

Preservation effort polishes historic rice mill in Hanalei after 2 decades of inactivity

By Jan TenBruggencate
Advertiser Kauai Bureau

HANALEI, Kauai — To see it from the outside, you wouldn't think the Haraguchi Rice Mill is more than a newish warehouse of wood and corrugated metal.

But it's much more. It's a piece of Hawaiian history rescued from the ravages of time and Hurricane Iwa.

When rice planting in Hanalei Valley ended, the Haraguchi family shut down the mill, powered by a classic 25-horsepower one-cylinder Fairbanks Morse diesel engine, flanked by a pair of huge iron flywheels. That was in 1960.

The mill sat for more than 20 years, largely untouched, with dust gathering on a maze of belts that ran the equipment that husked, polished and graded the rice.

In 1982, the family and the Kauai Historical Society began talking about restoring the old facility. Kahei Haraguchi, who built the mill in 1930, was interviewed in depth. Drawings of the mill were prepared by

architects for the Historic American Engineering Record.

In October 1982, Kahei Haraguchi, in his eighth decade, died. A month later, Hurricane Iwa knocked the rice mill structure to the ground. Engineer Matt Austin had gotten the old diesel running a few days before the hurricane.

Now the planned renovation would be more difficult. The mill went on the state and national registers of historic sites.

A non-profit organization to support the renovation, Hoopulapula Haraguchi Rice Mill, was started. A historic preservation grant of \$32,500 was acquired, and matching money and in-kind support were lined up.

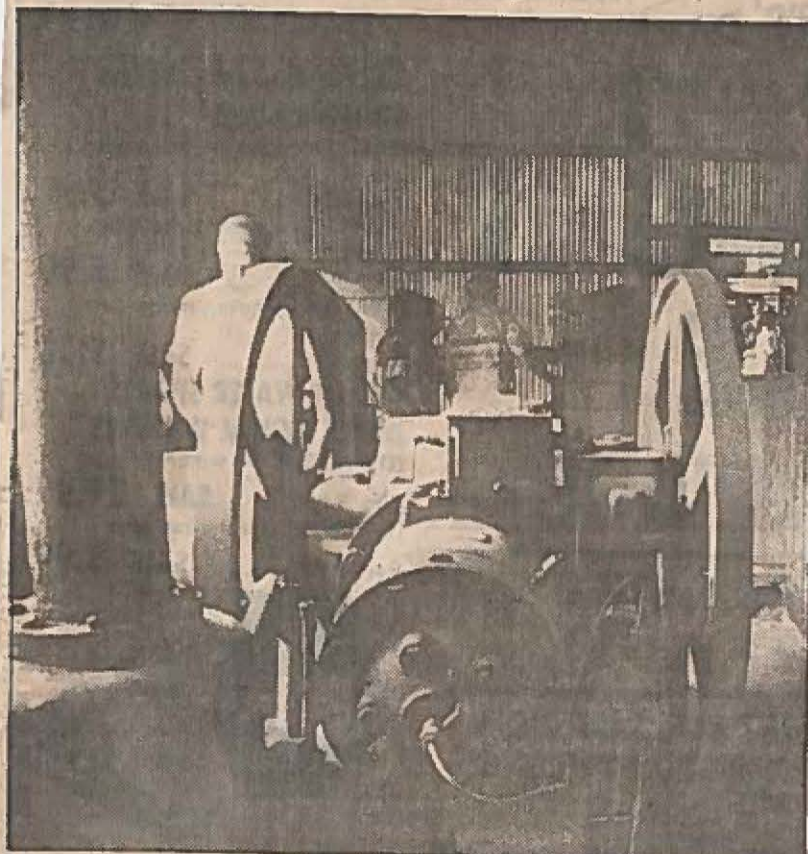
Lumber was specially milled last year to the specifications of the mill's original framing. The foundation was reinforced and the walls began to go up. The structure was completed.

Now work is going on inside.

The old equipment is being renovated, and Hoopulapula Haraguchi Rice Mill hopes to get the mill into working condition.

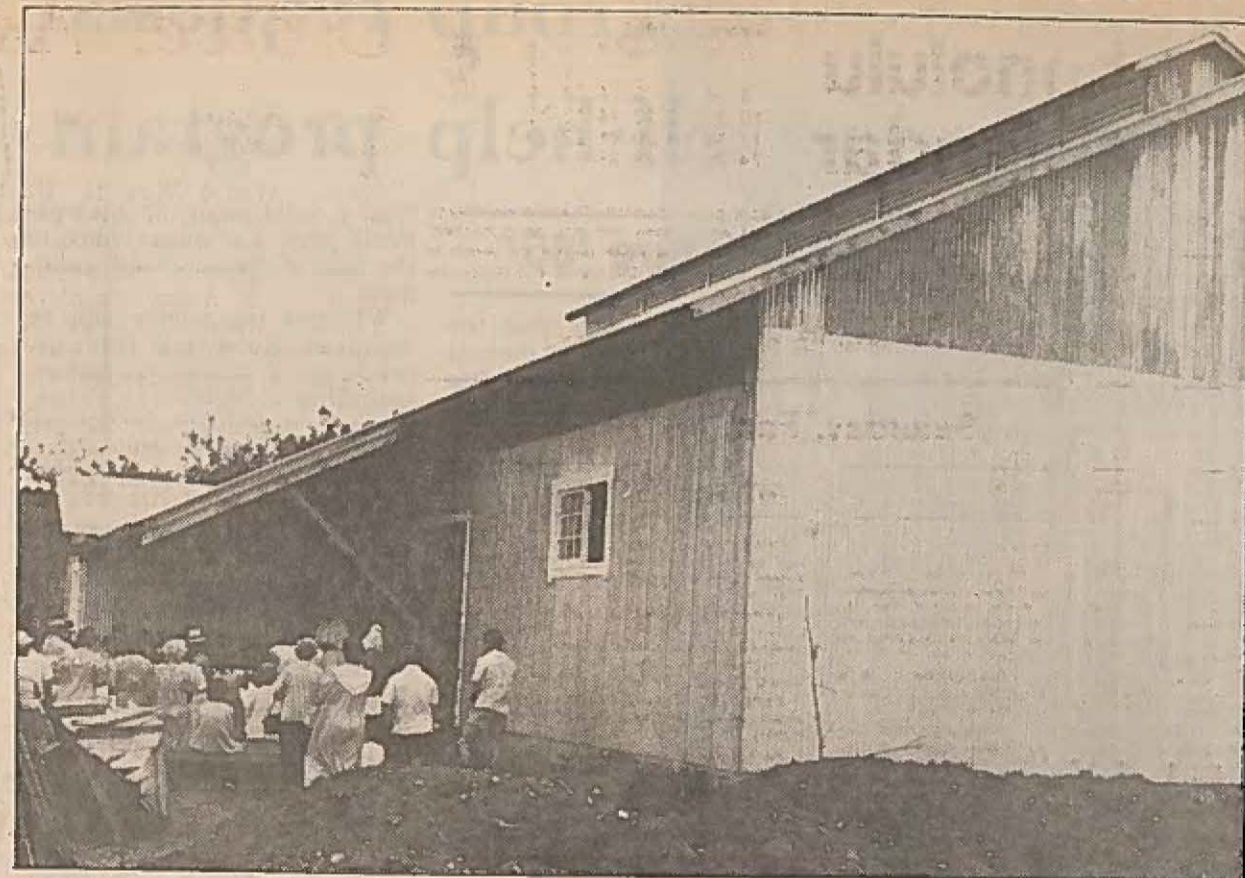
There's not much rice growing on Kauai these days, and the mill won't go into any commercial use.

It will be a place for school children and others to come and see a relic of the diversified agriculture of another generation.



Advertiser photo by Jan TenBruggencate

Aged diesel engine powered the rice husking, polishing and grading until 1960.



Crowd gathers outside new rice mill structure at its dedication recently. Next for renovation: inner works.

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