns, beginning in

322 Personal hikes into Mākua Valley on Sunday August 7, 2011 with Dr. Fred Dodge and on Saturday May 15, 2010 with Paulette Kaonohi Kaleikini.
323 Accompanied by the ordinance specialist on the hike into the valley, Native Hawaiians first offer ho‘okupu; at each step of the journey, in addition to the ordinance specialist, several military members and a civilian archaeologist in 3 or 4 large trucks drive behind the Hawaiian group and observe them. The archaeologist and the others with her alight to answer questions and to caution about one thing or another, but the overall effect of surveillance is paramount as hikers are aware of being observed at all times.
1970 with Kalama Valley on the eastern side of O‘ahu, have evolved into protests over Kaho‘olawe, at Mākuʻa on the leeward coast, and in the Koʻolau Poko district of Oʻahu, at Waiāhole-Waikāne as well as at Heʻeia-Kea.

Waiāhole and Waikāne

A major resistance struggle also took place on the Windward side of Oʻahu at Waiāhole-Waikāne in the 1970s. “As post-statehood urbanization, including hotel expansion in Waikīkī and the despoliation of Honolulu’s hills with tacky apartment complexes, proceeded rapidly in the 1970s and ’80s,” observe Trask and Greevy, “the windward side of Oʻahu also suffered damaging developments.”325 The residents of Waiāhole/Waikāne were adamant in their opposition to the loss of their agricultural lands, whose designation and use had been unchanged since the previous century. They were so well organized that they blockaded the road and prevented access to the interior of the area. The Waiāhole-Waikāne Community Association took out a huge ad in the Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser of October 1, 1978 to state their position and to ask for the public’s support. The top of the ad was entitled, “Ariyoshi: To Hell with Your Developer Friends!” and just underneath that line the following, “Waiahole-Waikane: Demands Long-Term Leases Now.”326 After the blockade of the road, Governor Ariyoshi had been forced to buy 600 acres in Waiahole Valley. Their ad stated their case.

In January of ’77, the tenants and farmers of Waiahole-Waikane backed up by tens of thousands of people across the State took a firm stand: “Hell No – We Ain’t Moving.” To back up our words, we occupied Waiahole Valley and blocked Kam Highway to keep the cops out. Because of our strong stand and the widespread public support backing up our struggle, Governor Ariyoshi was forced to buy Waiahole Valley.327

Next, it seemed that the governor did not want to issue long-term leases for the land and the Community Association would not accept the governor’s argument that his hands were tied. According to the newspaper, “The question facing all of us now, is whether or not we can consolidate this victory by keeping the valleys in agriculture and winning long-term leases for everyone.” This ad in the October 8, 1978 edition of the paper came out one month after the State pulled the plug on all services for the patients at Hale

325 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 35.
Mohalu, one month after the patients dared to hold a luau on the grounds of the leprosy facility. By purchasing the windward land, Governor Ariyoshi had acceded to the wishes of the farmers at Waiʻāhole/Waikāne. Because Ariyoshi’s rhetoric emphasized preserving the agricultural way of life, he could save the windward land and that gesture fit in with his overall ideology, but the patients’ desire for one acre was seen as greedy on their part and not as within their rights. In her dissertation on Waiʻāhole-Waikāne, Jackie Lasky analyzes the way various traditions in the struggle were employed for political ends and she also examines the importance of class and the issue of rights.

In Waiʻāhole-Waikāne, residents and activists linked the present injustice of the islands’s plantation society and American usurpation of the Hawaiian Kingdom; thus, it was their right to resist such continued oppression and injustices. It was through this multifaceted use of tradition that they were politicized into action.  

Rights were also an issue at Hale Mohalu - patients’ rights not merely tenant’s rights, but more importantly, human rights to self-determination. The concept of aloha ‘āina also emphasized the rights of the land as a living, breathing entity.

Heʻeia Kea

Along with Waiʻāhole-Waikāne, another land struggle took place on the windward side at Heʻeia Kea. Aloha ‘āina in the community served as the means to prevent the development of the rich wetlands at Heʻeia Kea in 1975. Real estate developers Mike McCormack and Foremost-McKesson wanted to transform the historic Hawaiian fishpond into “a marina with six hundred twenty-five berths” and to build townhouses, high-rise condominiums and as well as a golf course. Because of their united oppositon, the residents prevented such desecration, and like Waiʻāhole and Waikāne, this area has remained free of being turned into “a mini-Honolulu.” Whether windward, leeward or urban Honolulu, land struggles ensued over every area of Oʻahu, including the center of town, in the historic Chinatown area.

329 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 164.
330 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 61.
Chinatown

Unlike the fight for agricultural land or even largely vacant land, the battle in Chinatown focused on housing, but, as Trask and Greevy point out, the concerns were essentially no different.

Though the Chinatown struggle centered on densely packed apartments and single room occupancy hotels, the key issues were the same as the earlier ones in the [Kalama] valley. To prepare for the destruction of the dwellings, the landowners put their tenants on month-to-month leases.331

A massive effort to displace the residents in Chinatown met fierce resistance from a group named PACE, People Against Chinatown Evictions. With eyes on profits to be made from getting rid of poor elderly month-to-month tenants in low-rise buildings, developers sought to evict the lessees to clear the land for highrises. According to Trask: “In November 1975, resisters from the Waiahole/Waikane eviction struggle joined with protestors against Chinatown evictions at Honolulu’s city administration building.”332 On every front, from agricultural areas to urban Honolulu, the proposed development planned for these areas faced organized resistance.

The fight was hard-won but it did bring success, to some degree as the Advertiser noted: “In Honolulu, People Against Chinatown Evictions won the struggle for permanent, subsidized housing for its working-class community.”333 Hale Mohalu protestors, Punikai‘a and others participated alongside their friends who were part of PACE and members of PACE supported Hale Mohalu, joining one another in demonstrations. While these two struggles concerned urban O‘ahu, another battle of major proportions centered on the Ko‘olau Range.

H-3 and Hālawa Valley

In 1972 the State and the federal government began to work together to build the H-3 freeway. Its planned and eventually completed route was through the sacred land of Hālawa Valley in order to connect the two military bases of Kāne‘ohe and Pearl Harbor. To build that freeway, construction crews destroyed sacred sites, including numerous heiau. A congressional exemption, arranged for by Senator Daniel Inouye, permitted the construction work to take place without having to do an environmental impact statement,

331 Milner 169-170.
332 Trask and Greevy, Kūʻē 36.
as required by federal law. The struggle lasted over twenty years. The freeway cost billions of dollars and was the most expensive freeway ever built in the United States.

One of the battles fought over this property was documented in a video entitled: “Mālama Hālawa.” Just after the tunnel through the mountain had been completed, in an attempt to stop the final concrete pour in 1992, various protestors stood their ground against the government, but they were not successful. The work continued and the protestors, nearly all Hawaiian women, were arrested. In a video documenting this protest, Miliani Trask stands at the forefront along with many others including Gail Kawaipuna Prejean, who stated, “I see this highway as a continuation of the overt war against Hawaiʻi’s indigenous people.”

Sand Island

In years past Native Hawaiians had tried to establish pockets of sovereignty through designated fishing villages. This was the goal at Sand Island in the late seventies, where the residents had built makeshift homes along the shore and survived by fishing. “By 1979, there were 135 families living there, twice the number that had been in Kalama Valley when the Bishop Estate first began its eviction plans,” notes Milner in his article on houselessness. The residents had petitioned the Governor to stay on Sand Island in the old way of life; in exchange, in what would be a win-win for both sides, they had offered to educate the public about traditional methods of fishing. But the State would not negotiate with the protestors who sought to create a cultural park on vacant land, which the state possessed. According to the Honolulu Advertiser, “Evictions had created a growing homeless population, and the poor responded by creating shantytown communities, such as the one that stood between the state and its desire to complete a park on Sand Island.” The newspaper described the residents as squatters, although the article appeared somewhat positive with its comment about the neat condition of the houses. “On the eve of their December 1979 eviction, a vocal group of 80 to 100 "squatters" — a community of parents, children and the elderly — vowed to stay in the tidy, weather-beaten homes they had built from scrap lumber.”

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336 Milner 170.
In this conflict, the State wanted the land for its own use, which did not include allowing Hawaiians to live there in a cultural park. The Hawaiians were in the way, an eerie echo of the January Overthrow eighty-seven years earlier. Evictions became more political and nationalistic, in keeping with the increasing number of them that occurred along with Hawaiian awareness of their position as the first people of these lands.\footnote{Milner 170.}

Video recordings reveal the standoff at Sand Island and the support the residents had. Bernard Punikaiʻa, involved in his own resistance battle at Hale Mohalu, participated in these demonstrations, as did Clarence Naia.\footnote{“The Sand Island Story,” producers, Victoria Keith and Jerry Rochford, videotape, 1982.} Punikaiʻa and Naiʻa aided their fellow Hawaiians in the fight to maintain a traditional lifestyle, living by the water and fishing, as was their custom. Boggs points out how the relationship of aloha ʻāina and resistance was crucial to the urban eviction struggles.

As Hawaiians moved off of the land into urban areas, the values and attitudes associated with the ʻāina persisted. When in the 1970’s and ‘80’s some were forced off the lands upon which they had been living – or “squatting” in Western terms - these attitudes provided a rallying point. Aloha ʻāina became the slogan for these protests.\footnote{Boggs, “Land, Family, and Hawaiian Resistance” 6.}

In a foretelling of what would happen at Hale Mohalu, the State on January 23, 1980 bulldozed the Sand Island homes: eighteen persons were evicted and arrested for refusing to move. When the State Department of Land and Natural Resources deputies came to evict the protestors, the deputies were armed. They arrested the residents, handcuffed them with their hands behind their backs, and loaded them into paddy wagons. Abe Ahmad was one of the Hawaiian residents. Ahmad, known as Puhipau, worked as the iceman at Sand Island, meaning he delivered blocks of ice to the residents. Puhipau is a tall man, very distinguished looking with white hair and a white beard. Just before he was about to enter the paddy wagon, as the police handcuffed him, Puhipau said out loud: “This is how you treat your Hawaiian people? Thank you Governor Ariyoshi. Thank you State of Hawaii. No more Hawaiians, no more Aloha.” Immediately after removing the residents, bulldozers knocked down the houses, as if they were made of matchsticks. The community the residents had created was gone in an instant and the people, who were too poor to live anywhere else, except in public housing, were homeless once again. The
governor was sorry, he explained, but his hands were tied. The park had been approved by the Legislature and he was obligated to follow through with the project. Ironically, the land continued to lay unused for years—serving as a dumping ground for trash.

**Hale Mohalu Offers Solidarity**

An article in the *Save Hale Mohalu* newsletter of January 1980 entitled “Support for Everyone Who Struggles” reaffirmed the solidarity between Hale Mohalu and other battles taking place. “When Sand Island residents or Chinatown people complain that they have a right to exist in dignity and make decisions about their own lives—the patients of Hale Mohalu understand the problem—because it is their problem, too.”

The article pointed out how deeply involved the patients have been in these disputes. Not only did the patients demonstrate for Hawaiian land rights, they also were strong voices against nuclear armament. According to the newsletter, “During the past month, patients have travelled to Sand Island, Chinatown, City Council Chambers, and Iolani Palace for an anti-nuclear rally. We’re all in this together. Either life is for all of us—or for none of us.”

Proof of that was the connection made between Hawai‘i and Puerto Rico. The Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana reached out to support the Puerto Rican community who also had to endure military bombing of their land. “In Hawaii, the latest action taken in the Protect Kaho‘olawe Ohana’s four-year campaign to stop the bombing,” the *Star-Bulletin* reported, “was an attempt this week [March 1, 1980] to dissuade ships of American allies from participating in the shelling of Vieques.”

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana backed the Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and by extension the protest against the military use of Vieques.

As a follow-up of their thinking in January 1980, the newsletter of March 1980 expressed the solidarity of the struggles.

Bombing the sites of a people’s culture, storing nuclear weapons, driving old people from their homes in Chinatown and not allowing leprosy patients some say in decisions affecting their own lives—are pieces of the same piece of cloth. To protest the bombing of Kaho‘olawe is to protest Chinatown and Hale Mohalu at the same time.

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It was clear that the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana felt it important to reiterate the bond they shared with other struggles and to stress the importance of unity to achieve success.

The following year in 1981 the ‘Ohana created a tentative draft proposal for waging their crusade on behalf of Hale Mohalu. The plan, drawn up by John Witeck and Chris Conybeare, laid out their strategy for how to proceed in the upcoming months. Witeck and Conybeare included a critical addendum at the end of this two page strategic plan in which they stressed the importance of tying in the Hale Mohalu fight with other land struggles.

Note: this campaign should be undertaken in the broader context of important issues such as Hawaiian and community struggles for land and against evictions, the historical context of the treatment of Hansen’s Disease patients, and the general societal issue of the treatment of patients and the elderly. We should make all the possible connections, and seek all possible allies in organizing our campaign, but have a clear idea of which supporters and allies are the most important to involve.346

The patients felt it was important to protest oppression in any form, not only in battles for the ‘āina, but also for people who had no voice and no ability to speak for themselves. On March 19, 1981 Bernard Punikai’a wrote a letter to Senator Duke Kawasaki regarding Senate Resolution 117 as it concerned the residents of Huna Street and the development of a condo in that area. “We feel that the Huna Street residents’ situation represents another very blatant example of ordinary citizens being denied participation in making decisions which affect their lives and well-being and of being dispossessed of their rights.”347 Punikai’a continued his letter comparing the situation to what the leprosy patients have experienced. “We patients at Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa, Molokai, have encountered similar treatment by government, which tends to ignore the human equation in bowing over backward for financial and economic concerns.” Punikai’a made a striking point in his argument that seems self-evident today, but at that time he was completely ignored – namely, to get the responses and the opinions of the people who are directly affected. Punikai’a stated,

When studies were made regarding the future use of the 11 acres at Hale Mohalu, Pearl City (i.e., the Aotani Report), the patients were not even consulted, though

346 Proposal for a Hale Mohalu Campaign, Spring, 1981.
we initiated the Territory of Hawaii’s acquisition of the property and had been living on it for over 3 decades.  

Bernard Punikaiʻa also cited the situation at Nukoliʻi as another example of how the voices of the community are ignored by the government. “It was even more flagrant at Nukoliʻi, Kauai, where citizens voted by a 2-to-1 margin to rezone land back to agricultural and ban an unwanted resort development/condominium project. Only to have their voice completely disregarded and the project continue.” Punikaiʻa ended his letter to say that the ‘Ōhana backed the Huna Street residents: “We stand with the Huna Street residents and will continue to support them in ways they desire. We urge your speedy adoption of this resolution and your full efforts in their support.” Bernard Punikaiʻa as the spokesperson of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ōhana signed the letter.

In June 1981 a flyer for Nukoliʻi told of the problems encountered at the December 15, 1980 protest when thirty-two people were arrested, including Punikaiʻa. The flyer’s headline, “Nukoliʻi 1980-1981” encircled a picture of Punikaiʻa and the other protestors, and it sought support for a potluck-fundraiser on Sunday June 14, 1981 at the Waipahu Pro Center on Oʻahu. The flyer explained, “32 persons were arrested at the Nukoliʻi site for upholding the referendum. All charges against them were dropped, except for “Sister Georgette’s” who faces trial on June 22.” The fundraiser was to raise money for Georgette Meyers so that she could go back to Kauaʻi for the trial.

The patients at Hale Mohalu, under the leadership of Bernard Punikaiʻa, joined with their Hawaiian brothers and sisters at each land struggle they could participate in – such as Māku Valley, Chinatown, Waiahole/Waikāne, Sand Island, Waimanalo and Nukoliʻi. The patients also aligned with Jim Albertini in protests against nuclear armament. In fact, at the 1980 Nuclear Free Pacific conference held in Hawaiʻi, Bernard Punikaiʻa and activist Soli Niheu jointly argued for more Kānaka Maoli delegate positions. They took a strong stand and threatened to walk out if their demands were not met. The organizing committee agreed and allowed them to have five delegates. Soli Niheu spoke of his and Punikaiʻa’s efforts.

What happened at that conference was very, very important. We called for the indigenous peoples to caucus – to use a haole word – among ourselves. Those people who spoke at that meeting strongly believed that we should include independence as part of the movement in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{351} Others, including Māori and Māʻohi (Tahitians) agreed with the Kānaka Maoli representatives as well as other island state representatives and Australian Aboriginals. In an interview, Soli Niheu recounted what was decided. “There were about half-half white people and indigenous people. After the caucus, we took the position to expand the name from NFP [Nuclear Free Pacific] to NFIP [Nuclear Free in the Pacific].”\textsuperscript{352} This was an important step – linking sovereignty struggles to other issues that affected the region, so that overall solidarity and support for one another served to strengthen each movement.

**Land and Hawaiian Sovereignty**

The essential distinction among the land battles has to do with the primacy of Kānaka Maoli. According to Trask: “This call for land arises out of an understanding of the native claims of Hawaiians as the indigenous people of Hawai‘i.” The battles over Kahoʻolawe, Waiāhole-Waikāne, Heeia Kea, and the fight for Sand Island are among this grouping, including Hale Mohalu, as Trask states.

In 1977, leprosy patients at Hale Mohalu began a long fight to prevent their relocation to Leahi Hospital. Their issue was abuse of both the patients (most of whom are Hawaiian) and the land, which had been entrusted to the State by the Federal government expressly for the care of the patients.\textsuperscript{353}

The abuse of the patients and the land is an example of the abuse the State of Hawai‘i and the federal government continue to perpetrate against Native Hawaiians. Kuʻualoha Homanawanui expresses the violation in the phrase “this land is your land, this land was my land,”\textsuperscript{354} but whatever illegal occupation the United States maintains against Native Hawaiians, it changes not one iota of their primacy on this land that is their birthright. The work of Kalāhele, Homanawanui, Trask, Punikaiʻa, Niheu, and numerous Hawaiian leaders attest to this right.

\textsuperscript{352} Niheu, “Huli: Community Struggles and Ethnic Studies,” *Social Process in Hawai‘i* 55.
\textsuperscript{353} Trask, “Hawaiians, American Colonization, and the Quest for Independence,” *Social Process in Hawaii* 123.
\textsuperscript{354} Kuʻualoha Hoʻomanawanui, “This Land Is Your Land, This Land Was My Land” 116-154.
CHAPTER 5

1978 TRANSFORMATION: BECOMING ‘OHANA

For the patients and their supporters, 1978 became a transformative experience, moving them from trepidation to cohesion. The year started out with questions on how to proceed and ended in unity that would last a lifetime. Upset over the proposed closure of Hale Mohalu in January, the patients wondered what, if anything, they could do. In consultation with each other, they decided to say no, refusing to move. They garnered widespread community support in their resistance, organizing into a social movement aligned in solidarity. By December, they were living out their defiant refusal, despite the absence of any utilities or medical care. This chapter and the next examine the formation of the social justice movement that arose in response to events during this first year of resistance. Because it was such an intense period, I have divided the year into halves: January through June and July through December. This chapter covers the first half of the year, from initial efforts to prevent the transfer in January up to and including a leprosy conference held in Honolulu at the Mid-Pacific Institute in June.

Efforts to Prevent the Transfer

The State wanted to shut down the Hale Mohalu facility because it claimed the buildings were not safe for the patients – apparently missing the irony that the Department of Health (DOH) had been responsible for maintaining the facility in the first place. Given the sorry condition of the structures, the State argued it would be cheaper to move the patients to a renovated wing at Leahi than to re-build Hale Mohalu. Despite the fact that no permanent leprosy patient accommodations were ready at Leahi, the Department of Health (DOH) pushed for relocation. The Advertiser reported that the State planned to transfer the patients to the north wing of the Trotter Building at Leahi as a holding ward (which was in the process of being renovated) until the permanent facility of the south wing (which had to be remodeled) would be ready.355

On January 6, 1978 the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) gave permission for the Health Department to close Hale Mohalu immediately

and to move the Hale Mohalu patients into temporary quarters at Leahi. The administrator of SHPDA, James Swenson wrote to George Yuen.

It is the finding of the State Agency that an emergency now exists due to the fact that the Department of Health cannot comply with the Final Notice of Violation within the timeframe required by the Honolulu Fire Department. Consequently, this Agency has determined that a public need exits for this proposed change and approves the Certificate of Need as provided under HRS 323D.

The legality of these actions would later be contested, but the needed approval of SHPDA gave the Department of Health (DOH) permission to proceed with the transfer.

On January 12, George Yuen sent a letter to the patients regarding the relocation of Hale Mohalu to the Trotter Building, notifying them that the move was scheduled to “take place on or about January 23, 1978.”

Bernard Punikai’a met with the current residents at Hale Mohalu, about fifteen in number, of whom four or five required skilled nursing care. In recalling their discussion, Punikai’a explained,

Historically we’d not been allowed to say anything on decisions affecting us…if we didn’t speak up now, they’d continue. What can we do? [the patients asked] We can say, no, we’re not moving. We won’t leave; but that would be a decision they’d have to make.

At a news conference held next to Father Damien’s Statue at the state Capitol on Tuesday January 17, the patients announced their rejection of the proposed move. “We are unequivocally opposed to being uprooted again and imprisoned at Leahi Hospital.” In the first of many newspaper accounts, Advertiser reporter Janice Wolf described the backstory, noting that despite the sad shape of the Pearl City buildings, the site held special meaning for the residents, because “those creaky old wood frames are home.”

At their news conference, the patients stated they had signed a petition, vowing to take legal action in defense of their rights as patients and citizens of Hawai‘i and the U.S.

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360 January 17 was an auspicious day as it was the 85th anniversary of the Overthrow in 1893.
The petition cited the exemplary humanitarian regard Hawai’i has traditionally had for leprosy patients, seeing them foremost as human beings and secondarily as patients, and it demanded, “In this era of renewed concern for human rights, are we to be denied in our own state by our own government?”

The patients did not want to be institutionalized in hospital wards at Leahi since they did not require that kind of care. Where they lived in Pearl City, they were part of the community, able to walk about freely, but Leahi’s location in a residential neighborhood would require the patients to remain indoors to avoid the embarrassment created by their disfigured appearance, Punikai’a explained, describing Leahi as a prison. In the patients’ minds, this was a major setback and completely out of line with the latest medical attitudes toward rehabilitation, which Hale Mohalu embodied.

Feeling they were “being sacrificed for cost efficiency and land development,” they vowed to fight the transfer, aided by State Representative Neil Abercrombie and Legal Aid attorneys. The notion of being a pawn pushed around by the governing powers both frustrated and angered the patients, who were determined to obtain justice. They called on the people of Hawai’i to help them in the acknowledgment of their humanity.

The fight to have their dignity as human beings recognized would prove to be a bigger struggle than they ever imagined. But they would not be alone - many others, sympathetic to their cause, internationally and at home, would join them, including at least, initially, the editors of the local paper.

The January 20 Honolulu Advertiser editorial decried the forced move, explaining that the Health Department, while ignoring the patients, “wants to move them at first to a hastily (and cheaply) renovated wing of Leahi until a more extensively (and expensively) renovated wing is ready. That is said to be by July, but experience suggests it might take longer.” The editors worried the Hale Mohalu closure might presage what could happen at Kalaupapa, namely, the failing structures being allowed to deteriorate, the patients transferred, and the Settlement ultimately closed. The patients believed the law allowed them to stay at Hale Mohalu as long as they lived, the editorial explained, and

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“they could not be moved unless there was a compelling reason and they gave their consent. Now the health department is telling them they must move and there are no choices.” While there were only a small number of patients affected, the editorial continued, the decision on what to do should not be made in a crisis situation. The editors emphasized a crucial point. “We cannot treat leprosy victims like those of any other disease for they are also the subject of old prejudices, which have disrupted their lives.” The editors argued a key detail about sufferers of leprosy, noting their isolation was not voluntary, but imposed upon them for the good of society, and “now, that isolation is no longer required medically or legally, they deserve some special consideration.”

Although the sick were forcibly separated from their families for communal benefit, the public forgot that fact. In the minds of leprosy victims, compulsory removal to Leahi echoed their previous incarceration when first diagnosed, and though the disease had been arrested, scars, both emotional and physical, remained from that painful experience.

About to be uprooted once again, against their stated objections, they sought not only the public’s help but also legislative redress. At Hale Mohalu on Thursday January 19, members of the House Health Committee toured the facility and spoke to the patients, who urged them to stop the transfer. House Health Committee members visited Hale Mohalu and Leahi and came away with diverse viewpoints, but in agreement that the buildings were in sad shape and patient safety was paramount. Senate Health Committee Chair, Anson Chong, already familiar with Hale Mohalu from previous visits, quickly responded to the patients’ call for help. Chong introduced a legislative resolution, requesting the governor to stop the relocation, and explaining it would be assigned to committee for public hearing. (This hearing took place on Friday January 27).

House Health Chairman Herbert Segawa sympathized with the patients, but said his responsibility and concern for their safety outweighed their desire for Hale Mohalu. Senator Chong, on the other hand, had genuine empathy for the patients’ position.

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Segawa opposed their wishes, while Chong supported them, and their disagreement would become more entrenched with the passage of time.

While the Advertiser’s editorial on Friday January 20th backed the patients, the next day the editors of the Star-Bulletin endorsed the State’s position. “Hale Mohalu is a fire hazard. It is in danger of collapse – only emergency braces keep some parts of it up. The electrical wires under its leaky roofs pose the threat of fire and, on wet days, of electrocution.”375 No mention was made of the State’s culpability for these conditions. Instead, the editorial offered the paper’s approval of the House Health Committee’s unanimous vote on Friday the 20th to allow the Leahi move to proceed. In a condescending tone, the Star-Bulletin editors totally dismissed the patients’ emotional frame of mind. “There may be inconveniences immediately after the move, but none that cannot be remedied. Even the lived-in look should come rather quickly. Curtains were going up this weekend to help on that score.”376 The paper summed up the issue matter-of-factly. “After the initial adjustment period, the change should work out very agreeably.”377 This type of mind-set presumed to know what the patients wanted as well as needed.

Few in positions of power were willing to examine the situation from the patients’ perspective, which was replete with fond memories of Hale Mohalu’s earliest days when they planted its shade trees.378 They had institutional memory of a place that was not an institution to them, but a beloved residence. “The buildings are buckling here and there, falling to the ravages of age and termites,” one reporter stated, but “the place nevertheless has a kind of quiet dignity.” Having been built with the Hawaiian climate in mind, the rooms have “an airy feel” with “more screens than windows.” In sharp contrast, the cement walls of Leahi lacked the “natural essence” Hale Mohalu provided.379 As Punikai’a made clear, they had freedom to be themselves at their beloved Hale. “Here we have spacious grounds. At Leahi, there’s nothing comparable. We play cards, play the piano, sing and we’re not afraid of interrupting anyone else.”380 Francis Palea, age 67,
diagnosed with leprosy at age 26, smiled broadly as he talked about Hale Mohalu, his home for 21 years. “We love this place.”

When Frank Duarte, age 62 (married to fellow-patient, Mary Duarte) later visited Leahi, he was disgusted and walked out. Duarte, a diabetic, diagnosed with leprosy as a young man, spoke of his visit to Leahi. “They made like they had a private room for my wife and me. But there was no shower. No bathroom. She had to go to the women’s section to the bathroom or shower and I had to go to the men’s. Some private room.”

Representative Abercrombie called Leahi “a prison hospital,” arguing, “It’s a place to go, get well and leave. Or a place to go and die.”

The Hale Mohalu patients took legal action on January 20, 1978, when Legal Aid Society lawyers Susan Arnett and Shelby Floyd filed suit in State Circuit Court. The Legal Aid suit alleged that the move would violate Hawai‘i law and a Health Department regulation regarding the transfer of leprosy patients. As a result, Circuit Judge Harold Shintaku granted the patients a temporary restraining order, which allowed them to remain at Hale Mohalu past Monday the 23rd when they were scheduled for transfer.

Even though Judge Shintaku gave the patients a few days’ reprieve, he made them promise they would not hold the State liable for any injuries they might suffer, and that they would not sue if a fire broke out. The Judge had the patients sign statements to that effect, and if they hadn’t signed the waivers of liability, he would not have permitted his restraining order to stand. The patients used the few days of relief to marshal public support over the weekend. On Monday afternoon, they returned the signed liability wavers to the court and on that same date, January 23, Punikai’a and State Representative Henry Peters met with Governor George Ariyoshi in an attempt to stop the transfer. However, the Governor made no commitment to intervene. Asked his opinion of the meeting, Punikai’a commented, “At least, he listened.”

Meanwhile, the court hearing, originally scheduled for Tuesday January 24 was postponed until Wednesday January 25,
When the court reconvened, Judge Shintaku said that he had sympathy for the patients, but he felt that the law clearly stated the Department of Health decision to move the patients was legal if the Department felt that it was necessary. “The judge ruled that under state law,” the Advertiser explained, “the health department can transfer ‘any person’ to ‘any hospital’ in any situation, where there’s a question of patient health, welfare and safety.”  

The judge went on to say that this law overrules the other statute, which says that patient consent has to happen before a transfer can occur. “This is what the health department is authorized to do,’ Shintaku told Legal Aid. ‘I’m bound by it, you’re bound by it, the patients are bound by it.”  

The judge wanted to focus strictly on the law, avoiding any emotional issues, but for the parties involved, it was very upsetting. Patient Beatrice Romanowski, age 65, “visibly shaken by the court experience,” had to take the stand and identify a photograph of her room and bath. Shintaku angrily demanded to know why she should have that kind of accommodation. “Where in the law does it say she has to have that? If you want a palace built, go ask the legislature.”  

Afterwards, Abercrombie, nearly in tears, told reporters he was ashamed of the court proceedings. Clearly upset, Abercrombie expressed his shock at the “judicial display of temper” against the plaintiffs and their lawyers. A supporter of the patients from the beginning, Abercrombie was drawn to their cause because he saw parallels to the earlier struggles of the patients and Father Damien. Since the judge ruled that the patients could indeed be moved legally, this decision meant the State might close Hale Mohalu at any moment. Although the closure could be imminent, Director of Health George Yuen said he had no idea when the patients would be removed, but he did agree to “think over” an appeal from Abercrombie to delay the transfer. Abercrombie also tried to enlist help from the public, asking those concerned about Hale Mohalu to call the governor. Abercrombie sought to postpone the transfer until an alternative proposal for rebuilding on the contested site could be discussed at a scheduled Senate Health Committee hearing on Friday. Abercrombie pressed Yuen to delay any action until after

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393 Governor Neil Abercrombie, personal interview, Governor’s Office, Honolulu, Friday, 2 August 2011.
he [Abercrombie] had made his presentation. Mayor Frank Fasi also urged that the patient transfer be delayed until various solutions to the problem could be proposed.395

Moving Day and Its Immediate Aftermath

Despite the appeals of the patients, the pleas of Abercrombie and Mayor Fasi, as well as George Yuen’s pledge to “think over” Abercrombie’s two-day postponement request, the State wasted no time. It proceeded the very next day, Thursday January 26, 1978, to close Hale Mohalu and to transfer the patients to Leahi. Moving Day was one of rumors, intimidation, and fear with patients told no medications or nursing services would be given at Hale Mohalu, and medicine would be available only at Leahi. “Later, the instructions changed, and patients were told a two-week supply of medicine would be left behind – but that patients would have to administer it themselves.” Given the fact that many patients had no fingers, telling them that they would have to “learn to administer their own insulin shots” made for a frightening and intimidating atmosphere.396

With one story given to the media and another to the patients, it was a day of doublespeak and confusion. According to the Advertiser, “As nurses told patients their medications would no longer be dispensed, Health Director Yuen was announcing to the news media that food and medicine would be continued.”397 Since it appeared that they might not get needed medications, some patients felt that they had no choice but to go to Leahi. They were anguished over being taken away from their fellow patients. The daily papers reported that no one went willingly and most did so with a heavy heart. The Advertiser newspaper headline exclaimed: “Moving Day at Hale Mohalu: Tears, Confusion; 12 Remain.” It was the top story on the front page with a photo of the patients tearfully being moved onto a bus. “Amid tears and hugs, confusion and fear that they would lose their medical help, the 20 patients of the Hale Mohalu leprosy facility yesterday saw state health officials try to close the old place down.” Eight patients

reluctantly agreed to go, but twelve “decided to stay behind in the Pearl City facility and fight the transfer – even if it means getting arrested.”

It was a heart-wrenching decision for the patients to make. They felt they should be allowed to stay there after all these years and that the State should be required to make the necessary repairs. But the State wasn’t open to feedback from patients - treating them like colonial subjects who should obey the government’s superior judgment.

Punikai‘a recounted to John Witeck his personal memories of what happened that day.

Early in the morning, the head nurse, Ms. Tomi Miyahira started to tell the patients medicine would be withheld if they resisted going to Leahi: to eat heavy because breakfast was the last meal they were going to have at Hale; she told the blind and those needing insulin they had to go to Leahi or they would receive no medicine. Those in beds were told to get off the bed so the linen could be stripped off. Patient Leon Nono told her she didn’t own the bed or whatever because the Federal government provided for them… they were breaking the law.

Neil Abercrombie informed Mayor Fasi that morning of the planned afternoon move and of the State’s threat to withhold medication and food. Mayor Fasi immediately had a letter hand-delivered to Governor Ariyoshi, which described the action as “ridiculous” and “inhumane” and requested the Governor to continue the program until a solution could be worked out. However, the Mayor’s appeal went unheeded.

In speaking later to Witeck about what happened, Punikai‘a recalled, “Intimidation and threats did work somewhat: eight patients moved…. so broken up, very traumatic for them.” Punikai‘a tried to “make it easier” for the patients, telling them “don’t worry, they weren’t abandoning the ship, to go with our blessings. They were still a part of our community, our ohana.” Newspaper pictures of that emotional period reveal Punikai‘a aiding the patients, hugging and comforting them, as they boarded a worn-out school bus for the transfer. They were his brothers and sisters and he sought to do whatever he could to help. On the day of the transfer, the Health Department’s

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400 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
402 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
conduct toward the disabled residents resembled a marine staff sergeant barking orders to young recruits. It was chaos. “Sheets were ripped off beds,” the paper reported, “furniture was moved out, cardboard boxes with belongings were carried away.” Whatever dignity the patients possessed was visibly assaulted. During the ordeal, most of the patients cried, both those who stayed behind and those forced to leave. Just having to get on the bus for Leahi was a traumatic experience. “One [patient] had to be removed from the floor of the bus where he was hyperventilating.” Unable to get on the bus, “a woman baked in the hot sun in the back of a station wagon, while two drivers argued over who would get behind the wheel.” Frail elderly patients, upset by the unsettling move, but frightened by the State’s threats, felt forced to leave, too scared to stay.

In the midst of it all, Punikai’a recounted to Witeck how nurse Miyahira called the police with a complaint about him, saying, “Bernard had harassed the movers.” Punikai’a described the exchange with the officer. “‘Hawaiian policeman talked to me as if I was a kid, asked me if I understood the word ‘harassment’… complaint made.’” Punikai’a defended the patients when the movers tried to take everything away, as he explained. “‘Mary, dialysis patient was sitting on a chair, using table – not gonna let anyone take that table, chair away from her.’” He asked the movers, “‘Where do you expect her to sit, on the floor?’” Witeck noted Punikai’a’s description of the furniture removal. “Bernard told movers when trucks filled, not to take anything else because,” as he said, ‘I would lie down in front of their truck.’” Punikai’a told them, “‘I know what I have to do…. you do what you have to do. Told same thing to two sergeants who arrived; they talked to Keala the chief [Police Chief Francis Keala] … seemed like word reached HPD not to do state’s dirty work.’”

The State’s pressure on the patients to move and the heavy-handed manner in which it was done only served to galvanize Punikai’a and the other patients into resisting the State’s authority. The community that had existed so tightly for almost thirty years had been dealt a severe blow. Herded like cattle, the patients were summarily transferred from one facility to another, with little regard for their frailties, both emotional and

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408 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard, (John Witeck, personal collection).
409 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard, (John Witeck, personal collection).
physical, as if they were simply devoid of feeling. Sheets would later be put back on the beds and meals served, but the assault had done its harm, creating needless anxiety and waste: medicine packed and sent to Leahi on Thursday afternoon had to be returned to Hale Mohalu on Thursday evening.410

As their elected representative, Bernard Punikaiʻa conferred with his fellow patients to discuss their next step. United in their opposition, they held fast to the Hawaiian principles of aloha (love, affection) lōkahi (unity), and kūʻē (resist, protest). Many others in Hawai‘i, deeply disturbed by the state’s callous attitude, would join Bernard Punikaiʻa and the other patients in resistance, in kūʻē.

On Friday January 27th George Yuen came to Hale Mohalu to apologize to the remaining patients for the confusion that took place in the midst of the move to Leahi on Thursday. Yuen had promised that those who stayed at Hale Mohalu would continue to receive food and medical services. “‘We’re going to keep our word,’ he told patients, their friends and supporters who had gathered in the dayroom.” Angry patients told Yuen that despite promises services would continue at Hale Mohalu, their clothes, including pajamas, robes, and towels had been collected and taken to Leahi, leaving some without their nightclothes. “I know we’ve been through a lot these last few days,” Yuen said. “I was hoping I’d be able to convince [you] that the move was for your own safety. I’ve failed.”411 Later in the day, brown shopping bags, filled with assorted robes and pajamas arrived back in Pearl City. In addition to the confiscation of their clothes, the State seized furniture. Movers were kept busy moving living room furniture and refrigerators out and then having to return them later in the day. For his part, Yuen maintained he had not given orders for the furniture to be removed. While Yuen was sorry for any misunderstanding that occurred, he also reaffirmed his commitment to get rid of Hale Mohalu because it was not safe.

The process of moving everyone with their belongings was a tortuous ordeal for the elderly, handicapped patients, completely dependent on the Health Department for their most basic needs. As a result, the patients were drained, physically and emotionally, by the State’s rough treatment. “Yuen said he hoped over the next few days, tempers

would cool and everyone would ‘think things through without emotion.’” Yuen treated the matter as though it were a bureaucratic problem that could be fixed – as if there were no personal lives involved. The Department of Health had looked after every aspect of patient life for so many years that a paternalistic attitude of knowing what was best shut out the voices of those directly affected. No matter how hard the patients fought to be understood, Yuen discounted them; he believed the move was the best choice for everyone concerned, and his opinion ruled out any other.

On Friday January 27, 1978 before the scheduled hearing on the move took place, George Yuen wrote a five-page letter to Senator Chong to provide his views. Yuen explained the purpose and background of the leprosy program and Hale Mohalu.

At present Hale Mohalu serves as both a nursing facility and as a temporary residence for transient Kalaupapa patients who come to Honolulu for medical services unavailable at Kalaupapa. Eight of the total of 19 patients of Hale Mohalu have moved to their new temporary quarters at Leahi. With his letter to Senator Chong, Yuen sought to set the stage, laying out his argument even before the hearing took place.

Yuen went on to discuss different matters under several headings, “History of the Move” as well as the “Reasons for the Move” and the “Advantages to the Move.” In his conclusion, Yuen expressed his concern for the patients. “It is my sincere hope that the patients who remain at Hale Mohalu and those who are assisting on their behalf, will have an opportunity to quietly assess the pros and cons and finally come to a realization that the move is truly in the best interests of all.” With his letter to Senator Chong, Yuen sought to set the stage, laying out his argument even before the hearing took place.

On Friday evening January 27, the day after the forced move, the Senate Health Committee held a public hearing (the hearing that Abercrombie had urged Yuen to attend before evicting the patients). A large representation of over three hundred people from the community, including “researchers, architects, and members of the Protect Kahoolawe Ohana” came to listen and give their input on the resolution Senator Anson Chong had introduced. Of the six-member Senate Legislative Health Committee, only

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415 KCCN radio and its station manager, “Krash” Kealoha, broadcast the 4 hours and 40 minutes hearing as a public service. Bernard Punikai‘a sent a thank you letter to Kealoha on February 8, 1978, saying how he appreciated the broadcast “because it brought the hearing to all those people of Hawaii unable to attend, especially those of Hale Mohalu, Leahi, and Kalaupapa.” Punikai‘a, Letter to Kealoha, February 8, 1978. (David Lassner, personal collection).
Chairperson Chong and Senator Donald Nishimura attended the meeting. Missing were Vice-Chairperson Senator Henry Takitani, Senators Donald Ching, Richard Henderson, and Patricia Saiki. Bernard Punikai‘a presented a petition signed by seventy-six of the approximately one hundred and thirty patients. More signatures would have been obtained, he said, except for “transportation problems and the relatively short notice of the hearing.” The petition noted, “We, the leprosy patients who are directly affected by the closing of Hale Mohalu by order, and the forced move to Leahi Hospital, do hereby state: We are unequivocally opposed to being uprooted again and imprisoned at Leahi Hospital.” The petition continued with words that retrospectively are chillingly powerful: “We shall resist without ceasing.”

At the January 27, hearing, various people’s testimonies emphasized Hawaiian cultural values associated with a beloved land and the anguish suffered with its loss. For example, Ruth Chow, whose father was banished to Kalaupapa, affirmed what the patients desired. “They only wish to be allowed to live there in peace in a portion of the area of Hale Mohalu. You see, many of these people are elderly, poor Hawaiian. And Hawaiians are religious people who have a feeling of closeness to nature.”

Glenn Davis of the Hui Alaloa Ohana of Moloka‘i argued, “This government has been relocating Hawaiians at its convenience for 85 years! Enough is enough.” Charmaine Toomey of Moloka‘i raised the issue of accountability. “The State neglected its responsibilities as far as maintaining the facility in which they live. Why is it now that the patients must suffer physically, emotionally, and socially, due to the irresponsibility of the State?”

Soli Niheu spoke about the evictions that had particularly affected Hawaiians, expressing “his disgust with the State and the economic system in general that would displace Hawaiians from land that, he felt, belonged to Hawaiians anyway. He also drew a parallel between what is happening at Hale Mohalu and what happened at Kalama Valley and Waiahole-Waikane.” Bridget Mowat of the Hui Alaloa Ohana of Molokai spoke in favor of leaving the patients where they had been, that they are people who love

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417 Janice Taba, Notes, meeting January 27, 1978, (Janice Taba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
the land. Patient John Kaona of Kalaupapa specifically flew in to give his testimony because he wanted “to show his solidarity with the patients currently at Hale Mohalu. He said that the patients of Kalaupapa are against the move to Leahi.” Senator Jean King urged the adoption of Senate Resolution 49, asking the Governor to halt the relocation.\(^{420}\)

At the hearing, Abercrombie presented sketches done by architects James Pearson and Jay Anderson, which disclosed the possible health facilities that could be built at Hale Mohalu. The cost for rebuilding was approximately $326,000, which was the same amount of money that the State said it would cost to renovate Leahi.\(^{421}\) To broaden the scope of aid, Abercrombie publicly called for President Carter’s intervention. The patients sent President Carter a letter dated January 27, signed by Bernard Punikai’a for the Patients Advisory Council and Neil Abercrombie, Representative, 13\(^{th}\) District; their letter, written on official House of Representatives, State of Hawai‘i stationery, stated, “Your intervention on behalf of our leprosy patients’ rights to remain at their Oahu residence site, Hale Mohalu is sought only after exhausting all other executive recourse.” The letter listed the particulars of their case, beginning with the fact that “Violations were present more than five years ago,” and that “The DOH and its Leprosy Program administrators did absolutely nothing to correct the violations.” In the hope that the President would be sympathetic to their cause, they also sent their Patient Petition of December 12, 1977, which they presented to President Carter “in tears of anger and faith in your sense of the justice of our cause.”\(^{422}\) Abercrombie made sure that the meeting ended with the passing of a resolution seeking Governor George Ariyoshi’s help. At the same time, Director Yuen pledged to be open-minded about any alternative solutions.\(^{423}\) The irony of that would soon become evident, along with Ariyoshi’s stonewalling efforts.

**Save Hale Mohalu Movement**

The patients and their supporters rallied to do all they could to “Save Hale Mohalu.” Among the very early members of those who joined the patients were people like Janice Taba who told her friend David Lassner and together they came out to help at the Hale Mohalu facility in whatever way possible. That type of grassroots effort, one

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friend talking to another, marked the public’s assistance to this cause. The response was both immediate and lasting. Others who were there from the start included union leader John Witeck, teacher and former Maryknoll priest, Wally Inglis, along with Maryknoll Sisters Sandy Galazin and Earnest Chung. Jim Albertini who had been involved in the Kalama Valley eviction and who worked for peace at the catholicAction offices on University Avenue invited Maryknoll priests Ed Gerlock and Gigi Cocquio to accompany him to Hale Mohalu. Gerlock and Cocquio had only recently arrived from their work in the Philippines, protesting against Marcos.

More than thirty years later, these diverse individuals maintain a close relationship. Life-long friendships grew out of the bond they established, continuing to function as the focal point of their rapport.⁴²⁴ A remarkable dynamic exists whenever they get together: teasing, bantering, philosophical discussions, and assessments of the political scene – all the factors that were in play at the time of the struggle. In addition to these core Ohana members, the assistance given to the patients was far-reaching, ranging from various individuals to professional organizations, including the Hawaii Federation of College Teachers, who passed a resolution dated January 28, backing Hale Mohalu.⁴²⁵

To thank the people who offered support at the January 27 hearing, Punikai’á, as Chairman of the Kalaupapa Patients’ Advisory Council, wrote a series of letters dated January 30, to Senator Jean King, to Senator Chong, to each of the newspapers, and to Elizabeth Waterhouse for her generous monetary gift. On January 31, Punikai‘a sent his thanks to Mayor Fasi for his offer of the City’s medical department and ambulance, in light of the state’s threat to cut off medical services “vital to our survival.” In another letter on January 31 to James Brown, President United Public Workers, Punikai‘a offered his appreciation to “the Statewide Executive Board of the United Public Workers for their endorsement of the ‘Save Hale Mohalu’ movement.” A similar gratitude letter was also sent to “the Statewide Executive Board of the Hawaii Federation of College Teachers.⁴²⁶

News of the forced transfer from Pearl City continued to play out in the newspapers as various people expressed their opinions on the controversy. Dr. R. Frederick Shepard, Medical Director of the Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific, wrote

⁴²⁴ James Albertini, personal interview, Honolulu, Sunday 19 February 2012.
⁴²⁶ Bernard Punikaia, series of thank you letters, January 30 and January 31, 1978 (David Lassner, personal collection). Additional letters were also sent in February 1978 to various individuals, companies, and radio stations in gratitude for their support.
a piece in which he criticized Abercrombie for working to prevent the relocation. “The move is furthering the well-being of the Hale Mohalu residents and all must help them to realize that they have nothing to lose but the miserable setting of Hale Mohalu and ending their being set apart from society.”

In Dr. Shepard’s view the patients did not know what was best nor did Abercrombie.

In reply, on Wednesday February 1, separate letters from Ben H. Tamashiro and David Lassner in the Star-Bulletin dismantled Shepard’s argument. Tamashiro pointedly agreed with Dr. Shepard - the patients should have the homes that are “safe, commodious structures on attractive grounds with inspiring scenery,” but he argued the cost to re-build at Hale Mohalu would be about the same as to rehabilitate Leahi. David Lassner was deeply saddened when he read Dr. Shepard’s comments. “The doctor wrote with complete disregard for the feelings of the patients concerned.” Lassner noted that the patients are asking for something very dear to their hearts. “In spite of the condition of the buildings at Hale Mohalu, the site is spacious, and more importantly, has housed the patients for 29 years. It is home to them.” Familiar with Hale Mohalu from his visit, Lassner objected to the entire manner of the transfer and the way it disregarded the patients’ will. Lassner stated, “Such callous disregard for the feelings of a group of human beings who have suffered so long at the hands of society’s ignorance and unfounded fear, is completely inexcusable.”

While Lassner empathetically understood the patients’ perspective, the editors of the Star-Bulletin held an opposite view, which they repeatedly emphasized. The paper disputed Lassner’s statements with an addendum note to the bottom of his printed letter, arguing, “Except for four handicapped permanent patients, the Honolulu leprosy facilities are not ‘home.’ They are transient facilities for patients whose homes are at Kalaupapa, Molokai, to use while in Honolulu for temporary medical treatment or other reasons.”

For some, like the Star-Bulletin editors, the situation at Hale Mohalu was simply cut and dry - the patients did not reside at Hale Mohalu. They had homes on Moloka‘i and they

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made brief visits to Pearl City. The editors described the facility as though it were only a bus terminal or a rail station – simply a transient stop, no more.

In actuality, Hale Mohalu was a place of community that the patients revisited each time they came to Honolulu for medical treatment. Depending on circumstances that often meant several visits a year or perhaps several in a month. Hale Mohalu was their refuge in the city, a residence they helped to create; they made it a comfortable dwelling where they could relax - among others with whom they shared a unique relationship. The Pearl City facility was not just a transient place as the editors pointed out – it was an extension of their community at Kalaupapa - a shared family experience, a home in the truest sense. Forcibly to remove them from that kind of familial relationship was a tragedy and an abuse of the State’s power. If the authorities chose not to understand Hale Mohalu’s significance, some in the public empathized, as evidenced by the outpouring of support at the January 27 hearing and by one letter in particular to the editor printed in the newspaper from Oscar Kurren.

A professor at the University of Hawai‘i, Kurren said that while a majority of the patients opposed the move, it was made clear at the January meeting that “the residents of Hale Mohalu or Kalaupapa were never polled to determine their wishes on the move to Leahi hospital.” Kurren’s assessment of the State’s behavior summarized the feelings of many in the community. “Failure to maintain properly the facilities at Hale Mohalu over the years is inexcusable and unjustified.” Along with Kurren’s letter, the Advertiser also published a letter from Punikai‘a thanking everyone for “their warm support of our cause as we are being involuntarily torn from the aina which through our suffering and dying has now become the property of the state. We ask for your continued support in our struggle for dignity.” On Thursday February 2, the Senate of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i introduced a resolution “requesting the governor to halt the relocation of leprosy patients and to rebuild their treatment facility at Hale Mohalu.” Senator Eric Nemoto presented the resolution, which passed eighteen to four.

Protest Campaign Gains Momentum

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Building on community support and invoking the aid of their spiritual mentor, Father Damien, in a ceremony in front of Damien’s statue, patients and their supporters held a prayerful protest on Friday February 3, 1978. Various members of the clergy, including a Roman Catholic priest and elders from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, joined with legislators Abercrombie and Anson Chong in the demonstration to honor Damien and publicize the patients’ anger. Flower leis as well as maile leis were lovingly draped around the statue “under the watchful eyes of Honolulu police officers and Capitol security” while more flowers, including torch ginger, carnation, and roses, were laid at the statue’s base. Bernard Punikai‘a read the resolution the patients had drawn up, which expressed their wish to remain at Hale Mohalu. While the ceremony lasted only twenty minutes, it signified for the patients their emotional and spiritual connection with Damien, their mentor, and continued the tradition begun in January of demonstrations at the site. The story which was reported in the Advertiser with an accompanying photo of the patients singing in front of Damien’s flowered adorned statue also ran June 28th in the New York Times.

Hawaiian songs, as always, were part of the festivities and integral to the patients’ protest. Hawaiian music and the invocation of Damien’s presence were two abiding forces in the Save Hale Mohalu movement. In their formal resolution of February 3 read aloud at the Damien protest, the patients asked “the Governor and the Hawaii State Legislature to retain Hale Mohalu Hospital as the treatment center for the Leprosy patients on Oahu.” The resolution was signed by twenty-three patients.

In a planning session at Hale Mohalu on Saturday February 4 at 4 PM, Abercrombie joined with others to discuss their strategy for “Save Hale Mohalu” activities to take place on Sunday and Monday, prior to Punikai‘a and Abercrombie meeting with the Governor on Monday. Some of their ideas included holding signs that said “Save Hale Mohalu” or “Call the Governor” and others with the sentence “Toot your

436 Resolution, to retain Hale Mohalu Hospital as the treatment center for leprosy patients on Oahu, February 3, 1978.
horn if you care,” which became “Honk for Hale Mohalu.” Another suggestion was to have supporters hold signs across the street from the Governor’s Mansion at the State Capitol during the Monday meeting. That idea was incorporated as part of their weekly protest. Later that day at 6:30 PM after they did highway picketing, they held another meeting regarding their demonstration plans for Monday. They also discussed the positive feedback they got from the public to their Saturday picketing. There was “no negativity” and the responses included phrases such as “Shaka Brah,” “We Love You,” “Don’t Give Up the Ship,” and “We’ll Call the Governor.”

The supporters decided “to picket at heavy traffic intersections all over Oahu Monday morning” and to “get message to all disc jockeys to talk about [it] all during the day.” Supporters of the patients gathered signatures from the general public during the weekend. Petition signing took place at several sites, such as the Holiday Mart stores near Ala Moana as well as in Kailua and Pearl City.

On Monday February 6, in a meeting with Governor Ariyoshi that lasted over an hour, Punikai’a and Abercrombie presented to the Governor a petition signed by more than 2,500 citizens in support of the patients remaining at Hale Mohalu as well as letters of endorsement from the Hawaii Federation of College Teachers, the executive board of the United Public Workers (UPW), and the Federation of Hawaiian Civic Clubs. In her notes, Save Hale Mohalu member, Janice Taba, recorded what happened at the meeting (with George Yuen present). Ariyoshi asked, “What do you want?” The patients answered, “We want to share the land.” There was a long period of silence, Taba noted, when “Governor looked like almost going to say yes.” Then the Governor said he could not give an answer right away. He wanted to visit the patients first. Bernard Punikai’a stated, “All Leahi leprosy patients want to return to Hale Mohalu.” Punikai’a expressed concern over Ariyoshi’s visit [to Hale Mohalu] because he [Punikai’a] did not want “our people” to “get pressurized into anything.”

In addition to the petition presented to the Governor, supporters protested in front of the State Capitol, waving signs and asking passing motorists to honk their car horns in

438 Janice Taba, Notes, February 4, 1978 meeting at 4:00PM, (Janice Taba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
439 Janice Taba, Notes, February 4, 1978 meeting at 4:00 PM (Janice Taba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
441 Janice Taba, Notes February 7, 1978 meeting at 8:30PM, (Janice Taba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
442 Janice Taba, Notes, February 7, 1978 meeting at 8:30PM, (Janice Taba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
sympathy. They had gathered in front of the Capitol at 6:30AM [Monday February 6] and were there all day before the scheduled 3:30PM meeting with the Governor. “For the leprosy patients and their supporters who gathered in the rotunda below,” the Advertiser reported, “the meeting capped a physically and emotionally exhausting three days of taking their cause before the public.” As a result of the meeting, the Governor promised that he would personally visit Hale Mohalu to review the situation; but he did not make any commitment regarding their hopes to stay there on a permanent basis.

Abercrombie felt positive after the meeting, believing that the discussion had been open and frank; on the other hand, Punikai’a spoke of his disappointment, since no definite agreement had been reached. “All we can do now is hang in there and pray that he [Ariyoshi] will make the decision that will be to our benefit.” At the same time, Richard S. W. Young, of the Department of Health’s communicable disease branch stated to the press that “all four of the permanent patients listed on Hale Mohalu’s registry already have moved to Leahi. Another three patients, who are carried on the registry of Kalaupapa, Moloka‘i, also have moved to the Diamond Head facility.”

This tactic of splitting out the patients as being registered as either Hale Mohalu patients or Kalaupapa patients was an effort to delegitimize the patients’ struggle, a kind of divide and conquer move. When the law was changed in 1969, some patients chose to stay at Hale Mohalu, living there instead of Kalaupapa, but no new patients were admitted to Kalaupapa. Any new patients after 1969 were treated on an out-patient basis at Hale Mohalu. Those were clearly Hale Mohalu patients, not a part of the Kalaupapa settlement. For those patients who were sent to Kalaupapa and came under the law prior to 1969, they had as much right to the facilities at Hale Mohalu as they had to those at Kalaupapa. The State wanted to split hairs and say some patients were illegitimate residents at Hale Mohalu, ignoring the fact that the Kalaupapa patients stayed at Hale Mohalu whenever they needed medical attention in Honolulu and that they had been doing so since 1949, traveling back and forth between the two sites. It was to the State’s benefit to try to separate the patients according to a formal registry that meant one group had validity while the others were unlawful. On this topic, the paper reported the

statement of Richard Young, “About 12 patients, the majority of them transients actually registered at Kalaupapa, still are being treated at Hale Mohalu.”

These patients were hardly “transients.” The condition of leprosy was their passport, their union card of legitimacy, the reason they were at those leprosy facilities in the first place. Prior to the 1969 changes in the law, patients had no input into their treatment. They had to do just what the State demanded. Now, ten years later, given the advances in civil rights, these leprosy sufferers wanted to be acknowledged as individuals with rights, not just diseased bodies that could be shifted like so many pieces on a chess board. They called on the Governor to grant them the recognition they were seeking. In addition to the petition and the endorsement letters given to Ariyoshi, Abercrombie also gave the Governor a copy of the Pearl City Community Association June 1977 newsletter, which mentioned that the Hale Mohalu area might become available soon as a new location for the community’s recreation needs. Abercrombie said that was a welcome idea and hoped that the patients could have a small part of the site.

On February 7, the next day after the meeting with the Governor, the patients met with the Manager of the Palm Garden at the Blaisdell Hotel who suggested they hold a rally. Fasi notified Abercrombie that he would make a statement and that he was writing a letter to the Governor. On Thursday February 9, Fasi sent a letter to Ariyoshi. “I do urge that you not consider this issue strictly on the basis of dollars and cents,” he said, “too often, that is the course followed by government bureaucrats when human needs and considerations should be given first priority.” The Mayor professed to have great empathy “for the little guy” and the public generally saw Fasi as a man of the people. Mayor Fasi offered the city’s assistance in any way needed. Fasi also made a crucial point that the Governor ignored. “I’m sure that if you gave your personal assurances to the patients that they would be returned to new facilities at the Hale Mohalu location, they would willingly move to Leahi on a temporary basis.”

Promising to investigate the circumstances surrounding the transfer, Ariyoshi visited both locations on Thursday February 9. “Quietly and without advance notice,” the newspaper reported, “Governor George Ariyoshi slipped into both Hale Mohalu and

448 Janice Taba, Notes, February 7, 1978, meeting at 10:55PM, (JaniceTaba’s notebook, David Lassner, personal collection).
Leahi Hospital yesterday for a first-hand look at the leprosy facilities." Accompanied by Yuen Ariyoshi spent less than ten minutes at Hale Mohalu, peeking in rooms, shaking hands with patients, but never asking any questions. Ariyoshi viewed the wooden supports used to bolster the beams in the dayroom, an area known as the “show and tell room” because Health Department officials cited the buckling beams as a reason to call the facility unsafe. After his visit, Ariyoshi, never known for his speaking ability, declined to comment, but his press secretary, Hobert Duncan, stated that the Governor wanted to have “this personal background” in order to decide what to do. It appeared that the Governor knew all along what he was going to do, although he made an effort to appear willing to listen. “Quiet but effective” – the campaign motto of Ariyoshi aptly described his tactic of pursuing the State’s agenda.

To keep up the pressure on the Governor and as a reflection of their grief, the patients put a black lei on Damien’s statue, part of the Friday February 10 demonstration at the State Capitol. Patient Anita Una wrote a letter to the Advertiser editor expressing frustration with Yuen’s hypocritical comments about concern for the patients, because if that were true, improvements to Hale Mohalu would have happened long ago. In addition, the patients put a large ad in the February 12 Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser entitled “Save Hale Mohalu” with a photo, taken by David Cauley, showing Bernard Punikaiʻa hugging patient Hannah Kahatian on the bus to Leahi; along the side of the ad, there were seven bullet point short paragraphs explaining the background of the conflict. The bottom of the ad had a request for people to kōkua by signing and mailing back the following statement: “I support the return of leprosy patients to Hale Mohalu at Pearl City.” The Save Hale Mohalu publicity assault was huge and immediate. Punikaiʻa sent letters to thank various people for their support, including one to Don Robbs, News Director, KHVH Radio, typed on onionskin paper with the heading “Save Hale Mohalu” and signed by Punikaiʻa as the chairman, Kalaupapa Patients Advisory Council.

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452 “Demonstration” Photo by Ken Sakamoto, caption stated: “Bernice Pupule was among those who demonstrated at the State Capitol yesterday when a black lei was put on the statue of Father Damien to protest the move of leprosy patients from Hale Mohalu to Leahi Hospital,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Saturday February 11, 1978, A-3.
At a Senate Heath Committee hearing on Friday February 17, patient Kuulei Bell addressed her comments not to Chair Anson Chong, but directly to George Yuen. The hearing took place on a bill that would have provided money (“appropriate an unspecified state grant”) for rebuilding at Hale Mohalu.456 With her left eye bandaged because she was “suffering from glaucoma, Bell asked Yuen why the state had no compassion for the handful of leprosy patients who wish to remain at Hale Mohalu?” Bell was not a small woman afraid to speak her mind. On the contrary, her big-boned stature, coupled with her authoritative loud voice, and her opinionated, blunt manner made her a commanding presence and a natural leader. Bell stated, “All of our lives we’ve been pushed from one quarter to another without any regard to our feelings …we’re fighting for our survival.” Yuen showed no reaction as he sat quietly listening to her heartfelt plea. “What about our emotional feelings?” Bell asked Yuen several times. Yuen never responded to Bell, but informed the Committee that plans Abercrombie had submitted to rebuild were rejected as too expensive and that Leahi offered “advantages from the standpoint of medical, nursing and various support and therapy services” that made it the best choice.457 On Bell’s visit to Leahi, she discovered the absence of facilities for the patients, noting that there was only one shower for seven women to share and that at one point she had to use the men’s shower. Bell raised a critical question regarding the lack of preparation and readiness for their arrival. “If the Health Department wanted to move us all along why wasn’t anything done ahead of time?\textsuperscript{458} The rush to move the patients took precedence over where they were going. Little consideration was given to that aspect. It was ironic. The State said patient safety was its primary responsibility. The State also said that it had planned on moving the patients to Leahi for years – in fact as far back as 1969. Yet, nothing was ready at Leahi for them – no preparation whatsoever had been done. Typical of the colonial mindset that sees power as its natural prerogative, the State emphasized patient removal from Hale Mohalu as primary, not expecting there would be any resistance. But resistance was already strong.

As part of their campaign, the patients and their friends held a benefit on Sunday February 19, at the Palm Garden of the Blaisdell Hotel on Fort Street Mall in downtown

Honolulu, a primary venue for the revival of Hawaiian music. Various Hawaiian musical groups regularly performed at the Palm Garden, which became in time a major nationalist hang out. This was the period of the Hawaiian Renaissance – a time of resurgence in Hawaiian music as well as a new consciousness of Hawaiian identity. In a spirit of Hawaiian kōkua, numerous musicians came to the aid of the patients, their fellow Hawaiians, and offered their talents as part of the Benefit. Among the performers were Robert Beaumont and Jerry Santos of “Olomana” and the “Sandwich Island Band” with Cyril Pahinui, singer Owana Salazar, and the group “Anuenue” with Moe Keale.\(^{459}\) Despite short notice and scant resources, the supporters of the patients were able to gather public attention and put on this benefit – one of their first efforts of this kind. They raised over $600, which was a lot of money at the time. While they gained increased support with the Sunday Benefit, the State’s position only hardened. The more backing the patients received, the more entrenched the State became.

Kalaupapa patients continued to offer emotional as well as financial support to those at Hale Mohalu. In a note dated February 20, 1978, several Kalaupapa patients sent money “to buy food for the supporters at Hale Mohalu.” Among the list of contributors were Pali and Rose (Mr. and Mrs. Edwin) Lelepali and John Nakoa and written on the bottom of their note: “Much Aloha. Our prayers, our hopes and our support to all of you.”\(^{460}\) Patients Lourdes Taghoy, Mario Rea, and Harry Yamamoto also contributed.\(^{461}\)

In addition to these individuals, the father of Neil Abercrombie offered his words of encouragement. In a letter dated February 22, from his home in Palm Springs, California, Don Abercrombie cheered their efforts. “You must stick together, struggle together and win together. It helps me here to know that my son, Neil is with you and I want him to stay there. He doesn’t’ speak for you, but with you in a common voice for justice.” In what would be an understatement regarding his son’s political career, Don Abercrombie noted, “He [Neil] might not always be right, but his central motivation is to

\(^{459}\) David Lassner “Save Hale Mohalu Benefit” Palm Garden, Blaisdell Hotel, Notebook (David Lassner personal collection).


\(^{461}\) Along with the presence of Paul and Winnie Harada, other Kalaupapa patients offered their support for Hale Mohalu, including Clarence Naia, Bernice and Richard Pupule, Francis Palea and his son, Norbert, along with others like Mary and Frank Duarte, as well as Meli Pili and her husband, Teetui, and also Anita Una and Kuulei Bell, to name a few.
help others who have been victimized by ignorant people." Overall, it was a warm, caring letter, replete with empathy.

**Battle Lines Harden**

In contrast, Governor Ariyoshi’s persona seemed aloof and detached. In a five-page press release on February 22, nearly two weeks after he had visited Hale Mohalu and Leahi, the Governor announced his decision. “I have weighed every conceivable equation in this case and have come to the conclusion that the patients involved can be better served at the Leahi facility.” Part of the press release detailed the history of the Citizens’ Committee and past recommendations for the move to Leahi. The way it was stated made it seem as if it had been decided years ago without any mention of the subsequent changes that had taken place. The Governor was unequivocal in his judgment. “Although I fully realize that this decision will not meet with universal acceptance, it was made after I conducted extensive personal investigations into the matter.”

The Star-Bulletin carried the story as front-page news with the banner headline: “Ariyoshi for Hale Mohalu Move.” The tenor of the press release and the Star-Bulletin coverage gave the impression Ariyoshi had made his choice after a careful consideration of every possible factor. “If I did not feel that the move to Leahi was in the best interests of everyone, I would not endorse it.” The Governor said it was not financially feasible to build a new facility on the grounds of Hale Mohalu. “It would cost more than $780,000 to build a new facility at Hale Mohalu,” in contrast “to a total estimated cost of $328,000 for renovations at Leahi Hospital.” Ariyoshi insisted that his decision to move the patients to Leahi was in everyone’s best interests because the patients are getting older and will need more medical attention. Ariyoshi framed his argument based on the greatest good for the greatest number or at least that’s how he presented it. “My concern was not only for the taxpayers but, even more importantly, for the long-range welfare of the leprosy patients now under state care.”

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Punikai’a and Abercrombie were angered by the Governor’s refusal to block the transfer, saying that he “did not keep faith.” New revelations by Abercrombie further challenged the State’s position. In a press conference on Wednesday February 22, Abercrombie produced what he called the “smoking pistol in the whole Hale Mohalu affair,” namely a plan by the State to move the Health Department’s virus laboratory from its location on Punchbowl Street in Honolulu to the Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City. “Abercrombie told reporters,” the Advertiser stated, “he received confirmation of the plan from well-placed sources within the Health Department as well as from staff members of the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.” Abercrombie was outraged over this news because the State had consistently denied having any plans for the land. In response, Yuen said any such plans to relocate the laboratories “are just suggestions and not firm commitments.” Yuen also hoped to persuade those remaining in Pearl City to move because the State “cannot continue services at Hale Mohalu indefinitely.” The paper featured a photo of Punikai’a and Abercrombie and patient Winnie Harada as they spoke to reporters about the Governor’s decision. Indicative of her commitment, Winnie Harada, a self-effacing person, stood before the press to speak out publicly against what she viewed as a gross injustice. Winnie and her husband Paul Harada were among the first of many patients to offer support. With one or the other remaining at home in Kalaupapa to care for their house and pets, Paul and Winnie Harada each took time to come to Hale Mohalu, staying there to offer their help.

Governor Ariyoshi sincerely felt he had deep regard for the well-being of the patients and that he was looking at the matter from a long-term perspective, saying his concern was “more about the future welfare of the leprosy patients.” Bernard Punikai’a summed up the Governor’s comments as “crap,” and stated prophetically, “We will not move. They will have to come and get us and take us away.” The standoff continued without any sign of resolution. Yuen denied that the State had any plans for the site and he argued Abercrombie’s behavior had been irresponsible. Yuen felt it was unfortunate

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that patients were being mislead, saying "patients’ lives are being jeopardized by people who are urging them to resist the state’s proposal to relocate them," reiterating the view that the child-like patients needed the guidance of the State. Punikaiʻa disputed Yuen’s statement about the patients being misguided. The patients’ resistance was their own creation; nobody put them up to it. On his copy of the newspaper article with Yuen’s comments, Punikaiʻa had circled Yuen’s words and in the margin next to it, he wrote, “Patients decided on their own to defy DOH, and to remain at HM. Signed BKP.”

Punikaiʻa also challenged Yuen’s criticism of Abercrombie for declaring that Yuen and the Governor were deceitful. Alongside Yuen’s statement, he penned the following comment: “DOH has been deceitful all along. BKP.” Apparently, the State did not know how to handle the situation with the patients and clearly the DOH never expected such opposition. When asked how the State would convince the remaining patients to leave Hale Mohalu, Yuen answered that he did not know. “It’s a very sensitive situation - one we are handling on a day-to-day basis.”

While some supported the Governor’s position, many others opposed it. Life of the Land, a political and environmental advocacy group, criticized Ariyoshi as did Senator Anson Chong. In a press release of February 22, Chong expressed his sorrow. “I am dismayed and saddened by the decision.” In their coverage of Senator Chong’s reaction, the Advertiser noted his expertise as Senate Health Chair and knowledge of the leprosy program. Senator Chong said, “It is clear to me that the Hale Mohalu site should be viewed as a logical extension of Kalaupapa and not as an expensive hospital facility as stated by the administration.” Chong made an important point the Governor overlooked. “More important than the cost is the clear moral responsibility of the state to maintain a comfortable home in familiar surroundings with humane and loving treatment.” Life of the Land’s public relations director Dennis Callan said, “Our state government has been negligent for quite a few years in letting Hale Mohlau deteriorate to

478 Bernard Punikaiʻa’s files, Hale Mālama Curatorial Building, Kalaupapa.
479 Bernard Punikaiʻa’s files, Hale Mālama Curatorial Building, Kalaupapa.
this point. The best solution is to construct new leprosy facilities on the grounds of Hale Mohalu, as the patients are requesting.”

Some of the patients sent to Leahi were slowly getting accustomed to their new situation, but others objected to the transfer. Kuulei Bell and Herbert Hayase opposed the move, telling the Star-Bulletin, “Hale Mohalu is our home and Leahi is an institution.” Two letters to the editors on Saturday February 25, argued for and against the patients. One letter had little compassion. “If the majority really rules, the patients must be moved to Leahi immediately, even if it ‘saddens’ them.” The other letter writer had visited Kalaupapa and understood the plight of the patients from a historical perspective. “We forced them to leave their lives and families 30 to 40 years ago and now that they have made their own place in Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa, are we about to force them to move and to start over again? It was a fair question that most thought was the chief inquiry to be addressed, but some, citing financial reasons, allowed for its dismissal.

The patients and their allies arranged to hold a prayer service by Damien’s Statue for Sunday February 26. Five different members of the religious community led the service. “Pastor Ted Fritschel (Lutheran) and Father William Grosh (Episcopal), Rev. Steve Hanashiro (United Church of Christ), Father Donald McGinnis (Roman Catholic) and Rev. Gaius Thede (Methodist).” This diversity of religious support was present initially and continued throughout the struggle. The announcement flyer stated, “This is the time to reaffirm that God is the God of all – the God of political leaders, the God of the poor, the God of those without security, the God of Hawaii’s leprosy patients.” The aid of the churches was crucial to the crusade for saving Hale Mohalu. Meantime, in the midst of the on-going gubernatorial campaign, Independent candidate for governor, Frank Pore Jr. criticized Ariyoshi for not conferring with the patients before the forced move. “Ariyoshi’s only reason for wanting the patients transferred,” Pore asserted, “is that the leprosy program, which is mostly federally funded, would cost less [for the State] to administer at Leahi.” It was a charge that many others also believed to be the case.

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Senator Daniel Inouye wrote to Neil Abercrombie in response to Abercrombie’s letter of February 3, about the transfer. Inouye had heard back from the U.S Public Health Service and he included in his letter a copy of the reply he received from the Assistant Surgeon General Dr. Weinstein. Inouye explained that Weinstein felt the U. S. Public Health Department had no jurisdiction in this matter, although Weinstein’s letter hoped that there would be compassion for those involved.

On March 3, Abercrombie wrote to Emmett Cahill, editor of the Legislative Reporter, the newsletter of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches. Abercrombie thanked Cahill for his support of the patients’ cause and for the newsletter’s description of the Hale Mohalu controversy as a moral matter, involving “the most fundamental ethical issues.” Ironically, each side in this controversy felt that they were acting with the best of motives and that the other side was selfishly intransigent.

In early March, the Department of Health still maintained that it had no plans to force the remaining patients to leave Hale Mohalu. Yuen explained that he had been trying to persuade the patients to leave but that so far he had not been successful. He also said that there was not any “strict timetable” in which to complete the removal of all the patients to Leahi. Upset over Abercrombie’s charge that the State had secret plans for the Hale Mohalu site, Yuen asked Abercrombie to provide “documented evidence.”

In a further effort by the State to put pressure on the patients, Richard Young of the Health Department issued a Memorandum about their air transportation. “Those incoming patients from Kalaupapa who refuse to go to Leahi for their medical services will not be provided air transportation for the transfer and will not be referred to medical consultants for visits at the expense of the program.” It was a tough tactic that let the patients know who was in charge; in effect, Young’s Memorandum essentially stated that if the patient did not abide by the State’s orders, he/she would lose his/her benefits - even though those monies came from the federal government and not the State. While harsh procedures were implemented against the patients, a persona of caring and aloha for them

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496 Richard Young, Memorandum to Kalaupapa Leprosy Patients, March 4, 1978.
was the face presented to the public, especially by Governor Ariyoshi. On March 8, he wrote to Wally Inglis to thank him for his letter on Hale Mohalu. The Governor explained that he had “deep concern for the patients in the relocation process and that the decisions have not been easy.” The Governor also included a copy of his news release of February 22, 1978, saying “I hope it will provide you with the background information and also my thinking on the matter.” While the Governor’s letter to Inglis and Ariyoshi’s press statements seemed to portray the Governor and Yuen as deeply concerned for patient welfare, it soon became apparent that the State had violated the terms of the agreement that governed the Pearl City facility.

**Historical Basis for Land Claim**

At his news conference on Monday March 13, Abercrombie distributed a copy of the Territorial Government’s original 1955 application to purchase the Pearl City property. Abercrombie said that the Territory “pledged to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare that the land would be used for a permanent leprosy facility.” Because the State had received “the land on that basis,” Abercrombie explained, it was “still legally bound by that written agreement.” By transferring the patients to Leahi, the State had broken its promise. In response, Yuen said the State had intended to keep Hale Mohalu as a leprosy facility, but plans had changed. “In 1973 a subcommittee met to consider the use of the Trotter Building at Leahi for the leprosy program and in 1975 a few months after I took over as director of the Health Department, I recommended the move.” Abercrombie argued there was more to it - that the matter encompassed a bigger issue than the application document, claiming “the Health Department, by transferring the leprosy program to Leahi’s Trotter Building violated the intent of the Citizens’ Committee.” The Committee had recommended that the leprosy program be located next to the medical school at Leahi Hospital. It also recommended that rebuilding at Hale Mohalu should be investigated. Proposals for the medical school at Leahi had been dropped, but rebuilding at Hale Mohalu had never been pursued.

497 At the Hawaii State Archives, letters in the month of February 1978 to Governor Ariyoshi begging him to allow the patients to stay at Hale Mohalu numbered 29 to 1. Letters of protest against the move increased in March and so on throughout the rest of 1978, as well as the ensuing years. Hawaii State Archives, Correspondence, Executive Branch, Department of Health, Hale Mohalu, 1977-1978 and Hale Mohalu, 1979-1985.

498 Governor George Ariyoshi, Letter to Wally Inglis, March 8, 1978.


Criticism of the government’s behavior continued to mount. In a letter to the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa newspaper, *Ka Leo o Hawaii* on Monday March 13, David Lassner, a university employee, described the State’s behavior in moving the Hale Mohalu patients as “inhumane,” and expressed his appreciation to the Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i for their resolution in support of the patients. He concluded his letter with the hope that public support – from the students and others – would be able to convince the Governor to do the correct thing: “to allow the patients the human dignity which is their right – a say in their own future.”

During mid-March, Abercrombie sent a letter to Senator Birch Bayh, in answer to a question Bayh had posed about the relationship of Hale Mohalu and the federal government. In his explanation, Abercrombie noted the State “has perpetrated a fraud against the Federal government by ignoring the conditions under which it acquired title to the land.” Abercrombie recounted that since we now have drugs, which successfully treated leprosy, some people question whether “the commitments made in the 1950’s should be deemed valid today.” (And indeed some did ask that question, most especially the editors of the city’s newspapers.) Abercrombie answered that sulfone drugs had been in use in Hawai‘i since 1946, long before any promises were made in the 1950’s and that circumstances in effect today were no different from that time. Since the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare had the responsibility to see that these conditions were met, but instead had “been derelict in its duties,” Abercrombie reached out to Bayh, asking him for help on the federal level.

The next day, an editorial in the *Star-Bulletin* separated the issues of Hale Mohalu into two categories: the patients’ “long-term best interest” and “the state’s title to the 11.2 acres of land.” The editors concluded that it was correct to move the patients to Leahi as they could get better treatment there given the fact that they would be growing older and would require additional care. Despite patients’ objections, the paper suggested the best solution was to improve Leahi rather than going back to Pearl City. As for the State’s title to the land and the obligation to keep the land as a leprosy facility, the editors declared that the use condition had been fulfilled and that the State was justified in changing it.

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now that the drugs were available. Abercrombie countered that argument with a letter to Representative Daniel K. Akaka explaining that sulfone drugs were in use long before the commitments were made to obtain Hale Mohalu and that argument could not be used to negate promises made earlier regarding the facility. As with his request to Bayh, Abercrombie requested Akaka’s federal assistance to resolve the matter. Abercrombie further stated to Akaka that Ariyoshi had reviewed the case and reasserted his original decision to move the patients. Abercrombie’s letter framed the seriousness of the situation, explaining that it “has developed into a major political issue in Hawaii, and it will not ‘fade,’ as the leprosy patients are absolutely firm in their resolve to remain at Hale Mohalu.” They were convinced “that the time has come for them to assert their rights against the traditional attitudes and assumptions which had underlain their treatment in Hawaii for over a century.” Those approaches, Abercrombie noted, “range from, at best, patronizing to, at worst, dehumanizing.”

**Church Involvement and ‘Ohana Resistance Strategy**

Public and private efforts to resolve the conflict included the Hawai’i Council of Churches. Stanley E. Kain, Executive Director of the Hawai’i Council of Churches, sent a letter dated March 23, on behalf of their Community Outreach Division to Punika’a to invite him to discuss the Hale Mohalu situation at a community meeting that would take place on March 31, at Harris Memorial Church. The meeting was “a working session designed to define the current problems confronting the patients, the state, and the public regarding Hale Mohalu and the future of Kalaupapa.” Invited participants included the Governor, Abercrombie, representatives from the medical community, and the press. Kain explained that the Hale Mohalu Committee “was formed by the Community Outreach Division in March 1978, for the purpose of assisting churches and the general public in better understanding the issues surrounding the Hale Mohalu closure.” This marked the beginning of the Council’s long-running and pivotal involvement in the controversy. Moreover, it would prove vital to its ultimate successful outcome.

In response to the editorial in the *Star-Bulletin* of March 18, Paul Harada wrote a definitive statement about the conflict in a special newsletter. Harada stated, “After
forced incarceration and isolation for the best years of their lives, patients are just
beginning to meld into society, a privilege and a precious right they have been denied
because of the unknown factors of the disease.” Harada recounted the history since the
law of segregation in 1866, explaining that the general public has benefited from the
hardship suffered by the patients who had to suffer separation from their loved ones and
difficulties encountered from bureaucratic neglect. He explained as only a patient could
about Hale Mohalu, noting how it met “all the patients’ psychological and social needs
evolved through their banishment, the nature of their illness and eventual cure and
freedom resulting in deep ties to this facility, land, environment, [and] community.” Harada repudiated the idea that the sterile atmosphere of Leahi could ever be the equal of
Hale Mohalu, asserting, “the Department of Health and proponents of the ‘move to Leahi
for the benefit of the patients’ have deliberately ignored or are not aware of the reason
why patients refuse to move to Leahi.” Harada concluded his letter with a summation of
the crux of the conflict. “Mr. Yuen and the Department of Health’s decision to COMPEL
patients to transfer to Leahi is a throw-back to the old days when patients were forcefully
‘imprisoned’ and isolated.” Extremely articulate, Harada, a soft-spoken fisherman from
Hanalei, Kaua‘i, had been exiled to Kalaupapa in early 1942 at the age of 15. The best
word to describe Harada was “pono,” the Hawaiian word for righteous action. His efforts
to help Hale Mohalu were marked by a quiet thoughtful manner and humble attitude. He
was the cerebral counterpart of Bernard Punikai‘a in terms of planning and strategy.
There were people who just wanted to stay at Hale Mohalu but Punikai‘a and Harada saw
the conflict in terms of the larger issues involved. They understood that the implications
of the battle were greater than merely familiar housing.

The movement’s “initial projects” of resistance, such as the Blaisdell fundraiser in
February, the protests at Damien Statue, and the leafleting of the Health Department,
were “very important because the Health Department expected us to fade away in time,”
Punikai‘a explained. Jim Albertini and John Witeck knew the resistance “needed
different things to happen” in order to advance their cause. Some of the suggestions to

512 Paul Harada held various leadership roles in the Kalaupapa community, including sheriff and tour leader.
514 Bernard Puniaia, (notes from John Witeck’s conversation with Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
accomplish this goal included the “planned luau and concert,” plus the use of “fact sheets, a slideshow, and later a first calendar.” Part of their strategy included invoking the assistance of Father Damien, not only in actual prayer as guidance but also in terms of the value to be achieved from the publicity that could be generated. Invocation of Kamiano was crucial to the movement. At Damien Day in April 1978 when Damien High School held commemoration ceremonies to honor the school’s namesake, Hale Mohalu supporters stood silently with banners and protest signs in front of Governor Ariyoshi and Bishop Scanlan during the program at the State Capitol. It was the Save Hale Mohalu Ohana’s first “silent vigil” as they faced the Governor and the Bishop, two leaders who had been unsupportive of the patients. When the Sacred Hearts Community celebrated their second annual Damien Day on Friday April 14 at Damien’s Statue, they had not given any thought to the present-day leprosy patients. Not to be ignored, the patients came with large protest signs, standing as a formidable presence immediately in front of Ariyoshi, who spoke at the podium. When asked why the patients were not included in the festivities for Damien, school officials explained that they had simply focused on the high school celebration. Given the fact that Damien held special meaning for the patients, they did feel slighted, but they stood there with signs and broad banners that proclaimed, “Save Hale Mohalu,” and “We will not be forced to Leahi,” along with “You Honor Damien but not What He Stood For.” The police were called to the scene, “but the demonstrators did not disrupt the program of bands and awards made to Catholic high school groups once it had commenced.” Punikai‘a summed up the patients’ views. “It’s a display of hypocrisy. They honor Kamiano and forget his children.” In a letter, written to the Advertiser editor in support of the patients at the Damien Day event, the authors noted that ten years ago in 1968 the statue of Damien was unveiled amid a celebration in honor of the man who had ministered to the sick at

515 Bernard Puniaia, (notes from John Witeck’s conversation with Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
516 Father Damien died at Kalaupapa on April 15, 1889.
517 Bishop Scanlan never supported the Hale Mohalu patients. Ed Gerlock described Scanlan as being “to the right of Attila the Hun.” Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Mākaha, O‘ahu, Monday 16 July 2012.
520 Sacred Sacred Hearts Father Jason Lee, who co-chaired the event with Damien High School principal, Brother Joseph Grimaldi, explained there had been no deliberate intent to ignore the patients, but “inviting the patients never crossed our minds, since this celebration was for high schools.” Pat Hunter, “Hale Mohalu Patients in Damien Day Protest,” Honolulu Advertiser, Saturday April 15, 1978, A-3. (Ironically, today in 2013, the Catholic Church makes a big point of publicizing the association of the patients and Damien’s work with them).
Kalaupapa. The letter asked how could the State evict the Hale Mohalu patients? What happened to dishonor Damien’s memory? 522

To protest the actions of the Health Department, the Save Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana took their battle to the Department’s headquarters at Beretania and Punchbowl Streets, holding a noonday rally on Friday April 21. The flyer for the rally had a detachable coupon to clip and mail back a contribution to the Save Hale Mohalu Fund. It also gave information on the work of Kamiano, the ‘Lion of Kalawao’ and the present struggle. 523

**Divisions Delineated**

The Governor maintained repeatedly that he and Director Yuen were only motivated by what were the best interests of the patients. No matter how much the patients protested that they wished to have a say in what was happening to them, and regardless of the support offered by the public or sympathetic government officials, the State had made up its mind to move the Hale Mohalu residents in order to free up that land. Ariyoshi and Yuen resolutely stood by their position that the State had no plans for the land. Yet new information revealed that it was not true – the State had investigated possible uses for the site. Abercrombie in April 1978 produced proof that the State did have plans for the 11-acre parcel, namely a report done by Aotani and Associates, planning consultants. 524 The report contained the history of the site and various proposals for the land at Hale Mohalu, including a teen center, a youth stadium, a softball or baseball park, and housing for Hawaiian Homelands. 525 A draft report had a date of December 1977 while the completed report was March 1978. (Moving day for the patients was January 26, 1978). Nothing in the report contained recommendations for the leprosy program. That was not mentioned. Instead, it documented in detail numerous letters sent to various agencies asking what they would do with the site; the report included all the responses but none referred to the residents. The patients were totally ignored. It was clear the State had not planned on their future participation in Pearl City.

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523 Flyer, Announcement for Rally Friday April 21, 1978.
For his part, Yuen downplayed the Aotani Report, stating that it was just a working proposal, but that nothing had been decided.526

Since it was located in their particular part of the city, the local area newspaper, the Leeward Sun Press gave prominent coverage to all sides of the divisive controversy. Their April-May issue had a particularly dramatic red and black color-spread front page, with the headline: “Hale Mohalu debate goes on.” On the left side of the page, the Governor’s position: “Ariyoshi says public doesn’t know story” while the right-hand column stated: “Abercrombie says the deal was still raw.” Between the columns, in the middle of the page, a composite sketch of a face with two sides, a black line in the middle separated each half - a drawing of Ariyoshi on the left and Abercrombie on the right. The vivid polemic portrait made for an iconic image of the dispute. In the center of the page, an article on Hale Mohalu by Burl Burlingame entitled, “‘Non-existant’ Hale Mohalu Plan Found.” 527 Abercrombie summarily refuted Ariyoshi’s statements.

[Governor Ariyoshi] is well aware that Hale Mohalu is the Oahu branch of Kalaupapa; its extension. He is well aware that all outpatient treatment not handled on Molokai is done through Hale Mohalu and has always been. He is well aware that even the so-called ‘permanent’ residents are outpatients whose disease has been arrested and who stay there for historical reasons, which have nothing to do with Leahi or the present status of the program.

For his part, Governor Ariyoshi defended his position. He maintained that those at Hale Mohalu were outsiders who came from Kalaupapa. “Just a handful were longtime residents,” he declared, “and that handful had already moved to Leahi.” In answer to Ariyoshi, Abercrombie defiantly wrote, “It must be repeated – no one moved to Leahi. They all were taken under threat of withdrawal of medical care on appeal to dubious ‘regulations’ depriving the patients of even rudimentary civil rights.”528

As the patients pushed for their case to be heard, several organizations reached out to offer their aid, including a prominent advocate for environmental justice, Life of the Land, who noted their support in their March/April 1978 newsletter. 529

529 “Life of the Land has gone on record opposing the State’s evictions of the patients of Hale Mohalu. The patients there have a virtual, vested interest in living out their days at the Hale Mohalu site,” Life of the Land, newsletter, March/April 1978. Among its Board of Directors in 1978 were Peter Apo, Bob Nakata, and Dennis Callan. Today in 2013, Peter Apo is a Trustee for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Reverend Bob Nakata works with the lobby group, FACE, Faith Action for Community Equity; and Dennis Callan, owns Callan Tours, a travel agency.
A key player in the dispute was the office of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). The agency initially chose a pattern of non-intervention in the controversy. Later, its assistance was very important to resolving the issues. Because of the federal role in leprosy funding in Hawai‘i, HEW’s presence was critical. On Thursday May 4, the federal government entered the conflict in a promising way, when western regional director Michael W. Murray told legislators that he would look into the controversy.530 During an orientation visit to Hawai‘i, Murray met with government leaders, including Fasi, Ariyoshi, and Abercrombie. Punikai‘a also met with Murray along with Abercrombie and together they presented Murray with documents that had to do with HEW’s role in the Hawai‘i leprosy program at Pearl City.531 Murray explained he was not familiar with the Hale Mohalu issue, but he would study the matter when he returned to the continent. Abercrombie wanted Murray to review the documents to see if “HEW might have been ‘negligent’ in executing the agreement that turned over the 11.2 acre Pearl City site to the state in 1955.”532

Controversy at Leprosy Conference

In Honolulu, the Hawai‘i Council of Churches did their best to make people aware of the concerns in the Hale Mohalu quarrel. The Church Council’s Community Outreach Division held a free public forum on “Leprosy in Hawai‘i” on June 10, on the grounds of Mid-Pacific Institute. The flyer described the meeting as an “opportunity.”533 The morning half of the program centered on the topic of leprosy, its history in Hawai‘i, the various forms of leprosy, the treatment, and sociological impact on patients. The afternoon focused on Hale Mohalu with presentations by Ariyoshi and Abercrombie, followed by Yuen, and finally Bernard Punikai‘a. During the all-day forum, moderated by the League of Women Voters, Ariyoshi, Yuen, and Abercrombie got into a heated debate over the patients’ transfer. In addition, Yuen accused the churches of being hypocritical during the controversy.534 Yuen felt the churches had not attempted to seek

533 “Recognizing a general lack of knowledge on the part of most citizens, plus many distortions of the historical, religious and cultural attitudes of both the patients and the community, the Community Outreach Division of the Hawaii Council of Churches will offer an opportunity for open exchange among persons representing the many viewpoints on this important subject,” Flyer, “Leprosy in Hawaii,” Mid-Pacific Institute, June 10, 1978.
him out to ask him directly about the situation. Nor had any clergy offered to conduct Easter services at Leahi. According to the newspaper, “The afternoon forum deteriorated at times into heated exchanges when state officials, responding to attacks on their integrity, defended their reputations and actions.” Ariyoshi stated that he believed he had made the right decision in moving the patients to Leahi because when he visited Hale Mohalu, he “found the conditions disgusting.” Ariyoshi went on to say, “I wouldn’t want my mother to stay in these facilities. I walked in and out. I was so disturbed.”

Ariyoshi reiterated his opinion not to build at Hale Mohalu because it would have been too expensive and he could not justify the increased costs. The Conference was helpful to the general public by educating them about leprosy, but no resolution between the conflicting parties emerged. If anything, each side became more frustrated with each other.

On June 23, Bernard K. Punikai’a, Chairman, Kalaupapa Patients’ Council and Paul Harada, Kalaupapa Patients’ Council, and David Lassner, Secretary Pro-tem, sent out a letter inviting others to join them on Thursday July 6, 1978 at 7 PM at Hale Mohalu “for the first meeting of the Save Hale Mohalu support group.” It was a simple letter of several short paragraphs that laid out their plans and objectives. They planned on presenting a slide show about the conflict as well as have a discussion with the patients about “possible directions for action.” They invited people to join them and asked for kōkua in the difficult period ahead. To prepare for the upcoming July meeting, David Lassner made notes of what needed to be done by each person, such as publicity, bringing staplers, inkpads, and activating the phone tree. A tentative schedule with the agenda for the meeting was also planned, including the opening welcome by Bernard Punikai’a and Gigi Cocquio and the closing songs led by the patients.

The story of the conflict reached far beyond the Hawaiian Islands, when the New York Times carried the story on June 28, 1978. “For five months a group of lepers have staged a sit-in that creates some problems for Gov. George Ariyoshi and the state Health

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536 This joint patient-supporter group is being formed to provide broad-based support for the patients in their struggle for human rights and dignity. We will strive for continued community awareness of the issue by aiding in distribution of information, and fundraising events. The state must not be permitted to continue to treat human beings as inanimate objects to be fitted into whatever box is most convenient for state and health department plans. Leprosy patients initiated the acquisition of the Hale Mohalu land, and have earned the right to stay, through their years of suffering,” Letter of invitation, dated June 23, 1978, first meeting of Save Hale Mohalu support group, (David Lassner, personal collection).
537 David Lassner, Notes from June 27, 1978 meeting, (David Lassner, personal collection).
Department.”538 The Times’ article talked about the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i and laid out the present situation at the Pearl City facility. While the term “leper” (not generally acceptable today) was used throughout the story, the New York Times article provided increased publicity for the Hale Mohalu story, bringing it to a national audience.539 And that was precisely what the patients wanted – to get their story in front of the public, so they could enlist greater numbers in their cause.

In summary, the first six months were an amazing transformation in the incipient movement’s attempt to keep the leprosy program at Hale Mohalu and a flowering of the patients’ consciousness about their rights. The acceleration of the movement’s cohesion can be attributed to the wide base of support they were able to generate as well as to its leadership, which strategically positioned their campaign for maximum effect, and especially to the magnetism of Bernard K. Punikai‘a whose steely resolve pushed for rights he believed his people deserved. In six months, the resistance that began as anxious dissension had blossomed into a coordinated crusade with hundreds of supporters.

CHAPTER 6
‘OHANA STRENGTH VERSUS STATE VIOLENCE

There were two main developments that took place during the second half of the year from July to December. First, the movement became more structured organizationally. In July key members of the Save Hale Mohalu movement strengthened their efforts by organizing into the Save Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana, creating a formal structure with committees and assigned tasks. Secondly, in September when the State completely shut down the facility, the stakes changed significantly. The conflict reached a tuning point wherein the State acted to force submission, using deprivation of utilities and medical care as their intended lethal blow. Despite this violent act, the expected submission never happened. Both sides dug in and their positions remained far apart, while legal efforts offered potential relief.

Formal Organization in an Informal Way

“The Save Hale Mohalu Support Group was formally organized on July 6, 1978, with some 50 fifty people in attendance.”540 As part of their members’ efforts to educate and gain greater support, they formed three committees: education, luau, and rummage sales. Among those present were Sandy Arlanti co, John Kagehiro, Lorrain Kamaka John Witeck, Joe Medina, Felix Cardenas, Jr. Frances Lai, and Leigh Simmerer.541 Strategies they determined to pursue included putting out a fact sheet and organizing a slideshow and later, they decided to do a calendar. They resolved that in any conflict between patients and supporters, the overriding principle was “the patients would make the final decisions and that they had to be involved in any projects or decisions.”542 The ‘Ohana planned to hold a luau on Sunday September 10, and preparations began immediately with Jim Albertini as chair of the luau committee. Several people assisted him but, as his exhaustive notes testify, staging the event necessitated handling a complex of concerns. Albertini wrote several letters, reaching out to diverse companies, such as the Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Honolulu to request donations for the luau, where “the planned

540 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, August 1978.
541 David Lassner, Notes, (David Lassner, personal collection).
542 Bernard Punikaia, (notes from John Witeck’s conversation with Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
number in attendance is expected to be 1500 people.” The meticulous arrangements made for the luau were indicative of the ‘Ohana’s overall scrupulous attention to detail.

To generate publicity about their plight, Star-Bulletin reporter Murry Engle wrote about patient Mary Duarte and the upcoming rummage sale and luau. His moving story on Duarte and her refusal to leave Hale Mohalu expressed warmth towards her and the dissident patients. Engle described Duarte as beautiful, but as he explained, “At first you might not think so. She sees out of only one eye. Her fingers are stumps and her feet are swollen distortions.” Nonetheless, Mary Duarte had an inner beauty that radiated from her soft-spoken person. “She [Mary] has been at Hale Mohalu for a year and a half,” Engle noted, “because she must go to St. Francis Hospital three times a week to be hooked up to a machine that cleans her blood of poisons, a function her kidneys no longer can perform.” Duarte had been pressured by the doctors to move to Leahi, but she was not going to let them compel her into leaving Hale Mohalu. The State contended that Duarte was the only legitimate patient at Hale Mohalu and the rest were transients. Later on in the struggle, the State argued that these transients had become trespassers. To raise money for the luau, Duarte and the ‘Ohana had gathered items for the rummage sale, which they conducted from 9AM to 6PM daily until August 15.

As part of their campaign, the ‘Ohana had placed a statement of their argument on the bulletin board of the termite-eaten walls of Hale Mohalu. “The State should not be permitted to treat human beings as inanimate objects to be fitted into whatever box is most convenient for state and health department plans.” Yuen wanted to move Duarte because he felt she would be better off at Leahi, where there was more medical staff and facilities, including a pharmacy and labs not available at Hale Mohalu. At the Pearl City facility a doctor visited every other day and volunteer nurses from Waimano came for three short periods a day.

Renovations at Leahi were not finished, although they were supposed to be by now. Those who had been forced to go to Leahi missed being able to walk outdoors as easily as they once did. Most of them did not want to discuss the situation and some

548 Waimano Hospital is located approximately a mile mauka (toward the mountains) from Hale Mohalu.
spoke with reluctance, as Engle described, “‘We prefer to be at Hale Mohalu,’ one said. ‘It’s all right here, but I’d rather be at home at Hale Mohalu. But please don’t quote me. We’re being taken care of by the state.’”\(^\text{549}\) The sense of being beholden to the government overrode any other consideration for patients, accustomed to acquiescence.

Numerous letters of protest to the Governor continued, including one from the American Friends Service Committee on August 11, 1978. “We are writing to urge you to maintain Hale Mohalu as a facility for leprosy patients.”\(^\text{550}\) The letter outlined their reasons, beginning with the fact the patients very much desire to remain there as well as the matter of the land’s deed and its purpose to remain as a leprosy facility. “Transfer of the property to other use would not be consistent with the original gift until the need for a leprosy facility has substantially abated.” The letter signed by John Swindle, Clerk, Hawai‘i Area Executive Committee pleaded the case for the patients and asked the Governor to be willing to compromise on the matter. “In summary, we believe that the forced removal of the Hale Mohalu patients to Leahi involves real further hardships for a group of people who have been hard-pressed by our society.”\(^\text{551}\) While the Friends argued persuasively and accurately, Ariyoshi quietly, as was his style, continued implacably forward with his stated policy of removal.\(^\text{552}\)

**Tightening the Screws Amid Luau Plans**

In preparation for their planned luau, the Save Hale Mohalu Committee had written to the Department of Health for permission to use the kitchen facilities at Hale Mohalu. On August 9 Richard Young, Administrative Officer for the Communicable Disease Division responded to Bernard Punikai‘a’s request by denying permission. “While I appreciate the fact that you are continuing to stand up for a cause that you feel strongly about, I am also firm in my belief that the relocation decision is both lawful and correct.”\(^\text{553}\) Young denied the bid as not “prudent” because it would endanger too many people to unnecessary risk due to the unsafe conditions on the premises. Young also rejected the request as not “advisable” because it would require the State to approve fundraising for objectives whose purpose was to “contravene” the State’s resolve to


\(^{550}\) American Friends Service Committee, Letter to Governor Ariyoshi, August 11, 1978.

\(^{551}\) American Friends Service Committee, Letter to Governor Ariyoshi, August 11, 1978.

\(^{552}\) At the Hawai‘i State Archives, there are hundreds of letters to Governor Ariyoshi in support of the patients versus only a few in favor of his position. Hawaii State Archives, Governor Ariyoshi records, Department of Health, Hale Mohalu, 1977-1978.

\(^{553}\) Richard Young, Letter to Bernard Punikaia, August 9, 1978.
relocate the leprosy program to Leahi.\textsuperscript{554} Since the State denied them because of unsafe conditions, the ‘Ohana countered with a question. “As for the unsafe premises, we say: If the premises were so unsafe, why did they allow the patients to remain there so long?”\textsuperscript{555} The Support Committee proceeded with its plans to hold the luau and arranged to have the cooking done somewhere else. They also lined up the entertainers, including Darryl Lupenui and Waimapuna, Raymond Kane, Pua Alii Ilima, Olomana, Frank DeLima and Nā Kolohe, Makapu’u Sand Band and the Mākaha Sons of Ni‘ihau.\textsuperscript{556}

The Save Hale Mohalu Committee sought donations of food and supplies from the public; they also organized specific people in the ‘Ohana to deliberately solicit specific gifts from various companies. Jim Albertini was the chairperson who organized the luau while Val Arlantico was the food committee chairperson. Tickets for the luau were $1 for children and $6 for adults.\textsuperscript{557} Albertini ordered salmon from the Northwest and he arranged to have it shipped on Continental, but the airline would not donate the cost of shipping, because “there is the political sense of resistance involved,” so Albertini arranged to have catholicAction pay the shipping.\textsuperscript{558} Along with the plans for the luau, the supporters of Hale Mohalu held a special two-day rummage sale in order to raise money. The rummage sale with goods of “clothing, books, records, and other articles, much of which was donated by a downtown merchant whose store recently went out of business,” took place on Saturday and Sunday August 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} at Hale Mohalu.\textsuperscript{559} Large, handmade cloth banners with the words: “Save Hale Mohalu” made out of colorful strips of material hung from horizontal poles above the racks of clothing for sale while Punikai‘a and Francis Palea assisted the shoppers, as a photo in the newspaper revealed.\textsuperscript{560}

In late August, ‘Ohana members were assigned responsibilities for publicity. Fred Ross was to “ask Rev. Akaka to plug luau on his Sunday radio sermon,” while one of John Witeck’s assignments was a “map of how to get to Hale Mohalu luau and have it printed on the back of a second batch of Luau leaflets for distribution.” Everyone was

\textsuperscript{557} Hale Mohalu Support Committee Luau Plans document.
asked to help in getting leaflets and posters ready and distributed. “Educating, keeping people informed, drawing out more commitment and support – these are the tasks of the newly-formed Education Committee of the Save Hale Mohalu Support Group,” their August newsletter reported. The ‘Ohana listed seven steps for public education from: “#1. a fact sheet which gives the truth in contrast to what the State has been saying” to “#7. Publicity through local organizations and their newsletters.” In addition, this early issue of the newsletter identified the solidarity the Hale Mohalu victims felt with other groups who battled over land issues, explaining that the patients’ struggle was “like many other eviction battles, such as in Chinatown, Waiahole-Waikane and Mokauae Island, where the concerns of the residents are pushed aside for other considerations.”

September Closing

Even though the remaining patients continued living at Hale Mohalu, the State decided that it would close down the facility completely. Apparently, the plans for the luau and the rummage sale prompted the State to feel that it had to take steps to close Hale Mohalu soon. “Bernice Pupule believes that it’s because of the luau that the state has decided to close down the facility right now,” reported the Advertiser. The State was concerned that inviting the public to Hale Mohalu was creating a dangerous situation in terms of liability if anything should happen.

On Monday August 28th, the State announced that it would end all services at Hale Mohalu at the end of the week, on Friday morning September 1, nine days before the planned luau. Since the State had transferred some patients to Leahi in January and officially closed the facility, this notice was the State’s second closure. On Monday August 28, Yuen told the Star-Bulletin, “For the past eight months the Health Department has put up with the dissidents’ demands by maintaining a skeleton staff at Hale Mohalu with the bill running upwards of $25,000 a month,” but starting Friday September 1, that would stop. “We will close down the kitchen, nursing, maintenance and security facilities there.” The State reiterated that Mary Duarte was the only patient legally at Hale

561 Notes, August 24, 1978 Hale Mohalu Support Group Meeting.
562 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, August 1978.
Mohalu and that it considered the other patients outside agitators; Yuen and Ariyoshi also admitted that Hale Mohalu had “become both an emotional and political issue.”

Yuen gave financial reasons for the closing, but the main reason, he explained, had to do with the non-stop activity of Bernard Punikaiʻa and the Save Hale Mohau resistance movement who keep “planning things ‘like rummage sales and luaus’ while the state keeps denying the requests.” Yuen said it was not safe for large groups of people to gather there. Frustrated and not eager to see the Save Hale Mohalu movement gain more supporters, the Health Department with the blessing of the Governor opted to shut down Hale Mohalu. “‘It’s not that we’re just trying to prevent it (this luau),’ Yuen said, ‘but they keep on and on. The luau is just one of many things.’” Bernard Punikaiʻa and the Save Hale Mohalu movement would not stop and that drove the authorities crazy. In fact, Punikaiʻa’s fervent determination to resist resulted in a term the National Park Service and the Health Department called the “Bernard factor.”

Director Yuen sent a letter to Mary Duarte about the Friday closing, but the other patients only received letters from Richard Young. Upset that Yuen did not have the courtesy to notify them directly, the patients on Monday afternoon took the letters, put them in a box, and burned them. Yuen’s snub of the patients reaffirmed the State’s indifference to the patients’ views. Frank Duarte explained to the Advertiser that the patients have privacy at Hale Mohalu that is lacking at Leahi. Instead of the private room they presently have, whenever they wanted to shower or use the toilet at Leahi, they had only the general ward. Yuen argued that the facilities at Leahi were being renovated and that private and semi-private rooms would be available. “Frank Duarte likened Leahi to jail. ‘I’m not a patient of a few days, I’m a patient of 39 years,’ he said to the Advertiser. “It’s different to go to a hospital like Leahi for a few days, ‘but to go to Leahi and spend 20 years in a ward…this Yuen cannot see.’” The fact that Yuen did not acknowledge their feelings angered the patients. When he did not speak directly to them face-to-face

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568 Years later, Punikaiʻa’s persistence led Bryan Harry, former head of the National Park Service Pacific West Regional Office to refer to this type of opposition as “the Bernard factor.” Bryan Harry, Regional Director, Pacific West Region, National Park Service (retired), personal interview, Honolulu, 10 October 2006.

569 As recently as 2010, Mark Miller, the Department of Health Manager at Kalaupapa, referred to the “Bernard effect” in answer to a question about what would happen to the last few patients left at Kalaupapa: “if the remaining patients numbered only 5 or 6, would the state close Kalaupapa and force the patients out? Miller said the State would not do that because of the “Bernard factor” – the uproar and resistance that would occur.” Mark Miller, personal interview, Kalaupapa, 3 July 2010.

about the upcoming closure, they felt his behavior was cowardly. ‘‘Yuen has no guts to face us,’’ said Bernice Pupule,\textsuperscript{571} expressing her frustration at his lack of respect to speak to them in person, an important courtesy valued in local culture.

The State pressed its reiteration of the fiscal aspect of the controversy. Hale Mohalu continued to be a financial burden to the State because it claimed the workers there were needed elsewhere. ‘‘The 15 Health Department nurses, maintenance men, clerks, cooks, and kitchen workers will be transferred to other health facilities where their help is badly needed.’’\textsuperscript{572} Despite the State’s decision, the protesting patients and Abercrombie vowed that they would do everything to keep the facility open. Punikai‘a told reporters that they intended to remain. ‘‘We plan to ignore the orders to move out.... We just won’t move.’’\textsuperscript{573} In addition, Abercrombie made the accusation that the State might use the Hawai‘i Army National Guard to move the patients, but Yuen repudiated that notion. ‘‘There are no plans to use force.’’ Yuen continued: ‘‘We are hoping they will go peacefully. We don’t think we will be involved in any type of confrontation.’’\textsuperscript{574} But the State never seemed to understand the determination of the patients. As Frank Duarte said, ‘‘We’re going to stay. They have to give us Hale Mohalu or throw us in jail.’’\textsuperscript{575} How much clearer could they be? The patients were fighting for a principle, for a purpose greater than individual desires.

\textbf{Mayor Fasi’s Help versus State’s Tough Stance}

After the Health Department announced that they intended to close Hale Mohalu on Friday, Fasi wrote a letter to Ariyoshi on August 29 in which he suggested that the closing be postponed until after the October 7 Democratic Primary elections because if he [Fasi] won, he would let the patients remain at Hale Mohalu. In addition, Fasi would use the $200,000 appropriated by the legislature to renovate Hale Mohalu. Mayor Fasi stated that since the Legislature had appropriated the $200,000 it was obviously the will of the Legislature for this work to be done. Fasi said that the Governor was frustrating the will of the Legislature by not releasing the money. The Mayor concluded his letter with a plea

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to the chief executive’s compassionate nature: “I urge you to make this compromise. It is the fair thing to do; it is the right thing to do; it is the humane thing to do.”

Ariyoshi did not agree with Fasi’s proposal, nor did the Director of Health. Yuen believed that waiting until after the election to move the patients would be playing politics with their lives. Fasi made clear the city police would not be part of the eviction proceedings. “We’re not going to do the dirty work for the state.” Long time political enmity existed between Fasi and Ariyoshi, who were political rivals. Animosity between the two adversaries reflected the antipathy expressed between Punikai’a and Yuen.

Shortly after the State announced that it was shutting down Hale Mohalu on Friday, the first of September, the Star-Bulletin endorsed the State’s position. The editorial criticized the leprosy patients for their refusal to move and for treating Hale Mohalu as a hotel in Honolulu, saying the “oldtime patients” want to keep Hale Mohalu because they find it more comfortable than Leahi. The editors went on to explain how much better Leahi was than Hale Mohalu because it offered more medical services around the clock; the editorial argued the patients were already quite elderly, with an average age of 55, and therefore, they would need those services as they aged. What the editorial neglected to say was that the youngest patients were only 37 years old. The editors claimed that Leahi could be made “homier” than Hale Mohalu, but “it does not have the liveliness of a shopping center across the street.” The implication was that the patients were simply being selfish – they wanted the convenience of a hotel and a nearby shopping center. The editors never understood the meaning of the protest from the eyes and hearts of the patients. The editorial smoothly misrepresented the facts with partially correct information, saying, “In 1969, a Citizens Committee recommended an end to the century-old policy of involuntary confinement of leprosy patients also recommended the move from Hale Mohalu to Leahi.” That was correct, but what the editors left out was the requirement to investigate the possibility of re-building at Hale Mohalu. Instead, the editors blamed government rivalries. “State bureaucratic rivalries, however, knotted the Leahi move up in red tape. It was delayed until this year and by that time patient support

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579 Boogie Kalihiihiwa and Norbert Palea were born in 1941.
for the move had broken down.” Again, the editors were partially correct in that bureaucracy between governmental agencies led to inaction when it came to the issue of accountability for Hale Mohalu’s maintaince work. There never was any so-called “red tape” that knotted up the Leahi move, nor had it been a matter of waning patient support. Still it sounded convincing in print.

The editors decried the fact that the entire matter had become politicized with the forthcoming gubernatorial election and Fasi’s promise to retain Hale Mohalu if he were elected Governor. The paper lamented that possibility not only because it opposed Fasi, but because it felt to keep Hale Mohalu open would be fiscally irresponsible, saying it would cost “more money for less adequate care – but politics is not always rational.”

This was a subtle criticique of Fasi’s sensibilites as a rational person; obviously in the paper’s eyes, he failed misearbly on that score. In truth it was less expensive to rebuild at Hale Mohalu because the patients did not need the level of medical care Leahi provided. In fact, what was actually too costly was the excessive and unnecessary treatment Leahi delivered. The editorial urged Yuen to keep his promise that Mary Duarte be allowed to stay at Hale Mohalu, if that was her wish. “Health Director George Yuen, we believe, should stand by his commitment not to move the last patient against her will. If she chooses to move, however, then he would seem to be justified in cutting off utilities as planned at the Pearl City facility.” According to the editors, if they got rid of Mary Duarte, the State should have no compunction about its commitment to turn off the electricity and water for the other patients. Yet, ironically, the editorial urged that peace-making activities needed to take place. “They ought to include efforts at better communication with the dissident group and more patient participation in decision-making about the leprosy program.” The patients wanted a voice in the decision-making process, not in some distant future, but in the present moment. The last line of the editorial illustrated the disconnect between what was said and what was actually done; the editorial reaffirmed the commitment of the State to the patients, but it was only lip-service, the big gesture that meant nothing. The conclusion of the editorial stated, “But the scarred older patients are a responsibility the community must and does accept.”

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actuality, the editors were saying the State should accept responsibility for the patients but only if the patients followed the State’s orders.

Some of the patients at Leahi spoke to Advertiser reporter Dalton Tanonaka about the experiences of living at the Diamond Head facility. A major complaint had to do with the fact that they were living in temporary quarters until the renovation of a larger wing was completed. Some accepted their new surroundings with the compliance that marked their life as leprosy patients. George Liwai, 76 years old and blind, said, “I was sad to leave Hale Mohalu but what the state says, I do.” Some patients did not care for Leahi, including Sanford Smith who said he would “be much happier back at Hale Mohalu.” George Liwai, too, expressed a similar desire, saying “I would like that very much.”

Punikaiʻa described what happened to the two men after they were forced to go to Leahi. “George lost a lot of weight and became ill. Sanford Smith suffered from gangrene. After being at Leahi ... his gangrene discovered by accident ... after he fell at St. Francis off a handivan lift .... amputated his leg... later took off other leg.” Sanford Smith and George Liwai died within a year after being forcibly moved to Leahi.

On August 30, the city filed a final notice of violation of the city fire code at Hale Mohalu. After the first notice of fire code violations, the State did make some repairs, fixing some of the problems at Hale Mohalu, but the State had not done any since, especially not once a decision was made to transfer the patients to Leahi. Deputy Prosecutor Robert Goldberg said the final notice of the fire code violation had been filed against the State and it only remained to see if it was necessary to go to court. The prosecutor said that the State should repair Hale Mohalu or totally close it, but if the facility remained in limbo with patients still living there, then the city might have to go to court to make the State correct the fire code violations. “We’re waiting for the state to take action,” Goldberg said. “If they do not close, we’ll have to file suit to get them to renovate.” In the meantime, the patients carried on in the midst of the disrepairs.

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585 Bernard Punikaiʻa, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard Punikaiʻa (John Witeck, Personal Collection).
They had no plans to concede. In regard to the impending shutdown of utilities, the Hawaiian patients’ response was to hold fast to the inspiring words of Queen Liliʻuokalani, their beloved monarch. “Quoting Queen Liliuokalani’s motto, “onipaʻa kakou,” meaning steadfast all of us,” 13 leprosy patients prepared today to stick it out at Hale Mohalu hospital despite state plans to halt all services there tomorrow,” the Star-Bulletin reported.\(^{588}\) They called a news conference held at the Clinton Building to announce their stand. Bernard Punikaiʻa said, “Tomorrow is when they give us the shaft…but we won’t go.” It was a huge act of defiance given the medical condition of the patients and their ages. Approximately ten people on staff had been looking after the facility, but the patients were told that all services would be terminated as of Friday.\(^{589}\)

The Health Department sent Mary Duarte a letter to tell her that Hale Mohalu was closing on Friday and that they had a room ready for her at Leahi. Duarte had said she would move when “the time came,” but Yuen apparently took that to mean that she would relocate on the State’s schedule and not her own.\(^{590}\) Duarte said that the State twisted her words. “She said she told Yuen, she would leave only on one condition – ‘if everyone leaves and I am alone. As long as my friends stay, I stay, too,’ she said.”\(^{591}\) She told Yuen that he was trying to divide the patients and that if he really wanted to help them, he should tell Ariyoshi to release the $200,000 to rebuild Hale Mohalu. Duarte said, “I will never leave my people.” She also told him: “if you want to help me, help all of us by giving us justice.”\(^{592}\) Mary Duarte was by no means alone in her resistance. Bernard Punikaiʻa and the rest of the patients were aligned as one. The patients in a prepared statement declared, “We will not go. We will not move. From Hawaii to Kauai the call goes out. Kokua mai. Kokua makou.”\(^{593}\) The patients called for help from the entire archipelago to support them.

Leprosy in Hawaiʻi has always been a political issue; the debate over Hale Mohalu in 1978 in what was an election year for the governorship made the politics of leprosy a central part of the governor’s race. Mayor Fasi was running against Governor Ariyoshi, who was seeking re-election. Fasi supported the patients’ fight on moral

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grounds and told the patients that if he were elected, he would let them remain at Hale Mohalu by using the Legislative money, the $200,000 that had been earmarked for that purpose. According to Yuen as of August 30, the $200,000 appropriated by the Legislature would not be enough to pay for the design studies to rebuild Hale Mohalu. “To conform to federal standards,” Yuen said, “Hale Mohalu would have to be completely rebuilt at a cost of nearly $1 million.” Governor Ariyoshi felt that the allocated money ($200,000) should not be used because it would not be enough for what was needed. Despite the fact that the legislature had specifically designated the money to rebuild, the case was moot as far as Ariyoshi was concerned. He held tremendous power in this regard and he could not be persuaded to change his mind. However, this was not the first time that leprosy funds had been the source of intense debate, some as recently as the mid-1970s.

In its exploration on how best to operate the leprosy program, the State in 1975 had ordered a report regarding Hale Mohalu that showed “an expenditure of an estimated $90,000 to meet Life-Safety Code requirements for the building where six long-term residents and visiting Kalaupapa persons receive domiciliary and skilled nursing services.” In addition to the money that the Hawai‘i State Legislature provided for the Hawai‘i leprosy program, the federal government also allocated millions of dollars. Despite the large amount of money devoted to this program by both the State and federal government, no one could agree on how much was needed to do the repairs the patients wanted. Widely dissimilar opinions arose as to what amount would be sufficient.

The issue of which governmental figures to believe was confusing. The legislature had allocated $200,000, but the governor felt $1 million was required, although a 1975 State Report estimated that only $90,000 would be needed to meet the Life-Safety requirements. Thus, in a three-year period (1975 to 1978), the amount of estimated repair money had increased tenfold. From less than $100,000 in 1975 to almost a million in 1978, different estimates also led to disparate camps of opinion, with strong battle lines drawn on how to proceed. Since the Governor controlled the release of the money, he held ultimate fiscal power.


595 Hawaii State Department of Health, “The Inpatient Leprosy Program in Hawaii: An Analysis” by an ad hoc Special Study Group (February, 1975) 57.
**Labor Day Weekend Showdown**

Very early Friday morning, the Advertiser reported that if the State went ahead with its plans to close Hale Mohalu, “the 13 so-called ‘residents’ of Hale Mohalu will be without water and electricity.” Nonetheless, the patients vowed they would stay. Mary Duarte promised that she would not leave unless everyone did. “Mary Duarte – the lone ‘official’ resident – repeated the residents’ stand by saying, “I will never leave.” The State considered her “legitimate” yet they were willing to turn off water and electricity to a patient like her, who was undergoing kidney dialysis three times a week. Her so-called legitimacy apparently meant nothing. Punikai‘a insisted the patients would remain at the facility, relying on donated canned goods and water and that the luau for September 10 would go on as planned.

The State wasted no time. It followed through on its promise. At 6:16 AM on Friday September 1, 1978 the clocks stopped with the loss of electrical power as everything stopped: no lights, no water to drink, wash with, or cook. The Department of Health, charged with caring for the patients, turned off their lights, water, electricity, and cut all medical services at Hale Mohalu. Still Bernard Punikai‘a affirmed, “We’re gonna stay as long as we’re able to keep breathing.” Bernard Punikai‘a told John Witeck, “The state retaliated, shut off water and power on Friday September 1, 1978, the same day as the first day of World War II when the Nazis invaded Poland. There was a correlation between events – the supporters witnessed it.”

On September first, Dr. Verne Waite and an Attorney General investigator with badge arrived early to take away all medicine from the nurse’s station. Very sad thing to see – the Deputy Director of Health, a medical doctor came and removed the medication … such an act was contrary to his Hippocratic oath … being ‘good soldiers,’ they compromised principles and followed orders.

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600 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
601 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
Not long after this debacle, Richard Young of the Health Department added additional insult, as Punikai‘a recalled. “Few days later, Richard Young came down, [telling us] ‘not authorized to be in here,’ went to nurse’s station and ripped telephone out of the wall … patients had been using it.” Punikai‘a explained that earlier he had sought to get the phone problems corrected because it was a serious emergency matter. Witeck noted what Punikai‘a had told him about the phone.

Before September first, Bernard called the phone company to change phone to his name. Phone Company refused because the Health Department objected. Took meeting with the phone company to reverse them and get a phone in. Clarence had hemorrhaged one night, no phone for emergencies, very dangerous … if no phone, Phone Company would be held liable. Phone Company changed stand, said they must have misunderstood.602

The State’s threatening attitude towards the patients, the people they were supposed to look after, was difficult to understand. Handicapped patients who needed medicine, water, and food were camping out in the dark as the State tried to force them from their home – the place they believed they would never have to leave. Punikai‘a explained to the press that it was “not an emotional issue” but they were fighting to stay because they were “part of the community.” Moreover, he noted, “We were all once told that we would never have to worry about having to leave here.” Indicative of their fighting spirit, another patient, 70 year-old Leon Nono commented, “We no worry, we no give in.” Nono’s summed up the situation, “Tell them to go to hell.” 603

Once the State took action to shut down the utilities, the authorities decided to wait before continuing any further. In Yuen’s words, the State was going “to let things ride over the weekend,” and “we’re going to study it; a lot will depend on legal opinions.” 604 Dr. Verne Waite, Deputy Health Director, said that there were no plans to use force to evict the patients. Mary Duarte, the only authorized patient was at St. Francis undergoing dialysis on Friday when the State shut everything down. According to Dr. Waite the others were entitled to use Leahi as they had been entitled to use Hale Mohalu. 605 Punikai‘a argued they all had the right to be at Hale Mohalu, their second

602 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
home. He also pointed out that if Hale Mohalu was a fire-trap, it was made more so when the State turned off the water and as a result, the sprinkler system.

Although the patients had no running water, no electricity, no food, and no medical staff, the patients survived the first night without incident due to help from their supporters and friends; one of their most powerful supporters was Mayor Fasi who promised he would send over a generator on Tuesday morning. The patients and those who kept vigil with them spent Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in the dark. They expected it to be “a long siege” and made preparations accordingly. Not only the first night but during the Labor Day weekend, the resisting patients managed quite well thanks to the outpouring of aloha they received and it was not as bad as they had anticipated. Punikai‘a also wanted to make it clear that they did not receive any notice of eviction or any kind of legal warning of their being in violation.

Labor Day weekend saw another protest in Hilo on the island of Hawai‘i. “About 50 native Hawaiian protestors, many of them dressed in malos and flowing white robes, voluntarily submitted to arrest yesterday after a pushing and shoving match with Hawaii National Guardsmen on the edge of the Hilo Airport runway.” Sixty people in total were arrested, including newsmen who reported on the struggle. The demonstration was threefold: to protest the bombing of Kaho‘olawe, the high percentage of Hawaiians in prison, and mismanagement at Bishop Estate. Dr. Emmett Aluli of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana was one of those arrested. No one was hurt and there was no violence as both sides shoved and pushed against one another. Mayor Herbert Matayoshi downplayed the confrontation and blamed the events on a breakdown in communication. The Mayor thought the problems raised by the demonstrators were ones that needed to be addressed and that his administration had already begun to tackle some of them.

On the other hand, Governor Ariyoshi felt that it was a serious matter of unlawful behavior and he stated that it was his job to uphold the law. “We cannot, and this administration will not, submit to lawlessness and anarchy.” The Governor’s severe
response to the Hawaiians in the Hilo protest was typical of his harsh attitude toward the leprosy patients. The State’s chief administrator was not about to let what he regarded as a potential insurrection occur on his watch. Apparently, Ariyoshi believed his job as Governor was to prevent any type of protest from developing into the full scale chaos, he feared, was bound to result. Perhaps that was why he took such a punitive position toward Hale Mohalu. If he could run roughshod over those least able to defend themselves, he would be sending a message to other groups that they could expect him to be even more hard-hitting. It would deter anyone else from any type of protest action.

During Labor Day weekend on O‘ahu, the Hale Mohalu patients asserted their humanity. Punikai‘a stated, “We feel, we hate, we love, we cry, and we are entitled to basic human dignity.” The patients and their supporters decided to launch a multi-prong attack in their defense. They sought help from several different agencies, including international assistance. Their plan of attack included filing a suit in federal court, charging that the State misappropriated federal leprosy funds that should have been used for repairs and also alleging that the State violated the patients’ civil liberties. In addition to their suit, their goals were to have their attorney Jack Schweigert bring the issue before the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington and for Abercrombie to contact not only Amnesty International but also Senator Edward Kennedy, who was attending an International Health Conference in Moscow, Russia.

To get the State to restore water and electricity, Jack Schweigert filed suit in federal district court. Many of the patients were diabetic and had to take insulin, but because there was no longer refrigeration on site, they were forced to put their syringes and insulin in coolers. Schweigert and Punikai‘a declared that the federal government gave the State $1.4 million dollars a year to operate the leprosy program and some of that money should have been spent to make repairs. Yuen countered that federal money was for operating expenses only but not for repairs or capital improvements. Yuen said federal funds are used for facilities the State deemed proper and in the opinion of the

State those facilities are Kalaupapa and Leahi. It was completely within the State’s jurisdiction to decide how the money should be spent.615

Temporary Restoration and Continued Confrontation

Thirty minutes after the patients filed suit in federal court, Judge Samuel P. King ruled that the State had to restore all services to Hale Mohalu. On Tuesday the Star-Bulletin Night Final had big bright red headlines blasted across the front page that proclaimed the latest news: “Hale Mohalu Services Are Ordered Restored.”616 King’s order, which could be extended longer, would stay in effect for 10 days until September 15, but the State sought to challenge Judge King’s order straight away.617 The State contended that the patients were given notice a week ago and there was no merit to their suit. On the other hand, the patients charged that their civil liberties were violated because they did not have a hearing before the utilities were turned off. In an effort to nullify Judge King’s order, lawyers for the State sent documents to the Ninth Circuit Court in San Francisco.618 As far as the State was concerned there was no sense fiscally to operate two separate leprosy facilities on O’ahu when Leahi Hospital could fulfill that role. Rather than pursue an eviction order in Honolulu, the State decided it wanted to go to a higher court, and they prepared material for the Ninth Circuit, “asking that King’s order be nullified. State officials contended the order was improperly issued on the basis of erroneous information.”619 Under King’s ruling, the utilities were to be turned back on and food services continued, but medical services were only available at Leahi. Richard Young of the Health Department said, “We won’t be going beyond the court order.”620 King’s order was in effect until September 15. Young stated that his Department would not take any more steps until the Attorney General’s office gave them more direction.

The patients and their attorney, Schweigert maintained that the State misappropriated the federal money it received to administer the leprosy program. For the patients to be “imprisoned in a ward atmosphere” like Leahi was something the patients never wanted, Punikai’a argued. He also spoke of Yuen’s previous comments. “Yuen has said over and over in the past that patients couldn’t be moved because either the property

would revert to the federal government or the state would lose its funds.” Punikai‘a countered Yuen’s argument about the legality of Mary Duarte. “And as to Mary Duarte being the only legal patient, Yuen said twice in his 1976 federal Health Education and Welfare Utilization report that three-fourths of the patients at Hale Mohalu were from Kalaupapa and that Hale Mohalu was for those residents.” Punikai‘a noted the inconsistency of Yuen’s position. “Yuen’s own words indict him.” While the State immediately initiated judicial appeals, the re-instatement of the utilities took a few hours.

Throughout Labor Day weekend the patients had stayed at the facility without any utilities, but the Tuesday night ruling meant the lights came back on Wednesday afternoon, the sixth of September. Once again, life returned to normal. The Advertiser carried photos of the workmen reconnecting the electrical lines and described the results. “The telephone rang and water poured from the faucets and the lights came on and the dietitian at Waimano Home sent word that supper would be arriving at 5:30PM.” The patients at Hale Mohalu “cheered loudly and savored the taste of victory.” Chains and padlocks put on the previous Friday were cut, giving the patients freedom of access to and from the property. When the water had been turned off, the patients had secured a different kind of water supply - a city crew had hooked up a makeshift shower using water from a nearby city hydrant, allowing the city to supply “the facility with water since the pipes ran dry Friday.” But now, the water ran from the faucets as it had done for so many years. The patients were elated.

However, the Star-Bulletin editorial criticized the leprosy patients and the Hawaiian protestors in Hilo, insisting that both groups wanted to cause trouble for the Governor. Once again, the newspapers offered their backing not to the patients but instead to the administration. “With the political campaign season upon us, supporters of various causes are seizing the opportunity to put pressure on Governor Ariyoshi by staging protests that involve acts of defiance – or at least threats to defiance. Thus, a small band of leprosy victims is holding out – with encouragement from Mayor Fasi – at Hale Mohalu in defiance of the state’s attempt to close down that facility.” The editors made it sound as if there was a conspiracy between the Mayor and the patients to...
circumvent the Governor’s hard work. The Star-Bulletin added the protests at Hilo and the resistance at Waiāhole Valley as steps two and three of this attempt to put pressure on the Governor when it would have the most impact. The editors did not acknowledge the fact that the protest arose from a sense of injustice done to the Hawaiian people. Instead the editorial regarded these three acts of defiance as publicity-seeking efforts to derail the Governor. The editors argued that it was a lot easier to get publicity than it was to come up with “reasonable proposals” that would achieve satisfaction of their demands.625

Deputy Attorney General Michael Lilly traveled to San Francisco and asked the Ninth Circuit Court to overturn Judge King’s order to restore Hale Mohalu services. However, the Court upheld Judge King’s order.626 The Ninth Circuit issued their ruling on Friday September 8 one week after the State had shut down all services. Abercrombie argued that Lilly did not have to travel to San Francisco, because he could have obtained an eviction order in Honolulu, but the State would not do that because they were waiting for the primary to be over so the voters did not get agitated.627

**September Luau Plans**

Following the success of having the utilities restored and to make the public aware of their dire situation, the Save Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana went ahead with their plans to hold a luau. But the State warned that if they did hold the it, those who attended would be doing so at their own risk and would be trespassing on State property. Yuen still had no plans to use force against those at the luau, saying he just wanted to warn them of the hazards that they might encounter, but it was something they had to decide personally.628 The State tried to do everything it could to prevent the luau from happening, but like a tidal wave it could not be stopped as plans moved forward with a force of their own.

The ‘Ohana held the benefit luau on the grounds at Hale Mohalu on Sunday September 10, 1978.629 They planned on a crowd of 1500 but newspaper estimates of much less placed the number at more than 500.630 As they waited in line to get food, the people signed petitions in support of the patients. “Though the state Department of Health issued a warning that anyone attending the event would be trespassing, there was no

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attempt to interfere with the luau,” the paper reported. It took a massive coordination effort to put the luau on, but the Save Hale Mohalu Movement had help from numerous sources. Jim Albertini was in charge overall, coordinating plans between committees. Held on the grounds of Hale Mohalu, the luau took place from 2 to 8 PM with Olomana and Mākaha Sons of Niihau among the entertainment.

Punikai‘a recalled that over “900 attended” the luau and that “thousands [were] raised.” Planning and preparations for the event were a testament to the organizational talents of the ‘Ohana. Members had such diverse backgrounds that their skills and abilities complemented one another to accomplish such a large-scale production. Because they were not able to cook for that big group at Hale Mohalu, the kitchen facilities of the Pearl City Community Church helped the ‘Ohana with the preparations. Reverend James Mersberg, pastor of the church was also a member of the ‘Ohana.

While the luau garnered hundreds of supporters for Hale Mohalu, the newspapers on Wednesday September 13, printed two letters critical of the struggle. One letter to the Advertiser called them “squatters” and stated that their “landlords had given them notice to vacate and will provide them with far better accommodations and care at no expense to themselves.” The author went on to say that it was costing the taxpayers to keep the patients at Hale Mohalu. “I resent their emotional and unreasonable demands. I have to pay for them.” The other letter to the Star-Bulletin, while sympathetic to the patients, stated that “reason must not be over-run by sheer sentimentalism and emotionalism,” and that some politicians were just exploiting the patients for their own “political ambition,” and the author exhorted, “Let us clean political trash out of office.”

Dr. Robert Wong of the University of Hawaii School of Medicine and a physician who had worked at Kalaupapa wrote an article entitled “Hale Mohalu, A Home,” which was printed as a flyer handed out at the luau. Dr. Wong pointed out the essence of the patients’ fight. “Hale Mohlu is a home. It is a refuge. However many improvements are made at Leahi Hospital, it can never be more than another institution with all the

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632 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
633 Jim Albertini, Notes, committee arrangements, August and September 1978.
reminders of isolation and illness that an institution can bring.” Rather than go backward to that type of restrictive, impersonal setting, the Hale Mohalu residents desired to maintain their close-knit community. “They [the leprosy patients] had been involuntarily confined by the state and forced to exist as patients for most of their lives: they seek now an affirmation of their humanity.” At the bottom of the flyer, an insert box stated: “If you agree with this letter, please send it along with your own message of concern to Governor George Ariyoshi State capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813.” (The letter was also printed in the paper on September 22, 1978).

**Negative Decision and State Persuasion**

The ‘Ohana gathered at Hale Mohalu to hold a vigil on Monday evening in anticipation of the federal court hearing on Tuesday September 19. The photo of the group, hands joined in prayer, was published in the paper next to an article about the suit they had filed. Despite the vigil, Judge Samuel P. King ruled that the patients at Hale Mohalu had no standing before the federal court because the property now belonged to the State. Although King ruled on Tuesday, September 19 against the patients, the Judge agreed to extend for three more days the temporary restraining order on the State to continue with utilities. For King, the logic was clear: the State ran Hale Mohalu under the terms of a federal contract that no longer existed, so the State was free to do what it wanted with the property.

On Tuesday September 19, after Federal Judge Dick Yin Wong ruled in the morning against the leprosy patients’ efforts to remain at Hale Mohalu, George Yuen and other officials came to Hale Mohalu in a surprise visit. Dr. Erida Reichert, Dr. Verne Waite, and Richard Young accompanied Yuen, who said he wanted to talk over with the patients some peaceful resolution. When the patients tried to explain the historic background of their home (an important cultural facet of the conflict) they were quickly rebuffed. “Sporadic attempts made by the patients to delve into the history of the situation,” the paper noted, “were stopped by Yuen, who said, “I don’t want to go into

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637 Flyer, Robert T. Wong, M.D., “Hale Mohalu, ‘a home.’”
638 Flyer, Robert T. Wong, M.D., “Hale Mohalu, ‘a home.’”
past history. The purpose of the meeting is to get ahead.” Punikaiʻa spoke up, saying he was sent to Kaliihi for treatment of leprosy when he was six years old. He had no choice. “My only crime was that I had leprosy.” Punikaiʻa explained that he did not blame anyone because the law of segregation was in effect. “Then I was compelled to go to Kalaupapa. I went with the idea that I was going to die.” Now at age 48 with the disease arrested, he wanted to know why he had to go to Leahi. “I’ve been compelled all my life. But I ask you one question: Why am I compelled to go to Leahi now?” No one had to be quarantined any longer. Punikaiʻa stated, “I don’t want to be compelled because I came here for medical treatment. Where am I to stay?”

When Yuen answered that Punikaiʻa could stay anywhere on Oʻahu, he said he wanted to stay at Hale Mohalu. He argued for making Hale Mohalu the treatment facility. “You’re saying I can’t get treatment unless I go to Leahi. Keep the facility here and make it a real health care facility.” Punikaiʻa suggested putting mental health patients on one section of the grounds and family planning on another. “How about considering that?” he asked, “How about considering letting us stay at Hale Mohalu?” Yuen however had no answer. He left after he thanked the patients. For his part, Punikaiʻa was optimistic. “He knew I was quoting him plans he once had. We’re not disheartened.”

Despite all that he and the other patients had been through, they remained optimists, demonstrating the resilience they possessed.

On behalf of the patients Jack Schweigert asked the court for additional time because he intended to take the case to the Ninth Circuit Court and perhaps to the Supreme Court. Judge Dick Yin Wong agreed to extend until midnight Tuesday September 26, a court order preventing the State from turning off the services. Schweigert flew to San Francisco on Thursday September 21 to present his case to the Ninth Court of Appeals.

Offers of Support Amid Legal Negativity

On September 19, the Hawaiʻi Council of Churches Board of Directors issued a statement on Hale Mohalu, offering their position on the controversy. The Council explained that they supported the patients’ desire to live at Hale Mohalu, the home away

from home, saying such a request was reasonable, given their past mistreatment. The Hawai‘i Council Statement declared, “No other group of people are required to stay in a hospital when they are receiving outpatient care over an extended period of time.” The patients wanted no more than any one else desired for their medical care, namely to be treated with respect and consideration. But they were forced into an institution with a more intensive level of care than they needed because as the Council Board explained, “at the present stage of the state’s planning for the leprosy patients there is no intermediate choice between Kalaupapa and Leahi.” The Council urged concerned citizens to lobby for such an intermediate facility and to push for its construction.

In an effort to sway public opinion at this important juncture of the struggle, Robert T. Wong, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor, University of Hawaii School of Medicine, sent a letter to the Honolulu Advertiser editor on Friday September 22, 1978.

He mentioned that the most important fact to remember was that the patients at Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu were taken away from their families as soon as it became evident that they had the disease. They had to “face not only the physically destructive progress of the disease, but the emotionally destructive removal from loved ones, and the psychologically destructive exposure to repeated hurts inflicted upon him by the insensitive and uninformed.”

Dr. Wong’s letter noted that despite these difficulties, the patients have managed to create a real home among their fellow sufferers, “a community of friends with a degree of privacy and protection from hurt.” No matter what would be done at Leahi, it could never match the sanctuary that they had had at Pearl City.

Dr. Damian Enna of Carville sent a telegram on September 24, to Jack Schweigert in which he talked about the differences between the leprosy program at Carville and the one at Kalaupapa. “My impression, base on observations was that there was a significant difference in privileges, favors, and right granted the patients of Hawaii compared to those received by the patients at Carville.” The telegram went on to say Carville patients enjoyed good care and treatment and that in general leprosy patients “need not only medical and surgical care but equally important understanding and empathetic considerations to help them maintain their physical as well as good mental health.”

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Enna stated that the problems patients experience “vary considerably due not only directly to their disease but also to their permanent disabling features, besides being ostracized not only from society but occasionally their family, I feel they deserve the equivalent as provided by Carville.” From near and far, the patients received support for their demands that except for local authorities, medical people saw as reasonable.

When the patients sought help from the United States Supreme Court in their appeal to force the State to restore services, the Supreme Court rejected their request. On Wednesday September 27, Attorney Schweigert had filed a motion with the Supreme Court but Justice William Rehnquist denied the motion without comment. On Tuesday September 26, 1978 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals rejected a comparable appeal that Schweigert had presented. “The two appeals were filed after federal Judge Dick Yin Wong of Hawaii last week dismissed the patients’ lawsuit seeking to keep the facility open,” the paper reported. Judge Wong had permitted the services to be extended to midnight of Tuesday September 26, 1978. After the rejection of their appeal, Punikaiʻa expected the State would soon shut down the utilities. “We have to assume they will go ahead and shut off all the utilities; we can’t depend on their compassionate hearts.”

As a Hawaiian who had seen the battles his people had to face even in peaceful demonstrations, such as at Hilo earlier that month, Punikaiʻa was a realist.

The Star-Bulletin’s report on the court denial twisted the facts, contending that Thomas K. Hitch, chair of the Citizens Committee in 1969 had made plans with Bernard Punikaiʻa and the other patients of Kalaupapa to have patients treated at Leahi and emphasized the inconsistency of the patients’ present protest when it seemed they had agreed to the move years ago. The paper neglected to say that those plans were changed when the decision to move the medical school to Leahi (part of the 1969 Citizens’ Committee’s original objective) was abandoned. The Star-Bulletin seemed to criticize the patients’ position and to discredit them every chance it got, except for writer Murry Engle whose articles conveyed the patients’ perspective. Anticipating the State’s plan to shut down services at Hale Mohalu again, the patients were not discouraged. They had

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stockpiled canned food and had camper stoves to do their cooking, and they expected help from the city in terms of water and a generator for electricity.  

**Complete Termination of Services**

No longer required to maintain services as of Tuesday midnight, the State permanently shut off the electricity, the water, and medical and food services to the leprosy patients at Hale Mohalu on Wednesday September 27, 1978 at 1:10 PM. “Water and power lines at Hale Mohalu were cut yesterday afternoon,” Advertiser columnist Janice Wolf reported. “Food service stopped. Telephones were disconnected. Frank Duarte’s insulin is being stored on ice cubes. For leprosy patients fighting the closure of the troubled Pearl City facility, it was a most discouraging day.” The State felt totally justified in this action, which many others saw as incredibly callous and inhumane.

In protest, Hale Mohalu supporters gathered outside the Governor’s Mansion at Washington Place. “Honk for Hale Mohalu” signs held by leprosy patients and their friends prompted a continuous honking of horns. Although they had lost their court battles and were once again without utilities, the patients still fought back, and they had lots of supporting company. “The Washington Place pickets yesterday included members from other groups who feel their civil rights are being denied: Waiāhole-Waikāne Community Association, the People Against Chinatown Evictions and the Save Kahoʻolawe Ohana,” reported Engle in the Star-Bulletin. The picketing would continue as a weekly event for the next five years.

The State shut off the utilities again despite the fact that the administration claimed Mary Duarte was allowed to stay at Hale Mohalu. Ariyoshi told the press that Mary Duarte said she would leave, but she was pressured by the other patients to stay. Duarte said the people who pressured her were the doctors and Richard Young. “They’re putting pressure,” Mary Duarte explained, “They asked me to leave and I said I didn’t want to go.” Punikai’a disputed the accusation that other patients pressured Mary Duarte to stay, repeating what he had told the patients in January that “we were all in it together, together.”

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657 Bernard Punikaia, notes from John Witeck’s interview of Bernard (John Witeck, personal collection).
but no one should stay unless they wanted to.”⁶⁵⁸ In the middle of Engle’s article about the picketing at Washington Place, a small box insert contained news that “the Senate has approved a $600,000 increase in federal funding for Hawaii’s leprosy program. The increase, requested by Senator Daniel Inouye, brings total federal funding for fiscal 1979 to $2 million.” The paper noted, “The funds represent 70 percent of the total cost, with the state to pick up the rest.”⁶⁵⁹ Still, Ariyoshi and Yuen maintained that there was not enough to rebuild at Hale Mohalu. Meantime, Governor Ariyoshi was busy in September 1978 planning to develop a world trade complex at the harbor by Aloha Tower.⁶⁶⁰

**The State Versus The City**

Yuen became very upset with Mayor Fasi for helping the patients by supplying them with generators and with water and called a news conference to voice his disgust and to accuse Fasi of violating State law. Yuen “called the city’s involvement both ‘illegal’ and ‘sickening’ and said that ‘it degrades every citizen of this state.’”⁶⁶¹ Yuen asked the attorney general’s office to investigate if there are legal steps that the State could pursue—both against the city and against the Hale Mohalu patients, citing “possible trespass charges, motions to evict and ‘injunctions to remove the generators and water appurtenances.’”⁶⁶² Yuen felt the Mayor was just taking advantage of the situation to play politics and that it was disgraceful for an elected official, charged with upholding the law, to be the very one who was breaking the law, since the courts had ruled that the State could close Hale Mohalu.

The Mayor’s spokesman, Jim Loomis, City information specialist, said that Yuen was not legally qualified to decide if helping the patients was illegal. Yuen was not an attorney and could not make that kind of assessment. “If a judge says it’s illegal to help these people, we’ll comply,” he said.⁶⁶³ Loomis reiterated the Mayor’s suggestion to wait until after the October 7 primary election. “Since the state has let them stay there for the last seven months, what’s another week going to matter?”⁶⁶⁴

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Yuen was also angry with the Mayor over a significant change in the city’s identification of fire violations. Yuen was upset because the recent fire code inspections used the requirements for safety based on a less strict standard for dormitories instead of the one for institutions and thereby was no longer in violation. He “accused the city administration of using political influence to revise the report.” If Hale Mohalu had been in violation of the fire code for many years and was deemed structurally unsafe, the press asked, why were patients not moved earlier? Yuen had no explanation except to say that he had recommended that the move take place soon after he took control of the office in 1975. However, he had no idea why his recommendations were not followed.

However, Board of Water Supply Chief Engineer Edward Y. Hirata disputed Yuen’s claims. He affirmed the Mayor had not asked him to take any action at Hale Mohalu. Hirata took “responsibility for providing water to the Hale Mohalu leprosy facility,” declaring, “We are simply responding to the requests of one patient, Mary Duarte, whom the state says is authorized to be at Hale Mohalu.” Hirata criticized Yuen for his lack of compassion and accused him of dereliction of duty for allowing “Hale Mohalu to become a fire trap and ...completely abandoning Mary Duarte, a legal patient at Hale Mohalu.” The incongruity of that fact seemed to have escaped State authorities. Hirata asked, “How can Mr. Yuen say that Mary Duarte has a right to stay at Hale Mohalu and at the same time shut off water service to her?”

Yuen felt that the State had done its utmost to care for the leprosy patients in Hawai‘i. He also reiterated State support for keeping Kalaupapa open “until the last patient dies.” Yuen believed that the best thing for the future of the leprosy program in Hawai‘i was to close Hale Mohalu because he felt “we need only look 10 years down the road. Many of the present patients will be in their 60s and 70s and beyond and then I think the wisdom of the present decisions will be very apparent.” Yuen did not feel that his attitude was heavy handed or that he was insensitive to the patients’ present needs. However, in the eyes of the patients, Yuen was enemy number one. Punikai‘a had such dislike for Yuen that he had mounted Yuen’s picture inside a toilet seat that hung on the

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wall at Hale Mohalu. While it was an outrageously funny gesture, it was indicative of their animosity. Yuen was frustrated with Punikia’ a who in turn had no use for the Director. Like Ariyoshi, Yuen vehemently opposed the Mayor. The primary election was just a week away and political tension was palpable.

Ironically, the Advertiser carried the story of Yuen’s anger at Fasi on one page while on the opposite side, was a story about Fasi’s tremendous popularity with voters. “Mayor Frank Fasi gets a much stronger job rating than Gov. George Ariyoshi among the voters who will decide which man gets the Democratic gubernatorial nomination Oct. 7, according to the latest Advertiser Hawai‘i Poll.” Not only was the Mayor a more charismatic figure than the Governor, but also he was far more accessible. Easily approachable, Fasi was quite visible in the community, often seen behind the wheel of his colorful “Fasi van” or walking his dog Gino, around town as he checked on things, typical of his hands-on approach.

The Governor in contrast seemed quiet and aloof. “Approval for Fasi cut across all divisions such as age, income, ethnic background, religion, or gender. Even among Ariyoshi voters, more liked the mayor’s performance than disapproved of it, the poll shows.” Most people who supported Mayor Fasi were fiercely loyal to him. He was a very polarizing figure. People either loved him and his no-nonsense leadership style – (Fasi let everyone know the buck stopped at his desk) - or they bitterly detested him and his rather cocky attitude. The son of Italian immigrants, Fasi had a first-generation ambition to achieve, which, coupled with his Marine Corps discipline helped to shape his results-oriented attitude. Never hesitant to use publicity to garner support for his ideas, Fasi was characterized as a man of action. Governor Ariyoshi was by nature quiet and seemed more comfortable in the background. A lawyer, Ariyoshi had a slight speech impediment, which at times made him difficult to understand, but he had the backing of the Democratic machine and his former boss, Jack Burns. In strongly democratic
Hawai‘i, the winner of the primary would automatically carry the November election and become the next Governor.

In addition to the primary at the beginning of October, the Constitutional Convention was scheduled to end on Thursday September 21, 1978. A great deal of controversy surrounded the Con Con, since certain issues, like initiative, referendum, and recall that the electorate favored did not pass. Other concerns succeeded, especially the teaching of the Hawaiian language in schools and the official recognition of Hawaiian as a second language. This acknowledgement of the status of the Hawaiian language reflected the change in consciousness that was part of the Hawaiian reawakening.

Some people criticized Mayor Fasi for his hard line in the Chinatown building renewal and eviction of the residents, while he supported the patients at Hale Mohalu. Fasi responded that the issues were not at all similar. “In Chinatown, Fasi said the issue is unsafe buildings and the city is already in the midst of preparing new housing right within Chinatown that will accommodate the residents.” Although the old Chinatown buildings were not habitable, a few want to remain there so they can “raise chickens and vegetables in the middle of downtown Honolulu.” In contrast, the situation with Hale Mohalu involved a moral obligation. “While his ‘businessman’s sense’ tells him it makes sense to move the few people left at Hale Mohalu to new facilities at Leahi Hospital, Fasi said, his moral sense argues for leaving Hale Mohalu open where the patients can have a more ‘family-like’ atmosphere.”

Since all attempts to have their case heard in federal court had been exhausted, the patients, through their attorney Schweigert filed a motion in Circuit Court for reconsideration of a previous preliminary injunction that had been denied. Citing evidence only recently discovered, Schweigert asked the court to reconsider the injunction that it had repudiated in the February 1978 hearing, attaching “an affidavit of City Fire Capt. Robert A. Reyla which says the building is ‘reasonably safe from fire hazard’ following a September 13 inspection” and an affidavit by Toshio Kagehiro,

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Hale Mohalu’s long-time maintenance foreman. According to the *Star-Bulletin*, “He [Kagehiro] says that when he requested authorization in 1966 to make necessary repairs of the facility, he was told by supervisory personnel “the building was going to be closed within two years and replaced with a new structure to be built in the same area.”

Schweigert contended that if this new evidence had been admitted at the time of the previous hearing in February, the preliminary injunction would have been upheld. Judge Shintaku scheduled this latest hearing for 9 AM on October 13, 1978.

In the meantime, on Friday October 6, 1978, the day before the primary, the Hale Mohalu patients kept a silent vigil inside the Governor’s office as they waited to show the Governor three important documents that substantiated their claim to Hale Mohalu. One was a letter from Mayor Fasi, which said he would reopen Hale Mohalu if he were elected Governor, another was the letter from Dr. Damian Enna, head of the Carville Hospital’s clinical branch, and the third was the quitclaim deed. Although the patients waited in his office, the Governor did not meet with them that day.

Three of the patients wrote a letter to the editor of the *Star-Bulletin* of October 11, 1978 regarding the “silent vigil” that the patients and their supporters undertook on October 6 at the State Capitol “to make one last administrative appeal for transfer of the property to the patients as should have been done a long time ago.” The letter reiterated that the federal government gave the Hale Mohalu land to the leprosy patients and not to the State government, but that “the state has misrepresented that fact.”

Three Hawaiian patients, Pupule, Palea, and Puahala, who had a history of family members with leprosy, signed the letter and publicly offered their support to their brothers and sisters at Hale Mohalu, just as Winnie Harada and Paul Harada had done.

The Mayor may have been favored in the polls, but when it came to the actual election, Governor Ariyoshi won. The situation at Hale Mohalu after Governor Ariyoshi’s victory in the primary election meant that nothing changed for the patients, at

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678 Gary Kagehiro, personal interview, Honolulu, 29 July 2011. (Toshio Kagehiro’s son, Gary spoke of how difficult it was for Toshio to turn off the electricity when the patients were evicted in 1978 because Toshio felt awful leaving the handicapped patients without basic necessities).


least not immediately. They were still at Hale Mohalu even though the State had officially shut off food, electricity, water, and telephone and medical services. The city continued to provide water through a working faucet and provided a generator so the patients had electricity. Yuen intended to evict the patients and sought advice from the Attorney General’s office on how best to proceed.\footnote{10 Patients at Hale Mohalu,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Wednesday October 11, 1978, A-4.}

When it came time for the patients’ federal court hearing, the results were disappointing. “Another attempt by Hale Mohalu patients to stop the state from closing the Pearl City leprosy facility was struck down quickly today [Friday October 13, 1978] by Circuit Judge Harold Shintaku,” the Star-Bulletin reported.\footnote{“Hale Mohalu Lawyer Loses Another Effort,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Friday, October 13, 1978, A-6.} The Judge, saying he saw all those documents in February and that nothing was new, dismissed the case.

To bolster their strength and to renew their ties with their brothers and sisters at Kalaupapa, the ‘Ohana visited the Settlement on October 14 and 15, 1978. Seventeen members made the trip, and they held a slideshow and played videotapes of the picketing outside Washington Place. “The Oahu Ohana members are sending the Kalaupapa people a photo album of our weekend there, in appreciation of their warm aloha for us,” the ‘Ohana newsletter noted. This trip was an important meeting of mutual support – a blessing from the Kalaupapa patients, who could not make the trip to Honolulu, but who wanted to stand with their brothers and sisters; it also sustained the Hale Mohalu group who felt renewed by their visit to the Settlement and the beauty of the landscape.\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, December 1978, Vol. I, No.3.}

**Advocates for the Patients**

In the newsletter, The Pepa of October 1978, the publication of UCC (United Council of Churches) for the University of Hawai‘i Campus Ministry, ‘Ohana member Glenn Harada wrote an article about the patient controversy, explaining that no other people “has had their constitutional, personal, and family rights so ignored and violated for the sake of the ‘common good.’ They were denied their constitutional rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Harada explained that the patients could have children but were not allowed to raise them. Moreover, they “ had committed no crime, they were not mentally incompetent, were never tried by jury, but because of their illness they were literally ripped away, as children, adolescents, or adults from their families,
friends, and communities for the protection of all of us.”\(^{686}\) Glenn Harada had personal family experience of what life was like for leprosy patients because his brother Paul and his sister-in-law, Winnie, were leprosy patients who had been forced as young adults to live at Kalaupapa. Glenn made a plea in this article for the public to express their gratitude toward the patients for their suffering and to take another important step. “We should also ask for forgiveness for our fears, our ignorance, and especially for not having recognized nor treated these patients as persons.”\(^{687}\) Harada talked about patient incarceration. “Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that at Hale Mohalu there is a jail that was used for those who went absent without leave.”\(^{688}\) Patient Bernice Pupule spoke about her experience in the Hale Mohalu jail. “In 1956,” she recalled, “I nearly died when I was in the Hale Mohalu jail house. My fever hit 108 and I had reactions all over my body.”\(^{689}\) Pupule had been put in jail because she ran away and someone had reported her to the administrator. Pupule explained, “I was jailed for six months and was allowed out only for meals.”\(^{690}\) Kalaupapa too had a jail and patients served as sheriffs. People with a disease, already in isolation, were further isolated in jail.

Dr. Robert M. Worth, professor of Public Health at the University of Hawai‘i wrote an Op-Ed piece for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, entitled, “Caring for Hawaii’s Leprosy Patients.” Dr. Worth urged that the patients be allowed to have a voice in the conflict that dominated so much of the news.\(^{691}\) Dr. Worth was the physician at Kalaupapa in 1956 and had been involved in the leprosy program for over twenty years.\(^{692}\) “We all need to feel that we have at least some control over the circumstances of our lives,” he wrote, “and the patients are now giving clear signals that the days of well-meaning paternalism should be ended.”\(^{693}\) Aware what they required, Dr. Worth noted that the patients themselves have intimate knowledge of their needed care levels, since “most of these ‘old-timers’ have had over 30 years of experience with their disabilities, and they have a clear picture of their changing needs.” He ended his article by urging the State to examine the dispute – to see it with new eyes, and to “establish a firm mechanism

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\(^{687}\) Glenn Harada, “Hale Mohalu” The Pepa, published by the Off Center, October 1978.
\(^{688}\) Glenn Harada, “Hale Mohalu” The Pepa, published by the Off Center, October 1978.
\(^{689}\) SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, June 1979, Vol. 11, No. 6.
\(^{690}\) SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, June 1979, Vol. 11, No. 6.
\(^{692}\) Annie Worth, widow of Robert Worth, personal interview, Honolulu, 10 April 2013.
for officially and permanently involving patients in all decisions affecting their own lives.”

Dr. Worth’s knowledgeable presentation reflected his long association with leprosy patients, yet his opinion carried less weight than Yuen who had been involved in the Hansen’s Disease program for only three years.

On October 26, the Hale Mohalu Committee of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches scheduled a meeting with Yuen to discuss their proposal for building an intermediate care facility to be operated by a non-profit corporation. Glenn Harada, Committee member and brother of patient Paul Harada, explained, “‘We have drafted a very, very rough proposal,’ which the Department of Health has said it will consider.”

The committee made clear in a statement that the demands of the patients were not unreasonable and that the costs involved in rebuilding at Hale Mohalu need to be considered in light of society’s debt to the patients for the sacrifices they had to make. The committee also corrected the mistaken notion put forth by the State that the blue ribbon 1969 committee on leprosy recommended putting the Hale Mohalu facility at Leahi Hospital. That was not true, they said, the recommendation was to establish it close to the University of Hawaii at Manoa Medical School.

Harada explained that the committee wanted a new facility at Hale Mohalu that would provide twenty-four hour nursing care, along with private rooms and bath (with no more than two to a room), as well as an area for a community kitchen and lounge. Harada described the deprivation experienced by the patients, as a legacy of loss “shared by no other group in Hawai‘i today.”

Phone Crisis

As part of their organizational strategy, one of the tactics the ‘Ohana used was a phone tree. On a draft list of the SAVE HALE MOHALU PHONE TREE, dated October 26, 1978, the list of people who would help was divided according to different categories, beginning with “People who will call each other” (ten people in this category, including John Witeck, Ed Gerlock, Holly Henderson, Gigi Cocquio, and Jim Albertini), “People willing to attend meetings” (thirty-six people, including Joanne Miyata, Earl Mendonca, Glenn Harada, and Setsu Okubo), and “People who can be called for action” (eighteen

people, such as Ed Greevy, Wally Inglis, Val Vigliermo, and Haunani Trask), and finally “Contacts” (thirty people, including Dr. Bob Worth, Dr. Fred Dodge, Rev. Ruth Senter, and Anna McAnany). On this list alone, there were nearly one hundred people of different backgrounds and affiliations who were committed to helping the patients.

When the phone lines were cut, however, it not only affected Hale Mohalu’s ability to organize, it had potentially life-threatening consequences. When Clarence Nai‘a suffered a hemorrhage at midnight on November 20, 1978, the patients, with the assistance of the security guard, had to use the phone at the Mental Health office on the grounds of Hale Mohalu to call for assistance. Later, this phone was also disconnected and the patients were told to call Leahi for any future similar emergencies. The patients and their supporters were incensed at the stupidity of this idea “since a delay in receiving medical care could mean serious permanent disability or even loss of life.” Bernard Punikai‘a commented, “This is another crass example of the State’s treating us like children, subject to being punished even unto death for daring disobey our all-powerful guardians. They are trying to force us to move to Leahi by threatening our very lives.” Fortunately, Punikai‘a met with the phone company and was able to get a phone installed in his name later the following month on December 13, 1978.

In addition to resolving this problem of the phone, the patients were able to gain increased assistance from the Council of Churches, when the Council invited representatives from the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana to sit in on their meetings and to serve as resource people. Bernard Punikai‘a participated in the first meeting in November and sought their help in two specific ways. Punikai‘a asked the Council’s aid to get the State to restore the utilities and to fix the leaking roof.

Thanksgiving Celebration

In what would become a yearly tradition, the ‘Ohana celebrated Thanksgiving at Hale Mohalu, and many would also stop at the Thanksgiving festivities at Aiea park hosted by Dr. and Mrs. John Reinecke. The ‘Ohana bond grew stronger as a result of

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698 Draft Phone Tree List October 26, 1978 (David Lassner, personal collection).
702 Dr. and Mrs. John Reinecke were schoolteachers whose Communist Party association cost them their teaching jobs. (“The tall, slim, spectacled scholar and his Hawaiian-born Nisei wife were discharged from the schools in 1948 following a seven-week long hearing by the Board of Education ordered by the outraged [Governor] Stainback,” Lawrence Fuchs, Hawaii Pono (Honolulu, Bess Press, 1961) 311. The Reineckes, a gentle peace-loving, humble couple were harassed and persecuted for years before being cleared of
their social get-togethers, not only at Thanksgiving, but in their regular monthly meetings and Sunday church service and fellowship. Ed Gerlock explained, “We were really ‘Ohana – we all enjoyed each other’s company; there was a kind of bonding thing taking place in addition to Hale Mohalu.” At Year’s End

‘Ohana support was especially needed when it came to their court battles, which could prove to be at times very discouraging. On December 4, 1978 Jack Schweigert, attorney for the patients stood before Judge Harold Y. Shintaku in the First Circuit Court of Hawaii to obtain a “Motion to Quash and for Protective Order” in Civil No. 53577. Judge Shintaku had also been the Presiding Judge on January 20 when Legal Aid attorneys had filed suit on behalf of the patients in their effort to prevent the transfer. In his presentation on December fourth, Schweigert argued that Yuen was the patients’ nemesis and needed “to be deposed’ because “just about every key decision that came about that enabled the state to close Hale Mohalu had George Yuen’s signature. Every decision had to have the okay of George Yuen.” From his view of the case, Judge Shintaku reaffirmed his assertion that “the patients have no standing.”

The Judge agreed to hold another hearing to allow Schweigert to present additional papers before a final resolution of the matter. Schweigert wanted the “state courts to hear the entire Hale Mohalu case, since they have ruled the state has the power to transfer patients; they have not ruled on the land and fraud issues or on the state’s authority to shut down Hale Mohalu despite written pledges to the contrary,” the ‘Ohana newsletter reported. The fight to have their humanity recognized – the point that they were fighting for was so groundbreaking at that time; the State was not ready to relinquish their colonial hold and embrace new thinking. “The issue of patient rights -- human rights – has received shabby treatment so far by the courts. It will take public


pressure to win this point,” reiterated the newsletter.\(^{707}\) To deal with these legal matters and other concerns, the ‘Ohana at their next scheduled meeting, drew up a plan.

The draft plan dated December 14, 1978 stated their objectives and Punikai’a later signed the final copy. There were twelve goals to achieve a new Hale Mohalu on the grounds of the Pearl City facility. The first goal set out the basis for their demands, explaining that the State has been responsible for the care of leprosy patients, and that the patients have suffered from the isolation forced upon them. It also stated, “We have a right to a voice in our futures, on the use of land and buildings which have become our home.”\(^{708}\) The rest of the three-page document laid out what their specifics desires were for the care home. The patients explained that they were willing to talk with the State. “If, however, the State is unwilling to deal with us as human beings, with rights, feelings and intelligence, and remains deaf to our concerns, we will remain at Hale Mohalu and continue to resist their moves against us.” Until the State moved in their bulldozers, the patients did indeed resist. In an understated way, the draft plan affirmed their efforts. “Whatever the outcome, we feel we will not be the losers. We will have done our best – for one another, for the aina, for all the people of Hawaii. We will have set an example of both love and struggle which history and our people will judge.”\(^{709}\)

In the continuation of their legal efforts, the patients took their case to the next judicial level. Bernard Punikai’a filed an appeal in the State Supreme Court on Wednesday December 20, requesting that Health Director Yuen restore electricity, water, food, medical and telephone services at Hale Mohalu and asking for the hearing on Friday December 22. In addition, Punikai’a filed an appeal notice in Circuit Court, “which Friday threw out the action that originated Jan. 20, challenging the health department’s closure of the old leprosy hospital,” the Star-Bulletin reported.\(^{710}\) The appeal motion stated that the Health Department should have obtained the patients’ consent before it required them to transfer to Leahi, that it caused them harm, and violated regulations regarding public health. Reporter Engle sympathetically framed their

story and explained that there would be picketing on Friday December 22 outside Washington Place.\footnote{Murry Engle, “High Court Gets Hale Mohalu Appeal,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Thursday, December 21, 1978, A-17.}

On Friday afternoon near the State Capitol, Santa Claus (aka Gigi Cocquio) stood next to Bernard Punikai’a, Holly Henderson, and several others as they held signs that stated, “Honk for Hale Mohalu,” and waved at drivers as they passed by on Beretania Street. The Saturday \textit{Star-Bulletin} published a photo of those who were on the picket line, the caption under the photo reported that the State Supreme Court had decided not to hear the appeal for restoration of services at Hale Mohalu.\footnote{Ken Sakamoto, Photo “Still Believing,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Saturday December 23, 1978, A-2.} Despite this setback, the ‘Ohana continued their fight. Their December 1978 newsletter noted they had printed a “calendar for 1979 for the low price of $2.00” and that they also had “greeting cards, appropriate for Christmas, New Year’s, or anytime of the year available for $1 for 5 cards and envelopes.”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, December 1978, Vol. I, No. 3.} The newsletter explained that the proceeds benefit the activities of “the Hale Mohalu Ohana in its education work, legal expenses and the cost of gasoline and oil to power the generators now serving Hale Mohalu. So please kokua.”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, December 1978, Vol. I, No. 3.} The newsletter invited the public to come join the protestors every “Friday afternoon from 3:30 to 5:00 PM in front of Washington Place (Beretania and Richard St.) for our “Honk for Hale Mohalu” sign-holding.” The newsletter noted, “It’s an experience you won’t forget, and we want to make sure the Governor won’t forget it either. So come on out!”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, January 1979, Vol. II, No. 1.}

Although the circumstances of daily living were rough to say the least, the celebration of Christmas, their first Christmas in resistance was a joyous affair, filled with laughter and music amid warm fellowship.

Our clergy supporters – Ed, Sandy, Gigi, Earnest, Holly – conducted a very moving Xmas midnite service, and Holly’s and Mary Duarte’s words brought tears to the eyes of many of those on hand. The potluck luncheons on Christmas and New Year’s were well-attended and joyous. We were pleased to have Sanford and Solomon with us from Leahi, and we learned how poor and unsatisfactory the conditions are at Leahi from these two brothers, and how we need to stay in touch with our Leahi sisters and brothers from Kalaupapa. There was much singing, and plenty of ono food – a good beginning for a new year of sharing and struggle.\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, January 1979, Vol. II, No. 1.}
Christmas Day was on Monday and on the following Friday, December 29th, the Hale Mohalu picketers were back at their posts across from the Governor’s mansion with their protest signs. Although the ‘Ohana had lost the latest court case, they were not discouraged. They knew they had to maintain their support base and the Friday picketing and honking of car horns kept the struggle visible in the public’s consciousness. The blasting of car horns meant solidarity between the patients and the community.

In summary, during this first year, the patients had survived a tremendous upheaval to their lives and to their relationships. The ‘Ohana had organized into a resolute band of brothers and sisters who strategically waged their assault, fighting a legal battle in court and holding a luau for over nine-hundred people. The State tried to rout the patients in what could only be described as violent tactic, depriving them of essential services, including food and medicine. The ‘Ohana took their campaign to the streets of Honolulu, picketing every Friday in front of the Governor’s residence. Mayor Fasi, their governmental ally, lost the race for Governor in 1978 leaving the patients without the backing of a chief executive, but Mayor Fasi’s continued help was invaluable. The Hawai‘i Council of Churches committed to resolving the struggle. By the end of the year when they celebrated Christmas, the patients and their supporters were truly ‘Ohana. Although they had none of the usual comforts of a home, the dissident patients had established a strong organizational framework that enabled them to continue the tradition Ko‘olau had steadfastly embraced of resisting governmental injustice.
CHAPTER 7

ANIMOSITY TOWARD YUEN AND ARİYOSHI'S VETO

The protestors were still camped out at Hale Mohalu, one year after they began their resistance. When the struggle started, no one imagined the battle would last this long. The ‘Ohana commemorated the one-year anniversary in January 1979, renewing their efforts again at the Legislature, and enlisting community involvement.

Liturgically Inspired Protest

Many supported Hale Mohalu with honking of horns as their automobiles passed Washington Place, but others were dismayed by the loud noises. Joan Hayes, Chairman of the Board of Citizens Against Noise, found it particularly upsetting. “Noise generates hostility,” she complained to the editor of the Star-Bulletin on January 6, 1979. Hayes argued that car honking did not belong in the Islands. “A medium that can generate hate has no place in the land of aloha.” Nonetheless, many drivers participated in the “Honk for Hale Mohalu” campaign as a sign of solidarity with the patients.

In addition to the blasting of car horns, Hale Mohalu resistance incorporated various methods of protest, such as sign waving, marches, and rallies; these customary means were often executed with a slightly different twist. Noteworthy for their creativity, Hale Mohalu demonstrations integrated music, dance, and theater into their performances, influenced in no small measure by Catholic liturgy, whose presence subtly and overtly inspired ‘Ohana members. As a result, their stylistic expression had a somewhat ritualistic quality. Moreover, the close bond the patients felt with Father Damien, especially Bernard Punikai’a, who called Damien “his north star,” meant that the memory of the revered priest played a pivotal role in the Save Hale Mohalu ethos. In addition to Damien’s influence, inspiration came from the lives of Dorothy Day, a Catholic activist for the poor, and Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk, well known for his writings and his pacifism. Furthermore, the philosophy of Catholic liberation theology, and the resistance of the Berrigan brothers also helped to frame the vision of the

719 Anwei Skinsnes Law and Henry G. Law, Father Damien ... “A Bit of Taro, A Piece of Fish, and A Glass of Water” (Seneca Falls, New York: IDEA Center for the Voices of Humanity, 2009) 110.
720 Daniel and Philip Berrigan, two brothers, who as Roman Catholic priests, became anti-war activists, during the Vietnam War.
‘Ohana. This was particularly true of several key members, two priests and three nuns, who belonged to the Maryknoll religious order. Work with the poor - helping the powerless without a voice - was the special calling of these religious activists for whom the path to spirituality consisted of faith in action. The ‘Ohana membership also included several Protestant ministers, as well as devoted Quakers and Buddhists, aligned in their commitment to social justice.

Adapting familiar Catholic clerical traditions, such as fasting for several days and keeping an all-night vigil (part of the Catholic tradition of prayer and penance) at the State Capitol in Honolulu, and draping a black shroud (as in the Catholic Lenten tradition) over the statue of Damien in Honolulu and Washington, D. C. lent a sacramental tone to their demonstrations. In addition, the celebration of Mass every Sunday at Hale Mohalu was an important part of group solidarity. Even for ‘Ohana members who were not Catholic, this tradition of Sunday Mass served as a symbolic moment of unity - a central point of community focus. Whatever else might take place, Mass was a constant. But it was not necessarily Mass in the strict orthodox sense of Catholic theology; instead the service featured a shared liturgy employing readings from biblical texts or stories told by the patients. Emphasis was on communal worship and the breaking of bread together as ‘Ohana. Rather than an imposed hierarchical worship, this was a spiritual groundswell from ordinary people. Initially, two Catholic priests, Ed Gerlock and Luigi “Gigi” Cocquio led the services; midway through the struggle, they decided to leave the priesthood, but they continued as spiritual pastors to the ‘Ohana.

When they were no longer officially priests, Ed Gerlock and Gigi Cocquio still led the Sunday service.

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721 Maryknoll, headquartered in Ossing, New York operates schools as well as missions. Their charism focuses on working for the poor in third world countries, living in poverty alongside their flock.
722 After Hale Mohalu, one of the priests, Ed Gerlock later went on to work in Venezuela for five years with Catholic priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, noted for his political activism on behalf of the poor. Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Mākaha, O‘ahu, 16 July 2012.
723 Ed Gerlock personal interview, Honolulu, 19 July 2012.
724 Ed Gerlock married Mercedes, known as “Ching” on May 30, 1980 in a ceremony held at Hale Mohalu with Bernard as best man. Ed’s close friend, Gigi Cocquio married Judy and when their son was born, Bernard gave him the Hawaiian name, Pomaika‘i or “Blessed.” Ohana member, Wally Inglis, a former Maryknoll priest married Kay, a former Catholic nun in 1971 on the continent. Wally and Kay’s daughter, Katherine was baptized at Hale Mohalu and Bernard Punikai‘a was her godfather; their sons, Daniel (named for Daniel Berrigan) and Stephen played at Hale Mohalu on Sundays when they were small children. Wally Inglis and Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Honolulu, Tuesday 11 May 2010; Now a musician, Stephen Inglis recently released an album with Dennis Kamakahi that features songs about Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu; on the album’s liner notes, Stephen credits the time he spent at Hale Mohalu as an important part of his upbringing. Waimaka Helelei, Dennis Kamakahi and Stephen Inglis, copyright 2011
Different members of the ‘Ohana gave their own special imprint to the group’s conscience. Hawaiians like ‘Īmaikalani “Snake” Kalāhele and Peter Kealoha who had been on the front lines of numerous evictions brought their aloha and resistance savvy.\(^{725}\) Mary Choy was a Buddhist, and her presence provided a calming effect.\(^ {726}\) The Quakers, including Betty Simmerer and her son Leigh and husband and wife Stewart and Charlotte Meacham brought their personal philosophy of non-violence, which fostered a meditative basis to strategic planning. Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana members were characteristically not only idealistic, but also practical, with a marked spiritual nature, dedicated to a broad spectrum of social justice issues. Many had been involved in the civil rights struggle in America or worked to alleviate conditions for the poor through their ministry overseas in Taiwan and the Philippines.\(^ {727}\) Firmly convinced of the moral righteousness of their cause, they possessed a maturity gained from life experience and a deep commitment to Hawai‘i and the Hawaiian people.

**Save Hale Mohalu Day**

The one-year anniversary of the compulsory transfer to Leahi in January brought a renewed push by the ‘Ohana to enlist widespread public support. The patients met with Mayor Frank Fasi to obtain additional help. An expert in using the media to his advantage Fasi issued a Proclamation declaring that World Leprosy Day would be observed on Sunday January 28, 1979, and it would also be known as “Save Hale Mohalu Day.”\(^ {728}\) The demonstration on Sunday morning began, according to the “Save Hale Mohalu Day” program, with a rally at Aala Park, followed by a march to the State Capitol, where several people spoke.\(^ {729}\) The rally started at 11AM with Pahula Kawaikapuokalani, who was joined by the Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines, members of the Na Kolohe Hawaiian Club, and the Dixieland Jazz Band. At 12:30PM they began the Parade to the State Capitol, where the 1:30PM program included a Pule led by Mary Duarte, and Mayor Fasi’s Proclamation. After the Mayor’s talk, Kumu Hula Darryl Lupenui and his

\(^ {725}\) ‘Īmaikalani Kalāhele, personal interview, Honolulu, 20 June 2013 and Peter Kealoha, personal interview, Honolulu, 29 July 2013.

\(^ {726}\) Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Honolulu, Thursday 19 July 2012.

\(^ {727}\) Wally Inglis served in Taiwan as a Maryknoll Catholic priest while Ed Gerlock and Gigi Cocquio were Catholic priests in the Philippines until President Marcos kicked them out, and John Witeck had marched for civil rights in Selma, Alabama in 1965.

\(^ {728}\) Flyer, announcement, “Save Hale Mohalu Day January 28, 1979.”

\(^ {729}\) Flyer, announcement, “Save Hale Mohalu Day January 28, 1979.”
Halau Waimapuna performed. The program featured Bernard Punikai’a and the introduction of patients from Kalaupapa, Leahi, and Hale Mohalu, including Paul Harada, Elizabeth Yamamoto, John Arruda, and Sanford Smith, as well as John Witeck of the United Public Workers Union, State Senator Neil Abercrombie, and Haunani-Kay Trask of Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana. In addition, Glenn Harada of the Hawai’i Council of Churches, John Lovell of People Against Chinatown Eviction, Dr. Robert Worth, and Dr. Ted Gugelyk of the University of Hawai’i as well as Stewart Meacham of the American Friends Service Committee also participated in the event. The musical group, the Mākaha Sons of Nii’hau helped to bring the festivities to a close. Some of the songs featured included, “We shall Overcome” and “U.S. E. D. Hale Mohalu –style” and “Kalaupapa.”

The rally’s purpose was “to kick off our efforts at this session of the Legislature to win funding for a new facility at the Hale Mohalu site,” the ‘Ohana noted, “and to urge the State administration to recognize the moral and humanitarian dimensions of the issue.” The Honolulu Advertiser carried a photo of the marchers, whose caption stated there had been a parade, two rallies, as well as music performances, and Mayor Fasi had proclaimed “Save Hale Mohalu Day” in conjunction with World Leprosy Day, noting the event “drew about 300 supporters.” While the paper reported the crowd at three hundred, the ‘Ohana newsletter had a different number. “Nearly 500 persons turned out to march in the spirited parade from Aala Park or to attend the 3-hour rally at the State Capitol… even though our event conflicted with the much publicized Carol Kai bed race.” While television news stations covered the event, the two daily newspapers gave it little or no press.

Fire Yuen and ‘Ohana Rebuilding Plans

The level of distrust between the parties intensified the longer the battle continued. Problems with the administrator at Kalaupapa, Charles Busby highlighted difficulties with the overall management of the leprosy program. Frustrated, patients had signed a petition charging that Busby had used his position for personal benefit. In

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response to the petition, Yuen appointed a committee to investigate Busby. As part of his enquiry, Deputy Health Director, Dr. Vern Waite had completed twenty-eight interviews of the fifty patients who had signed the petition. Persistent frustration had historically existed between the patients and the Health Department, due in no small part to the power differential in their relationship, and depending on the circumstances, this irritation frequently flared up into a major conflict. In fact, Representative Patsy Mink cited administrative negligence at Kalaupapa as the reason to have federal oversight by the National Park System. Given the disagreement over Hale Mohalu, a dispute with management at Kalaupapa in January signaled the potential of more problems. Annoyed by the Administrator’s irresponsible behavior, Patients’ Council member, John Arruda complained, “Kalaupapa is deteriorating like Hale Mohalu.” Patient Anita Una also criticized Busby for neglecting the Settlement, while using his position to obtain special privileges for himself and his friends.

At the Kalaupapa gathering on January 15 and 16, the patients openly discussed their grievances against Busby’s administration. The State sent an ad-hoc committee, made up of seven members from various disciplines to hear those complaints. One of the committee members was psychiatrist, Dr. Myron Neil, from the Diamond Head Mental Health Center. The patients freely voiced their feelings at this hearing, but never knew until afterwards that a State psychiatrist had been present. Upset that he had been evaluating them, the patients felt deceived. “We resented the idea that they would bring in a psychiatrist to listen and observe our behavior without our consent or knowledge.” Yuen responded that the State simply wanted to hear the complaints of the patients to avoid any misunderstanding, but no attempt had been made to mentally evaluate them. From the patients’ viewpoint, the State surreptitiously spied on them, and the disagreement only reaffirmed the existing hostility.

The January skirmish over Busby grew into major clash over Yuen in February. On Friday February 9, a group of Kalaupapa patients released to the press a letter they

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736 Patsy T. Mink “Kalaupapa National Park” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Tuesday August 28, 1979, A-19, (“the state’s performance in the area of preservation of Kalaupapa has been so dismal as to require that we seek inclusion in the National Parks system.”)
had sent Governor Ariyoshi requesting Yuen’s dismissal. Throughout the proceedings, newspapers served as the staging area for both parties. Typical of the “cat and mouse game” played between the State and the patients, the newspaper reported - on the same page and date - two conflicting stories regarding the fraught relationship. The Honolulu Advertiser on Saturday, February 10, carried the headline: “Kalaupapa Group Urges Yuen Firing,” while immediately underneath was another story: “Yuen Says Hale Mohalu Solution May Be Near.”

The juxtaposition of the controversial statements captured in print the dichotomy of the Health Director’s colonial relationship with the patients. As DOH head, Yuen held ultimate control over patients’ lives on every level. Although they viewed Yuen with suspicion, the patients had to rely on him, creating an affiliation dynamic that seesawed between anger toward him and pleas for his help. The DOH’s paternalistic aid to the patients was often accompanied by a sharp rebuke. In one newspaper article, entitled “Solution Near,” Yuen’s tentative offer of assistance was augmented by a comment from Dr. Reichert of the Health Department’s leprosy program, about Hawai’i’s “out of control” patients. A positive suggestion contrasted with a reprimand informed the pattern of parental authority. The paper quoted Yuen as saying, “A solution may soon be worked out to the protest of eight patients occupying Hale Mohalu.” Yuen did not provide any specifics, “but told the House Finance Committee during a hearing that his department is working with the attorney general’s office and ‘something will happen pretty soon.’” The news seemed promising, except for Dr. Reichert’s “out of control patients” remark

At the State Legislature, the ‘Ohana sought approval for a care facility on the grounds of Hale Mohalu. Tentative plans called for a twenty-bed facility with care provided by the Franciscan Sisters. Initially, Yuen seemed open to the idea. At least, he gave that impression. Speaking to the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday February 14, Yuen “opened the door a bit on the issue of converting Hale Mohalu,” but he also repeated that the program should be moved. Yuen explained that the

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administration was looking into keeping Hale Mohalu open as residential facility, and he would let the Senate Ways and Means Committee know by next Wednesday February 21, whether his department would negotiate with the patients to build a Pearl City transitional facility. Although Yuen made this pledge, “he had testified at the House Committee hearing that his administration could not support such a project.” The House Committee hearing was earlier in the week. Apparently Yuen had a change of mind, but it turned out that he seemed to be saying one thing to the patients and another to the press. Later on, he would re-affirm his original decision: transfer the patients from Hale Mohalu to Leahi.

On Friday, February 16, the Honolulu Star-Bulletin wrote an editorial urging compromise between the two sides, but describing the resistance struggle by the patients in disparaging terms, calling the latter, nothing more than squatters, refusing better facilities at Leahi. The editors complained about the way Yuen had been treated, saying he was “subjected to unjustified name-calling and vilification by critics of the Leahi move.” Despite this criticism, he “promised the Senate Ways and Means Committee an early decision on whether leprosy patients will be allowed any sort of future living facilities at Hale Mohalu in Pearl City.” The editors extolled Yuen’s willingness to consider this option, glad “some cooler heads - and there are not so many in this controversy – are advocating a ‘compromise,’ that would keep major medical treatment at Leahi but allow Kalaupapa patients a transient residence at Hale Mohalu.” The editorial supported this idea with one caveat – cost, explaining if costs could be worked out, “it might leave everyone fairly happy, and that would be a pleasantly amazing development.” In actuality, when the ‘Ohana provided figures that showed it was cheaper to rebuild at Hale Mohalu, the proposal was dismissed.

Despite the paper’s request for compromise, Yuen’s position was steadfast all along, as revealed in the Department of Health magazine, Hawaii Health Messenger. In the article, “Directions in Public Health, An Interview with George Yuen, Director of Health,” Yuen spoke about the controversial patient transfer. Asked why he felt the move

was necessary, he answered because there was “an average daily census of 17 patients at Hale Mohalu in 1977.” When asked if “Hale Mohalu was a closed issue?” Yuen responded, “It is our intention to have the old Hale Mohalu facility vacated and to demolish it as soon as possible.”

A statement on official government stationery of February 20, 1979 entitled “Department of Health’s Position on the Hale Mohalu Relocation to Leahi Hospital” reaffirmed Yuen’s stance. This document gave the background of the move to Leahi, and laid out various alternative care proposals that had been received, but the State rejected all suggestions. “We maintain our original position that no third facility should be at Pearl City.”

A few days later, the State suggested the patients leave Hale Mohalu and accept a plan for a live-in cottage at Leahi. On behalf of the patients, Bernard Punikaiʻa rejected the Leahi cottage because they wanted a care home at Pearl City. The State’s plan was to demolish the present structures but not rebuild. While the State desired the remaining patients gone, Ariyoshi said that he would not call out the National Guard to remove them. According to the Governor, the State wanted to avoid that kind of confrontation, and he hoped the issue could be resolved in the courts. Senators Ben Cayetano and Neil Abercrombie questioned the handling of money designated specifically for the leprosy program, monies provided by a private fund. “Abercrombie contended that the department ‘hid’ from the Legislature the $300,000 fund, but Yuen said the money was contributed on condition that it be used for research and rehabilitation, not for construction.” Some of the money, $20,000, was used to fund a research project and the remainder would be used to buy wheelchairs and pay for a physical therapist. Both Abercrombie and Cayetano questioned those choices. The State had money from this private fund and the federal government, but chose to withhold it from Hale Mohalu.

The month of March saw the launch of an all-out assault by the ‘Ohana to press their rebuilding case. On March 5, Yuen notified Punikaiʻa that the State’s offer of a Leahi cottage, which the patients rejected, was formally withdrawn. In addition, Yuen

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750 Hawaii Health Messenger, Volume 42, No. 1, Spring 1979, p. 2.
754 The Lani Booth fund is money in the amount of $250,000 given to Hawaiʻi’s leprosy program from the Estate of Lani Booth, who is buried at Kawaihao Church cemetery in Honolulu.
wrote a letter to Sister Maureen Keleher of St. Francis Hospital on March 7, letting her know that the Departmental AD Hoc Committee had finished its review of proposals to relocate the leprosy program and that “it cannot support the construction of a third facility.” Yuen went on to say that the offer of a cottage at Leahi has been rescinded now that Punikai’a, as spokesperson for the patients, rejected the State’s offer.757

University of Hawai‘i Public Health professor, Dr. Robert Worth told legislators on Thursday March 8 that the State could save approximately $300,000 by rebuilding at Hale Mohalu.758 Yuen told the paper that “a similar plan was found to be ‘not realistic’ and the department is proceeding to evict Hale Mohlau patients remaining at the facility.”759 Interestingly, Yuen said that while he did not know exactly when the eviction would take place, the State would not do it while the legislature was in session. The ‘Ohana proposal that Dr. Worth had suggested was for a twenty-bed facility in a family care home that would cost about $320,000. The ‘Ohana had not yet received exact figures from an architectural feasibility study by Pearson & Terry, AIA that it had requested, but when they did, they would submit them to the Senate Health Committee. The ‘Ohana proposal included twenty-four hour nursing care, with nursing provided by an outside source, such as the Sisters of St. Francis, at a cost of approximately $210,000 per year.760 The ‘Ohana contended that it would cost the State much more than that to send Kalaupapa patients to Leahi. “Some of the patients do not require the kind of intermediate nursing care provided at Leahi at a per day, per patient cost of $61, the group indicated.”761 Dr. Worth noted that the figures provided by the ‘Ohana were only estimates, but that they were “in the ballpark.”762 He explained that he had tried to speak with the Governor about the issue, but had not been able to get an appointment. Worth found it strange that other patients have a choice in medical care, but leprosy patients were unnecessarily forced to Leahi as the Health Department “continues to ignore this concept of personal choice and to do so in the name of economy.”763 A former Health Department employee, Worth found it difficult to criticize the Department, but felt he had

to speak out. Worth could not understand why the patients received a memo in 1978
telling them that if they did not go to Leahi, their medical treatment would not be paid for
by the State. Since the patients have no health insurance and little money, the State
“forced the patients to fill the Leahi beds even if they did not need the intermediate level
of care.” 764 The State spent money needlessly because sending the patients to Leahi was a
waste of $300 per day. 765

Ben Cayetano, chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, “said
Worth’s testimony was the first he had heard by a health care expert supporting the
concept of a new facility at Hale Mohalu.” 766 Impressed with Worth’s presentation,
Cayetano promised to get the Governor to see Dr. Worth. In addition, Health Committee
Chair Carpenter had introduced Senate Bill 839 to keep the leprosy program at Hale
Mohalu, and on Saturday March 10, a hearing on the bill was scheduled to take place
before the Senate Ways and Means Committee. 767 In spite of Yuen’s well-known
opposition toward Hale Mohalu, he stated on Friday his “department would review the
proposal in time for tomorrow’s decision-making session.” 768 Once again, Yuen seemed
open to new ideas, giving no hint that his original removal decision still held firm.

When Ariyoshi spoke to reporters earlier on Thursday March 8, the Governor
made clear he saw no merit in the ‘Ohana’s proposal to rebuild, telling the press he was
determined to close Hale Mohalu, that there was nothing new in the plans offered, and
nothing that would cause him to change his mind. He explained that the State was willing
to go to court to evict the Hale Mohalu trespassers, but he was refraining from taking any
action until he met next week with Senator Carpenter. Ariyoshi would not say how much
force he would use to remove the occupants. 769 They appeared open to suggestions, but
Ariyoshi and Yuen had their minds made up, no matter how many appeals were made.

The Senate worked over the weekend and approved a bill that would allow the
patients to remain at Pearl City. The Hale Mohalu issue had been an extremely emotional
one that took a lot of time at the Legislature this session, the press noted. “If this bill
survives the Senate, it’s going to have very rough sailing in the House,” explained

Nonetheless, it was a tremendous victory. It seemed as if the patients would succeed in getting the land. On March 12, the Committee on Ways and Means recommended that S. B. 839 be placed on the calendar for third reading. Among those who signed the recommendation were Chairman Cayetano, Abercrombie, Carpenter and Anson Chong. The influential Citizens Committee, which ten years earlier had helped to change the leprosy laws, had been asked to assist once again. Former chairman Thomas K. Hitch called the committee together to address the proposal advocated by Dr. Worth, who also had served on the previous committee. Of the seventeen original members, ten came to this meeting, including patients, Bernard Punikai‘a and Anita Una. Under discussion was Dr. Worth’s proposal to have Hale Mohalu rebuilt as a minimum care facility, while acute care would be done at Leahi for pre-1969 patients sent to Kalaupapa. Dr. Worth had hoped to get his former committee’s support in recommending his proposal to the Governor and the Legislature. Chairman Hitch declined to support Dr. Worth because he felt the mandate of the committee was no longer clear.

On Tuesday March 13, Punikai‘a, Ed Gerlock, Sister Sandy Galazin, Dr. Worth, and Senate Health Committee Chair Carpenter met with Governor Ariyoshi at his office. The Governor asked several questions about the proposed budget and said he would “consider the Ohana proposal.” All along the Governor had said he was open to hear both sides and money, while important, was not the primary consideration. He reaffirmed that the patients were due special consideration since they had been involuntarily isolated at Kalaupapa. At the meeting, Carpenter presented to Ariyoshi the initial information he had discovered about the failure of State agencies to follow proper procedures in the patient transfer and the Governor wished Carpenter well in his investigation.

State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA)

773 Of the physicians on the committee, Dr. Maurice Brodsky, the former administrator of Leahi preferred that site, but Dr. Toru Nishigaya and Dr. Harry Arnold offered their support for the Pearl City location, Editorial, “Leprosy Care – Past and Future,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Wednesday March 14, 1979, A-12.
A few days later Carpenter went public with his findings. At news conference on Friday, March 16, Carpenter announced that he had documents that dated back to September 1977, which showed that the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) had issued a certificate of need even though certain State specified deadlines required by SHPDA had not been met, nor had the Health Department fulfilled conditions that SHPDA mandated. Carpenter had enlisted the help of Herman S. Doi, the State ombudsman to investigate the matter. According to Carpenter, the head of SHPDA, Jim Swenson had requested that the Health Department investigate the possibility of keeping Hale Mohalu open as the law required. Although this condition had not been met, Swenson had finally granted the necessary certificate. Swenson was away on the mainland and unavailable for comment. However, SHPDA assistant administrator, Patrick Boland acknowledged that the agency had received the information from Senator Carpenter and that they [SHDA] were reviewing it. “Boland said there was “absolutely no conspiracy between the two agencies to circumvent the law.”

SHPDA was extremely influential in the medical community because it held final authority over health planning, including control of where and when medical facilities were built, expanded and equipped. Before a medical institution spent more than $150,000 to alter its facilities, it first had to obtain from SHPDA the required certificate of need. The transfer of the patients from Hale Mohalu to Leahi required the remodeling of Leahi’s Trotter Wing, which was expected to cost around $328,000, necessitating the certificate of need. Carpenter asserted that Yuen had evaded the law in the way he handled the transfers. Yuen responded that he had done nothing wrong. Carpenter maintained Yuen failed to comply with Swenson’s request to study whether the patients could remain at Hale Mohalu.

On March 20, Father Edward M. Gerlock, M. M. wrote a letter for the ‘Ohana to Representative Herb Segawa, Chairman, House Health Committee and to Jack Suwa, Chairman, House Finance Committee offering a proposal that “is substantially the same
as that presented to the Senate Committees on Health and Ways and Means.” The ‘Ohana took the cost estimates for this proposal from that given by the Health Department and from consultation with other professionals who operated skilled nursing and intermediate care facilities. They also used construction costs obtained from Pearson and Terry, AIA. Gerlock explained that the ‘Ohana proposal sought “to combine the moral aspect of the issue with the economic. The sufferers of Hansen’s disease have at least an equal right with the rest of humanity to make decisions affecting their lives.” Gerlock continued, “the setting up of a care home facility at the Pearl City site promises to save the State between $29,900 and $67,860.” As he pointed out, when the patients “receive the appropriate level of care at the appropriate facility,” all parties benefit because it “serves the interests of the patients, the public and the State.” Many people agreed with that idea, including Margaret K. Apo whose letter to the editor questioned the issue of confinement and contagion, arguing that since the patients were no longer contagious, they were free to live wherever they wished. She felt the State should honor the patients’ desire to live at Hale Mohalu because without them, the State would not have gotten the land in the first place.

However, the Attorney General did not share Apo’s view. In one of the most bizarre suggestions, Deputy Attorney General Michael A. Lilly counseled Representative Segawa that S.B. 839, which had passed third reading in the Senate Health Committee, might not be constitutionally sound. Lilly argued that the bill designated a specific use for a specific site. “Lilly said legislative power over lands owned or controlled by the state extends only to issuing general laws.” Lilly went on to say that the proposed bill “is not a general law affecting all state-owned lands, but quite to the contrary, is a state law delineating land use for a particular parcel.” For that reason, Lilly determined the bill could in violation of the State Constitution. Later Senator Abercrombie wrote an op-ed piece [Star-Bulletin April 20, 1979] refuting Lilly’s claim. Abercrombie argued that Lilly’s rationale was totally ridiculous because the State designated certain lands for particular purposes as a natural consequence of its administrative oversight.

On March 24, the House Health Committee, under Segawa’s leadership refused to hold hearings on Senate Bill 839 and effectively killed the bill. Segawa felt the Bill was unnecessary because the process for determining if there is a need for such a facility already existed namely “the state Health Planning Certificate of Need Law.” When the committee voted against holding a hearing, it never informed the public. Segawa felt he did not have to tell anyone that his committee was voting on whether to hold hearings. Although the supporters of the bill were very upset, Segawa believed he did nothing wrong. He also believed the Attorney General’s opinion that “the bill unconstitutionally attempted to set land use through specific legislation.” Even though his actions were detrimental to the bill’s survival this session, Segawa suggested the issue was not dead. Segawa noted, “the Senate this year proposes funding for leprosy treatment in the budget and $200,000 is still alive from last year’s budget for planning, design and construction of leprosy treatment facilities at Hale Mohalu.” It would not be as simple as Segawa suggested. The ‘Ohana felt deceived. Given the fact that they had worked diligently to propose an alternative plan for Hale Mohalu that would save the State money, the ‘Ohana thought it deserved a public hearing. They felt the House acted against the constituents’ interests by its refusal to hear the bill that saved taxpayers’ dollars and gave the patients a voice in their care, thereby fulfilling moral and economic obligations.

An Advertiser editorial also agreed with the plan to keep Hale Mohalu open, citing the latest testimony of health care professionals who supported allowing the patients to live “in familiar, reasonably comfortable and private surroundings.” The editorial noted the difference in the positions of the Senate and the House and stressed the need to work out a solution, calling for “less confrontation and more compromise.” It was not simply a matter of cost, which although important, was not that great and should not be the only determining factor. The editors pointed out that both the medical community favored a leprosy facility at Hale Mohalu and public opinion supported the patients’ wishes. It summed up the issue at the heart of the conflict. “The major question is how the citizens of Hawaii through their state government choose to treat these remaining

patients whose life and medical experience have been so unique.” The State administration seemed to feel yes, these patients have been traumatized in the past, but that’s over now and we are taking care of them – better than they realize. It was as though the Governor and the Health Director played the role of parents whose children did not know what was best. The editors hoped that there could be a face-saving method for those who had taken a hardline in this matter because it was time to follow Father Damien’s leadership. According to the paper, Father Damien’s life should be the inspiration for how to care for today’s leprosy patients.\textsuperscript{793} Often it seemed Damien’s image was cited when a noble unselfish example was needed to bolster one side or the other’s argument for compassion.

Disappointed with the House Health Committee’s negative attitude, Bernard Punikai’a sent a letter on March 26 to Segawa with a copy to Representative Jack Suwa, Chairman of the House Finance Committee, and to Senators Abercrombie, Carpenter, and Cayetano. Punikai’a’s letter enclosed the revised Hale Mohalu proposal “with the 20-bed budget transcribed to the forms which you gave us.”\textsuperscript{794} Punikai’a mentioned basic human issues in the ‘Ohana’s proposal, noting, “We ‘old timers’ have never been declared mentally incompetent, nor are we felons. We therefore believe that we have, as citizens, certain rights and expectations of personal choice.”\textsuperscript{795} He explained their desire to avoid “as long as possible, the entry into institutionally dominated living.”\textsuperscript{796} Clearly dissatisfied, Punikai’a ended his letter, hoping that the decision not to hear S.B 839 despite its overwhelming support “does not mean we are being led down another shibai budget exercise that will result in a pat on the head and no action on our behalf.”\textsuperscript{797} Unwilling to allow the State to push the patients around, Punika’i’a refuted what he saw as empty words.

Frustrated but determined to obtain justice, the patients enlisted the public’s aid. ‘Ohana supporters stood at the State Capitol on Thursday March 29, and gathered over two hundred signatures of passers-by. The next day, they went to the Fort St. Mall where they succeeded in getting almost two hundred more signatures from the noontime crowd.

\textsuperscript{794} Bernard Punikaia, Letter to Representative Segawa, March 26, 1979.
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who stood in line, waiting to sign. If the ‘Ohana did not get House support, they received generous backing from the public.

On Friday March 30, SHPDA’s Chair Jim Swenson sent a Memorandum to members of the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council, a group of respected community members who advised SHPDA. Swenson’s memorandum contained several documents relating to the certificate of need process for Hale Mohalu, some from several years back. The Memorandum noted that the process had been flawed, and the certificate of need should never have been issued. To deal with this matter and to investigate the charges made by the Senate Health Committee of a conspiracy to violate the law, the Coordinating Council set up a task to study the issues. The leader of the task force, formed on March 31, was Sister Maureen Keleher, the head of St. Francis Hospital.

On Thursday April 5, the patients and their supporters attended a meeting of the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council (HSHCC) at which Sister Maureen Keleher, on behalf of the Council, appealed to the Governor to restore electricity and water to the Pearl City facility, while the issue of the certificate of need waited to be resolved. HSHCC members voted overwhelmingly to urge the Governor to take this interim step. On April 9, Senator Carpenter, who sympathized with the patients, offered a Senate Resolution relating to the establishment of a residential care home facility at Hale Mohalu. Part of the basis for the resolution explained that there was a moral component to the issue, noting “whereas it is right and just that we consider not only economic factors, but also the moral and human equation in regard to the needs of these patients, for not to do so would be tragic and unfair.”

Yank Yuen

In the midst of the conflict, Governor Ariyoshi nominated Yuen for another term as State Health Director and confirmation hearings were held on Monday April 9. Hale Mohalu supporters were at the meeting to offer testimony opposing Yuen’s nomination. Patients Paul Harada, Bernice Pupule, and Clarence Nai’a wore hand painted paper
badges with “Yank Yuen” on their chests. However, as both papers reported the next day, there was considerable support for Yuen. The Star-Bulletin in particular gave a positive account. There seemed to be overwhelming backing for Yuen, even from some former Hale Mohalu patients now at Leahi, such as Stephen Dawson and Pedro Rapadas who testified in favor of Yuen. But they were the only two, and Paul Harada explained their position. “Dawson and Rapadas are incapable of leaving their room so [they] should be given a choice of staying at Leahi if they want to.” Adamantly opposed to Yuen’s re-confirmation, Punikai’a stated, “Mr. Yuen has shown gross violation and total disregard for the privacy and the civil rights of the patients.” Punikai’a felt Yuen should be fired because he “perpetrated an abominable act that cannot be condoned.”

A letter from Holly Henderson printed in the Star-Bulletin on April 18 indicated that not everyone at the hearing supported Yuen. Henderson’s letter provided an expanded picture of the confirmation hearings, bringing a more nuanced view than the one reported earlier in the press. Her letter pointed out how the newspapers frequently carried only one side of the story, often reinforcing the primacy of the State’s position. Henderson disputed the report that “only a handful” opposed Yuen, saying there were “actually more than a dozen” present in opposition. Concluding her letter, Henderson made an important point. “As Sister Sandy Galazin remarked at the end of her testimony, “It is not up to me to challenge (Yuen’s) honesty, integrity, intelligence, or any of the traits attributed to him today. I can only say that I too am honest, capable, and have integrity – none of which qualifies me for the job of director of health.”

On April 10, the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council (HSHCC) asked the State Health Planning and Development Agency (SHPDA) to rescind the certificate of need because the legal requirements (of investigating possible rebuilding as well as considering the integration of leprosy programs in future use of the site) had not been met. The Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council (HSHCC) requested SHPDA to rescind the certificate after it had received its task force report. The task force had rejected as inadequate a study done by Gerald Lum Associates that Yuen had earlier

submitted to SHPDA as fulfillment of the investigative requirements for rebuilding at Hale Mohalu. The Lum study took into account the spatial needs but not the patients’ psychological or social needs. “It considered only the capital construction cost of the various alternatives for Hale Mohalu and not the annual operating costs.”809 The task force recommended an outside consultant be hired to do a new study with oversight from a committee made up of several health organizations as well as the ‘Ohana.810

On Tuesday April 11, several legislators, from the House Finance Committee visited Hale Mohalu – just two days after the Yuen hearings and one day after the announcement to rescind the certificate of need. Health Committee Chair, Segawa was not present, but many others were, including House Finance Chairman, Jack Suwa, Representatives Fukunaga, Hashimoto, Ige, Kobayashi, Kunimura, Lacy, and Sutton as well as Malcolm Tomooka and Bob Ueoka from the Health Department. The meeting at Hale Mohalu proved fruitful. The House Finance Committee agreed with the Senate Ways and Means Committee to “include $350,000 for the new Hale Mohalu facility in Pearl City and another $200,000 for operating expenses. The proposed item went into the A section of the Budget (essentials) and was passed on the floor during the last days of the Legislature.”811 As the ‘Ohana reported in their newsletter, this meant that $550,000 had been placed in the budget, but was not a done deal. “The issue is far from over. Now is the time to organize around the patients and insist that funds be kept in the budget and released by the Governor so that the patients can live in a home like everyone else.”812

On April 12, in an op-ed piece in the paper, Segawa gave the appearance of truly wanting the best for the patients, but in reality he only voiced the Governor’s position.813 Because Segawa had felt there was confusion about the ‘Ohana’s proposal and their testimony in the Senate on S. B 839, Segawa had called a meeting with the ‘Ohana and the Health Department and asked them to provide information figures based on certain patient count and levels of care required and the costs involved. Quoting the different figures for each side, Segawa explained why he felt the move to Leahi was the best choice. His op-ed piece gave the appearance that he had deep regard for the patients and

811 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979 Vol. II, No. 5.
812 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979 Vol. II, No. 5.
that he relied on rationality not emotion for the choice of Leahi. Later, his figures would be disputed, but his seemingly sympathetic argument had gained publicity.

Angered at Segawa for not holding a hearing, the ‘Ohana kicked into gear; they used their phone tree and the aid of radio D.J. Tom Dancer to have people call Segawa’s office. The ‘Ohana also held a press conference outside Segawa’s office. Although the ‘Ohana had worked hard to apply pressure via phone and in person, the time for bills to be approved by committee expired. But it turned out that even though Segawa had refused to hold the hearings, the bill was still alive in the “Senate draft of the Health Dept. budget on the leprosy program, (HTH 111).”

If Segawa had firm ideas on the topic, James Swenson, administrator for SHPDA, began to have second thoughts. On April 13, Swenson asked the Attorney General’s office for a ruling that would allow his agency to rescind the certificate of need. “James Swenson, health planning administrator, said that if he and his staff ‘knew what we know now’ he might not have issued a certificate of need for the transfer without better clarification of the law.” It would appear that the patients would be vindicated, but in dealing with the State, the issue was complex. On Friday April 13, the Advertiser in a short article, entitled “Key Panel Head Favors Leahi” indicated the reasons Segawa wanted the patients to go to Leahi. “Segawa said cost, ‘while not the critical factor,’ is one reason for favoring Leahi.” The way the newspaper framed the story – including the headline – gave prominence to the State’s position. The ‘Ohana disagreed, claiming that the figures Segawa relied on were incorrect because the “Health Department’s operational costs did not include $56, 000 in fringe benefits for health workers.” By following their proposal, the ‘Ohana argued the State saved money, freeing up expensive beds at Leahi for other patients. The article presented what the ‘Ohana thought, but it downplayed their ideas and gave the reader a sense Segawa’s proposal was superior.

Easter Publicity Campaign

To enlist community support, the ‘Ohana looked to the important religious Easter weekend to demonstrate in a dramatic way. The protestors held a special rally on Good Friday, April 13, and invited the public to join them at noon in front of the State Capitol.
by Damien’s statue. The program entitled “Damien’s Day 1979” described the occasion as a Bible Vigil and featured songs and prayers. Members of various church groups were part of the demonstration as were the Aikiko Dancers, a modern dance group. Dressed in black tops and black pants and wearing masks to represent the scars of leprosy, the Dancers’ effectively portrayed the heartbreaking separation of families caused by the disease. “The Akiko Dancers performed a deeply religious dance about people, leprosy, and hope. We sang and prayed, and renewed our spirit.”

Reflecting on the relationship of art to the movement, Ed Gerlock explained the ‘Ohana felt art was a way to express the truth in a way that science could not. “I think a large part of the campaign for Hale was ‘artistic’ – Akiko, … the honking on Friday afternoons, the weather balloon released in front of the capitol, the scroll with thousands of signatures rolled down from the top floor of the legislature.” Another aspect was the “Hale Mohalu Band and Bernard’s original compositions, ‘Hale Mohalu’ and ‘Kalaupapa’ sleeping and fasting overnight in front of the capitol.” He noted that Gigi Cocquio was “the primary architect of many of these actions.” Gerlock reflected on their reasoning. “What was the purpose of all this? As in all good art, to dip into the collective consciousness of the people of Hawaii … regarding the whole experience of leprosy in the islands.” Noting the importance of leprosy in Hawai‘i’s history, Ed Gerlock elaborated. “The issue was never over and lay in the back of people's consciousness (I can remember truck drivers honking a blast with their air horns in front of Ariyoshi's house along with a "shakah"--kind of a total endorsement.” Gerlock expressed the feelings of many in the community. “The issue at bottom (it seems to me) was, ‘after all these people have been through--do we now have to institutionalize them--against their will?’ Supplementary to all this was the patients themselves.” Gerlock noted this was true “particularly [of] Bernard who was articulate and whose life reflected the message as much as his words.”

The daily newspapers failed to cover the Damien Day demonstration, but the following day the Star-Bulletin reported on the State’s fiscal miscalculations regarding

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820 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979 Vol. II, No. 5.
821 Ed Gerlock, personal email, 23 April 2011.
the leprosy facilities. “The Hale Mohalu Ohana had accused the state Health Department of providing ‘misleading and deceptive’ cost figures to legislators to sway them against a proposed boarding-care facility for leprosy patients in Pearl City.” Segawa downplayed the error, admitting, “the Health Department had ‘made a mistake’ in presenting its figures on costs of caring for the leprosy patients at Leahi Hospital” because the state had neglected to include fringe benefit costs for workers at Leahi. However, Segawa said the ‘Ohana in its plan had failed to include some “patient allowances and certain other expenses.” Nonetheless, he agreed the ‘Ohana proposal saved money. “Adjusting all the figures,” he said, “the Ohana plan would cost $29,000 less than the DOH’s plan to care for leprosy patients at Leahi Hospital.” Despite this acknowledgement, Segawa remarked that costs were not the only consideration, but rather “concern for the patient,” stressing the primacy of the Health Department as his reason not to rebuild. He also said patients at Leahi had called him to say they did not want to return to Hale Mohalu. Unfortunately, the State’s inadequate calculations, plus the Health Department’s colonial hold on the leprosy program, trumped a willingness to examine the issue with a fresh perspective. Dr. Worth countered Segawa in an op-Ed piece entitled “A Particular Point of View,” arguing that the estimates put forward were excessive and wasteful.

Easter Sunday was a significant and memorable occasion for the patients. At the Punchbowl Sunrise Service, Mary Duarte spoke to the assembled crowd of about six thousand. In a message all about love, Duarte, frail and thin as she was, enthralled the audience. “We as patients at Hale Mohalu want you to know that, to this day, our ALOHA goes out to all who oppose our desire to live once again as normal human beings. We are the same who Christ used as examples of such great love when Jesus cleansed the lepers and showed such great love to them.” The audience enthusiastically applauded her words, including Governor and Mrs. Ariyoshi. Later, the ‘Ohana led by Father Gerlock held a religious service followed by a potluck luncheon at Hale Mohalu.

826 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979, Vol. II, No. 5.
The following day at the Legislature, ‘Ohana member Jim Albertini provided written testimony in support of S. R. No. 407 relating to Hale Mohalu. “catholicAction of Hawaii has been on record since the beginning of the Hale Mohalu controversy with a firm statement of support to respect and meet the needs of the Hale Mohalu patients, as expressed by the patients themselves, not the state Department of Health.” On the same date, Sister Maureen Keleher of the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council wrote a letter to George Ariyoshi in which she explained that the Council at its April 5th meeting had voted nineteen to zero, “to recommend to you that the electric and water services be restored to Hale Mohalu, Pearl City.” Sister Keleher expressed the Council’s concern for the patients at Hale Mohalu, reiterating that the utilities should be turned on for their safety. During the marathon session of the Legislature on April 19, the Senate passed a resolution, “stating the Senate’s resolve that a care home be constructed and maintained at the Pearl City site and that, in the meantime, utilities be restored to the patients staying at Hale Mohalu.” This was in addition to SB 839, in which the Senate had approved the present site at Hale Mohalu for their use.

Also on Thursday April 19, the ‘Ohana arranged a spectacular demonstration of the strength of their petition drive. From the rafters of the State Capitol, they unfurled a petition with 5,000 names. The sheets of paper hung down in one continuous roll - a vertical banner of support five stories high. The ‘Ohana invited legislators, such as Senators Chong, Campbell, and Carpenter, who had been supportive of their cause to join them on the 5th floor for the theatrical event. On Friday the Damien Day Celebration at the State Capitol took place with Governor Ariyoshi and Father Albert, provincial of the Sacred Hearts Fathers of Damien High School. It was a festive occasion with high school bands and drum majorettes and the statue of Damien decorated with flowers. Once again, the patients were not invited to participate. While prayers were offered for the canonization of Father Damien, those who were the living legacy of Damien’s ministry, patients David Brede, Punikai’a, Nai’a, and Pupule, watched from the sidelines.

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829 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979 Vol. II, No. 5.
On Friday April 20, Abercrombie argued against Segawa in an article, entitled “An Appeal for Hale Mohalu,” in the Star-Bulletin.\(^{832}\) “It is unfortunate that Rep. Herbert Segawa has chosen to decide for the leprosy patients what is best for them,” he said. “This is especially so when the maze of numbers utilized are really nothing but a rather flimsy façade for wasting the taxpayers’ money.” Abercrombie laid out the Attorney General’s judgment as clearly ridiculous. “The attorney general’s ‘opinion’ that designating the land for leprosy at Hale Mohalu is unconstitutional is transparently fraudulent. The land at Hale Mohalu was originally set aside for health purposes – a specific use for a particular parcel.” Abercrombie pointed out that it could not be any other way. “When a decision is finally made on what to have there, the uses will be specific and particular as to location.”\(^{833}\) Abercrombie’s assessment was on target, but the newspapers downplayed his outlook in favor of the administration, and theirs was the strongest voice heard.

On May 2, Emmett Cahill, Chairman, and Stanley E. Kain, Executive Director, Hawai‘i Council of Churches wrote a letter to the editor in support of Senate Bill 839. They also pointed out the bill passed the Senate by an overwhelming 23 to 1.\(^{834}\)

Fire at Leahi

The State had maintained that Hale Mohalu was nothing more than a firetrap. When a fire broke out close to Leahi Hospital grounds, the notion that Leahi was a safer option than Hale Mohalu became questionable. On May 5, according to newspaper reports, “Fire gutted a 40 year-old Kaimuki house yesterday afternoon and the flaming embers, fanned by stiff trade winds, caused other blazes which destroyed the Leahi Hospital thrift shop a quarter-mile away and damaged roofs of six other house in the neighborhood.”\(^{835}\) Newspaper pictures of the patients in their wheelchairs sitting outside on the hospital grounds illustrated their vulnerability and helplessness in such a situation and raised questions about the safety of Leahi, which the State had touted as being so much more secure than Hale Mohalu.\(^{836}\)


George Liwai

The move to Leahi took its toll on the patients including one of the strongest fighters for Hale Mohalu, George Liwai, who passed away on Saturday May 5, 1979 at Leahi Hospital.\(^{837}\) Liwai had been a long-time resident of Hale Mohalu. “He entered Hale Mohalu in 1960,” and it had been his home ever since, the ‘Ohana newsletter reported. \(^{838}\) Heart-broken to leave his Pearl City home, Liwai always hoped that one day, he would be able to come back. Liwai supported his fellow patients in their resistance; whenever he saw them, “he would cry and say, ‘Don’t give up!’” George Liwai’s encouragement was a source of inspiration for the ‘Ohana. Fellow patient, Bernice Pupule recalled, “He was always with us and thinking of us. ‘Save Hale Mohalu, our home, our aina,’ he would say.”\(^{839}\) He never got the chance to return to Hale Mohalu. Instead of burying him at Kalaupapa, his family decided he would be buried close to his Hale Mohalu home about twenty feet away in the nearby cemetery. George Liwai’s death was ever present in the minds of the ‘Ohana, making them determined to not let his death be in vain.

Joining With Others

One way the ‘Ohana gathered strength was their participation with others who fought for justice. On Saturday April 14, over three hundred people marched in an “Anti-Nuclear Walk” through Waikiki, including ‘Ohana members, Jim Albertini and Gigi Cocquio, and patients Bernard Punikai‘a, Bernice Pupule, and Clarence Nai‘a.\(^{840}\) On Sunday May 6, ‘Ohana members attended the International Workers’ Day rally at Aala Park. Bernice Pupule and Clarence Nai‘a addressed the crowd of approximately one hundred individuals.\(^{841}\) The ‘Ohana had received support from several unions, including the United Public Workers and the Teachers’ Union and wanted to join with others who, like them, fought for their rights. It was true of the battle ongoing in Chinatown. At a hearing regarding the demolition of twenty-four Chinatown structures to make way for urban renewal, many who testified felt the city had already decided the outcome. “Most of those in attendance were supporters of PACE – People Against Chinatown Evictions,”

\(^{837}\) Obituaries, George Liwai, (date of death May 5, 1979), Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Tuesday May 8, 1979, C-7.
\(^{840}\) SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1979, Vol. II, No. 5.
the *Advertiser* reported.\(^{842}\) Even though they felt the decision had already been made, they wanted to go on record with PACE’s opposition by their physical presence. “At the outset of the hearing earlier in the evening,” reporter Tanonaka noted, “a city official explained that the buildings must be removed to put up multi-family rental units and a parking structure and to increase commercial development in the area.”\(^{843}\)

The United Public Workers supported PACE and felt that the city should negotiate with the residents. “The People Against Chinatown Evictions (PACE) brought out over 70 supporters and residents to oppose the permits,” the paper reported, “but led a walkout from the hearing, protesting the City’s certain approval of the permits.”\(^{844}\) Many of those who oppose the city’s plans believed that the character and charm of the area, the culture of Chinatown, would be lost.\(^{845}\)

**National and International Appeal**

On May 16, in his continuing effort to reach out for national assistance, Senator Abercrombie wrote to Joseph Califano, the Secretary of Housing, Education and Welfare, to ask for his help with the Hale Mohalu issue and the waste of money that the State has incurred by overspending for the leprosy program at Leahi. Abercrombie explained, “Enclosed is a copy of a proposal to which leprosy patients throughout the state of Hawaii have agreed. It is unfortunate that repeated attempts to have HEW respond on this issue have failed.”\(^{846}\) Senator Abercrombie raised an important question. “How can HEW justify paying for a level of care higher than that which is needed by the patients?”

Abercrombie ended his letter with a plea on behalf of the patients. “The weakest of the weak call out to you with all the strength of their love and faith.”\(^{847}\) This appeal to HEW was part of the patients’ campaign for federal intervention and possible resolution.

The patients also received a tremendous psychological boost when Carville Hospital’s well-known publication, *The Star* wrote about the Hale Mohalu controversy, as its cover story in the May-June issue.\(^{848}\) The author of the article had toured the Kalaupapa Settlement with Paul Harada and Frank Duarte and learned first-hand about


the resistance at Hale Mohalu. Harada explained, “Most of us are ambulatory. We don’t need long-term hospitalization.” When the State announced the relocation of the leprosy program to Leahi, the Governor stated, “it was in the best interests of everyone involved,” but as Harada commented, “he hadn’t consulted us.” Harada further elaborated, “We have and always will be grateful for what the government has done for us, but we’re tired of being pushed around.” After the Kalaupapa trip, the author visited Punikai‘a and the other patients at Pearl City, noting, “Like Paul and Frank, Bernard was an articulate man with no trace of anger or self-pity in his voice.” The Star cover story on Hale Mohalu laid out the State’s history of neglect and the patients’ request for their civil rights, explaining, “They, the patients, wanted a part in decision-making. It was their human right.” The Star’s coverage helped to bring the Hale Mohalu story to a national audience.849

**Governor Ariyoshi’s Veto**

As part of its last minute session, the Legislature appropriated funds in the budget for the re-building at Hale Mohalu, but Governor Ariyoshi flatly rejected their efforts. Describing it as “an inappropriate use of public monies,” Ariyoshi “vetoed a $605,800 appropriation the Legislature had earmarked for construction and operation of a new leprosy treatment facility at Hale Mohalu.”850 The Star-Bulletin reported the story on Monday June 11, Kamehameha Day, explaining it was one of a several vetoes the Governor made just before he left on a trip to a conference of Western Governors in Idaho. The Governor felt the facilities available to the patients at Leahi were more than sufficient for their needs and the small number of patients did not justify building a new facility. Thus, Ariyoshi used the patients’ census to suit his purpose, on one hand, arguing that the aging population of Kalaupapa required a more complex level of care, since those numbers would be growing, and on the other hand, saying the numbers were too small to justify the expense of rebuilding.

To protest the veto, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana marched as usual in front of the Governor’s Residence and the State Capitol with signs expressing their feelings. Some of the signs stated: “New Hale Mohalu Saves $500,000 to Taxpayers” and “We Protest the Veto,” while others asked, “Hale Mohalu Ariyoshi’s Watergate?” In their newsletter

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article about the Governor’s veto, the ‘Ohana explained how little the State had done to resolve the difficult situation, saying the Statewide Health Citizens’ Council (SHCC) was supposed to do a study but it had not yet begun. The Council had requested the restoration of utilities and that the certificate of need be rescinded, but the Governor and the Attorney General ignored those requests.851 Despite support from the community, with over 5,000 petition signatures, the State administration decided to maintain its original plans and to reject any other suggestion. As the ‘Ohana newsletter stated, “The Governor has chosen to ignore the Legislature, his own appointed SHCC, the newspapers, the Federal Government, and the overwhelming sentiment of the majority of the population,” to press for institutionalization and patient removal. But the ‘Ohana’s response was short and to the point. “We will stay! We will not be moved. The taxpayers deserve more. Most of all, the blood of the patients and their sufferings purchased the Aina.”852 In addition, Senator Abercrombie tried to get the Governor to rescind his vote and to wait for the State Health Coordinating Council’s evaluation of the proposal to keep Hale Mohalu open before taking any action.853

Regarding Governor Ariyoshi’s veto of the Ohana’s proposal, Bernard Punikai’a in a hand written note to Randy Obata at KHUH talked about the ‘Ohana plan, explaining, “fiscally, it is a very sound plan” because “the state could accrue the savings of several hundred thousands of dollars,” and “secondly, it would not compel a patient to be in a hospital bed unnecessarily.” And lastly, the most important of all was why the patients had resisted in the first place. Punikai’a stated, “Third, it recognizes that we as patients have rights and those rights are not negated by our having leprosy.”854 Punikai’a also discussed his disappointment in the Governor’s actions. “By his veto, he has ignored the moral considerations, in regard to a group of people, whom society has historically deemed to be of little value.” Punikai’a continued, “The opportunity presented itself for the Governor to recognize the humanity of the victims of leprosy and to reaffirm the humanitarianism of the Hawaii, the Aloha State. He has chosen to do neither.”855 The ‘Ohana plan had been thoroughly discussed at the recently completed Legislative session,

where, as Punikai‘a stated to Obata, “the merits or our proposal were more than adequately proven.” Yet the Governor chose instead to listen to figures from the Department of Health, figures, already established as inaccurate. Colonial power operated to quell any viewpoint other than its own dominant voice.

After the Governor’s veto, the Advertiser editors urged compromise. “So what is still needed, we believe, is some sort of compromise that will meet the criteria of cost, patient well-being and human emotions, not necessarily in that order.”856 The editors noted that similar issues (deteriorating buildings and aging patients) existed at Kalaupapa and that the settlement’s future was “now under deliberation by a citizens committee.” Since these Kalaupapa patients use Hale Mohalu when they come to Honolulu for medical reasons, given the fact that they are an aging population, it was imperative that a solution for Hale Mohalu be found soon, the editors argued. “Most of the people who have used Hale Mohalu in the past have been ‘full-time’ Kalaupapa residents” the editorial stated, “and the number needing attention on Oahu may soon increase.”857

Perhaps the State’s thinking was similar to that of the Park Service. Bryan Harry, former chief of the National Park’s Pacific West Region and his close associate Gary Barbano, Park Planner for the Pacific West Region, had been deeply involved in helping to create Kalaupapa as well as Kaloko-Honokahau as National Parks. When Kalaupapa was established in 1980, Harry and Barbano estimated the majority of the patients, given their health problems, most likely would not be alive in twenty-five years; they took that factor into account into their park planning projections.858 When the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations took place at Kalaupapa in 2005, Harry and Barbano, expressed surprise at the number of patients still alive and at how healthy they were.859 Perhaps, like the Park Service, the State thought the patients would get sick and quickly pass away. Maybe the State thought the Health Department would suddenly get inundated with overwhelming numbers of elderly leprosy patients who would need hospital care and thus, Leahi was best suited to serve them. Perhaps, too, the thought of over eleven acres of land in a rapidly developing area – the potential of that property – the money to be made, was too tempting to leave to patients who were wards of the State.

Unfortunately, the federal government at this time proved to be as recalcitrant as the State. Leonard Bachman, the Medical Director of the Division of Hospitals and Clinics, from HEW, responded to Senator Abercrombie’s request to have that department investigate the waste of money spent by the State in regard to the use of leprosy funds by saying that there was no procedure that would allow his office to do so.  

**Maintaining the Struggle**

One of the staunchest allies for the patients was the United Church of Christ. On June 16, 1979 at the Aha Paeaina [Hawaiian Archipelago Meeting] of the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ, Bernard Punikai‘a addressed the gathering. The conference passed a resolution in support of Hale Mohalu, and the Kalaupapa Patients Council and the ‘Ohana endorsed it. A photo of Punikai‘a, published in the ‘Ohana newsletter, showed him standing in front of the pulpit, addressing the conference, with the caption, “Bernard spoke before a group of ministers about Hale Mohalu and a gospel that promised more hope, more dignity and more freedom. No one can doubt the genuineness of one who spoke from the bible of his life.”

At their General Synod in late June in Indianapolis, Indiana there the “delegates had before them the resolution on Hale Mohalu passed by UCC’s Hawai‘i Conference only a few days before the national meeting.” Bernard Puikai‘a spoke about Hale Mohalu to the assembly, which helped bring the Pearl City story to a bigger audience. The Synod voted “in support of the Hawai‘i Conference Concern for Hansen’s Disease (Leprosy) Patients’ Right of Choice,” stating that they were following the work of Christ in speaking out against injustice, adding, “our Congregational forebears in 1866 founded Siloama, ‘the church of the healing spring,’ the first church in Hawai‘i’s colony of leprosy patients,” and noting that “the patients in asserting their right to live fully as free people, have been denied food, water, electricity, and medical services at their chosen home – Hale Mohalu.” The resolution went on to explain that the Hawaii State Legislature had passed legislation, which provided for the construction and operation of a new Hale Mohalu, but Governor George Ariyoshi had vetoed it. To rectify this injustice,

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863 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, July 1979, Volume 11, No. 7, p. 3.
the Synod requested the President of the United Church of Christ to contact the Governor, the leaders of Hawaii’s state Legislature as well as its congressional delegation and the President of the United States to inform them of the Synod’s resolution.864

Not long after the Governor’s veto, in anticipation of the State’s attempt to forcibly remove the patients and their supporters, the ‘Ohana began training in non-violence. The ‘Ohana newsletter offered the following succinct expression of the principles involved. “Non-violent resistance seeks to realize the truth. It is an outward expression of an inward searching of the heart. Love is its root. It seeks to free both the oppressor and the oppressed.” 865 The principles were part of the struggles for a nuclear-free Hawai‘i and the motivating principles of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana.

Although they sat in the darkness, newspaper reporter Diane Yukihiro noted the Hale Mohalu patients were still enthusiastic. They continued to enjoy life as they always had - playing cards, listening to music, and talking story. Punikai’a explained, “mostly they talk story” because as he elaborated, “we’re Hawaiian, you know.”866 The patients had enjoyed a wonderful Mother’s Day celebration the previous month, but they missed their friend, patient George Liwai, Punikai’a believed that the forced transfer led to Liwai’s death, that it “contributed to his debilitated condition, his not being able to recover.”867 Bernard Punikai’a spoke to the paper about the State’s role in the trauma the patients experienced, saying the State officials “did not take into consideration the psychological or emotional concern of the patients. They were more concerned about the transferring of furniture than the patients themselves. Somebody didn’t look at us as people. We were objects, part of the inventory.”868

The patients at Pearl City remained optimistic and claimed widespread public support.869 However, there seemed to be a shift in the attitude of the ‘Ohana about the struggle, a sense that this was going to be a really tough fight, far harder than they

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thought. After Ariyoshi’s veto of the allocated funds and the work of the ‘Ohana to come up with their alternative plan, what effect did the veto have? With memory thirty years after the event, Wally Inglis said the people were prepared for the Governor’s refusal, so that while it was a disappointment, it was not a great surprise, given the fact that there had been so many roadblocks, and this was seen as one more.  

Senator Abercrombie sent telegrams to HEW Secretary, Joseph Califano and to President Carter, inviting them to meet with the patients at their Pearl City home. To advance his case, Abercrombie incorporated into his invitation a theme popular in the press at the time, namely wasteful government. He cited the government’s waste of funds in Hawai‘i’s plan, adding, “A mere glance at the ‘dump’ which HEW Funds have sustained for the past 20 years will fill you with shame and anger.” Abercrombie ended his telegram by appealing to Califano’s well-known characteristic for being blunt and direct, explaining it was the type of leadership that the patients required at this time. 

In summary, despite the fact that the patients continued to gain support from the public, from the newspapers, and from the Legislature, Governor Ariyoshi stayed his negative course and ignored everyone’s voice but Yuen’s and his own. The ‘Ohana had provided a plan that would save the State money, a consideration Ariyoshi stated was not important, except when he said it was. Ariyoshi vetoed the money the Legislature had specified for the rebuilding. The ‘Ohana had to wage an aggressive public relations campaign to counter the hegemonic role of the State. Many organizations and prominent members of the community urged the Governor to restore services until a solution could be found. Instead of easily resolving the conflict with the appropriated money, Ariyoshi exacerbated the situation, creating more disharmony and bad publicity for his administration. While the patients survived without utilities, the resistance pattern, already a year old continued, as the State ignored the inhumane treatment it inflicted.

870 Wally Inglis, personal interview, Honolulu, 27 September 2012.
CHAPTER 8
SCROOGE

The second half of the second year of protest began and ended with a celebration, starting with a parade on the fourth of July and concluding with Christmas fellowship, despite the fact the patients were still camping out under a leaky roof in Pearl City. Some of the ‘Ohana traveled to Washington D.C. to press for an investigation of federal money in Hawai‘i’s leprosy program, which received another million thanks to Senator Inouye. Meanwhile, efforts to make Kalaupapa a National Park grew in popularity and funding. The Health, Education, and Welfare agency (HEW) finally promised to audit the leprosy program. To express their feelings for the State’s chief executive, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana gave Governor Ariyoshi the “Scrooge Award” of the year.

Kailua Fourth of July Parade

In a continuation of their artistic sense of protest, the ‘Ohana decorated a float with flowers and ti leaves as their entry in the Kailua Fourth of July parade. Their communal effort both in the decoration and actual parade indicated the humor and unity of the ‘Ohana, part of their effort to celebrate the patients. ‘Ohana member, Kathryn Braun wrote about the float for an article in Impulse magazine, the East-West Center publication. “There were, of course, the usual horses, military bands, and beauty queens,” Braun explained, but “there was an entry that was uniquely Hawaiian. That entry was by the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana, representing Hawaii’s leprosy patients and their supporters.” Braun decorated the float with other ‘Ohana members who took part by riding on the float or walking alongside it, while two patients Richard Pupule and Ned Nekoa rode horses. The fellowship they exhibited in putting this project together denoted their resilience and creativity. Braun’s article recounted the patients’ battle, their tremendous community support, as well as the recent veto of the Governor. Despite this setback, the patients had not given up. It was a very positive article, well written, and since it was published in an academic journal with a focus on Asia and the Pacific, it

873 Kailua, a beachside community on the windward side of O‘ahu, holds a traditional neighborhood parade every Fourth of July.
874 Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, entry for July 4.
875 Kathryn Braun, “The Road to Hale Mohalu” Impulse Magazine, Fall 1979, Volume 6, Number 2, p. 50-52.
876 SAVE HALEMOHALU NEWS, July 1979, Volume 11, No. 7, p. 5.
brought the patients’ story to the awareness of the international community at the University, particularly to members of the Pacific region, where leprosy remains an issue.

**Federal Aid**

Joseph Califano, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) was in Honolulu at this time. Califano had earlier received Abercrombie’s letter on the problem, and Califano promised when he got back to Washington, he would have his staff investigate to see if a special audit of Hawai‘i’s leprosy program was warranted.877 Without this specific request, audits were only done routinely, and that could be years away. In contact with the San Francisco HEW office, Abercrombie learned of an apparent discrepancy, namely that HEW had received reports for the past twenty years, which indicated that Hale Mohalu had been maintained. The San Francisco HEW staff had no knowledge of the Pearl City facility’s deterioration. Abercrombie’s letter to HEW described the program’s wasteful spending, charging that the State moved the patients to Leahi in order to use HEW funds to “offset the hospital’s $3 million annual deficit.” He felt the situation should be investigated.878 Yuen denied Abercrombie’s charges, noting that the leprosy program and Leahi Hospital were separate budgets,879 but Califano promised to have his department check into an “audit of Hawaii’s entire leprosy program in light of the State’s neglect of Hale Mohalu between 1956 and 1976.”880

In a letter to the editor of the Honolulu Advertiser written on June 28 by the Hawai‘i Council of Churches but published on July 7 Glenn Harada, Chairman of the Committee on Hale Mohalu, agreed that Leahi was the proper choice for those who required special care, but affirmed the Council’s support for those who did not need that kind of assistance but preferred instead a residential rather than an institutional setting.881 With the promise of a possible audit and the backing of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, the patients were elated by what seemed slow but steady progress.

When U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye on July 13, announced that the Senate Appropriation Committee had approved a federal subsidy of $2 million dollars to be used for Hawai‘i’s leprosy program, “an increase of over $400,000 over the current budget,” it

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was more good news. Although the appropriation was for the 1980 fiscal year and still had to come to the Senate floor, Senator Inouye had once again used his powerful position in the Senate to secure funding for Hawai‘i, and the leprosy patients. An astute politician, Inouye did not jeopardize his political position. As a leader in the Democratic Party, he could have pressured Ariyoshi and Yuen to support the patients, but he did not.

National Park at Kalaupapa

Representative Patsy Mink had been instrumental in obtaining a major legislative initiative for the patients. While the Hale Mohalu struggle was taking place, hearings were held in Honolulu as part of the preparations to make Kalaupapa a National Park. Mink had introduced legislation in December 1975 “calling for an immediate study by the Secretary of the Interior for a new national historic park at Kalaupapa on the island of Molokai.” Committees were formed and studies were undertaken to make the Park a reality. Mink noted the importance of this project in her introduction of the bill. “Within 50 years there will be no more patients at Kalaupapa. It is therefore imperative that this study be authorized now. Time is of the essence.”

Ironically, the conflict over Hale Mohalu served to bring to public awareness the fragility of Hawai‘i’s Hansen Disease community and the importance of protecting its history. Yet, from the State’s viewpoint, the consideration accorded to preserving the sanctity of Kalaupapa paradoxically did not extend to Hale Mohalu. If anything, the State seemed to view Hale Mohalu and Bernard Punikai‘a, in particular, as major impediments. Mink had noted that the State of Hawai‘i had been negligent in their responsibilities to care for the patients, which was the reason the patients sought federal oversight.

In its editorial of July 21, the Star-Bulletin described the Kalaupapa Peninsula as “the site of human love and tragedy, intermixing” and endorsed the idea for it to become a national park. The editorial remarked that the Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Commission, which held public meetings on Oahu that week, faced a difficult chore in deciding the future use of Kalaupapa, especially in terms of visitation while the patients are still alive. The paper reaffirmed the desire for the site to be a park, noting that

883 Greene, Exile in Paradise 717.
884 Greene, Exile in Paradise 717.
885 Patsy T. Mink, “Kalaupapa National Park,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Tuesday August 28, 1979, A-19, (“the state’s performance in the area of preservation of Kalaupapa has been so dismal as to require that we seek inclusion in the National Park system.”)
the public wants the remaining patients “who live there fully protected” and “the site preserved as a park.”\footnote{Editorial, “The Future of Kalaupapa” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Tuesday July 24, 1979, A-18.} Ironically, the importance of Kalaupapa was not disputed, but Hale Mohalu’s future did not merit the same support from the editorial staff.

However, events at the Pearl City facility continued to resonate at Kalaupapa. Unsure of what might happen to the Settlement at Moloka‘i, the authorities surveyed the patients, something that was not done with Hale Mohalu. The Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Commission conducted the survey in August 1979.\footnote{The fifteen-member Advisory Commission had been mandated by Congress to see about turning Kalaupapa into a National Park.} \footnote{David Tong, “Survey of Residents: National Park for Kalaupapa Favored,” Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, August 19, 1979, A-3.} “Sixty-six percent of the 93 patients [out of 125] surveyed supported the idea of making Kalawao Peninsula a national historical park,” the paper reported. It also noted “more than 90 percent of the residents were opposed to any administration by the State or Maui County.”\footnote{David Tong, “Survey of Residents: National Park for Kalaupapa Favored,” Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, August 19, 1979, A-3.} The patients rejected the State due to “resident distrust and suspicion from past experience.”\footnote{David Tong, “Survey of Residents: National Park for Kalaupapa Favored,” Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, August 19, 1979, A-3.} Worried that development might happen under the State’s administration, the patients felt federal oversight would be best, since “the federal government has a good track record in park development and has ample funds available to do a good job.”\footnote{David Tong, “Survey of Residents: National Park for Kalaupapa Favored,” Honolulu Sunday Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, August 19, 1979, A-3.}

A week later the Star-Bulletin published Patsy Mink’s testimony on behalf of the park at Kalaupapa.\footnote{Patsy T. Mink, “Kalaupapa National Park,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Tuesday August 28, 1979, A-19.} The newspapers, supportive of Kalaupapa as a National Park, gave the story ample coverage, printing the full text of her testimony.

Sanford Smith and Unheeded Pleas

Leahi patient Sanford Smith died on Thursday July 19, 1979.\footnote{Obituary, Sanford Smith, (date of death July 19, 1979), Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Tuesday July 24, 1979, C-5.} He had always wanted to return to Hale Mohalu, urging his fellow patients never to give up their fight. Sanford Smith was born on August 20, 1915 on Kaua‘i and he was buried at Kalaupapa, where his funeral Mass was held. When Sanford was a child, his mother became ill with leprosy, and she was sent to Kalihi Hospital. She had come home after the disease was arrested, but she got sick again and had to return to Kalihi. Later she was sent to Kalaupapa. When Sanford Smith became sick, he was taken to Kalihi Hospital in April
1936. When he went to Kalaupapa on October 7, 1936, he was reunited with his mother. When his stepfather was failing in health, the older man took a gun and shot himself in the head. Before he died, he made Sanford promise to take care of his mother. Smith later went to Hale Mohalu, where he lived until being forced to Leahi. Smith stated,

I went to Hale Mohalu in 1949. The patients worked in the yard, cut the trees, dug out the weeds and fixed the place. The Administrator asked us if we could be ready for the opening, which was only a month and a half away. We talked it over among ourselves and decided to try. We all worked from Sunday to Sunday and late into the night. With the work of the patients, the place became beautiful. Coconut trees planted, new hedges…buildings were painted…We made it in time for the opening luau. Everyone was happy.

We used to have a lot of youngsters coming in with the disease. It was sad to me because they were so young. Imagine – six or seven years old, and taken away from their parents. I thought that was terrible. We understood at that time, that the patients owned the land, if they could work on it and develop it for 20 years.  

Hale Mohalu had been Sanford’s home for nearly thirty years when the Health Department forced him to leave it in January 1978. He did not want to go, but he felt he had no choice. “A lot of the patients didn’t like the idea of moving at all, but the Health Department said we have to move -- like it or not. That was their attitude.” When he had trouble with his hand and his foot at Leahi, he told the doctor, but the doctor did not investigate the problems until it was too late, and Smith had already developed gangrene. He took antibiotics but had to have part of his arm taken off, and later in February 1979, his left leg was “removed above the knee.” Despite his physical ordeals, he simply wanted to live at home in Hale Mohalu. Smith never gave up that desire.

I don’t like it at Leahi and the way they shove patients around. They are always telling the patients, ‘do this’ and ‘do that’ … patients have minds too – and we have human rights. Where are the human rights of the patients? Why are we treated like animals? So – Bernard, Frank and Mary, Francis, David, Clarence, Bernice, Richard and all of you staying at Hale Mohalu … DON’T GIVE UP!! Father Damien is with us! Don’t let Damien down! Let us love one another like brothers and sisters. I guarantee you, as long as I’m living, the Health Department is not going to drive you folks away. Aloha to you all at Hale Mohalu – may God bless all!!

The lack of compassion for someone like Sanford Smith and the other elderly patients who had made a home for years at Hale Mohalu and then were summarily kicked out troubled many. Beatrice Romanowski had written to Governor Ariyoshi before the move, pleading with him to prevent it.\footnote{Beatrice Romanowski, Letter, George Ariyoshi, February 6, 1977, Hawai‘i State Archives, Box 236 Correspondence Executive Branch, Department of Health, Hale Mohalu, 1977.} Like Sanford Smith, Romanowski had made her home at Hale Mohalu. When she was diagnosed with the disease, the authorities took her away from family. At the time, her daughter was ten and her son was one year old. As she said in her letter, “we had to leave our home and our families years ago and it was sheer hell to do so, we suffered a lot, but we had no choice but to adjust.” Romanowski initially was sent to Kalihi and when Hale Mohalu opened in 1949, she was sent there. Now after making adjustments to live in Pearl City and creating a familiar way of life, the State forced her to move once again. Romanowski made an “earnest plea and request” for Ariyoshi’s help. Afraid of any repercussions, she wrote a follow-up letter a week later, asking him to please “not refer my letter to the Board of Health. I would appreciate it very much if you would look into this matter yourself.”\footnote{Beatrice Romanowski, letter, Governor Ariyoshi, February 13, 1977, Hawai‘i State Archives, Box 236 Correspondence Executive Branch, Department of Health, Hale Mohalu, 1977.} Despite her request and many others, Ariyoshi ignored the pleas of the patients and relocated them. A year and a half later, the Governor continued his pattern of ignoring his constituents to do as he wished.

Sister Maureen Keleher of the Statewide Health Coordinating Council sent a letter to the Governor on July 26, explaining that they had not had a response to their earlier letter in April.\footnote{Save Hale Mohalu News, Vol. II, No. 2, September 1979, p. 4 + Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, July 26} Sister Keleher again asked Ariyoshi to turn on the electricity and the water, but the Governor never answered her letter. It was frustrating for the Council to be ignored by the Governor, but that was how he responded – that is to say, he was nonresponsive. He disregarded the patients and the leaders who comprised the Health Council, even though the Council had been charged with resolving the conflict.

In contrast to Bishop Scanlan’s lack of visibility in the Hale Mohalu conflict, Bishop Joseph A. Ferrario visited the patients at Hale Mohalu on Wednesday August 1, 1979.\footnote{Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, August 1.} He also worked with the Hawai‘i Council of Churches to plead the patients’ case.
Music and Nonviolence: Sustenance and Survival

Throughout the struggle, Bernard Punikai‘a continued creating music as he had always done. Punikai‘a was an excellent musician and on August 1, 1979 he recorded special songs he wrote about the two locations that had been “home” to him most of his life. Music was like breath to Punikai‘a, especially Hawaiian music and in his first recording session, Punikai‘a recorded “Hale Mohalu” and “Kalaupapa, My Home Town.”899 His powerful love for the ‘āina came clearly through in his voice when he sang those songs. In fighting for the land that was his birthright, Punikai‘as stood in solidarity with other Hawaiians at the time who faced eviction. The words of the song “Hale Mohalu” speak of the relationship of the patients to the land. “Hale Mohalu, Land of Joy, Land of Pain, We Are One,” expressing the Hawaiian view of unity with the ‘āina.900

Part of the ‘Ohana’s sense of oneness in their relationship to the land and to one another in this struggle included the concept of nonviolence. The ‘Ohana anticipated that they would face eviction and arrest. To prepare for that, they organized plans for nonviolent resistance in a document entitled “Follow-up with Group and Individuals for Support” and dated August 2, 1979. In response to escalating violence, they had worked out procedures in five steps to be followed during any arrest situation at Hale Mohalu.901

Federal Role

Anticipating the financial review of the leprosy program, Senator Abercrombie informed the public about the importance of the HEW audit in a letter on August 4th to the Star-Bulletin. “It will reveal the startling statistics that leprosy patients are being forced to occupy beds at a higher level of care and thus expense than is required for them medically. This cost is passed on to the taxpayer.”902 Abercrombie expressed his appreciation for Kathy Titchen’s Star-Bulletin story of July 9, 1979, entitled “Yuen Denies Federal Funds Used at Leahi,” but he raised an objection to the headline.903 “It stated federal funds are not used at Leahi. Since HEW spends almost $1.5 million a year there in the Department of Health’s ‘Hale Mohalu at Leahi’ program, I wonder if the money comes from taxpayers on Mars.” Abercrombie pointed out that the real crux of the

899  Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, August 1.
900 “Hale Mohalu” words and music by Bernard K. Punikaia, copyright 1996.
901 Non-Violent Resistance, Follow-up with Group and Individuals for Support, August 2, 1979.
article was captured in Yuen’s comment that he did not “know of any provision in the law for an audit.” Abercrombie felt that Yuen could bury the federal funds in some State account, but the bottom line was that the taxpayers were being ripped off. The leprosy patients were assigned to higher level of care than needed while sick people who required intensive care were denied those beds. Abercrombie’s argument slashed at the colonial veil of secrecy and monopolistic control exercised by the State over the leprosy program.

Although Senator Inouye ostensibly tried to get the most federal money, when the votes were taken in Congress on the proposed funding, Hawaii’s leprosy program received somewhat less than the $2 million originally approved. “Hawaii’s leprosy program,” the paper reported, “will receive $1.8 million from the federal government for the next fiscal year under an agreement reached by a Senate-House conference committee.” Inouye announced the agreement on Monday August 6 saying, “it is a $200,000 increase over the current budget.” Yuen indicated that none of the funds would be spent on Hale Mohalu. All that money, but nothing allotted to Hale Mohalu because the State controlled how the money was spent. From the ‘Ohana’s viewpoint, an independent audit was clearly needed. With Inouye’s announcement of the $200,000 increase in money appropriated for the leprosy program in the coming year, followed by Yuen’s statement that none of the money would be spent on Hale Mohalu, Emmett Cahill, in a letter to the editor, felt compelled to ask why the increase in funds when there was a decrease in the number of people covered. He explained that by denying the eight patients at Hale Mohalu services, out of the 125 patients in the leprosy program, it was a decrease of almost six and a half percent. Cahill suggested the funding increase should be examined and that Senator Inouye would be the best person to do it.

**Services in Washington, D.C. and Honolulu**

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana set their sights on the nation’s capital and sent delegates to Washington, D.C. to meet with Congressional Representatives to press for an audit. They met with Senators Inouye and Daniel Akaka and they decided to hold a protest in front of Damien’s statue. Since they wanted to make it as dramatic as possible, they employed a tactic used in Catholic liturgy during Good Friday services. On Wednesday August 8 to draw attention to the Hale Mohalu conflict, they covered the statue of

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904 “Isle Leprosy Program will get $1.8 million” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, August 8, 1979, D-12.
Damien in Washington, D. C. with a black shroud. In Honolulu, a similar protest took place. Father Ed Gerlock led a small ‘Ohana group gathered on the steps of the nation’s capitol for a ceremony with readings from the Bible and singing songs, including “We Shall Overcome.” They held a black drape with the words “Damien Weeps for his Children,” which they subsequently placed on Damien’s statue in the Capitol Rotunda. Gerlock explained that the group wanted to have Damien’s statue removed from the Capitol because of the injustice at Hale Mohalu. The press release stated the statue should be shipped back to Kalaupapa because “it has ceased to have meaning in this rotunda given the present situation of the leprosy patients in Hawaii. The National Catholic Wire Service papers wrote about the demonstration and sent the story to various local Catholic papers, such as the Catholic Sun in upstate New York. Because of the wire service’s wide distribution, the coverage helped to publicize the conflict on a broader scale. Although the Catholic Sun used the no longer accepted term, leper, its treatment of the story accurately described the situation, quoting Gerlock. “Hale Mohalu ‘is commercially assessed at $1 million per acre and located across the street from a shopping center. What the state is saying, is that the land is too valuable to be given to leprosy patients.”

In Honolulu, the paper reported about fifty people attended the local ceremony, explaining that a similar protest took place in Washington at the U. S. Capitol. The ‘Ohana’s ceremony began with the song, “Hale Mohalu” followed by an Introduction and a prayer to Damien or Kamiano. The prayer to Kamiano concluded with a call to his spirit and invoked the name of two patients who passed away earlier that year. Next there was a reading from the Bible, a Hale Mohalu Psalm with the refrain of Sanford Smith’s words said aloud, “Where are the human rights of the patients?” It was heartfelt to quote Sanford Smith, especially the concluding line, “Let us love one another like brothers and sisters” because he had only passed away the previous month. The patients then silently

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906 (Both events were noted in the 1980 Hale Mohalu calendar) Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, August 8.
909 “Maryknoll Pleads for Lepers,” Catholic Sun, August 22, 1979, front cover.
910 “Maryknoll Pleads for Lepers,” Catholic Sun, August 22, 1979, front cover.
911 “Hale Mohalu Protest Held at Damien Statue,” Honolulu Advertiser, Thursday August 9, 1979, A-12.
912 The prayer to Kamiano was said in unison as follows: “Kamiano, today we are gathered here again around your statue, as we did for many times these past 19 months, because we believe that you still are alive among us.” Program, “Ceremony in Front of the Statue of Father Damien,” August 9, 1979, (David Lassner, personal collection).
draped Damien’s statue. The observance concluded with the song “Hawaii Aloha” song by all in attendance as they joined hands in a circle.913

On August 13, shortly after the ceremony at Damien’s statute and nearly a year and a half after the patients had been forced to transfer, the State dedicated the new wing of Leahi Hospital. Bernard Punikai’a did not attend the State-conducted service, but sent the Leahi patients his good wishes in a letter addressed to “Dear Hannah, Beatrice, Barbara, Haruko, Pedro and Steve.” Now that two had died, there were only six left of the original eight. Punikai’a wished them well and said, “While I personally would not desire to be there in an institution, I recognize that you have the rights, rights to choose to live in an institution, that you perceive [meets] your needs and/or desires.”914

Support and Opposition

The pictures of Damien’s statue covered in a black cloth in Washington, D. C. and in Honolulu created the stir they were meant to do. Sr. M. Aileen Griffin, Mother General of Syracuse Franciscan Sisters915 in an article in the Catholic Sun newspaper of August 22, stated her support for Father Gerlock’s work. “This is a question of letting the leprosy patients have more voice,” she said.916 From their order’s long history of caring for the patients, Sister M. Aileen Griffin knew well the difficulties they had endured.917 Not everyone was as sympathetic or understanding. Monsignor Marzen wrote a letter to the Catholic Sun on August 29, disputing Gerlock statements. Marzen’s criticism had to do with a misunderstanding Marzen had regarding the number of patients at Hale Mohalu, but the Monsignor, a rather hard-core traditionalist was, generally speaking, not supportive of the work of Father Gerlock or the patients.918

On the approach of the first-year anniversary of the date the State turned off the utilities, Father Ed Gerlock in a letter to the editor asked, “Who would have believed that the state was capable of such a thing?” He listed all the community support garnered.

A year has gone by – 10,000 people have signed a petition, the United Church of Christ both locally and nationally has gone on record as supporting the patients; the Catholic priests, Senate as well as Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ferrario have

913 Program, “Ceremony in Front of the Statue of Father Damien,” August 9, 1979, (David Lassner, personal collection).
915 The Mother General of the Syracuse Franciscan Sisters belonged to the same religious order as Mother Marianne who was canonized in October 2012 for her work among the leprosy patients on Moloka‘i. To this day, the Franciscans Sisters continue their work at Kalaupapa.
916 “Franciscan’s Head Supports Action,” Catholic Sun, Wednesday August 22, 1979, front cover.
917 “Franciscan’s Head Supports Action,” Catholic Sun, Wednesday August 22, 1979, front cover.
918 Wally Inglis, personal interview, Honolulu, Tuesday 16 April 2013.
visited and indicated their support, as have the Hawaii Council of Churches, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, the United Public Workers, the Hawaii Federation of College Teachers, Lions International, the Honolulu Baptist Association and a host of others.\textsuperscript{919}

Gerlock spoke too of the letters that the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council (HSHCC) wrote the Governor on April 16 and again on July 26, 1979 urging him to restore the utilities, but the Governor never responded to HSHCC. Gerlock ended his letter with a quote from patient, Francis Palea, who said, “All our lives, we’ve been treated like animals and pushed around. If we patients and our friends can stick together, I feel we can win.”\textsuperscript{920} That sense of being on the right side of the battle was one the patients and the ‘Ohana never lost, although there were many moments of discouragement. It seemed as if all the adversity the patients had to overcome with their illness, gave them not only a sense of acceptance but also tremendous optimism.

Others dismayed by the one-year anniversary expressed their dismay in letters to the editor. On September 1 the Reverend Jean Brookes, an English trained nurse stated, “I appeal to the sensitivity of the people of Honolulu that they request their representatives to give urgent practical support to the patients at Hale Mohalu in their desire to stay there.” Brookes recounted as part of her nursing work, she knew leprosy patients in a small village who lived in their own homes. Brookes explained that not only were basic services at Hale Mohalu vital, but also other care aspects that were essential. “The open space and fresh air of the site is equally important to people who need to feel alive, and for whom institutionalization would be a living death.”\textsuperscript{921}

In addition to Reverend Brookes’ urgent call for humanitarian consideration, the Quakers formally endorsed the same request. On Friday, September 7, the Quakers (American Friends) in Honolulu added their name to the lists of organizations in support of Hale Mohalu.\textsuperscript{922} The Quakers officially acknowledged their unease over the unresolved issue of Hale Mohalu rapidly approaching its one-year anniversary without utilities, hoping their support would help quicken its resolution.

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\textsuperscript{922} (“1979: Honolulu Friends Meeting conveys acceptance of their concern for Hale Mohalu at the Pacific Yearly Meeting.”) Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, September 7.
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Not all felt the same way as the Quakers did – not even people who were closely associated with the medical problems of the patients and who knew them intimately. He later changed his mind, but at this time Dr. Olaf Skinsnes lambasted Jean Brookes for her supportive comments. Dr. Olaf Skinsnes sent a letter to the editor rebuking Brookes. He spelled her name incorrectly and proceeded in a four-page typed letter with fifteen points to argue point by point why the patients were living a privileged life. “Instead of leprosy patients being deprived and harassed,” Dr. Skinsnes said, “they are here being pampered as is no other group of patients.” He criticized the patients as wanting more of the special attention they have received all their lives.923

The situation at Hale Mohalu for the patients was near crisis when help arrived. On Monday September 10, the ‘Ohana arranged with St. Francis Hospital Home Care to provide home care to the patients. Since the patients did not have any medical attention unless they went to Leahi Hospital, this assistance by St. Francis Hospital was a tremendous aid.924 Living as they had for this long was equivalent to camping out, which the patients willingly did, but it was also an incredible hardship. Frustrated, patients sent a letter to Ariyoshi on Wednesday September 19. “This is a follow-up letter to the one that was sent on September 12, 1979 requesting an appointment to ‘come and sit down and talk with you because we feel our rights have been taken away.’ We awaited your response.”925 Again, they did not receive a response, so they called the Governor’s office and tried to get an appointment with the Governor’s secretary, but no appointment was set. Although they wrote, they called, and they left their number, they were ignored. Patients Frank Duarte, Richard Pupule, Clarence Nai’a, David Brede, Meli Pili, and Bernard Punikai’a signed the letter. “We believe we deserve an answer to our request to meet with you. Having leprosy does not make us second-class citizens although we are often treated as such. After all, we are citizens of the state of Hawaii.”926

Public support, however, continued for the patients, evidenced in a letter to the editor from Dorothea Carvalho entitled “How to Help Hale Mohalu.” Carvalho, who lived on the Big Island, wrote that she had a bumper sticker on her car, “Save Hale

924 Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, September 10, ("1979: ‘Ohana meets with staff at St. Francis Hospital Home Care Program to start home care at Hale Mohalu.")
Mohalu,” and that many people asked her what it meant. She urged those who signed the petitions to also write the government, asking it to help the patients. “If – you just sit back and let these people suffer loss of rights, freedom, dignity, humanness – then you are as guilty as the ones who actually are trying to suppress and institutionalize them.”

Throughout the ordeal, Bernard had his music to sustain him. In the midst of all this protest, Punikai’a filed for a General Exercise Tax License on September 19 and listed his company as Punikai’a Productions.

The battle to win over the Governor and the State persisted in letters to the editor. On September 26, the Advertiser printed three separate letters, from Charlotte Meacham, Tara Hands, and Kathryn Braun who expressed frustration with the Governor’s position. Meacham’s letter spoke about Quaker support. “Friends were distressed to learn that after a year Hawaii’s governor and the state health administration still see the patients’ “welfare” in terms of uprooting them from their home at Hale Mohalu and forcing them into the dreary wards at Leahi Hospital.” Tara Hands urged the public to “write to our governor encouraging continuation of Hale Mohalu for present Hansen disease patients,” along with your desire to see a national park at Kalaupapa. Kathryn Braun explained that the State Health Coordinating Council had twice asked Governor Ariyoshi to restore services. “So far, he has not even responded to these requests. Nor has he spent any time talking with the leprosy patients to find out their needs.” The irony of Ariyoshi’s unwillingness to meet with the patients stands in sharp contrast to the Governor’s efforts to reach out to his financial backers for transforming Aloha Tower into his vision of a waterfront complex.

If Ariyoshi seems to be a failure in the eyes of many for his unwillingness to help the patients at Hale Mohalu, he draws high praise from historian Tom Coffman in The Island Edge of America. Coffman asserts that Ariyoshi remained consistent in his policies, viewing Hawai’i as a special place with special needs unlike other states. However, Coffman’s analysis does not reflect Ariyoshi’s treatment of the leprosy patients. Since they are a unique part of Hawai’i’s history, the leprosy patients required the special treatment Ariyoshi espoused for Island life. But Ariyoshi’s attitude toward the patients appeared dismissive and devoid of the aloha he expressed for the Island’s distinctive character. Ariyoshi talked about the “preferred future,” a term he used to mean controlled growth in a world
One-Year Anniversary

On Wednesday September 26, 1979 the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana got together for a combination work/party event to make signs and share chili. In photos of this event taken by Ed Gerlock, Bernard Punikai‘a supervises members of the ‘Ohana as they painted protest signs. Among the signs was one by Setsu Okubo who painted: “Phuck You, Ariyoshi.”

Ever the imperious leader of his troops, Punikai‘a was sitting in a chair reading a document while his trustworthy minions did their work.

Mindful of the anniversary and troubled by it, various community religious leaders presented a letter and a petition to George Ariyoshi on Thursday September 27, 1979 asking the Governor to once again provide food, water, and electricity. The letter was signed by Most Rev. Joseph A. Ferrario, Auxiliary Bishop of Honolulu; Rev. Stanley E. Kain, Hawaii Council of Churches; Rev. Ruth Senter, Oahu Association United Church of Christ; Glen T. Harada, Honolulu Baptist Assoc.; Charles A. Jolly, Sr. Honolulu Baptist Assoc.; Jim Albertini, catholicActon of Hawaii; Dr. Fred Dodge; and several members of other groups. In their letter, they stated that the Hale Mohalu controversy had been the source of “a great deal of tension in the community and resentment about government.” They also asserted that a genuine willingness to address the problem by “people of good will” could resolve the issue. They endorsed three proposals favored by the State Health Coordinating Council (SHCC). “One of these proposals is to interview all of the leprosy patients at Kalaupapa, Leahi, and Hale Mohalu as to their choice of residence on Oahu.”

The second proposal that the SHCC approved was “to take the Hale Mohalu Ohana proposal, which claims that it can save the U.S. taxpayer $500, 000 a year by allowing the patients to stay in a care home facility at Hale Mohalu, and evaluate it.” The leaders questioned whether this was actually the case, because they felt if it was true, then it should implemented, but as they stated, “in any case, it is important to examine it in terms of cost effectiveness.”
The third proposal requested that while these different ideas were explored, the Governor restore food, water, electricity, and medicine at Hale Mohalu as sign of good faith. And they noted that the SHCC had written to the Governor with this restoration request not once but three times during the past six months. Before the Bishop and the other leaders signed this letter, they ended their request with a simple statement that spoke to the core of the controversy. “People who have suffered as much as the leprosy patients deserve every accommodation while this issue is being discussed.”

After their meeting with Governor Ariyoshi, the delegation of community and religious leaders issued a press release on September 28, in which they explained about their meeting and the presentation of the three proposals. “We make this request in the hope of establishing a truce, as a sign of good faith toward reconciliation. We believe that the meeting with the Governor, which lasted more than an hour, was positive.” Ariyoshi said “he would give the proposal careful consideration and let us know his decision.”

The Honolulu newspapers each covered the meeting of the Governor with church and community representatives. The Advertiser had the larger of the two relatively short articles, saying about twenty religious leaders met with the Governor on September 27 in a meeting that was “latest happening in the Hale Mohalu controversy.” Although the Governor was open to hearing what everyone had to say and the talk was congenial, no decision was made at the time. Reverend Stanley Kain, executive director of the Hawaii Council of Churches stated, “We felt good about the meeting because the governor was willing to hear us out and appreciate some of the feeling which was expressed.”

The Star-Bulletin covered the story in five short paragraphs, which was quite a contrast to their front-page red headlines one year ago. Clearly the story had lost some of its prominence, at least as far as the Star-Bulletin was concerned. If the media did not give much attention to the meeting with the Governor on the one-year anniversary, the patients and their supporters held a large rally in front of Damien’s Statue at the State Capitol to mark the occasion. The announcement flyer for the gathering invited public participation. “Come, join us to celebrate the courage of the patients during the last year

937 “Clerics and Ariyoshi Discuss Hale Mohalu” Honolulu Advertiser, Friday September 28, 1979, A-2.
938 “Clerics and Ariyoshi Discuss Hale Mohalu” Honolulu Advertiser, Friday September 28, 1979, A-2.
and to protest the continuing violation of human rights of the patients.”

Approximately a hundred people attended the commemoration, that included the dramatic unfurling of another scroll, this one with 10,000 signatures, from the fifth floor of the State Capitol, followed by Friday picketing, now in its 53rd week.

J. J. Kaufman, a member of the ‘Ohana wrote a letter to the editor about the Friday rally. “Yesterday’s rally at the state Capitol celebrated the heroism of the Hale Mohalu residents in bucking the profit-minded intentions of the state.” Kaufman stated his opinion directly and with passion, calling upon “Ariyoshi to cease his obstinace and recognize the desire of the Hale Mohalu patients to live out their lives in peace and happiness at Hale Mohalu and not at Leahi where already two patients, George Liwai and Sanford Smith, have died.” Despite innumerable pleas, Ariyoshi remained implacable. In light of the anniversary and as part of the effort to increase support, Bernard Punikai’a announced on Friday September 28 the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana had “just completed a 45-rpm record that will be on sale next month along with T-shirts and calendars.”

**Additional Support**

‘Ohana member Mabel De Cambra, on behalf of the Nanakuli Women’s Group sent a letter to the editor, expressing her frustration with the State in this extended battle. She argued, “The patients’ right to free choice has been taken away in the hopes of reducing them to mere puppets manipulated by the master puppeteer. Ariyoshi has committed a gross injustice against the human rights of the leprosy patients.”

Pat Mumford of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches also wrote a letter to the Star-Bulletin, regarding their coverage of the September 28th meeting with the governor. While the Hawai‘i Council of Churches represents many Protestant denominations, Mumford noted that many others have joined with the Council to express support for the patients, and she felt it was important for the public to know that at the meeting with the Governor, “others in attendance, included representatives of the Oahu Association and...”

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941 Hale Mohalu 1980 Calendar, September 28, (“1979: One year since services terminated at Hale Mohalu; 53rd week of picketing attended by 100 people; Scroll with 10,000 signatures support Hale Mohalu unfurled from the 5th floor of State Capitol.”)
943 “Song Will Tell of Struggle at Hale Mohalu” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Saturday September 29, 1979, B-5. According to the Star-Bulletin, “The record features “Hale Mohalu” written and sung by Howard Shapiro, backed with “My Home Town” written and sung by Punika’a.” The paper wrote the title as “my Home Town” but did so incorrectly as the full title on the record says: “Kalaupapa, My Home Town.”
Hawai’i Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Honolulu Baptist Association, the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu.” Mumford reiterated that individually and collectively, they urged the government to seek a solution by studying the various proposals that have been put forward.

There was no movement on the State’s part, as evidenced in a response that Representative Herbert Segawa wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Cate in Hilo who had written him their concerns. Segawa explained how he wanted to clarify some points with them that may have given the impression the State has been cruel and inhumane. Segawa went on in this letter to misrepresent the facts, claiming that there were residents at Hale Mohalu who were not authorized to be there; in the next sentence, Segawa corrects himself to say: “Actually there is one person in this group who is a renal dialysis patient who should be moved to Leahi. However, she has refused to move.” Segawa blamed the poor condition of the buildings on the former administrators, as if the State bore no responsibility whatsoever.

David Lassner later responded to Segawa’s statements by personally writing to him and to Dr. Skinsnes. Lassner explained to Dr. Skinsnes that the Rev. Jean Brookes of New Zealand had forwarded to Bernard Punika’a and the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana a copy of Dr. Skinsnes’ September 7, 1979 letter to Rev. Brookes. Appalled by Dr. Skinsnes’ insensitive attitude, Lassner expressed his outrage. “I can only assume that you are as ‘callous and cold hearted’ as the state health authorities whose actions you attempt to justify.” Lassner wrote a razor-sharp letter to Skinsnes, disputing the latter’s comments.

You refer to the dilapidated and reprehensible condition of Hale Mohalu at Pearl City. Anyone would agree with you. The fact is that the state deliberately let the facilities decay to their present condition and deliberately kept the patients there until such time as they obtained title to the land from the federal government. Maintenance officials were directed to not make necessary repairs. The Director of Health’s proposal to the Governor for the relocation of the program is dated some 10 days after the state gained title to the valuable land.

On Tuesday October 16, 1979 Senator Neil Abercrombie sent a letter of thanks to David Lassner from for the “excellent rebuttal” Lassner made to Dr. Skinsnes letter.
Setting the Record Straight

In addition, David Lassner sent a letter on Monday October 22, 1979 to Segawa, regarding Segawa’s reply to the Cates. Lassner explained, “I am responding both to try to correct your perspective of the Hale Mohalu situation and to let the Cates know that their concern is justified.” In his letter to the Cates, Segawa had said he personally had investigated the situation at Hale Mohalu. Lassner replied angrily, saying that it was Segawa who had refused to hold hearings on the Hale Mohalu proposal and by so doing had personally killed the bill. If Segawa had held the hearings, Lassner pointed out, he would have learned firsthand the validity of the patients’ concerns.

In his letter, Lassner asked, “Was it pure coincidence that Director of Health George Yuen’s proposal to Governor George Ariyoshi for relocation of the leprosy program was dated less than 2 weeks after the State gained title to the land?” Twenty years ago, Lassner noted, the patients were the ones to initiate the process of gaining title to the land. Lassner concluded his argument with a final summation of what the entire Hale Mohalu situation was really about, pointing out that the matter was “a medical/social issue which the state has forced into the political arena.” David Lassner sent a copy of his letter to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Cate.

On October 28, patient Anita Una of Kalaupapa mailed Dr. Skinsnes a typed letter in which she expressed her disgust at the doctor’s superior attitude toward leprosy patients. Her letter was powerful in expressing the patients’ frustration.

All the “FREE” pamperings from “cradle to grave” for LEPERS (certainly, that must have been the name you’d love to hit us with) and the two million dollars that you mentioned for our care, certainly, the bulk of which is not used to benefit the patients, whether they are in institutions or as out-patients. You also failed to mention, among the “FREE” hand-outs, we were also endowed with the most dreaded and despised disease – LEPROSY, free-of-charge. I’d have gladly and freely traded place with you, were it be possible.

She sent a copy of her letter to David Lassner, to Bernard Punikai’a, and to Rev. Jean Brookes. Inserted with the copy of her letter to Lassner, Anita Una included a hand-
written note to thank Lassner for his letter to Dr. Skinsnes. Una’s expression of gratitude is clearly evident. “I don’t know if I’ve met you, but you have my heartfelt gratitude and aloha for such a superb letter. What more can I say? Thank you, Anita Una.”

On November 2, Senator Neil Abercrombie expressed his gratitude to David Lassner for his letters regarding the patients. Abercrombie extolled Lassner’s efforts. “Your letters are clear and cogent arguments for the patients position and contribute much to their struggle for human dignity.”

In the midst of all the events taking place with Hale Mohalu, there was also a major strike happening in the Islands. The United Public Workers went on strike in November 1979 and the strike lasted for 41 days. Garbage lay uncollected, rotting on street corners. Honolulu was a mess. The Hale Mohalu newsletter reported on the strike and its connection with other struggles. “As UPW strike wore on in its fourth week …as the Sand Island support group sent its call out to the community and traced Hawaiian history to the roots of the problem…we all realize that it’s all one piece of cloth.” The newsletter stated, “oppression is oppression and it’s all connected,” and it expressed hope for the future. “May the day come soon when we can live in peace and love—as sisters and brothers.” It was the sentiment that guided the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana despite the obstacles they faced. When Attorney Sid Wolinsky from the law offices of Public Advocates, Inc. visited his clients, staying at Hale Mohalu, he personally experienced the leaking roof when the rain fell on his running shoes. Wolinsky visited Hale Mohalu to confer with the patients and on Friday November 2, he had a meeting with the patients at Kalaupapa. His visit was a moment of encouragement for the ‘Ohana in their battles.

When Governor Ariyoshi received an award as the Humanitarian of the Year, it was too much for the ‘Ohana who protested outside the hotel holding the event. A group from the mainland honored Governor Ariyoshi in a special Honolulu dinner to recognize Ariyoshi as a humanitarian. Punikai’a Father Ed Gerlock, and Sister Sandy Galazin wrote a letter to the editor to protest that award. “It is with a sense of great dismay that we learned of the humanitarian award to be presented to Governor George Ariyoshi at a
fund-raising dinner tonight by the National Jewish Hospital of Denver.” The authors explained that local Jewish leaders assured the ‘Ohana that the hospital was open to all races and that it was well regarded for its service to the community. The ‘Ohana felt it was unfortunate that the leaders had apparently focused more on the fund-raising aspect of the award than the humanitarian. The ‘Ohana authors explained that the Governor had vetoed a bill that would have provided funds for a new care home at Hale Mohalu. However, the Governor gave the highest priority to a multi-million dollar tourism project at Aloha Tower. The authors wished that the organizers had checked with the local community before giving the award because if they had, “they would have more properly given the award to a person with some humanity.”

A caption in the Advertiser under a photo of Governor Ariyoshi noted the tribute was for “his distinguished community service.” The patients saw it as an insult that Ariyoshi, who had no aloha for those who needed his help and for whom he was so indifferent, was so honored.

On November 19, 1979 an exhibit on leprosy entitled “An Opportunity Lost” opened at the Federal Building in Honolulu. The exhibit was about the federal experimental station that once existed at Kalawao, Moloka‘i at the beginning of the twentieth century. Dr. Jerrold Michael, Public Health professor at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa arranged to stage the exhibit to educate the public about the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i. Even before it opened, the Star-Bulletin editors discussed it in an editorial entitled “Leprosy Studies - Past and Present.” The Moloka‘i experiment had numerous problems getting the patients to join the program. Only nine of the eight hundred and fifty-six patients volunteered to participate in 1909. In reporting on the exhibit, the ‘Ohana newsletter noted the sense of mistrust evident in 1909 was again present in the case of Hale Mohalu in 1979. The brochure handed out at the opening ceremony reported on the difficulties that had taken place on Moloka‘i at the beginning of the 20th Century, including “basic cultural misunderstanding, spawning mistrust between the patients and the health professionals.” Other problems had to do with

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SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS November 1979, Volume II, No. 10, p. 3.
“resistance to the segregation of lepers on Molokai; bitterness against the U.S. Government for overthrowing the Queen, annexing land in 1893 and the apparent continued local ‘annexation’ of homes and land at Kalawao for federal use.” In addition, the medical staff fearful of contacting the disease treated the patients “across rigidly imposed physical barriers.”

Although the principal parties were different, the problems in the late 1970s with the leprosy program seemed to be a case of history repeating itself.

Celebration Amid Concerns for Kalaupapa

The ‘Ohana celebrated Thanksgiving Day at Hale Mohalu with patients from Kalaupapa, Jubilee and Cathrine Puahala, and Rachel Nakoa from Leahi as well as Charlie Correa and John Lovell of People Against Chinatown Evictions, and the Hale Mohalu Band. Approximately eighty-five to one hundred people enjoyed the day.

Although efforts were underway to make the Kalaupapa Settlement a National Park, the State land board hesitated to give up control of Kalaupapa to the federal government. In any case, the Advisory Commission had “voted in principal” on December 13, 1979 for the site to be a National Historic Park. The National Park Service agreed to oversee the land while the State still retained title to the property. Although some in the State government wanted to maintain complete control, the Advertiser editors did not endorse that notion, giving wholehearted support to the idea of a National Park.

“The most immediate concern for all involved is clearly to maintain the lifestyle of the more than 100 leprosy victims who still live in Kalaupapa,” the paper noted. The editorial acknowledged several other requirements, including the residents’ approval.

Progress was steady on efforts for Kalaupapa but the Hale Mohalu resolution was stuck. In a December letter to the paper, Ed Gerlock expressed his frustration that the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana proposal was over a year old. The ‘Ohana had worked diligently on their proposal but the State had completely stalled in their response. In the meantime, the patients were getting ready to spend the holidays camping out under leaking roofs.
The local paper, the *Leeward Sun Press* described their plans for the festive season, saying they had strung Christmas garlands and wreaths on the walls and were looking forward to their Christmas potluck meal and simple religious service.971

The ‘Ohana held a December 22 meeting to discuss their next year’s strategies. Their outline of items for January 1980 was contained in a document entitled, “Discussion/Decision by Hale Mohalu Ohana: 12/22/79” and included the following questions:972 “What do we know that’s happening in January 1980 that affects our goals? What’s our response/strategy? Who will do what and with whom?” The last question asked, “When do we plan to meet again to analyze together? a la proposed evaluation sheet?”973 After dates and important events were: “Grassroot Support Front: National [and] Local: mutual support with these groups: poor, ethnic, ALOHA AINA, aging, handicapped, ‘taxpayer’, moral, medicine, education, labor.” Not only did the ‘Ohana evaluate their strategies, they also examined how effective they were as an organization. A second document entitled “Proposed Evaluation of the Hale Mohalu Ohana” contained the outline headings “Need, Some Questions, Suggested Content of the Evaluation, Duration, Process.”974 For example, under “Some Questions,” the following question was raised: “What are the gains/losses, strengths/weaknesses from the various activities undertaken – picketing, newsletter, sales of calendars/records T-shirts, recycling, legal struggle, etc. in terms of economic, political and cultural aspects, with reference to our goals?”975 These documents indicate how committed the ‘Ohana was to their cause and how analytical and strategic their approach.

**“Scrooge” Award at Christmas**

The ‘Ohana decided to give Governor George Ariyoshi a special award at Christmas. It was an award that aptly described their feelings toward him. “The Hale Mohalu Ohana today named Gov. George R. Ariyoshi its Scrooge of the Year for what it called ‘personal achievement in the infliction of unnecessary suffering on leprosy patients.’”976 The award plaque contained photos of the ‘Ohana’s protest demonstrations

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at the State Capitol and its inscription stated that Ariyoshi was given the award for his “cold bureaucratic indifference to the rights of elderly and infirm Hawaiians.”

The ‘Ohana charged Ariyoshi with “confiscating $1.8 million in federal leprosy treatment funds and abandoning the Hale Mohalu leprosy patients in their hour of greatest need.” Pictures of that presentation show Gigi Cocquio dressed as Santa Claus handing the plaque over to one of Ariyoshi’s aides in the Governor’s office on Christmas Eve. Later, outside on the walkway near the Executive Office, Santa Claus talked to the media.

When the ‘Ohana held their Christmas Eve Service, it began at 11:00 PM, with the singing of hymns starting at 10:00 PM, followed by the traditional meal of Portuguese bean soup. The Christmas Day service started at 12 Noon, with a potluck dinner at 1:00 PM. Supporter Ron Kang visited Hale Mohalu with his wife and children at Christmas, noting it was especially memorable because “three of our children received their first Holy Communion that night and we are very thankful that we could share this event with our friends.” Despite the difficult circumstances of the leaking roof and no utilities, the fellowship shared at Hale Mohalu lifted the spirits of the people who came to be a part of the ‘Ohana, not only at Christmas but throughout the year.

In summary, the latter half of 1979 was a period where the ‘Ohana did all they could to draw attention to their cause, such as entering a float in the Kailua parade or taking a trip to Washington. On the one-year anniversary of the termination of all services, religious leaders met with Governor Ariyoshi, pleading with him once more for restoration and resolution. The Governor listened politely, promising to consider the matter, but when nothing materialized, the ‘Ohana presented him with the Scrooge Award of the Year. In every way possible, the ‘Ohana sought to keep the Hale Mohalu issue in the forefront of public consciousness, with a rally and unfurling of petition scrolls at the State Capitol, selling calendars, T-shirts, and a record. Millions in federal funds given to the leprosy program year after year with no audit empowered the authorities to act with impunity and colonial malfeasance.
CHAPTER 9
WORLDWIDE PUBLICITY AND NATIONAL OUTREACH

In January 1980, the Hale Mohalu stand-off began its third year. Development controversy raged as protestors fought evictions on O‘ahu at Sand Island and on Kaua‘i at Nukoli‘i, while the Hōkūle‘a made a second voyage to Tahiti. Despite her legitimate status at Hale Mohalu, Mary Duarte’s resistance meant she had to endure severe living conditions. She passed away in May. To gather support, the ‘Ohana enlisted the aid of worldwide publicity, relying internationally on the Catholic magazine, Maryknoll, and nationally with the Boston Globe, the San Francisco Examiner and Chronicle, the National Catholic Reporter, and the Washington Post. Seeking a federal audit of the leprosy program, the ‘Ohana traveled to Washington, D.C. in September, and in October.

Aloha ‘Āina Letter to George Yuen

The Kalaupapa Patients’ Council on January 3, 1980 sent a letter to George Yuen, in response to the State’s second offer in December 1979 of the cottage at Leahi. They rejected the cottage as no different from the previously rejected cottage except for a few more rooms. “More than two years has passed since we tried to make you understand, to let you see in our hearts, but to no avail.” They expressed their love for Hale Mohalu and explained why the Trotter Ward at Leahi never could be its replacement. Since the State refused to grasp Hale Mohalu’s significance, they quoted Mary Duarte’s assessment of State officials. “Mary Duarte was right when she said: “They listen, but they don’t understand.” Nonetheless, the patients pleaded their case once more. “We will no longer be complacent while others chart the course we must follow. We are not spectators, observing our lives as it goes by. Self-determination, to participate in decisions that affect our lives. That is our goal.” As they noted, Hale Mohalu was prized not simply because it was convenient to shopping. Such accessibility was important, but above all was its significance, which they emphasized by underlining each word in the sentence: “Hale Mohalu is a very special place. It is in Pearl City.” It was site

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982 At the beginning of 1980, America was in the midst of an energy crisis and Afghan rebels were battling the Russians, Helen Altonn, “PUC Orders Changes in Electric, Gas Rates,” Alexander G. Higgins, “U.S. Press Has Until Friday to Leave Iran,” and “Afgan Rebels Claim Three Roads Blocked” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Tuesday January 15, 1980, A-1.


specific – this was crucial – it was not something that could be transferred, but integral to the setting itself. The patients loved Hale Mohalu because of their personal relationship to the land, having transformed overgrown weeds into flowering plants, including seeding numerous coconut trees, which now covered the grounds. They had poured their labor and love into the soil. “For when we came, it was over grown, and it was our sweat that made the transformation, our hands dug the holes to plant the plumerias.”

Their physical toil in the land, the connection to Kalaupapa, and the shared kinship of their fellow leprosy sufferers created a distinctive bond - they took care of the land, which in turn, nourished them with peaceful surroundings, beginning, as they said, “Aloha Aina and the seal that joined Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa.” Because of their sickness that they obtained the land in the first place; as long they remained there, the patients were promised that the land would always belong to them. “Thirty years we lived, we suffered, we died, land of joy, land of pain we are one. Our blood has touched the Aina, it is the payment that has been rendered by us for this land, Aloha Aina.”

This quality of Aloha ‘Āina, an integral part of the Hawaiian people, expresses a special affiliation. For Hawaiians to take care of the land means a reciprocal relationship in which the land takes care of you in turn - part of the concept of ‘Ohana or family. The Patients’ Council concluded their letter with a formal rejection of the cottage at Leahi.

To build solidarity on the mainland, Bernard Punikai‘a and John Witeck met with West Coast supporters from Monday January 7 until January 14 the following week. In addition to speaking to people in Berkeley, San Francisco, and Oakland as well as doing some TV interviews for Channel 4 in San Francisco, Punikai‘a talked about the problem of the Navy bombing of Vieques, and the bond the ‘Ohana felt with the Puerto Rican fishermen on Vieques, explaining about the Kaho‘olawe struggle, and correcting “some of the illusions about Hawaii being a problem-free paradise.”

**Local Publicity: Patients’ Interviews**

Significant publicity about the leprosy patients occurred in mid-January when the Star-Bulletin gave a full-page spread on a new book by Ted Gugelyk and Milton

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988 The letter was signed by the seven council members as follows: Bernard K. Punikai‘a, Chairman, Paul Harada, Vice-Chairman, Anita Una, Secretary –Treasurer, and Gloria Marks, James Brede, Mariano Rea, and John Arruda, Kalaupapa Patients’ Council, Letter to George Yuen, January 3, 1980.
Bloombaum entitled *The Separating Sickness: Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale.* At Kalaupapa, authors Gugelyk and Bloombaum had interviewed twenty-five leprosy patients, including Punikai‘a, and the newspaper printed several excerpts. “These interviews in themselves are important because they are primary source material on how men and women with leprosy view themselves.” After reading the book, one person (quoted in the article) expressed the mixed emotions the stories helped to arouse, saying: “I wept as I read *Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale, the Separating Sickness* – tears of rage, sorrow, and hope.” The publicity gained from the interviews engendered public sympathy for the patients. For the first time, patient’s painful stories, told in their own words were brought to light. Several of the interviews talked about the Hale Mohalu conflict, noting that some opposed the Health Department’s behavior while others agreed with it. In any case, the profile-raising stories gained support for the Pearl City holdouts, because “the interviews create such an aura of anguish that the case for accommodating patient wishes is strengthened.” Gugelyk and Bloombaum reported that in the process of conducting the interviews, they found most patients favored retaining Hale Mohalu, noting “nearly 90% of the patients preferred Hale Mohalu over Leahi.”

The State’s desire to position leprosy treatment at Diamond Head required that renovation work had first to take place. In October of 1979, the facilities were completed, nearly a year and a half after the initial patient transfer. On Tuesday January 15, 1980, during dedication ceremonies for the new Trotter wing at Leahi, Governor Ariyoshi unveiled a portrait of Father Damien. The *Star-Bulletin* ran a photo of the Governor in front of the Damien painting, as he stood close to patients Steve Dawson, Pedro Rapadas, and Beatrice Romanowski; the caption under the photo explained that the new Trotter wing consisted of 21-bed unit. The photograph of the Governor, solicitously next to Leahi leprosy patients, under Damien’s watchful gaze, helped to promote Ariyoshi as a caring leader - a counterfoil to media representations of the Governor as heartless.

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990 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, *The Separating Sickness: Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale.*
Undaunted by this promotional effort, some ‘Ohana members went to see the new wing and the cottage located at 728 Sunset in Kaimuki. Patients Clarence Nai‘a and Frank Duarte were not impressed. Nai‘a commented, “I don’t like that place at all. There’s no privacy. It’s like shoving us into one firetrap from another.” With the renovations of the Trotter wing, and the second offer of a small cottage near Leahi, the State felt they had more than accommodated the needs of the leprosy sufferers.

The Star-Bulletin editors, still serving as mouthpieces for the State’s opposition, misunderstood the complexity of the Hale Mohalu disagreement and failed to grasp the patients’ multi-layered, deeply personal viewpoint. On January 18, the editors declared the dispute was no longer about health care, but land. “The controversy over a leprosy treatment facility on Oahu can be said to have advanced to the point that it now is almost exclusively over land, rather than over health care concerns.” The paper did not appreciate the emotional investment the patients had with the land at Hale Mohalu – that it was not simply real estate. Instead, the paper argued, “The facilities at Leahi Hospital in Kaimuki are immensely superior to anything ever provided at Hale Mohalu.” While the editors extolled the benefits of the accommodations at Leahi, they also criticized the Hale resisters as being unreasonably stubborn, of treating the State with “scorn,” as if they were mean-spirited simply for the sake of being mean-spirited. Due to the patients’ unreasonableness, the State had no alternative but to act as it did. The editors spoke of the patients as though they were ungrateful children, perhaps even spoiled brats and the State had no choice but to dig in against the unfair criticism. The editorial maintained the State had done an excellent job in providing for the leprosy victims, but the holdouts had willfully derided the administration’s efforts. The patients’ reasons for wanting to stay at Pearl City were spurious to say the least. “They claim they ‘bought’ the land for the state from the federal government – since the state had to keep it as a hospital for 20 years to acquire title.” The editors dismissed that as ridiculous and pointed to the State’s offer of a cottage as countering that notion - (meaning one made up for the other). The editors felt no matter what the government proposed, the patients had stubbornly refused the offer.

In closing, the editors reflected on the declining number of aging Kalaupapa patients and what that would portend. Given the residents’ eviction worries, the editors...
felt the Governor had been incredibly generous, noting that Ariyoshi had promised, “the State will maintain Kalaupapa as long as even one patient survives and wants to stay there.” The editors extolled the Governor’s actions while it used the paper’s powerful podium to disparage the patients’ concerns. Five days after this editorial on the generosity of the State to its Hawaiian leprosy patients, the State took action at Sand Island, evicting the Hawaiian people who lived there. In a foretelling of what would happen to Hale Mohalu, the State on January 23, 1980 bulldozed the Sand Island homes and 18 persons were evicted and arrested for refusing to move.

Save Hale Mohalu Day (Second Annual)

Two days after the Sand Island eviction, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana marked the January 1978 patients’ removal from their Pearl City home. On Friday January 25, they held the Second Annual SAVE HALE MOHALU DAY celebration at the State Capitol, near Damien Statue, from 11:30AM to 1:00 PM. “Over 120 persons attended the short rally; 30 of these were Sand Island residents whose homes were bulldozed and demolished two days before. Spirits were high and unity with the Hale Mohalu cause was strong.”

Two of the main speakers were Sister Maureen Keleher of St. Francis Hospital and Star-Bulletin reporter Chuck Frankel. The patients sang “Kalaupapa” and “E Na Kini,” and “John Lovell of PACE (People Against Chinatown Evictions) gave his usual firey speech in support of the patients, and the Sand Island residents, led by Abe Ahmad, gave a strong salute to Hale Mohalu’s cause and explained the State’s attack on their homes.”

The Advertiser published a photo of the rally, but it was the only coverage the paper provided with the caption stating, “Hansen’s disease patients and their supporters display protest signs around the Father Damien statue and in the Capitol rotunda yesterday at a rally marking the second year of their campaign.”

While the protests over Hale Mohalu persisted into another year, efforts to secure Kalaupapa under federal protection steadily advanced. On January 29, the Kalaupapa National Historical Park Advisory Comission “presented to the Kalaupapa community a ‘preliminary draft proposal’ to declare Kalaupapa (which includes the ahupuaas of

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998 see Chapter 4.
Makanalua and Kalawao) a ‘National Historical Preserve.’” In an article for the ‘Ohana newsletter, Bernard Punikai‘a noted that several agreements had yet to be worked out but then Commission members would vote on the legislation. It was hoped that by becoming a National Park, Kalaupapa could be spared the deterioration that Hale Mohalu suffered, thus protecting the patients and maintaining the peninsula for posterity.

When the Kalaupapa Patients’ Council held its Chairperson election in February 1980, the candidates included Kuulei Bell, Richard Marks, Bernard Punikai‘a and Ben Kahikina, and Bernard Punikai‘a was chosen to be their Chair once again. Council members selected were Anita Una, Norbert Palea, Kuulei Bell, James Brede, Gloria Marks, and Paul Harada. It was an important election because it kept the continuity of the struggle intact. An excellent communicator with the media, Punikai‘a had become the public face of the Pearl City controversy.

Communication with the State, however, could be difficult. On February 5, 1980 Governor Ariyoshi wrote to Sister Maureen Keleher, a year after her letter to him, misspelling her name as Kehler. Sister Maureen, Vice-Chair of the Hawaii Statewide Health Coordinating Council had originally written to the Governor on April 16, 1979 to report that the Health Council had voted unanimously to recommend the Governor restore services to the Pearl City patients. Ariyoshi apologized for the delay of his response. In answer to the Council’s request, Ariyoshi explained he had enclosed a copy of the letter he sent to Ms. Ruth F. Senter of the Oahu Association of the United Church of Christ. Ariyoshi felt his letter to Senter stated clearly his position on the issue of Hale Mohalu. Ruth Senter had written to the Governor on December 4, 1979 to advocate for “a period of truce” between both sides. Senter had suggested the patients be surveyed to see their wishes regarding housing, and she also requested that Governor Ariyoshi (as Sister Maureen and the HSHCC had done) restore services at Hale Mohalu immediately.

The Governor answered Senter that a survey was not needed because the State on December 5, 1979 had offered the patients the use of a cottage at 728 Sunset Avenue.
The offer of a cottage superseded a survey because as he said, “the survey then need not address the question of the patients’ desires for a residential care home facility, since one has already been offered.” Ostensibly, the Governor believed if the State offered what it perceived as the patients’ wish (even if it were not) then the patients should quietly accept the offer. In a twisted argument, Ariyoshi wanted to institutionalize the patients, but described it as integration into the community.

I have been reminded many times that these individuals desire to live normal lives, that their affliction is controlled and that there is no reason that they cannot reside among our citizens. I consider this process of community integration and acceptance to be very important.\(^\text{1007}\)

While the patients did feel integration was important, they were asking for their right to choose rather than for the State to impose its wishes. But the patients were non-entities in this process – the notion of patients’ rights was totally foreign to the Governor. In his letter to Sister Maureen, the Governor explained that he had asked George Yuen and his staff to attend the next State Health Coordinating Council meeting. In Governor Ariyoshi’s mind, the matter was settled and it was the patients who were making it difficult for all concerned. If it had not been for Punikai’a, and the ‘Ohana, and public outrage, the State would have accomplished the institutional transfer with complete impunity, heedless of patients’ wishes.

**1980 Legislative Efforts**

When the State Legislature opened in 1980 the ‘Ohana had to renew their efforts. Among the bills they supported were Senate Bill 1084 regarding patients’ rights, Senate Bill 2654 pertaining to patients’ salaries at Kalaupapa, and Senate Bill 2655, which had to do with home rule for Kalawao County. Primary as always was the matter of rights, as their newsletter noted. “Patients rights is the battle cry at this session of the Legislature,” especially “approval of S. B. 1084, as amended -- to provide no relocation or treatment of leprosy patients without their knowledge and consent.”\(^\text{1008}\) Several other organizations, such as the United Public Workers, PACE, catholicAction, Health and Community

\(^{1007}\) Governor George Ariyoshi, Letter to Mrs. Ruth F. Senter, Oahu Association of the United Church of Christ, February 5, 1980.

Services Council, the Hawai‘i Union of Socialists, and the Council of Churches also testified in support of the patients' rights bill.  

On Wednesday February 20, there was a Senate hearing on the following bills, 2624 (water tank at Kalaupapa) 2625 (water system at Kalaupapa) 2654 (“equal pay for equal work”) 1084 (“patient’s rights”) and 2655 (Kalawao County). The ‘Ohana invited those who could to attend and to testify. In a note dated February 15, Lassner reminded the ‘Ohana to attend a hearing on the 20th as well as another key hearing on February 21.

“Your friend and ours, George Ariyoshi, has asked our other friend, George Yuen, to discuss Hale Mohalu on Thursday, February 21, during Hawaii State Health Coordinating Council (HSHCC) meeting 7:15 PM, Department of Health Board Room.”

At this meeting the Hawai‘i State Health Coordinating Council decided to do away with the study committee it had formed to investigate alternative proposals for Hale Mohalu. It was a shock to the ‘Ohana. “Well, ten months later, on February 21, 1980, SHCC voted to disband its study committee, commending it for a job well done – although the committee failed to agree on any position and, in fact, failed to conduct any independent study at all!” It was a disappointing turn of events.

Here we are 10 months later – with a group that had actually decided to consult the patients to find out what their needs and desires are. And still this had not been done. THE PATIENTS ARE ONCE MORE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD, WITH NO VOICE – WHEN IN FACT THEY ARE THE MOST APPROPRIATE ONES TO DECIDE THIS ISSUE.

The wheels of the State bureaucracy ground the project into the dust, but succeeded in gaining time for the State as it attempted to wear down the patients and the ‘Ohana. But that did not happen. The ‘Ohana’s battle cry was: “Hale Mohalu Will Win!!” On the island of Hawai‘i on February 21, ‘Ohana supporters held a successful rally in Hilo. Close to 500 persons attended, raising almost $1, 000.
the Kalaupapa Memorial Hospital was dedicated on February 26, 1980. It was a day of celebration with the musical group, Olomana, and Kumu Hula Frank Hewitt in performance. The opening of the new hospital offered a lesson for Hale Mohalu because some influential people in the State, “including the Honolulu Star-Bulletin,” opposed the new hospital and tried to use their power to prevent its being built. According to the ‘Ohana newsletter, “The LESSON of this accomplishment is that no matter how long or difficult the task, or how formidable the odds, unity and perseverance can accomplish great things. And to this end we pledge our efforts toward saving Hale Mohalu.”

In support of the ‘Ohana’s efforts at the Legislature, Kalaupapa patients came to Honolulu, including Meli Pili and her husband, Teetai Pili, who stayed at the Pearl City facility for a week, while Meli testified before the Senate Health Committee.

**International Publicity**

In March 1980, Maryknoll priest, Morgan Vittengel composed an article about Hale Mohalu in a four-page story entitled “A Great Leap – Backwards!” featuring four-color photographs on each page. The opening page had a photo of Punikai’a with patient Hattie Kahatian, while the beginning summary explained, “The closing of a medical facility for leprosy patients threatens to revive prejudice against them.” On the following page, a photo of Maryknoll Father Ed Gerlock, protesting by the State Capitol next to a sign “Honk for Hale Mohalu,” while the other pages contain photos of Maryknoll Father Luigi Cocquio, including one with him seated next to Punikai’a on the pedestal of Damien’s statue at the State Capitol. The short article captured the essence of the conflict, explaining that the run-down property had now become desirable real estate.

All of this led to the decision by the Governor and the Board of Health to remove the ‘eyesore’ (both the place and the victims of leprosy). The patients would be relocated to Leahi Hospital and the now valuable acreage would be repossessed for more profitable urban developmental purposes. As unbelievable as it may seem, the state of Hawaii led by its Governor proposed taking a great leap backwards!  

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Traveling Exhibit

On April 28 at the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Maryland, Dean Jerrold M. Michael of the University of Hawai‘i presided once again over the opening of the exhibit about Moloka‘i’s experimental leprosy station at Kalawao. Entitled, “An Opportunity Lost, An Exhibit on the History of the United States Public Health Leprosy Investigation Station, Moloka‘i Hawaii, 1909-1913,” it had previously been on display in November 1979 at the Federal Building in Honolulu. Dean Michael explained that the 1909 experiment failed because it was not long after the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani and the tensions from that event coupled with the imposition of the federal takeover at Kalawao resonated with the Hawaiian patients who were viewed not as people but experiments. The doctors in charge were chiefly concerned with scientific study and maintaining an antiseptically, germ-free environment. The Hawaiians who were the majority of the leprosy patients did not share the same fears toward the illness as the federal medical staff. As Dean Michael explained, “All that remains of the once proud Investigation Station are the concrete piers upon which the buildings once stood.”

Today in 2013 over a hundred years later, the ruins of the concrete piers are visible, with most fallen down and some lying in crumbled pieces, hidden in the overgrowth of Christmas berry plants and strawberry guava trees.

For the June 1980 Star-Bulletin, David Shapiro wrote an article about the Moloka‘i exhibit. Every time publicity about the exhibit surfaced in the media, it was a reminder that the government’s treatment was inept past and present. The Moloka‘i study was imposed on the patients, without any dialogue from their perspective. Dean Michael blamed the federal failure on its misplaced emphasis: stressing the importance of technology rather than communication. The Dean’s words, “Let us not lose our concerns for humanity in our striving for knowledge,” resonated with events at Hale Mohalu, where the humanity of the patients had been ignored.

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Support and Dissent

On the island of Hawaiʻi in April 1980, the ‘Ohana held a rally “at the invitation of Keaukaha’s Maila Puka O Kalani Church, a parish that has faithfully supported the Hale Mohalu patients” with their donations and purchase of calendars, bumper stickers, and T-shirts.¹⁰²⁶ Patients Meli Pili, Clarence Naiʻa, Bernice and Richard Pupule, and Sister Earnest Chung flew to Hilo while Paul Harada, Cathrine Puahala, and Barbara Marks came from Kalaupapa. “Over 400 people came out for a great evening of dance, music, songs, chants, and an update from Paul Harada and an opportunity to meet each other.”¹⁰²⁷ This sharing of aloha among the ‘Ohana helped to sustain the struggle, particularly during those moments when the opposing parties in the controversy became frustrated with what they perceived as the other’s intransigence.

At Aiea Library in April 1980 when the Pearl City Neighborhood Board held an informational meeting to discuss Hale Mohalu, tensions mounted between the Health Department and the patients. Yuen and Punikaiʻa each found the other unreasonable and both sides heatedly disputed one another before the Neighborhood Board. “Residents and supporters of the Hale Mohalu leprosy hospital accused the state Department of Health of lying to the Pearl City Neighborhood Board executive committee during an informational meeting last week at the Aiea Library,” reported the Sun-Press.¹⁰²⁸ Yuen told the Board that the patients at Kalaupapa were circulating a petition in favor of a cottage at Leahi and that the State did not have anything to do with the petition. Punikaiʻa said that was a lie – “that he had ‘first-hand’ knowledge that Dr. Anna Maria Brault, chief of the DOH Communicable disease division, had a hand in the petition.”¹⁰²⁹ Yuen later stated he used the wrong term when he said petition - that it was really a survey to assess the patients, but he thought one of the patients had started the survey. During his Board presentation, Yuen said, “To me, the position of the state is very reasonable. Why don’t they want to accept that? My only conclusion is the land, that they feel they own the land.”¹⁰³⁰ From his comment, Yuen had not the faintest grasp of the conflict. When questioned about

Yuen’s remark, Punikai‘a said, “We were the payment for the property. My suffering help pay for the land. Thirty years of suffering, a lifetime ... we are the property.”

Bernard Punikai‘a and the patients were at the forefront of a societal change in consciousness that the DOH could not envision. Punikai‘a explained that the entire matter had to do with “freedom of personal choice. The patients should have the right to choose where they live, if they live in a dormitory or a home, to choose their own doctor, just like the rights of any citizen.” Punikai‘a had jotted down a handwritten note on yellow paper with the title “Hale Mohalu at Leahi Argument Against,” saying the patients did not want to be “put into cubby holes for the rest of their lives.” They were capable of living, full rich lives, contributing to society, but the State wanted them out of the way. Two full years after he ordered the patients transferred, when they had tried to negotiate for a small corner of the land, Yuen twisted the debate, moving from the State desired the land to argue the patients wanted the land. Yuen’s argument was ridiculous, not unlike Ariyoshi’s twisted argument that if the patients insisted on integration, they should accept institutional living at Leahi.

The patients who died while at Leahi, George Liwai and Sanford Smith were remembered in a memorial service on Friday May 9, when Ed Gerlock officiated at the ceremony to mark the one-year anniversary of the passing of the two men.

**Mary Duarte’s Passing**

In May, Mary Duarte who had been such an integral part of the resistance at Hale Mohalu, passed away unexpectedly. Although she fought hard to hold out with the others at Hale Mohalu, Mary Duarte’s mental strength could not overcome the physical toll of her chronic renal condition. “Mary Kaiwi Duarte,” the paper reported, “one of the last leprosy patients to remain at Hale Mohalu, died Monday [May 19] at St. Francis Hospital. She was 63.” A very kind woman, she was deeply respected and loved by those who were fortunate to meet her. Diagnosed with leprosy as a child, she was sent to Kalaupapa where she lived for years. When she developed kidney disease, she moved to

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1033 Note, Bernard Punikai‘a, (Personal Papers, Bernard Punikai‘a, Hale Mālama, Kalaupapa)
1034 George K. Liwai died on May 5, 1979 and Sanford Smith died a few months later on July 19, 1979.
Hale Mohalu in 1977 in order to undergo kidney dialysis treatment three times a week at St. Francis Hospital. Mary Duarte was a staunch supporter of the patients’ desire to remain at their Pearl City home. “Mrs. Duarte” the obituary noted, “became the epitome of the effort to keep open the 22-year-old home for lepers.” She and her husband Frank Duarte remained at Hale Mohalu despite no running water or electricity. In speaking of her home in Pearl City, Duarte stated, “I want to stay here.” Of whatever happened in the struggle, she said, “I feel like I want to be part of Hale Mohalu, win or lose.”

Star-Bulletin writer Murry Engle described Mary Duarte as “the rallying figure for leprosy patients in their fight to save Hale Mohalu Hospital at Pearl City.” State Senator Neil Abercrombie blamed the state for contributing to her death and to that of George Liwai and Sanford Smith. “The blood is on the hands of the state. I feel it is directly responsible for the untimely deaths of Mary and of Sanford Smith and George Liwai last year.”

In late spring, a ruling from the Department of Health and Human Services (HEW) appeared to be a setback. On May 27, HEW sent a letter to Cecil Heftel, House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means in response to Heftel’s letter of January 10, 1980 in which Heftel and his constituent, Punikai’a requested that the federal government audit Hawai‘i’s leprosy program. The Department of Health and Human Services did not feel that the audit was necessary. Their letter with its slow response reflected the government’s bureaucratic handling of even a simple request. HEW distanced itself from any responsibility for the leprosy program, explaining that it was within the State’s jurisdiction to decide what to do about Hale Mohalu, citing court cases the patients had filed as reasons for their distance.

Local and National Publicity

In Hilo, the Hawai‘i Tribune-Herald on May 14 carried an article on the residents of Hale Mohalu that was later picked up by other news agencies, gaining national attention. Author Jon Stewart described the situation of the patients.

They are old, most of them. Some are sick. Some are confined to wheelchairs. Some are blind. They are all poor. They are all, but one, native Hawaiian. And they are all disfigured, some badly, by the ravages of leprosy. They are the lepers.

of Hale Mohalu, and since September 1, 1978, they have lived a life of official non-existence, deprived of municipal water, electricity, medicine, nursing care, outside food services and federal health funds.\textsuperscript{1041}

It was a precisely accurate description, “a life of official non-existence” because the patients, banished to Kalaupapa, had indeed been hidden away from society’s eyes, as if they did not exist. Society wanted to forget them completely. Stewart went on to explain the conflict, saying the State “wants to use Hale Mohalu - 11 very valuable acres in nearby Pearl City, plus five old buildings – for other, unspecified uses. And the lepers, who for more than 20 years have considered the place a friendly home in an unfriendly world, don’t want to leave.”\textsuperscript{1042} The story would appear in newspapers all across the country and helped to bring tremendous publicity to the patients’ cause.\textsuperscript{1043}

A few days later on May 25, a major east coast newspaper had a full-page story on the leprosy patients. The \textit{Boston Globe} newspaper picked up the story that Jon Stewart had written in the \textit{Hawai’i Tribune-Herald} and carried it in their Sunday edition.\textsuperscript{1044} It was a major shot in the arm in terms of publicity. In addition, Dorothea Carvalho of Hilo wrote to the editors of the \textit{Hawai’i Tribune-Herald}, thanking them for Stewart’s article. “It is high time that the patients of Hale Mohalu were treated with the respect due to human beings – they do have certain human rights and because they have been ill their rights should not be denied them. They should be allowed to live with dignity.”\textsuperscript{1045} ‘Ohana member Emmett Cahill also sent a letter to the editors of the \textit{Hawai’i Tribune-Herald} thanking them for publishing the Stewart article because it affirmed that the patients are human beings with rights and feelings.\textsuperscript{1046} Such supportive letters and articles in major newspapers spurred the hopes of the ‘Ohana. It seemed like a new national momentum had begun as more people learned about the injustice at Hale Mohalu.

In addition to articles in the major daily Honolulu papers and the \textit{Leeward Sun-Press}, and the most recent coverage in the \textit{Hawaii Tribune Herald} and the \textit{Boston Globe}, articles on Hale Mohalu also appeared in \textit{UNITY}, the union newspaper. One union article stated, “The ‘Ohana has grown into an organization with people from all sectors of

\textsuperscript{1041} Jon Stewart, ‘We are people, not a disease,’ \textit{Hawaii Tribune-Herald}, Wednesday, May 14, 1980, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{1042} Jon Stewart, ‘We are people, not a disease,’ \textit{Hawaii Tribune-Herald}, Wednesday, May 14, 1980, p. 4.
Hawaiian society. A newsletter with a mailing list of nearly 2,000 goes out regularly each month. Over $18,000 was contributed to support the patients in their struggle.”

As the article noted, most of the donations were small amounts of less than $10, indicative of the wide support for the patients. This article in the UNITY newspaper was a way to reach out to a larger audience, especially to a receptive group of people involved in labor struggles, who could offer much needed support. The story concluded with a request for contributions, explaining: they had the 1980 calendar for sale, the record of the Hale Mohalu song, and the T-shirt with Father Damien’s image, as well as the book, Maiʻi Hoʻokaʻawale – the Separating Sickness, and asking, “Please help by signing our petition, which now has 12,000 names.”

On June 15, 1980 Robert Hollis wrote about the Hale Mohalu conflict in an article for the San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle entitled “Hawaiian Leprosy Patients Fight for the Hospital They See As Their Home.” With this West Coast major report and the earlier one in the Boston Globe on May 25, 1980, the patients’ story now had received national coverage from coast to coast. In the San Francisco article, Bernard Punikaiʻa explained why the resistance happened at this point in time. “Collectively, people have perceived that this is the best time to stand up and say to the state, ‘Treat us with some humanity.’” Punikaiʻa went on to say, “The fundamental issue is that we have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect our lives.”

Although their daily living situation must have been very difficult in many ways, they lived in a small area of Hale Mohalu that was “clean and cheerfully decorated with banners and posters used in Honolulu street demonstrations during the 30 months” and the patients never seemed to lose their optimism, as Hollis reported. “The remaining patients, now down to seven, are cheerful, full of the aloha spirit and convinced of the rightness of their cause.”

Hollis was sympathetic to the patients’ cause. He had written about them for the Advertiser a few days earlier and was well acquainted with the details of the struggle. The Chronicle laid out both sides in its extensive report and Hollis noted that a huge unresolved question concerned the State’s plans for the land. Hollis explained that the patients felt the State

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1047 “Save Hale Mohalu!” UNITY, June 1980.
1048 “Save Hale Mohalu!” UNITY, June 1980.
wanted to save money at their expense. Punikaiʻa argued, “by moving all the patients to the underutilized Leahi, the state saved the costs of Hale Mohalu. Hawaii receives $1.8 million a year in federal funds for the care of some 200 leprosy patients.”

Hollis noted there the State never conducted an audit of these funds although the State has received federal funds for the leprosy program since 1954. Hollis reported on the ‘Ohana’s legislature efforts to obtain the $200,000 appropriation, their architectural plans, and Governor Ariyoshi veto of that appropriation. Hollis spoke of leprosy expert, Dr. Robert Worth who talked about the battle between the Mayor and the Governor. Worth felt Fasi’s support for the patients and his run for Governor against Ariyoshi left the patients caught in the crosshairs of the long-standing antagonism between the Mayor and the Governor. Worth said, “We’re into a political retribution thing now. The patients were caught in a political Catch 22. They were seduced by Fasi and abandoned by Ariyoshi.”

The article contained a photo of Bernard Punikaiʻa standing next to a horse at Hale Mohalu – an experience he could never have at Leahi. The open Hawaiian lifestyle living close to nature they enjoyed at Pearl City would not be possible at Leahi.

In mid-July, the National Catholic Reporter covered the story of the leprosy patients. The Catholic Reporter carried Wolinsky comments, especially about the differences between Leahi and the large, open land of Hale Mohalu, saying, “You could build the Hansen’s Disease Hilton at Leahi, and it wouldn’t have that open space, and it wouldn’t be the patients’ home.” Wolinsky said that the State of Hawaiʻi “breached its contract for patients care,” and the patients suffered transfer trauma because they were denied due process when they were forced to move. Wolinsky noted “governments cannot relocate people in their care who, because of age or illness would ‘suffer grievously’ from being moved.” Wolinsky also explained that there was a second suit filed in San Francisco against the Health, Education and Welfare Department for allowing the property now worth $11 million dollars to be stolen from it.

In addition to the articles in the Sunday San Francisco Examiner of June 15, 1980 and the Sunday Boston Globe of May 25, 1980 and the National Catholic Reporter of July 18, 1980, there

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was also an article on Hale Mohalu in the magazine *Mother Jones* expected very soon as well as another expected article in *The New York Times*.\^1055

**Trip to the Nation’s Capitol**

In late July the patients announced plans for a trip to New York and to Washington D.C in order to meet with congressional leaders. Chairman of the ‘Ohana trip committee, Stewart Meacham noted the group was still seeking a federal audit of leprosy funds in Hawai‘i.\^1056 Given the large amount of federal money the State received compared to their niggardly attitude about rebuilding necessitated further investigation, yet the ‘Ohana was the only voice calling for such a study. On August 1, the ‘Ohana sent out a request for donations to help with the upcoming trip to Washington, explaining that the group wanted to talk with Secretary Patricia Harris of the Department of Health and Human Services because “close to 90% of the funding for the state leprosy program are federal funds.”\^1057 On August 2, People Against Chinatown Evictions had their annual fundraiser and the ‘Ohana helped them by selling tickets.\^1058 From fundraising to public arguments in the paper, protest issues in general and over the patients in particular were part of everyday discourse. When *Star-Bulletin* editor A. A. Smyser published an article about Kalaupapa, Senator Abercrombie disputed some of Smyser’s remarks. In his letter to the editor on August 20, the Senator argued that the patients were not “free to come and go” as Smyser had stated, but they were forced to go to Leahi. “They are sent there involuntarily and are resisting this violation of their most fundamental human and constitutional rights.” Abercrombie claimed that the patients “are made pawns in a land-power grab by the Department of Health. Not only are the patients under attack but other taxpayers, as well.” The Senator maintained that the cost to send the patients to Leahi created unneeded expense. His support of the patients called for equity. “They ask only the simple justice due every one of us – not to be torn from one’s home by government dictate merely to satisfy the greed of a mindless bureaucracy.”\^1059

In preparation for their trip to Washington, the ‘Ohana discussed their plans with the press, explaining that two patients Clarence Nai‘a and Bernard Punikai‘a were part of

\^1058 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, July 1980, Volume III, No. 5, p. 3.
a five-member delegation to meet with Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Harris in the hope of obtaining an audit.\textsuperscript{1060} It was important to get the audit done “because, since 1954, the state has submitted only quarterly reports to the agency, formerly the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.”\textsuperscript{1061} Punikaiʻa explained there had not been any review conducted regarding the expenditures, “no follow-up to see whether the money has been used wisely and if every (patients’) rights have been protected in the administration of those funds. Who’s to say what kind of discrepancies might show up in an audit?”\textsuperscript{1062} While not making any accusations, the ‘Ohana felt after twenty-six years it was time to have an audit.\textsuperscript{1063}

The Hale Mohalu controversy became part of the 1980 Mayoral race. Having lost the race for Governor, Mayor Fasi was running for re-election against fellow Democrat Eileen Anderson. Many people who supported Fasi felt that Anderson was the Governor’s mouthpiece and that her candidacy was simply done at his bidding – to thwart Fasi. Without Anderson on the ticket, Fasi would easily win the primary and therefore the election. The primary was September 20, 1980. As with many other issues, Anderson agreed with Governor Ariyoshi concerning Hale Mohalu. “Democratic mayoral candidate Eileen Anderson yesterday [Wednesday September 17, 1980] accused incumbent Frank Fasi of ‘encouraging’ leprosy patients to remain at the old Hale Mohalu leprosy facility under dangerous and unsanitary conditions.”\textsuperscript{1064} If she were mayor, she would try to get the patients to move to Leahi, saying, “the new facility at Leahi ‘is a delightful place.”\textsuperscript{1065}

Shortly after her comment about Hale Mohalu, Eileen Anderson defeated Mayor Fasi in the primary. Hale Mohalu had lost a staunch supporter in Fasi. Anderson went on to defeat the Republican nominee Jack Schweigert, who had been at one time the attorney for Hale Mohalu. With Mayor Anderson and Governor Ariyoshi united in their opposition to the patients, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana reached out to Washington for aid.

After Mary Duarte’s death, Senator Spark Matsunaga had sent a letter of condolence to Frank Duarte. In response, Frank Duarte on Hale Mohalu stationery wrote Matsunaga to ask him for help. Duarte spoke about his wife’s wishes. “Mary wanted to

stay at Hale Mohalu until she died because she believed that Hale Mohalu is our home, and nobody could take away that HOME from us.” Duarte explained how both Ariyoshi and Yuen had said Mary was the only “authorized” legal patient at Hale Mohalu, but if that was the case, Duarte questioned their actions.

So why, while my wife, Mary was here, did both of them, Ariyoshi and Yuen, order the cut off of medical services, (nurses and medicine) food, water, gas, electricity, and telephone? WHY? Who’s talking about HUMAN RIGHTS? Many people talk about HUMAN RIGHTS, but that’s all they do, talk about it.

Duarte reaffirmed that the ‘Ohana will not leave Hale Mohalu, not only for her sake, but also because of the other patients, who also lost their lives. “Mary is still here, her spirit is alive, giving us strength to continue our struggle, and we will continue the fight. In the spirit of “Kamiano” Fr. Damien, Sanford Smith, George Liwai, we will resist this attack on HUMAN RIGHTS and our HUMANITY.” It was a powerful letter, full of emotion and fight. Duarte expressed his regrets that for health reasons, he could not go with the others to Washington, D. C., ending his letter with a request. “I hope that your words of consolation to me are also in support of our struggle. Please kōkua us.” Hard to imagine how anyone in position to do so would not answer this plaintive call for help.

The Hale Mohalu Delegation did visit New York City and Washington, D. C. in September 1980, and the newsletter reported on their trip. “O-H-A-N-A. That’s the only word that can sum up the efforts around the patients’ personally talking the Hale Mohalu struggle to East Coast U.S.A.” In New York, the ‘Ohana stayed with Jesuits friends on Staten Island and visited Bernard Punikaiʻa’s sister, Shirley Manicas on Long Island. After an enjoyable trip to the Big Apple, they took the train to Washington D.C. where ‘Ohana members Kathryn Braun and Chris Conybeare met them. Braun and Conybeare had been active supporters of Hale Mohalu prior to their move to Washington. Representative Cec Heftel met with the group and introduced them to Dr. Leonard Bachman, Director of the Division of Health and Human Services. The ‘Ohana met with all four members of the Congressional delegation. The National Catholic Reporter of September 19, 1980 had a photo of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana in Washington D. C.

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1066 Frank Duarte, Letter to Senator Matsunaga, September 1, 1980.
1067 Frank Duarte, Letter to Senator Matsunaga, September 1, 1980.
1068 Frank Duarte, Letter to Senator Matsunaga, September 1, 1980.
Pictured on the steps of the Capitol were Sister Sandy Galazin, Clarence Nai‘a, Emmett Cahill, Sister Earnest Chung, and Bernard Punikai‘a. Adjacent to the group picture, there was also a photo of Punikai‘a with Representative Daniel Akaka.\textsuperscript{1071}

An important benefit of the trip to Washington had been the chance to meet with nationally syndicated columnist, Colman McCarthy of the \textit{Washington Post}. McCarthy wrote about Hale Mohalu in a story entitled “Crushing the Powerless for the Common Good.”\textsuperscript{1072} The widespread distribution of McCarthy’s column provided the patients another national platform, in addition to the coverage in Boston, San Francisco, and New York. McCarthy framed the story about the patients in terms of power and insightfully assessed the conflict in terms of its larger implications.

For most Americans, who seldom think about the 50\textsuperscript{th} state and whose awareness of leprosy comes mostly from myth or prejudice, the Ariyoshi-Punikaia dispute doesn’t rate even a passing thought. But it should. The issues involved - access to decent health care, ties to the land, the right to challenge the authority of the government even if the policymakers are well-intentioned – are common to hundreds of current square-offs in American communities between the powerful and the powerless.\textsuperscript{1073}

McCarthy’s simply written column laid out the history of the struggle, the background of the settlement at Moloka‘i, and the status of the conflict, noting that the case has been in the courts, with some rulings in the patients’ favor and others for the State. “But something more than legalities are involved and this is why the lepers of Hale Mohalu are united with tens of thousands of other American citizens who have been, or are being, displaced for some noble purpose.”\textsuperscript{1074} The problem with that, as McCarthy elucidated, someone else (other than those directly affected) determines what constitutes nobility. According to McCarthy, “It is ever the same. Some crushing force, with unlimited funds to fight its case in the courts, tries to overpower a few weak citizens, telling them that displacement is for their own good or the common good.”\textsuperscript{1075}

When they returned from their trip to the nation’s capitol, the ‘Ohana reflected on its outcome. Some of the successes and disappointments the ‘Ohana experienced included the fact that Senator Inouye had requested the General Accounting Office (GAO) to audit
the leprosy program and the transfer of the land at Hale Mohalu. Inouye had also asked Ariyoshi to restore the utilities. Lastly, “the Department of Health and Human Services promised to study the situation and intervene - as and when they can.” The ‘Ohana was disappointed that Secretary Patricia Harris of Health and Human Services did not meet with them, but overall, they felt that their trip back east had been a major success.

**OHA Contest**

After his return from Washington, Punikai’a decided to run for office in the newly created Office of Hawaiian Affairs election. Along with three other candidates from Moloka‘i, Punikai’a was part of a highly competitive race that included activist Walter Ritte, and Sam Peters Jr., who started the Moloka‘i Free Press in 1975, and Louis Hao, parks director for Mayor Elmer Cravalho of Maui. “The four candidates are easily the most visible because of their past associations and activities.” Punikai’a focused on education, explaining, “he would seek to develop ‘cultural learning centers’ on each island to instill more pride in Hawaiian culture.” Abraham “Puhipau” Ahmad, Peter Apo, and Gard Kealoha were OHA candidates for the single seat to represent Oahu. In this inaugural Office of Hawaiian Affairs election, Punikai’a, Puhipau, and Ritte were three noted Hawaiian activists - all outspoken in their resistance to the status quo.

Punikai’a stated, “I deeply believe that Hawaiians have become nomads and victims in our own land.” Like others, he wanted to run for OHA to correct those problems. “I see that the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) must become a tool for Hawaiians to win our right of self-determination and to regain our birthright as a people, our self-dignity, our culture, and our lands.” Punikai’a was astute in his assessment of the manipulation of Hawaiian culture to promote tourism. “I love parades, but I question why our culture should be used by others for commercial purposes while so many of our own needs are neglected.” He added, “It’s time we stopped weaving coconut hats and understand ALOHA to mean commitment and responsibility to ourselves as an OHANA.”

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In November the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana held the Second Annual Pupu Potluck rally at Hale Mohalu. Mel and Lani Hoomanawanui of the Ahahui Ohana moku Anuenue, members of the resistance at Sand Island attended the celebration and Punikai‘a, Nai‘a, Emmett Cahill, and Sister Sandy Galazin and Sister Earnest Chung talked about the outcome of their trip to Washington and New York. “During the question-answer period, concern was voiced about Mayor-elect Anderson’s statement during the campaign that, if elected, she would take back the generator provided by the past City administration and disconnect the water hooked up by the City,” the ‘Ohana newsletter reported.1082 The Hale Mohalu Band - Jim Albertini, Gigi Cocquio, Wally Inglis, and ‘Īmai Kalāhele (“Snake”), along with Punikai‘a - performed at the rally, as did the Emerson Brothers, Ken and Phil, and Ira Nephus on trombone and Nelson Hu on guitar. About one hundred people attended the potluck rally, enjoying the food, fellowship and the music, “a sparkling repertoire of Hawaiian nationalist and other protest songs. This included Bernard Punikai‘a’s haunting ‘Kalapapa.”1083 Nationalist songs were becoming increasingly important as Hawaiians struggled to reclaim their cultural heritage and lands.

On November 27, the Hale Mohalu Ohana held their Thanksgiving potluck luncheon at Hale Mohalu1084 “A liturgy during which scriptures were read and informal prayers offered highlighted the celebration.”1085 Auntie Emma deFries, Hawaiian activist, passed away at Ka‘a‘awa on Monday December eighth. Auntie Emma, “a well-loved member of the Hawaiian community and a kahuna nui, who worked closely with the Protect Kahoolawe ‘Ohana and with anti-nuclear groups” was a powerful force in the Hawaiian renaissance. “Highly respected among Hawaiians as a spiritual leader in tune with nature,” her obituary noted, “She devoted much of her life to perpetuating Hawaiian culture, giving talks about old Hawaii and teaching the Hawaiian language, the hula and ancient chants.”1086 Auntie Emma had been a supporter of Hale Mohalu and had been at the luau in September 1978.1087 Punikai‘a attended Aunty Emma’s funeral, offering his condolences and expressing “the strong aloha of our Ohana for this great Hawaiian

1084 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS October-November 1980, p. 5.
1086 Obituary, “Auntie Emma deFries Dies at Kaaawa Park,” (date of death December 8, 1980), Honolulu Advertiser, Tuesday December 9, 1980, B-1.
1087 Emma deFries, photographed at Hale Mohalu luau September 10, 1978 (Ed Gerlock, personal collection).
woman who had walked among us and given strength to our endeavors and protests.”

Auntie Emma’s passing was a great loss for the Hawaiian community.

At Hale Mohalu, the protestors continued their fight as they faced their third Christmas in the dark. At the December 25 Christmas Thursday celebration, one of the guests was “Philippines political exile Charito Planas, a noted anti-Marcos activist who is based at the Friends of the Filipino People national office in Washington, D.C.” The annual Christmas potluck featured the music of the Hale Mohalu Band. One member of the ‘Ohana, Jim Kaufmann in the ‘Ohana newsletter recounted the Christmas party and spoke of prospects for Hale Mohalu in the coming year, noting, “Whatever 1981 holds in store for Hale Mohalu, the roots of the struggle, over 3 years old, run long and deep, both locally as well as nationally. No force, no matter how awesome or powerful will dislodge them: and the Christmas celebration proved that.”

In summary, the highlight of the year for the ‘Ohana was the Washington, D.C. trip. They felt it had been a successful venture and would bring forth the long-awaited audit. The Legislature helped the patients to secure some bills that strengthened their position, but the Governor’s veto stymied any ultimate win. When Mary Duarte passed away, the struggle took on a tougher stance, providing the protestors with more resolve than ever. National publicity helped win new supporters. From coast to coast, news of the Hale Mohalu conflict was widely disseminated. While publicity about the case increased substantially in this year, Governor Ariyoshi and Director George Yuen still held tremendous control over local media.

CHAPTER 10
FASTING IN PROTEST

The standoff had lasted three full years with no resolution. Everything was at a standstill awaiting the court case. Frustrated but determined, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana initiated “a 2-month campaign to broaden community support and build for a major initiative in the spring.”¹⁰⁹¹ In order to generate favorable publicity, they decided to launch a strong offensive planned for Easter Week. The ‘Ohana took over the rotunda of the State Capitol, sleeping at night by Damien’s statue, to hold a three day vigil. The ‘Ohana employed themes of crucifixion and resurrection as symbolic of the struggle. Though it never aired publicly, dissension among the lawyers emerged over strategy.

Federal Audit of Leprosy Program

In early January, the General Accounting Office announced that it would investigate the handling of federal funds in the Hawai‘i Hansen’s Disease program. This was great news for the ‘Ohana, a reflection of their efforts to seek federal help in Washington the previous fall. In a press release the ‘Ohana issued on Friday January 9, Punikai‘a stated, “We welcome the investigation of the Hawaii leprosy program. We feel the investigation will show that the State’s misuse of funds and property has not been in the interests of the patients or the taxpayers.”¹⁰⁹² Both Honolulu newspapers conveyed news of the long-awaited audit, crediting the aid of Senator Inouye and Representative Heftel. Advertiser writer Jerry Burris reported that ‘Ohana members went to Washington to press for keeping Hale Mohalu open, but because of Inouye and Heftel, “the plan was revised to call for a general audit of federal money going to the Hawaii leprosy program.”¹⁰⁹³ Nadine W. Scott of the Star-Bulletin also credited the assistance of Inouye and Heftel. To provide context in the three-year battle, Scott recounted information about the quitclaim deed, and how Toshio Kagehiro was told not to make repairs as far back as 1966 when he was hired.¹⁰⁹⁴ The ‘Ohana was delighted that the investigation was to take place, but to make sure that the promised audit would actually happen, the ‘Ohana sent a copy of the newspaper articles along with a letter on January 13 to their supporters in

Washington, requesting them to write the General Accounting Office (GAO). Given that Inouye, Heftel, and Assistant Surgeon General, Dr. George Lythcott, supported the complete audit, the ‘Ohana wanted to make sure that the GAO did not back out, “claiming they have no responsibility.” The ‘Ohana asked that letters and calls be made to Inouye, to Heftel, and to Lythcott, urging their Washington friends “to call and write the GAO and congratulate them for doing the investigation and to raise hell if they tell you they are backing out.”

To emphasize their sense of solidarity with Kalaupapa and to report on their Washington trip, several ‘Ohana members traveled to the Settlement for a weekend visit in the middle of January. The ‘Ohana wanted to cement ties with Kalaupapa, as unity was crucial to their overall patients’ rights struggle. On Friday January 16, they had scheduled a reunion potluck at the Lions Club Pavilion by the ocean and on Saturday January 17 a community meeting to discuss current projects along with a presentation of the ‘Ohana’s slideshow. The notice for the Saturday meeting was an open invitation to the entire community, stating, “WE ARE ALL ONE OHANA!” On their return from Kalaupapa, the ‘Ohana sent letter of thanks and to let the residents know they understood their concerns. “We hear you tell us loud and clear to continue the struggle for Hale Mohalu. And that we shall do. We hear you tell us to remember that not all of the problems are at Hale Mohalu.” Settlement residents worried about needed building repairs on patient houses, the water tank, and the meat house, continual understaffing in medical and maintenance personnel as well as pay discrepancies between State workers and patients. The lack of resolution on these outstanding issues led the resident patients to feel like second-class citizens. The State’s history of neglect remained a constant whether at Pearl City or Kalaupapa. The ‘Ohana newsletter reminded readers to rally behind the patients. “We must not allow Kalaupapa to become another Hale Mohalu! We must act to compel the Governor to restore the necessary utilities and services to the Hale Mohalu patients and to reconsider the patients’ plan for a new facility on the present site.”

Not long after their return from Kalaupapa, the opening session of the State Legislature took place on Wednesday January 21, and once again the ‘Ohana had to plead their case. They also marked the one-year Sand Island eviction anniversary on Friday January 23, and on Monday January 26, the third anniversary of the Leahi transfer.

**Save Hale Mohalu Day**

The ‘Ohana observed SAVE HALE MOHALU Day at noon on Monday at the Damien Statue with a ceremony, featuring music and a brief service. Special guests from Chinatown and Sand Island were invited to give solidarity speeches. Invitations had also been extended to OHA representatives to speak. The newspapers basically ignored the demonstration, except for a photo of Bernard Punikai’a at the bottom left front page of the *Star-Bulletin* with the caption stating that on the third anniversary of the effort to “maintain rather than phase out Hale Mohalu,” Punikai’a made “an impassioned appeal at the State Capitol” for a new facility. The ‘Ohana newsletter carried a more descriptive account, explaining that the concerns of the Kalaupapa patients were highlighted at the observance attended by more than sixty-nine people, including two patients presently at Leahi, Rachel Nekoa and Tad Higa. With the legislature in session, the ‘Ohana followed through on their promise to help solve Kalaupapa’s problems by working to get bills introduced and by drafting a petition of support, gaining over 300 signatures. The ‘Ohana sought to prevent Kalaupapa from becoming another Hale Mohalu.

**Dean Michael’s Friendship**

An important voice for the patients’ concerns at this time was University of Hawai‘i Public Health Professor Dean Jerrold M. Michael, who praised the leprosy patients for their strength of character. In a letter to the editor, Dean Michael commended the book *The Separating Sickness: Ma‘i Ho‘oka‘awale* for telling patients’ stories in their own words. He particularly noted Bernard Punikai’a’s life story. “The reading of his story and those of the others who have suffered not only the physical ravages of leprosy, but the severe social impact that the disease brings can give those of us who have been more fortunate, a better perspective on life.”

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Bernard Punikai’a’s last name; instead of Punikai’a, they left out the letter “P” and printed his name as Unikaia.1107 Dean Michael sent Punikai’a a typed copy of his original letter to the editor, which had the correct spelling. On it, Michael wrote, “Bernard, Just to prove I did spell it correctly – the newspaper made the mistake. Aloha, Jerry Michael.”1108 Dean Michael also sent Punikai’a a hand-written letter on January 31 with suggestions for Punikai’a’s education. “Dear Bernard: I now have a plan set out which - if you agree – could get you started on your University of Hawaii degree.”1109 The Dean recommended Punikai’a start out as an unclassified student, enrolling in graduate classes in public health, social work, and political science. Moreover, Dean Michael wanted Punikai’a to take a course he was teaching in the fall on health planning and suggested Punikai’a come see him to discuss these proposals. Intellectually curious, Punikai’a was an avid reader with an extensive collection of books, especially on Hawaiiana.1110

**Spring 1981 Campaign**

As part of their crusade to compel the State to meet the patients’ demands, the ‘Ohana proposed a tentative draft plan, “made not as a suggestion for a last gasp, or final offensive, but as means to focus and intensify our efforts and to direct them toward Governor George Ariyoshi, the one person in Hawaii who can resolve the issue in our favor.” The plan identified Ariyoshi as “the one person who has been the major obstacle to victory,” since “his decisions and directives have led to the present impasse.” It also acknowledged the movement’s stamina and that of the participants.

The 3-year staying power of the patients and the Ohana has been a victory in and of itself, but only a most tentative one. The state administration is playing a waiting game, and we most not allow this game to be played to its predictable conclusion. We must build on the popular support we have created for Hale Mohalu and focus this support for concentrated periods at one pressure point.1111

John Witeck and Chris Conybeare, authors of the draft proposal, proposed several ideas to achieve their goal – including petitions, slideshows leaflets/fact sheets, contact with OHA, a visit to Kalaupapa in late March or early April, as well as a major campaign of

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1108 Jerrold Michael, Note to Bernard Punikaia on typed copy of original letter to the editor, January 31, 1981.
1109 Dean Jerrold M. Michael, Letter to Bernard Punikaia, January 31, 1981.
1110 Bernard Punikai’a personal papers and books, Hale Mālama Curatorial Building, Kalaupapa National Historic Park.
1111 Proposal for a Hale Mohalu Campaign, Spring, 1981.
activities scheduled around the Easter period of April 12-19, 1981. Mid-April was targeted because April 15 was the anniversary of Damien’s death and April 19 was Easter Sunday, but they began straightaway for the campaign to have full impact. Witeck and Conybeare included a critical addendum at the end of this 2-page strategic plan in which they stressed the importance of tying in the Hale Mohalu fight with other land struggles.

Note: this campaign should be undertaken in the broader context of important issues such as Hawaiian and community struggles for land and against evictions, the historical context of the treatment of Hansen’s Disease patients, and the general societal issue of the treatment of patients and the elderly. We should make all the possible connections, and seek all possible allies in organizing our campaign, but have a clear idea of which supporters and allies are the most important to involve.

A lawyer, Conybeare was skillful in negotiation as was Witeck, who handled union disputes for the United Public Workers. Both men had the best strategic minds and coupled with the impressive skills of other ‘Ohana, it made for a formidable campaign.

In February, the ‘Ohana appealed to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, sending them a letter to congratulate the new trustees and to ask OHA to place the matter of Hale Mohalu on their agenda so that the ‘Ohana could make a presentation. “The letter by Bernard Punikaia as Ohana spokesman briefly described the struggle and the sacrifice of the patients, many of them Hawaiians, and noted the urgency of the situation,” explaining “basic rights, as well as human lives, are at stake.”

**Appearances Can Be Deceiving**

Since the Moloka‘i Settlement became part of the national park system, interest in Kalaupapa continued to grow as newspapers explored its history. On Thursday March 12, the *Los Angeles Times* carried a story about problems at Kalaupapa regarding patients’ pay and pension discrimination. On the surface, everything at the Settlement looked peaceful, “but underlying the calm there are currents of unrest and deep resentment toward the state.” The paper described how the patients, removed from their loved ones, isolated, and taken care of by the Department of Health are expected to be thankful...
for what they receive. Paul Harada explained how the government “took our lives, shoved us out. We were brought here [Kalaupapa] to protect them [the public] and now they expect we should be happy and grateful because they take care of us.”1117 The patients pointed out the way the State “treated them like children, or worse, like animals herded off into exile.”1118 Although the State had responsibility for the patients, they were dismissive toward them. Punika’a elaborated, “Government’s perception of leprosy patients is that we are mindless.” When the law did away with isolation in 1969, the State saw there was no longer any need for Kalaupapa to exist, giving way to the tempting desirability of the unspoiled land. Saddled with patients’ responsibility, the State believed by its presence, it had generously exceeded its obligation; as a result, the State continued to collect federal money, while it chose to do only minimum care. “The state has taken a parsimonious approach to the maintenance and upkeep of Kalaupapa, spending only as much as was absolutely necessary to maintain the buildings and the patients,” Punikai’a explained.1119

‘Ohana and Patient Primacy

At the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana meeting on Mach 18, the discussion centered on the need to connect with other oppressed groups, including the struggle for Huna Street.1120 Of chief concern was the primacy of the patients in relationship to the ‘Ohana. John Witeck, secretary of the ‘Ohana took notes and a partial list of the issues raised on this matter included emphasizing “Unity of Patients and Ohana is the most important, Problems among the patients, Not worked out or solved, Bad feelings sometimes remain. Not just Hale Mohalu land we want, but should be for a better society. Solidarity is very important.”1121 His notes also stressed the need to “link with other groups similarly oppressed. Maybe let land be used by other people.”1122 Witeck’s records also reflected the plans the ‘Ohana made for the Damien Day celebration the next month. “The Big Cross by Damien Statue – ‘Human Rights of Patients Have Been Crucified.’”1123 Tying together Christ’s crucifixion with the patients’ human rights made for a powerful visual

1120 For an expanded discussion of the issues involved in Huna Street, please see Chapter 4.
image to grab the public’s attention and certainly the ‘Ohana needed to grow their support base because the administration did little to help.

Legislatively-speaking, the results for the patients were often disappointing. Senator Yamasaki, Chairman of the Hawaii Senate Ways and Means Committee had worked to defeat two bills relating to Kalaupapa. Senate Bill 863 introduced by Senator Abercrombie had to do with equal pay for patient workers who were paid less than the minimum wage; Senate Bill 1730 introduced by Senator Carpenter had to do with home rule for Kalawao County. “It [Kalawao County] is now administered by the State Department of Health, and the residents’ needs and concerns are often neglected.” Later in June, Kalaupapa’s low wages would be declared illegal, thanks in large measure to the efforts of Punikai’a and the ‘Ohana who sought to end the monetary discrimination. In order to achieve some autonomy for patient representation regarding Kalawao County’s governance over Kalaupapa, the ‘Ohana had sought to change that regulation, but they lost. To this day, Kalawao remains a separate county ruled by the Department of Health.

April’s Major Campaign

Three years into the struggle, the conflict continued to tread water and needed a major offensive to create momentum. In conjunction with the Easter holiday, the ‘Ohana launched what they hoped would be a hard-hitting campaign to sway public opinion toward their side in order to generate political action. They focused their attention on three chief events, namely Palm Sunday, Easter Week, and Easter Sunday.

Special services were held for Palm Sunday and during the following week (known in the Catholic tradition as Holy Week) the ‘Ohana had decided to pursue several activities. They began on Wednesday April 15 to mark the ninety-second anniversary of Damien’s death with a commemorative program at the Damien Statue at 12 Noon. The ‘Ohana newsletter invited the public “to celebrate the meaning of Father Damien’s sacrifice and the struggle of the patients of Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa.” The festivities began with singing “Hale Mohalu” followed by the introduction, a prayer, and a reading, and the singing of “Kalaupapa.” Next various speakers took center stage before

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1125 “Fast, Protest to Mark Damien’s Birth Date,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Monday April 13, 1981, A-3. (note: the paper said it was Damien’s birthday but April 15 1889 was Damien’s date of death.
1126 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, April 1981, p. 4.
the program drew to a conclusion with the song “E Na Kini,” another prayer, announcements, and finally the singing of the traditional “Hawaii Aloha.”  

The ‘Ohana newsletter noted that some of the them would “begin a 3-day fast that day, and we would welcome your stopping by anytime between Wednesday noon and Friday noon to aid our leafleting and petitioning campaign.”  

The ‘Ohana campaign also included an all-night vigil for Wednesday and Thursday night at the Capitol. At noon on Friday, they held a “Way of the Cross Service, ‘a walking observance highlighting Hale Mohalu issues from the organization’s viewpoint.”  

During the fast on Thursday the Advertiser captured the scene with a photo entitled “Fasting in Protest,” showing the protestors gathered around Damien’s statue with a “We Want Justice” sign in front at the base of the statue.  

The Star-Bulletin also showed a photo of the group during their all night vigil in the middle of the rotunda.  

The Holy Week activities at the State Capitol featured several speakers including Punikai’a, Frank Duarte, Clarence Nai’a, Dante Carpenter, and Charlie Correa of the Chinatown struggle. People stopped to sign petitions in favor of the patients, while those driving past the State Capitol signaled a vociferous aloha via their cars’ horns. “The honking for Hale Mohalu was steady for the entire three days. At two or three in the morning, patients and supporters would be awakened by the sounds of honking cars and trucks.”  

It was quite a show of solidarity – a demonstration religious in nature but not quite - in the midst of the State Capitol rotunda. Photographs of the vigil reveal a scene of phenomenal contrast, with candles and a quiet retreat-like atmosphere, not in a religious setting, but in the cavernous open-air lobby of the State Legislature.  

On Friday April 17, 1981, the ‘Ohana held “Way of the Cross” ceremony at 12 Noon at the Damien statue. In their April newsletter, the ‘Ohana invited the public to join them in the “Raising of the cross at the Damien Statue. ‘The Way of the Cross’ service beginning at the State Capitol, a walking observance of the key issues and struggles facing Hawaii’s people.”  

The ‘Ohana felt it was significant to perform the Stations
around the block of the State Capitol because it commemorated “the many ways in which
the image of God is defiled in human beings by the Legislature, the Governor, the
Department of Health, of Land and Natural Resources, banks, in the exploitation of
women, etc.” The Ohana celebrated the traditional Stations of the Cross by replacing
them with a series of meditations related to the Hale Mohalu struggle. They adapted the
traditional stations to make their own: First station: The State Legislature, Second:
Department of Health, Third: Flame in Front of Capitol, Fourth: Washington Place, Fifth
station: Facing Down Hotel Street, Sixth station: Hawai‘i Bank, Seventh: Circuit Court,
Eighth: Iolani Palace, Ninth: Mission Houses, Tenth: Department of Land and Natural
Resources and the Last: Damien Statue.

The Easter Sunday celebration at Hale Mohalu began at 12 Noon with the ‘Ohana
religious service followed by a potluck luncheon. “Easter Sunday was the largest
crowd at Hale Mohalu in many moons. Supporters and patients shared food, songs and
love.” The ‘Ohana fellowship, shared over meals, music, demonstrations deepened
the longer they fought, and in sharing their aloha, the spirit of the ‘Ohana renewed its
strength.

On April 21, 1981 patient Anita Una of Kalaupapa sent Bernard Punikai‘a a
lovely note of support and money for his fight at Hale Mohalu on behalf of all the
patients. It was a warm, caring letter in which she expressed concern for his health and
demonstrated the support of fellow patients.

You know, Bernard, I’ve frequently agonized at the futility of your ‘admirable’
efforts, but certainly admired your strength and courage to tenaciously ‘buck’
back against an insurmountable obstacle, but for your health-sake, if it doesn’t
work out by the end of this year, shouldn’t you give yourself a break and give it up? I’m sure no one will think the less of you for it, but you’ve fought back hard
and long enough. I’m sure you’re going to rebel at that suggestion, but I’d hate to
see you and the others to continue suffering any longer. Naturally, I hope you’ll
win out (for us) this year!

Anita Una ended her letter with her best wishes for Punikai‘a and “the boys” as she called
the other protestors. Her warmth and aloha reflects the sense of family that the patients

1136 Program, “The Way of the Cross of the People of Hawaii” Good Friday, April 17, 1981.
1138 Anita Una, Letter to Bernard Punikaia, April 21, 1981.
shared with one another, a bond they have experienced as leprosy brothers and sisters.
With their various medical problems, they had aloha for one another’s physical fragility.
At this time, Clarence Nai‘a had knee surgery at Queen’s Hospital and Bernard Punikai‘a
recently had a foot operation. While Nai‘a still had some knee problems, Punikai‘a on
crutches was able to picket on Friday afternoon not long after his surgery. 1139

One year after Mary Duarte’s death, the ‘Ohana remembered her in a service,
recounting “Mary stories.” 1140 Ed Gerlock publicly mentioned her in a letter to the paper,
talking about her at the Easter Sunrise service in 1979. “She stood there that chilly Easter
morning at the Punchbowl Sunrise Service and spoke to the thousands that gathered to
hear and experience what the meaning of Easter was.” 1141 Gerlock related what a
remarkable woman Mary Duarte was, in particular, her gentle spirit. “She told the
governor that she loved him and it was precisely because she loved him that she and the
patients at Hale Mohalu must continue to fight him. What he was doing to the leprosy
patients was far worse for him than it was for them, she had said.” 1142

Hale Mohalu Garden

In addition to maintaining the upkeep of the Pearl City facility, among the many
delights of Hale Mohalu was a small garden that Ed Gerlock started. 1143 Plans for the
proposed garden were first mentioned in the April 1981 newsletter and referenced a
poster on the wall at Hale Mohalu, which stated, “The land is mother to us all.” The
‘Ohana took that idea as their inspiration. “The basic issue at stake here is that the land
belongs to those who have invested their lives in it. In keeping with that spirit, we are
planning to plant nearly an acre of vegetables here at Hale Mohalu.” 1144 A few months
later, the garden was completed. The June newsletter reported the progress. “Around ¾ of
an acre has been plowed behind the main Hale Mohalu building and the administration
building and 1/3 of that has been planted to corn, kai choi, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and
onions.” 1145 The ‘Ohana had high hopes for the garden – that it would sustain them in
some small measure physically and financially. “We hope in the near future,” noted the

newsletter, “we will have vegetables to share with Kalaupapa, the needy elderly and a few to sell to help support Hale Mohalu.”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, June 1981, Volume IV, No. 3, p. 4.} While Ed Gerlock and Ned Nekoa sold vegetables to the ‘Ohana, the small amount earned went right back into the garden, which was source of pride on several counts. The garden had significance spiritually as a symbol of rebirth, but also of unity, as they hoped to share it with others in struggle, such as the Chinatown elderly. The newsletter posed an important question, asking: “Is it not the shared food that symbolizes our unity?”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, April 1981, p. 1.} The garden operated as a counter-balance to the government’s negativity - a positive demonstration of the fruits of the land - of what could be done with the property that the State had sought to condemn. The garden’s most popular produce included two types of sweet potatoes, red and purple, as well as sweet corn and various herbs, such as oregano, sweet basil, and thyme. “We seem to be able to supply our friends with more than enough vegetables and at the same time sell enough to buy what we need to keep going.” Indicative of their openness and sense of humor, the ‘Ohana invited others “if you got the thyme…” to join them in working the land, which they described as “either a little farm or a huge garden!”\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU News, December 1981, Volume IV, No. 4, p. 2.} One of the outstanding characteristics of the ‘Ohana was their ever-present sense of humor, with devotion to their work, but never taking themselves seriously.

**Kalaupapa Management and Financial Concerns**

By June 1981 the Ad Hoc Advisory Commission for the newly created Kalaupapa National Park had been elected. The commission consisted of eleven members, seven patients and four appointed by the Governor.\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU News, June 1981, Volume IV, No. 3, p. 3.} While 13 patients were nominated, the following seven were elected: Richard Marks, Shoichi Hamai, Bernard K. Punikai‘a, James Brede, Isaac Keao, Paul Harada, and the only woman, Kuulei Bell.\footnote{SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS, June 1981, Volume IV, No. 3, p. 3.} All were strong leaders in the community, all were extremely capable and articulate and would provide invaluable insight into what was needed in the new Park. In addition to advocating for Hale Mohalu, Punikai‘a was deeply involved in matters affecting Kalaupapa as his election to the Ad Hoc Advisory Commission indicated.
With his advocacy work in both leprosy communities, his educational endeavors and his pursuits in musical composition, he was extremely active and led a busy life. Bernard Punikai‘a never threw anything away and he often did not open the mail that he received. Sometimes he never cashed some of the checks sent to the ‘Ohana. Three such items included the following: (1) An envelope dated June 1, 1981 with a personal check from Ruth K. Chow (Luka) dated May 29, 1981 made out to Save Hale Mohalu Fund for $12.00 for 4 calendars. (2) Another check for $4.50 dated May 27, 1981 to Save Hale Mohalu fund (both checks never cashed). (3) An envelope dated November 6, 1981 with enclosed check, dated November 3, 1981 for $20.00 (not cashed) from Nora N. Ogawa. Joanne Rashbaum of the American Bar Association in Washington D. C. sent a note on April 10, 1981 along with an uncashed check for $20.00, saying: “You know I am with you in spirit and prayer. Hope this small indication helps a little. Aloha and Shalom.”

Ironically, at the same time, the lack of money was a crucial issue. The ‘Ohana had not printed a newsletter for several months in 1981 until the December issue. They explained what was taking place. “Money was (is) in short supply and a lot was happening. We hope the thought never crossed your mind that we gave up… We continue the struggle as you will see in this newsletter and we continue to need your support.” One effort to raise money was through fundraisers. These appeals were held to both publicize the struggle and to help fund it. Those instances where checks never got cashed were among the collection of papers and items that Punikai‘a accumulated as part of his schedule and personal idiosyncratic habit of being a “collector.” Sister Sandy and Sister Earnest wanting to be helpful cleaned out Punikai‘a’s room at Hale Mohalu, but Punikai‘a did not appreciate their efforts – he was furious that they had thrown out his stuff. “Sometimes,” Ed Gerlock recalled, “the ‘Ohana would intrude on Bernard’s authority.” Wally Inglis nodded in agreement, “I remember Bernard could put his foot down.”

Another ‘Ohana member put it more succinctly. “Bernard never took shit from

1151 Uncashed checks from 1981 made out to Save Hale Mohalu fund.
1152 Joanne Rashbaum, Letter and uncashed check to Save Hale Mohalu, April 10, 1981.
1153 SAVE HALE MOHALU December 1981, Volume IV, No. 4, p. 2.
1154 Wally Inglis, and Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Honolulu, 12 May 2010.
1155 Wally Inglis, and Ed Gerlock, personal interview, Honolulu, 12 May 2010.
anybody." At times, his style was “so much in your face,” that some found him pushy and offensive. “It was such a non-Hawaiian thing to do,” commented one non-Hawaiian person, who wondered, “where did that come from? How did he get that?” When I asked Snake Kalāhele about that aspect of Punikaiʻa, he said, “people forget Hawaiians were warriors,” continuing, “the idea of the docile Kanaka came from Christianity.” Perhaps patients were so accustomed to staying back, that when one spoke up, it was a shock. Punikaiʻa knew he had to persist against a colonial system that wanted him to fade into obscurity, which made him all the more determined to speak. While Punikaiʻa was the authoritative voice of the struggle, he fought not only for Hale Mohalu but also for social justice for anyone who suffered discrimination, especially his fellow Hawaiians.

**Unfair Wages at Kalaupapa**

The State not only denied the patients equal pay but also collective bargaining and other fringe benefits. Patients worked as kitchen help, ranch hands, policemen, and gardeners but did not receive the same pay as others. The federal government said the State of Hawaiʻi violated civil rights when it paid handicapped patients at Kalaupapa less than the minimum wage. The Advertiser carried the news as a front-page story, noting the State discriminated against the patients, paying them less than civil service employees for the same work. George Yuen had received the report in a letter dated May 11, but did not make it public. On Monday June 22, Punikaiʻa released the report, which he had obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. At the time, the State employed 23 patients at the settlement. “Under a provision of state law, they are paid salaries ranging from $1.64 to $2.69 an hour,” the Star-Bulletin reported. “The law pegs the patients’ salaries at a percentage of the federal minimum wage.” However, civil service employees at the settlement were paid more than minimum wage. In many cases, these civil servants worked side by side with patient employees whose pay was far less - even though the latter often had to substitute for the former in their absence. Punikaiʻa told the Star-Bulletin: “It is incumbent upon the State of Hawaii to rectify this gross injustice and

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violation of the Kalaupapa Hansen’s Disease patients civil rights.”1161 In a press release, Punikai‘a stated,

That we as a class of people have been denied our basic human rights is irrefutable, i.e., the denial of all medical and dietary services to Hale Mohalu which killed Mary Kaiwi Duarte; the pay differential, paying patients as low as 53% of the $3.35 minimum wage: and the disenfranchisement of our voting rights, with no representation on the county level.1162

Overturning wage discrimination was a major advancement, although the State tried to downplay its illegal actions, saying they admit “to none of the charges” but some adjustments in “isolated cases” might be necessary.1163 In fact, George Yuen said, “There is no admission at all.”1164 However, Yuen agreed to meet with the federal authorities to talk over the situation, but the State really had no choice because their “federal funds could be in jeopardy.”1165 Ironically, the State had no hesitancy in gaining title to the land at Hale Mohalu or collecting federal money, but when it came time for their obligatory response, their answer was to stall.

Attorney Conflict

In late June, difficulties arose between the attorneys on the best course of action to pursue. On June 24, Robert M. Harris, Honolulu attorney with Harris, Lamott, & Smith sent a letter to Sidney Wolinsky regarding Hale Mohalu. “I wanted to update you regarding the questions you raised on Friday June 19 about the appeal to the Hawaii Supreme Court. I contacted Bernard and he agrees that Jack Schweigert should not argue the case.”1166 The consideration of whether to dismiss the State appeal was one that was controversial. Schweigert’s removal was another matter of dispute.1167 Harris told Wolinsky in his letter that Punikai‘a was in agreement on both issues. “Bernard is

1167 Schweigert had incurred the ire of the patients early on by acting on his own (without first checking with the patients for their wishes) when he flew to Washington D.C. to consult with noted attorney Daniel Lyons, who argued cases before the Supreme Court. Schweigert wanted to help the patients as best he could, but he learned he was not in charge. Schweigert explained the State saw “Hale Mohalu as just a bunch of buildings, but to the patients, it was a ‘heart-throb.’” At the time, Schweigert was a young lawyer who brought in Sid Wolinsky because he [Jack] needed help. San Francisco attorney Wolinsky was well known for his firm’s work on social justice issues. Jack Schweigert, personal interview, Honolulu, 10 December 2012. In another interview, Schweigert stated, “Bernard was brilliant and Wolinsky was brilliant. There was lu‘uhu (anger) because he [Schweigert] argued for the state case.” Jack Schweigert, personal interview, Honolulu 14 May 2013. Harris had been involved with the case from his previous work at Legal Aid.
agreeable to dismissing the appeal if we deem that to be advisable, or to having someone other than Jack [Schweigert] make the arguments if we elect to proceed.”

On June 25, Harris wrote Punikai‘a asking him to contact Schweigert to have him turned over his files to Harris. Following up on the request, Punikai‘a sent a typed letter on Hale Mohalu OHANA stationery to Schweigert and Associates on June 30 in regard to the Punikaia v. Yuen case, stating, “it is my desire to have Public Advocates and Legal Aid handle the oral arguments before the Hawaii Supreme Court.” Punikai‘a asked Schweigert to turn over his files to Harris. “In the totality of the Hale Mohalu legal issue, it is my belief that to present the strongest possible case, there has to be coordinated control, so that there is no conflict with our strategy in our other cases.” Those other cases included the suit in federal court, Brede v. Director of Health, Civil No. 78-0336, and on September 2, Harris sent Wolinsky a letter about that case. “I am writing specifically in response to the request for information related to the proposed Motion for Partial Summary Judgment contained in your letter to me of July 9, 1981.” Harris’ six page letter laid out certain facts of the case. Page 5 of the letter talked about a study the state did that would support the patients’ claim of trauma associated with transfer. “The State has a statistical study related to transfer trauma as part of their preparation for the case. Study was done in late 1980 or early 1981.”

In a typed Memorandum on September 11, from Punikai‘a to Harris regarding this federal suit, Punikai‘a answered questions Harris had raised in his September 2 letter to Wolinsky, especially about the role of the Pearl City facility. Punikai‘a explained.

Hale Mohalu’s primary function was to receive Kalapapa patients for whatever medical needs they had. Outpatients received only care related to their Hansen’s Disease and nothing else. They had to provide for their other medical needs/care. Kalapapa and Hale Mohalu classified as inpatients – received all medical care. Richard Young’s letter to all patients that no air transportation or visits to medical consultants would be authorized if they didn’t go to Leahi. It would seem that only “authorized” facilities would be acceptable to the DOH. Prior to 1-26-78 Hale Mohalu was the only authorized place.

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1173 Bernard Punikaia, Memorandum to Bob Harris re: Civil No. 78-0336, September 11, 1981.
Punika’a’s clarification of Hale Mohalu’s purpose was important because the State disputed this fact, twisting the historic record to suit their purpose.

The ‘Ohana held a fundraiser on Moloka‘i on August 22, 19811174 and the following month on Hale Mohalu OHANA stationery, Bernard Punikai’a sent three separate typed letters on September 15, 1981 to Hauanani Apolonia at Alu Like, Brother Boogie of IKONA, and to Rowena Akana at KCCN to thank them for their help with the benefit concert. His letter summed up the conflict.

As you know, the State of Hawaii is trying to take the Hale Mohalu home away from its rightful owners – Hawaii’s Hansen’s Disease patients. This land is now worth 11 million dollars. Since business and government have made a practice of taking valuable land from Hawaiians throughout the history of Hawaii, the state feels that they have a right to take Hale Mohalu land from the patients. He ended his letter by expressing his gratitude for their kōkua in helping the patients’ fight the battle to remain on the land and to keep it from “massive development.”1175

**Reasons Not to Dismiss and Irreconcilable Differences**

On September 17, Schweigert sent a typed letter to Punikai’a in which he gave the “Outline of Reasons for Not Dismissing the State Appeal.”1176 He urged Punikai’a and the patients to keep fighting the Supreme Court case. “The State case is a good case, much, much better I feel than the Federal case. If you dismiss this case, and should Sidney lose the Federal case, then you’ve got no case at all.”1177 Schweigert concluded his letter with a recommendation that if Punikai’a were to reconsider his decision and not want to dismiss his case, he should notify the Attorney General straight away.

On September 17, Schweigert sent a letter to Wolinsky in which Schweigert said that he [Jack] was shocked that Wolinsky advised Punikai’a to dismiss the State Appeal. Schweigert’s letter pleaded, “Please do not allow such a foolish, foolish thing to occur for it appears to me to represent the far greater argument.”1178 A few days later Schweigert notified Harris that he would not withdraw from the case. Schweigert stated, “Since I realize from your statements to me that the only reason you seek my withdrawal is to dismiss the Supreme Court Appeal, which I feel is extremely prejudicial to my client, I

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cannot withdraw until a table conference is had between all counsel and Bernard. Please set this up.”

Schweigert was clearly upset over possible dismal of what he felt was the stronger case, namely the appeal Punikaia v. Yuen, Supreme Court No. 7234. Schweigert discussed the matter with Samuel Makekau, the Deputy Clerk for the Supreme Court and followed up his conversation with a letter to him on September 23.

Dear Sam: This is a forbearance of my conversation with you yesterday. In this regard I want to make the record in this matter clear. (1) I am the attorney of record in this matter (2) The dismissal filed in this matter on Wednesday September 16, 1981 was against my advice and without my consent. My objection stems from my belief that the appeal proposed a strong chance of reversal since the matter dealt with a standing issue only.

On the same day September 23, Schweigert also sent an angry letter to Harris to formally register his displeasure over the dismissal of the appeal. “Dear Robert: My accounting of the facts are as follows: 1. On Wednesday, Sept. 16, 1981, I called your office.”

Schweigert explained how he viewed what had transpired since that time, numerically listing his points. On the fifth point, he said, “5. I was informed that you had already filed a dismissal which you did without my approval and without the formal Withdrawal and Appearance of Counsel.” His letter continued for another page. “I felt a continuance was necessary so as to fully explain to all [underlined and bolded in original] the Hale Mohalu clients of the importance of the State case.” Furious over the way he was pushed aside by the other attorneys, Schweigert ended his letter icily. “Furthermore, the choice to respond is yours.”

The next day Harris notified Chief Justice William Richardson about the appeal’s dismissal and the way it was handled. Harris stated, “I am writing to clarify the matter of representation of plaintiff/appellant Bernard Punikaia at the suggestion of Mr. Edward Suzuki of the Supreme Court Clerk’s Office.” Page two of this letter explained that there had been the “recommendation to drop the appeal” and “Mr. Punikaia … agreed that the case should be dismissed.” Harris ended his letter by commenting on Schweigert’s withdrawal from the case. “I saw no ethical problem caused by his

1180 Jack Schweigert, Letter to Samuel Makekau, Deputy Clerk, Supreme Court, re: Supreme Court No. 7234, September 23, 1981.
1183 Robert Harris, Letter to William Richardson, Chief Justice, Hawaii State Supreme Court, September 24, 1981.
1184 Robert Harris, Letter to William Richardson, Chief Justice, Hawaii State Supreme Court, September 24, 1981.
withdrawal and stating that I did not intend to set up a conference to debate this matter.”\textsuperscript{1185} Harris signed the letter with a cc to Punikai‘a, Wolinsky, and the other attorney involved in the case, James Pietsch of Legal Aid.

The formal paperwork for the withdrawal of counsel, entitled “Legal Document No. 7234 in the Supreme Court of the State of Hawaii” should have had Jack Schweigert’s signature in the allotted space for his name, but the space remains blank. Although the withdrawal document lacked Schweigert’s signature, it contained Bernard Punikai‘a’s approval signature. As a result, the appeal Schweigert desired to plead before the Hawai‘i Supreme Court had been withdrawn.\textsuperscript{1186}

Because this matter had been so hotly contested, on September 24 Harris wrote to Schweigert. “Dear Jack: I received your letter of Sept. 21, 1981 and regret that the matter of this appeal seems to continue to be an issue of contention.”\textsuperscript{1187} Harris went on to explain his actions about the dismissal of the appeal. “I felt it incumbent on me to notify the court of our intent to take the case off the calendar.” In a dispassionate tone, he matter-of-factly assessed the status of the lawyers’ relationship, saying, “but it appears that there is an irreconcilable difference of opinion on the matter.”\textsuperscript{1188} Furious with the way the case had been handled, Schweigert sent a letter to Wolinsky on September 24. “Dear Sidney: I am appalled by the way the above case was dismissed, particularly after all the hours I spent putting the case together.”\textsuperscript{1189} Schweigert believed that he had not been treated courteously, explaining while he was still the attorney of record, he “was not even given the courtesy of a phone call from you to discuss this decision – particularly after I had even amended the brief this summer and written to you several times about your responsibility to do the oral argument.” The ramifications for the patients were very damaging in Schweigert’s view as he explained, “To no avail, I believe the patients at Hale Mohalu have been done a great disservice.”\textsuperscript{1190}

On the following day, the 25 of September, clearly irate with Harris, Schweigert sent him a letter. “It was upon your advice that Bernard was responding – advice I might

\textsuperscript{1185} Robert Harris, Letter to William Richardson, Chief Justice, Hawaii State Supreme Court, September 24, 1981.
\textsuperscript{1186} Legal Document 7234, Hawaii State Supreme Court, Withdrawal and Appearance of Counsel, signed by Bernard Punikaia, but not Jack Schweigert.
add which was given solely as a matter of convenience.” Schweigert was angry not only for the way the dismissal was handled but also because the case had a real chance to be successful for the patients. “Certainly the appeal was a winner. Accordingly, switching to you was prejudicial which is an act I may safeguard against despite my being fired.” Prior to the dismissal of the case by Harris, the Hale Mohalu Appeal at the Hawaii State Supreme Court had been scheduled for September 25, 1981.

In the midst of this legal wrangling with the attorneys over the best way to proceed in court, the ‘Ohana recognized the third year of the struggle with another attempt to resolve the standoff. The ‘Ohana press release on September 25 announced that they would “observe the 3rd anniversary of the State’s cessation of services and utilities at Hale Mohalu, Pearl City by delivering a letter to the Governor urging the restoration of these services and utilities and a meeting with him to solve the long impasse.” The letter stated, “On this third anniversary, we renew our commitment to seek these ends as the Legislature voted to do two years ago [and] to realize the principle of human rights and dignity on which we have taken our stand.”

After delivery of the letter at 3:30 PM, mass picketing took place as usual until 5:00 PM. The press release stated “that 1981 is the Year of the Disabled, and yet the State has allowed the suffering of the patients to continue and has caused hardships that have contributed to the deaths of three Hale Mohalu patients: Mary Duarte, Sanford Smith, and Georg Liwai.”

**Attempt at Legal Reconciliation**

In an effort to patch up any misunderstanding and hard feelings among the attorneys, Sidney Wolinsky sent a letter on September 28 to Schweigert in reference to Punikaia v. Yuen and the dismissal of the appeal. “The decision to dismiss the case was reached after a great deal of soul searching,” Wolinsky stated. “I think that both Robert and myself and Bernard all had a good deal of conflict about whether or not to proceed, and all took your opinion into account as a very weighty matter in arriving at a decision.” Wolinsky explained that he thought the problem between the attorneys had to do with a matter of miscommunication, “more of a communication breakdown than

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anything else,” as he phrased it. “Also, I think that if Punikaia v. Yuen were considered in isolation,” Wolinsky noted, “it probably would be best to have proceeded with that case.” Wolinsky stated that there were other considerations to take into account because of the federal case and those were complicated matters and Schweigert naturally did not have knowledge of those details. Wolinsky, Harris, and Punikaiʻa came to the conclusion that it was best to dismiss the appeal. Wolinsky valued Schweigert’s friendship and respected his work and hoped that there would be no ill will between anyone of them – that he and Jack should get a beer together next time and put all this disagreement behind them.

On October 6, Schweigert wrote to Wolinsky with a carbon copy to Punikaiʻa and to Harris. Schweigert’s letter was short and to the point. “Dear Sid: Re: Punikaia v. Yuen, I consider the matter ended. Regards, Jack F. Schweigert.” Clearly Schweigert had put the entire matter behind him, but the tone of the letter and its brevity indicated his displeasure with the way the case was handled.

On October 7, Harris wrote to Wolinsky in San Francisco re: Brede v. Director of Health CC. No.80-4433. “Just a note to advise you that oral arguments on the injunction appeal is set before the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco on November 10, 1981 at 1:30 pm.” Harris wanted to confirm if Wolinsky would be the one to present the case, saying: “I trust that per our earlier discussion, you will make the arguments with backup from us here.” If you feel it advisable for me to present the argument,” Harris continued, “let me know as soon as possible and I will check with Legal Aid regarding travel arrangements, but I will presume that you will proceed with this unless I hear to the contrary.” A copy of this letter was sent to Jim Pietsch and Bernard Punikaiʻa.

When the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals heard the case in November 1981, they sent it back to Hawaiʻi, as the Advertiser reported, explaining “the appeals court asked for a new decision on whether the services should be restored pending a trial on the patients’ lawsuit” and “also asked for the costs of restoring the services and renovating

the Hale Mohalu facility pending a trial.”

The fact that the court ordered more hearings was seen as a victory for the patients.

As chairman of the Kalaupapa Patients’ Advisory Council, Bernard Punikaiʻa wrote a letter to Tom Hitch, in which Punikaiʻa requested Hitch’s help. Punikaiʻa wanted Hitch to write a letter whereby Tom Hitch would affirm that the Citizens’ Committee never intended for the patients to be institutionalized at Leahi’s Trotter Ward. Punikaiʻa explained, “Because of the Committee’s actions and the repeal of the compulsory isolation law, which the Committee helped bring about, Hawaii was strongly commended by federal health officials.” The Committee was hailed for their good work but the State was now twisting the truth about the Committee’s work and Punikaiʻa’s role.

That is why I am even more appalled that our Committee is being cited by State officials to justify their contrary actions in regard to the forced transfer of patients from Hale Mohalu to the Trotter ward at Leahi. We both know there is no U.H. Medical School at Leahi and that the use of the Trotter wing was not what our Committee had in mind when we wrote our report.

The State misrepresented the facts when it said it was only carrying out the Committee’s recommendations and Punikaiʻa had agreed to those recommendations. To correct the distortion, he asked for “a letter from you confirming your answer given to me two years ago that the State’s actions are not in accord with our Committee’s recommendations. This is also the view of Anita Una and Dr. Bob Worth, as well as my own.

**Holiday Preparations and Celebrations**

On Saturday, November 21, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana held a day of housekeeping chores at Hale Mohalu to help keep the place clean. Some of the people who came included members from the Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines (CHRP) and the Union of Democratic Filipinos (KDF). The newsletter reported, “Somehow when the lawns are cut and broken limbs are removed, one can see even more clearly what a beautiful place Hale Mohalu is.”

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana also mentioned that they planned to clean some of the buildings on December 12, 1981 and asked for volunteers to help with that project. “Recently, the Save Kahoʻolawe Ohana inquired about use of one

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1207 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS December 1981, Volume IV, No. 4, p. 3.
of the buildings for a meeting. It is with pleasure that we share what we have with those who struggle for the same ideals,” the newsletter noted. Bernard Punikai‘a and the ‘Ohana handed out a printed flyer, inviting fellow patients at Leahi to join in the celebration of Thanksgiving at Hale Mohalu “commemorating this special day and our 4 years of struggle to save Hale Mohalu. The service will be followed by our traditional Thanksgiving potluck luncheon—and, of course, songs and music led by our Hale Mohalu Band.” It was a reaching out for mutual aid and companionship. Both groups of patients could draw strength from one another and to help with transportation, the ‘Ohana offered their assistance, including arranging rides and van service for those in wheelchairs. Even though the struggle continued, Thanksgiving at Hale Mohalu was a joyous occasion, as the newsletter noted.

Around 11:00 o’clock of Thanksgiving morning, a large group gathered at Hale Mohalu to pray and give thanks. Ben Kahikina and Rachel Nakoa came over from Leahi to join the patients here at Hale Mohalu. The two Charlies, John, Mr. Bautista and Larry came from PACE and a host of people from struggles came to pray, celebrate and sing.

Pictures in the newsletter showed the Hale Mohalu Band and friends gathered in fellowship to share in the holiday meal. Approximately a hundred people came for the festivities, helping to strengthen ties with one another. Another indication of fellowship occurred when Abercrombie sent Punikai‘a a card in December. Punikai‘a was in the hospital and Abercrombie on official Hawai‘i State Senate stationery sent a card addressed to Bernard Punikai‘a at Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu. Abercrombie, a close friend of Punikai‘a wrote on the card, “Dear Bernard, Leave it to you to find a way to not work. We’re on to your game, so get out of there ASAP. Remember – don’t let the bastards grind you down. Aloha, Neil.”

Not everyone in Honolulu received Christmas greetings from Senator and Mrs. Inouye but Bernard Punikai‘a did in 1981. The envelope, dated 12 December 1981, mailed from the Senate Office Building in Washington D.C. was addressed to Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Punikaia at Kalaupapa, but Kalaupapa was crossed out and Hale Mohalu at Pearl

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1208 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS December 1981, Volume IV, No. 4, p. 3.
1209 Bernard Punikai‘a and the Ohana, Invitation to Leahi Patients for Thanksgiving Celebration, November 1981.
1210 Bernard Punikai‘a and the Ohana, Invitation to Leahi Patients for Thanksgiving Celebration, November 1981.
1213 Senator Neil Abercrombie, card to Bernard Punikaia at Queen’s Hospital, December 1981.
City stamped on the envelope; the enclosed Christmas card, a picture of the Washington D.C. Capitol from Pennsylvania Avenue in the year 1865 stated, “Season’s Greetings and Best wishes for the New Year.” Maggie, Dan, and Kenny Inouye.” While Inouye sent holiday wishes, that was all he provided. The promised audit never materialized although almost a year had passed since the newspapers reported that it was to take place because of the Senator’s influence. The promise of an audit was a politically expeditious move by a skillful politician like Inouye, a rising star in the Senate who lost none of his political capital to make sure the audit took place.

For their fourth Christmas sans utilities, the ‘Ohana celebrated with a religious service at 11 PM on Christmas Eve, followed by the traditional meal of Portuguese Bean soup. On Christmas Day the ‘Ohana hosted a potluck at 12 Noon at Hale Mohalu and in their newsletter, they extended their best wishes to everyone for a joyous Christmas. The newsletter noted too the passing of patients John and Miriam Mina in 1981.

In summary, the conflict among the attorneys over which court case, federal or state, to pursue had caused hard feelings among the professionals who had sought to put it behind them, but in such a tense situation, it did not help to advance the objective. If the ‘Ohana felt they needed to emphasize unity with Kalaupapa patients and other struggles, then the unity among the legal defense team was also crucial. The fact that Punikai’a won the case for equal pay was a huge victory, part of his battle to get equal treatment before the law, with the same rights as a non-leprosy person. The audit was still expected because no official word announced otherwise. The Easter campaign had been momentarily successful, but what lasting effect it had remained a question because nothing changed as a result of it. Nonetheless, the ‘Ohana pressed on, strong in their resolve to achieve justice.

1214 Senator and Mrs. Daniel Inouye, Christmas card to Bernard Punikaia, December 12, 1981.
1215 Bernard Punikaia had worked on Molokai with the Democratic precincts to help elect Inouye. When the ‘Ohana tried to get an appointment to see Inouye in Washington, Inouye’s staff put them off initially, but then his office informed them that the Senator would see them briefly. His staff was not happy to see the ‘Ohana, and were quite cool. However, Inouye was very gracious, renewing his acquaintance with Punikaia and talked to the ‘Ohana for over an hour. Inouye promised to do his best but in the end, nothing materialized. It was not an issue that Inouye wanted to use his influence to fight for when he had other concerns that were more politically helpful to his Senate career. Sister Earnest Chung, personal phone interview, Maryknoll, New York, 3 November 2013.
1216 “Within the past month, John Mina died at Kalaupapa. His wife Miriam had passed on earlier this year. They were strong supporters of Hale Mohalu and reminded patients living at Hale not to give up. May they rest in peace!” SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS December 1981, Vol. IV, No. 4, p. 3. Miriam Mina, sister of patient Boogie Kahilihiwa, had a little two-bedroom plantation-style cottage on Kamehameha Street in Kalaupapa, across from the cemetery and ocean. Miriam Mina so loved hot pink, a “bubble-gum pink,” she had her kitchen painted that color. I was fortunate to stay in her house for a week as part of my work for the National Park Service in February 2010 and the Park Service had painted the interior of the house bubble-gum pink for historical accuracy.
1218 Inouye later wrote the ‘Ohana that his request for the audit was not approved. Kathryn Braun, personal email, 24 November 2013.
CHAPTER 11
‘ONIPA‘A!

At the beginning of 1982, Yuen received an honor for his work as a humanitarian, but by the end of March, he had resigned in disgrace over a major Department of Health scandal regarding heptachlor in milk.\(^\text{1219}\) Since the Governor was in the midst of another gubernatorial race, Yuen’s resignation aided Ariyoshi, who faced embarrassment over the scandal and criticism for his treatment of leprosy patients at Hale Mohalu. The latter’s court case proceeded slowly until March, when Judge Pence issued his ruling. Afterwards, momentum measurably shifted. Pence had incorrectly exceeded parameters set forth by the Ninth Circuit’s hearing request, but the press accorded his decision as the ultimate finality. Media coverage colored public perception, portraying the verdict as a victory for the State and a final defeat for the patients. A benefit concert held at Aloha Tower by the ‘Ohana to rally the troops proved successful, but it was an increasingly uphill battle. No matter how difficult the situation, the patients and the ‘Ohana steadfastly resisted, embracing the Hawaiian value, ‘Onipa’a, the motto of Queen Liliu‘okalani.\(^\text{1220}\)

Hailed and Reviled

At a banquet to celebrate the International Year of the Disabled at the Ala Moana Hotel on Thursday January 7, George Yuen was the keynote speaker. Outside the hotel, protestors from Hale Mohalu distributed leaflets, saying he did not represent the rights of the disabled.\(^\text{1221}\) The leaflets spoke of the patients’ “mixed emotions” over the dinner because of their support for the handicapped (they too were handicapped) but they felt it necessary to “protest the invitation to a notorious violator of human rights as guest speaker.” The Star-Bulletin’s coverage included a photo of the protestors, with the caption, “Clarence Naia and other supporters of Hale Mohalu stand outside the Ala Moana Hotel last night, protesting the selection of George Yuen, director of the state Department of Health, as state chairman of the International Year of the Disabled

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\(^{1219}\) This was a really big scandal and it caused a huge uproar in the community. Heptachlor, an insecticide, and a known carcinogen, was routinely sprayed on pineapple fields and pineapple cuttings, the leaves, known as “green chop” were fed to cows, resulting in heptachlor in milk. Lee Gomes, “Pineapple Pesticide Detected in Samples of Island Milk,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Thursday March 18, 1982, A-3 + T. Dalcher, M.D., Letter, “A Physician Is Leary of Milk,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Saturday April 3, 1982, A-9.

\(^{1220}\) Hawaiian Dictionary, edited by Pukui and Elbert define ‘onipa’a as follows: “Fixed, immovable, motionless, steadfast, established, firm, resolute, determined (this was the motto of Kamehameha V and of Liliu‘okalani. Lit., fixed movement."

Persons.”\footnote{Dean Sensui, \textit{Photo, “Protest Yuen’s Selection” Honolulu Star-Bulletin}, Friday January 8, 1982, A-3.} Other photos taken by the ‘Ohana showed protestors’ signs that said: “Yuen – Enemy of Handicapped,” and “Yuen Violates Handicapped Rights,” and “Yuen, What about Hale Mohalu?” as well as “Speak about Kalaupapa,” and perhaps the strongest: “Is Hitler Coming Too?” \footnote{Photos of Demonstrators at Ala Moana Hotel, Thursday January 7, 1982, (John Witeck, personal collection).} Approximately ten to twelve demonstrators gathered outside the hotel among them Punikai’a, Nai’a, Meacham, Witeck, and Cocquio.\footnote{Editorial, “Assessing Yuen’s Health Stewardship,” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Thursday April 1, 1982, A-14.} The protesters wished the organizers, who represented a Jewish hospital in Denver, had spoken to the local community before deciding to honor Yuen. Had they done so, they would have been aware of the locally intense animosity toward him.

At the end of March 1982, in light of the Department of Health’s problems with the heptachlor scandal and Yuen’s troubled relationship with the patients at Hale Mohalu, the fact that George Yuen decided to retire from his position as Director of Health was viewed as a good thing politically for the State administration. Public trust had been severely eroded over the heptachlor matter, which had been a really big scandal, affecting the health of many in the community, especially pregnant women and young children. The \textit{Star-Bulletin} editorial applauded Yuen’s decision. “Health Director George Yuen has done Governor George Ariyoshi an important political favor by retiring at this time. A new face at the department will diminish the milk controversy as an issue in the governor’s fall re-election campaign.”\footnote{Jeanne Ambrose and Phil Mayer, “2 More Milk Products Are Pulled,” \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} Friday December 10, 1982, A-1.} Charles G. Clark was appointed by the Governor to fill in on a temporary basis. Clark had been in charge of the Board of Education and came to the position with years of experience as a State employee, but little experience with Hansen’s Disease patients. The milk controversy seemed to be under control at least momentarily, but resurfaced once again in December. This time the problem had to do with unacceptable levels of antibiotics in the milk.\footnote{Survivors of Leprosy and Hansen’s Disease. Hawaii. Health Department of the State of Hawaii. “2 More Milk Products Are Pulled,” \textit{Honolulu Star-Bulletin} Friday December 10, 1982, A-1.} The difficulties with heptachlor and antibiotics in milk indicated the level of incompetence that plagued the Health Department. If the Health Department mishandled the way they monitored milk production, it was no wonder they routinely ignored the concerns of marginalized leprosy patients as the history of mismanagement attested.
Legislative and Musical Appeals

The Legislature, which once appeared hopeful in resolving the conflict, focused this time on other concerns, namely sugar and tourism. Opening Day at the Legislature traditionally was one “of upbeat entertainment, flowers and partying,” and while the Legislature celebrated with special foods, the Hale Mohalu dissenters spent their days cooking on a Coleman stove. Columnist Bob Krauss reported, “No, the Public – that enormous body of people which pays taxes and elects these people and somehow feels ripped-off in the process – wasn’t here. They were somewhere else, trying to make a buck, trying to stay afloat, trying to cope.” The phrase “trying to cope” applied to the Pearl City patients these past four years, fading into obscurity from public consciousness. To change that perception and to sustain their resistance, the ‘Ohana planned a concert.

The Save Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana had printed up tickets for a benefit concert that was originally scheduled for January 31, but actually did not happen until March. The benefit ticket promised “A full program of the best Hawaiian entertainment, *No-host beer, wine and pupus.” The cost was $7 at the door or $5 in advance. On behalf of the ‘Ohana, Punikai’a wrote a series of letters in preparation for the March concert, from getting the venue to inviting the musicians. To this end, he sought the aid of well-known Hawaiian language and music expert, Larry Kimura. Punikai’a’s letter to Kimura gave the background of the struggle. “We will not be moved again – especially into a hospital when we don’t need that type of care or institutionalized environment.”

As plans for the concert advanced. Punikai’a and the ‘Ohana invited other musicians. Their letter stated, “We are seeking to raise funds to continue our efforts to SAVE HALE MOHALU and to defend the rights and aina of Hawaii’s Hansen’s Disease patients.” The letter’s conclusion tied together the fight for both patients and Hawaiians. “On behalf of our kupunas at Kalaupapa and those who are onipa’a at Hale

1226 In this Eleventh session, Representative Henry Peters was Speaker of the House with Richard Wong as Senate President while Senator D. G. “Andy” Anderson was the Senate Republican leader with Representative Kina’u Kamali‘i as the Republican leader in the House. Years later, Wong and Peters were indicted for criminal behavior but not until Peters went on to become a Kamehameha Schools trustee with a million dollar salary.
1231 Ticket, January 31, 1982, “SAVE HALE MOHALU BENEFIT CONCERT.”(the concert later took place in March 1982).
Mohalu for the rights of Hawaiians and all who have aloha aina, Me ke aloha pumehana, Bernard K. Punikaia, Chairman, Kalaupapa Patients Council, Spokesman, Hale Mohalu Ohana.”

In addition, Punikai’a sent a letter on March 1 to his “Sisters and Brothers” at the United Public Workers, Local 646, AFSCME, Private Sector Division and Oahu Division. He asked for their kōkua in publicizing the event and purchasing tickets. Punikai’a credited the Union’s support in helping them remain at Pearl City and reaffirmed the patients’ resolve to hold firm “until our human rights are respected and we win a new Hale Mohalu on some of the 11 acres at Pearl City.”

He raised a critical question. “For if we are moved from Hale Mohalu and forced into a hospital, who is to say when our sisters and brothers and kupunas at Kalaupapa will be removed by the State?” Given the State’s track record, the issue was one that consistently troubled the patients.

At the Legislature this term, Senate Resolution 62 requested that the Governor build a residential care facility at Hale Mohalu. Among the resolution’s fourteen passages, one emphasized consideration of “not only the economic factors but also the moral and human equation.” The ‘Ohana asked the public to contact the Governor or Senate Health Committee Chair Cayetano to support this resolution. Nothing came of this. In reflecting on the ‘Ohana efforts at the Legislature, Sister Earnest Chung expressed how difficult the process had been.

My recollection is that the request for funding to build Hale Mohalu at Pearl City went through the Legislature THREE times with the Governor refusing to sign off on the budget. Well, after the First time, which was a struggle seeing that it had to go through at least six hearings (human services, health and budget in the Senate and the House) before it gets to conference between the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the House Finance Committee to arrive at the point of passing the bill on to the Governor, we certainly learned a hard lesson. Even after the Second Session and the Third Session of the legislature, we were not able to get the Governor’s approval.

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1238 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1982 Volume V, No. 1.
Court Hearings with Judge Pence

The hearing before Judge Martin Pence to decide on the restoration of services began on Wednesday January 20 and was expected to last two days. Early rulings by federal Judges Dick Yin Wong and Samuel P. King denied the patients their request for services, so the patients had appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Ninth Circuit had sent the case back to Hawai‘i, asking “for a new decision on whether the services should be restored pending a trial on the patients’ lawsuit.” In the case before Judge Pence, deputy attorney general Michael A. Lilly argued for the State, while attorneys Robert Harris and Sid Wolinsky represented the patients.

The Judge heard testimony from a roofer and an electrical engineer. Paul Harada testified that a recent survey of the patients revealed that sixty-seven favored Hale Mohalu, while eleven selected Leahi and ten had no opinion. Frank Duarte, a plaintiff in the class-action lawsuit spoke about his feelings for Hale Mohalu. “It’s our home. It’s peaceful…I don’t see myself living in a hospital.” The paper reported six part-time residents used the facility and three were full-time. Several people testified that small improvements temporarily could make the property structurally safe, including upgrading the electrical wiring for approximately $1,900. Frank Honeychurch, an electrical engineer, testified that the living room areas could be re-wired for as little as $760 if everything went smoothly. Testifying for the patients, James Early, a structural engineer, said that steps needed to be taken to shore up a termite-eaten structural beam in the living area, as well as measures to deal with wind-induced stress on the roof.

Court delays delayed repair work while construction costs and the value of the land increased. To help them in their consideration of the issues, the San Francisco Appeals Court requested specific information from the court in Honolulu, including questions such as “whether the patients would suffer disadvantages if moved to Leahi, the type of facilities there, and a comparison of the costs of restoring Hale Mohalu services
with the costs of construction new facilities at Leahi.” Judge Pence’s hearings ended on Wednesday February 3. The Advertiser described what had happened in the courtroom. “State architect Earl Hunter estimated it would cost more than $1 million to renovate the two-story Hale Mohalu facility so it would meet 1982 health and safety standards,” but Hunter also said “to renovate only the portion of the first floor to accommodate about 20 residents and to tear down the rest of the building would cost about $167, 500.” The opposing sides presented their answers to questions the Ninth Circuit Court wanted Pence to consider. After the hearings, Pence took the case under advisement. “If he rules in favor of the residents, he will issue a permanent order” to restore services, the paper reported, even though “the order was supposed to remain in effect only until a trial on a lawsuit filed by the patients.” It sounded very positive, but it would prove to be just the opposite. On Friday March 5, Pence ruled against the patients calling them, “sit-in trespassers.” Some felt Pence’s decision was heartless, while others applauded it. The Star-Bulletin appeared pleased.

In a harshly worded opinion, Pence said the plaintiffs have homes at Kalaupapa on Molokai and declared their claims ‘were, and are, entirely without merit.’ Each and all have used and intend to use the Pearl city facility (Hale Mohalu) as their Honolulu motel…The 11 acres are no longer needed as a garden, horse pasture, or playground for 15 or so patients who intermittently come to Honolulu from their homes at Kalaupapa, the judge wrote in his 69-page decision.

In addition to his refusal to restore services, Judge Pence addressed another issue in the case, denying patients’ claim that their constitutional rights to due process had been violated in the transfer of the leprosy patients and program to Leahi. Assistant Attorney General, Lilly could hardly contain his elation. “After 3 ½ years of banging my head against the wall, I’m delighted with the judge’s order.” With this ruling, Pence and Lilly believed the legal fight should immediately cease. Pence felt the patients would get as good care at Leahi as they had at Hale Mohalu. Pence’s comments were sarcastic.

It, [Leahi] of course, couldn’t permit the transients to have three dogs in the lobby and a horse in the front yard, as is now the case at the Clinton Building, nor does

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it permit transients to have the absolute and unrestrained freedom of having visitors, parties and celebrations at any time they may desire.1253

Not only professionally, but also on a personal level, Judge Pence and Michael Lilly opposed the patients’ desires. Their opinions reflected their colonialist attitude and obvious disdain. The colonial structure in itself was a formidable obstacle, coupled with judicial control testified to the immense power differential of the authorities. In view of Pence’s decision, Lilly felt the patients had to depart Hale Mohalu immediately, since “the facility was ‘dangerous for human habitation, full of termites, a firetrap.’ If the patients remain, his [Lilly] office will have to discuss the matter to decide what action to take.”1254 The court did not hold the State accountable for failing to look after the patients’ health by maintaining the Pearl City facility. Instead the court, in alignment with State’s policies, upheld patient discrimination. “Lilly says the state plans to tear down the two-story building,” the Advertiser reported, “but there are no plans on what to do with the property.”1255 More than four years had passed, and the State had no idea what it would do with the property. It wanted the land – free and clear of any impediments, such as the patients - the people the State had a responsibility to treat with justice.1256

The March 8 Star-Bulletin editorial endorsed Judge Pence’s opinion that the conflict should end. The editors implied that the patients, like stubborn children, had carried this resistance too far. “Better and far more modern Oahu facilities have been provided by the state Health Department at Leahi Hospital in Kaimuki. Most patients are using them.”1257 The editorial concluded that the parties were the wiser for what had transpired. “Points have been made on both sides in this long fight. It probably has led to more community awareness of patient concerns, and obviously has heightened sensitivities within the Health Department.” The editorial emphasized that the controversy should respectfully conclude,1258 but missed the point of why the patients resisted. The editors’ argument that community awareness had been heightened because

1254 “Leprosy Patients’ Suit to Block Transfer Rejected in U.S. Court,” Honolulu Advertiser, Saturday March 6, 1982, A-3.
1255 “Leprosy Patients’ Suit to Block Transfer Rejected in U.S. Court,” Honolulu Advertiser, Saturday March 6, 1982, A-3.
1256 According to the Hawaiian Dictionary, edited by Pukui and Elbert, pono is defined as “goodness, uprightness, morality, moral qualities, correct or proper procedure, excellence, wellbeing, prosperity, welfare, benefit, behalf, equity, sake, true condition or nature, duty; moral, fitting, proper, righteous, right, upright, just, virtuous, fair, beneficial, successful, in perfect order, accurate, correct, eased, relieved: should, ought, must, necessary.”
of the struggle was indeed correct, but the patients fought for a bigger reason than just community awareness -- it was a battle to obtain their civil rights.

**Battle Still Alive: ‘Onipa‘a!**

The ‘Ohana held a meeting on Monday March 8, 1982 to discuss Pence’s decision and the upcoming concert. As they saw it, Pence went beyond his mandate, and his opinion was biased as well as incorrect. The ‘Ohana reaffirmed their commitment. “The Hale Mohalu struggle for Hansen’s Disease patients’ rights is alive and well and not in the least bit affected by the erroneous, slanted advisory ruling of an opinionated judge.”

The ‘Ohana meeting also focused on individual responsibilities for the forthcoming concert, with Joanne Miyata as the Program Coordinator and Gigi Cocquio charged with “signs and stuff from Hale Mohalu.” While the ‘Ohana planned for the concert, they also got word to the newspapers that they would not desist because of Judge Pence’s decision. The Advertiser on March 12, carried a small article about the conflict entitled, “Hale Mohalu Says Fight’s Still On.” The article confirmed that the ‘Ohana’s fighting spirit was in full flower and that they had scheduled numerous Hawaiian musicians to perform at a Hale Mohalu benefit concert from noon to 6:30 PM on March 21, at Aloha Tower. Despite the court’s decision, Punikai‘a reaffirmed that “the Ohana and the patients have never relied on the courts to win their struggle. Instead, they have relied on the support of the community, which recognizes … the justness of the patients’ demand for a home at Hale Mohalu, not a placement ward at Leahi.”

To reassert the position of the ‘Ohana and to argue against Pence’s comments, Emmett Cahill sent a long letter on March 17 to the editor of the Star-Bulletin. Point by point Cahill disputed previous statements made by Pence as reported in the paper. Cahill noted Pence was correct about the exorbitant cost of renovations today, but “the program was salvageable at a very modest cost in 1979, when Senate Bill 839, which called for a $200,000 appropriation to construct small cottages for the residential care center, passed both houses of the Legislature.” But Ariyoshi had vetoed the will of the Legislature and the public. Cahill argued against Pence’s mockery of the patients for having three

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1259 John Witeck, notes from Hale Mohalu meeting, March 8, 1982, (John Witeck personal collection.).
1260 John Witeck, notes from Hale Mohalu meeting, March 8, 1982, (John Witeck personal collection.).
dogs and a horse, saying pets were “desirable aspects” to make the facility less of an institution. “Do not pets help to make more of a home in such a setting? Certainly more so than sterile Leahi, remote form bus lines, shops and restaurants.”

Similarly frustrated with Judge Pence’s decision, John Witeck composed a letter to each of the newspapers. It was unfortunate that the papers never published his comments because he helped to clarify the situation, noting much of the media coverage had been inaccurate. Witeck said, “The original Hale Mohalu case, which had been remanded to Honolulu from the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco, has not yet been heard. This remanded case covers the whole range of issues: land ownership; transfer trauma; involuntary servitude; and denial of due process.” Witeck also refuted statements regarding the run-down condition of the buildings and the lack of plans for the land. “Given the history of the Hale Mohalu issue, this is certainly questionable, and ignores the fact that the land at Hale Mohalu is very valuable, a developer’s dream.”

In addition, Witeck sent a letter to the editors of the Star-Bulletin regarding the article of March 6 as well as their recent editorial on March 8. With lawyer-like precision, Witeck systematically refuted the arguments made against the patients. He also repudiated Pence’s derogatory summation of the patients as “squatters” and “sit-in trespassers,” because as Witeck asserted that was merely Pence’s view since “no Court has found the patients to be either.” Regrettably, the Star-Bulletin and the Advertiser backed Judge Pence as though he were the final word on the matter, giving his pronouncements so much weight, as though Pence and the editors spoke for the entire State. Witeck’s Star-Bulletin letter countered that impression. He said the “struggle is supported by 90% of the Kalaupapa residents, and by much of the Hawaii community as well – the Council of Churches, teachers, unions, various community groups, and as the benefit concert on 21 March shows, many local artists and musicians.” While Lilly pompously thought that the issue would soon be over, his attitude revealed how little the State understood the patients’ commitment. After four years of resistance, they were not about to give up and walk away. They had pledged themselves to a cause with a spiritual

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significance, not a religious one necessarily but definitely spiritual in nature. Their blood was in the land and in the struggle with no thought of giving up either one.

**Benefit Concert**

The ‘Ohana proceeded with their plans for the benefit concert and issued an announcement to the press. The announcement reaffirmed that the ‘Ohana were still engaged in fighting for Hale Mohalu and that the concert was a sign of their resolve and solidarity. In addition, the ‘Ohana prepared a Public Service Announcement, stating the concert was “to kokua the struggle of the Hansen’s Disease patients for their rights and the aina of Hale Mohalu.” The Thursday March 18 *Star-Bulletin* reported, “A benefit to help Hansen’s Disease patients in their battle to remain at Hale Mohalu is planned Sunday at Pier 9 at Aloha Tower.”

Part of the publicity drive included a poster. Printed on yellow paper, the concert poster featured a sketch of the protestors with Bernard Punikai‘a and Mary Duarte in the foreground surrounded by Father Damien and the Ohana. Bernard Punikai‘a’s arm was raised in a clenched salute. The colorful yellow poster with the iconic drawing of the patients was an instantly recognizable symbol of the struggle. In addition, there was a black and white concert flyer that had IKONA, Makaha Sons of Niihau, and Olomana and Frank Hewitt highlighted in bold lettering.

Because of the recent death of two Hale Mohalu supporters, Charlie Miner, Chinatown activist, and Robert Beaumont of the musical duo, Olomana, the concert was dedicated to them. “Charlie never missed a Hale Mohalu affair and Olomana had volunteered to play at the concert.” Master of Ceremonies, John Witeck had scheduled the Hale Mohalu Band last, making them wonder if they were ever going on. Handed out at the Concert was a blue flyer (letter size) printed on two-sides. One side had a sketch of Hale Mohalu protestors joined in a circle around the statue of Damien. Underneath the drawing was a list of performers, speeches, and the concert’s dedication.

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1273 Yellow Poster, with drawing of Bernard Punikaia, Mary Duarte, Father Damien, Benefit Concert, Sunday March 21, 1982.
1275 Other performers included Ke Alii O Ke Kai, Nalani Olds with Haunani Apoliana, Honolulu Boys Choir and Halau, Joe Serrao and Naleohan, the Kailua High School Madrigal Singers and Dancers, Kamalamalama Brothers, and finally the Hale Mohalu Band.
1277 To this day, the Hale Mohalu Band tease Witeck about that scheduling event, joking, if he is ever the master of ceremonies again when they are performing they may never get on the stage; Wally Inglis, personal Interview, Honolulu, 9 April 2013.
The names of others who acted as Master of Ceremonies, such as Rowena Akana, KCCN disc jockey, Iaukea Bright, Rankin Kinney, and Peter Kealoha were also listed. Punikai‘a, Nai‘a, and Frank Duarte, PACE (People Against Chinatown Eviction) Ahahui Ohana Moku Anuenue (Sand Island) Friends of Kahoolawe, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawaii Council of Churches, Friends of the Filipino People, Pacific Concerns Resource Center, and the Hawaii Union of Socialists had a chance to speak.\footnote{Blue Flyer, “Benefit Mahalo and Invitation to Volunteer,” March 21, 1982.}

On the other side of the flyer was a statement that the Hale Mohalu struggle was still on despite Judge Pence’s recent ruling. The flyer explained some of the history of the struggle and what the patients were seeking. It also invited the public to join the ‘Ohana by volunteering to help in whatever way they could. “The Hale Mohalu issue had become a power struggle between the Governor and the patients. His strategy seems to be to wait until everyone gets tired or too ill to continue the struggle.”\footnote{Blue Flyer, “Benefit Mahalo and Invitation to Volunteer,” March 21, 1982.} The ‘Ohana sought the public’s help in rallying around the patients, asking them to sign the “volunteer form today and schedule our slideshow and speakers for your community, church, student, or union group.”\footnote{Blue Flyer, “Benefit Mahalo and Invitation to Volunteer,” March 21, 1982.} The flyer also invited the public to come to the next Hale Mohalu meeting the following Monday on March 29, 1982.

**Michael Lilly’s Criticism**

After the Aloha Tower concert and a week after Emmett Cahill’s letter appeared in the paper, Assistant Attorney General Lilly on March 24 penned a long letter to the editor with a list of seven points that laid out the history and arguments as he saw them. Lilly was particularly high-handed and critical of the patients. In his description of the struggle, the patients were selfish and embodied a deep malaise that was part of a bigger problem of people who want a “free-ride” rather than a willingness to sacrifice. Lilly complained. “Their cry for Hale Mohalu is but self-indulgence. Having more than anyone could possibly expect from society, they want more.” His argument was ridiculous, but he expanded on his indulgence idea, suggesting it “reflects a deeper ailment in a society, which expects the government to solve daily problems we once solved for ourselves.
through hard work and sacrifice. Lilly never acknowledged that the patients had made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for the good of society.

In another letter published immediately underneath Lilly’s letter, Bette Johnson expressed an opposing sentiment. Johnson pointed out how we as a society treat the so-called least members of society reflects on our own humanity. “They are, and they are always were, the test of humanity. How we deal with them measures not their need but our own human decency.” Her argument was a powerful statement that members of the churches in Hawai‘i tried to make to Ariyoshi and to Yuen, but it fell on deaf ears.

Kalaupapa patient Anita Una supported the Hale Mohalu struggle not only financially, but also by her written testimony to the newspaper.

It’s a ‘Big Deal’ when Lilly says that the Kalaupapa patients are permitted to go to Leahi ‘for free.’ Let me remind him that when society decided that we were not wanted there in his community, to protect him from the horrid and dreaded disease we had no choice in that matter either. We were cast away to this land of the ‘living dead,’ as it was known then, and that too, was ‘for free.’

Una disputed Lilly’s comment that the patients were free to go now wherever they wanted. “I ask him, where in the hell can we go to? And what can we do in our disfigured and disabled condition, after all these many decades?” Una explained how the lands at Kalaupapa, once a place of banishment, were now desirable. “The potentials of these lands look pretty good to the greedy bureaucrats now;” she noted, “and if they could, they would throw us out of here just as they did with Hale Mohalu.”

Frustrated and angered, Ed Gerlock, too, responded to Lilly’s letter critical of the patients. Gerlock explained that Lilly neglected to mention a proposal by the ‘Ohana to rebuild at Hale Mohalu that the 1980 Legislature had not only approved but had also allocated money for the project in its budget. Gerlock angrily refuted Lilly’s comments, writing the patients did not voluntarily make the move to Leahi and enclosing a photo of Hannah Kahatian “weeping inconsolably as she was being pushed on to the bus. George Liwai fainted as a result of the tension and carelessness with which he was treated on that day.” Gerlock explained he also had “a tape recording of Sanford Smith cursing the

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Department of Health for threatening to withhold medicine if he did not go to Leahi. Hardly what you would call a “voluntary moving!” Gerlock castigated Lilly’s high-handed attitude and criticism as “unconscionable.” Even though many objected to Lilly’s comments, the ‘Ohana needed help to fight the public relations war the State waged via media and through their dominant colonial position.

**Strategy Meetings and Patients’ Advocate**

At their meeting on April 26, 1982, the ‘Ohana discussed their tactical plans, including a need to “direct and focus support, with various actions, possibly leading to a sit-in at the Governor’s office, or a mass demonstration in September.” On May 3, the ‘Ohana discussed strategy against Ariyoshi and the plans to meet with Republican Legislative leader, Andy Anderson. Under “Old Business,” they considered the question of putting “political pressure on Ariyoshi? Will it be wasted energy to try to change his position? Is there too limited support if we plan for a sit-in or demo? Or should we look to other candidates more than focusing on Ariyoshi?” As part of new business, they discussed a topic entitled, “Stand Against Ariyoshi” and here while nothing was finalized, discussion made it clear that Punikai’a felt “strongly some campaign be initiated against Ariyoshi, during the general election period; such as radio time, letter writing, and at campaign meetings, raising the question about Hale.” At their May 17 meeting, the ‘Ohana talked about a lack of beds at Leahi. Patients sent to Leahi from Kalaupapa were told they would have to leave Leahi before they were ready to be released due to the fact that there was a shortage of beds. As a result, patients are “being sent home when not ready to be released.”

As part of the strategy to educate the public, Kalaupapa historian, Anwei Skinsnes, with clockwork precision, consistently wrote a newspaper article about leprosy and the patients. Her reports often appeared at the most opportune moment to enlist the public’s empathy to appreciate the sacrifices leprosy patients had to make and explain about the amazing people who have been part of their journey. Skinsnes in a subtle way

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contrasted the heroes in her story with the present administration, pointing out contemporary intransigence. In June, Skinsnes wrote an article on Mother Marianne Cope, the Franciscan nun and her fellow religious sisters who labored at Kalaupapa to carry on the mission of Father Damien.\textsuperscript{1292} Her article served to highlight the plight of the Hale Mohalu patients because it provided context for their unique story. Not long after this article on the Catholic presence at Kalaupapa, more good news for the patients surfaced with the announcement of new church leadership. Bishop Joseph A. Ferrario became the third Roman Catholic bishop of Honolulu during a service to mark his installation at Our Lady of Peace Cathedral in downtown Honolulu on Tuesday June 29.\textsuperscript{1293} He would play a crucial role in helping the Hale Mohalu patients.

**Hawaiian Viewpoint: Legacy of Imperialism**

Because there was so much agitation happening in the community regarding treatment of Hawaiians and their newly awakened consciousness, the issue gained media attention. On July 15, in a Star-Bulletin op-ed piece, Haunani-Kay Trask wrote an article entitled “A Hawaiian View of Hawaiian Problems,”\textsuperscript{1294} contradicting a June 30 article by Star-Bulletin editor, A. A. Smyser. Trask set the record straight on the historical reasons for the conditions Hawaiians presently face.

> Today, the Hawaiian people continue to suffer the legacy of imperialism – land alienation, occupational ghettoization and other forms of economic exploitation, the worst health profile in the Islands, deep psychological oppression that results in criminal behavior, or aimlessness from a personal sense of both loss and failure.\textsuperscript{1295}

Trask delineated the devastating effects caused by the tourist industry’s appropriation of the Hawaiian culture as well as the harm done by the privatization of land. However, as she pointed out, there had been a new awakening among Hawaiians. “But during the past decade, Hawaiians have begun to reveal a new consciousness about their heritage, their subjugation to American imperialism, and their pride in being Hawaiian.” This new consciousness accounted for the changes that took place in the Hawaiian community, affecting every aspect of life, from language revival to demands for rights long denied. “The heart of this Hawaiian revival is the concept and practice of aloha ʻāina – love for

\textsuperscript{1292} Anwei V. Skinsnes, “Mother Marianne: Silent Successor to Father Damien,” Honolulu Advertiser, Tuesday June 8, 1982, B-1.
the land.”1296 In the Hale Mohalu struggle, Bernard Punikai`a repeatedly emphasized the importance of this value.1297

**Marching in Place: Keeping On**

While the attorneys tried to resolve the dispute with the State, Punikai`a sent a letter to Ariyoshi as a follow-up clarification of the settlement attempt made by the ‘Ohana’s attorneys. Punikai`a wanted the Governor to know that even though they were willing to reach a settlement, the patients were not giving up the fight for their rights as human beings. “We will never give up our struggle to safeguard our fundamental rights as human beings to be treated as such and be given a voice in decisions affecting us.”1298

In a sign of solidarity, when the Protect Kaho`olawe ‘Ohana scheduled a fundraising musical performance, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana invited the public to support the upcoming Kaho`olawe Concert at Aloha Tower on Admission Day, August 20, which was being held in order to raise funds to buy a boat for travel to Kaho`olawe.1299 Each Hawaiian ‘Ohana supported the other in their unified goal of sovereignty. When it came time to celebrate Bernard Punikai`a’s fifty-second birthday at the end of August, his friends from Kalaupapa, Reverend James W. Drew and his wife, Sally sent Punikia`a a birthday card to wish him all the best on his attendance at the University. “Dear Bernard, we wish you well on your University venture. We know you will show the “youngsters” a good time.”1300 Four years into the struggle, Punikai`a was not just languishing at Hale Mohalu but he sought to continue his education, especially Kānaka Maoli culture. In the spring and fall semesters of 1982 and 1983, Punikai`a studied Hawaiian language with Kumu Naomi Losch at Leeward College. At times, he could not be there because of his work with the Patients’ Council and the ongoing struggle with Hale Mohalu.1301 Intellectually curious, Punikai`a sought to educate himself on his heritage as well as numerous subjects, having to do with politics, law, history, public health, and music.

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1297 As a student in Dr. Trask’s class, I often hear her speak of aloha `āina but it was not until I spent six weeks living at Kalaupapa in 2005 did I understand what she meant. The house we stayed in was once that of former patient, Eracleo Augustine. It was located on Damien Road close to the mountain cliff or pali. Each morning that I walked outside, the play of sun or clouds on the pali was spectacular. There was a presence, a mana in the land that was unmistakable. I thought of Dr. Trask many times, thinking, “this is what she meant.”
1298 Bernard K. Punikaia, Letter to Governor Ariyoshi, August 9, 1982, (John Witeck, personal collection). The letter was also sent to Sidney Wolinsky, Robert Harris, Dick Muller, and Michael Lilly.
1299 SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS 200+ weeks on the pavement.
1301 Kumu Naomi Losch, personal email, 25 August 2011.
By this time in the struggle, Hale Mohalu was barely in the news, but the protest continued, joining forces with other causes. On Saturday September 11, Bernard Punikai‘a was one of the featured speakers at Maryknoll High School who spoke out against the upcoming visit to the United States of President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines. A small article in the paper on the same page as the obituaries contained the story of the Maryknoll meeting and Punikai‘a. The notice was so small it would have been easy to miss, but another article in the Travel Section of the the Sunday paper on Kalaupapa had much more coverage. This story focused on Kalaupapa’s distinctiveness, as tour driver and patient Isaac Keao, owner of “Ike’s Tours,” noted. For the tourists, “the colony at Kalaupapa, if they knew of it all, was something dimly associated with the past, a horror story out of the 19th century.” This visit to Kalaupapa was a totally different experience from anywhere else they had been in Hawai‘i. By the time they left Ike’s Tour, they had a new understanding and appreciation for the Settlement. The papers often juxtaposed a story about Kalaupapa vis-à-vis what was happening at Hale Mohalu or with Punikai‘a as spokesperson for the ‘Ohana. Generally the story about the latter would be miniscule. Four years into the leprosy conflict, Hale Mohalu was largely ignored, while the new national park at Kalaupapa got far more coverage.

**Governor’s Race: Ariyoshi and Fasi**

The State controlled the message about Hansen’s Disease patients much more than many may have realized, as the Governor’s election illustrated. Once again George Ariyoshi and Frank Fasi faced each other as opponents in the race for Governor. It would be Ariyoshi’s third time to run for the position. He defeated Fasi four years earlier when the struggle for Hale Mohalu began. This time Fasi ran as an independent. The primary was Saturday September 18, and there were twelve candidates running for Governor. Part of the crowded field had a humorous aspect in that one of the candidates, John Paul Fritz, a “perennial candidate for public office,” used as his middle name “Aloha and Mahalo,” because he did not have enough money to advertise and thank his supporters. As the incumbent, he faced three principal candidates, former Mayor Fasi, Lt. Governor Jean King, and State Senator D.G. “Andy” Anderson. Keeping above the fray, Governor

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Ariyoshi refused to appear in a public forum to debate his opponents because he felt he would be attacked. He said whenever he attended various community sponsored political forums, “he generally ends up as the target of all three of the gubernatorial candidates.” It was frustrating because he was not “given equal time to respond.”

Ariyoshi said it was more difficult for the incumbent to run for re-election “because everyone comes after you. You’re the target. You have to spend money correcting the record ... You have to spend money to let people know what your record is.”

Ariyoshi felt his spending of over $1 million should be judged against the combined total of the three candidates, which amounted to $863, 392 and not their individual amounts of $164, 709 for King, $418, 735 for Anderson, and $279, 948 for Fasi.

Ariyoshi’s twisting of the gubernatorial narrative (where as the most powerful person in the State, he somehow became the victim) illustrated how smoothly he managed to control the media, particularly with the Hale Mohalu struggle. Rather than a group of patients fighting for the recognition of their humanity, the State switched the storyline, so they instead were viewed as squatters, looking for special treatment.

Ariyoshi won the election for an unprecedented third term, solidifying his hold on power through a period in Hawaiian history of tremendous change. Ariyoshi had been elected Lieutenant Governor in 1970 and before that he had served for sixteen years in the State Legislature. At age 28, when he began his legislative career in 1954, he was the youngest legislator. When Governor Burns became ill, Ariyoshi, as second in command, stepped in as Acting Governor in 1973.

When Ariyoshi won the election in 1982, it meant by the end of his term in 1986, he had held the highest office in the State for thirteen years, meaning he had opportunity to leave his imprint on the State. He always said he sought Island solutions to Island problems, yet the leprosy patients of Hawai‘i are uniquely part of the Islands. Ariyoshi, presented with the opportunity to hear the patients speak on their own behalf, however chose to ignore their voices.

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The Grace of Immanent Spirits

Because there had been so much in the news about Hawaiian issues and so much misconception, two respected University of Hawai‘i Professors, Stephen Boggs and Marion Kelly, wrote an article to clarify some concerns.\footnote{1310} In an even-handed manner, they discussed the history of Hawai‘i and the way land was regarded before the arrival of Captain Cook. “In ancient Hawaii no one “owned” the land. The Hawaiians regarded the land in much the same way that other non-Western peoples commonly have for thousands of years.”\footnote{1311} Boggs and Kelly explained Hawaiians had a spiritual relationship to the land – a relationship familiar to indigenous people who also feel they belong to the land. Dorothy Lee described this relationship as “one of ‘intimate belongingness’ within which ‘man acts and refrains from acting in the name of a wider democracy which includes nature and the divine.’”\footnote{1311} Boggs and Kelly elaborated on what Lee meant. “Such people, Lee points out, belong to the land (not the other way around) ‘in the way that flora and fauna belong to it. They cultivate the land by the grace of the immanent spirits, but they cannot dispose of it and cannot conceive of doing so.’”\footnote{1312} Punikai‘a tried to tell this to the State. The patients were given the Hale Mohalu land as their kuleana.

By the end of 1982, the Hale Mohalu controversy had been pretty well obliterated from public awareness as far as the media was concerned. The resisting patients were still at Hale Mohalu camping out without basic services, but the newspapers basically ignored their story until Robert Hollis wrote a full-page spread in the Advertiser on Monday December 27. Hollis remarked, “regardless of the merits of the dispute, the Hale Mohalu protest has become noteworthy because of its length. It is also unique because the protesters are Hansen’s Disease patients, who until recent years were true outcasts in Hawaii.”\footnote{1313} Hollis reported on the public amnesia over the issue. “Time, seemingly endless court hearings, decisions and appeals, as well as public apathy have resulted in the Hale Mohalu issue disappearing from the public mind.” If it had not been for articles like that of Hollis or those of Anwei Skinsnes, the controversy could easily have...
disappeared from public view. Even Punikai’a never expected that they would still be there in protest after four years. He thought it would have been resolved long ago. After all these years, the State felt certain they would prevail in this dispute. They continued to claim that they had no plans for the property whose value had steadily increased over the course of time. The land was considered prime real estate, now worth millions of dollars. How could the State maintain it had no ideas about its use? “Punikaia and others, however, say the Ariyoshi administration has all along wanted the patients out so that the land can be developed either by the state or sold to private builders at an enormous profit.”

In December, the patients and their supporters celebrated Christmas as they had for the past five years, gathering together on Christmas Eve for a religious service followed by homemade Portuguese soup prepared by Ed Gerlock. The service and the fellowship took place under electric lights powered by a generator, and the soup “was heated on a Coleman stove, as is all the food prepared by the dissident patients.”

Hollis did an excellent job in the Advertiser article to convey to the reader what life had been like for the patients living in these bare-bones conditions. He concluded his portrait with the realistic but rather ominous note that if no agreement were reached, it would be a matter of time and age that would decide the matter.

In summary, Punikai’a’s nemesis, George Yuen resigned ignominiously from his position as Health Director in March, while that same month Judge Pence and deputy Attorney General Michael Lilly dismissed not only the patients’ suit, but also the patients themselves. In response, the leprosy victims were by no means about to prostrate themselves in supplication before the State, nor were they ready to abandon their cause. Instead the patients put on a huge benefit concert at Aloha Tower, declaring their steadfast resistance. Ariyoshi remained in power, as did his policy of ignoring the patients as well as prominent members of the community who tried to help them. The patients defiantly carried on, willingly to reach a settlement with the Governor but unwilling to compromise their principles. Nothing short of complete surrender would suit the State, so both sides remained apart.

CHAPTER 12
EVICTION 1983

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana marked the historic fifth anniversary of the January transfer. In April the Ninth Circuit Court heard the patients’ case. It seemed at last there would be a resolution to the conflict as the property increased in value and massive development took place across O‘ahu, especially in the Pearl City area. In September the Ninth Circuit ruled against the plaintiffs. The patients were evicted, arrested, and the buildings destroyed. The remarkable five-year standoff was finally finished. The physical structures were gone but not Hale Mohalu. The battle was only beginning.

Save Hale Mohalu Day

In preparation for the fifth anniversary commemoration at Damien Statue on January 26, the ‘Ohana met on January 10 to discuss their plans and protest signage. Various banners were considered, including one that said “Hale Mohalu Lives On! January 26, 1978 – Victory.” Among the speakers slated to appear were Patsy Mink and Haunani-Kay Trask. Two days later, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana issued a media release, which stated that five years after the removal to Leahi, three patients remain at Pearl City, “supported by their Kalaupapa community and their Ohana of supporters.” The rally was scheduled for Wednesday January 26 from 11:30 AM to 1 PM at the State Capitol. In addition to honoring the three patients who had died during the struggle, various community leaders were invited to speak. To gather support for the rally, the ‘Ohana distributed yellow flyers that contained a reprint of the Robert Hollis article in the Honolulu Advertiser from December 27, 1982. The flyer explained the significance of the anniversary date and the purpose of the rally. The back of the flyer included Judge Shirley Hofstetter’s quote about “unconscionable and reprehensible,” as well as information on items for purchase, including T-shirts, 1983 calendars, and records with the songs “Kalaupapa” and “Hale Mohalu.” Five years was a milestone that did not seem possible but the ‘Ohana remained steadfast. As part of the publicity to mark the anniversary, John Witeck wrote a compelling article about the five-year struggle for the

1317 Media Release/Public Service Announcement re: Fifth Anniversary, January 12, 1983.
1318 Media Release/Public Service Announcement re: Fifth Anniversary, January 12, 1983.
newspaper, **KA HULIAU**. The gathering January 26 was small, and the newspapers only carried two photos of the event. The *Star-Bulletin* had a picture of Bernard Punikaiʻa in his worn cowboy hat as he stood before the microphones to address those assembled. The *Advertiser* photo featured two demonstrators holding a banner as they marched past the Damien statue. Their banner asked “How Much Longer?” under the words: “1978-1983, Too Long, Hawaii, Waiting for Justice, Hale Mohalu Still Waits.”

**Job Discrimination and San Francisco Court Date**

Another example of “waiting for justice” was the Kalaupapa pay discrepancy because the Department of Health never followed through to correct the problem. Punikaiʻa’s efforts to bring this inequity to the attention of the Legislature resulted in proposed bills offered by both the Senate and the House. To correct the discriminatory policy, Senator Richard Wong had introduced SB No. 360 on February 2, while the House amended its version of a similar bill, HB No. 546. On March 1, Representatives Byron Baker, Health Chair and Connie C. Chun, Vice-Chair sent Henry Peters, House Speaker a letter regarding the changes made to HB No. 546, and a recommendation that the bill pass second reading. As the Legislature acted, the patients decided to file a discrimination suit. Wolinsky contacted Punikaiʻa to have him sign retainer forms. He responded with his apologies. “Sorry about the delay in the retainer forms re the minimum wage lawsuit. There were two bills in the Legislature; one of them has died, but the House Bill survives. They were identical/companion bills.” Punikaiʻa also spoke about their court appeal. “Hurrah! Finally we have a date for our appeal before the 9th Circuit. Yes, I’m coming - by hook or crook. Please do arrange all the public speaking engagements and media conferences possible.” On March 31, the ʻOhana on behalf of the patients sent a “Dear Friends,” letter asking, “We need your help in order to send Frank Duarte and Bernard Punikaia – and perhaps one more Hansen’s Disease patient –

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1323 “SB No. 360 Relating to employment of patients at facilities for the treatment of persons suffering from Hansen’s Disease,” February 2, 1983.
1324 “HB 546, HD 1, A Bill for an Act Relating to Employment of Patients at Facilities for the Treatment of Persons Suffering from Hansen’s Disease, Before the 12th Legislature, 1983.”
to San Francisco for one week before the May 10 court date.” The letter explained that in
San Francisco their attorneys and friends had planned “a series of events designed to
broaden our support and to bring our situation to public attention.”

On Friday April 8, six Kalaupapa residents filed suit in federal court against the
Health Department for discrimination in pay, charging that the State had paid them less
than federal minimum wage. The federal Office of Civil Rights investigated the
matter in 1980 and in 1981 and directed the State to take corrective action, but the
situation remained unchanged. Punikai’a who filed the suit told the press, “the state
continues to be ‘insensitive’ to Hansen’s disease patients and treats them like ‘second-
class citizens.’” This difference in pay, effective since 1947, meant resident patient
workers did not receive any overtime pay or raises although their civil service
counterparts did. “The suit asks that the workers be given the same wages and benefits as
any civil service worker doing the same task and that they be repaid back wages.” At
this time, Kalaupapa had twenty-three resident patients who performed the same job
alongside the State’s forty-seven civil service workers. The discrimination in pay,
Punikai’a elaborated was “one more example of the way in which this ineptly
administered bureaucracy seems to bungle everything it touches.” That would be an
understatement to say the least. Certainly the State did not want to deal with any more
complaints from Punikai’a. Only the courts seemed to offer the patients any hope of
receiving justice.

On Tuesday May 10, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco heard
the patients’ case. The Star-Bulletin never covered the event at all. The Advertiser
reported on the story but it was not front-page news. Wolinsky said the hearing “was the
‘culmination of a long five-year political issue, in Hawaii that pitted the governor with
the Department of Health and the Legislature with the patients.’” Wolinsky meant that
the Legislature tried to help the patients, but the Governor and the Health opposed them.
The patients’ suit requested return of the land as a leprosy facility and financial damages
in the amount of $10 million dollars. Wolinsky argued the case before Chief Judge James

R. Browning and Judges Eugene Wright and J. Clifford Wallace. Lilly felt “the appeals court should defer to the decision of the federal district judge in Hawaii.” The State wanted that ruling to stand. Lilly also “argued that the federal government never forced the state to honor an agreement to give the land to the Hansen’s disease patients – and hence, the state owned the land outright.”\(^{1334}\) The court’s decision could take several months. In the meantime, the stand–off continued, with weekly Friday picketing.

**Another Approach**

While waiting for the court to make its decision, part of the on-going public relations battle included generating positive press for the patients. In August Anwei Skinsnes wrote such an article when she reported on two important men who worked at Kalaupapa in the early part of the 20\(^{th}\) century, namely Superintendent Jack McVeigh and resident physician Dr. Goodhue. Despite economic budgetary constraints, these two individuals made sure that patients had the best care they could provide. Anwei Skinsnes summed up the legacy left by McVeigh and Goodhue. “They were the pioneers of effective medicine and administration at Kalaupapa largely because the patients were their top priority. They realized that good health was dependent on more than the administration of a few pills: that good morale was also essential.”\(^{1335}\) The men understood no one had volunteered for segregation at Kalaupapa and therefore, they were “entitled to every consideration that the territory can give them.”\(^{1336}\)

Jack London, who had visited Kalaupapa, saw firsthand the benefits of McVeigh’s and Goodhue’s attentiveness to the patients. Skinsnes quoted London’s praise of the men as heroes and comment that he was grateful he had the chance to know them.\(^{1337}\) She contrasted McVeigh’s and Goodhue’s work with patients’ present treatment.

However, 117 patients now reside at Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu by choice. Most of them contracted the disease before the introduction of the sulfone drugs in the 1940s and were taken from their families in order that society might be protected. Nothing will ever change that fact, so the situation still deserves special consideration.\(^{1338}\)

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\(^{1338}\) Anwei V. Skinsnes, “Getting Along Nicely Now” Honolulu Advertiser, August 31, 1983, H-1 + H-2,
The timing of the article with its emphasis on mutual love between the staff and the patients helped to frame the Hale Mohalu conflict favorably, and reminded the public of the nearly forgotten Pearl City struggle.\textsuperscript{1339} It reinforced the premise that the patients “deserve special consideration,” while the loving attitude of Goodhue and McVeigh contrasted sharply with the harshness of Yuen and Ariyoshi.

**Appeals Court Upholds Closing**

The Appeals Court decision on Hale Mohalu in September brought the eviction of the patients and the inevitable destruction of the Pearl City site. The Star-Bulletin reported the patients “lost another round” and it underscored Lilly’s triumph and Judge Pence’s earlier ruling. “After Pence decided in March 1982 that the patients claims against the state ‘are entirely without merit,’ the plaintiffs took the case to the 9\textsuperscript{th} U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The circuit court upheld Pence’s decision.”\textsuperscript{1340} Next day, Advertiser political columnist, Jerry Burris reported that the unanimous decision by the court was seen as validating the State’s position in the eyes of Lilly who said, “any patient remaining at Hale Mohalu is a trespasser.”\textsuperscript{1341} Lilly’s comments revealed not only a feeling of vindication but also exultation over the State’s victory. Lilly argued the patients “do not have an entitlement to continued services at Hale Mohalu,” and “they have no constitutional right to be there.”\textsuperscript{1342} Wolinsky said the Judge’s ruling “marks a sad day for the legal system and Hawaii when it is unable to protect the elderly and disabled.”\textsuperscript{1343} Jeanne Ambrose’s Star-Bulletin article recalled the history of what took place after the 1978 evictions, explaining that the patients had lost three federal court cases before taking the case to the Ninth Circuit.\textsuperscript{1344}

The San Francisco Chronicle commented on the case. “A small group of leprosy victims who have been fighting to remain in a tree-shaded leprosarium near Honolulu lost an appeal before the Court of Appeals here yesterday.”\textsuperscript{1345} The Chronicle recounted the story of the patients struggle in a dispassionate but fair way, noting Wolinsky called the

\textsuperscript{1339} This latest Advertiser article by Anwei Skinsnes was part of a series on leprosy that she had written for the paper; previously there had been an article in March 1981 on Brother Joseph Dutton (Anwei V. Skinsnes, “Brother Dutton’s Penance: Starting Over at Kalaupapa,” Honolulu Advertiser, March 26, 1981, D-1 + D-4.) and another in June 1982 on Mother Marianne Cope, (Anwei V. Skinsnes, “Mother Marianne: Silent Successor to Father Damien,” Honolulu Advertiser, Tuesday June 8, 1982, B-1.) The account of McVeigh and Goodhue were part of that sequence.


decision “extremely scholarly and humanly cold.” Wolinsky also said the decision meant the leprosy patients “who have been brutalized by the state of Hawaii and society generally have absolutely no rights when the state tries to close down the home in which they’ve lived for 30 years.” The Chronicle brought out an aspect of the final decision that the local papers, more concerned about crediting Lilly, did not emphasize, namely Medicaid. As the paper reported, the court held that “although the regulations limit the ability of Medicaid facilities, such limits are not applicable to transfers indirectly resulting from decertification of a facility. The same reasoning applies to the closing of a facility.”

In a father-knows-best tone, the Star-Bulletin editorial of September 9, suggested that the resistance fight by the patients needed to end immediately now that the court case had been decided. “If indeed the legal questions have been settled, the time may have come for the holdouts at Hale Mohalu to give up their long and courageous fight and make peace with Health Department officials who really have their best interests at heart.” The holdouts did not agree with that assessment of “best interests at heart.” If the patients had believed that was the case, they would not have fought the State in court. In fact, they felt the State, in contrast, had its own best interests at heart.

At a meeting of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana on September 9, they discussed the case and their options. Emmett Cahill said, “We’re not about ready to roll over and die. We’ll keep fighting as long as we can, as long as we live.” Sid Wolinsky gave his legal assessment, saying it “may mark end of the legal road. Some legal recourse left, but no great expectations that [it] can be successful.” The ‘Ohana considered several ideas, such as sending letters to the editor, to their congressional representatives, as well as reporting to their supporters via a newsletter. Some other ideas were to meet with Health Director Charles Clark and also to arrange for a meeting with Bishop Ferrario. Anita Una, visibly upset, tearfully “suggested they call it quits, [you] gave it a good try, [and] your health could be affected.” The ‘Ohana considered the fact that eviction was very likely and discussed how would they handle that situation. The unity of the ‘Ohana was the

principal factor that emerged from the meeting. Pat Mumford of the Council of Churches was present as well as Neil Abercrombie. The people at the meeting gave their total support behind the patients’ affirmation that “Hale Mohalu is our home not Leahi, which is cold, institutional, not a community. State always made decisions for us … now is time to change that.” The group felt the administration was “playing a waiting game with patients,” and they needed to begin a campaign of “new constituencies, - Church, Kokua Council, City Council resolution, Health and Community Services Council.”

Punikai‘a explained his thoughts. “Judging by State’s past actions regarding Makua and Sand Island, [they] would not come in unannounced – send notices, play on fears, set deadline, see how we react, adjust and make plans.” From first hand observation of previous evictions, Punikai‘a was certain the State would follow the same pattern.

The controversy continued to play out in the newspapers, as people wrote letters to the editor to express their feelings about the decision. Under a heading entitled “The Case for Hale Mohalu,” the Star-Bulletin printed two letters, one from Wally Inglis and another from Stewart Meacham; both letters disagreed with the newspaper’s editorial of September 9, which suggested that those who had resisted the State should now end the conflict peacefully. Inglis noted that the patients at this time “need our encouragement and support.” Meacham pointed out how the paper’s “complacent assurance that the state has only the welfare of the patients at heart hardly squares with Judge Shirley Hufstedler’s opinion,” of the State’s actions as “reprehensible and unconscionable.”

Emmett Cahill sent his letter as well, reaffirming the defiance that characterized the ‘Ohana to argue that those who fought for Hale Mohalu would continue to do so and would never give up.

In the meantime, the patients remained at Hale Mohalu while they waited for the State to serve notice of eviction. It arrived a week after the court ruling. Dated September 14, 1983, the final notice stated,

You are hereby notified that Parcel 35, Tax Map Key 9-7-19, Waianae, Ewa, Oahu, now commonly know as the former Hale Mohalu Hospital of Pearl City, is owned by the State of Hawaii. Use of said land for any purposes, included but not

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1354 Stewart Meacham, Letter, Honolulu Star-Bulletin Wednesday September 21, 1983, A-15, ironically the paper published these responses on the same day it reported the destruction of Hale Mohalu.
limited to, residential, farming, and/or camping, has not been authorized or permitted and will not be authorized or permitted by the DOH, State of Hawaii. Final notice is hereby given that, effective 5PM 9/16/83 unless you remove all your personal property, including animals, pets, clothing and any and all personal property of any description from said land, such property, shall be confiscated and removed from said land at your cost and expense.1356

The Department of Health had served the eviction notice to the three remaining patients, ordering them to leave by 5PM on Friday September 16, 1983, and the patients at Pearl City had invited their supporters to a potluck on that Friday.1357 The patients hoped to get a temporary restraining order blocking the eviction. Punikaiʻa remained hopeful, but he was also realistic about the State’s tough stance at Sand Island and Mākua.1358

**Deadline to Vacate and Eviction**

The deadline to vacate meant the patients had to be out of the building by Friday afternoon. Health Director, Charles Clark gave the order, but he also sent an accompanying letter, offering to help relocate people back to Kalaupapa, if that was where they wanted to go.1359 However, Friday the 16th of September came and went, and the patients remained as entrenched as ever. Under the caption “Deadline Passes” a photo in the Saturday Star-Bulletin featured Abercrombie and Punikaiʻa at Hale Mohalu, reading the notice to vacate. The Health Department said it had nothing to report about any further action by the State.1360 A large group of supporters gathered in a circle around the patients at Hale Mohalu, discussing plans to hold a vigil in anticipation of eviction.1361

A few days later, Bernard Punikaiʻa and Bruce Doneux of the Kalaupapa Historical Project looked over glass plate negative records that were left at the facility, feeling saddened and angered that the negatives had been abandoned by the Health Department.1362 The State left behind scores of these glass plate records, which contained personal information on the patients and the leprosy program. No provision was made to store them for safekeeping or retain them for their historical value.1363

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“A reliable Health Department source” informed the patients and the ‘Ohana that the eviction would take place early Wednesday morning. Anticipating the raid, supporters came to show solidarity, including Winnie Harada from Kalaupapa and Jim Albertini from Hawai‘i Island. Rather than give any public notice, word of mouth alerted as many supporters as possible to be present early Wednesday morning. Many had stayed all night and “by 5 a.m., most sleeping bags were rolled up.” A member of the ‘Ohana guarded the side gate as supporters continued to arrive. They tried to plan their strategy, dividing into those willing to be arrested and those (for whatever reason) who could not afford to have that happen and would leave after the warning to vacate had been given by the State. “By 5:30 a.m., the ‘Ohana convened in a circle. More than 30 patients and supporters were present.” In an even-tempered voice Jim Albertini laid out the options and the strategy to be followed when the police showed up. “Options included being arrested in a circle around Clarence and Bernard, or holding signs and banners outside the gate when the time came.” The supporters gathered in a circle and sang songs, “Kalaupapa, My Home Town” and “Hale Mohalu,” as they had done so many times before “With Bernard in the center, the ‘Ohana ring of nearly 40 supporters followed his lead in singing the songs.”

Punikai’a and Nai’a were seated in the center of the circle holding between them a large wooden cross with the words, “Hale Mohalu” on the horizontal cross bar and “Leprosy Patients Crucified” on the vertical plane.

When the authorities arrived at 6:15 AM, they broke the lock of the outside gate, guarded by Inglis as he and other supporters chanted, “Save Hale Mohalu.” A metallic voice over a bullhorn announced, “Clear the area - this is a government operation.” The police force quickly surrounded the Clinton Building and entered it. When the singing stopped, an official from the Health Department, Les Matsubara, walked to the middle of the room, and read a statement, saying everyone present was trespassing, that he would give a warning to leave, and if anyone stayed after the 10 minutes allocated to leave, that person or persons would be guilty of interfering with a government operation and they would be arrested. Matsubara repeated his warning and began the 10-minute countdown. Punikai’a stepped forward and read from a prepared statement.

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We of Hale Mohalu, our community at Kalaupapa and our friends have been trying for more than five years to save our homes. We have tried to help the state understand that Hansen’s disease affects only the body. Our minds comprehend that a facility deeded to the state by the federal government ‘as a leprosarium in perpetuity’ is, in fact, intended for our use… All we asked was to remain on our land at Hale Mohalu where so many of our brothers and sisters lived and died in isolation, for the safety of the general public. We understood why that sacrifice was necessary. We are still waiting to understand why we must give up our homes as well.\footnote{1366 John Witeck, “Dawn Raid at Hale Mohalu,” KA HULIAU, October-November, 1983, p. 1 + pgs.10-11.}

Punikai‘a looked straight at Les Matsubara, demanding, “This is our home and you are trespassing. We ask you to please leave.”\footnote{1367 Witeck, KA HULIAU, p.10.} The supporters applauded loudly and the officers retreated to wait the remaining minutes. Mary Neilson had arrived late and tried to reach her husband inside the building, by pushing past the police who blocked the entrances. She struggled with the police who held her back forcefully and refused to let her go inside. She cried loudly as the police hurt her arm in the scuffle. Several ‘Ohana tried to help, including Dr. Fred Dodge, who “found himself in a choke hold when he went to Mary’s aid, but was released and rejoined the circle around Bernard and Clarence.”\footnote{1368 Witeck, KA HULIAU, p.10.} The circle of friends, their hands clasped, sang “Hawaii Aloha” and “Hawaii Pono.” When “half the supporters left to take up posts outside the gate, those remaining formed a tighter circle around Clarence and Bernard.”\footnote{1369 Witeck, KA HULIAU, p.10.} The group said the Lord’s Prayer followed by the singing of “Onipa’a Kakou” led by Kawahine Kamakea, Frenchy DeSoto and Kawehi Gill. When the ten minutes was up, the officers broke through the circle, physically lifted Punikai‘a and Nai‘a, picked them up, and carried them outside, setting them on the muddy ground. Police evicted the remaining protestors, with one officer on each side of the person, lifting them up, and carrying them outside to be put into the police van. “Supporters in a parking lot overlooking the field shouted support and encouragement to the 18 arrestees – 11 men and seven women.”\footnote{1370 Witeck, KA HULIAU, p.10.} As she was escorted outside, Kawahine Kamakea,\footnote{1371 Kawahine Kamakea explained that she had gotten involved in the Hale Mohalu struggle because it was not right that the State would treat the patients so unjustly by allowing the buildings to become unsafe while the State collected millions in federal money for the leprosy program. Kawahine Kamakea, personal interview, Honolulu, 5 January 2013.} her hands tied behind her back with her arms held by the police, fell to the ground, but got up, glared at the police, and proudly...
walked on her own power into the police paddy wagon. The officers carrying Holly Henderson joked that they did not want to drop her as it would not look good for the television cameras. After a few moments while the rest were removed from Hale Mohalu, the two patients were lifted to their feet and placed inside a police car. Nai’a and Punikai’a were taken to the main police station in Honolulu and booked. The buildings were bulldozed. News of the eviction and the arrest of the leprosy patients was blasted across newspaper front pages and on the television news.

The Wednesday September 21 Star-Bulletin headline summed up the story, “Last 2 Holdouts at Hale Mohalu Evicted” with the sub-headline, “Police Arrest Protestors at Facility.” Reporter Stu Glauberman recounted the early morning events. “The last two holdout Hansen’s disease patients at Hale Mohalu and several of their supporters were arrested this morning at the Pearl City facility and taken away in police paddy wagons.” Some of those who had stood vigil with the patients before the police raid decided that they would comply with the order to leave, but others refused and got arrested.

Eighteen people were arrested. Seven of those, along with the two patients, were taken to the main police station on Beretania Street and later freed on $25 bail each. The seven who went to Beretania station included James Albertini, and Bruce Doneux, both 36 years old, Jewell Cuizon, 40, Joseph Neilson, age 69 and Mary Neilson, age 56, and Radine Kamakea, 31, along with Kawehi Kanui-Gill, age 33. Everyone except Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Neilson were charged with obstructing government operations. “Others arrested and freed on $25 bail each at Pearl City police station were Ruth Chow 62; Elke I. Marsh, 44; Eric M. Enos, 35; John J. Witeck, 38; Kalama K. Akamine, 25; Puhipau (Abraham) Ahmad, 45; Holly Henderson, 41; Kevin Kunz, 36; and Frederick Dodge, 52.” Although the group was divided as to which police station they were brought to, they all had to appear together for arraignment at the Ewa-Pearl City District Court.

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Advertiser writer, Mark Matsunaga composed two empathetic articles about Hale Mohalu. One dealt with the actual eviction, describing the order to vacate, which was delivered in an amplified voice. “Please clear the area, this is a government operation.” The other article focused on the land that had been cleared and the question of what would happen to it, noting Director Charles Clark did not know.

Events After the Eviction

After the eviction, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana put out a flyer inviting the public to join them that evening in a meeting at the Wesley Foundation at 1918 University Ave. on September 21. The flyer stated, “Our hearts, like all hearts, know where home is And our souls know that the only response to injustice is to resist.” The next day the ‘Ohana affirmed that the spirit of Hale Mohalu continues. Punikai’a said, “Only the buildings are gone. Hale Mohalu is more than buildings. It is in all of us.” But the patients were upset that personal patient property was destroyed even though Charles Clark had promised that he would store those things for them at their expense. Punikai’a was particularly upset that the chapel the patients had used for years had been destroyed. Punikai’a explained the chapel was where they all prayed the morning of the Pearl Harbor attack. Clark said he was able to save some parts of the chapel, including the stained glass windows, items from the altar, and the chandeliers. Clark felt he had no choice but to evict the patients and bulldoze the buildings once the Appeals Court had made its ruling. Frank Duarte had returned to Kalaupapa when he received his eviction notice. Clarence Nai’a had gone to Leahi because he had back pain but, as the paper expressed it, Bernard Punikaia “is the only one on his own today.” The ‘Ohana said they would “continue to conduct sign-holding vigils at the State Capitol from 3:30 to 5PM Fridays.”

The next day the Advertiser editorial spoke about the destruction. “Aloha Week was hardly the best time symbolically, but the end at Hale Mohalu, which came with state
action yesterday, has long been inevitable.” In a rather high-handed manner, the Advertiser summed up the loss of the buildings. “Whether the decline and destruction of the decayed Pearl City living facility for Hansen’s disease patients was necessary or desirable is still debatable.”1382 The editors explained that some people believed that Governor Ariyoshi had been amazingly patient in dealing with the Hale Mohalu situation, which had been co-opted into a political chess game, while others felt the State was guilty of callousness in dealing with its most vulnerable population, who were disrespected and dishonored in the process. Whatever viewpoint prevailed, the paper urged that Hale Mohalu should be used as a reminder to care for the State’s leprosy patients and to look after Kalaupapa now that it is a National Park.1383

After the State destroyed the buildings at Hale Mohalu Charles Clark commented, “I am very happy that we have finally terminated this five-year struggle. I am unhappy that we had to have a confrontation and that it was necessary to physically remove two of the patients and some of the sympathizers.”1384 Regarding the land, Clark stated that he would write the Governor and have him transfer the property from the Department of Health to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Clark stated, “The property is now off-limits to the public and trespassers will be arrested.”1385 Immediately after the eviction, the Star-Bulletin editors on September 22 explained why they felt it was necessary, saying the protestors “could have respected the law and vacated the premises and negotiated an amicable settlement with the state. Instead they defied the state to remove them. So they have been removed – fortunately without violence.”1386 In a chilling summation of the situation, the editors reprimanded the patients, saying in effect that they should have done what they were told, but since they did not, they got what they deserved. The eviction happened, the editors stated, because of the patients’ failure to prove their case in court. Because of “this intransigence,”1387 like willful children, they had to suffer the consequences. The paper failed to acknowledge the colonial model responsible for the imbalance of power with the Health Department and the patients.

While the editors approved of Ariyoshi’s handling of the eviction, others sent letters of complaint to the paper. In the Star-Bulletin, John H. Norris criticized the Governor for the eviction. “It is just another sorry chapter in the shameful history of our government’s - state and federal - dishonorable dealings with indigenous people – the thievery of land by broken treaties and the use of euphemisms like “ceded.” Norris felt the timing was at the worst possible – in the middle of Aloha Week. “Gov. George Ariyoshi shows how much of the Hawaiian spirit he possesses when he chooses Aloha Week to evict leprosy victims from their home and land they were promised would be theirs in perpetuity. When will the state want Kalaupapa for developers?”

Norris also sent a letter to the Advertiser to express his outrage. Norris felt that the Ariyoshi and the State had lost its integrity – that they were morally bankrupt in the eviction of the patients. “So once more greed wins over rights. Another piece of the aina is stripped away from the indigenous rightful owners who, years ago, accepted this isolated home to protect the community and were promised it would be their home in perpetuity.” Norris spoke for the citizens of Hawai‘i who criticized the governor’s handling of the matter. “I have just witnessed a ruthless display of bureaucratic arrogance as the pleas and efforts of these unfortunate Hawaiians to save their home was cruelly trampled under the police boot in a staggering blow to humane government.”

The City Prosecutor Charles Marsland had empathy for the patients and refused to prosecute them – although that was what the State Attorney General wanted him to do. “Despite a scolding by Attorney General Tany Hong, City Prosecutor Charles Marsland today stood firm in his decision not to prosecute protestors at last week’s demolition of the Hale Mohalu Hansen’s disease facility in Pearl City.” The Star-Bulletin went on to discuss the case. “Two former residents of the facility and 16 sympathizers are scheduled to be arraigned in Ewa District Court tomorrow morning [Wednesday September 28] on misdemeanor trespass violations stemming from last Wednesday’s protest.” Marsland was a man straight out of the old West, a tall, no nonsense talking, my word equals my bond, kind of man who had huge popular support. Marsland did not suffer fools lightly and he knew which fights were important and worthy of his time and the public’s.

“Marsland said he remained ‘unswervingly convinced’ that dropping prosecution in the case was in the public interest,” reported the paper.  

On September 28, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana released a statement. “Whether the State chooses to charge us or not, we feel it is vital to make clear why 18 diverse citizens, ranging in age from 25 to 69, chose to be arrested rather than leave Hale Mohalu.” The Statement gave the status of the matter and told of how they had received generous support from the public in their fight for the patients’ civil rights.

Simply to read Hawaii’s statutes related to Hansen’s Disease is to realize that they are in fact a penal code. To have had to go to the Legislature in the 1980s over such basic issues as the patients’ rights to vote and to receive minimum wage is a shameful indictment of State treatment of these fellow citizens.

The statement also spoke of the way the State neglected Hale Mohalu and of how it reflected the way the State has handled the entire Hansen’s Disease program. “We ask the public to hear the facts and be the jury.” When Marsland refused to prosecute the case, the Attorney General’s office stepped in with fresh accusations. Deputy Attorney General Frank Kim levied new second-degree trespassing charges.

One of those arrested was Holly Henderson, a strong supporter of the patients whose letter to the editor expressed the ‘Ohana’s determination to continue fighting. She said, “Those who know the facts will never ‘terminate’ the struggle for human rights for these fellow citizens and friends. The name for that struggle is Hale Mohalu. It will continue.” In so many ways, the demolition of the buildings did not signal any ending for Hale Mohalu, but rather the movement was a phoenix emerging from the ashes of the buildings’ debris. Henderson’s letter, along with Cahill’s, Inglis’ and Meacham’s captured that renewed spirit.

The Star-Bulletin editors once again voiced the will of the State in their editorial, critical not only of the protestors but also of City Prosecutor Charles Marsland. “The law, it appears, was not merely broken; it was defied,” the paper stated. “The state cannot ignore such challenges without inviting more of them.” The editorial described

Marsland as “an old softy” because he had been sympathetic toward the demonstrators.
“The protesters, he claims, should not have been arrested in the first place when the state
evicted the holdout patients from the abandoned leprosy facility in Pearl City last
week.” How the editors could claim that the facility was abandoned when the patients
had been living there for five years only emphasized the disconnect between what the
patients were doing and what the newspapers wanted to believe. The Attorney General
and the Star-Bulletin felt that the demonstrators “went to Hale Mohalu with the specific
intent to violate the law, and they must be prosecuted for breaking it.” According to the
paper, the protest was an act of civil disobedience, which while “a favorite tactic of
demonstrators since the 1960s,” was illegal. “The state will have to prove that they broke
the law, but the acts they are charged with are crimes.” The editors ended their
commentary by telling Prosecutor Charles Marsland that he should let the courts decide
the fate of those charged. “You ought to stick to prosecuting.”

The haughty tone of the paper reflected Ariyoshi’s sense of authority as Governor and his adept distancing of
himself from any resolution of the patients’ problems.

Judicial Appearance and Historical Context

When it came time for the protestors’ court appearance in Pearl City, the
atmosphere was anything but decorous. The eviction was quiet in contrast to the
boisterous behavior in the courtroom a week later. Given Charles Marsland’s absence, the
State Deputy Attorney General, Frank Kim performed the role of prosecutor, but got off
to a poor start because he had the wrong date for the arrests. The prosecutor said that the
date was September 14th but that was a week before the eviction. “That drew loud
chortles and guffaws from the gallery,” the paper reported. “Many of the defendants said
they were not at Hale Mohalu on September 14. One, John Witeck, suggested the state
may be trying to ‘blow the case’ deliberately.”

Kim also had trouble getting the names and charges straight. Michael Lilly explained that Kim had only recently been assigned
the case when it became known that Marsland would have no part of it. Lilly said he
sympathized with Clarence Nai’a and Bernard Punikai’a, but he still had to prosecute the

case. The defendants interrupted the hearing frequently, asking questions and making speeches, feeling as Punikaiʻa said, “The wrong people are on trial.”  

In another example of her efforts to shape the discourse on the dispute, Anwei Skinsnes wrote a full-page article in the Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser about the history of leprosy in Hawaiʻi and situated the Hale Mohalu protest as the most successful in a long line of patients’ resistance to being moved from one place to another. 

The Hale Mohalu controversy is not new. It dates back much farther than the closing of this Honolulu-based leprosy treatment facility in 1978 and involves far more than a complex of buildings. The controversy is the most recent, strongest and most successful in a long line of protests by the patients against being moved from one place to another. Basically, it centers around the patients’ right to be involved in making decisions that affect their future and arises out of their concern for that future.

Her comments framed the struggle in terms of the larger issues involved, issues that the State chose to overlook. Throughout her writings in the newspaper over the years, Skinsnes advocated for the patients and their rights to speak on their behalf, in their own voices. Her approach was quiet but sure, coming across always as the dispassionate expert, whose reasoned opinion happened to support the patients. This latest article on resistance at Hale Mohalu in terms of the history of patients’ resistance persuasively disputed the State’s view of the protestors as trespassers.

When the patients lived at Hale Mohalu, the conflict played out in the press, particularly individual reactions expressed in letters to the editor. In the aftermath of the eviction, that pattern persisted. The issues remained even if the Pearl City site was gone.

The Advertiser of Monday October 3, 1983 published three letters to the editor in support of the patients. One letter, titled “Call for Reason” by Mrs. E. Laurence Gay stated, “As for Bernard Punikaia, a tribute is owed to this remarkable man for his unshakable patience and persistence in the face of overwhelming odds.” Another

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1404 Anwei Skinsnes was the daughter of leprosy expert, Dr. Olaf Skinsnes who had worked at Kalaupapa, bringing Anwei with him when she was sixteen in 1968. Anwei Skinsnes came to know the patients at Kalaupapa over the years very intimately, understanding them and their struggles, and she is extremely protective of their voice, seeing to it that they are portrayed with dignity. She has conducted extensive interviews of the patients, written numerous articles, and produced documentaries about Kalaupapa. Her latest book is Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory. Anwei married Henry Law, the first superintendent for the National Park at Kalaupapa in July 1985 at St. Philomena Church at Kalawao. Anwei Skinsnes Law serves as the international coordinator of IDEA, an international human rights organization that lobbies on behalf of Hansen’s Disease patients.
letter, entitled “Missing Compassion?” written by Ann Miura of Kula, Maui, said, “We should remember that Hansen’s Disease was a very democratic one and but for the luck of the draw, these people could be the mothers and fathers of the governor, the director of the Department of Health or you or me.”

The third letter, entitled “Hale Mohalu Entreaty” by Josette and Lou Rosof talked about what the Rosofs did after the eviction. “On September 21, we returned home after seeing one of the ugliest displays of governmental callousness. We were angry. We dashed off the following letter to the person responsible for the ugliness, George Ariyoshi.” Their letter to the editor contained the letter they wrote to the Governor, but first they wrote, “There is goodness, an aloha spirit in Hawaii. We hope that that spirit will work to right the wrong that was done the other day.”

The rest of the letter described their unhappiness with the Governor’s behavior and that of Yuen and Clark.

Among Bernard Punikai’a’s papers at this time, a two page handwritten document marked “Original,” dated October 8, 1983 contained a list of names and addresses of the supporters who were at Hale Mohalu before the early morning eviction. The diversity of the names and ages on the list spoke of the wide support given to the struggle.

**Strategies for the Trial**

The ‘Ohana met on October 8 at the OHA office in Honolulu in order to lay out the strategy to be used in refuting the court case. Anyone who wished to use a public defender for the trial had to meet on October 11 at the Public Defender’s Office. Notes from the October 8th discussion revealed “some people have been contacted by the State Prosecutor’s Office, and told that the trial date of the 18th [January 1984] was a mistake and their trial date has been changed to the 25th of January.”

The four pages of typed notes focused on different tactics on how best to be tried, whether individually or together. “If we are tried together, there would be greater solidarity and better momentum established. The drawback would be that there would be less opportunity to present individualized defenses.” The problem, however, with individualized defenses was
momentum would be lost in the process of eighteen distinct trials. Next point of consideration centered on the type of offense and corresponding penalty. “The penalty for each petty misdemeanor offense – is 30 days in jail and a $500 fine. The State may be looking for other offenses with which to charge us.” How to respond depended on what the State would allow or disallow at trial.

Various strategies were outlined. “The object of any new trial should be to effect positively the use of the land for patients.” That point was clear and another had to do with the media. “The best way to achieve our goals is through public opinion, and the best way to effect change in public opinion is through the media. Therefore, the goals of the various committees should be to connect with the media.”

One aspect of the media was the fact that the New York Times covered the story, as they had previously done at the start of the standoff in 1978. The Times reported on the upcoming trial in an article in their October 11, 1983 issue, stating, “Bernard Punikaia, 53 years old, and Clarence Naia, 55, are leprosy patients who fought for five years to stay at the antiquated treatment facility known as Hale Mohalu, about 10 miles from downtown Honolulu.”

Locally, Francis Adamus sent a letter to the paper on Thursday, October 13, entitled “Marsland & Hale Mohalu,” in which he stated, “I was disturbed by your editorial criticizing Charles Marsland for his refusal to prosecute the Hale Mohalu patients.” Adamus’ letter supported Marsland for his independent thinking and chastised the editors for their negativity toward Marsland and former Mayor Frank Fasi.

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana held a meeting at the Gloria Dei Church in Pearl City with sixty-five people in attendance. Several committees were discussed, including Legal, Media, Fundraiser, Legislative, Community/Outreach, PR/Video, and Phone Tree. On the Media committee, members included Nai’a and Punikai’a, Olivia Breitha, Wally Inglis, Anwei Skinsnes, Mary Neilson, Bruce Doneux, and Nancie Caraway as a consultant. The organizational strength of the ‘Ohana seemed as solid as it had always been. If anything, the ‘Ohana was more determined than ever to fight for the land, setting the date of November 7 for their next meeting.

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1412 Strategy Notes, October 8, 1983 Meeting at OHA office, Honolulu, re: those arrested at Hale Mohalu.
1416 Neil Abercrombie and Nancie Caraway are husband and wife.
Regarding transfer of the land at Hale Mohalu, the Department of Land and Natural Resources scheduled a public hearing for Friday October 21 and the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana sought to publicize the meeting by issuing a press release. “A major issue to be considered will be the transfer of the 11-acre Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City from the jurisdiction of the Department of Health to the Department of Land and Natural Resources.”\[1417\] Charles Clark, State Health Director had said that his department would turn over the property to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. The ‘Ohana press statement reiterated their stance. “It is the position of the Hale Mohalu patients that the land is still rightfully theirs and should not be removed from Health Department jurisdiction.”\[1418\] The ‘Ohana also mentioned a meeting at the OHA offices on October 26, 1983 at which an OHA resolution would be signed. In the meantime, the ‘Ohana continued their picket each Friday in front of the State Capitol.

When the Department of Land and Natural Resources met on Friday, in the words of Advertiser columnist Barbara Hastings, they “took possession of an 11-acre hunk of land, tax map key 9-7-19-35 at Manana, Waimano, Ewa, Oahu.”\[1419\] Department members accepted the transfer but did so with some discomfort, given the history of the site. As the paper reported, Punikai‘a told the authorities the land “belongs to the victims of Hansen’s disease, and some cottages should be built to house them.” He also said “the people of Kalaupapa …feel our hearts …our blood have touched the land at Hale Mohalu.”\[1420\] Bernard Punikai‘a said that the DOH used the patients to get the land. Susumu Ono, Department chairman, appeared sympathetic to the patients, telling them the land could only be used for a public purpose, but there were no proposals for its use at that time.

Office of Hawaiian Affairs

On Tuesday October 25, the Hale Moana ‘Ohana announced that the next day at 10 AM the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) trustees “will publicly sign a resolution in support of constructing a new residential care facility for Hansen’s Disease patients on a small portion of the eleven-acre Hale Mohalu property in Pearl City.”\[1421\] The statement

\[1417\] Press Release, Hale Mohalu Ohana, October 20, 1983.
explained that the land at Hale Mohalu had been officially transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Land and Natural Resources the previous Friday and that the patients with the help of OHA intend to ask the DLNR for 2.5 acres to build a residential care facility on the site.

When OHA met on Wednesday they discussed the 2.5-acre proposal for the patients. They wanted to acquire the property from the Department of Land and Natural Resources in order to build an inpatient and outpatient facility for Hansen’s Disease patients. Other agencies also expressed interest in the property. The Hawaii Housing Authority (HHA) told DLNR that they would like to acquire the property “for public housing for the elderly and/or for families of low and moderated income.” In addition to the 2.5 acres for the leprosy facility, OHA wanted to use the entire parcel of land for community health services. The head of the Housing Authority, Director Paul Tom, believes the parcel was well suited for housing, noting, “it is level, close to urban Honolulu, near shops and the bus line and is already owned by the state.” Ironically, those were also the reasons given by the patients for wanting to remain on the property.

The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana met on Monday November 7, 1983 at the Kalihi Palama Library. At this meeting, twenty-five people were in attendance. On the Agenda, ‘Ohana discussed the OHA resolution and heard reports from their Committees on Research/Education, Legal, Phone Tree and Media. Under Legal, they discussed “the January trial and a possible civil suit against the state.” The eviction only served to energize the ‘Ohana to pursue the land at Hale Mohalu and to support the patients.

**Interview Insight**

Alan Waldman in Honolulu Magazine of December 1983 interviewed Bernard Punikai’a. In the article, Punikai’a said, “Being made a prisoner in a hospital when you are not sick or feeble is dehumanizing.” This interview conveyed the pain that Punikai’a felt in dealing with his disease and with the State administration. It also revealed his strength and courage. Bernard Punikai’a could have done so many things if he had not had leprosy, but because of his illness, he used his handicap to break down

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1424 Minutes, Hale Mohalu Ohana Meeting, November 7, 1983.
barriers for handicapped people and bring attention to the inequities in the treatment of Hansen’s disease patients in Hawai‘i. The struggle of Hale Mohalu was the beginning of his role as an international advocate for human rights.

In summary, from a commemoration of their fifth year in resistance at the beginning of the year in January to their eviction, arrest, and the destruction of their Hale Mohalu home in September, the patients had waged a historic battle. The community supported them in the struggle, but the State’s power to use the courts and the media trumped the people’s fight for justice. Bernard Punikai’a had been the driving force behind this unprecedented twentieth century leprosy patients’ confrontation. Like Ko‘olau’s resistance on Kaua‘i despite overwhelming odds, Punikai’a would not submit. His courage and his intellectual stamina belied his handicapped body. With this local fight in Hawai‘i, Punikai’a fought for the rights of patients everywhere, enlarging the conflict to worldwide significance. Punikai’a’s stature continued to grow as he worked to educate the public about the rights of the handicapped, enabling the voices of the ill to have input regarding their care. The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana truly became a family through this ordeal, remaining committed to one another and to the goal of obtaining justice for the patients by honoring the land at Hale Mohalu.
CHAPTER 13
HALE MOHALU 18 TRIAL AND LAND CAMPAIGN 1984

This chapter examines the trial of the Hale Mohalu 18 and the efforts of the ‘Ohana to protect the Hale Mohalu site from becoming a sports complex. The legal case involving the eighteen became an issue of human rights on trial while the campaign to rebuild on the land at Hale Mohalu would be a hard-fought battle, taking as long as the original five years of resistance. The ineptness that characterized the State’s behavior with the handling of the leprosy program and the milk contamination scandal carried over to the opening of the trial, with the overall feckless attitude evident even in the court proceedings.

Charges Dropped and Trial Preparations

Bernard Punikai’a and Clarence Nai’a along with sixteen supporters comprised the group of eighteen arrested in the September 1983 Hale Mohalu eviction. Seventeen had been initially charged with obstruction of a government operation. Mary Neilson, the eighteenth person, had been charged only with trespassing.\textsuperscript{1428} Later on September 28, 1983 (after Marsland refused to prosecute the case) the State added trespassing charges.\textsuperscript{1429}

Four months later, the State changed its mind once again. On Wednesday January 11, 1984, all trespass charges (a petty misdemeanor) against seventeen of the eighteen arrested were dropped, but they still faced charges of obstructing government operations (also a petty misdemeanor). The State decided to drop the trespass charges against the seventeen defendants because the trespass charges and the obstruction charges appeared to duplicate one another.\textsuperscript{1430} The trial was scheduled to take place on January 25, 1984 before Judge Donald Low in ‘Ewa district court.

To get ready for the upcoming case, the ‘Ohana put out a special issue newsletter. The logo of the ‘Ohana newsletter, which used to say “Help Us Save Hale Mohalu,” now stated: “Help Us Rebuild Hale Mohalu.”\textsuperscript{1431} This small newsletter, legal-size sheets of paper folded in half, featured a front-page story by Wally Inglis entitled “18 Hale Mohalu
Defendants to Stand Trial.” The salient point Inglis made concerned the land, explaining that many strategy meetings had taken place in preparation for the trial, but the focus had centered on “the future of the 11.2 acres of land which still rightfully belongs to the patients.” Inglis concluded his commentary by saying the eighteen deserved applause for their courage in resisting a government, which accepts millions in federal money but ignores the voice of the patients for whom they receive the money.

The newsletter also announced a fundraiser scheduled for January 21 at St. Andrew’s Cathedral. The rest of the newsletter contained short articles, including a poem entitled “Requiem” by Holly Henderson about the pain she experienced as a result of the eviction. On the next to the last page, the ‘Ohana stated the newsletter’s purpose: “The Hale Mohalu News is aimed at helping to synthesize the developments of the Hansen’s disease struggle, a Human Rights Issue, by informing our supporters as well as to organize ourselves.” This page also had an itemized list of suggestions under the heading “What You Can Do,” such as the following.

1.) Write and or Call your legislators and church leaders to support the Hale Mohalu legislative resolution and Bill to build an inpatient, outpatient Hansen’s Disease facility on 2.5 acres of Hale Mohalu lands.
2.) Contribute to the Hale Mohalu News (with boxes to check for $5, $10, $20).
7.) Become a member of The Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana for $10 a year.

The last page also listed: “Dates To Remember” among which included the notice of the next Hale Mohalu meeting at 7 PM on [Monday] January 30, 1984 at 919 Fourth Street, Pearl City as well as the following invitation.

On January 25th [Wednesday] there will be a “People’s Trial” held outside of the Pearl City Court, during the break, to sum-up the actions so far. Our feeling is that the court will not allow us to speak; therefore we will have a press conference to shed light on the situation. Kokua mai.

The ‘Ohana also issued a press release dated Wednesday January 18, announcing they expected the upcoming trial to be a three-day event and they planned to hold a rally and fundraiser on Saturday January 21 from five until nine in the evening, including entertainment and speeches. The press release gave the particulars of the trial with

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1432 HALE MOHALU NEWS Volume 1, No.1, Special Issue, Jan. 1984, p. 1.
1433 HALE MOHALU NEWS Volume 1, No.1, Special Issue, Jan. 1984, p. 2.
1434 Richard Kinney’s residence, an ‘Ohana member whose home was located in Pearl City not far from the original Hale Mohalu site.
1435 HALE MOHALU NEWS Volume 1, No.1, Special Issue, Jan. 1984, p. 8.
regard to the date, the location, and the presiding judge, and the attorney for most of the Hale Mohalu 18, “who will attempt to explain in court their September resistance actions against the state’s long record of unjust treatment of Hawaii’s Hansen’s disease patients.” The press release provided the names of the defendants and their principal argument, saying: “It is the position of the 18 that the Pearl City land belongs to the patients and has been unlawfully seized by the state for undisclosed purposes.”

Invitations to the Trial

The ‘Ohana took an offensive stance against what they saw as ridiculous charges, and to mock the absurdity, the Hale Mohalu 18 sent out invitations to their trial. The attractive invitations, worthy of any formal wedding, were printed on white vellum-type paper, approximately four by five inches in size, and included a list of several phone numbers for response. The irony was that the phone numbers were for Governor Ariyoshi’s office, the State Health Director, Charles Clark, as well as the District Court and the Advertiser and Star-Bulletin newspapers.

Jim Borg, Advertiser writer, reported on the ‘Ohana’s tongue-in-cheek tactic, saying, “Formal dress is optional, the engraved invitation says, and guests are urged to R.S. V. P. No charity ball or debutante cotillion, this. The Hale Mohalu 18 cordially request your presence at their trial next week in Pearl City District Court.”

Defendant Holly Henderson, explained that the ‘Ohana had sent out 300 invitations to legislators, to friends, and to church and community leaders. According to Henderson, an anonymous donor had paid for the invitations. Her comment about them captured the spirit behind their production, saying, “those invitations have a great deal of dignity and they have a great deal of humor. They are a lot like the people involved.” In terms of the overall aim, Borg noted the goals of those accused. “The defendants hope to parlay the trial into a broader community discussion of what they see as inadequacies in the state’s care of leprosy victims.”

Borg’s article also gave information on the upcoming dinner at St. Andrew’s Cathedral on Saturday January 21st at 5 PM where the program included an update on the trial scheduled for the following Wednesday.

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On page A-8 of the movie section (where it would most likely be seen) the Saturday Star-Bulletin printed the invitation along with a “Gala Trial” caption, stating,

Eighteen persons arrested Sept. 21 as they protested demolition of Hale Mohalu are charged with obstructing government operations, but they cannot be accused of lacking a sense of humor. This engraved card entered the mails this week, stylishly inviting people to the trial on Wednesday. The RSVP numbers listed are those of state Health Director, Charles Clark, Gov. George Ariyoshi, District Court, the Honolulu Advertiser and the Star-Bulletin.1442

The invitation and caption were in the center of the entertainment page above which were two theater reviews; certainly the invitation could be considered entertaining; however, it was featured under a column headed “Police/Fire” which contained stories of those hurt in car crashes or hospitalized. Either way, it was appropriately placed on the printed page.

**Start of the Trial and Outcome**

The trial began in a disruptive, boisterous manner, with charges of favoritism. When Judge Low met privately in his chambers with defense attorney, Reinhard Mohr and four defendants who were acting as their own attorneys,1443 the prosecuting attorney accused the judge of favoritism. The judge told the defendants that he was inclined to dismiss the charges if they would not challenge the police account on the day of the eviction. However, the other defendants did not agree with that proposal. Some, like Abe “Puhipau” Ahmad wanted to drag the case out, while Witeck felt it was better to exit quickly, because their case could be argued better in a civil lawsuit. When the proceedings began, the judge halted the trial twice because of verbal exchanges between him and the defendants. Due to their behavior, Judge Low ordered the defendants ejected from the courtroom, but later they were allowed to stay.1444

TheAdvertiser’s report about the first day of the trial featured a photo of defendant John Witeck, attorney Reinhard Mohr, and State Deputy Attorney General George Yamamoto with a caption, saying: “The trial of 18 people accused with interfering with the state’s razing of Hale Mohalu will continue this morning, but it will be hard to beat yesterday’s session for strange twists.”1445 The circus-like atmosphere of the proceedings began when Yamamoto wanted Low to disqualify himself because of

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1443 The four were John Witeck, Abe Ahmad, Kawehi Kanui-Gill, and Fred Dodge. Later Dr. Kevin Kunz also represented himself.
favoritism toward the defendants. Next, one of the defendants Abe “Puhipau” Ahmad did not recognize the jurisdiction of the court and refused to state his plea. Judge Low at first wanted to throw Ahmad out of the courtroom, but later decided against it. When people were called into the courtroom, they were informed that no sandals were allowed, they were told to sit in specific seats, and that once they entered no one was allowed to leave the courtroom. These stipulations were later amended. Deputy Attorney General Yamamoto wanted the Judge dismissed, and Defense Attorney Mohr wanted Yamamoto dismissed. There were about ninety people in the crowded courtroom, with Mohr representing fourteen of the defendants, while Witeck, Kanui-Gill, Dodge and Ahmad were their own defense. Later, Kevin Kunz decided to represent himself as well.

Yamamoto blamed Low for comments that he would look with favor on a request from the defendants for acquittal, if they did not dispute police account of the arrests. In Yamamoto’s mind, that meant Low had already decided the defendants were innocent before Yamamoto had a chance to present his case. Judge Low declared he never said any such thing. Mohr said Yamamoto’s accusation was “scurrilous” and “unethical.” But comments made outside the courtroom by the defendants seemed to substantiate the Judge’s inclination to dismiss them. The defendants, who felt the trial was to publicize the plight of the patients, thought it was important to keep it going as long as possible. Major disagreements over tactical proposals mirrored minor conflicts, such as the opening and closing of the doors. The bailiff locked the doors to the courtroom and said that anyone leaving the room would not be allowed back in, but later he was told by another sheriff to unlock one of the doors.

The trial was expected to last two days, and when the prosecution ended its presentation, the defendants readied subpoenas against George Yuen and George Clark. Defendant Joseph Neilson had the case against him dropped, the paper reported, because “he had been cited under the wrong statute.” Originally he had been charged with interfering with the arrest of his wife, Mary Neilson, but somehow later on, the charge got “switched to obstructing a government operation,” exactly the same as the other defendants. The State wanted the judge to correct the charge, but the judge refused.

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Mohr planned to ask the judge to dismiss the charges against the defendants he represented because he felt the State failed to prove the charges it had levied against the protestors. “He [Mohr] has argued that, strictly speaking, the protestors did not interfere with the operation, because they already had been carried off by the time the bulldozers moved in.”

Advertiser reporter Jim Borg gave the defendants a major boost by framing the article to include their viewpoint. He noted that the protestors felt the destruction of the buildings was a wicked act. “The defendants also maintain that the razing operation itself was immoral, if not illegal. For one thing, the whole Hale Mohalu issue is still the subject of a federal civil suit.”

The State behaved as if the matter was a fait accompli, but the patients were within their rights to appeal the Ninth Circuit Court’s decision.

The trial had begun on Wednesday January 25 but by Friday January 27, Judge Low decided to recess the case for one week, despite protests from the defendants who wanted to speak in their own defense. Low called the recess to allow Mohr time to prepare acquittal motions for his defendants. The protestors were upset they did not get the opportunity to speak. Defendant Kevin Kunz represented himself, and he and Witeck “were still protesting when Low walked out of court having declared the recess.”

When the trial resumed on the following Friday February 3, the defendants were acquitted of the charges against them. Judge Low decided that they were not guilty of obstruction because the buildings’ demolition had not yet begun when they were arrested. Because he felt it was morally wrong to destroy the Hale Mohalu structures, John Witeck had particularly wanted to interfere with their razing. Witeck complained to the court that he never got the chance to express his free speech right to protest the demolition because that opportunity had been denied him with the police arrest.

One defendant, Mary Neilson, was made the scapegoat for everyone on trial. She became the only one of the eighteen who was convicted of the charges. Mary Neilson was fined $50 and ordered to do twenty hours of community service as punishment for

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her conviction of trespassing the previous September. Mary’s husband had his charges previously dismissed, and the others were acquitted of their petty misdemeanor charges. Mary Neilson said the State needed a “scapegoat” and she was it. Ironically, the last to arrive, she “became the first person to be arrested” and the only one punished.”

**After the Trial**

Ironic twists are characteristic of the Hale Mohalu story and the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i. Bernard Punikai‘a was arrested in September 1983, put on trial in January 1984, and in February 1984, he participated in a leprosy symposium in New Delhi, India. Richard Marks traveled with Bernard Punikai‘a to India to attend the conference. Prior to that meeting, the Western Hansen’s Disease Institute held a conference in Honolulu and at Kalaupapa on February 10 and 11, and Bernard Punikai‘a and Dr. Bob Worth were among the featured speakers. Soon thereafter, the XII International Leprosy Congress was scheduled to take place from February 20-25 in New Delhi. Anwei Skinsnes, who helped to coordinate the trip, explained that the Congress was held every five years in a different country for those involved in leprosy work to discuss major issues worldwide.

In Honolulu, the ‘Ohana published a special Valentine to express their gratitude to those who had helped to fight for Hale Mohalu. As with their invitations to the trial, the Valentine card was printed in the two daily papers. The Honolulu Advertiser and the Honolulu Star-Bulletin of February 14, 1984 featured a large heart-shaped Valentine from the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana. The Valentine expressed the ‘Ohana’s appreciation to the community for the “countless gestures of aloha” and sought the public’s help to get legislative support for the bill that would establish “a Hansen’s Disease residential care facility on Hale Mohalu land at Pearl City.” The shape of the heart had been formed by the repetition of the words “aloha” written next to each other and the border of the Valentine heart had the word “mahalo” repeated all around the edges. The Aloha Valentine was approximately three by four inches, reminiscent of the trial invitations. In

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1457 Anwei Skinsnes, “Hansen’s Disease Conference to be Held” HALE MOHALU NEWS Volume 1, No.1, Special Issue, January 1984, p. 3.
1458 Anwei Skinsnes, “Hansen’s Disease Conference to be Held” HALE MOHALU NEWS Volume 1, No.1, Special Issue, January 1984, p. 3.
addition to the “Happy Valentine’s Day!” wishes, the Valentine also expressed the following: “Special thanks to New York supporters Barbara, Mal, Geneve, Jeremy, and B. for making this local valentine possible!”

The public had not forgotten the recent trial, and on February 17, 1984 a letter to the editor expressed displeasure toward the State’s behavior in the case. Author Jody Cross agreed with attorney Mohr’s comment that the court case should never have taken place. Cross felt the State’s attorney Yamamoto, acted disrespectfully toward the defendants by “bullying and in general smearing and mocking witnesses and the court.” Such actions, according to Cross, undermined justice instead of serving the public good.

**Legislative Housing Campaign for 2.5 Acres**

Efforts continued at the State Legislature to obtain a patient facility at the old Pearl City location. Senators Abercrombie, Steve Cobb and James Aki introduced a bill on February 13 to establish a residential care facility at Pearl City, Oahu on two and one-half acres, of the former eleven-acre site known as Hale Mohalu. Later in the month, the ‘Ohana invited the public to a hearing on this bill they hoped would get passed. Their press release explained that the Senate Health Committee’s scheduled hearing was to take place on Wednesday February 29 at 1:00 PM in Conference Room 6. Senate Bill No. 1924-84 proposed to provide for a Hansen’s Disease residential care facility at the former Hale Mohalu site. The press release noted various community groups, churches, and patients planned to testify in support of the Bill. The Pearl City Neighborhood Board was also considering a resolution in support of a residential care facility at that location. Testimony at the legislative hearing was strongly in favor of Senate Bill 1924. Rachel Saiki urged Senate approval in testimony that was factual, as well as warm and personal. As a supporter and friend of the patients, I have come to know them and their needs and lifestyle well. I like to make chili pepper water for Clarence Naia, for instance, and at Hale Mohalu he was able to use it to prepare his own food. He is unable to do this at Leahi, which is an institution not capable of providing such

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personal arrangements. This institutionalization should not be forced on these patients who have already suffered so much. You as legislators can help end this legacy of suffering and abuse by voting to approve S.B. 1924.1466

Saiki’s words - “legacy of suffering and abuse” - accurately described what had been the story of the patients’ lives. The Governor and his Health Department felt they understood this legacy but, as Saiki testified, their actions had been “cruel and callous.”1467 Patient Olivia Breitha, never one to mince words, stated, “Give us a break; in the past, we’ve just been broken – but not anymore.”1468 In written testimony before the Senate Committee, Holly Henderson stated her reasons for supporting Senate Bill 1924 were simple – because the patients desired it. “About 80% of Kalaupapa’s residents have signed a petition indicating that they prefer the option of a residential care facility at Hale Mohalu-Pearl City to forced institutionalization at Leahi Hospital,” Henderson noted. “That, in my opinion, settles the matter.”1469 Henderson raised a critical question before the Senate. It had been Bernard Punikai‘a’s question too but the State chose not to respond. Henderson’s testimony raised it once again, when she asked, “With the threat of contagion removed by sulfone drugs, there is no reason that the civil and human rights so long denied should not have been restored. Why haven’t they been?”1470 Henderson knew better than to expect an answer from the legislators at that moment, so she examined the reasons why and suggested it had to do with the fact that the patients are treated as people unfit to make decisions for themselves, not unlike children, prisoners, or the mentally incompetent. To right the wrongs of the past, Henderson urged the legislators to set aside the 2.5 acres. “The site at Pearl City has history. On it, the patients prayed as Pearl Harbor was bombed. Next to it, their dead are buried. To them, and to many of us, that land is holy ground.”1471 In a few, simple words, Henderson expressed the land’s meaning.

On Thursday March 1 the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21 held their regular meeting, and discussed the Hale Mohalu housing proposal that “2.5 acres of the property to be used as a residential area for about 20 Hansen Disease patients and their

1468 Olivia Breitha, (oral testimony, transcribed by John Witeck in his notes), (John Witeck, personal collection).
The patients had enlisted the services of the Franciscan Sisters to help them administratively with the new facility, which also had support from the Council of Churches. Betty Simmerer, Richard Kinney, and Kawehi Kanui-Gill were some of the ‘Ohana members who attended the meeting. Board Chairman Ernest Oshiro asked the Health, Education and Welfare Committee to look into the housing proposal and to report back to the Board at their next meeting later in the month. When they held their meeting on March 29, the Board approved the housing idea.

In the midst of the battle to obtain the land at Hale Mohalu, efforts to make Kalaupapa a National Park steadily continued. Cooperative agreements had been signed between the National Park, the Department of Health and the churches as the Advertiser editorial, “Kalaupapa’s Future,” explained, but more still had to be done. Congress had “to amend park service legislation to allow leasing of the Kalaupapa land from the state – something now forbidden. Then lease arrangements will have to be worked out with the Hawaiian Homes Commission. With those agreements, the National Park Service would be able to obtain the funds for the park at Kalaupapa. The editorial made it seem when everything was taken care of at Kalaupapa, the situation with Hansen’s Disease patients would be finally settled, explaining that those confined involuntarily at the settlement “are assured of being able to remain at Kalaupapa for the rest of their lives, with the state Department of Health retaining responsibility for their medical services.”

**Ballpark for Hale Mohalu Site**

Despite efforts to push for housing, the Senate approved a resolution to turn Hale Mohalu into a ballpark. Abercrombie had tried to amend a resolution that would have offered both a recreational field for youth and a residential care facility for patients. In a close vote after a passionate debate, Abercrombie’s motion failed. Senator Cayetano, who represented Pacific Palisades-Waipio-Mililani, had opposed Abercrombie’s last-minute resolution. With the final vote (18-7) in favor of turning Hale Mohalu into a

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1472 Minutes, Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21, March 1, 1984.
1473 Minutes, Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21, March 1, 1984.
ballpark, Cayetano thought that Abercrombie should cease any further efforts. Although
Abercrombie had previously backed whatever legislative measures to aid the patients
Abercrombie had pursued, Cayetano felt the matter had run its course. “We must put this
matter to rest once and for all,” Cayetano said. “The battle is over.”
Conflict between
Abercrombie and Cayetano was over quickly, but at the time, it was heated. Frustrated by
the Legislature’s support for a ballpark at Hale Mohalu, Emmett Cahill sent letters to
both newspapers. In the Star-Bulletin, Cahill asserted that while the Hale Mohalu
buildings were gone, the requirement for patient residential housing still existed, and it
was shameful the “lack of compassion brought about by the value system of sports
outweighing health care.” In his letter to the Advertiser, he talked about Democratic
Party Chair, James Kumagai and his connection to the push for sports on that site.
Kumagai had previously served as deputy director of Health when money was
appropriated in 1975 for a Little League Stadium. “Today, Kumagai is listed as a
supporter of the hastily formed Pearl City Youth Athletic Association (PCYAA) which is
pressing for the use of the Hale Mohalu 11 acres for a Little League stadium and two
soccer courts.” Cahill felt the recent Senate decision if favor of sports was made so
quickly that “it became clear that the decision had actually been made much earlier and
higher-up.” He praised Abercrombie for his unsuccessful efforts to have the site shared
and pointed out that while the sports people were victorious, compromise would have
been the honorable choice.
To see what the residents wanted for the former site, the Pearl City Neighborhood
Board conducted a survey in June 1984. The following month on July 9, the Board sent
out a report on the 13,067 Pearl City households they had surveyed. Their letter
stated, “In summary, about 2/3 of all of the people responding do not favor the youth
complex proposal. Instead the elderly housing and the treatment center (which are
compatible proposals) are preferred.” The letter signed by Board Chair Oshiro concluded,
“We hope that this information will be considered in the decision on what to do with the

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1481 Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21, Letter, Survey Results, July 9, 1984.
The Star-Bulletin reported the results of the Board survey, explaining that the Pearl City residents favored housing for the elderly and Hansen’s Disease patients. Another survey suggestion for the site was a sports complex, that included two soccer fields, a softball field and two little League diamonds, but two-thirds of those surveyed said they did not favor that idea. On August 24, the Department of Land and Natural Resources had scheduled a meeting to review various site proposals. To add their input, “eleven patients in Trotter ward at Leahi Hospital have signed a petition addressed to the Department of Health requesting a residential facility in the Hale Mohalu because ‘it is known to us and the area is familiar and are comfortable …Listen to us rather than tell us what we want.’” Patricia Mumford of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches explained that there was already an effort by the Council to secure funding to build new housing.

Hale Mohalu Anniversary

On the first anniversary of the eviction, Henry Kiani Perritt wrote to the editor. “During last year’s Aloha Week, the patients were handcuffed and bodily evicted. Minutes later, their homes and possessions were destroyed by bulldozers.” Mr. Perritt argued the State promotes tourism at the expense of residents and the Hale Mohalu eviction proved his point. “Long have the people of Hawaii known that the ‘Aloha Spirit’ in Hawaii and the visitors’ bureau is aimed at visitors spending money here. Aloha has nothing to do with the rights of Hawaii’s residents.” He pointed out the irony of the State’s celebration of Aloha Week for the benefit of the tourist industry, while it evicted the patients and destroyed their home. “How hypocritical of the state to celebrate Aloha Week by brutally evicting these patients from their homes at the same time putting on festivities for the tourists.” The juxtaposition of the two events indicated the sympathies of the State lay with tourism and not the patients.

Case Officially Over

After the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had ruled against the patients in 1983, the ‘Ohana and the patients appealed to the United States Supreme Court. A year later on Monday October 1, 1984 the court responded by refusing to hear an appeal of the Ninth’s
decision. “The ruling brings an end to the 6-year old legal battle between the patients and the state.”1487 It was a tough blow for the ‘Ohana. The refusal of the Supreme Court to review the Ninth Court’s ruling was, as Punikai’a said, “very disappointing.”1488 He and the ‘Ohana had worked hard all these years and it was difficult to realize that their last hope with the courts had finally come to an end. “The question was not just whether the state had the right to do certain things,” Punikai’a commented to the paper. “But does that right allow them to act in a manner that clearly, if not illegal, is certainly immoral.”1489 In his letter to the ‘Ohana, Wolinsky expressed his disappointment with the court ruling and stated he felt that there was no legal avenue left.1490

**Sports Complex the Winner**

Not willing to give up on the battle for the land, the ‘Ohana sought help, as they had done all along from the religious community. According to the Hawai‘i Catholic Herald, “A coalition of Hawaii religious leaders, headed by Bishop Joseph A. Ferrario, is expected to ask Governor George R. Ariyoshi to support their request to delay a decision on the future of the site that once housed Hale Mohalu in a meeting with the Governor Oct. 19.”1491 Nearly every religious leader in Hawai‘i was part of the group that Bishop Ferrario had marshaled to meet with the Governor. This coalition of various groups under the guidance of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches wanted to build a complex to enable the elderly and handicapped to live independently on the site.1492 At the meeting, religious leaders presented Governor Ariyoshi with a proposal that would provide housing for the elderly and handicapped on the site.1493 The DLNR (the Department of Land and Natural Resources) was asked to delay a decision on the use of the site until the housing alternative could be more fully explored. The agenda for the next board meeting on Friday October 26, concerned the proposal for the youth sports complex. Lawmakers, particularly those from the leeward area, for years had wanted to use the site for sports. In

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1489 “Hale Mohalu Case is Officially Over,” Honolulu Advertiser, Tuesday, October 2, 1984, A-1.
1491 Laura Ellen Marrack, “Religious Leaders Seek Support for Hale Mohalu Site Housing Proposal,” Hawaii Catholic Herald, Friday, October 19, 1984, pgs. 1+5.
1492 Laura Ellen Marrack, “Religious Leaders Seek Support for Hale Mohalu Site Housing Proposal,” Hawaii Catholic Herald, Friday, October 19, 1984, pgs. 1+5.
1493 Anne Harpham, “Housing Urged for Hale Mohalu Site,” Honolulu Advertiser, Saturday, October 20, 1984, B-3.
light of the bitterness over the eviction of the patients, the religious leaders hoped the choice of housing would help bring about reconciliation.\(^{1494}\)

The *Advertiser*’s editors backed the housing option. “Hale Mohalu remains something of an unfinished emotional issue with many in this community. Now it might be made something more positive.”\(^{1495}\) The Land Board met on Friday October 26 to consider a plan that would provide housing, and the editors hoped that the Land Board would seriously consider that possibility. The editorial described how religious leaders had met with the Governor to ask him to delay any action on the property, saying, “a impressive number of religious and social organizations have asked Governor Ariyoshi and his administration to consider a plan for using the site for housing for the elderly and handicapped.” The editors made their housing recommendation in a low-key manner. “Arguments in favor include an acute need for such housing in the Pearl City area and a survey by the Neighborhood Board there, indicating area residents are for using the location to shelter the elderly and handicapped.”\(^{1496}\) The editorial also explained what the Legislature had done about the locale – what it had already approved. “The Legislature this year did pass non-binding resolutions favoring use of the site for a Little League sports complex, not a bad idea but also not in the same league as needed housing when you consider social priorities.” Moreover, the editors noted, “the Legislature acted before the new housing plan was advanced.” Perhaps the editorial postulated, as some have suggested, the location could be used for both housing and sports. “Some feel it might be possible to combine the two uses on the site in a way that would help reconcile the old feelings, fill needs, and make a statement about the future.” The editors concluded that this ongoing matter offered the land board an opportunity to consider this option.\(^{1497}\)

Despite the push for housing - from the *Advertiser* editorial and from the meeting of religious leaders with the Governor - the Board of Land and Natural Resources met on October 26 and voted to grant the sports group its request to use the land at Hale Mohalu for sports.\(^{1498}\) The housing enthusiasts were distressed. Pat Mumford, acting Director of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, expressed her disappointment that the Board did not

\(^{1494}\) Anne Harpham, “Housing Urged for Hale Mohalu Site,” Honolulu Advertiser, October 20, 1984, B-3.


wait. Mumford also said that the Coalition had no plans to give up their attempts for elderly housing on the site. The Land and Natural Resources granted a thirty-five year lease to the Pearl City Youth Complex Association (PCYCA) at a rental fee of $120 per year. “The recently formed association,” the paper noted, “consists of representatives from the youth baseball, softball and soccer leagues as well as community groups such as the Kiwanis and Jaycees.”

The Star-Bulletin reported on the important development in the land saga, explaining, “The state Board of Land and Natural Resources by a 4-1 vote yesterday paved the way for the Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City to become a complex of athletic fields rather than a church-backed housing area for handicapped and elderly people.” Commissioner J. Douglas Ing cast the one dissenting vote because he wanted the housing enthusiast to have time to rally legislative assistance to reverse the resolution in favor of an athletic complex. In a letter to the editor of the Advertiser of November 9 entitled “Hale Mohalu’s Future,” Wallace Inglis wrote, “There are a lot more bridges to be crossed before they hear the sound of “Play Ball!” on Hale Mohalu’s fields. And at every bridge they will meet resistance from scores of committed citizens who will not tolerate such desecration.” As Inglis explained, so many things happened in October to derail the efforts to obtain housing, beginning with the Supreme Court’s refusal to review the Ninth Court’s ruling and the Board of Land and Natural Resources’ decision in favor of a sports complex. Despite these deep disappointments, the ‘Ohana pushed forward to save the land at the old Hale Mohalu home for something more meaningful than simply a baseball field. “The Coalition for Specialized Housing, a group of social and religious organizations coordinated by the Hawaii Council of Churches, is requesting,” the Advertiser reported, “that the state Board of Land and Natural Resources conduct a court-like contested case hearing on leasing the former Hale Mohalu site at Pearl City.” Since the Board of Land and Natural Resources had made the decision to allow the sports complex to proceed, this challenge by the Coalition for Specialized Housing did not sit well with the Land and Natural Resources chairman, Susumu Ono, who said he would...
check with the Attorney General to see if the coalition could have a contested hearing. According to the paper, “The coalition, represented by attorney Boyce Brown, contends that the board’s decision, was ‘an inappropriate use of statutes allowing direct lease of land without recourse to the public auction and does not serve the expressed needs and desires of Pearl City residents.”"**1505

**Hale Mohalu Memorial**

In the midst of the controversy, some had proposed putting up a memorial at Hale Mohalu but one of the patients, Elroy Makia Malo, who had lived at Hale Mohalu, objected. In a letter to the editor of the *Advertiser* on November 16 Makia and his wife, Ann Kieran Malo, wrote a passionate letter entitled “Hale Mohalu, No Memorial, Please,” saying, “For whatever purpose the Hale Mohalu land is to be used, we know that we were the currency that was “used” to pay for that land. Our suffering, our shame and our loss of freedom paid the price.”**1506** The Malo family went on to say that while many are suggesting that the past remain just that, they asked how could it be so easily dismissed “when it was the legal and social decrees of the past that dictated and continue to dictate our present and our future?”**1507

**Lawsuit Filed Over Sports Use**

In an effort to overturn the state’s decision permitting a sports complex on the site, the Hawai‘i Council of Churches organized a special group, known as the Coalition for Specialized Housing, who filed suit on November 23, 1984 in Circuit Court.**1508** The Coalition wanted the site for housing for the elderly as they explained in their suit.**1509** Both papers covered this story, but each only gave small coverage to it. The *Star-Bulletin* report stated, “Attorney Boyce Brown maintains in a suit filed in Circuit Court by the Coalition for Specialized Housing that the board should have conducted an adversary hearing before granting the lease.”**1510** Because the correct procedures had not been followed, the lawsuit demanded the end of the agreement. In their lawsuit, attorney

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Brown asked that the lease be voided and that the trees on the property, especially the banyan, chaulmoogra, and coconut trees be protected until the issue got resolved.1511

The questions raised about re-establishing Hale Mohalu in Pearl City were only part of the issues on leprosy care in Hawai‘i under consideration. The Board of Health, the advisory body to the State Department of Health, had been hearing testimony about Hansen’s Disease and the needs of those afflicted. Some charged that patients had not received proper care and that the Health Department’s administrative record in caring for Hansen’s Disease patients had been less than satisfactory.1512 Three doctors who worked specifically with Hansen’s Disease discussed patients’ needs. They often disagreed on whether the patients receive adequate care. Dr. Kevin Kunz, who had been arrested at Hale Mohalu the previous September, explained that personnel changes in terms of the Health Director and the head of the Communicable Disease Division resulted in unsettling management. No organization, Dr. Kunz, noted oversaw the program.

On the other hand, Dr. Oliver Hasselblad, in charge of the Kalaupapa settlement, felt that adequate care has been provided to the patients. If they needed special treatment, they were flown to Honolulu. Because there were no lights on the runway, planes could not land at night, but Dr. Hasselblad said the Coast Guard came to help in that case. Dr. Olaf Skinsnes, a thirty-year veteran of research in the field, said that there was a lack of adequate outpatient facilities. The Board of Health met on Thursday December 6 and it was the third in a series they held, drawing testimony from patients, doctors, university representatives, the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, and the Health Department as well as the Health and Community Services Council. Leslie Matsubara, the man who ordered the patients out of Hale Mohalu with a bullhorn in September 1983, was now the new Director of the Health Department.1513

Disturbed over the recent decision of the Land Board, H. T. Ching expressed his dismay in a letter to the editor. “Food, shelter and clothing are three basic human needs, yet members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, excepting Douglas Ing, have denied housing to the elderly and disabled despite the backing of the Hawaii Council of

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Churches and other concerned citizens.” Ching expressed his gratitude that the courts were now involved in the matter. “It is gratifying to know that a church and social group are bringing suit and challenging the leasing of the Hale Mohalu site as a sports complex.” He urged the community, including the disabled, the elderly, church members, as well as others, to join together to convince the legislators to reverse the Board’s unfortunate decision. Ching ended his letter, saying, “I hope the court will favor needed housing over athletic fields.”

In summary, by year’s end, the sports complex got the land at Hale Mohlau, and the authorities could feel pleased the goal long sought had finally been obtained, namely the land cleared of any remaining patients and free of any damaged structures. The Trial of the Hale Mohalu 18 had been dismissed and the enormous energy the ‘Ohana had put into saving the property at Hale Mohalu became focused on keeping the land from being turned into a sports complex. The Pearl City community wanted the grounds to be used for elderly housing and along with the support of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches that goal became a reality only after a prolonged fight that began when the buildings were destroyed. A key player in the fight was attorney Boyce Brown who had also worked with the Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana. His strategic thinking helped the ‘Ohana and the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, under the leadership of Patricia Mumford, fight to retain the land.

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CHAPTER 14
SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

At the beginning of 1985, chief issues of concern for Pearl City had to do with two unresolved questions. One uncertainty focused on the outcome of the land at Hale Mohalu and the other on whether the Navy would base a battleship group at Pearl Harbor. These “continuing sagas” were filled with “political maneuvering, compassion, ambition and promise.”

Both topics encompassed parallel themes of solicitude and bureaucratic negotiation, but a protracted narrative characterized the Hale Mohalu story, whose fate “has been unfolding for the past eight years.” It would take another eleven years before the account would be complete, but no one suspected that then. By the end of the year, another aspect of the conflict involved the race for City Council, leading to increased debate. Meantime, it was one court battle after another.

Court Battles over the Land

On January 25, Judge Richard Y. C. Au presided at a Summary Judgment Hearing concerning the property at Hale Mohalu. Coalition attorneys Boyce Brown and Cynthia Thielen sought a summary judgment against the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) alleging that the DLNR had been improper in its decision on October 26, 1984 to grant a lease for the land to the Pearl City Youth Complex. The Coalition for Specialized Housing issued a press release about the hearing and stated why they felt housing was the best use for the spot. “Its rural-like setting, proximity to medical and shopping facilities and to churches, and access to public transportation, as well as the importance of its history to many Hansen’s Disease patients make it an ideal and logical location for desperately needed housing.” The Coalition explained that the locale contained very valuable trees and that the preservation of the site was historically important. Moreover, the DLNR has the responsibility to determine “the best use of Hawai’i’s land, and that low-rise housing is a much better use than the development of

facilities which would necessitate the destruction of many historically significant and in some case rare trees."\footnote{1519}

At the hearing, Coalition’s attorney Brown felt justice had not been served when the DLNR awarded the lease to the sports complex because the Board did not hold a contested case hearing, given the competing interests in the land, and no environmental assessment was done of the sports proposal as the law required.\footnote{1520} At the end of the hearing, Circuit Judge Richard Au announced that he would decide next week whether he would void the lease. Meanwhile, support for the Coalition’s housing proposal received favorable publicity when prominent Hansen’s Disease specialist, Dr. Olaf Skinsnes, endorsed the idea.

Dr. Olaf Skinsnes had originally argued against the wishes of the Hale Mohalu protestors, but he later had a change of heart and came to see the importance of a proper residential facility. In an article in the January 1985 Honolulu Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, he publicly spoke out on behalf of the Coalition’s efforts to obtain the land at Hale Mohalu for elderly housing. Dr. Skinsnes explained he was returning to China, where he was born in order to do research, but before he left he wanted to make his feelings on Hale Mohalu known, saying he had hoped to see the former site “turned into an integrated center for the elderly and handicapped – including non-contagious leprosy patients.”\footnote{1521}

However, the courts did not endorse Dr. Skinsnes’ support for housing. When Judge Au made his decision on February 1, 1985, he refused to make any changes to the lease granted to the Pearl City sports group, ruling that the DLNR had followed proper procedures when it made its decision to grant the 35-year lease to the sports complex.\footnote{1522}

At this time, in addition to the recent news of her father’s support, historian Anwei Skinsnes composed another article about the importance of the Hale Mohalu site. This was a full-page spread on the first page of the Editorial section of the Sunday paper. She discussed the story of leprosy in Hawai‘i, detailing how much had changed for the better. “The 1970s and early 1980s were difficult times for the Hansen’s Disease program

\footnote{1519} Press Release, Patricia Mumford, Coalition for Specialized Housing, January 25, 1985.
\footnote{1520} “Hale Mohalu Lease Ruling Due Next Week” Honolulu Advertiser Saturday January 26, 1985, B-8.
\footnote{1522} “Judge Won’t End Hale Mohalu Lease” Honolulu Advertiser February 2, 1985, A-4.
and the Hansen’s Disease patients in Hawaii, for it was a time of great transition,” Skinsnes explained. “The change in laws had cleared the way for drastic changes in the treatment of Hansen’s Disease which not everyone understood or was able to accept.”

Her article helped (as did her father’s comments) influence public understanding of the importance of the Hale Mohalu property.

**Legislative Efforts for Joint Use**

The legislature entered into the battle to save the land as well. Senator Abercrombie and Representative Tam each authored bills that provided for joint use of the site. Abercrombie offered his bill, SB 1485 on February 12 noting, “This bill is intended to mandate the joint use of the land formerly known as Hale Mohalu, located in Pearl City, Oahu (Tax Map Key: 9-7-19:35), for specialized housing for elderly and disabled along with a Community Center and housing for Hansen’s Disease patients.” Rod Tam introduced House Bill 1179 on February 13, 1985, matching what Abercrombie had written. The Advertiser editorial of February 15 also supported the idea that housing should be built on the former Hale Mohalu site, explaining that the State had leased the 11 acres to a youth sports association for the lease rent of $120 a year for a period of 35 years in order to develop playing fields, but the issue still remained unresolved. The editorial summarized what the majority of the community believed, namely that a youth sports complex had its merits, but the need for housing took precedence as far as the best use of the land.

To give their side a fair chance to succeed, the Coalition sought the court’s help. On Friday February 15, Cynthia Thielen requested that Circuit Judge Edwin Honda halt the State from executing the lease with the Pearl City sports group until she could ask Judge Richard Au to reconsider his decision the next week; however, Judge Honda denied her request. Just two weeks before on February 1, Judge Richard Au had rejected the request to have the lease voided. Judge Honda told the Coalition that they

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1524 H. Dewitt Barnett, Letter, Honolulu Advertiser, Friday, February 22, 1985, A-19, Barnett praised Anwei Skinsnes’ article, saying he hoped her report would persuade those in power to re-establish a residential care center for Hansen’s disease patients at the old Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City.
1528 “Housing Coalition Fails to Stop State from Leasing Old Hale Mohalu Site” Honolulu Advertiser Saturday February 16, 1985, A-6.
failed to meet two basic requirements for a court order, namely they failed to “show that Au was likely to reverse himself. The other was that the coalition would suffer ‘irreparable harm’ if the lease is executed.”1529 While the court’s decision was a setback, the Ohana pressed on. To urge House backing, Patricia Mumford and Bernard Punikai’a each wrote separate letters to Representative Isbell. Mumford’s February 19 letter suggested housing was the best use of the land and explained that the Hawai‘i Council of Churches had agreed to act as the “corporate umbrella” and coordinator for the Coalition for Specialized Housing.”1530 Bernard Punikai’a in a handwritten note asked Isbell for her kōkua for this matter of HB 1179.1531 Patricia Mumford also wrote to the Advertiser editors to thank them for their support of housing at Hale Mohalu. “We would be grateful for the opportunity of clarifying one point, and that is the relationship of the coalition with “leaders of major religious …organizations.”1532 Ms. Mumford, Acting Director of the Hawai‘i Council of Churches, explained that while the religious leaders support the Coalition’s efforts, they are not directly involved as such in the legislative and legal activities. Moreover, Mumford’s letter made clear the need for monetary support from the community, explaining the “Council of Churches is receiving contributions for the necessary consultant, architectural and legal fees,” in order “to provide housing and retain the historic trees on the 11.2 acre Pearl City site.”1533

While letters were written to the papers and to legislators, it was not a one-time effort, but part of the ‘Ohana’s persistent strategy to protect the land. On March 4, Bernard Punikai’a wrote a letter to Chairman James Aki and members of the Senate Economic Development Committee in support of Senate Bill 1485, which mandated “the setting aside of the Hale Mohalu land site for affordable residential housing.” Punikai’a stated, “My appeal to you today is for the dignity of man and aloha aina.”1534 He talked about planting the one hundred and twenty coconut trees from Kalaupapa and of the changes to the land that the patients had made by their physical labor. Punikai’a explained that the location should be used for housing because “it would be a living

1529 “Housing Coalition Fails to Stop State from Leasing Old Hale Mohalu Site” Honolulu Advertiser Saturday February 16, 1985, A-6.
memorial to a historic site and to a special time in Hawaiian history, where a class of people were ostracized and incarcerated not because of any crime but for “the greatest good to the greatest number” to “benefit the healthy.” Once again, as he had done previously, Punikai‘a reiterated the value of aloha ‘āina.

On March 4, Alvin K. H. Pang, Director, Department of Housing and Community Development, City and County of Honolulu, also wrote a letter to Chairman Aki in which Pang gave testimony in support of SB 1485. The City Department of Housing supported SB 1485, as did the Senate, which voted unanimously in favor of the bill. The bill permitted the State to allow the site to be used for both housing and for ball fields. It was a significant victory for the Coalition.

In March 1985, the local paper for Pearl City, the Sun-Press, reported that the Pearl City Neighborhood Board had sent out a survey to the residents of the area asking them their opinion once again regarding what should be done with the former Hale Mohalu site - housing or playing fields. The completed questionnaire was to be returned to the Neighborhood Commission by April 15, 1985.

Although SB 1485 passed unanimously in the Senate, House Representatives Calvin Say and Reynaldo Graulty pushed for hearings on another bill, HR 340. In effect, the added layer of bureaucracy sidelined Abercrombie’s bill for this legislative session. With the successful work of the Coalition on SB 1485 derailed, the Hawai‘i Council of Churches issued a press release on April 9, expressing their frustration.

For approximately one year the Coalition for Specialized Housing has been working to obtain land on which to build an integrated housing complex for the elderly and handicapped. In order to do that it became necessary to lobby for a change in statute wording which would then permit the Department of Land and Natural Resources to be able to lease State lands to charitable organizations for the purpose of ‘residential use for the elderly and handicapped.’ The vehicle for this proposed change was to have S. B. #1485 which was passed by the Senate in a 25-0 vote.

Despite the overwhelming vote in favor of SB 1485, the House of Representatives managed to set back the Coalition efforts, as the press release concluded, noting, “the

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1538 “Pearl City Survey is in Mail Now” Sun-Press March 28, 1985, A-5.
acquisition of suitable land for much needing housing has been bogged down and delayed until the next legislative session.”

Representative Say’s office made it especially difficult as Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana member Betty Simmerer explained in a letter to the editor. In an attempt to offer her support for Senate Bill 1485, Simmerer called Say’s office the day before the hearing on March 22 to request his help on the bill, “which would have made it possible for the Department of Land and Natural Resources to directly lease state land to non-profit developers of low cost housing for the elderly and handicapped.” Betty Simmerer became frustrated when a member of his staff twice refused to take her name or her message. Simmerer complained not only of Say’s unwillingness to hear from his constituents, but also her discouragement with the additional layer of red tape added to the housing process by the transfer of land to the Hawai‘i Housing Authority. All of these bureaucratic steps, she felt, obstructed the ability to provide needed elderly housing.

Despite this seeming setback, the Coalition pressed forward for shared usage through negotiation and legal challenges. It also sought and received help from the Mayor’s Office. Mayor Frank Fasi on April 29 aided the Coalition with his proposal to have the City help in financing the project. Mark Matsunaga, a reporter with the Advertiser, who had written sympathetically about the 1983 arrests of the Hale Mohalu protestors, covered this story of the Mayor’s efforts to work with the Coalition, reporting on the press conference in which the Mayor and the Coalition announced plans “to build 130 housing units on the 11.2 acre site. Fasi said, “We’ll do anything and everything we can to assist” the coalition. This was an important commitment coming from a Mayor who prided himself on his accomplishments. It boded well for the Hale Mohalu supporters, since “the city would allow the coalition to use federal community development money to finance construction of the housing.” It was the kind of project the Mayor favored - both the public and private sector were able achieve a solution to the shortage of rental housing, especially for the elderly and handicapped.

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Although the State owned the land, zoning fell under the city’s jurisdiction. Since it was zoned residential, and the city controlled zoning for the site, Fasi explained they might “go ahead and leave it residential.” Mumford, spokesperson for the Coalition, was optimistic that a compromise could be worked out with the sports complex to allow for housing on part of the eleven-acre site. Cynthia Thilen, attorney for the Coalition, explained that a lawsuit to invalidate the lease granted to the sports complex by the DLNR still existed.

Tour of Settlement and Kalaupapa Commitment

While the Coalition and Bernard Punikaiʻa negotiated for the Hale Mohalu site, Punikaiʻa, who had been appointed a member of the Board of Health assisted in giving the Board of Health a tour in May 1985 of the Kalaupapa Settlement. It was the first visit of the Board of Health in eight years and many of the residents greeted the members, but since there were less than one hundred patients, there were no big luau celebrations as in years past. State Health Director Leslie Matsubara (who had given the order to leave Hale Mohalu in September 1983 when he was a deputy health director) attended this meeting with his staff, along with the seven Board of Health members. Stephanie Castillo reported this story for the Star-Bulletin. “The board’s visit here was part of a study of the state’s Hansen’s Disease policy begun in November.” Castillo explained, “The Report, which was commissioned by the 1984 Legislature, will be completed in June after one last public hearing, according to Dr. Donald Char, chairman of the board.” In an example of the need to work together on a small island, Punikaiʻa led Matsubara and the Health Department assembly on a tour of Kalaupapa. Punikaiʻa had only recently been appointed to the board, “pending the governor’s approval.” How ironic! Punikaiʻa gave a tour of Kalaupapa to this group that included the very man who had ordered him out of Hale Mohalu and now Punikaiʻa was a member of the Board of Health.

1550 Punikaiʻa was appointed to serve on the Board of Health by Governor Ariyoshi on July 8, 1985 for a term ending June 30, 1988. Punikaiʻa was also appointed by Governor Waihee to serve a second term from July 1988 until June 30, 1992.
On May 15, Hobert E. Duncan, Special Assistant on Communication to the Governor sent a letter to the paper about his disagreement with a patient’s comment in a prior story about Kalaupapa that appeared in the Star-Bulletin on May 7, 1985. That story was about the children arriving at the settlement during World War II. One unidentified patient said something that Duncan disputed and wanted to clarify. Duncan’s letter explained, “The patient is quoted as saying 11 residents died last year. ‘I don’t think Kalaupapa will be here for another 10 years, maybe not even for five years. They’re not going to keep Kalaupapa for just one patient. No way.’”

Hobert Duncan went on to explain that the patient was wrong. “In 1974, Gov. George R. Ariyoshi made a commitment to keep Kalaupapa functioning for as long as anyone wishes to remain – and this includes one patient. He has kept that commitment.” Duncan elaborated further on the Governor’s pledge. “Those patients who wish to remain at Kalaupapa, where their primary disease and the infirmities of advancing years are treated by skilled physicians, and where housing and food are provided, have that option.” It sounded like an amazingly generous offer on Ariyoshi’s part.

However, the Governor’s statement contained an important phrase: “where their primary disease and the infirmities of advancing years are treated by skilled physicians, and where housing and food are provided,” because those words allow the State leeway, if they should want to exit from managing the facility (see footnote).

Coalition Efforts

Hansen’s Disease questions of concern in 1985 continued to center not only on Kalaupapa, but also on the outcome of Hale Mohalu. Bernard Punikai’a and the Coalition for Specialized Housing worked hard to save the site of the former leprosy facility, attending numerous meetings to achieve that end as they continued to negotiate for a shared settlement. In her efforts to obtain housing, Pat Mumford had the invaluable assistance of Lillian Jeskey-Lubag, a graduate student in social work, who volunteered at the Hawai’i Council of Churches and worked tirelessly on behalf of the Coalition.

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1553 For example, if it should happen in the future that physicians and food might no longer be provided at Kalaupapa, (if it became fiscally too expensive - in a budget shortfall, perhaps) then the state could require all the remaining patients to come to Honolulu for care (which they presently do on an individual basis) and Kalaupapa as a Hansen Disease Settlement might be easily closed.
On May 22, the Coalition met to discuss with their members the idea of joint usage with the Pearl City Youth Group. Minutes of their bi-weekly meeting stated, “After much discussion, it was agreed by those present that one week from today we would approach the Pearl City group with a proposal of sacrificing an area which would have formerly encompassed 60 units (one bedroom and studio units).” For their willingness to sacrifice, the Coalition requested a similar compromise from the other side. “We will be asking the youth group to forfeit one regulation –size ‘big league’ baseball diamond, as they would still be retaining a peewee field and a major league field,” noted the minutes. The Coalition felt that this would prove to be a win/win for both sides. Witeck, Anwei Skinses, Punikaiʻa, Inglis, and Olivia Breitha were some of those who attended the meeting and agreed to this proposal.

**Wedding at Kalaupapa**

A special wedding took place at Kalaupapa when Superintendent of the National Park, Henry Law, married Anwei Skinsnes on July 4 with Bernard Punikaiʻa as the best man. Law, a ten-year Park employee came to Kalaupapa three years before in 1982 to oversee Kalaupapa becoming a National Park. Together as a couple, the Laws’ involvement with the patients and their stories would become part of the foundational cornerstone in recounting the history of Kalaupapa. The couple’s work, individually and together, documented the story of leprosy in Hawai‘i, particularly twentieth-century Kalaupapa. They have been advocates for the patients in numerous ways, most especially making sure that the patients’ voices are heard in Hawai‘i’s leprosy narrative.

**The Newspaper: KA HULIAU**

Indicative of the determination to help save the site, John Witeck composed an article in the August/September 1985 issue of the newspaper KA HULIAU entitled “Hale Mohalu: Never Say Die” in which he talked about what had happened to Hale Mohalu since the eviction in 1983. Witeck outlined the efforts of the Coalition for Specialized Housing to protect the site as well as the support they received from other agencies. He also described the upsets that had occurred in the attempt to share the Hale Mohalu space with the sports group, explaining offers and counter-offers were made in May and June.

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1554 Minutes, Meeting of the Coalition for Specialized Housing, May 22, 1985.
1555 Minutes, Meeting of the Coalition for Specialized Housing, May 22, 1985.
1985, but when both sides were near agreement, the Pearl City Youth Complex Association rescinded their offer, making it harder for the Coalition.

Witeck reported that Governor Ariyoshi had not worked to resolve the matter, saying the Governor had refused to meet with the Coalition or offered to help reach a compromise. The Pearl City Youth Complex had recently become more receptive to the idea of joint use, while Don Huang, the Coalition’s architectural consultant, had redesigned his original drawing for the Coalition to include some of the facilities for the Pearl City Youth Complex. However, there were some positive outcomes. Witeck ended his article not sure of how the problem would be resolved. “But whether the PCYAC backers will attempt to work something out with the Coalition and the patients is still to be seen.”

Witeck captured the frustration of the ‘Ohana in his report.

At one point in the proceedings, the Neighborhood Board came up with an idea that could only be described as bizarre when it suggested the best site for elderly housing would be in an area that was used by the city to maintain garbage trucks. The recommendation was scheduled for presentation to the complete board at the regular meeting on August 29. Coalition reaction to this idea ranged from wary to highly critical. Coalition members were in agreement that the recommendation completely disregarded the historical significance the original site held for the leprosy patients. Attorney Cynthia Thielen expressed her dismay, explaining that the Coalition had been clear that it wanted housing on the site because of its historical and cultural importance.

Community Controversy

In addition to the controversial proposal to place elderly housing on a garbage truck maintenance site, the Pearl City Neighborhood Board at their meeting on August 29 had several measures to consider, including the Waiawa Ridge development, the City Council recall election, and the widening of the H-1 freeway. Board Chairman Albert Fukushima explained that the recommendation to move the proposed housing from the Hale Mohalu site to a location behind Pearl City Tavern at a city garbage truck

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maintenance yard would be presented for consideration. This proposal fortunately never succeeded. Instead, housing or a sports complex still remained as the focus.

When the Pearl City Neighborhood Board met in early September, they approved the city’s development plans for ball fields at the Hale Mohalu location. Only Joan Stebbins dissented, and the vote passed eleven to one. The non-profit Pearl City Youth Complex Association, granted the lease on the land by the State, had enlisted the aid of City Council Chair George Akahane who had proposed the amendment. Irritated that such a sacrilege would take place, Stebbins, an active supporter of Hale Mohalu, tried to dissuade the Board from Akahane’s proposal, by producing “a city Department of Parks and Recreation study that concluded that the Pearl City area has more than twice the ballfields, per capita, than any other area in the state.” Even though another Board Member, Bill Sullivan tried to delay the vote, the Board voted in favor of the ball fields.

However, later that month [September 1985] the Advertiser carried a full page spread on the local housing crisis as part of a series of articles about aging in Hawai‘i saying, “More than 2,000 elderly people are on waiting lists for public housing or rent subsidies.” That article brought to the forefront of public consciousness the tremendous need for housing. People were of course aware of the need, but the article gave statewide notice of the situation, so there could be no doubt about the extent of the problem, and the publicity bolstered the Coalition’s argument regarding housing. In response to this series on aging, several letters to the editor were printed in the paper. Among them was one by Patricia Mumford, Executive Coordinator and Rev. John Norris, Executive Coordinator, Hawaii Council of Churches in which they expressed their sorrow over the facts revealed in the article, especially as it related to housing. Mumford and Norris lamented. “Yet attempts to build housing, which would help alleviate the shortage [of elderly housing] are being thwarted by the very state government, which decries the existing shortage.” Mumford and Norris explained that the Hawai‘i Council of Churches over a year before formed a Coalition to deal with this need. They ended their letter with a perceptive comment about the State’s choice of action, saying appropriate land for

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1561 Alan Isbell, “Pearl City Board Agenda Rife with Community Controversy” Sun-Press August 29, 1985, A-1.
1564 Gwenda L. Iyechad, “Housing Crisis” Honolulu Advertiser, September 24, 1985, D-1.
housing was selected but the State chose to use it for sports, and as they noted, there was no way to compare the need for affordable housing with a sports facility.\footnote{Rev. John T. Morris and Patricia Mumford, Letter, “Housing for Elderly” Honolulu Advertiser, Friday, October 18, 1985, A-19.}

Continued political wrangling in the Pearl City area came to the fore when a seat on the City Council became vacant. Council member for the Pearl City area, George Akahane, in a blatant political move to advance his career switched his allegiance from the Democratic to the Republican Party, but Democratic Party leaders, especially Patsy Mink the City Council Chairperson did not appreciate what they perceived as his disloyalty, and Akahane was recalled from office. Because of his recall, Akahane’s seat in the Pearl City district was open, and a special election was held to fill the empty council position for the 8th District (Halawa-Aiea Pearl City). Among the candidates was a Republican, Ron Kimura, an Aiea businessman and community volunteer, who would later prove helpful to the Hale Mohalu supporters.\footnote{“Kimura Seeking Council Seat” Honolulu Advertiser Monday November 4, 1985, A-2.} The special election was scheduled for November 30. Kimura believed that protection of the environment was just as important as the promotion of new businesses. He wanted to maintain the character of the area, saw the need for open space, and opposed development that created concrete jungles. On the controversy over Hale Mohalu, Kimura believed that a compromise was necessary so both housing and recreational areas could be developed.\footnote{Alan Isbell, “Kimura Embraces Economic Issues” Pearl City/Aiea Sun Press November 14-20, 1985, A-4.}

The special election for Pearl City councilman added fuel to the dispute surrounding the land at Hale Mohalu. Arnold Morgado was accused of being in bed with those who supported the sports facility, and as a Pearl City Councilman he was guilty of a conflict of interest because of that association. Moreover, many felt, he had used his former position as a State Representative to manipulate circumstances, so that the sports group obtained the 35-year lease, which was another conflict of interest. Morgado never felt that he had crossed a line, maintaining he was clear of any impropriety.

Hale Mohalu’s Legacy

Once again, Anwei Skinsnes Law interrupted the Hale Mohalu discourse at a critical point, using her authoritative voice to speak for the patients. Skinsnes Law wrote a letter to the editor in the Honolulu Advertiser about the legacy of Hale Mohalu and why the site should be preserved for its historical importance.
On the former Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City there are over 100 coconut trees brought over from Kalaupapa as young plants and planted with great love by Hansen’s Disease patients in order to beautify their home away from home. Aren’t these an important legacy for future generations?

What about the rare chaulmoogra oil tree which was planted at the old Kalihi Hospital in the early 1920s as a symbol of the great strides made by Hawaii in the treatment of Hansen’s Disease? Those who came before us felt this tree was so important that they transplanted it to Hale Mohalu in 1949 when Kalihi was closed and Hale Mohalu became Hansen’s Disease treatment facility. What about the large banyan tree …the monkeypods and numerous other trees on the 11-acre site that make it a virtual oasis? The trees and the site itself with its significant history are an extremely important legacy…

Anwei Law knew the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i and the patients in a way that few others did. She had done oral interviews of the patients, and they trusted her completely. Law had been at Hale Mohalu during the struggle and understood the importance of the site from the patients’ perspective and as a historian. She concluded her letter with a call for public support of the site as housing for the elderly and for Hansen’s Disease patients.

Given her background, her argument was insightful and persuasive as she noted,

Something is not right when plans call for the destruction of these trees and this legacy. The situation is comparable to the present plan for the Hale Mohalu site, which calls for a complex of athletic fields rather than much-needed housing for the elderly and handicapped, including those Hansen’s Disease patients who wish to live independently and regain their place in the community.

Skinsnes Law skillfully used the newspapers as a way to garner public support for the patients. Her consistency in that work spoke to her dedication to the patients.

City Planner Recommends Compromise

The State had possession of the land at Hale Mohalu and could lease the site, but the city was the governmental entity responsible for planning and development. The city’s Chief Planning Office, Donald Clegg, had recommended a compromise that would allow both sports and housing. Citing the need for elderly and handicapped housing, Clegg rejected the plan to use the entire parcel for a sports park. The recommendations of Clegg were part of the process, but not the final word. The Honolulu City Planning Commission still had to hold hearings, and they were expected to take

place in January. Because there was a big demand for housing in the area, Clegg felt the sports group failed to demonstrate they required the entire 11 acres. The sports complex backers indicated that the compromise idea was a threat to their overall plans. Former State Representative Arnold Morgado Jr., clearly upset with the city’s compromise decision, argued it went against the Legislature’s intention to have a community sports center, and said it threatened the viability of the total sports project.

The Advertiser editors, however, endorsed the city’s plan to open up the land at Hale Mohalu to a shared use of the space. The editorial understood the importance of the land at Pearl City. “This site is more than just another piece of ground. Like it or not, it has a heavy emotional history that cannot and should not be simply swept under the tarmac and forgotten. There are also fine historic trees, some of which might be saved as part of a housing project.” Senator Abercrombie and City Council candidate Arnold Morgado were on opposite sides of this issue. Abercrombie criticized Morgado for opposing the shared use of the site, arguing their differences combatively in public.

Because the city planner had rejected the ball field proposal, it meant that the issue of what would happen with the land at Hale Mohalu remained unanswered. “Members of the Coalition for Specialized Housing lauded the city action, calling it ‘a very responsible decision.’” Morgado said this was just a tentative ruling, and it could still be overturned. However, that was not too likely. The Coalition felt that their chances for housing had been greatly improved by the city’s decision. The architect for the Coalition, Don Huang of Collaborative Seven, said he would prefer the site be used entirely for housing but that both sports and housing could be accomplished with five acres given over to housing. The Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press editorial acknowledged the controversy, saying the site for over a decade had been “a source of frustration, bickering and general discontent.” The editorial also admitted the difficulty of the situation, explaining that both sides were intransigent. The editors recognized the
historical significance of the land at Hale Mohalu and recommended that housing should be built on the site. “First and undeniably foremost, the site has social significance. Just as some sites are protected because they have been identified as having a place in history, so should the Hale Mohalu site be protected.”1581 The editorial concluded that moving the sports complex to another part of the Leeward area could easily solve the controversy.1582 Coalition spokesperson Mumford sent a letter to the editor in which she expressed her hope for a compromise. “We have been negotiating in good faith for several months with the Pearl City Youth Complex Association and although an agreement has not been reached, we continue to be convinced that a compromise solution can be found.”1583 She also expressed her belief that the best use of the land was for housing, which would benefit not only the Pearl City community but also the entire island.1584

On Saturday December 28, Pearl City voted for a new City Councilman.1585 Eight candidates competed for the Council seat to represent the Pearl City-Aiea area, one Republican and seven Democrats, and the Democratic Party only endorsed Morgado.

In summary, the year began in uncertainty regarding what would happen to the land at Hale Mohalu. The sports complex had a thirty-five year lease on the site, but it was by no means a lost cause for the ‘Ohana because the case was in court. As a compromise, the City Planner had recommended a shared use of the site, but the sports complex wanted full usage of the land. Arnold Morgado elected to the City Council was a staunch supporter of the sports complex. The Coalition under Patricia Mumford’s guidance had joined forces with Bernard Punikai’a and the ‘Ohana seeking to obtain the land for housing. The Coalition and the ‘Ohana were a powerful alliance for the patients. Anwei S. Law, one of the strongest advocates for the patients and a close friend of Punikai’a, accompanied Punikai’a to international leprosy conferences, where his voice and his presence inspired others. By year’s end, the issue of what would happen to the land at Hale Mohalu, while not decided, seemed promising.

CHAPTER 15
TRIUMPH YEARS 1986-2013

The years from 1986 to 2013, a period of almost thirty years, encompassed a major transformation regarding the land at Hale Mohalu. For the first ten years of this period, the fight to gain possession of a portion of the property dominated the efforts of Punikaiʻa and the ‘Ohana. From lengthy legal battles on sharing the site with the Pearl City Youth Sports Complex in order to build elderly housing, to the point of actual groundbreaking in 1994 comprised an eight-year period of constant vigilance and toil. Two years later in 1996 the grand opening of the new housing facility on the original site signaled healing and reconciliation for both sides. Punikaiʻa’s only regret was that many of the patients who had fought for this project did not live to see it. Thankfully, Bernard Punikaiʻa was there to welcome the new residents, thirteen years after he and Clarence Naiʻa were evicted. A memorial to that day has been incorporated into a mural in the community room of the new Hale Mohalu. A second building has been completed, with dedication services held on August 23, 2013. Punikaiʻa passed away in 2009 but his friends have seen to it that his legacy lives on.

1986 Sports v. Housing

Arnold Morgado won the City Council seat for the Pearl City area in a special election on Saturday December 28, 1985 and took office on January 17, 1986. One of his opponents in the race, Jerry Souza, had filed a lawsuit in U. S. District Court to challenge the proposed ballfields for the Hale Mohalu site, which Morgado supported. Souza, a community activist, had filed the suit because he felt the environmental impact statement (EIS) had not been sufficiently done. Although not a lawyer, Souza drew up the legal papers on his own because he sensed the urgency of the matter, given the Pearl City Youth Complex Association (PYCA) had already begun filling and grading the site.\footnote{Alan Isbell, “Hale Mohalu Suit Dismissed; Refilling Vowed” Pearl City-Aiea Sun-Press, January 9-15, 1986, A-1 + A-3.}

Souza was the only candidate out of eight in the election who suggested the Hale Mohalu site be used for housing. Cliff Yaguchi, president of the sports association, was named in Souza’s suit because Yaguchi was also Morgado’s campaign manager. The City had recommended shared use of the site. Souza worried that Morgado would use his
Council seat to push for sports over housing. In addition, the Coalition for Specialized Housing had a pending court suit, challenging the legality of the State lease to the sports association.\textsuperscript{1587} Since the land board approved the lease without first following all the legal requirements, the Coalition was forced to fight for representative inclusion, due to the State’s machinations and the City’s failure to provide public meeting notice.

When the Honolulu City Planning Commission held a hearing on the site, the sports complex was well represented but the housing enthusiasts were missing. Pearl City Youth Complex Association members showed strength of numbers when dozens of them came to the hearing to oppose a proposal by the City to divide the former Hale Mohalu site into 6.2 acres for sports and the remainder for housing.\textsuperscript{1588} The Coalition found out only after the fact that a hearing had been held. In addition, without first obtaining the necessary permits the sports complex had begun grading work on the site. The non-profit sports association’s plans were for basketball courts, regulation-size playing fields, a pavilion, and areas for parking.\textsuperscript{1589} Shocked that the sports group had initiated work on the contested property while negotiations were still ongoing over its use, the Coalition denounced the grading and stockpiling, telling the \textit{Sun-Press}, “they have given up trying to negotiate with complex supporters.” Both sides accused the other of negotiating in bad faith on the proposal to share use of the site, as the dispute intensified.\textsuperscript{1590}

When the State weighed in with an opinion by the Attorney General’s office, it added more fuel to the controversy. “The state Attorney General’s office has declared that the Pearl City Youth Complex Association does not have to abide by city zoning and building ordinances and can go ahead with construction with the state’s approval.”\textsuperscript{1591} Deputy Attorney Arthur Muraoka told Susumu Ono, chairman of the state Board of Land and Natural Resources, “the city does not have the authority to tell the state what it must do on state land. In the opinion, dated February 4, Muraoka said the city can only require of the state what the state has empowered the city to do.”\textsuperscript{1592} In spite of the permitting requirements and housing recommendation by the City, the sports complex, determined

\textsuperscript{1588} Curtis Lum, “Sports Complex Backed at Hearing; Foes Absent” Pearl City-Aiea Sun-Press January 30-February 6, 1985, A-1+A-8.
\textsuperscript{1589} Curtis Lum, “Sports Complex Backed at Hearing; Foes Absent” Pearl City-Aiea Sun-Press January 30-February 6, 1985, A-1+A-8.
\textsuperscript{1590} Curtis Lum, “Housing Coalition Raps Work on Mohalu Site” Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press, February 6-12, 1986, A-1+A-2.
not to share the site, sought to override any ruling by the City -- as if the law had not
previously dealt with this question of State versus City jurisdiction. Temporarily this was
a victory for the sports group, but the housing enthusiasts did not give up. They were
stymied at every turn, not only by the State but also by the City’s postponement tactic.
For two weeks in a row, the City Planning Commission did not vote on amendments
proposed to alter the Primary Urban Center Development Plan, including those having to
do with Hale Mohalu.\footnote{1593} Originally scheduled for February 5, the decision was
postponed until February 12, but was again postponed until February 19 because of a full
agenda. The delay angered the supporters of the Coalition for Specialized Housing.

Coalition’s attorney Cynthia Thielen tried to testify before the Commission, but
she was told that that a public hearing had been held in January and for her to testify
would be repetitive. Since the Coalition had not been notified about the January public
hearing and had missed it completely, Thielen disagreed, saying it would not be
repetitious, given the fact the commission had not previously heard it. Thielen, however,
was ruled out of order and not allowed to testify.\footnote{1594} Another setback occurred when the
Planning Commission voted to reject the Chief Planning Officer’s recommendation for
housing on part of the land. Instead the Planning Commission “amended it to allow the
Pearl City Youth Complex to build the complex on the entire lot.”\footnote{1595} The next step in the
process was for “the amended recommendation, along with other proposed amendments
to the Primary Urban Center Development Plan,” to go before the City Council.\footnote{1596}

On Thursday March 6 the Star-Bulletin printed a notice of the Public Hearing at
City Hall on March 17 to discuss the “1985-1986 Annual Review of Primary Urban
Center Development Plan (Kahala to Pearl City)” as well as development plans for east
Honolulu. Numerous plans were scheduled for consideration, including the following:
“Manana and Waimano (former Hale Mohalu site) Tax Map Key: 9-7-19 Proposed
Amendment: Pub Fac to Park.”\footnote{1597} When the meeting took place on March 17th to review
the Development Plans for Honolulu’s urban center, there was vocal disagreement over

\footnote{1593}{“Planning Commission Delay Angers Coalition Supporters, Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press, February 20-26, 1986, A-9.}
\footnote{1594}{“Planning Commission Delay Angers Coalition Supporters, Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press, February 20-26, 1986, A-9.}
\footnote{1595}{Curtis Lum, “Sports Complex Supporters Get All of Hale Mohalu Land" Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press, February 27-March 5, 1986,
A-1.}
\footnote{1596}{Curtis Lum, “Sports Complex Supporters Get All of Hale Mohalu Land” Pearl City-Aiea Sun Press, February 27-March 5, 1986,
A-1.}
\footnote{1597}{Legal Notice, “City Council Notice of Public Hearing” Honolulu Star-Bulletin Thursday March 6, 1986, C-6.}
the former Hale Mohalu site. The first agenda item, the compromise proposal to allow both housing for the elderly and a playing field, immediately brought charges of a conflict of interest against Arnold Morgado, as Morgado was a member of the City Council for Pearl City and a well-known supporter of the sports complex.1598 Since Morgado’s campaign manager was personally involved with the sports group, Wally Inglis challenged Morgado on the impropriety, declaring, “Your campaign manager is president of Pearl City Youth Complex, and that, alone, suggests more than a conflict of interest.”1599 Inglis, a member of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana argued, “The land deserves a better fate than a ball park.”1600

However, the following month, the City decided not to split the land at Hale Mohalu because there was no support for the division at that time. “As expected,” the Sun-Press reported, “the City Council Planning and Zoning Committee denied a proposal that would have divided land at the former Hale Mohalu site for a sports facility and specialized housing.”1601 Patricia Mumford of the Coalition for Specialized Housing determined it would be best at the present time to refrain from advocating for changes to the proposal because it provided “fewer hurdles for the supporters of the complex.” Arnold Morgado expressed his sorrow that there had been so much verbal sparring between the two sides. The sports complex still had to apply to the Department of Land Utilization for a conditional use permit and that application required a public hearing to be held and a final decision rendered within a time frame of ninety days. Several members of the Planning Committee expressed their views, including Welcome Fawcett, who did not want the land to be used solely for a sports complex, saying “the land represented a commitment by the state to people suffering from Hansen’s Disease and the appropriate use should be consistent with the original intent of the state.”1602 The Coalition had not given up their housing plans and continued the battle on the next round.

In May the Advertiser published an article about Kalaupapa and Anwei Skinsnes Law in which she talked about her desire to make sure that the truth about the history of Kalaupapa got told. She felt that people needed to be educated about leprosy in Hawai’i

because over the years the story had been sensationalized. Anwei Law also discussed her lobbying efforts to save the grounds of Hale Mohalu. “That is as important as the story of isolation – the story about their move back into the community. Hale Mohalu was the first place in the world after a cure was found to adopt (an international medical resolution) to locate people in an urban center,” she said.” The importance of Hale Mohalu cannot be overemphasized. “It was a huge turning point in the story of a disease whose victims have been outcasts since before the time of Christ.”

The timing of the publication of this Advertiser report on the truth about Hawai‘i’s leprosy patients helped tell the story of Hale Mohalu to the public and aided in the efforts to preserve the site.

From month to month, the touch-and-go battle to secure the property seemed to succeed or falter from one moment to the next. The Sun-Press reported in early June, the statement of Clifton Yaguchi, president of the Pearl City Youth Complex, who said, “A master plan for a youth sports complex proposed for the 11.2 acre former Hale Mohalu site should be finished within a week or two.”

Throughout the stalemate, the sports complex held a lease on the property, paying a $120 per year for 35 years until January 31, 2020. Although the sports complex had had the lease for the past 18 months, little had been done with the property because of the debate over its proper use.

In the midst of this controversy, the efforts of Bernard Punikaia were recognised by a major news magazine on the continent. “Bernard Punikaia, a leprosy victim who fought the state over the use of the Hale Mohalu site, has been honored by Newsweek magazine for his efforts to protect the rights of Hawaii’s victims of Hansen’s disease,” noted the Sun-Press. “A special ‘Statue of Liberty’ edition of Newsweek currently features the 56-year old Punikaia as one of Hawaii’s ‘unsung heroes.’” Punikaia was happily surprised to learn the news, saying, “his reward has been the satisfaction of knowing that he has helped to inspire others afflicted with Hansen’s disease to stand up for their rights, and demand control of their lives.” He explained to the reporter for the Sun-Press that he fully intended to live in the housing at the Pearl City location. Newsweek selected two people from each state for this special edition. Those selected

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had to qualify on one or more aspects of a three-fold criteria. “People who had performed acts of physical bravery, people who had mastered severe physical disabilities, and people who, at some sacrifice to themselves, did good for others.”\textsuperscript{1609} \textit{Newsweek} felt that Punikaiʻa met both the second and third criteria. The \textit{Sun-Press} article featured a picture of Bernard Punikaiʻa when he entered Kalihi Hospital at age six and it reported that he had been given a number, like a prisoner. His number was 3441. The day the patients were forcefully removed from Hale Mohalu on January 26, 1978, Punikaʻa explained to the Leeward paper, was a devasting day he would never forget.\textsuperscript{1610} He had fought hard to keep Hale Mohalu and he was equally determined to see it saved for housing.

With the issue of the land unresolved, the Coalition for Specialized Housing held a meeting on November 18, 1986 during which they discussed what their next steps would be. Anwei Skinsnes Law reported that gubernatorial candidate John Waihee had gone to Kalaulapapa to discuss with the residents their concerns. When the topic of Hale Mohalu arose, Waihee “was not even aware that the buildings at Hale Mohalu had been demolished.”\textsuperscript{1611} Later after he had “done his homework,” he “stated that no one group should have exclusive use of that land … that it could be shared.”\textsuperscript{1612}

Since Waihee had become Governor-elect, the Coalition decided that it would be best to pursue efforts to resolve Hale Mohalu with Waihee’s help and that they should show him their plans for the site in order for him to understand that they were serious about their project. The Coalition decided that Pat Mumford would write to Governor-elect Waihee and to Lieutenant Governor-elect Ben Cayetano to ask for a meeting with them and that Punikaiʻa, Naiʻa, Wally Inglis, Newton Kerney, and Pat Mumford were the suggested participants. With regard to Hale Mohalu, the November minutes also noted that nothing seemed to be happening with the land at Hale Mohalu and the reason was “the sports folks cannot get the variance needed to circumvent the present land use law. According to our attorney, the sports group does not qualify for the variance under the law as it now reads.”\textsuperscript{1613}

\textsuperscript{1611} Minutes, Coalition for Specialized Housing Meeting, November 18, 1986.
\textsuperscript{1612} Minutes, Coalition for Specialized Housing Meeting, November 18, 1986.
\textsuperscript{1613} Minutes, Coalition for Specialized Housing Meeting, November 18, 1986.
1987 October Zoning Hearing

It would be a year later in October 1987 before any substantive movement took place on the issue of the former Hale Mohalu site and it would be another confrontation between the respective parties. The city Department of Land Utilization (DLU) held a hearing on October 8, 1987 to consider an application by the sports association for a zoning variance in order to build a ball park in a residential area. The sports complex filed for a zoning exemption, but the Coalition argued against the exemption. “No matter how city Land Utilization Director John Whalen rules,” the Advertiser reported, “his decision, due by early November, seems certain to be appealed.” The sports group wanted to develop the site extensively, including parking large enough to accommodate three-hundred cars, restrooms, a basketball court, a regulation baseball field, a combination soccer-football field, little league fields, and an office pavilion to facilitate team meetings. For three years, it had been a series of delays and court battles, although it seemed hopeful at one point that a solution could be achieved. Attorney Thielen tried to reach a compromise for joint use of the site, seeking five of the 11.2 acres to build housing; for a short period after the lease had been granted, this seemed possible, but negotiations fell apart early in 1986 because, according to Thielen, the sports complex did not want to lose any playing fields.

At the October 8, 1987 hearing, in addition to testimony from Neil Abercrombie who wanted to see joint use of the site, Bernard Punikai’a and Anwei Law also testified. Law spoke about the historical value of the site and the importance of saving the trees, especially the rare chaulmoogra tree. Punikai’a also voiced concern about the cemeteries located adjacent to the site. “‘If you had a sports arena,’ he said to the Sun-Press, ‘I think it would be very destructive to people paying their last respects.’” Jerry Souza, a resident of nearby Third Street, voiced his indignation about a different distress, explaining that the Youth Complex had offered to build a Hale Mohalu memorial. “‘What is the memorial to?’ he asked. ‘The site IS the memorial.’”

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When the Department of Land Utilization finally made its decision on the zoning variance, the dynamics of the situation dramatically changed. The sports complex group were disappointed when the Land Utilization Department Director John Whalen announced his decision on Monday October 19, 1987, denying “the variance because the sports group failed to meet criteria laid out in the city charter that allow such zoning exemptions.” It was a major victory for the Coalition, opening the way for a compromise that would allow both housing and a smaller sports complex on the property. On Thursday October 22, 1987, Coalition attorney Thielen said a reasonable split would be six acres for the sports complex and five acres for housing.

An Advertiser editorial noted that it had been almost a decade since Hale Mohalu had been closed “amid rancor and protests that continued until the old buildings were bulldozed some four years ago. The site has strong historic attachments, and some old trees that ought to be at least considered in future planning.”

Explaining that both sides had failed to compromise earlier, that each side had their supporters, and the prospect of additional court battles seemed likely, the editors acknowledged that the prospect of combining elderly housing with a youth sports facility in the same location was a compromise less than ideal, but appropriate for an island community, “where land is at a premium and everyone must make accommodations to live together.” Nonetheless, the sports association filed an appeal with the city, and on November 27, 1987 Benjamin B. Lee, Deputy Director, Department of Land Utilization, City and County of Honolulu sent a letter to Cynthia Thielen regarding the appeal. Lee wanted Thielen to know that the appeal had been put on the agenda of the Zoning Board of Appeals on December 10 in case she would want to intervene. It would be several months later in the spring of the following year that both sides were able to come to an understanding about the property, ten years after the patients were forced to leave Hale Mohalu.

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1988 Victory: Shared Site

In late May 1988 the two opposing sides finally reached an agreement approved by the Board of Land and Natural Resources to share the site. “A three-year tug-of-war over the former Hale Mohalu site in Pearl City has ended with an agreement to use half for Little League ballfields and half for housing for the elderly,” the Friday May 27 Advertiser reported. The housing group got the lease for five acres makai of the Waimano stream, which bisects the property while the sports association leased the 5.2 acres mauka and both groups were to share a one-acre picnic area. Neither side had any comment on how the compromise came about, but Coalition spokesperson Patricia Mumford described it as wining solution for each. While both parties were pleased, “it was particularly satisfying for Punikaia, a living symbol of the vigorous but ultimately futile campaign to save the old Hale Mohalu center,” the Star-Bulletin noted. Punikaiʻa embodied the fight for Hale Mohalu, with his picture in the newspapers and his appearance on television news. “Of the agreement to share the site between sports and housing, Punikaia said, ‘We’re very happy. It’s been a long road to travel and to arrive at this stage.’” After the board action on Friday, Punikaiʻa recalled how the patients “tried to get the state, the Department of Health and other state officials not to close the facility but to continue the program down there because it had been earned by our blood, sweat and tears,” but the issue became politicized. “Politics got in the way of humanity, Punikaiʻa explained, “we were the expendable debris that were there and interfering with their plan.” Although many of his fellow patients had passed away since their resistance at Hale Mohalu, Punikaiʻa felt the victory belonged to them. It was an amazing triumph for all concerned, especially for Punikaiʻa and Naiʻa and the ‘Ohana who were arrested five years earlier. Punikaiʻa thought of Duarte, Smith, and Liwai, saying “they taught us a lot, how to deal with adversity. They were fighters. Physically, they might have been weak, but they had strength of spirit and commitment.” He noted that there were eighteen patients at Leahi and one hundred at Kalaupapa and that any Hansen’s Disease patient who can live independently would be able to move into the new facility.

He said he would like to live at Hale Mohalu, but he is not sure if his pension of $267.10 a month “can cover the projected rents of $210 to $375 plus his living expenses.”

After the eviction, Punikaiʻa made a point of not staying at Leahi. It was part of his fight to obtain the land at Hale Mohalu. “After Hale Mohalu was leveled in 1983, Punikaiʻa said, he lived in his car rather than move to Leahi Hospital.” To keep the struggle alive until the victory of housing for the land was obtained, Punikaiʻa felt he needed to physically maintain the act of resistance.

It was a long struggle but thanks to Punikaiʻa, to Patricia Mumford and the Coalition for Specialized Housing, it got resolved. The Advertiser editorial board joined in praising the shared resolution. “The Hale Mohalu compromise makes for welcome news indeed. It’s a win-win triumph of negotiation and conciliation.” Although Governor Waihee had used his influence to help resolve the Hale Mohalu controversy, the paper did not say anything about that, but it reported news of another long-standing problem he sought to resolve. On the same date as the news of the compromise, the Advertiser also reported on Waihee’s push for the return of the island of Kahoʻolawe. The military had recently mistakenly shelled an archaeological site that was off-limits. Waihee felt the mistake should strengthen the case for the State to regain control. The Protect Kahoʻolawe Ohana sought a moratorium on the bombing by June 5th in order to assess any archeological damages. The Navy insisted little harm had occurred, but the Kahoʻolawe ‘Ohana disputed that claim. Native Hawaiian Waihee felt it was time for the federal government to return the island. Although different issues, similarity between Hale Mohalu and Kahoʻolawe lay in the fact Native people claimed their land.

Emmett Cahill wrote a letter to the editor in praise of the Hale Mohalu settlement and the numerous people who made it happen. Cahill credited Punikaiʻa as the “glue that held the Hale Mohalu Ohana together.” He noted Punikaiʻa would be quick to acknowledge the five-year success story came about through the efforts of many people. Cahill thanked Mayor Fasi who was one of the first to help, providing a generator and a water hook-up, and attending fund-raisers. Cahill also credited the

legislative support from Neil Abercrombie. Cahill said all of the problems could have been resolved with the stroke of Governor Ariyoshi’s pen, but instead relief came about through Governor Waihee’s administration and the support of State Health Director Jack Lewin and William Paty of the Department of Land and Natural Resources as well as help from city housing authorities. Naturally, Cahill also gave credit to the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana, “made up of people from the churches, professional health agencies, labor, attorneys and individuals who were prompted by compassion for the patients and frustrations by the state administration.” Cahill thanked the Hawai‘i Council of Churches for their role “as the catalyst, the umbrella, which formed the coalition three years ago to bring the long-boiling tempest to a satisfactory solution.”

International Leprosy Forum in Holland

Soon after this good news on the victory of Punikai‘a and the Coalition, several Kalaupapa patients, including Punikai‘a, Henry Nalaielua, Richard and Gloria Marks, and Bill and Elroy Malo, traveled to the Netherlands to take part in the 13th International Leprosy Congress held in September 1988 at The Hague, where each patient gave a presentation on a particular topic relating to the disease. Richard Marks talked about tourism as a tool to educate about leprosy, while Henry Nalaielua focused on the need for a two-way conversation between the patient and the doctor, so the patient can question the doctor and not feel he or she had to comply with what the doctor said. Punikai‘a wanted to encourage professionals in the field to work with patients in order to provide public education. Stephanie Castillo, who had just written a book and made a documentary about the correlation between the public’s reaction to leprosy and the AIDS epidemic, accompanied the group, as did Anwei Skinsnes Law. Castillo also recounted the journey in a series of articles for the Star-Bulletin.

Anwei Law emphasized the disgrace associated with the disease. “People don’t come in for treatment if they sense the stigma of being identified as a patient.” She pointed out that once people get to know leprosy patients, they no longer dread the

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disease. She hoped that professionals at the international conference would learn to lose any fear they might have, by seeing the Kalaupapa patients speak at the meeting.

Punikai‘a hoped to help those who deal with leprosy to recognize “that a person with the disease is still a person and does not, once he’s diagnosed, become a specimen.”

During their trip to Europe, the Kalaupapa patients paid a visit to Father Damien’s crypt in Louvain, Belgium, and Stephanie Castillo, writing in the Star-Bulletin about the journey, commented that it sounded “strange to hear Hawaiian spoken so far way from Hawaii,” but as she noted, “this is the language Damien had learned to speak and the tongue from which came his Kalaupapa name, Kamiano.”

The patients felt it was important to see where Damien was born and to put flowers on his crypt. Expressing his gratitude to Damien, a sentiment shared by the other patients, Nalaielua said, “I am very much indebted to this man because of his selflessness, and because of what he gave.”

Makia Malo talked about Damien and how he came to understand him better. “This man of God was our champion. He was there for our people when nobody cared for them.”

The patients appreciated the love that Damien demonstrated for leprosy patients; if others had turned away from them, they knew Damien acknowledged their humanity. The patients hoped that their presence at this scientific and medical conference would help put a face on the illness in order to dispel the fear people had. “You begin to see past the disease to the people,” Castillo reported. “You start seeing every one as unique, with hundreds of different character strengths and weaknesses.”

That was what Punikai‘a had tried to do with the patients’ stand at Hale Mohalu. His partner in this educational process was Anwei Law whose goal with this conference was her ever-present one – to educate the public about the disease.

She pointed out the courage of the Hawaiian patients, saying they were willing to speak about their experiences in order to help the public better understand the disease.

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1642 Stephanie Castillo, “Hawaii’s Hansen’s Disease Patients Were Overwhelmed by the Experience” Honolulu Star-Bulletin October 24, 1988, B-1+B-3.
1643 Stephanie Castillo, “Hawaii’s Hansen’s Disease Patients Were Overwhelmed by the Experience” Honolulu Star-Bulletin October 24, 1988, B-1+B-3.
1989 Damien Centennial

For the 100th Anniversary of Father Damien’s death on April 15, 1989 a huge celebration was held at Kalaupapa. Several hundred people attended the festivities, among them international dignitaries and local elected officials as well as members of the clergy. Mayor Hannibal Tavares and Governor John Waihee took part in the proceedings along with various hula hālau and Hawaiian musicians. Prince Philippe of Belgium spoke and members of Damien’s family came to the place where Damien had labored and died. The Patients’ Council voted to lift the restriction that allowed only one-hundred persons to visit per day for this special celebration on April 15.1647 Aloha Airlines helped transport the guests to the peninsula for the celebration. Bernard Punikai‘a was there along with fellow patients, including Clarence Nai‘a, Nellie McCarthy, Edwin Lelepali and Richard Marks and friends like Carol Murry and Emmett Cahill.

1991 Letter: Profiles in Nonviolence

On stationery from the University of Hawai‘i, Department of Political Science, dated October 14, 1991, Glenn D. Paige wrote to “Anne, Bernard, Donnis, Ho‘opio and Jim” seeking their input about a book on nonviolence that he was writing.1648 Paige wanted to elicit material for his book by asking them their responses to a series of questions. Paige explained that the work, entitled Hawaii Profiles in Nonviolence, was to be published under the auspices of the Matsunaga Peace Institute. Asked of the participants for the forthcoming book, the letter listed questions on non-violence as follows:

1. What factors in your life do you think predisposed you to take an interest in non-violence? If you had a very conventional violence-accepting background, then just set it forth.
2. Was there any special event or experience that especially awakened your interest in non-violence?
3. Since you have become consciously concerned with pursuing non-violent principles in various areas of life, what kind of activities has this led you to engage in?
4. And reflecting upon your answers to the 3 preceding questions, what kind of meaning does this now have for you, what have you learned, what ‘lessons’ would you like to pass on to present and succeeding generations?

When the book was published in 1995, it was entitled *Hawai‘i Journeys in Nonviolence: Autobiographical Reflections*. Among the contributors were two key participants in the Hale Mohalu struggle, namely Maryknoll Sister Anna McAnany and James Albertini. Writing about Hale Mohalu, Albertini expressed its importance to his life and his work, saying: “A beautiful lasting bond of friendship and solidarity developed.” McAnany and Albertini were both involved in the anti-nuclear movement, as was Punikai’a.

**Patient Victory: September 1993**

On September 21, the tenth anniversary of the eviction and arrest of the patients and their supporters, a celebratory declaration took place at Damien’s Statue at the State Capitol to announce plans for building a new Hale Mohalu. “Yesterday afternoon,” the paper reported, “Hale Mohalu’s past and future were celebrated on the state Capitol grounds – at the foot of the statue of Father Damien who ministered to leprosy patients on Molokai in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.” It was a remarkable occasion that vindicated the patients’ struggle. It was especially meaningful for Punikai’a and members of the ‘Ohana who never gave up their battle for the land as well as for Patricia Mumford of the Coalition for Specialized Housing who labored steadfastly to make the dream a reality.

Numerous dignitaries were on hand for the announcement, including “40 civic officials and community activists.” Mayor Fasi along with State Health Director John Lewin and City Councilmen Gary Gill and Arnold Morgado were part of this special event. “Punikai’a, 63, said the new Hale Mohalu will stand as a monument to the lives of those patients with Hansen’s disease, or leprosy, who died hoping to have a home of their own again on Oahu.” No longer sharing the picnic area, six acres of the original site were set aside for housing while five acres were for the sports complex. “With government assistance, the Coalition for Specialized Housing will develop 15 one-bedroom units for patients of Hansen’s disease and a three-story apartment building for

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It was truly remarkable that all the parties involved had been able to get to this point of cooperation. In a reflective comment about past difficulties, Bernard Punikaiʻa epitomized the patients’ hallmark consciousness of forgiveness, saying: “We have managed to reconcile our differences.”

The Advertiser editors gave their stamp of approval to the news in one of their backhanded compliments about the struggle. The editorial agreed with the Health Director’s description of the 1983 eviction and arrest as being “a day of infamy.” The editors also went on to say that the patients’ struggle had been unnecessary. “Thus the land has been almost entirely unused since the last of the patients were evicted 10 years ago yesterday. Many of the patients who suffered needlessly didn’t live long enough to witness yesterday’s ‘celebration of healing and reconciliation.’” What did the editors mean by “they suffered needlessly?” If they meant the State forced them to suffer unnecessarily that would be correct but given that the editorial was entitled “Hale Mohalu: Sorry Saga Nearer to an End,” it seemed a critical assessment.

In contrast to the editorial’s mixed message, columnist Richard Borreca talked about Punikaiʻa’s struggles to save Hale Mohalu in a very moving, supportive way. Borreca described Punikaiʻa as his hero, saying, “But to me, Bernard Punikaia with his crippled hand and feet, who for decades spoke up for those without friends and never complained of his own fate, makes a statement we can all learn from.” Borreca recounted the story of the conflict and how it had played out with the destruction of the buildings. “Although it was a new Governor John Waihee who pledged to right the state’s disgraceful wrongs committed at Hale Mohalu, it is a lame-duck governor who will see construction started in the closing days of his administration.” Construction was to begin the following year in 1994. In a congratulatory tone, tinged with admiration, Borreca ended his column, noting the work continues as “Punikaia’s battle goes patiently but firmly forward.”

**Groundbreaking: October 1994**

Ground was broken for the new Hale Mohalu on Sunday October 2, 1994 at 3 PM in a ceremony attended by Governor John Waihee, Mayor Fasi, and patients Bernard Punikai‘a and Clarence Nai‘a, as well as members of the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana and the Coalition for Specialized Housing. For Punikai‘a, it was “truly a dream come true.” At last, he said, “We can see the end of a long, hard road.” Construction was expected to start the following month in November 1994 and would take approximately fourteen months. Although the completion of the dream was within sight, Punikai‘a had enough experience to know only when the first tenant checked in, it would be truly finished. As Punikai‘a said, “I’m a realist, I won’t celebrate until the last nail is hammered and the paint is dry, but it’s good to know we’re almost there.”

The Star, the magazine published by Carville Hospital in Louisana, wrote about the new housing construction on the former leprosy facility site. “The issues involved in the Hale Mohalu controversy were complex and could not be eliminated by bulldozing the buildings. At the center of the controversy was the right of individuals with Hansen’s disease to be a part of decisions that concerned their future.” The Star had previously reported on the Hale Mohalu controversy and wanted to recognize the contribution that Bernard Punikai‘a had made to the endeavor. “He has always seen Hale Mohalu as a “quest for dignity” – a recognition of the right of individuals who have had Hansen’s disease to have an active role in decisions regarding their future.” What The Star found so encouraging was that Punikai‘a did not care only for those with leprosy, but he wanted to aid others as well. His efforts to help were far-reaching, as The Star noted. “They extend to many people, who, because of age or the presence of a disability, have difficulty finding suitable and affordable housing.”

**1995 Housing Foundation and New Logo**

In June 1995 a beatification ceremony for Father Damien at the Vatican in Rome began the formal steps of declaring him a saint. Several patients from Kalaupapa participated in the ceremony, including Punikai‘a, Meli Watanuki, and Kuulei Bell.

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In July 1995 work began to pour the foundation for new elderly housing on the site of the former Pearl City facility. Wearing a hard hat, Punikai‘a walked over a part of the newly poured foundation accompanied by the consulting developer, Jack Casper, who had also been present in 1994 at the groundbreaking dedication ceremony. There had been many bureaucratic obstacles to overcome to reach this milestone, as the Star-Bulletin noted. “Punikaia laughingly recalls the peaceful resolution to his years of ‘hand-to-hand’ combat with Arnold Morgado, who opposed the project as a legislator but eventually, as chairman of the City Council, provided key support.” The site contained a chaulmoogra tree that was originally at Kalihi Hospital. Punikai‘a was present in 1949 when the tree was transplanted from the old hospital. In keeping with the tradition of honoring the past, the tree was incorporated into the design for the new Hale Mohalu. “The legacy is memorialized in the logo of Hale Mohalu, which depicts the berry and leaves of a chaulmoogra tree.”

**Grand Opening April 1996**

Befitting new beginnings in the spring of the year, the newly built Hale Mohalu welcomed its first residents in April 1996. A few days beforehand, Punikai‘a looked over the buildings he helped to establish. The caption under a photo of Punikai‘a, taken by Advertiser photographer, Carl Viti, stated, “Former Hale Mohalu patient Bernard Punikaia finds echoes of his old community’s friendliness in the way the new buildings are designed to let people mix. He had a hand in that, advising the designers.” It took nearly thirteen years for the phoenix of new buildings to arise out of the ashes of the destroyed wooden structures from which Punikai‘a and the others had been evicted. Advertiser reporter, Mike Leidemann noted the image of Punikai‘a, “carried out of his hospital-home, symbolized the arrogance of the state bureaucracy, valuing dollars over humans.” For Punikai‘a, the two events, the eviction and the grand opening were interwoven. “You can’t tell the story of one without the other.”

Reverend William Terbeek of the Coalition for Specialized Housing credited Punikai‘a with getting the buildings completed. “He [Bernard] was always the driving force.” Quick to acknowledge the work of others, Punikai‘a spoke of all the people who

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worked to make it possible. He mentioned the “people who believed in what we were doing – churches, academics, workers, unions, but we couldn’t have succeeded without the Council of Churches; they sustained us legally, technically and monetarily in all the low points.”

As he labored to make the case for a new Hale Mohalu, Punikai‘a lived in his car, in Richard Kinney’s garage not far from Hale Mohalu, and then in front of the Queen Lili‘uokalani building on Houghtailing Street where his friend ‘Īmai Kalāhele worked. Punikai‘a later drove to different locations to avoid any hassle with the police, and eventually with the aid of Mayor Jeremy Harris, Punikai‘a found accommodation in an elderly housing project in Pāwa‘a, Honolulu, where he felt comfortable. Because of foot problems, Punikai‘a had to use a cane and a motorized scooter to get around.

Reflecting on what it took to get the new $18 million dollar 5.7 acre project completed, Punikai‘a spoke of the sense of community that characterized the spirit of Hale Mohalu, explaining they were a family. “We laughed, rejoiced, broke bread, and sometimes complained about each other,” he said, “but we never lost sight of what our mission was.” He regretted that the patients, who fought hard for their old home, were not alive to see the new housing, but he said their spirit was there. Three of the units in the new Hale Mohalu housing are named for them, making them symbolically a part of the site. Punikai‘a spoke of his idols, Father Damien and Martin Luther King, Jr. and of Mary Duarte, George Liwai, and Sanford Smith as the people from whom he drew inspiration and strength. He explained that the new buildings reminded him of his former home in terms of its openness and its community-gathering space. Punikai‘a was a consultant in the design, helping to create the huge lobby and open community room where people could gather as the patients used to do, playing cards and talking story. Punikai‘a explained, “We wanted a place where people could interact and be comfortable out of

1670 Wally Inglis, personal interview, Honolulu, Tuesday April 2, 2013.
their rooms.” That was such a big part of the old Hale Mohalu that Punikaiʻa wanted to make sure the new facility had a similar sensibility.

The project consists of five low-rise buildings in a 210-unit complex that has both studio and one-bedroom apartments with 15 units reserved for Hansen`s disease patients who wished to move there. Punikaiʻa expressed pride in what had been accomplished. “It took a lot of coming together and help. Hale Mohalu represents a major chunk of my life, a lot of pleasures as well as a number of aches and pains. But that’s what life is, people who care enough to help each other.”

The Advertiser editors supported the opening of the new Hale Mohalu and regretted that it took so long to accomplish: “… it remains shameful that it was such a struggle to bring this housing about.” The editorial also commended Punikaiʻa for his courage and strength. “The new Hale Mohalu may never have been built if not, for the perseverance of Bernard Punikaia, a former Hale Mohalu resident.” The Advertiser’s comments were quite a change from past remarks by the Star-Bulletin of September 22, 1983 when that latter paper criticized his resistance and praised his eviction.

This editorial spoke of the struggle to get the present housing built. “For five years after the site was cleared, community interests fought over how the land should be used. In 1988, an agreement was reached to put in a sports complex on half the land and housing – with some for former Hansen’s Disease patients – on the other half.” But it would take another half a decade for progress to be made. “For five more years, the Coalition for Specialized Housing struggled to get the housing project built.”

May 1996 New Buildings Dedicated

The Hale Mohalu Band with Bernard Punikaiʻa on his auto-harp sang his song “Hale Mohalu” at the dedication ceremonies for the new Hale Mohalu on May 19, 1996. Thirteen years earlier, when they were evicted, the Hale Mohalu ʻOhana also sang that song. Many years later, the words held extra special meaning as they celebrated their dream become reality. Mayor Jeremy Harris, and Dr. Nancie Caraway on behalf of Congressman Neil Abercrombie, spoke, as well as the Reverend William Terbeck,
President of the Coalition for Specialized Housing, and Ronald Lim, Housing Assistant to Governor Cayetano. Retired Catholic Bishop Joseph Ferrario, and Rev. Donna Faith Eldredge, Director for the Council of Churches offered the Litany of Dedication and blessing of the buildings. In addition, Anwei Skinsnes Law, Clarence Nai‘a and Bernard K. Punikai‘a shared their thoughts with the assembled group.\textsuperscript{1677} The last to speak, Punikai‘a talked about the painful loss of the loving patient community they had created, and he hoped the new residents would enjoy living there, urging them, “Get to know each other. Interact. Play cards, talk story, because that’s what we used to do. Hale Mohalu – this is our gift to you.”\textsuperscript{1678} While it could never be exactly the same as what was there before, the new housing came into being on the shoulders of people who worked hard to create it, imbued with the mana of the patients, making it a senior citizens’ building like no other.

**1997 United Nations: Quest for Dignity**

In October 1997 Bernard Punikaia and three other Kalaupapa patients, Olivia Breitha, Cathrine Puahala, and Makia Malo participated in a World Health Organization exhibition, entitled “Quest for Dignity, A Victory over Leprosy/Hansen’s Disease” at the United Nations in New York City. The four Kalaupapa patients joined with twenty other Hansen’s Disease patients from ten countries and dignitaries for the opening banquet at the United Nations.\textsuperscript{1679} Anwei Skinsnes Law had coordinated the event in order to showcase the accomplishments of those with the disease rather than the negativity associated with the illness. Along with photographs of Hawai‘i and of Kalaupapa residents, as well as the new senior housing at Hale Mohalu, the event also included the patients telling their own stories to the public.\textsuperscript{1680}

**International Advocacy Association: I. D. E. A.**

As part of her research and advocacy for leprosy patients, Anwei S. Law founded the International Association for Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement, known as IDEA, a coalition of Hansen’s disease survivors and their supporters. In April 1997 it held its first conference in Spain. In 1998 the World Leprosy Congress met in Beijing and the “Quest for Dignity” exhibit was also shown there.

\textsuperscript{1677} Program, “Hale Mohalu Dedication,” May 29, 1996.
\textsuperscript{1678} Tino Ramirez, “Hale Mohalu is a Home Once Again” Honolulu Advertiser May 20, 1996, A-3.
1998 Quest for Dignity at Honolulu Hale

On July 1, 1998 the “Quest for Dignity” exhibit, which had opened last year in New York came to City Hall in Honolulu prior to its showing in Beijing. Anwei Law had coordinated the multimedia exhibit, which “shows the human beings behind the disease, and talks about the accomplishments of people who have been badly mistreated by society, yet gone on to succeed in very inspirational ways.” Instead of being pushed to the fringes of society, Law wanted to portray people celebrating their triumphs over the illness. In reporting on the exhibit, the Advertiser featured a photo of Bernard Punikai’a smiling happily as he leaned against one of the stone horses that stood at the entrance to the Honolulu Academy of Art [now known as the Honolulu Art Museum]. In the caption next to his photo, Punikai’a stated his objectives. “‘We want to be a part of the process ...to be in a position to help others as well as ourselves.’”

The Star-Bulletin also carried an article on the exhibition, explaining that it featured photos, historical documents, panel discussions, speakers, storytelling, and entertainment. Punikai’a described the three-fold intention of the exhibit. “The idea is to educate, to help people understand and to illustrate the positive side.” Since he was arrested at Hale Mohalu, Punikai’a’s life had been completely transformed. As an advocate for patients’ rights, his work grew in scope from an initial focus on Hawaiian patients to those who suffer internationally. In September 1998 Punikai’a participated in his fourth International Leprosy Conference and the third at which he was a speaker. “He just returned from a week in Japan with IDEA coordinator Anwei Skinsnes Law, speaking to Hansen’s disease victims in that country, which ended enforced isolation of patients only two years ago [in 1996],” reported the Star-Bulletin. It seemed like Hawai’i was behind the times in abolishing its laws of segregation when it did so in 1969 and yet Japan only made that change in 1996. The Star-Bulletin noted that several patients from Kalaupapa, part of the “Quest for Dignity” exhibit, were among the two hundred people invited to a reception in honor of the exhibit on Thursday July 2, 1998.

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1682 Wally Inglis said that this photo by Pamela Parlapiano was one of Bernard’s favorite.
hosted by Governor and Mrs. Ben Cayetano at Washington Place. From being kicked out of Hale Mohalu and arrested, Punikaiʻa and Naiʻa had arrived at a special celebration at the Governor’s mansion and the former home of Queen Liliʻuokalani.

1999 Protest at Carville, Louisiana

When the federal government wanted to close the Gillis W. Long Hansen’s Disease facility it operated at Carville, Louisiana in 1999, Bernard Punikaiʻa and others from all over the world joined in protest. Although opened in 1894, the Gillis W. Long facility had been under the U. S. Public Health Service since 1921, becoming “the primary Hansen’s disease research center in the world, where sulfone drugs were developed that led to an end to quarantine in the 1960s.” But by the late 1990s the government no longer felt it could continue to fund the multimillion-dollar operation at Carville, and President Clinton in 1997 turned the property back to the state of Louisiana to build a training center for at-risk youth. During the transfer negotiations in 1998, the patients were told they could stay on the three hundred acre site until they died. Then they were told they would have to leave in two or three years, but in March 1999 they had been informed they had to go. The patients who had been sent there earlier in the twentieth century and who had lived for years at Carville did not want to leave.

Parallels to what happened at Hale Mohalu resonated with the Louisiana patients. “Originally forced to live in Carville under quarantine, the population of senior citizens clings to the rambling complex of wooden buildings on the Mississippi River as home,” the Star-Bulletin reported. “Many of the 83 residents have lived there since they contracted the disease as children, before the development of drugs that stop its disfiguring and disabling damage to the body.” The Louisiana residents thought they would live out their lives at Carville, but the authorities told them they had to move by June 1999.

To protest their forced removal, they held a march to the cemetery where their loved ones and fellow patients were buried. The story garnered widespread publicity, including a report in Newsweek magazine, which described how their residency at the Louisiana facility had replaced their former relationships. Carville gave them a sense of

belonging that the world stripped away with one, hated word: ‘leper.’” That hated word deprived them of a normal life because of society’s fears. Now, the government viewed them as expendable. Determined to fight, the patients held their protest march on March 11, 1999. Supporters from several states and countries, including Japan and Korea joined in the protest, as did Bernard Punikai’a. For Punikai’a, the march was “a human rights statement about all the former Carville residents who were denied freedom and the right to vote, to travel and to marry because of their disease.” The protesting patients wanted to show that they had roots at Carville and they could not simply be relocated once again as they had been years earlier. Their fearful concerns were the same that plagued Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa patients who came to love the place where they lived. At the protest in Carville, Punikai’a stated, “When we are walking to the gravesite, it is to underscore that these people have husbands and wives here. Carville is home.”

Most non-patients never think of that aspect of the leprosy facilities like Carville and Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu, but Punikai’a’s stance sought to change that perception.

The eviction at Carville never happened. The demonstration at the cemetery in March forced the officials to reconsider the move, rescinding the eviction deadline. Although the authorities decided not to close the facility, they created additional changes that transformed its character. “They told us we can stay, but they’re doing things to discourage us,” Sam Wilson, president of the Carville Patient Federation, said this week. “It’s not the same place,” he said, describing the new occupants who share the 330-acre site.” By July 1999, the National Guard and a training center for at-risk youth were both using the site. Assured that they could remain for the rest of their lives, if they wished, the government, however, also offered an alternative if they left, “a $33,000 annual tax-free stipend.” Some chose that option rather than stay on the mixed-use property. Anwei Skinsnes Law expressed her doubts about the mixed-use of the site because it was no longer the home the patients had known. She asked, “How changed does a place have to be to stop being your home?”

mistaken in its effort to get rid of long-time residents. In contrast, she praised what Hawai‘i had done with the Settlement on Molokai‘i by making it part of the national park system. She asserted that the National Historic Park at Kalaupapa had been the proper choice for the patients. “‘History will see a real difference,’ said Law. ‘There’s the one way that they did it wrong and the one where they did it right.’”

**1999 San Francisco Exhibit**

The exhibit “Quest for Dignity” which premiered in October 1997 at the United Nations in New York and came to Honolulu in the summer of 1998 traveled to San Francisco for a showing from August 19-26, 1999 at the Hearst International Exhibition Hall at the Presidio. Former residents of Honolulu, such as Dr. John Lewin, who was once the Health Director for the State of Hawai‘i, and the Reverend Hollinshead Knight, once the dean of St. Andrew’s Cathedral, but then retired, were some of the people who helped to make possible the exhibit in the city by the bay. Bernard Punikai‘a, United States president of the sponsoring organization, IDEA, International Association for the Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement, was one of the speakers.

IDEA secretary Anwei Skinsnes Law explained the “Quest” exhibit borrowed an idea from the AIDS quilt project and the memorial to people with HIV/AIDS. “Names of former leprosy patients will be sewn into a banner that will travel with the “Quest for Dignity” exhibit in showings around the world.” The effort to educate the public about Hansen’s Disease was ongoing both at home and internationally.

**1999 Award in India**

At the end of 1999 in a ceremony at the Imperial Hotel in New Delhi, India Bernard Punikai‘a “received the Wellesley Bailey Award for his courage, achievement and outstanding contributions related to Hansen’s Disease.” Along with Bernard Punikaia, at age sixty-nine, Leprosy Mission International also honored three other people, who were from Japan, South Korea, and Suriname. It was quite an honor for the little boy, taken away from his family at age six and sent to Kalihi Hospital and later to Kalaupapa when he was only eleven. Isolated from society, Punikai‘a went on to become a vital contributor not only to his immediate associates but also to the larger

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community of mankind. The Star-Bulletin reported on the honor Punikai‘a received, noting it included a financial component, a cash prize of one thousand pounds.  

**Bernard Punikai‘a Day August 29, 2002**

In 2002 Governor Ben Cayetano proclaimed Bernard Punikai‘a’s 72nd birthday on August 29th as “Bernard K. Punikai‘a Day.” Close friend, Wally Inglis, Governor Cayetano’s Director of Information Services, had arranged for the event that another friend Congressional Representative Neil Abercrombie had suggested. According to the Star-Bulletin, “His friends say it is a fitting tribute to Punikai‘a, who has been in failing health following a stroke, because he has been recognized internationally for his work of helping others.” Confined to a wheelchair since the stroke, Punikai‘a, honored by the award, paid tribute to his fellow Hansen’s Disease patients, such as Clarence Nai‘a and Mary Duarte who were key participants in the battle to save Hale Mohalu. “They were the ones who made our foundation strong.”

Advertiser reporter Mike Leidemann also talked about the celebration that gave Bernard Punikai‘a his own special day. “Bernard Punikai‘a, a Hansen’s disease patient whose lifelong ‘quest for dignity’ electrified Hawai‘i and brought him worldwide fame as a human rights activist turns 72 today.” The article pointed out what a Renaissance man Punikai‘a was. “A composer, musician, educator and community leader,” Punikai‘a with his many talents had accomplished a great deal in his three-score and ten plus two. “He has twice run for state office, taken college courses in public advocacy, public health, business law and Hawaiian language,” the paper reported, “and served on numerous committees and boards, including two terms with the state Board of Health.”

While his fight to save Hale Mohalu will be forever associated with his name, his reputation included much more, including his work “as an advocate for patients’ rights and broader civil rights issues, friends say. He’s been a leader in the fight to honor Moloka‘i’s Father Damien, and has appeared at four International Leprosy Congresses, in New Delhi, the Hague, Orlando and Beijing.” Although the local newspaper editors might not have supported Punikai‘a’s efforts in the past, this time on the occasion of the
tribute given to him by Governor Cayetano on his seventy-second birthday, they acknowledged his contributions and saluted him. “Punikai‘a, 72, was honored yesterday by Gov. Ben Cayetano for a lifetime of work on behalf of human rights, human dignity and the rights of Hansen’s disease patients.” The editorial also pointed out the importance of Punikai‘a’s influence. “In an era when people don’t vote and claim to have given up on any hope of affecting government or civic affairs, it is instructive to look at the work of Bernard Punikai‘a.” The paper acknowledged that he deserved the accolades he received for his steady but determined efforts to affect change. “With humor, humility and more than a small degree of stubbornness, Punikai‘a has taken on the authorities on behalf of his fellow Hansen’s disease patients over and over again. His successes have come slowly, but almost always surely.” Ironically, the editors saluted him not merely for his international battles, but for “his leadership of the fight to save Hale Mohalu,” which they described as his “biggest struggle, and in the end his biggest single success.” The editorial concluded its salute to his life as a lesson for all of us. “Punikai‘a has been honored internationally for his work on behalf of human rights and leprosy patients around the world. But his greatest legacy will be here at home, where he has demonstrated that even against tall odds, it is still possible to stand up for what you believe and, in the end, prevail.”

Anniversary Luau: September 2003

On Sunday September 21, 2003, twenty years after they were evicted from Hale Mohalu, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana held a reunion on the site of the original leprosy facility. In its place stood the senior housing Bernard Punikai‘a and the ‘Ohana had fought to establish, and the Star-Bulletin covered the story. “Today, Punikai‘a, Nai‘a and those arrested with them will gather with nearly 300 others for an anniversary luau on the grounds of a 210-unit senior citizen housing development that also bears the name Hale Mohalu and which sits on the same [original] site.” It was truly a memorable occasion and a testament to the fortitude of the ‘Ohana and the patients who did not let the State stop them from fulfilling their rightful place on the land. “Big Island peace activist Jim Albertini who was also arrested that day, called the evictions a shameful day for the political establishment of the time,” reported the Star-Bulletin. “I think it’s a struggle

that gives hope to all kinds of people to stand up for rights, human rights,’ said Albertini. ‘Anybody -- a human being, a child of God -- should be treated with dignity, and that’s at the heart of nonviolence.’”

Committed to nonviolence, the ‘Ohana had made that aspect a central part of their resistance. In the process of working together to save Hale Mohalu, the ties they formed with one another became lifelong friendships. “Another reason for today’s luau is to unite the bonds made during the controversy.” The anniversary luau was reminiscent of a family reunion, where members might not see each other for a period of time but looked forward to reconnecting with loved ones. “‘There was a beautiful sense of community developed over those five years,’ said Albertini, whose farm on the Big Island was named ‘Malu Aina’ or place of peace by Punikaia.” As with any Hawaiian family reunion, music was an integral part. “Inglis said today would also be a chance for the Hale Mohalu band – Punikaia on autoharp, Inglis on trumpet, Albertini on guitar and others -- to play a reunion concert.”

The following day on Monday September 22, 2003 the Star-Bulletin gave the reunion frontpage coverage and the lead line stated, “Twenty years ago, Hansen’s disease patient Clarence Nai’a was one of 18 people arrested in a pre-dawn raid at Hale Mohalu, carried from the deteriorating buildings of the former treatment facility.” At the anniversary luau, lifelong friends and supporters greeted one another with deep affection. “Hansen’s disease patients from Kalaupapa and Leahi Hospital, along with scores of others, joined the commemoration. Nai’a and Punika’a are grateful to and share a close bond with the supporters who stood together with them on that day 20 years ago.”

The ones who died during the struggle - George Liwai, Stephen Smith, and Mary Duarte - were remembered in the celebration and their spirit was very much a part of the new facility. One of the buildings’ three wings was named in their honor while the lobby has a stained glass window from the old chapel, and on the walls overlooking the lobby are written the lines of refrain from Punikai’a’s song, “Hale Mohalu.” A mural depicting the standoff with Bernard Punikai’a and Clarence Nai’a holding a wooden cross had been painted on a wall in the community meeting room in another building. Although it was a totally different structure from the old Hale Mohalu, the new edifice incorporated the

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essence of ʻohana and love that the old facility embodied. They could and did feel proud of what had been accomplished, as well as grateful it had turned out so well. Some of those pictured in one Star-Bulletin photo surrounding Punikaiʻa, and Clarence Naiʻa were John Witeck, Gigi Cocquio, Steve T. Boggs and Joanne Boggs, Holly Henderson, Wally Inglis, Fred Dodge, Jim Albertini, Sister Sandy Galazin, Sister Earnest Chung, David Lassner, Amy Agbayani, and Oliver Lee. The front page had another photo of Bernard Punikaiʻa playing the auto-harp with the Hale Mohalu Band of Gigi Cocquio on guitar, along with ʻĪmaikalani Kalāhele on guitar and Wally Inglis on trumpet.

2005 Special Honor

In the summer of 2005 on July 23, Papa Ola Lōkahi, a Native Hawaiian Health Board honored fourteen people who had made a contribution to improving the health of Hawaiians by presenting them the Kaonohi Award. Among the recipients were two Hansen’s Disease patients, Bernard Punikaiʻa and Henry Nalaielua, plus Father Joseph Hendricks, a priest who worked for years at Kalaupapa and Dr. Benjamin B.C. Young from the John A. Burns School of Medicine. Niu Maka, the newsletter for the Native Hawaiian Health Board, Papa Ola Lōkahi noted that Bernard Punikaiʻa was given the award for his work educating people about leprosy. According to the newsletter, “Bernard has been an ambassador for Hansen’s disease patients on behalf of the International Association for Integration, Dignity and Economic Advancement, a coalition of Hansen’s disease survivors and their supporters.”

2009 Three Leaders Gone

Richard Marks died December 9, 2008 at age 79. Elizabeth “Kuʻulei” Bell died February 8, 2009 at age 76. Bernard Punikaiʻa died two weeks later on Ash Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at the age of 78. At Kuʻulei’s funeral at the Mormon Church, Punikaiʻa was seated in his wheelchair next to Makia Malo. When one of the church singers, a handsome older Hawaiian man with a white beard and white hair began to sing a solo in Hawaiian, Bernard Punikaiʻa, wearing his baseball cap and scarf around his neck, had his head leaning down as if he had momentarily fallen asleep, but as soon as

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1713 Kuʻulei Bell’s funeral service was held at the Mormon Church on Judd Street in Honolulu. Punikaia and Malo were in a group with other patients seated in front of me.
the man began to sing in a deep powerful bass, Punikai‘a raised his head slowly and lifted up his right arm in a clenched fist. Despite his handicaps and frailty from a previous stroke, Punikai‘a was as much a fighter as ever.

Wally Inglis and Neil Abercrombie had been to see him just before he passed away at Leahi. A memorial service was held in Honolulu at the Newman Center at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Soon after, a Funeral Mass was held at St. Francis Church at Kalaupapa. In a simple wooden box, Punikai‘a lay at the front of the church. People approached the open casket to offer a prayer and say aloha to Bernard Ka‘owakaokalani Punikai‘a. In a solo performance as he stood at the back of the church, Wally Inglis played the trumpet for his close friend. The simple service did not take long and burial at Kalaupapa cemetery immediately followed.

Punikai‘a’s obituary in the Honolulu papers recounted his accomplishments to educate the public about leprosy. “Bernard Punikaia told his life story to international audiences, at the United Nations in 1984 and at World Leprosy Congress meetings in India, China, Belgium and Brazil, and was recipient of numerous honors for his work as an activist for his people.” But Bernard Punikaia was well known not for those awards among the people of Hawai‘i. His was the familiar face that made the disease less fearful. “Punikaia, with a constant grin and a baseball cap at a rakish angle,” the paper reported, “played a major role in banishing public fear of leprosy by putting a real face and a rascally personality on the disease, which he contracted at age 6.” What started at Kalaupapa as the head of the Patients Council and took him to Honolulu to fight for Hale Mohalu led to a lifetime of seeking equal treatment for his people. “Punikaia described his efforts as a ‘quest for dignity,’ and that expression was adopted for a 1997 exhibition about the accomplishments of Hansen’s disease patients around the world that was unveiled at the United Nations and traveled to several countries.”

After Punikai‘a’s death, newspaper remembrances spoke of his international activism as well as his stand at Hale Mohalu. When Wally Inglis reflected on Punikai‘a’s

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1714 I was one of those people and I felt grateful to see his face so peaceful and serene in death.
life, he spoke of the importance of nonviolence and the worldwide influence Punikaiʻa wielded. “‘Kalaupapa and Hale Mohalu had global implications because of his example of leadership, of standing up, of non-violent protest,’ said Inglis. ‘It had impacts far beyond Hawaii.’” Inglis went on to state Punikaiʻa took “what could have been a very provincial, isolated struggle” and linked “it with global concerns of peace and justice.”

He never gave up and he never became bitter over the mistreatment and lack of respect he encountered. Father Damien was his inspiration and role model. Like so many of the patients at Kalaupapa, Punikaiʻa embodied the Christian ideal of forgiveness and the Hawaiian expression of aloha.

An important part of his legacy has been the establishment of Ka ʻOhana O Kalaupapa, an organization to reunite families torn apart by separation at Kalaupapa. “He spearheaded the effort to form Ka ʻOhana O Kalaupapa, which brings together the patients, their family members, descendants and long time friends to serve as another voice for the community and work with government agencies.”

Begun in 2003 that work has continued to grow under the guidance of Anwei Skinsnes Law and Valerie Monson. More and more families are discovering their family relationships with patients that they never knew existed.

**New Senior Housing**

In April 2011 it was announced a second phase of Hale Mohalu housing project would be built. “After five years of planning, a nonprofit corporation broke ground yesterday on a $40 million, 163-unit Pearl City affordable housing complex for seniors,” the paper reported.

Bernard Punikaiʻa had worked to make this day possible and while he had passed on, his close friends Wally Inglis and Governor Neil Abercrombie were present. “‘This is really a sacred site,’ said Wally Inglis, president of the Coalition for Specialized Housing, which is building the new complex and also owns and operates Hale Mohalu.” Several patients witnessed the ceremony, including Elroy Makia and Norbert Palea. “The first phrase of Hale Mohalu II, set to wrap up in about two years, ”

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1720 Law, Kalaupapa 525-526.


the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported, “will offer one-bedroom units for $401 to $668 a month to seniors who earn 60 percent or less of area median income.” The paper explained the buildings of Hale Mohalu II would be constructed on the remaining unused portion of the original 11.2 acres, adjacent to the first elderly housing project, which was completed in 1996. Wally Inglis’ description of this historic groundbreaking event accurately summed up what will finally have taken place after all the heartache of the Hale Mohalu struggle and eviction. “This,’ he said, ‘is the healing process.”

Construction was completed on Hale Mohalu II Senior, the two buildings for senior housing, named for Punikai’a and Nai’a in mid-2013. Hale Mohalu II Family is expected to be finished in the fourth quarter of 2014. At the ground breaking/dedication ceremony held on August 23, 2013, Governor Neil Abercombie, Wally Inglis, and Mayor Kirk Caldwell were among the featured speakers. Patients Winnie Harada and Barbara Marks and several ‘Ohana members were also in attendance.

In summary, September 2013 marked the 30th anniversary of the infamous eviction and destruction of Hale Mohalu. As part of its plans to recognize that date, the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana published a photographic essay on the struggle, entitled “Hale Mohalu Land of Joy, Land of Pain.” Jack Schweigert had described Hale Mohalu as a pyrrhic victory, meaning that it was won at too great a cost for the victors, but I disagree. In the end, the patients and the ‘Ohana achieved a victory that was tremendously costly, but they secured the land for the purpose they sought. They achieved their aim. It did not become a baseball field or any other sports field and it did not become a golf course or a luxury high-rise condominium. Moreover, the struggle served to enlist others in the battle to recognize the humanity of leprosy patients and the handicapped in general – to honor the humanity of the sick and not to judge them as being the sum total of their illness and nothing more. The fight for Hale Mohalu, part of the Native Hawaiian struggle for independence, has become symbolic of the movement to achieve justice for all people.

1727 Jack Schweigert, personal interview, Honolulu, 10 December 2012.
EPILOGUE

Kalaupapa patients continue to come to Honolulu for additional medical treatment, staying at Hale Mohalu, not their old home, but an institutional ward in a wing of Leahi Hospital. In this case, the State and Governor Ariyoshi won the battle: the patients went to Leahi, after all. On the other hand, the patients achieved a victory as well. The site of the old Hale Mohalu, in Pearl City is now a senior citizen home, thanks in great measure to the persistent efforts of Bernard Punikai‘a and the Council of Churches. Without their hard work, we have no idea what might have been built on the site. However, given the rate of expansion in the Hawaiian Islands, we can imagine that like the rest of Pearl City and Honolulu, it would most likely be developed into high-rise condominiums. The efforts of the Hale Mohalu protestors and their supporters helped to make the public aware of correct land use for the Pearl City site. That issue of land use is just as important today as it was during the 1970s and 1980s. Native Hawaiians continue to fight for their land and aloha ʻāina and mālama ʻāina are also at the forefront in matters of sustainability.

Kalaupapa, Hawai‘i was prominently in the news when Father Damien was canonized a saint of the Catholic Church in October 2009 and again in October 2012 when Mother Marianne was also declared a saint. Several patients from Kalaupapa traveled to Rome for the ceremonies and were accorded flattering media attention. In contrast, thirty-five years ago (in 1978) the press, the Church, and the State treated the patients dismissively. The treatment meted out to the Hale Mohalu patients has resonance for the future of Kalaupapa. The residents have been assured they can live out their lives there but questions arise today as to what will happen to the last of the patients?

Promises have been made for a lifetime of care at the Moloka‘i Settlement, but will that be the case? What will happen when only a few remain? As their numbers continue to decrease, will they be required to relocate to Hale Mohalu at Leahi? Will pressure to maximize the value of that pristine parcel of land that is Kalaupapa force the removal of the patients? What of the demand to increase visitor numbers now that Father Damien and Mother Marianne have been declared saints? Whose voice will be heard, the patients or the National Park or the State of Hawai‘i? What about Native Hawaiians and their concerns? The State of Hawai‘i has repeatedly declared its economic need for
tourist dollars. Will the State support the National Park’s purpose to maintain the history or seek to make Kalaupapa a resort area like Waikīkī? Or enlist Disney to build another resort, such as Aulani at Ko Olina? Will the Park Service increase visitation and allow overnight camping and commercial concessions, ruining the sacredness of the land?

Controversy about land concerns exists today as it did years ago and perhaps even more so because there is so little undeveloped land left in the Islands and none as untouched as Kalaupapa, reminiscent of Hawaiʻi before World War II. However, Kalaupapa is on Hawaiian Homestead land that is only leased to the National Park. The Native Hawaiian community as beneficiaries of that land may indeed take up the battle to save the last undeveloped parcel of land in the Hawaiian Islands. Perhaps activists like Walter Ritte and others will do all they can to protect the sacred land (wahi pana). Organizations like Ka ʻOhana O Kalaupapa have gathered a large following, given the fact that so many people were sent to Kalaupapa and their relatives are only now beginning to find out about them. New connections are continually being made as these Kalaupapa relatives are eager to learn their previously hidden history.

January 2013 marked thirty-five years since Bernard Punikaiaʻa and the patients said no to the State’s attempt to dismiss their rights and humanity. It is a significant anniversary in Hawaiian history, and yet so few know about it. This dissertation serves as a way to recognize and remember the courage of those who resisted. Like Koʻolau on Kauaʻi, Bernard Punikaiʻa belongs to the pantheon of Hawaiian heroes who have stood up to the government in the face of injustice. It requires tremendous courage to take a stand, especially when the government does it all can to suppress your opposition, even to the point of harming you physically, as the State of Hawaiʻi did at Hale Mohalu. The patients tried to negotiate a solution, up to the eleventh hour, but the State would have none of it. Punikaiʻa stated clearly what the fight was all about – it was not for his self-interest but for a cause far bigger - for Hansen’s Disease patients’ dignity and self-determination as well as joining with others in the fight for Hawaiian self-determination.

Hawaiians have never surrendered their sovereignty. This fact has been cited as a critical factor in the documentation of the illegal American occupation, as the work of Noenoe Silva demonstrates. In her collaboration with Pualeilani Fernandez in “Mai Ka ʻĀina O Ka ʻEhaʻeha Mai: Testimonies of Hansen’s Disease Patients in Hawaiʻi, 1866 -
1897,” Silva and Fernandez discuss the letters of protest Kalaupapa patients wrote to the Hawaiian language newspapers. Their research into the patients’ letters reveal important insights with present-day resonance.

Moreover, the letters bring up important questions about how the criminalization of disease works in the politics of dispossession in colonial situations. The experiences of being arrested on suspicion of having the disease and of being imprisoned at Kalaupapa can be seen as a microcosm of the political processes of nationalism and colonialism.

One letter by W. Kahalelaau complained of racism by the government, suspiciously accusing those in charge of using “the quarantine system unfairly, to sweep away Hawaiians who may be considered undesirable.” Kahalelaau wanted the government to view those with leprosy not as something to be swept away, but instead as integral to society or in his words, “as the very core of the Kingdom.” Kahalelaau’s description in Hawaiian is compelling: “ka poe i komo io ke aloha i ka Iwi-hilo” which Silva and Fernandez translate as “the people in whom aloha has truly entered, in the last rib-bone [i.e., the core of their being].”

A hundred years later, in a modern day continuation of leprosy patients voicing their grievances against the unjust practices of the government, Bernard Punikai’a made his case for the leprosy patients – that they too were not to be swept away into an institution they neither needed nor wanted. Punikai’a wanted the government to see those with leprosy as “ka poe i komo io ke aloha i ka Iwi-hilo,” and the love they had for Hale Mohalu was part of their rib-bone, part of their essence. In fighting for Hale Mohalu, Punikai’a was also fighting for the Hawaiian people, for their rights. In the affirmation of Hawaiian sovereignty, music has played a crucial role, as particularly evident in the much beloved song, Kaulana Nā Pua (Famous are the Flowers) or the Rock Eating Song (‘Ai Pōhaku) wherein Hawaiians express their resistance to annexation. The song is also called “Mele Aloha ‘Āina (Song for the people who love the earth). In Silva’s words, “This song is still sung by Kānaka Maoli today as a call to sovereignty.”

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1729 Silva and Fernandez, “Testimonies” 94.
1730 Silva and Fernandez, “Testimonies” 82.
1731 Silva and Fernandez, “Testimonies” 82.
1732 Silva, Aloha Betrayed 135.
funeral in January 2013. As a Hawaiian, music was an integral part of Punikaiʻaʻs being. He spoke of the importance of music to his life, especially Hawaiian music and to its ability to sustain him over the long years of the struggle for Hale Mohalu.\textsuperscript{1733} The songs that Punikaiʻa composed and the ones he sang were an important part of a tradition of mele (song, poetry) especially mele of resistance. His songs were mele lāhui (nationalist song) and also mele wehi (song to honor a person). A song, composed by Ernest Kala, a Kalaupapa patient, entitled “E Nā Kini” was a song that Punikaiʻa and the Hale Mohalu ʻOhana sang along with “Hale Mohalu” and “Kalaupapa, My Hometown,” at all their gatherings. The first lines of this song call for active resistance – to claim what is their birthright.

\begin{verbatim}
E na kini o ka ʻaina, e ala mai (a e hana pu)
E na mao o Hawai nei, e ala mai (a e hana pu)

Natives of the land, rise (and take action)
Precious descendents of Hawaii, rise (and take action)
\end{verbatim}

The chorus echoes the fight. Punikaʻa and the ʻOhana sang these words with gusto.

\begin{verbatim}
Hui:
I ka lawe, lawe a lilo, i ka pono, pono a mau
Paio no ka pono e, e na kini o ka ʻaina
I ka lawe, lawe a lilo, i ka pono, pono a mau
Ua mau ke ea o ka ʻaina i ka pono

Chorus:
When taking, take hold of righteousness, righteousness forever
Defend righteousness, you natives of the land
When taking, take hold of righteousness, righteousness forever
[For] the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.

The last three lines repeat the motto of the last reigning monarch, Queen Liluʻokalani.

Onipaʻa mai, onipaʻa mai
E na mokupuni o Hawaii nei, e na mamo, kini a lehu
E ala mai!

Hold your ground, stand firm
Island of Hawaii, precious descendents in countless numbers
Rise!
\end{verbatim}

Hopefully, the Ka ‘Ohana and the precious descendants of the Kalaupapa patients will act as kahu (guardians) to the land at Kalaupapa and fight for it as Bernard Kaowakaokalani (bright light in the sky) Punikai’a did at Hale Mohalu.

This dissertation set out to answer various questions about the Hale Mohalu struggle, including why it happened when it did. How could such a small group who had no political power and no physical ability manage to create a vibrant social movement?

The answer lies in a unique alignment of time, place, and people. An equilateral triangle, this coincidence of time, place, and people provided an equal balance of singular factors expressive of the Hawaiian concept of mana, producing an extraordinary crusade.  

First of all, focusing on time, an examination of the period reveals that the nineteen sixties and seventies brought huge changes to the Hawaiian landscape. By 1978, nearly twenty years after statehood, many Native Hawaiians regarded the so-called improvements as deeply troubling, since Kanaka Maoli had been forced to deal with continuous assaults on the ‘āina. If not a turning point, the year 1978 marked a shift in the acquiescence of Hawaiians to the status quo, as resistance, in the activist style of Robert Wilcox, emerged full-blown. Certainly, 1978 was a pivotal year for the re-assertion of Hawaiian identity. Apropos of its significance, the Mākaha Sons of Ni‘ihau recorded a song entitled “1978” in which they reflected on the changes in the Hawaiian Islands since the monarchy. Paraphrasing one of the lines from that song, lead singer, Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, known as “IZ,” asked if the old Native Hawaiian leaders could come back today, what would they think of the modern-day Hawai‘i and the land they loved so dearly? Would they be shocked and saddened to see how the ‘āina had been descreated?

The Mākaha Sons were from Wai‘anae and at that time consisted of brothers Skippy and Israel Kamakawiwo‘ole, their cousin Mel Amina, Sam Gray, Jerry Koko, and Moon Kauakahi. Skippy encouraged the group to sing songs with political themes in both

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1734 According to Pukui and Elbert in the Hawaiian Dictionary on page 235, mana is defined as “Supernatural or divine power, mana, miraculous power; a powerful nation, authority; to give mana to, to make powerful; to have mana, power, authority; authorization. Privilege; miraculous, divinely powerful, spiritual; possessed of mana, power.

1735 In Aloha Betrayed, Noenoe Silva explains Wilcox, a Royalist, had led a rebellion in 1889 to “undo the Bayonet Constitution by the same means as it had been done, by threat of violence.” (Silva, Aloha Betrayed 128) + In Island Edge, Coffman writes: “In the first American election held in the Territory of Hawai‘i in 1900, the native Hawaiian patriotic leagues that had opposed annexation merged. The Hui Aloha ‘Āina and the Hui Kalai ‘Āina formed the Home Rule Party elected a person who symbolized Hawaiian resistance to annexation – Robert Wilcox. Because Wilcox’s reputation was derived from his having taken up arms against the annexationists, his election was the most pointed statement of protest then available to the Hawaiians through the American political system,” Coffman, Island Edge 9.
English and Hawaiian – songs especially having to do with Hawaiian sovereignty. Some of their songs included “Kahoʻolawe,” regarding the bombing of the island, and “Waimanalo Blues,” that spoke of overdevelopment as well as “Hawaiʻi ‘78,” which has been called “the band’s signature song.” Resistance or Kūʻē was part of the social/political atmosphere in 1978, not only in song but also on the ground in everyday life - the lyrics reflected what was happening in society. It was no accident that the Mākaha Sons would be one of the leading acts at the luau in September 1978 put on by the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana. With the musicians they shared a similar consciousness in their deep love for Hawaiian culture and refusal to yield to colonial oppression.

January 1978 marked the two-hundredth anniversary of Captain Cook’s arrival in the Hawaiian Islands. Archeologist Patrick Kirch describes the scene as Cook’s ships, the Resolution and the Discovery, made their approach. “At daybreak on January 18, a Sunday, the lookout reported an island bearing northeast by east; soon after a second land was glimpsed. Unlike low-lying Christmas atoll, these were high islands resembling Tahiti.” The winds were such that the men on Cook’s ships could only gaze at the islands in the distance and it would be the next day January 19, 1778 they actually made face-to-face contact with the Natives at Waimea, Kauaʻi. Two hundred years later, the views of two Kanaka Maoli men on the historical event were reported in the Advertiser in an article entitled, “Sawyer: Remember 1893.” According to the Advertiser, activists Richard Sawyer and Charles Maxwell spoke not only about Cook’s anniversary, but also (evidencing a burgeoning new consciousness about the Overthrow) remarked on the significance of the January dates in relationship to Queen Liliʻuʻokalani. In my research in the newspaper archives, I was startled as I read through the January 1978 pages suddenly to see this article’s title, “Remember 1893.” Nowhere else in the newspapers of that time period did I see a similar headline - articles mostly emphasized Cook, not Liliuʻokalani. Although the history of the Overthrow and subsequent annexation were not well known,

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1737 Kois, Facing Future 27.
1738 After the protests and arrests in September 1978 at Hilo Airport (discussed in dissertation chapter 6 on 1978) Mickey Ioane, a member of the band called Da Blalahs from Keaukaha on the Big Island composed “Hawaiʻi ‘78. (Kois, Facing Future 77) and in Rick Carroll’s biography of Israel, IZ, Carroll notes Keaukaha is “a Hilo Bay neighborhood that has Hawaiian homestead land.” Rick Carroll, IZ: Voice of the People (Honolulu: Bess Press, 2006) 60. Furthermore, in April 1980 Keaukaha was the site of a successful fundraiser for the Save Hale Mohalu Ohana, “Keaukaha fund raiser,” SAVE HALE MOHALU NEWS April 1980, Vol. 3, No. 3.
1739 Kirch, A Shark Going Inland 2-3.
1740 On many levels, it would be the beginning of the end for the indigenous Hawaiian people.
Maxwell predicted it would be soon, and the dates of January 16-19 would be recognized as days of infamy - not unlike that accorded to Pearl Harbor. “With ceremonies underway in recognition of Capt. James Cook, a Hawaiian ohana leader [Maxwell] said the state also should remember that Jan.16 through 19 were the days of the 1893 revolution.”

Thirty-five years later, the forewarning of Sawyer and Maxwell proved accurate, as knowledge of the illegal annexation has been well documented. In addition, it has become increasingly better publicized. Since 2009, in conjunction with the September birthday of Queen Lili‘uokalani, the Biographical Research Center, the Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities, and a consortium of other groups conduct a program called “Mai Poina” (Don’t Forget) about the Overthrow on the grounds of Iolani Palace. Volunteer actors in a living tableau recreate the roles of historical figures in the days immediately leading up to the Overthrow. It is a dramatic presentation that brings to life in a visceral way the events of the period. Afterward, scholars are available to answer questions. Open to the public, tourists as well as residents, these free performances told from the Hawaiian perspective, increase community awareness of the Overthrow.

January 1978 marked significant anniversaries - Cook’s arrival, Lili‘uokalani’s dethronement, and on January 26, the beginning of the Hale Mohalu confrontation. In addition, on January 26, the Star-Bulletin reported the United Public Workers’ Union had asked President Jimmy Carter to grant amnesty to Walter Ritte and Richard Sawyer, the two Moloka‘i men found guilty of trespassing on Kaho‘olawe. The Union argued the charges were an outrage against the Hawaiian people. Reflecting the feeling of many in the community, the Union requested the return of the island from military control.

A shift in public consciousness begun with Kalama Valley in 1970 strengthened visibly during the decade of the seventies. 1978 was a watershed year for Hawaiians on many levels. The restoration of ‘Iolani Palace was finally completed and the re-opening of the Palace took place on May 3. The Palace stands as symbol of the Hawaiian nation and its re-opening signified renewed hope for the Hawaiian people. Indicative of a groundswell

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1742 Several performances approximately 35 - 40 minutes in length are offered each evening from Wednesday to Sunday.
1743 Nearly thirty-five years later, public consciousness has progressed from knowing little about the Overthrow to a growing recognition of Hawai‘i as an occupied country.
1745 Richard Sawyer, prior to his life as an activist, had been a United Airlines steward. As a United flight attendant, I had worked trips to Chicago with him.
focus on Hawaiian issues, the 1978 Constitutional Convention’s focus on judicial selection, state spending limits and legislative reform helped to bring about positive changes for the Native Hawaiian community. Frenchy DeSoto, the elected representative for Wai‘anae, was a powerful leader who made Hawaiian issues foremost on her agenda. As chair of a new committee, the Hawaiian Affairs Committee, DeSoto was a force to be reckoned with when it came to advancing Hawaiian concerns.

As reported in Ka Wai Ola, her leadership led to gains for the Hawaiian people.

The final convention package included five Hawaiian amendments to the State Constitution: the creation of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; protection for traditional native fishing, hunting, gathering and access rights for religious and subsistence purposes; protection of ancestral lands; establishing Hawaiian and English as the state’s two official languages, and strengthening the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands by allowing more flexibility and legislative funding of the department’s administrative costs.

While this was significant progress, evictions and large-scale resistance still took place, such as at the airport in Hilo in September 1978 over “the state’s use of a 92-acre Hawaiian Home Lands parcel for Hilo’s Airport runway and terminal.” The Hawaiian demonstration was peaceful and even friendly. But most importantly, Hawaiians were now asserting what was rightfully theirs, as the Honolulu Star-Bulletin & Advertiser reported. “The Hawaiian group claims the land, valued at $633,000 a year in rental fees, was taken without compensation. The matter is now in litigation in Honolulu.” Along with the battle for Kaho‘olawe, the launching of Hokule‘a, the celebrated wa‘a in 1976, and with the reawakening of ‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i and ‘Ōiwi music, this period of Hawaiian resurgence revealed a renewed determination of Kanaka Maoli to fight for their lands and their culture in ways that had not been previously seen for some time, culminating in political rights for Hawaiians gained by the Constitutional Convention, and by a restored

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1750 As discussed in dissertation chapter 6 on 1978.
‘Iolani Palace, a physical manifestation in 1978 of what could truly be called the Year of the Hawaiian.\textsuperscript{1752} The emergence of Hale Mohalu resistance in 1978 was no accident.

Secondly, the circumstance of place was unique because Hale Mohalu was a location designated for leprosy patients. It was a home but it was also unusual in that it had been established for this unique group of people who gave their mana to the land. They paid for it with their bodies and their blood as Punikai‘a had stated on numerous occasions. Hale Mohalu was a wahi pana like the land set apart for leprosy patients at Kalaupapa, where over eight thousand patients are buried. St. Damien and St. Marianne, the only two American Catholic saints, labored at Kalaupapa, adding their mana to the site in the eyes of the patients and believers from all over the world. According to a publication on the subject by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the concept of wahi pana is pervasive.

Nā wahi pana are celebrated places regarded with great reverence and respect in old Hawai‘i. These places were sources of mana or spiritual power. For Kanaka Maoli, wahi pana are places that remind us of who we are as a people – the past, present and at times, the future. The history of our people are carved out in these legendary locations. A sense of place gives us a feeling of well-being, stability and belonging especially to our ‘ohana – those living and those long gone.\textsuperscript{1753}

For the patients Hale Mohalu was the same as Kalaupapa in terms of its special qualities. The patients belonged to the land and the land belonged to them in ways that ironically both isolated and nurtured, providing a sense of ‘ohana when the rest of the world banned them from sight. As anyone who has been to Kalaupapa or to Hale Mohalu can attest, these sites vibrate an exceptional aura.

Thirdly, focusing on the participants, the patients and the people who came to help the patients were a special group aligned in principle and emotional chemistry. It was a strong diverse group that formed the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana, an alignment of people brought together and united by several issues, such as the struggle against the Vietnam War, the emergence of environmental issues, land and power struggles, Hawaiian sovereignty, the anti-nuclear movement, and the movement against martial law in the

\textsuperscript{1752} When John Waihee was elected as the first Hawaiian Governor, 1987 was officially designated the Year of the Hawaiian. “Last year [1986] then Governor Ariyoshi issued a proclamation officially making this ‘The Year of the Hawaiian,’ and this year the state has its first governor of Hawaiian ancestry.” Honolulu Star-Bulletin, Year of the Hawaiian, 1887-1987, (Alto, New Mexico: C. F. Publishing Co., 1987) i.

Philippines. ‘Ohana member Chris Conybeare explained that Hale Mohalu “attracted activists of all backgrounds.” These diverse people led by Bernard Punikai‘a, “an amazing person,” as described by Conybeare, the battle for Hale Mohalu “captured the imagination and inspiration of people.” Conybeare noted it was “incredible Bernard Punikai‘a could withstand that pressure” for as long as he did. In considering why Hale Mohalu happened when it did, he noted that it was a special constellation of events and people at that particular moment in time. Conybeare added it was “a kind of glue that happened” due to the “inspirational nature of the patients themselves,” who had personally suffered so much in their lives. “Hale Mohalu,” noted Conybeare, “did not dissolve into factions” like so many other social movements. There were no “ideological factions” but in everything, everyone agreed that the patients came first. That was always very clear and understood by all involved. If there were any difference of opinion on an issue, the patients’ choice was selected. Kathryn Braun explained that she and her husband Chris Conybeare arrived in Hawai‘i in 1978 and she “came to study Public Health at the University of Hawai‘i and Chris to engage in public-interest law.” When they joined the Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana, they “connected with a fabulous group of broadminded individuals grounded in Hawaiian history and culture and dedicated to fighting injustice. This group was diverse.” In addition to those with Hansen’s Disease, “it included gerontologists advocating for the right of older people to live out their lives in the community,” and “it included individuals committed to improving life for marginalized groups and raising awareness about issues of concern to Hawai‘i citizens.” As part of the ‘Ohana they “worked to educate the public and policy makers about the history of leprosy in Hawai‘i and how the State of Hawai‘i had reneged on its promises to maintain a community-based home for Kalaupapa residents when on O‘ahu.”

The people I interviewed in my research spoke of the exceptional qualities of Bernard Punikai‘a. Lawyer Susan L. Arnett who argued for the patients in their Legal Aid

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1754 Chris Conybeare, personal interview, Honolulu, 22 May 2013.
1755 Kathryn Braun, personal interview, 30 January 2013 and personal email, 30 January 2013.
1756 Braun explains the impact Hale Mohalu had on their present careers. “Today, 35 years later, I’m still working to reduce health disparities experienced by Native Hawaiians (with Imi Hale Native Hawaiian Cancer Network), to promote healthy aging (with Hawaii’s aging network), and to teach the next generation of UH students about Hawaii’s history and cultures. Chris is working with Hawaii labor, challenging the single-person ownership of multiple TV stations in Hawaii, and leading an international group dedicated to media freedom,” Kathryn Braun personal email 30 January 2013.
suit in January 1978 said of Punikai’a, “he was such a welcoming, embracing person.” Wally Inglis noted that he had a “feisty spirit” and that “he was a man of strong likes and dislikes.” He loved music and “it was as a musician and songwriter that he most wanted to be remembered.” Inglis mentioned too that Punikai’a knew how to have a good time, that “he enjoyed entertaining at his Kalaupapa beach house, where his parties became legendary. He loved to travel, both for pleasure and to carry his message to fellow leaders at international leprosy gatherings in Europe, Asia and South America.” Sister Earnest Chung said of him, he had “a good sense of humor, [was] easy to laugh and harbored little bitterness against those who wronged him.” She summed it up by saying “it was a gift for me to have the opportunity of knowing him.” From members of the ‘Ohana to professional journalists, to lawyers, to family members, each person noted Punikai’a’s strengths and weaknesses in an evenhanded description but everyone agreed he was extraordinary. Punikai’a’s leadership played a crucial role throughout the ordeal. As his brother-in-law, Peter Manicas, an emeritus professor, said of him, he was “well educated without formal education.” Punikai’a would often come and sit in on Manicas’ college sociology classes, and his presence in the classroom always delighted Manicas. Punikai’a read widely and educated himself. If he had not been stricken with the disease and isolated, Punikai’a could have been a lawyer or a college professor or adopted any career he chose. His charisma made him a natural leader.

The oldest of eight siblings, Punikai’a and his sister Shirley (Kenoe) used to play together as small children when she visited him in Honolulu from her hānai home in Lā‘ie. One day she came to town and he was nowhere to be found. She never knew what had happened to him until many years later. She was performing hula with others at Kalaupapa when Punikai’a recognized her. They were happily reunited but could not embrace and had to speak to one another through a wire fence that separated them. As Kenoe described her brother as a youth, she said he looked like “a young Alan Ladd,” and indeed pictures of him do resemble the popular movie star of the 1950s.

Punikai’a had gone through so much personal heartache in his life, having been taken away from his family at age six - the youngest child sent to Kalihi Hospital at that

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1757 Susan L. Arnett, personal interview, Honolulu, 13 June 2013.
1758 Wally Inglis, personal email, 28 February 2013.
1760 Shirley Kenoe Manicas, personal interview, Honolulu, 22 May 2013.
time - that his trauma gave him empathy for others. Punikai’a described his adjustment to Kalihi, explaining that while he “gained a reputation for bravery” because he was not afraid of the patients in their disfigurement and sores, he also experienced tremendous loneliness and often cried himself to sleep. Recalling his early years, Punikai’a said: “As a young boy, I was very extroverted. I was not shy, but always outspoken. Sometimes, that got me into difficulty, because I would speak my mind about different matters. I guess that part of my personality was formed very early.”

Since he was outspoken as a young child, Puniakai’a grew to be an articulate spokesperson for the patients. His brother-in-law said of him that he had an “instinct for injustice which never failed him.” Punikai’a took that instinct for injustice and used it to wage the battle for patients’ rights. Reflecting on Punikai’a’s identification with injustice, Sister Earnest thought it was “because Bernard had suffered such injustice that he recognized other situations of injustice so keenly and wanted to lend his voice and support.”

As Robert Hollis reported in the San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle, Punikai’a said, “Collectively, people have perceived that this is the best time to stand up and say to the state, ‘Treat us with some humanity.’” Punikai’a went on to assert, “The fundamental issue is that we have a right to be involved in the decisions that affect our lives.”

In a summary assessment of why the movement happened when it did, the factors of time, place, and people accounted for the action taken at Hale Mohalu. The intersection and connection of the three elements enabled the social movement to coalesce. Punikai’a’s courage, his strength and determination as well his great sense of humor, his humility and forgiveness helped to make it possible. Like Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and other great heroes who fought for social justice for the oppressed, Hawaiian activist Bernard Punikai’a devoted his life to work for leprosy patients’ rights. He sought to have their human dignity recognized by society. Punikai’a’s quest for dignity began in Hawai‘i, but the journey took him throughout the world as he advocated on behalf of those with the disease. For centuries the illness had

1761 Gugelyk and Bloombaum, Separating Sickness 103.
1762 Peter Manicas, personal interview, Honolulu, 22 May 2013.
borne a stigma and warranted social exclusion. Punikai‘a wanted the public to understand that those afflicted with the disease have a sickness, but they are not their illness and should not be treated as though they were specimens. Just as the spirit of the patients who died during the struggle for Hale Mohalu lives on, so too does the work of Bernard Punikai‘a, a hero in Hawaiian history. The fact that Punikai‘a and the Hale Mohalu conflict has been largely ignored speaks to the legacy of colonialism. It is my hope that this dissertation will help to set the record straight and to give voice to those patients to whom we are so indebted. Journalist Richard Borreca told me if he had to pick three people he would want his children to have lunch with, Bernard Punikai‘a would be at the top of the list. For the past four decades, Borreca has interviewed every person of note in Hawaiian politics. His emphasis on Punikai‘a’s primacy speaks to the mana of Punikai‘a, a fighter for his people and an example for us all in seeking justice.

Questions arise as to why the movement took so long and how did the ‘Ohana sustain the movement? The answer to the second half of that question has to do with Punikai‘a’s strength of character and the determination of the ‘Ohana. Braun explained that the diversity of the group unified by their commitment to justice, loved by the patients, accepted by them, made for a family, a true ‘Ohana. Peter Kealoha spoke of the love, the aloha they had, of how people went to help the patients that they first could not bear to look at in their disfigurement but soon discovered the discomfort was completely forgotten, swept up in the warmth of the patients. Instead of going to help them, Kealoha found it turned out that the patients were actually the ones who provided aid. When I asked Keahoha about Punikai‘a, he said Punikai‘a was assertive but he always had aloha, not at all a bully.

Kealoha elaborated on how the patients were so independent, determined, despite their disabilities, that they tried to do for themselves, and they generously would share with you willingly whatever they had. The patients embodied warmth and aloha. They had painful experiences of being ostracized, so that when they could give their love, they did so genuinely. For non-patients, it was something extraordinary, a transformative experience like no other. With the patients as their focus, the diverse group of supporters became transformed in the process, individually and collectively. The supporters, eager

1765 Kathryn Braun, personal email, 30 January 2013.
and willing to fight for the patients, felt so deeply committed they would not give up. Gigi Cocquio said it best. “Hale Mohalu was a place called ‘The House of Comfort’ for patients with Hansen’s Disease, A place where they would find Comfort. I found that the Patients were the HOUSE OF COMFORT.” Cocquio personally experienced comfort because when he “came as a foreigner and stranger, they took me in their house and hearts” and “when I made decisions that changed my life completely, they accepted me with no questions.”

There was also a broad base of support across many different types of individuals and organizations. They had strength of numbers to support the movement. There were different levels of support, with an inner ring, such as Ed Gerlock, Gigi Cocquio, Sister Sandy Galazin, Sister Earnest Chung, Holly Henderson, and John Witeck, who were there consistently, doing the day-to-day work, with another set of outer rings consisting of people who offered other kinds of support as needed.

Moreover, there were different objectives at different phases. First it was to save the existing Hale Mohalu. When that failed, the next objective was to save the land. They got half the land and then they succeeded in getting all of it.

As to why it took so long, the answer lies partly in the working out those different objectives, but the reason why the battle for Hale Mohalu took so long, really has to do with the State’s unwillingness to listen to the patients and its decision to drag it out in the courts. Ariyoshi could have ended it any time. Everyone it seemed appealed to him to do so, including leading community members and organizations. Yet he would not bend. I tried to get an appointment with Governor Ariyoshi to ask him his reflections on Hale Mohalu. I wrote to Kay H. Yahiku, his executive secretary at Watanabe Ing LLP, the law firm where Ariyoshi still comes to work. I got a strong negative answer back from his secretary who protectively explained he was busy and was not able to add anymore to his already busy schedule and, given his advanced years, he becomes tired rather easily.

Tom Coffman had said he was surprised that the Governor did not meet with me since

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1766 Gigi Cocquio, personal email, 17 February 2013.
1767 Wally Inglis, personal interview, 23 July 2013.
1768 “Dear Ms. McAleavey: Today, my first day back to work, has been a hectic one. I’ve finally had a chance to check with Governor Ariyoshi about your request. Governor explained that he has numerous projects going on at this time and he finds himself tiring easily and quickly. That being said, he tells me that he would like to wrap up his projects and not open any new ones. He must conserve his energy to complete those projects he has started, so he will NOT be able to honor your request to meet. Your understanding is appreciated. Aloha, Kay H. Yahiku, Ass’t. to Governor George R. Ariyoshi,” Kay H. Yahiku, personal email, 3 June 2013.
one of the things he likes to do is to engage with people and understand things from other people’s perspective. Coffman also explained that Ariyoshi tended to give a lot of responsibility and leeway to his department heads and if Yuen felt it was the best choice to move to Leahi, he may have deferred to him.\footnote{1769} Without talking directly to Governor Ariyoshi, it is difficult to assess his position. So many people from all walks of life appealed to him to let the patients remain at Hale Mohalu. The State Archives are filled with letters beseeching his help,\footnote{1770} including one heartfelt letter from University of Hawai‘i Professor Terence Knapp who urged him to intercede on the patients’ behalf.\footnote{1771}

In sum, it seems that the State believed that the patients needed to move to Leahi because State authorities unilaterally thought that was best. Fiscally the State said it was the wisest course of action - it would cost too much to rebuild. The ‘Ohana came up with plans that showed the State would save money if they rebuilt. The land was the prize and the State held out to obtain the property. The Governor felt it became a political issue when Mayor Fasi intervened and the gulf only widened with the passage of time. The patients fought the colonial system to advocate for patients’ rights. They have become symbols of the courage of the weak and displaced in Hawaiian history, but the silence of colonial oppression has kept it a story largely hidden. Now with the thirtieth anniversary and the publication of the photographic essay, it is my hope that this dissertation will help shed light on a struggle that encapsulates much of the history of Hawai‘i, a story of dispossession and defiance.

\footnote{1769} Tom Coffman, personal interview, Honolulu, 31 July 2013.  
\footnote{1770} In the Executive Branch Department of Health records for March 1978, letters to Governor Ariyoshi were 29 to 1 in favor of keeping Hale Mohalu at Pearl City. That was just for the month of March 1978. Hawai‘i State Archives, Governor Ariyoshi records, Department of Health, Hale Mohalu, 1977-1978.  
\footnote{1771} In a one-man show at the University of Hawai‘i’s Kennedy Theater and later in a video, Professor Terence Knapp portrayed Damien in Aldyth Morris’ play entitled Damien.
Bernard Punikaia admitted to Kalihi Hospital at age six.
Frank Duarte, Clarence Naia, and Bernard Punikaia at Hale Mohalu
(Robert Hollis, “Hale Mohalu: Hanging in There,” Honolulu Advertiser Monday
December 27, 1982, C-1, Photo by Charles Okamura).
Hale Mōhalu

Aloha, my brothers, it’s time to go...
handcuffed and dropped in the mud...
Brother Bernard
Uncle Clarence
Kawahine...

Shit,
I think I going write the Advertiser
and ask them
"Da Question", bra.
Just where the hell is the Aloha spirit
...bra?

HALE MOHALU CHRONOLOGY/HISTORICAL TIME LINE

1819 Rule of Kamehameha I ended with his death
1820 American Protestant missionaries arrived in Hawai‘i
1830 Leprosy is known to exist in the Islands
1848 Presence of leprosy confirmed in Honolulu
1850 Board of Health organized by King Kamehameha III on December 14, 1850
1863 Kamehameha V ascended the throne on November 30, 1863
1865 Leprosy Act segregated victims at settlement on peninsula at Kalaupapa, Moloka‘i. Peninsula- has 3 sections: windward (Kalawao), leeward (Kalaupapa), middle (Makanalua). In Honolulu, Kalihi Hospital established as leprosy receiving station.
1866 First patients arrived at Kalawao, Moloka‘i on January 6, 1866
1873 Dr. Gerhard Armauer Hansen identified leprosy bacillus
1875 Kalihi Hospital closed; Leprosy Detention Center, near Honolulu harbor, opened
1881 Princess Lili‘uokalani visited settlement, first time for royal family member to visit
1881 Leprosy hospital established at Kaka‘ako, Honolulu; Detention Center closed
1884 Princess Lili‘uokalani and Queen Kapi‘olani visited Kalaupapa
1885 Kapi‘olani Home for Girls opened (for the offspring of leprosy patients)
1888 People sent to Kalawao: “558 largest number, ever sent in one year” (Anwei Law)
1888 Kaka‘ako Hospital closed and Mother Marianne and Sisters arrive at Kalaupapa
1889 Death of Father Damien
1889 Leprosy Receiving Station at Kalihi opened
1890 Robert Louis Stevenson visited the peninsula
1890 Population shift from windward Kalawao to Kalaupapa accelerated
1893 Overthrow of Hawaiian Monarchy on January 17, 1893
1894 Republic of Hawaii declared on July 4, 1894 with Sanford B. Dole as President
1894 Louisiana Leper Home established at Carville, Mississippi.
1898 July Annexation of Hawai‘i by the United States
1900 Organic Act Hawai‘i becomes a Territory of the United States
1907 Jack London and his wife visited Kalaupapa
1909 U. S. Leprosy Investigation Station opened at Kalawao
1913 U. S. Leprosy Investigation Station closed; staff moved to Kalihi Hospital
1921 Louisiana Leper Home at Carville became Federal: now National Leprosarium
1930 August 30, Bernard Punikai‘a is born in Honolulu.
1937 March Punikai‘a diagnosed with leprosy at age 6 and sent to Kalihi Hospital.
1942 Children from Kalihi Hospital shipped to Kalaupapa (Gang of ‘42)
1943 Sulfone drugs, which aid in controlling leprosy are developed at Carville
1946 Sulfone drugs are introduced in Hawai‘i
1948 Lions club started at Kalaupapa
1949 Leprosy now officially called Hansen’s disease in Hawai‘i
1949 Hale Mohalu Hospital established at Pearl City in Honolulu
1952 Schooling set up at Hale Mohalu
1954 Fed. Gov. - US Public Health Service - began subsidy of Hawai‘i’s leprosy program
1968 Citizens’ Advisory Committee - Dr. Thomas Hitch; Punikai‘a represents Kalaupapa
1969 Committee meets for a year and hears testimony from various leprosy experts. State Board of Health ends policy of segregation. No new patients will be sent to live at Kalaupapa. Any new cases of leprosy will be treated at Hale Mohalu.

1970 Number of patients at Hale Mohalu declined to approximately twenty. Eviction of Hawaiian tenants at Kalama Valley; start of Hawaiian movement.

1971 Save Our Surf (SOS), Kōkua Hawai’i, Kalama Valley Demonstration, State Capitol

1973 Bernard Punikai’a went to Carville, Louisiana for foot surgery; while there he finished his General Educational Degree, completing his high school education.

1977 March 23rd marked the end of the twenty-first year of the arrangement whereby the Federal Government turned over title of the land at Hale Mohalu to Hawai’i. September -DOH filed request w. State Health Planning & Development Agency (SHPDA) for Certificate of Need to move operation to Leahi & to renovate a building on the Leahi grounds for use as “Hale Mohalu.”

1977 November Patients are informed - can no longer stay at HM, but have to go to Leahi. December - on the basis of the Fire Marshall’s condemnation of the buildings at Hale Mohalu (after years of warnings for non-compliance), Certificate of Need-issued, on condition that DOH Health Department would immediately undertake a feasibility study regarding the alternative of re-building at Hale Mohalu.

1978 January 18 Leprosy patients opposed closing HM; DOH wanted it closed on Jan.23

1978 January 19 Sen. Anson Chong introduced legislation for governor to stop relocation

1978 January 20 Patients in despair; Legal Aid filed suit; Judge granted 24-hour reprieve

1978 January 25 Judge Shintaku gave okay for the state to move patients to Leahi

1978 January 26 State ordered HM closure; patients sent to Leahi; others refused to go

1978 January 27 Senate Health Committee public hearing revealed strong patient and community support for those who wanted to remain at Hale Mohalu.

1978 February 19 Save Hale Mohalu Benefit at Blaisdell Hotel, Palm Garden

1978 March Aotani & Assoc HM Project Development Report completed for DAGS

1978 May/June issue of Carville’s The Star had cover story: “Patients vs.Hawaii”

1978 September 1 Friday State shut off electricity, water, medical services at HM

1978 September 3 Sunday Save Hale Mohalu Luau at HM; big crowd in attendance

1978 September 5 Tuesday Utilities are ordered restored at Hale Mohalu

1978 September 27 Wednesday State shut off utilities at Hale Mohalu permanently

1978 October 6 Friday patients staged a “silent vigil” in the Governor’s office

1979 March 29 Thursday Ohana collected petition signatures, Damien statue, St. Capitol

1979 March 30 Friday more signatures on petition are signed at Fort Street Mall

1979 April HSTA, the Teachers’ Union, passed a resolution in favor of HM patients

1979 April 1 Sunday Senators Carpenter and Abercrombie and DOH visited Kalaupapa

1979 April 5 Meeting of SHPDA, re: request to rescind certificate of need; it is denied.

1979 April 9 Monday Senate held confirmation hearing to continue Yuen as Director

1979 April 11 Wednesday Bernard Punikai’a testified for PACE at City Council meeting
1979 April 13 Good Friday celebration at noon at Damien statue with Akiko Dancers
1979 April 14 Saturday Anti-Nuclear Walk through Waikiki, patients participated
1979 April 15 Easter Sunday Sunrise Service Punchbowl, patient Mary Duarte speaker
1979 April 20 Friday Damien Day held, Gov. Ariyoshi, Damien statue, minus patients
1979 May 6 Sunday International Workers’ Day, Aala Park, w. Bernice Pupule & Naia
1979 May 5 Saturday George K. Liwai, patient, (opposed transfer) died; buried near HM.
1979 May 13 Sunday Mother’s Day celebration at Hale Mohalu for Duarte & Pupule
1979 May 18 Friday Dr. Robert Worth visited Kalaupapa w. drafts of new HM proposal
1979 May 20 Sunday Pupu Rally at Hale Mohalu held to organize supporters, committees
1979 May/June issue of Carville’s *The Star* had second cover story: “Save Hale Mohalu”
1979 June 8 Friday Ariyoshi vetoed legislative funds appropriated for Hale Mohalu
1979 June 16 Saturday Non-violent training sessions began at Hale Mohalu
1979 June 26 Punikai’a at General Synod of United Church of Christ conf., Indianapolis
1979 July 4 Wednesday Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana had a float in the Kailua July 4th Parade
1979 July 19 Thursday Sanford Smith patient, (opposed transfer) died;
1979 July 28 Friday P.A.C.E. 4th Anniversary celebration at Pauali St. from 5 to 10 PM
1979 August 9 Thursday Ceremony- Statue of Father Damien (Statue is draped in black)
1979 August 11 Saturday catholicAction, Pearl Harbor, anti-nuclear demonstration
1979 September Protest by Ohana at black draped Damien Statue, Washington, D. C.
1979 September 28 Mass Rally, Scroll w. 10,000 signatures unfurled 5th flr State Capitol
(one year anniversary of termination of services)
1979 October 16 David Lassner letter to Dr. Olaf Skinsnes; Lassner refuted Olaf’s claims
1979 November 2 Attorney Sid Wolinsky visited Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa
1979 November 15 Gov. Ariyoshi received Humanitarian Award; patients protested
1979 November 22 Thanksgiving Day celebrated at HM, with Ohana and patients
1979 December 25 Christmas: second Christmas in protest at HM for patients

1980 January 7 Punikai’a and John Witeck in SFO to meet w. West Coast supporters
1980 January 23 Sand Island homes bulldozed and 18 people arrested.
1980 January 25 Second Annual Save Hale Mohalu Day, State Capitol
1980 January 29 Kala Nat’l His Park Adv. Com- Prelim Draft Proposal to Kala residents
1980 February Punikai’a re-elected Chairperson of Kalaupapa Patients Council
1980 February 26 new Kalaupapa infirmary is dedicated
1980 March 3 Ninth Circuit Court SFO referred HM case back to federal court in HNL
1980 May 7 Wednesday Stewart Meacham’s 70th birthday celebrated at Hale Mohalu
1980 May 10 Saturday Nuclear-free conference delegates visited Hale Mohalu for dinner
1980 May 19 Death of Mary Duarte, age 63, while a resident protestor at Hale Mohalu
1980 May 20 Attorney Wolinsky in federal court asked restoration of services by state
1980 June 13 Friday Punikai’a admitted to St. Francis Hospital with pneumonia
1980 June 24 Birthday- the late Mary Duarte -memories of her recalled, ‘Ohana meeting
1980 August Bernard Punikai’a declared candidacy for OHA
1980 August ACLU Board voted unanimously in support of Hale Mohalu.
1980 September ‘Ohana went to NYC & Washington DC, met Inouye, Heftel, & Akaka
1980 October 13 Hawaiian Renaissance icon, musician Gabby Pahinui passed away
1980 October 19 Washington Post columnist Column McCarthy wrote about HM in Post
1980 November 16 Sunday HM 2nd Annual Pupu Potluck Rally w. Sand Island protesters
1980 December 8 Monday Auntie Emma deFries, noted Hawaiian activist, passed away.
1980 December Sand Island 18 acquitted.
1980 December 15 Monday Punikai’a arrested with 31 others at Save Nukoli’i Protest
1980 December 22 Public Law 96-565 created Kalaupapa as a National Park

1981 January 16-18 Fri, Sat, Sun. ‘Ohana visited Kalaupapa for community meetings
1981 January 21 Wednesday Opening of State Legislature
1981 January 23 Friday First Anniversary of Sand Island Eviction
1981 January 26 Monday SAVE HALE MOHALU DAY, Damien statue, 12 Noon,
1981 February 14 Saturday Sovereignty Day, Iolani Palace, 10:30 AM – 4:30 PM
1981 March 1 Sunday Nuclear-Free Pacific Day, demonstrations
1981 April 15 Wednesday Damien Day Celebration 12 Noon State Capitol
1981 April 17 Friday - service, “The Way of the Cross” at Damien Statue, 12 Noon
1981 April 19 Easter Sunday - ‘Ohana service and pot-luck at HM at 12 Noon
1981 April 20 Mike McCormack’s helicopter accidentally cut power lines to Kalaupapa
1981 May 1 Kalaupapa water supply threatened with collapse of dam at Waikolu Valley
1981 May 8 Film “Kalaupapa, the Refuge shown on television in Hawaii, (KHET-TV)
1981 May 17 Remembrance of Mary Duarte on the one-year anniversary of her death
1981 June Kalaupapa Nat’l Park Ad Hoc Advisory Commission Members elected
1981 June 19 Patient Teetai Pili, strong supporter of Hale Mohalu, passed away
1981 July 19 Anniversary (one year) of the death of Sanford Smith
1981 July 25 Celebration of International Year of the Disabled, held at Kalaupapa
1981 August 22 Save Hale Mohalu Fundraiser on Molokai
1981 September 25 – Legal case – appeal of 1979 suit
1981 November Ninth Circuit Court remanded case to U.S. District Court, more hearings

1982 March 6 Judge Martin Pence ruled: patients’ case - “entirely without merit.”
1982 March 21 Save Hale Mohalu Concert at Aloha Tower
1982 April 2 Friday Anita Una patient, letter, editor, response to Assist.AG Michael Lilly
1982 April 24 Saturday Work Day at Hale Mohalu
1982 August 20 Friday Protect Kaho’olawe ‘Ohana Concert at Aloha Tower

1983 January 26 Wednesday Rally at Damien Statue for 5th year anniversary of eviction
1983 September 7 Wednesday 9th Circuit Ct. upheld Pence’s ruling: oks closure of HM
1983 September 15 Friday Eviction Order: patients to be gone from HM by 5 PM today
1983 September 21 Wednesday patients & friends evicted, arrested, buildings destroyed.
1983 October 11 New York Times told story of Hale Mohalu struggle & upcoming trial

1984 January 25 Wednesday Trial of the Hale Mohalu 18 in Ewa District Court
1984 February 10 &11 Western Hansen’s Disease Institute Conference, HNL & KALA
1984 February Punikai’a attended XII International Leprosy Congress, New Delhi, India
1984 April NPS signed cooperative Agreements between churches & DOH re: Kalaupapa
1984 October 1 US Supreme Court refused hear case re: appeal of 9th Circuit Court ruling
1984 October 26 DLNR allowed land - HM site converted into sports complex - PCYCA
1984 November Coalition for Specialized Housing files suit against lease to PCYCA
1984 National Hansen’s Disease Center named the Gillis W. Long Nat’l. Han’s Dis. Ctr.

1985 January 25 Summary Judgment Hearing -suit by Coalition for Specialized Housing
1985 February 1 Judge Richard Au ruled against the Coalition and allows lease to stand
1985 February 15 Judge Edwin Honda denied court order request to halt Au’s decision
1985 July 8 Governor Ariyoshi appointed Punikai’a to the Board of Health till 30 June 88
1985 December 26 Election of City Councilman for the Peal City-Aiea area

1986 February 2 Punikai’a filed nomination papers, House of Representatives, 10th Dist.
1986 June Newsweek -special edition “Statue of Liberty” honored Bernard Punikai’a

1987 City Dept. Land Utilization denied PCYCA needed zoning; hope: for compromise

1988 July Gov. Waihee appointed Punikai’a to second term, Bd. of Health, 30 June 92
1988 September Kalaupapa Patients attended 13th Int’l Leprosy Congress, Netherlands

1989 April 15 Centennial Celebration of Damien’s Death on Moloka‘i

1991 April initial work began at Kalaupapa for movie on life of Father Damien

1992 “Resident population of Kalaupapa is 87 with 53 state workers.” (S-B 3/16/92)
1992 March 18 “Simple Courage”- documentary on leprosy and AIDS shown on TV

1993 September 21 New Housing plans announced for the site of former HM facility

1994 May 11 Kalaupapa patients traveled to Belgium Father Damien’s Beatification
1994 October 2 Groundbreaking for new subsidized housing on former Hale Mohalu site

1995 June Three Kalaupapa patients in Rome w. Pope for Beatification of Fr. Damien

1996 April 21 Grand Opening of newly constructed Hale Mohalu on site of original HM
1996 May 29 Dedication Ceremony for new Hale Mohalu housing

1997 Punikai’a, President, Int’l. Assoc. Integration, Dignity & Economic Advancement
1997 October “Quest for Dignity” leprosy exhibit opened in NYC at the United Nations

1998 Spring/summer movie “Father Damien” was filmed at Kalaupapa
1998 June Bernard visited Japan w. IDEA, Integration, Dignity, Economic Advancement
1998 July 1 “Quest for Dignity” exhibit opened at City Hall in Honolulu
1998 July 2 Gov. Cayetano held Washington Place reception to honor “Quest” exhibit
1998 September International Leprosy Congress in Beijing; Punikai’a, Puahala attend.

1999 Kalaupapa patients traveled to Belgium for opening of a film on Father Damien
1999 March 11 Bernard joined Protest against June 1999 closure Carville leprosy facility
1999 June SFO Bernard & Anwei at Institute for Saving History & Ourselves symposium
1999 July 10 Patients at Carville told they can stay, but are encouraged to leave
1999 August 19-26 San Francisco “Quest for Dignity” exhibit at the Presidio, w. Bernard
1999 December New Delhi, India Punikai’a received Wellesley Bailey Award

2000 June 23 National Hansen’s Disease Museum opened at Carville, Louisiana

2001 Bernard Punikai’a suffered a stroke

2002 May Damien Day Kalawao, Punikai’a played music he composed - Fr.Damien song
2002 August 29 Governor Cayetano proclaimed August 29 Bernard Punikai’a Day

2003 Ka ‘Ohana o Kalaupapa organized because of Punikai’a, goal to reunite families

2005 Summer Bernard Punikai’a received Kaonohi Award from Papa Ola Lōkahi

2008 December 9 Death of Kalaupapa leader, Richard Marks at age 79.

2009 February 8 Kalaupapa postmaster, death of Kuulei Bell, age 76; Bernard at funeral
2009 February 25 Wednesday Death of Bernard Punika’a at age 78
2009 March Bernard Punikai’ a is buried at Kalaupapa
2009 October Father Damien declared a saint in Rome, Kalauapapa patients in attendance

2011 April Groundbreaking ceremony for new building complex, Hale Mohalu II

2012 October Mother Marianne declared a saint in Rome, as Kalaupapa patients attend

2013 January 26 Anniversary of Hale Mohalu forced transfer to Leahi (35 years)
2013 August 23 Dedication for Hale Mohalu II, second set of new housing on site
2013 September 21 Anniversary of Eviction and Destruction of Hale Mohalu, 30 years
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**Video and Films**

* A Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific
  * Alydth Morris’ Damien
* An Uncommon Kindness: the Father Damien Story
  * First Friday December 1987
* Hale Mohalu
  * Homealani
* Ka Lā Ho‘iho‘i Ea
* Keepers of the Flame
* Mākua Homecoming
* Molokai: The Story of Father Damien
  * Mālama Hālawa
* Pacific Sound Waves
* Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana
* Sand Island Story
* Triumph at Carville
* Waimanalo Eviction

**Recordings**

Dennis Kamakahi & Stephen Inglis, “Waimaka Helelei”
Christa Maerker, “Lepra, die Trennende Krankheit”
Bernard Punikai’a, “Hale Mohalu and Kalaupapa, My Hometown”

**Calendars**


**Document Collections**

Damien and Marianne of Moloka‘i Heritage Center, Kalaupapa Photo Collection
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I interviewed more than seventy persons in the period 2005 to 2013.

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(Hawaiian Activist), Jack Schweigert (Attorney, represented the patients), Miriam Sharma (Scholar), David Stannard (Scholar), Haunani-Kay Trask (Scholar), Meli Watanuki (Patient), Randall Watanuki (Kalaupapa employee), John Witeck (Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana), Lucy Witeck (Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana), Annie Worth, wife of Dr. Robert M. Worth (Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana), Kay H. Yahiku (Executive secretary, Governor George Ariyoshi), Karen Young, wife of Dr. Fred Dodge (Hale Mohalu ‘Ohana)