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Pukalani Baptist Church

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HISTORICAL NEWSLETTER

Organizing of Pukalani Baptist Mission By Gloria Inciong

In a report written in the Foreign Mission Board newsletter , “The Commission” in 1946, Hannah Plowden reported that work on Maui had been developed in Kahului as the main center, but also in Puunene, Spreckelsville, Makawao/Pukalani and most recently in Lahaina. She reported that there were religious education classes in two grammar schools and in Baldwin high School. There also were Sunday schools in Kahului and Makawao and two Bible classes reaching people above school age.

As the ministries grew, more help was needed and also places where the ministries could take place. Plantation camp community and social halls were used along with Buddhist social halls and later buldings in NASKA (Naval Air Station Kahului) (Kanaha Beach) for Sunday School classes and services for the four areas of ministries. More workers came during the 1940's, some for a brief time and some for longer. There was the arrival of Hilda Bledsoe and Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Tharpe. Also some military chaplains stationed on Maui helped with the work on Maui. Rev. Edwin Dozier, fluent in the Japanese language, would visit Maui and hold services.

On April 22, 1945, Kahului Baptist Church was organized. In March 1946, Dr. Maxfield Garrott, missionary who served many years in Japan, became the first pastor of the church. Kahului Baptist Church dedicated their new building in Kahului on December 15, 1951. The building was partially built with funds from Foreign Mission Board through the Lottie Moon Christmas offerings. Kahului Baptist Church became the sponsoring church for Pukalani Baptist Mission.



In the 1950 Annual Report for Foreign Mission Board in the So. Baptist Convention Annual for 1950 it states “**Rev. Daniel Ongais, a graduate of the Baptist Bible School in Honolulu, is conducting a mission in the Happy Valley Section of Wailuku. He is the first local preacher to be educated, ordained and employed by the Hawaiian Mission.**” Because Hannah Plowden was the first principal of Baptist Bible School in Honolulu before coming to Maui in 1944, she and Rev. Ongais most likely were acquainted. Wailuku Baptist Mission was organized as Wailuku Baptist Church (now Valley Isle Fellowship) and Rev. Ongais became their first pastor serving until 1954. Through the years, Rev. Ongais continued to help with many aspects of

ministries on Maui, including serving as interim pastor of Pukalani Baptist Church from 1968-1971. The last news I have of Dan Ongais that he was living with his daughter Antonette in Oceanside California.

Miss Plowden went to Lanai to help with work there and later back to Oahu where she served as Director of Hawaii Baptist Religious Education Department and became the first woman editor of the Hawaii Baptist Newspaper. In a letter to the Mission Board in 1952, Missionary L.E. Blackman wrote **“Miss Plowden has given inspiration and encouragement to all of the churches and especially to the more remote missions.”**

She ended her 39 year missionary career on December 31, 1960. Soon thereafter she embarked on a world tour of visiting missions, schools, hospitals where she had worked and helped organize. She returned to So. Carolina to live with her brother and went to be with the Lord in June 1983.

Different people helped with carrying on the work at Pukalani after Miss Plowden left including Dr. Garrott, and residents of the Pukalani community, Mrs. Ruby Crowell and Mr. Barney Tengan. In October 1949, Miss Kendrick was injured while walking with Miss Bledsoe from church in Kahului when she was hit by a bus and received several fractures. She took furlough to North Carolina to heal and set sail back to Maui in August 1950.

So the arrival of Miss Alda Grayson in January 1950 came at a much needed help for Pukalani. Miss Grayson, along with eleven other missionaries had sailed from China to return home and then in January coming to Maui for her next appointment as missionary for Maui. She was asked to take charge of the mission in Pukalani until a pastor could be called. She willingly said “yes” and so it began her 10 years at Pukalani before retiring in 1960.



MISS ALDA GRAYSON

Miss Grayson of Rutherfordton, No. Carolina was a graduate nurse when she was appointed by the So. Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1921. After studying the language in Peking (Beijing), she joined other medical missionaries in Laizhou in the Shandong Province serving as superintendent of nursing at the Kathleen Mallory Hospital. In the early 1930's she began making extended trips into the country, giving up hospital work in favor of rural evangelism. She returned to the U.S. during World War II, and then returning to China again, this time working at Tsingtao for almost two years. Her work and experience in China made for a good match in being in charge of the mission.

With the different areas of work on Maui and not enough workers and no permanent buildings, those doing the ministries had to do the best they could with what they had available and most important, with praying and cooperation essential. Young people from Kahului Baptist Church would come up to Corn Mill camp on Sunday morning to teach Sunday School and then go back down the hill to Kahului Baptist to teach there.

In the 1951 Issue of The Commission Miss Plowden's article **“Come Visit Hawaii”** says **“Visitors to the Valley Isle during the summer will find a church building under construction (Kahului Baptist Church) vacation Bible School at all three centers and a camp for the G.A.'s (Girls Auxiliary) and R.A.'s (Royal Ambassadors) in addition to the regular services. The missionaries serving there (on Maui) are Rev. and Mrs. E.J. Tharpe, Miss Bertie Lee Kendrick, Miss Alda Grayson and Miss Hilda Bledsoe.**

JOHN 12:32

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

Dragon Tales #1
Laura's Chinese Adventures
“First in the Village” - Part 2
By Laura Newell

[Laura's student wondered why someone wasn't a Christian if they were seriously religious.]

I tried to explain that No, all Americans are not Christians (a common Chinese misconception) and that religion is not the same as following Jesus. Her brown eyes widened as I agreed with Karl Marx that religion is indeed a drug which deceives many people. And as Marian asked questions I had the pleasure of telling about Nicodemus, about Christ and the Pharisees, and of God's purpose in sending His Son to earth.

Then it was Marian's turn and I listened intently as she described how years ago her mother's dad owed an opium debt to her father's dad, but there was no money to pay it. The solution agreed upon was to give her mother to her dad's family and she would become his wife. And that was why Marian's 41 year old brother was only 15 years younger than their mother.

It seemed timely to tell my young friend how my Father in heaven had sacrificed His only Son to pay the debt we owed; it was Marian's turn to listen intently.

The long weekend turned out to be very enjoyable in spite of sharing the same k'ang with four other adults; I didn't feel like I could roll over without disturbing those sleeping next to me. But God was so good - most definitely good. After all, He had provided a full moon which enabled me to successfully navigate the outdoor "toilet" at midnight. Yes, very good.

My final day in the village we hiked up a hill so Marian could show me where her father was buried. The sunset was glorious and as I looked over the valley I asked her, *“Do you know any Christians here?”*

“No, there are none I know of,” she replied. I breathed a silent prayer that Marian might be the first believer in her village so she could bring God's Good News home to her people. Yes, God is extremely good: less than three months later, just two days before Christmas, Marian gave her birthday gift to Christ - her life.

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