

April 22, 2020

Pukalani Baptist Church

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HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

The Early Beginnings of What Will Become Pukalani Baptist Church

By Gloria Inciong

How does a girl in South Carolina winning a college scholarship to Winthrop College for raising the most bushels of corn per acre, Corn Mill Camp Community Hall in Makawao/Pukalani, and the civil unrest in China and Japan have to do with the beginnings of Pukalani Baptist Church.

After graduating from college and then onto Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville Kentucky, Hannah Plowden of South Carolina was appointed as a missionary by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and left for Soochow (Suzhou) in Central China in September 1921. She always felt called to go to China as a missionary. During the early years in China she traveled around by boat doing evangelistic work. She, along with other missionaries there, faced many difficulties in the 1920 – 1940s.



Hannah Plowden

During her time in China, Miss Plowden taught and was Women's Dean at the Shanghai Baptist College and Theological Seminary which has an interesting history on how it came to be. American Baptist Missionary Union (Northern) and American Southern Baptist Convention collaborated in 1909 to combine Shanghai Baptist College and Shanghai Theological Seminary into one school and one campus, in China. The name "University of Shanghai" was adopted but later changed to Shanghai University when it was registered with the Chinese Government in 1929. The Chinese government closed the school in 1952.

After 13 years in China, Miss Plowden became very ill and had to return to the states to recover. While recovering, her health returned enough so she could serve as Dean of Women and Associate Professor in Missions at Baptist Bible Institute in New Orleans (now known as New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) until ready to go back to China. During this time she was able to bring three of her students from China to the United States.

After fully recovering, in 1940 Miss Plowden wrote the Foreign Mission Board "**When I applied for appointment, it was my purpose to spend the rest of my life in China. I am ready to be considered for work there.**" On May 9th, 1940 she was restored to the list of active missionaries and sailed from San Francisco in Sept. 1940 to Honolulu. When reaching Honolulu, she was informed that because of the unrest at that time in China and Japan, the Mission Board felt it was unsafe for her to return to China. Also by the end of 1940 there were ten missionaries who were brought back from China, Japan, and Manchuria living in Honolulu. They formed what was to become **Hawaii Baptist Mission**, which would be the agency of Southern Baptist Ministry in Hawaii for 19 years until the territory became a state. Miss Plowden wanted to spend the rest of her life in China but sometimes things beyond our control change the path God has for us.

She stayed to do mission work on Oahu teaching, educating & organizing until **1944** when she volunteered to come to **Maui** as the first full-time Baptist worker on **Maui**. It was like starting from nothing but she was up for the challenge, most likely from her experiences in China.

She began by organizing Bible classes around the island, one of these being in the **Corn Mill Camp** area where the first Bible classes were held in someone's home. Later she was given use of the Corn Mill Camp Community Hall. Corn Mill Camp Hall was located in the triangle above the Makawao Fire Station between Old Haleakala Hwy and the Haleakala by-pass road.

In her report to the Foreign Mission Board dated May 1945, Miss Plowden wrote "**Southern Baptist entered Maui as a mission field in Sept. 1944. A Sunday school had been organized by a fine Baptist layman, Daniel Ongais**" and in a letter written later that year, she states ..."God, in his providence, saw fit to send to the field in Oct., 1945, Bertie Lee Kendrick". In that same letter she states regarding Corn Mill Camp "**In Makawao, center of a pineapple plantation, there is now a Bible class of 12 high school girls and a Bible study hour of 30 children....and (regarding missions on Maui) she wrote "This is one of the neediest yet most responsive missions it has been my privilege to know. It is urgently in need of more workers.**

JOHN 12:32

AND I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE
TO MYSELF."

Dragon Tales #1 "The First Village"

By Laura Newell

As our bus rattled over dusty potholes the heat and noise intensified. The springs in my seat were shot and I shifted in search of comfort, knowing I wouldn't find it.

"My back injury..." I explained.

"I know. Sorry the roads are so bad."

I smiled to reassure my companion I was glad I came. As an American teacher in Inner Mongolia, I'd taught Marian as a freshman in college. Here it was her junior year and she was still stuck with me, this time for British and American Literature.

We had become friends during her sophomore year due to her father's sudden death. Because her family was poor, she wasn't sure they'd be able to continue sending the monthly allowance which enabled Marian to buy food, books and other essentials. But she wanted so desperately to complete her college education.

I knew her well enough to realize she would never accept a gift of money. That's when God gave me an idea: pay her to come in weekly and clean my apartment on campus. It would definitely save my bad back and assist with her financial crunch. She agreed after

some persuasion; she was glad to help but reluctant to take money for it. Each week Marian came and we'd sip jasmine or oolong tea and talk story before she started sweeping and mopping. Gradually our friendship developed and she invited me to visit her village and meet the family she dearly loved.

It was a three-day weekend that marked "Liberation Day" - October 1, 1949, when the communists set China free from feudalism, imperialism, corruption and the like - or so the propaganda went. I gazed out the open window as a familiar scene bumped by in village after village: small mud houses with chickens, others with pigs or sheep in the courtyards; men and women and occasional children bent to hoe fields, and drying corn, covering the roof of nearly every home.

Marian broke into my thoughts: "Are any of your relatives farmers?" I replied that my maternal grandparents had been dairy farmers in western Pennsylvania. Especially attentive when I related my grandfather's conversion to Christ in Warren State Mental Hospital, she couldn't understand how a Presbyterian deacon, who had been religious all his life, wasn't a Christian.

To be continued...

[Originally printed in Pukalani Baptist Church's Proclaimer, October 1995, Volume 12, Number.]