

SOURCE:

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Chapter 3 Historic Context

Introduction

To the extent that it is relevant to archaeological and historical investigations at PMRF, the cultural and historical setting is reviewed as six topics: (1) traditional cultural geography; (2) traditional land use; (3) early historic land use; (4) commercial agriculture era; (5) early twentieth century prior to World War II, and (6) World War II and Cold War to 1990s.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE ORIGINAL "COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL ERA" SUBSECTION:

Commercial Agricultural Era

"The 1848 *Māhele* was the legal mechanism by which the model of private ownership of 'Āina [land] replaced that of the traditional Hawaiian system of sharing control and use of 'Āina" (Kame'eleihiwa 1992:137). Kamehameha III received as crown lands the entire *ahupua'a* of Waimea (92,646 acres). He in turn surrendered a substantial portion to the government to settle his commutation payments some time prior to his passing in 1854 (Maly and Wulzen 1997:20).

After the *Mahele*, Kamehameha III's remaining crown lands at Mānā were used for grazing cattle belonging to the royal family (Gonzalez et al. 1990a:28). Some of the land was subsequently leased, and entrepreneurs engaged in raising livestock and farming tobacco, coffee, fruit, rice, and sugarcane (Jones 1992:6; Sweeney 1994:10). In the mid-1850s, Archibald Archer and his partner, a Mr. Gruben, received a 30-year lease on crown lands in western Kaua'i, including Mānā. Their venture in cultivating tobacco in this area proved unproductive, and after five years they turned their lease lands over to Norwegian immigrant Valdemar Knudsen (Gonzalez et al. 1990a:36-37; Sweeney 1994:11; see also Lydgate 1991:93). Knudsen was appointed manager of these crown lands by Kamehameha IV. He initially raised cattle and horses on the plain. Handy and Handy (1991:411) note that eradication of wild cattle and goats "became the settled policy of the ranchers, and gradually the upper forest regained some of its pristine growth. Erosion, however, had taken the lower forest slopes beyond the possibility of natural revival."

Knudsen leased lands in the central area of the plain (adjacent to but outside the present boundaries of PMRF), considered “too marshy at the time for sugarcane cultivation,” for rice production. The two primary growers were Leong Pah On and Ah Hoy. Leong Pah On arrived from China in 1864. He established a large rice plantation on the Mānā Plain, dug ditches to drain stagnant water, used water buffalo and contract laborers from China to work the fields, and acquired horses and later rented railroad cars to transport his rice crop to the wharf at Kekaha. The laborers lived in Pa Hon Camp, which was on the main road between Kekaha and Mānā (Char and Char 1979:18-19). At the peak of production, Leong Pah On’s agricultural venture included about 600 acres of rice fields (Char and Char 1979:19).

As commercial rice and sugar plantations grew, the number of laborers needed to work the fields increased. According to L. Smith (1989:4), the first camp dates to 1852 (Camp 3). Chinese workers arrived first, followed by Japanese in 1885 and Filipinos in 1889. Mana Camp was the principal settlement associated with the sugarcane plantation.

In 1878 Knudsen began planting sugarcane in partnership with Captain Christian L’Orange. One of their first acts was to excavate a ditch to drain Kawai’ele Pond into the ocean, thereby making about 50 acres of marshland suitable for sugarcane cultivation (Carson 2004:25; Gonzalez et al. 1990a:36-38; Kekaha Sugar Company n.d.:1). In 1884, Hans P. Faye, Knudsen’s nephew, joined the partnership. Faye was responsible for the boring of the first of numerous artesian wells to irrigate plantation sugarcane fields on the Mānā Plain. By 1898, sugarcane production was up, and the Kekaha Sugar Company, Ltd., was formed in that year (Flores and Kaohi 1992:132; Gonzalez et al. 1990a:36-38). Company fields gradually replaced rice fields as sugar cultivation spread across the Mānā Plain. Sugar mills were located at Kekaha and Waimea, and workers lived in plantation camps scattered among the fields. Mana Camp included a school, three stores, a company office, and a post office. Other camps included Second/Saki Mana and camps at Kaunalewa and Limaloa (Flores and Kaohi 1992:115).

In recalling his childhood memories, Eric Knudsen (born in 1872) described taro, sweet potatoes, yams, rice, chicken, eggs, and milk as plentiful. Catches by Mānā fishermen included squid, large flocks of turkeys wandered about, and other resources included figs, papayas, mangos, and coconuts. The wetlands teemed with wild plants, birds, and ducks. Firewood and logs for canoes were obtained from the uplands, and goats were hunted in the valleys (Flores and Kaohi 1992:129; Kaua’i Historical Society 1991:100; Knudsen and Noble 1999:27; McGerty and Spear 1997c:10-11). In the 1870s, a few houses stood at Nohili on the lower side of the Government Road. Sweet potatoes, melons, and tobacco were still grown and small markets existed. A market was located about midway between Polihale and Poki’i and another at the village of Mānā.

By 1874, or possibly earlier, several structures stood at Moelaoa within the current boundaries of PMRF Barking Sands (Hawaiian Government Survey 1874a, 1874b). These structures (depicted as small squares) also appear on a later map, Territory of Hawaii (1901) (see **Figure 3.3**). In the 1880s, several *hale* (huts or houses) reportedly stood near Barking Sands (Flores and Kaohi 1992:122, 126, 138; Kaua’i Historical Society 1991:103).

Figure 3.5 illustrates that by 1905 several wooden buildings had been erected on the dunes within the current PMRF Barking Sands boundaries. **Figure 3.6** shows the extensive plantation fields on the back beach side of the dunes, extending across the Mānā Plain.



Figure 3.5. Section of 1905 panorama of Barking Sands showing several wooden structures (far left and center) on the *makai* (ocean) side of the dunes (Hawaii State Archives, Photo Album 19-6).

Small coconut groves were located at Limaloa and Kaunalewa on the Mānā Plain (see **Figure 3.2**). Eric Knudsen (1991:99) recalled that Limaloa had a spring, seven coconut trees, and a small patch of kalo. Flores and Kaohi (1992:118) reveal that the coconut grove at Kaunalewa still existed in 1918, although much reduced in size.

The first school at Mānā was organized in 1880. Hawaiian children were taught in classes held in one of the plantation houses, but as more contract workers arrived, Hawaiian families were increasingly displaced. Some moved to Polihale. Many moved to Kekaha or Waimea or elsewhere, but continued to frequent the area to fish, hunt, and gather resources (Flores and Kaohi 1992:115, 154; Maly and Wulzen 1997:23; McGerty and Spear 1997c:11). A new school built at Mānā in 1889 taught immigrant and Hawaiian children. The school changed locations several more times before it finally closed in 1953 (Flores and Kaohi 1992:127).