

VI. Kalawao Settlement, Pioneer Period, 1866-1873

A. Purchase of Land for Leprosy Settlement

Having decided upon segregation as the course of action to be taken in the attempt to stem the spread of leprosy in the islands, the kingdom proceeded quickly to acquire the necessary land on the peninsula of Moloka'i. On September 20, 1865, the president of the Board of Health reported that he had visited Moloka'i and succeeded in acquiring the property:

There are from seven to eight hundred acres, excellent land for cultivation and grazing, with extensive kalo [taro] land belonging to it; there are from 15 to 20 good houses obtained with the land, the whole being obtained for about \$1,800 cash, together with some other Government lands [on Moloka'i] given in exchange. A promise was made to the present inhabitants to remove them from there free of charge.

These first lands purchased included Waikolu and Wai'ale'ia valleys. Most of the land already belonged to the government but was being leased:

The tract was extremely well situated for the purpose designed. It is difficult of access from the sea; has no roads passing through it into other districts; is supplied with water by two running streams; has a large area of kalo land; enjoys the advantage of the constant trade wind; has ample grazing lands; and possesses a soil capable of raising vegetables of all different kinds adapted to these islands in the greatest abundance.²

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1. Hawaiian Kingdom Board of Health, Leprosy in Hawaii, pp. 27-28.
 2. Report of the Board of Health to the Legislature of 1866, in ibid., p. 38. In negotiating its land deals, the government was aided by Rudolph W. Meyer (1826-1897). Meyer had come to Moloka'i from Germany in 1848 and had married the Chiefess Kalama who owned land at Kala'e on the cliffs above Kalaupapa near the summit of the pali trail. There he operated a small sugar plantation and grew coffee, corn, wheat, and potatoes. With C.B. Andrews he exported produce to California during the Gold Rush. Eventually he managed an extensive cattle and sheep ranch on Moloka'i owned by a half-sister of Kamehameha IV and V. After Princess Ruth Ke'elikōlani's death in 1883, Meyer managed the lands for her principal heir, the High Chiefess Bernice Pauahi Bishop. He functioned as chief supervisor of the Kalawao settlement from its beginnings in 1865-66 until 1897.

The residents of the peninsula were transferred to new homes at Waialua on the southeast coast of Moloka'i.

A short while after the initial land purchases, the large tract of Makanalua, "belonging to the estate of the late Haalelea" and adjoining the settlement at Kalawao, was purchased.³ A large parcel of land still separated the colony from the few people remaining at the Kalaupapa landing; this ahupua'a of Kalaupapa would not be purchased until 1873. Even after the west side of the peninsula was annexed, several kuleanas of the earlier residents were neither purchased nor condemned, and these forty or so landowners continued to reside there. They interacted freely with the leprosy victims, even providing hiding places and food and lodging for healthy Hawai'ians who were relatives or friends of the exiles and wanted to visit them secretly. These kama'āinas were finally evicted in January 1895.

B. Preparations for Establishing Self-Sufficient Colony

The Hawai'ian government at first thought that implementation of its policy of segregation would be inexpensive. The most costly part would be the initial outlay involved in collecting the people together, providing them with an outfit of clothing and a few other necessities, and transporting them to Moloka'i. Those who were known to have money and who had been unable to hide it or give it to relatives for safekeeping, were forced to hand it over to the government as reimbursement for expenses incurred in their behalf.⁴ The board also purchased a few beef cattle and horses, poultry, sheep, goats, and other livestock to send to Moloka'i to encourage farming efforts. In addition, medicine, agricultural

3. Ibid., p. 39. Evidently Kalawao land division was acquired in 1865, Makanalua in 1866, and Kalaupapa in 1873. With Kalawao and Makanalua came the houses of the former owners.

4. R.W. Meyer, Agent, Board of Health. To His Excellency Walter M. Gibson, President of the Board of Health. [Report of leper settlement for past two years.] No date (ca. April 1, 1886), in Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, pp. 3-4.

implements, tools, a canoe, fishing nets, carts, and one or two pair of oxen were sent along.⁵

C. Arrival of the First Leprosy Victims at Kalawao

1. Sick Unable to Support Themselves

Kalihi Hospital opened on November 13, 1865, and of the first 62 patients inspected, 43 were diagnosed as having leprosy and were admitted either for further treatment or transfer to Moloka'i. By 1872 about 600 persons had been banished to Kalawao.⁶

The first group of "colonists" were deposited at Kalawao on January 6, 1866. (Contrary to popular myth, it is doubtful that any of the exiles were forced to jump into the surf and swim to shore as a matter of regular procedure. When the weather was bad, however, this was the only way leprosy victims or visitors could land, because boats were not able to venture very near the rocky shore when the waves were choppy.) Relatives and friends were allowed to accompany the exiles as kōkuas (helpers) and were expected to live with and care for them.⁷

5. Report of the Board of Health to the Legislature of 1866, pp. 40, 42.

6. Kuykendall, Hawaiian Kingdom, p. 74.

7. Kōkuas were an important social, emotional, and clinical aspect of the settlement. These voluntary companions, friends or relatives of the afflicted, for the most part provided the loving nursing care that was not provided for in any other way. Father Damien wrote the Board of Health in 1886 that partners who wished to accompany their husbands or wives into exile should be allowed to do so. It was also suggested as early as 1874 that healthy mates not wishing to go to Kalawao should be granted a divorce so that patients could remarry at the settlement and thus create a more stable community.

In some instances the motives of kōkuas were mercenary. Some tried to prove that they were infected in order to receive government rations of food and clothing. Some had volunteered to accompany friends only because they had had no home elsewhere and hoped to receive board as well as a share of the patients' rations. As conditions improved, the need for kōkuas as medical helpers became less necessary.

Kōkuas in the form of nonactive patients as well as marriage partners are still found in the settlement today on the payroll of the Board of Health.

Kōkuas became an indispensable arm of service at the settlement. Among their chores were driving cattle down the pali trail, fetching wood from the mountains, carrying water from the valleys, cultivating taro, handling freight at the landing and all the other jobs that physically incapacitated people could not perform but that were necessary to run the leprosarium. Their presence created a problem also in that they posed a danger of contagion when they left on visits to the other islands.

There evidently was some segregation even among the leprosy victims themselves from the beginning. The most advanced cases were isolated in Wai'ale'ia Valley, while patients who were less sick preferred to live at Makanalua, between Kalawao and Kalaupapa. Poorer ones in need of supplies later tried to live as close as possible to Father Damien's warehouse.

The original inhabitants of the peninsula had owned many pieces of land and houses. Cultivated fields established on the peninsula's few spots of better soil and in the valleys yielded taro, potatoes, and other vegetables. Unfortunately the segregation process had proceeded very slowly, and more than six months elapsed after the former residents had vacated their land before the first leprosy victims arrived. During that time the fields had become overgrown, and it was only with extreme difficulty that the new arrivals were able to salvage enough of the crop to feed themselves. They did manage, however, and were able to survive until the next shiploads of people came. Having been given no food by the government, the new arrivals became dependent on the crops of the first residents, who grudgingly gave the newcomers some of the products of their labor. It became apparent that this system would not last--sick and demoralized people were willing to work for themselves, but were not inclined to help support others.

Later arrivals were forced to subsist on a native pea that grew profusely on the peninsula and this supported them until the Board of Health realized that it would have to furnish food until the people were

able to raise their own.⁸ For many, this time never arrived. To feed such a rapidly growing population entailed extensive labor. Physical exertion was impossible for physically disabled or emotionally despondent persons. Others who were able simply did not know how to farm. Many, finding that they were provided with food anyway, made no effort to work. Fields were neglected or at best poorly farmed.

The Board of Health had appointed a superintendent, Louis Lepart, a Frenchman and former Sacred Hearts brother, to live in the settlement, while Rudolph Meyer provided a general oversight by visiting the settlement once a month. The resident superintendent would receive the people when they were unloaded, show them a place to stay, and distribute the weekly food allowance. Because of the food shortages, Lepart informed the board in September 1866 that in the future, supplies would have to be provided by the legislature. Although disappointed that the Kalawao settlement would be a constant drain on the kingdom's resources, the board acknowledged that because the villagers were deprived of the ordinary rights of citizens and restrained in their activities for the good of the community as a whole, that same community incurred a responsibility to look after their welfare.⁹

Because the residents could not obtain enough fish or meat for their support, they received from the board small allowances of salt beef or salmon. They were allowed three pounds of meat and one bundle of pa'i 'ai per week, and nothing else. Clothing soon wore out and had to be supplied, but only to those who had no money or friends to outfit them. Men received a pair of blankets, a denim shirt, a pair of pants, a hat, and sometimes shoes; women received one blanket, a shirt of blue or brown cotton, and a calico dress. This one outfit of clothing was expected to last the entire year.

8. Meyer, Report of leper settlement, ca. 1886, pp. 4-5.

9. Report of the Board of Health to the Legislative Assembly of 1868, by His Excellency F.W. Hutchison, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, p. 44.

Water was hard to procure and had to be carried a great distance--an almost impossible task for those with deteriorating limbs. The only shelters available for the earliest arrivals were the houses of the former native residents. These were mostly thatched, although three or four wooden structures were also present.¹⁰ Some of these houses had to be rethatched and a few new structures were built for the new arrivals. Still, housing was inadequate and unsatisfactory, especially for those in advanced stages of the disease.

As more people arrived, housing, food, and^o water procurement problems multiplied. Quarrels arose easily and due to the lack of sufficient supervision, were settled among the people themselves, sometimes violently. Resentful of their fate, alienated from the rest of the world and civilized laws, usually destitute of clothing and scarcely able to obtain the simplest necessities, and crushed by the weight of their banishment, the moral state of the victims declined quickly. Reduced to the lowest depths of misery and despair, many inmates turned for solace to thievery, drunkenness, and debauchery. A kind of local beer, made from kī-leaves, was brewed in profuse quantities and was responsible for much of the licentiousness that prevailed. The Board of Health, to its great disappointment, discovered that

the terrible disease which afflicts the Lepers seems to cause among them as great a change in their moral and mental organization as in their physical constitution; so far from aiding their weaker brethren, the strong took possession of everything, devoured and destroyed the large quantity of food on the lands, and altogether refused to replant anything; indeed, they had no compunction in taking from those who were disabled and dying, the material supplies of clothes and food which were dispensed by the Superintendent for the use of the latter; they exhibited the most thorough indifference to the sufferings, and the most utter absence of consideration for the wants, to which many of them were destined to be themselves exposed in perhaps a few weeks; in fact, the most of those in

10. Meyer, Report of leper settlement, ca. 1886, pp. 4-6.

whom the disease had progressed considerably, showed the greatest thoughtlessness and heartlessness.

2. Organization of Siloama, "Church of the Healing Spring"

While in the settlement's earliest days lawlessness and vice resulting from frustration and despair were rampant, there was also a group of people who had been avid churchgoers in their former lives and who took with them to Kalawao a belief in fundamental Christian values and precepts. These individuals gathered regularly in fellowship and were visited occasionally and inspired by the Reverend Anderson O. Forbes, the American Protestant clergyman for Moloka'i, stationed at Kalua'aha on the southeastern shore of the island, who came over via the pali trail. In June 1866 these thirty-five residents requested from the Congregational Assembly--the annual meeting of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA)--that they be released from their former churches and allowed to form a new one at Kalawao. The Reverend Mr. Forbes became pastor of this new church organized on December 23, 1866, and named Siloama, in memory of Jesus's healing of a blind man by anointing his eyes with clay and bidding him wash in the pool of Siloam. This little church became a sanctuary in which the sick could meditate on the heavenly kingdom where their own bodies would hopefully be healed. Either Forbes or his assistant pastor, S.W. Nueku of the Hālawā church on Moloka'i, visited the settlement periodically to administer the sacraments, and between times members chosen as elders conducted services and day-to-day responsibilities such as visiting the sick, counseling, welcoming new members, and keeping up contact with the Hawaiian Evangelical Association.

The first major order of business for the new congregation was construction of a church building, a formidable task due to the scarcity of money, building materials, and skilled workmen. By saving part of their scanty government dole, the Siloama members were able by

11. Report of the Board of Health to the Legislative Assembly of 1868, p. 44.

early 1869 to save up \$125.50. In hopes of building a house of worship thirty-four feet long by twenty feet wide, costing about \$300 and adequate for a hundred people, the members appealed to other island churches for monetary help, which was freely extended. When \$600 had been collected, enough to pay for lumber, a bell, and a carpenter, the Hawaiian Board of Missions bought the materials and had them delivered to Kalawao. There they were dumped overboard, floated ashore, and quickly transported to the chosen site. Oral tradition holds that Deacon G.K. Kawaluna, whose wife was a leprosy victim, donated the land for the site of Siloama Church. The first Siloama, erected in July 1871, was dedicated on October 28 of that year. By that time Forbes had been transferred to Honolulu and most of his successors as pastor of Siloama were settlement residents.

Church affairs at Siloama proceeded much as they did in other congregations. Elders met each week to conduct business and the rest of the time exercised moral and disciplinary supervision over their charges. Church activities included a Sunday School, an afternoon discussion club, and musical activities.¹² During this early Kalawao pioneer period, the groundwork was firmly laid for a strong Congregational community life.

News of the conditions at Kalawao soon spread through the islands. In early 1867 much criticism was mounted against the board for conditions at Kalawao that were purportedly resulting in starvation and the lack of many necessities of life. The initial purpose of the settlement being simply isolation, no provision was made at first for a resident physician or for hospital facilities. The president of the board visited the settlement and found that the sick were generally satisfied with the state of affairs except for wanting more food. Two items were seen by the president as being necessary for the welfare of the settlement--a

12. One Hundredth Anniversary Brochure of Siloama Church, founded December 23, 1866, Commemorated August 27, 1966 (Kalawao, Molokai, 1966), pp. 7-8.

hospital to care for those in the last stages of the disease and a sympathetic female nurse to run the establishment. It proved impossible for Lepart to acquire hospital materials from the resources at hand or to stimulate the patients to work on constructing such a building. When residents at Kalaupapa were called upon to perform the work, they accomplished little beyond cutting a few posts. Thereupon the Board of Health sent supplies and laborers from Honolulu, and a satisfactory hospital building was constructed that helped somewhat to alleviate the miseries of its patients. Food was prepared for them and they received special items such as bread, rice, tea with sugar, and milk from the heifers supplied to the settlement. In addition to the hospital, other structures built included a house for Mr. Donald Walsh and his wife, a schoolhouse, and separate sleeping quarters for the young boys and girls. All were enclosed, with the hospital, within a fence and were under the care of the superintendent and a nurse.¹³

3. Board of Health Takes Stronger Hand in Kalawao Affairs

It became necessary in 1867, after Lepart's resignation, for the Board of Health to appoint another superintendent, and the elderly English gentleman, Donald Walsh, was chosen. A former officer in the British Army, Walsh succeeded to some extent in bringing order to settlement affairs. Constables were appointed from among the non-leprous husbands of women sufferers to assist him. Procurement of a regular food supply caused more trouble and anxiety than any of the other problems relating to the government of the settlement. The system of encouraging the patients to cultivate the fields had resulted in neither an adequate supply of food nor a reduction in expenses, because those who worked the fields still expected to receive allotments from the board. In addition, the valleys had become sites of irregular and improper activities. The sick, therefore, were removed from the valley and the

13. Report of the Board of Health to the Legislative Assembly of 1868, by His Excellency F.W. Hutchison, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, pp. 45-47. Mr. Walsh was to serve as the school teacher and his wife was to be the nurse in the hospital.

fields leased to a man not under control of the board in expectation that sufficient taro would be planted and supplied at a moderate price to meet the needs of the settlement.¹⁴

D. Report of Board of Health, 1870

1. Building Construction

The Board of Health report for 1870 mentions that

Three large houses adjoining the Hospital capable of lodging twenty-five persons each, have been erected in the settlement, with cook house, and separate buildings for the male and female children. House frames for the lepers in the general settlement have also been supplied, and sufficient accomodation to lodge all in a comfortable manner is now provided in the Asylum.¹⁵

2. Law and Order

Problems maintaining order in the settlement were still surfacing in 1870. It was impossible to preserve order through the normal laws and punishments of the kingdom because of the special status of the residents. Because they were to be kept confined on Moloka'i and could not be chastised through either the payment of fines or incarceration in a prison off the island, special legislation had to be sought to deal with their problems as well as with imposing penalties on those people trespassing on the peninsula to visit friends and relatives.

3. Food Supply

Food supply remained a problem. An attempt had been made to cultivate Waikolu Valley with taro and manufacture pa'i 'ai on the spot. This practice would help ensure an adequate food supply, especially during winters when it was difficult to land supplies. In 1870 the land was leased to King Kamehameha V at a yearly rental of \$250 and

14. Report of the Board of Health, 1870, Fred W. Hutchison, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, pp. 54-55.

15. Report of the Board of Health, 1870, Fred W. Hutchison, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, p. 53.

his agents agreed to furnish the settlement at the regular market price. In their anxiety to please the king, some of these agents stole taro patches from the sick, which they had cultivated for their own use, without any remuneration. This practice severely limited further cultivation of lands by the residents.¹⁶ Ultimately canoes started bringing in pa'i 'ai from other valleys on the northern side of the island. The leprosy victims grew vegetables in their own enclosures as well as receiving weekly rations of meat.¹⁷

E. Report of Board of Health, 1872

1. Law and Order

Unfortunately neither Superintendent Walsh nor his wife understood the Hawaiian language, and many of his attempts to maintain order or establish rules were not understood by the villagers. Discontent continued due to that lack of communication. After Walsh sickened and died in 1869, his widow became superintendent, assisted by an old sea captain. Those two constantly disagreed and matters did not improve. During the latter part of Mrs. Walsh's term of office, a partial rebellion took place, due evidently to a dispute over job responsibilities between the afflicted and their lunas. The rebellion was quelled by the punishment of two of the rebel leaders and the transfer of the resident superintendency to Kahoohuli, a former captain of the King's Guard in Honolulu and a leprosy victim with a stormy will. It was found, not surprisingly, that natives or halfcastes were more acceptable to the patients as superintendents than foreigners were.

2. Building Construction

A description of the peninsula in an 1872 report mentions several native houses at the Kalaupapa landing place and the following buildings at Kalawao settlement:

16. Meyer, Report of leper settlement, ca. 1886, p. 8.

17. Report of the Board of Health, 1870, p. 55.

On an even, good road, the Leper Settlement is soon arrived at; it is large and extensive, surrounded by grand and imposing scenery. The papaia, puhula [sic] and banana plants give the village a cheerful appearance. Some of the houses are fenced in by stone walls, others are placed amongst potato fields or pasture lands. . . .

A little further on, the house of the Keeper is reached. He has a neat commodious house with two rooms to himself, the other portions of the house being appropriated for stores of various descriptions, out-office for the supply of medicine, books, etc. The buildings adjoining the principal keeper's house are two hospitals (male and female) for those of the sick unable to attend to themselves--separate houses being provided for all those persons of the leper valley who require special attention in regard to diet, accomodation and medical aid--in fact, for all those too far advanced in the disease to take care of themselves.

In the quadrangle, of which the Superintendent's house forms one side, are to be found the separate houses built for boys and girls, with a special building for a school-room; an instructor for which establishment is generally to be obtained amongst the lepers themselves. There are several other buildings included here, useful or necessary for general purposes and the special control of the stock and material of the establishment.¹⁸

The school taught the normal subjects of the islands--reading, writing, mathematics, geography, and singing. "The children, with the exception of one or two, do not seem to feel their misfortune; when they leave school they act as others of the same age, running or playing their way home, apparently unconscious of the fate that awaits them."¹⁹ The houses of the residents, generally clean and well kept, were scattered throughout the valley. Once in awhile a Catholic priest from O'ahu or Maui came to Moloka'i to administer the Sacraments, but the settlement still had no resident priest. In 1872 Brother Victorin Bertrant (sometimes Bertrand) transported a wooden

18. Report of the Board of Health, 1872. Ferd. W. Hutchison, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, pp. 59-60.

19. Ibid., p. 61.

chapel from Honolulu and erected it at Kalawao. Blessed by Father Raymond Delalande on May 30, it was dedicated to St. Philomena.

3. Food Supply

Over the years, changing tastes and eating habits influenced the dietary requirements for the settlement. The taro lands were ultimately abandoned. The need by newer patients for a greater variety of food resulted in the importation of dairy cattle by 1872, primarily for use by patients in the hospital. Milk was not completely acceptable to most of the villagers, however, and ultimately the milch cows were turned loose to roam at will.²⁰

Most of the usual tasks necessary in any Hawai'ian village seemed to be carried on at Kalawao. While the women made mats and other furnishings for their cottages, the men worked the potato fields and raised sugar cane, bananas, and other crops. A change for the better had taken place among the populace, and during the previous two years, considerable quantities of food had been raised to supplement the supplies sent by the board. Fresh provisions only were issued to the villagers--five pounds of meat and twenty-one pounds of pa'i 'ai per week. Meat consisted of mutton, generally, or beef. The people could do as they liked with the produce they raised and frequently sold large numbers of sweet potatoes and pigs.²¹

4. Living Conditions

It cannot be denied that during most of the early Kalawao pioneer period, despite attempts by the government to ameliorate the situation, living conditions were extremely difficult. This was due to several factors--overpopulation, lack of appropriate on-site supervision of affairs, and the hit-and-miss character of much of the early settlement

20. Norman K. Carlson, "On Kalaupapa, the Land, too, finds a Cure," Soil Conservation xvi, no. 10 (May 1951), p. 230.

21. Report of the Board of Health, 1872, pp. 58-62.

administration as the Hawaiian government attempted to determine the best way to care for its leprosy victims. Food was poor and of insufficient quantity, and its shipments were irregular and inadequate. Getting one's weekly rations involved a trip of a few miles--incredibly difficult for people who could barely walk. Proper medical care was wanting. The hospital, although some concession to the needs of the dying, was far from an ideal institution. Reserved for the worst cases, it lacked beds and doctors. Victims sometimes were fortunate enough to have mats, but most lay directly on the ground. There were few medicines. Clothing was inadequate. There was a dire need for readily available, wholesome water to drink and to use in food preparation. From 1866 to 1873, almost forty percent of the exiles died. Those who succumbed had the benefit of neither coffin nor burial service. The bodies of the luckier ones were wrapped in a blanket and transported hanging from a pole suspended on shoulders to shallow graves into which they were dumped. Often the bodies were washed out during a rain or dug up and eaten by hogs. Those people who did not work or find diversion in worthwhile pursuits passed their time sleeping, playing cards, and drinking. No resident priest comforted the soul or uplifted the spirit. Often bestiality surfaced, and the warning "'A'ole kānāwai ma kēia wahi"--"in this place there is no law"--reportedly became a standard greeting for new arrivals.²²

F. Improvements Under King Lunalilo

1. Increased Enforcement of Leprosy Laws

Affairs continued in this fashion until January 1873 when Prince William Charles Lunalilo ascended the throne. A public outcry against conditions at Kalawao was raised and pleas appeared in the local papers for something to be done to improve conditions at Kalawao and better implement the law of 1865. In response, King Lunalilo appointed a new Board of Health to administer the settlement. This new board, and each one thereafter, was composed of a president, chosen from within the

22. Englebert, Hero of Molokai, pp. 129-31.

government, a secretary, and other prominent men, such as doctors and ministers. Headquartered in Honolulu, the board administered the leprosarium and made appointments to all posts there. Superintendent Rudolph Meyer continued as head official of the settlement. Because his visits to the settlement were infrequent, he was assisted by an under-superintendent living at the settlement (often a patient), in command of all employees and day-to-day operations. All personnel were paid by the government. Their unenviable jobs often meant incurring the full brunt of the patients' frustration and wrath.

At the beginning of 1873 it was determined that several hundred confirmed leprosy victims were still mingling with the general population in the islands. Segregation was still thought to be the only viable means of arresting the progress of the disease, and renewed zeal was shown in forcing the isolation of every infected person, without regard to their position or rank, a duty always thankless and heartrending. The unsavory reputation that Moloka'i had acquired by this time made the roundup of victims very unpopular. According to Arthur Mouritz,

the general dread and fear that possessed the leper when it was proposed to banish him to Molokai, was in the main due to statements sent out by the segregated lepers, who complained of harsh treatment, no nursing, separation of husband and wife, absence of medical attention, poor and insufficient food, scanty supply of clothes, difficulty of obtaining rations when sick, and a hard, dangerous journey to Waikolu to obtain poi, and many other defects of administration, some real, some imaginary. All the above combination of complaints, if really believed, were sufficient to cause a suspect leper to hide himself, and, if he had nerve enough, to resist segregation by using firearms.²³

No longer could wives or husbands accompany victims, and visits to the settlement were forbidden except under extreme circumstances and then only for short periods of time.

23. Mouritz, "Path of the Destroyer," p. 82.

2. Reforms in Administration of Settlement

The practice of demanding money from the sick as reimbursement for their care was discontinued, and in cases where it had been collected, it was refunded to the victims' families. Weekly rations of meat were increased and a greater variety of food was introduced. Patients could now receive five pounds of meat or three pounds of salmon per week and one bundle of pa'i 'ai, containing twenty-one pounds, or either ten pounds of rice or seven pounds of bread or flour and five pounds of salt per month. Because a little work was deemed beneficial to physical and mental health, and to encourage cultivation of the land, patients were allowed the choice of receiving the cash value of their weekly food supplies in lieu of food. A positive response was immediate, and before long the patients managed to cultivate a surplus of food. During the winter, then, when food importation was difficult, there was usually a good supply on hand that was bought from the farmers by the board at the regular market price. By this means many residents were able to supply personal wants not provided by the government. Some were even able to build houses and acquire comforts at no expense to the board.

The problem of supplying adequate clothing was remedied by the board by establishing a store at Kalawao in July 1873 in which staple goods were sold at low prices. From then on, each person, instead of receiving clothing, was given an allowance of six dollars on which he could draw at the store whatever he wished. Allotments were handed out on the first of October each year.

Most of the food up to that time had been purchased from people in the nearby valleys of Pelekunu, Wailau, and Hālawā. It was transported at first in the planters' own boats and then in boats belonging to the board by men specifically hired for that purpose. Because it was often difficult during the winter season for boats to land, stocks of bread, flour, and rice were kept on hand for emergencies. Attempts were made yet again to cultivate Waikolu Valley. Contracts were let with friends or relatives of the residents (some were kama'āinas) at the settlement to cultivate the valley for three years. During that time

they would plant and care for the taro, for which they would receive one-half of its market value upon delivery to the board. At the end of the three-year period, however, people were tired of the work and were unwilling to continue, so the program was dropped.

The problem of kōkuas was also addressed at this time. As mentioned earlier, these were helpers who voluntarily accompanied friends or relatives to the settlement. It was felt by many that it was wrong to separate married couples if one of them wished to accompany their stricken partner to provide the sympathy and care that no one else would. Because Hawaiians had no fear of the disease, there were many--relatives and friends alike--who were willing to go into exile. Of the great number of people that accompanied the victims in the early years, a few did so only because they envisioned an easy living, obtained from the rations of food and clothing provided to their charges. In order to discourage idleness on their part, the new king instituted at the settlement the old Hawai'ian custom of Pō'alima, which was followed throughout the islands. It dictated that every able-bodied male had to work one day a week for the board, and in return they were allowed to live on the land, but could not receive rations for food or clothing. Those kōkuas that were gainfully employed by the board in jobs requiring healthy people--such as animal slaughtering, distributing of food, preparing food, providing fuel, and serving as police--were exempt from the Pō'alima rule and also received food rations.

Other improvements for the welfare of the people included increased hospital accommodations and the furnishing of bedsteads to the inmates to get them off the mats on the floor.²⁴

From the beginning of 1873 through March 1874, over 500 more confirmed cases of leprosy were sent to Moloka'i, still in the hopes that time and the improvement of living habits, diet, and general hygienic

24. Meyer, Report of leper settlement, ca 1886, pp. 9-13.

Illustration 7. Kalawao settlement, no date (post-1873), looking west. Hospital compound to right of road, store to left. Doctor and visitor houses at right rear of picture? Courtesy Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu.



Illustration 8. Another view of hospital compound, Kalawao, toward east, no date.
Dispensary in foreground? Courtesy Bishop Museum, Honolulu.



Illustration 9. Inside the hospital compound, Kalawao, no date.
Courtesy Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu.



measures would stop the course of the disease. This influx caused severe housing problems at the settlement. On a visit by two board members in early 1873 it was decided that building accommodations were inadequate; it was also noted that many healthy native residents at Kalaupapa had kept possession of their kuleanas, containing many good houses, located on Board of Health land. Meyer, the board's agent, was instructed to carry out the purchase of those homesteads to obtain more housing and also to ensure complete isolation on the peninsula. This he accomplished to a great extent.

Procurement of a good water supply for the hospitals, stores, and central buildings was a major requisite. A pipe six thousand feet long was laid (from Wai'ale'ia Valley?), with taps at convenient distances, enabling a good supply of fresh water for all. The superintendent at that time was W.P. Ragsdale.²⁵

G. Impressions of a Patient, Peter Kaeo, During this Period

One of those who went voluntarily to Kalawao during this time was Peter Kaeo, cousin of Queen Emma, the consort of Kamehameha IV. Kaeo arrived on Moloka'i in late June 1873 and was released in 1876. The correspondence between Peter and Emma during his three-year stay on the peninsula provides valuable insight on Hawai'ian politics in general and on living conditions at the settlement specifically. A sketch map Kaeo sent Emma, showing the location of his house on the north side of the road to Kalaupapa, a little west of the hospital building, also shows part of the Kalawao settlement to be southeast of the store on the edge of

25. Report of the Board of Health for 1874, Hermann A. Widemann, President, in Leprosy in Hawaii, pp. 70-71, 74. William P. Ragsdale, a part-Hawai'ian of American descent who made himself a popular hero by volunteering to go to Moloka'i before anyone realized he had leprosy. He had formerly been an interpreter for the Hawai'ian legislature and a practicing attorney. In 1873 he succeeded J.H. Napela as assistant supervisor of the settlement. He died in late November 1877. Alfons L. Korn, ed., News from Molokai. Letters Between Peter Kaeo & Queen Emma, 1873-1876 (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1976), p. 16.

"Kalawao Valley" (Wai'ale'ia Valley). Other houses were beginning to extend west toward the Kalaupapa landing.²⁶ Peter's house was on a rise at the foot of Kauhako Hill, halfway between Kalawao and Kalaupapa. It faced the sea on a flat between the pali and the crater. In front of his house was flat, rocky land, studded with old potato patches. One of his letters mentions a trip to look at the inside of the crater, where he noted breadfruit, 'ōhi'a, lehua, kukui, and other trees growing. He stated that on the windward side of the crater where the trees were thickest, the Mormon elder and assistant supervisor of the settlement, J.H. Napela, held his Sunday meetings.²⁷

Kaeo also mentions the presence on the peninsula of many unafflicted persons who hid themselves by day and emerged at night to visit and help their relatives. Kōkuas felt insecure in their position, and Kaeo mentions some of them hiding in caves for fear of being sent away by the Board of Health. He also stated that the board was rumored to have threatened to kill all the horses because they were eating all the grass and leaving none for the cattle. The people threatened trouble if that occurred, because those animals were their only means of hauling water.²⁸

Many serious problems still existed at Kalawao despite the Board of Health's claim in its 1874 report that

notwithstanding the increased number of lepers, the difficulties of communication, etc., there has not been one instance of want of food at the settlement. . . . The Board can assert that in a material point of view, these people are better off in Molokai

26. Sketch map of Peter Kaeo, 1873, in Queen Emma Collection, M-45, Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu.

27. Letter 6, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, July 9, 1873, in Korn, News from Molokai, pp. 17-18.

28. Letter 10, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, July 16, 1873, in ibid., pp. 24-25.

Illustration 10. Old Kalawao store, ca. 1930. Courtesy Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu.



than most natives of these islands, and also better off, with very few exceptions, than they ever were in their own homes.²⁹

Food continued to be a major problem in terms of adequate supply, procurement, and variety. The rough coastline and often stormy and windy weather made it extremely difficult to land supplies. Kaeo mentioned one day when the sea was so rough that boats could not approach the shore, but could only throw the taro onto the rocks for people to grab as best they could.³⁰ He mentions in some detail problems with the food allowance:

A House where it holds two or more patients [is allowed] one [share of] Pai and 3 pounds of rice, half of Pai and half of Rice everywhere [elsewhere]. The natives begin to grumble on account of their having rice all the week round and very little Poi. . . . Our meat is so poor that we do not see any fat or signs of any hardly after it is dressed and delivered. . . . Some have no cooking utensils to cook with, so they ask for Salmon in place of Beef--but no Salmon. Some ask for rice in place of Pai, as the Pai is bad and sower, but Rice is scarce and only for those in the Hospital.³¹

Kaeo received much of his food supply from Queen Emma, but when he ran out, had to depend on his allowance as a leprosy victim. He supplemented this diet occasionally by hunting wild pigs on the plains, which were salted for winter use. He had servants with him, who helped in food preparation and gathering. Others were not so lucky. Peter described two men dying from hunger, one of whom had been living on rice and salmon for two weeks until his system could no longer digest it. Kaeo believed the luna, Ragsdale, was starving the inmates by forcing rice and salmon on them and restricting distribution of meat and poi in an

29. Report of the Board of Health for 1874, p. 72.

30. Letter 12, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, July 20, 1873, in Korn, News from Molokai, p. 29.

31. Letter 14, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, July 23, 1873, in ibid., pp. 33-34.

attempt to save money on food. Deaths that resulted at that time were probably from acute malnutrition, resulting from the physical deterioration marking advanced leprosy and faulty diet. Poi, the traditional staple diet item for Hawaiians, was an emotional tie with childhood and old customs, and the lack of it produced psychosomatic consequences as well as nutritional deficiencies.³²

In early November 1873, Meyer informed the chairman of the Board of Health that its regulations on food rationing were no longer reflecting changing conditions of supply and demand. Although the number of patients was increasing, the amount of poi provided by the board was the same. Also the failure of ships to land supplies to replenish food reserves meant people often suffered. Not until February 1874, however, were weekly rations increased by the board.³³

Peter also mentions the kama'āinas--early landowners still living on the peninsula--and their desire to remain there until their death. Those people were always a source of frustration to the government both because they took up much needed living space and because they thwarted the policy of complete segregation. According to one of Peter's letters, the Board of Health was not against kama'āinas helping the patients or associating with them as long as they did not intend ever to leave the peninsula.³⁴

H. Arrival of Father Joseph Damien de Veuster

1. Decision to Become a Priest

Joseph de Veuster was born January 3, 1840, in Tremeloo, Belgium, into a fairly well-to-do peasant family that raised and sold

32. Letter 60, Peter to Emma, (Kalaupapa), December 9, 1873, in ibid., pp. 153-54 (f.n. 2).

33. Letter 62, Peter to Emma, December 17, 1873, in ibid., pp. 159-60 (f.n. 2).

34. Letter 15, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, July 27, 1873, in ibid., p. 36.

grain. His parents, Francis and Anne Catherine, had eight children, half of whom entered the religious life. Attending school until the age of thirteen, he then returned to the family farm to work in the fields. In 1853 his brother Auguste entered the seminary and four years later went to the Sacred Hearts Fathers novitiate at Louvain. Joseph continued working the farm for a while, a smart, helpful young man with a deep sense of piety and a quiet inner strength. He returned to boarding school in 1858 in preparation for a future as a grain trader. He wholeheartedly tackled his studies of French and the religious education offered. It was evidently during this time that he heard the call of God. He at first kept this revelation to himself, for with so many other siblings in religious orders, Joseph was the one expected to carry on the family grain business. As the months went by, however, Damien's resolution deepened. Seven months after entering school at Braine-le-Comte, Damien warned his parents of his mission in life:

Don't think this idea of entering the religious life is my idea! It's Providence, I tell you, that is inspiring me. Don't put any obstacles in the way. God is calling me. I must obey. If I refuse I run the risk of going to hell. As for you, God will punish you terribly for standing in the way of His will.³⁵

What could his parents do in response to such an ultimatum? Although undoubtedly disappointed that he would not be continuing the family trade, they also realized they could not deny him this calling. Having made his decision, Joseph wasted no time in beginning his holy service. Leaving Braine-le-Comte, he joined his brother Auguste (now Brother Pamphile) at Louvain, where he was accepted as a postulant.

2. The Fathers of the Sacred Hearts

The religious order that Joseph de Veuster entered in January 1859 bears the canonical name Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary and of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed

35. Vital Jourdan, The Heart of Father Damien, 1840-1889, rev. ed. (New York: Guild Press, 1960), pp. 14-15.

Sacrament of the Altar. It is referred to more commonly as the Sacred Hearts Fathers, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, or the Picpus Fathers, referring to the Paris street on which the mother house was located. The founder of this congregation, Father Marie-Joseph Coudrin, had a vision in 1792 of missionaries going all over the world spreading love for the Sacred Hearts. The Sacred Hearts Congregation was founded in 1800 to "practice and propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary," and to carry on continual adoration, involving a half hour of day adoration daily and one hour of night adoration weekly. This routine was faithfully carried on by Damien at Moloka'i.³⁶ Approved by Pope Pius VII in 1817, the congregation was asked eight years later to undertake the conversion of the Polynesians in the South Seas. Missionaries left for Hawai'i in 1827.

3. Joseph de Veuster Studies for the Priesthood

Upon entering the house of the Picpus Fathers, nineteen-year-old Joseph was described as being

a young man exceptionally good to look upon. Along with the strength and healthy physique so necessary for a missionary's work, he had dark curly hair and a frank, handsome face, a face destined to be cruelly ravaged by the worst disease known to men,³⁷ but at that time glowing with hope and youthful ardor.

The biggest obstacle for Joseph to overcome in his monastic training was his ignorance of classical languages. According to the rules of the order, because of this lack he had to be placed among the lay brothers and could not hope to become an ordained priest. At first this did not bother Joseph, whose zeal for service of any kind was all-devouring. It was not long before his superiors, perceiving his determination to overcome all obstacles and the tenacity with which he pursued all his tasks and especially the study of Latin, took special pains

36. Ibid., p. 17.

37. Farrow, Damien the Leper, 1951, p. 16.

to remedy his academic deficiencies to allow him to enter the ranks of those studying for the priesthood. Leaving Louvain at the end of June 1860, Joseph entered the French novitiate at Issy near Paris. At the mother house, on October 7, 1860, he took his final vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Laying aside his baptismal name, he adopted a new one, as was the order's custom. It seems especially fitting that he chose as his patron Damien--the physician of Cilicia who spent his life serving others and finally accepted a martyr's death in the early fourth century.

Throughout his ecclesiastical training, Damien underwent long periods of self discipline. Many of the character traits he had to contend with at this time continued to surface at Moloka'i, such as sudden bursts of temper that immediately consumed him with remorse, and a compulsion to get things done that made his life a constant shift from prayer to work and back again. Vital Jourdan points out that Damien differed a great deal from many of his fellow students:

If a novice's perfection consisted solely in keeping himself in a state of passivity and receptivity in blind obedience to his director without any personal initiative on his part, Brother Damien was assuredly not good novice material. For to these things he added his own outlook, his own turn of mind, his own style of thinking and acting. No up-in-the-clouds spirituality for him. He was original enough to settle difficulties by means of his own rich imagination. Coming late to the religious life, with bits of the material world clinging to him and a newly acquired spirituality, he set about ridding himself of an awkwardness, a clumsy way of expressing his best feelings that sometimes brought him grief. However, it was that originality, the initiative cultivated on the edges of the beaten path, that was going to make his life such a tremendous success.³⁸

4. Damien Leaves for Hawai'i

In 1863 the Sacred Hearts Fathers decided to send missionary reinforcements to the Hawai'ian Islands to help Bishop Louis

38. Jourdan, Heart of Father Damien, 1960, pp. 20-21.

Maigret, the Vicar Apostolic. Father Pamphile was chosen as one of the party of six priests and brothers and ten sisters. As it turned out, however, Divine Providence had other plans in store for the de Veuster brothers. During a typhoid epidemic in Louvain, while visiting the sick, Pamphile caught the disease. Damien nursed him back to health and started him on a long convalescent period. Despite his extreme disappointment at not being able to go on the journey, Pamphile encouraged his brother to get permission to go in his place. Bypassing his own immediate superiors, Damien sent his request directly to the Superior General in Paris.

After many long and anxious days of waiting, Damien was informed that he could go. His happiness was unbounded. With time only for a quick but emotional farewell to his family, whom he would never see again, and a short retreat in Paris, Damien began the long, slow voyage to his martyrdom.

On May 21, 1864, Father Damien was ordained to the priesthood in the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace in downtown Honolulu. From there he was sent to the Puna district on the island of Hawai'i where he ministered to the spiritual needs of the 350 Catholics in the area. He was later transferred to the Kohala and Hāmākua districts, serving eight years in that mission. During that time many of his parishioners were sent into isolation on Moloka'i.

5. Father Damien Volunteers as Resident Priest at Kalawao

On May 4, 1873, Monsignor Maigret consecrated a new church at Wailuku on the island of Maui. A few Picpus Fathers from neighboring districts were invited to assist in the ceremony, Damien among them. During their time together, these missionaries discussed many things, touching frequently upon the leprosy victims isolated at Kalawao and especially the sad spiritual condition of the Catholics among them.

It had been almost impossible to minister to the spiritual needs of the Catholic leprosy victims up to that time. Once a year, perhaps, a priest would spend two or three days at the settlement. Father Raymond Delalande, who visited there for several weeks in 1871, found such an enthusiastic welcome that the bishop decided to build a chapel. The church was erected by a lay worker in six weeks and was ready for use by the end of May 1872. There the Catholics gathered each Sunday to pray, sing, and recite the rosary. Bishop Maigret informed the priests that the people of the settlement had recently sent him a petition requesting a resident priest. Although Maigret had decided to grant the request, it would be a difficult decision to impose such a sentence on the person administering that post.

At that point, several young priests, including Damien, eagerly volunteered for the assignment, and it was decided to have four priests serve on a rotating basis. Damien's pioneering work at Puna and Kohala, his wish to join the multitude of his parishioners that had been sent to Kalawao, and his obvious earnest and sincere desire to help the afflicted may have made him the obvious first choice for the post. His offer was accepted with both sadness and joy by his bishop. A few months later, in explaining his reasons for that great decision, Damien stated that

When the agents of the Board [of Health] came to carry off some of my faithful, a voice within me told me that I should rejoin them some day. When I took ship to Wailuku, the same voice warned me that I should never return to Kohala, that I should never again see my well-beloved children nor the beautiful chapels I had built. For this reason, there were tears in my eyes when I turned away from that Catholic settlement to which I had become attached during the eight years I had spent in it.

39. Englebert, Hero of Molokai, p. 137.

6. Arrival of Father Damien at Kalawao

On May 10, 1873, Damien accompanied Bishop Maigret from Maui on board the steamer Kilauea, carrying a load of fifty leprosy victims and a cargo of cattle bound for Kalawao settlement. As the boat neared Moloka'i and the residents caught sight of the holy pair, the bishop recounted later that

those who were able to walk ran down from Kalawao. Our neophytes surrounded us, their rosaries hanging from their necks. . . . How great was their joy, when I presented to them the man who had asked to come to them and was henceforth to be their father! They⁴⁰ cast themselves on their knees with tears brimming their eyes.

Although there was an initial understanding on the bishop's part that Damien would be relieved in his work on Moloka'i within a few weeks, it is fairly certain that Damien, who was possessed of "an appetite for doing good for God in difficult circumstances,"⁴¹ from the first was determined to devote the rest of his life to the leprosy victims of Moloka'i. Having left home with no firm indication that he would not be returning, Damien arrived at Kalawao without a change of clothing or any personal effects. Lacking even a home, he found shelter for the first few nights in the open under a pū hala tree. Damien's arrival as a resident priest prompted a flood of charitable publicity toward the Catholic church. Damien's self sacrifice and his willingness to risk constant exposure to a terrible disease were widely acclaimed in the Honolulu press:

And yet, as the provincial remarked, there was nothing unusual in this among the Sacred Hearts Fathers: it happened whenever one of them went to a district where the mission was not established. And, of course, there had been Sacred Hearts Fathers and brothers at Kalawao before Damien. But "all that had happened without noise, without public admiration. The

40. Ibid., pp. 137-38.

41. Gavan Daws, Holy Man: Father Damien of Molokai (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973), p. 57.

honor of attracting attention, exciting sympathy, stirring up the press, was reserved to Father Damien."⁴²

Because of the overwhelming public response to Damien's presence at Kalawao and his insistence on wanting to stay, his superiors decided to leave him there permanently. He could come to Honolulu overnight for confession when he wished.

7. Father Damien's Comments on Conditions at Kalawao

In March 1886, Damien produced a manuscript at the request of Walter Gibson, then president of the Board of Health, recounting the state of affairs at the leprosy settlement upon his arrival there at the age of thirty-three. These memoirs are fascinating reading and provide probably better than any other source an accurate description of social and economic conditions during the pioneer Kalawao settlement period. Following are the general topics he discussed:

a) "The Diet of the Lepers"

Damien believed that diet greatly influenced the affects of leprosy. For a long time the food of the settlement was of poor quality, insufficient, and unequally distributed. The starchy vegetable taro seemed the easiest food to digest and never caused ill effects. It seemed to be necessary emotionally as well as dietetically, for he noted that at one time, "the place having been about three months without taro on account of the scarcity of that vegetable, several cases of death occurred in consequence of it, and the majority of the people looked very emaciated, although they had plenty of rice, and sweet potatoes."⁴³ The settlement's regular supply of taro was cultivated in Hālawā, Wailau, and

42. Ibid., p. 62.

43. J. Damien, "Special Report from Rev. Father J. Damien, Catholic Priest at Kalawao. Personal Experience During Thirteen Years of Labor Among the Lepers at Kalawao," March 1, 1886, MS., Hawaii State Archives, Honolulu, p. 5.

Pelekunu valleys and the cooked taro or pa'i 'ai brought by sea in open boats or a small schooner or steamer. The latter method of transportation was most successful because schooners and boats were often prevented from arriving by rough weather, thus depriving the people of their major food item. The rice or hard bread issued when poi was not available sufficed for an emergency but could not support the Hawai'ians as a principal food.

Sweet potatoes raised by patients were used to add variety to the diet, but also were used in making an intoxicating drink of which the Hawai'ians were very fond but which had a detrimental affect on their health. A pint of milk was also provided for nourishment. The milk came from milch cows, which unfortunately often had to be killed for meat when the regular supply of beef cattle failed to appear on time.

b) "The Water Supply of the Settlement"

Procurement of water was one of the major problems patients had to contend with. The only dependable stream was in Wai'ale'ia Valley, and water had to be brought from the gulch to homes in paint cans carried on shoulders or on horses. Clothes were also washed in this stream, although very infrequently because of the distance involved. When the Board of Health supplied water pipes in the summer of 1873, a reservoir was built and a water line laid to the settlement. After that, abundant water was available for drinking, bathing, and washing, and people were better off there than at Kalaupapa where only rainwater or brackish well water were available.

Damien mentioned that he had been informed that at the terminus of Waihānau Valley, just southeast of Kalaupapa settlement, was a natural reservoir. He immediately went out to inspect the site and did find a natural semicircular basin seventy-two feet in diameter one way and fifty-five feet another way. Soundings determined it to be at least eighteen feet deep in the center. The water was clear, icy cold, and of good flavor. Old residents of the area told Damien that the pool never dried up, remaining a permanent source of water throughout the year.

Illustration 11. Father Damien and "the choir," no date. Courtesy Bishop Museum, Honolulu.



The question of how better to supply water for Kalaupapa had been under discussion for a long time, but nothing had been done because of the impression that it would be too costly. Now Damien felt that instead of considering going to Waikolu for a water supply, pipes should be laid from the Waihānau reservoir to the village.

c) "The Dwellings of the Lepers"

Upon Damien's arrival, he found 816 residents, some of whom he had known from his earlier missionary work on Hawai'i. The Kalaupapa landing place was "a Some what Deserted village of three or four wooden cottages and a few old grass houses. The lepers were allowed to go there only on the Days when a vessel arrived. . . ."44 The patients all lived at Kalawao, about eighty of them in the hospital. The rest, with a few kōkuas, lived farther up toward "the valley," probably Wai'ale'ia, where the most advanced sufferers lived apart. Houses were built out of wood taken from old pū hala groves. Some residents did not even have that much covering and were living in shelters formed from the branches of castor oil trees covered with kī or sugar cane leaves and sometimes with pili grass. There were living "pell mell, without distinction of ages or sexes, old or new cases, all more or less strangers one to another, those unfortunate outcasts of society."45 Because ventilation was usually lacking in those small huts, the dampness had an extremely detrimental effect on the residents, causing scabs, sores, and very weakened constitutions. As 1874 approached, a question arose as to how, in the face of limited government appropriations, the habitations of the people could be improved.

Time was passed in playing cards, in native dances, and in drinking fermented kī-root beer. Because water was scarce, clothes were seldom cleaned:

44. Ibid., p. 1.

45. Ibid., p. 2.

The smell of their filth mixed with exhalation of their sores was simply disgusting and unbearable to a new comer. Many a time in fulfilling my priestly duty at their domiciles, I have been obliged, not only to close my nostrils, but to run out side, to breathe fresh air. To protect my legs from a peculiar itching, which I usually experienced every evening after my visiting them, ⁴⁶ had to beg a friend of mine to send me a pair of heavy boots.

Whereas Peter Kaeo used to ask his cousin to send him a bottle of camphor periodically, which he would put on his kerchief to smell when passing the hospital on his way to bathe in Waikolu Valley, Damien took up pipe smoking as a way of counteracting the overpowering odors. At the time of Damien's arrival, the disease was taking fearful tolls on the inhabitants. That fact and the degrading living conditions gave the place the reputation of a living graveyard.

d) "The Clothing of the Lepers"

The climate of the Kalaupapa peninsula often worked great hardship on the leprosy victims. Because of the settlement's location on the north side of the island, backed by very high mountains, the temperature was often cool. Frequent storms, bringing rain and wind, were almost unbearable for people whose circulation at advanced stages of the disease was poor at best.

Peter Kaeo tells about coming across villagers living in caves who, when asked why they did not go to the hospital, replied that their cave was preferable because the hospital was "anu anu". Other villagers he found living by the side of a stone wall they had built and covered with mats were also anu anu.⁴⁷ Kaeo noted in the fall of 1873 that about half of the people were in dreadful fear of the rainy season because of their desperate lack of clothing. Their woolen blankets

46. Ibid., p. 3.

47. Letter 35, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, August 31, 1873, in Korn, News from Molokai, p. 80.

were completely threadbare, they had no undergarments, and children were dressed in rags.⁴⁸

Damien found that the cold, damp weather had a deleterious effect on those without warm clothes, causing fevers, coughs, swelling in the face and limbs, and congestion in the lungs. Although each victim received a suit of clothes and a blanket from the government every year, because of neglect and lack of washing, they wore out within only a few months. Friends and relatives often supplied clothes, but those without this means of help suffered greatly before the settlement store was established. Those who could earn a little money to buy necessities had to entrust it to the schooner captain to buy such items for them. It was with a great deal of relief within the settlement that news arrived about the inauguration of the Moloka'i store in the summer of 1873. With the issuance of six dollars to each person every year to buy what they wanted, the clothing situation was greatly improved. Occasional charity offerings also helped ameliorate that particular problem.

e) "Exercise for the Lepers"

Father Damien felt it was very important that exercise be a part of the leprosy victim's daily schedule. Any physical activity would help circulation of the blood and offset to some degree paralysis of nerves and muscles. On Damien's arrival he found most people concerned only with sleeping, drinking, and playing cards; only a small minority partook of any exercise, mostly in the form of cultivating fields and riding the few horses available.

f) "The Morality of the Leper Settlement"

Previous to Damien's arrival it had been widely acknowledged that one of the greatest needs of the people at Kalawao was for a spiritual leader or priest. Because of this lack, vice and

48. Letter 47, Peter to Emma, Kalaupapa, October 1, 1873, in ibid., p. 123.

degradation were rampant. Damien briefly outlined the state of affairs with which he first had to contend:

In consequence of this impious theory, the people, mostly all unmarried, or separated on account of the disease, were living promiscuously without distinction of sex and many an unfortunate woman, had to become a prostitute to obtain friends who would take care of her, and her children, when well and strong, were used as servants; Once that the disease prostrated them, such women and children were often cast out, and had to find an other shelter; sometimes they were laid behind a stone wall and left there to die and at other times a hired hand would carry them to the hospital. The so much praised aloha of the natives was entirely lacking here, at least in this respect.

As already mentioned in other pages, the Hawaiian hula was organized after the pagan fashion, under the protection of the old deity Laka, who had his numerous altars, and sacrifices, and I candidly confess, that I had hard work to annihilate Laka's religions and worship, and thereby put a stop to the hula, and its bad consequences.⁴⁹

Another source of immorality was intoxication. The natives cooked, fermented, and distilled the root of the kī plant, which grew abundantly along the foot of the mountains. The beverage was so imperfectly distilled that it was actually totally unfit for consumption and seemed to make people temporarily mad. This practice was illegal but difficult to stop because certain members of the police force were themselves involved in the distilling operations. Damien seemed, however, to have enough moral authority and physical strength to stop much of the illegal and immoral activity of the non-Catholics as well as of his flock.

g) "Medical Treatment"

During the first period of the settlement's existence, from 1866 to 1873, the superintendents had made some attempt to furnish medicine to the sick as required. Many of the patients also relied on

49. Damien, "Personal Experience," 1886, p. 30.

their own native remedies. Despite this, Damien noted that he found these people less addicted to sorcery and the practices of native doctors than were the natives he had ministered to on Hawai'i. Because of the shortages of medicine and trained medical personnel, ulcers were often left unattended and exposed to dirt, flies, and vermin, and commonplace problems such as fever or diarrhea could cause death due to lack of treatment.