

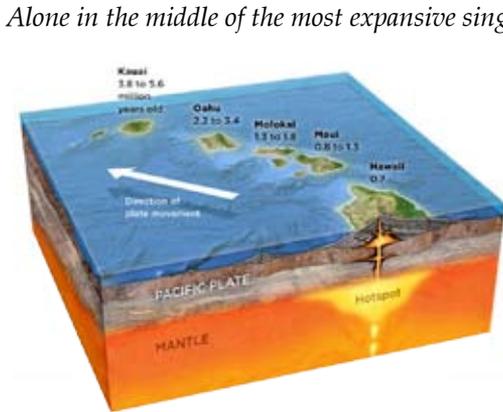
THE HISTORY
OF
COFFEE CULTIVATION IN HAWAII
1813 - 2013



written by
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THE HAWAIIAN Islands have been described by geographers, as the most remote place on earth. Three thousand miles from other chains and land masses; prior to their discovery by the Polynesian Navigators, about 2000 years ago, they were a place of pristine beauty, where unique plants and animals had existed undisturbed for millennia.

Massive volcanoes sitting 18,000 feet and deeper on the ocean floor soared in their youth to altitudes of 15,000 feet or more above sea level, then eroded, (ice, wind, water), down to the level of the ocean, drifting as if in a million year old dream, northwest, along with the Pacific plate.



Alone in the middle of the most expansive single area on Earth, the Pacific Ocean, the youngest islands, in the south-east of the chain, become barriers to the movement of moisture laden winds traveling from the northeastern Pacific. High enough to block the passage of clouds over them, these larger islands trap water, commonly 250 to 400 inches of rain on the windward slopes; whereas less than 10 inches of rain falls annually on the leeward side. There is a loss of

3° Fahrenheit for each thousand feet of elevation when one ascends these slopes, and crosses over soils in differing stages of weathering, with differing mineral content depending on the period of eruptions for each of these mountains. All of these factors spell out hundreds of micro-climates in which to grow estate coffees; a myriad of outcomes to send on to roasters worldwide.



HAWAII IS THE ONLY STATE IN THE UNION THAT GROWS COMMERCIAL COFFEE, AND IT TOOK ENTERPRISING IMMIGRANTS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE LUSH VERTICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE TROPICAL ISLES WAS PERFECT FOR GROWING COFFEA'S RED CHERRY. FROM AFRICA TO ARABIA, THROUGH INDONESIA, INDIA AND ITALY, AND FINALLY ON TO THE AMERICAS AND HAWAII, THE COFFEE BEAN TRAVELED FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS TO FIND ITS HOME IN HAWAII.





It's not surprising that coffee was able to become established here with relative ease, and in a variety of ecological niches. There exist a handful of relatives which are native, and/or endemic to Hawaii. These, like coffee, are plants in the family Rubiaceace, primarily of the genus Coprosma sp. The Hawaiians had names for some of these, such as "Pilo, Kukaenene." When the small yellow to reddish

fruit of the Pilo is cut open, one finds a small hard center drupe which looks exactly like a coffee bean.

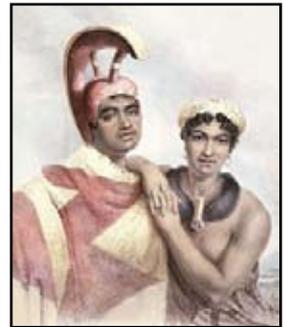
The coffees of Hawaii; Maui, the Big Island, Moloka'i, O'ahu and Kaua'i reflect the differences and diverse environments that give each of them unique flavors. It has been a long process getting the industry to the point it is today. Undoubtedly as new localities and cultivars merge into the stream of coffee production, they will reflect the richness of nuance which is the essence of the Hawaiian coffee experience.

WHAT FOLLOWS IS A SHORT HISTORY OF WHAT HAS GONE INTO ESTABLISHING THE PRESENT DAY INDUSTRY.



Though there is ongoing discussion as to the precise date when coffee was first planted in Hawaii, the first mention of the introduction of coffee plants to Hawaii is that of the Spanish physician and advisor to King Kamehameha - Don Francisco de Paula y Marin - with the first plantings in 1813. An avid gardener, Don Marin is also credited with planting Hawaii's first pineapples.

Tradition speaks of him setting out plants in Mānoa, one of the huge amphitheater valleys back of Honolulu. But, apparently by the 1820's, none of these plants had survived, prompting Boki, then Governor of O'ahu, to encourage a coffee planter from Jamaica, whom the Governor had met during a trip to England, to import more plants into Hawaii, and to start a plantation on O'ahu, to produce sugar, coffee, and a distillery for the manufacture of rum.

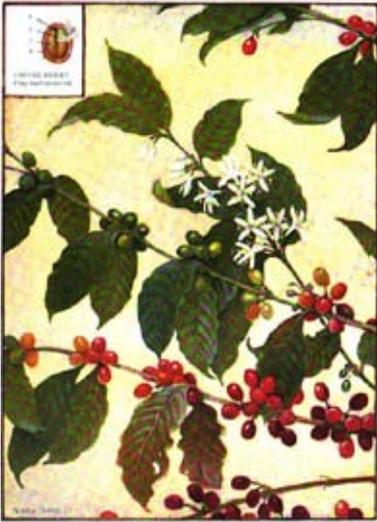


CHIEF BOKI AND LILIHA

In May, 1825, the *HMS Blonde* arrived in Honolulu with the bodies of the late king and queen of Hawai'i. Aboard were the botanist James Macrae and the naturalist Andrew Bloxam and perhaps the largest collection of plants to be introduced into Hawai'i up to that time. The coffee plants were delivered to gardener John Wilkinson, who planted them in the Mānoa Valley on O'ahu. A short time



later, Wilkinson died and the coffee plantings, which were nearing harvest, suffered neglect. However, production of sugar and rum in Mānoa Valley continued.



COFFEE BRANCHES, FLOWERS, AND FRUIT

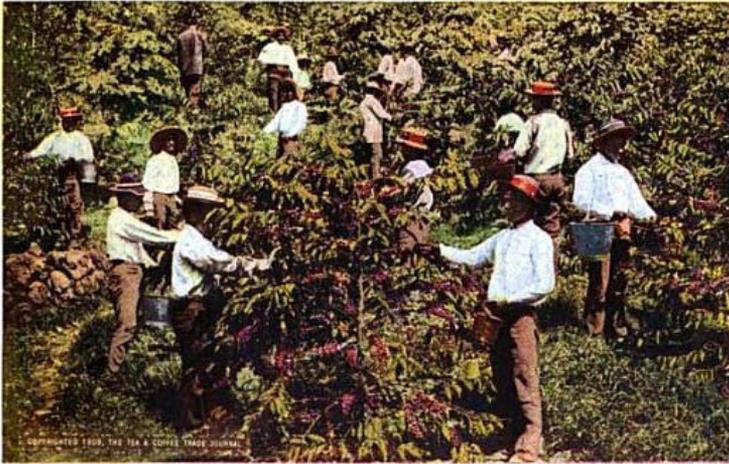
At about the same time, Richard Charlton, the British Consul at Honolulu imported coffee plants from Manila, and they too were planted in upper Mānoa Valley. The exact date is uncertain.

Later, slips from these original plantings were set out in Kalihi as well as in Niu Valleys, on the leeward coast of the island of O'ahu, and subsequently, in the years 1828 through 1829, coffee was started at Kona, Hamakua, and Hilo, on the "Big Island" of Hawaii by missionaries traveling to those areas from Honolulu. Thus the "Seeds" of the internationally renowned Kona coffee industry were sown from the island of O'ahu.

William Hooper, reported "planting and fencing" 5000 coffee trees at Koloa, on the island of Kauai, in 1835. By 1845, coffee and sugar were export staples of the then Kingdom of Hawaii.

Soon coffee was needed to fuel the California and Oregon gold rush, and Hawaii's coffee future was indeed looking bright. However, arriving at that future was to prove a difficult journey.

At Hanalei, there were two large plantations with "extensive" plantings which were begun in 1854, licensed by Kamehameha IV. All of these fields produced good yields for a short time, but they were all planted at elevations which may have stressed the cultivar, and in the mid-



JAPANESE LABORERS PICKING COFFEE ON KONA SIDE, ISLAND OF HAWAII
COFFEE UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES

1850's, all of the lower elevation Hawaiian plantings were devastated by a scale insect called "blight," and by 1857, all of the former coffee plantings on Kauai had been converted to sugar production.

Despite the setbacks, early growers learned that coffee planted at the 1000' elevation and higher tended to grow and resist disease better. In Kona the elevation, soil and climate was found to produce some of the choicest beans in the world. The coffee was said "to have an invigorating chocolate flavor" equal to celebrated "mocha" coffee, named after its delivery port of Mocha (or "Mokha") in Yemen. A boom in coffee prices in the 1890s brought many growers, speculation, more acreage and farming refinements. Herman Widemann, a German immigrant who first settled in Kauai, brought Guatemalan beans to the islands that increased production, along with nurseries for the new stock.



MULE TEAMS HAULING WAGONS OF 100 LB. BAGS OF KONA COFFEE

Articles in *The Maui News* report of many healthy coffee plantations on Maui in the Kokomo Districts as well as plantings in West Maui. Editorials from the early nineteen hundreds call for legislative protections of the valuable crop.

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Saturday, 24

MAUI BLUE BOOK

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L. B. Crook, Clerk Circuit Court,	Wailuku
Judge W. A. McKay Dist. Magistrate,	Wailuku
Chas. Copp, " "	Makawao
Kapuniho, " "	Lahaina
Kaliniho, " "	Honouliuli
Jineta, " "	Hana
Prinsah, " "	Kipahulu
Shure, " "	Molokai
Hyatohalahala, " "	Lanai
L. M. Baldwin, Sheriff,	Wailuku
W. F. Saffery, Deputy Sheriff	Wailuku
S. Kalama, " "	Makawao
C. R. Lindsey, " "	Lahaina
F. Wittrock, " "	Hana
G. Trumble, " "	Molokai
Captain Police	Wailuku
H. Copp, " "	Makawao
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J. C. Adams, " "	Hana
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J. N. K. Kaula, Deputy Assessor	Wailuku
W. O. Allen, " "	Pala
G. Dunn, " "	Lahaina
J. Gross, " "	Hana

HAWAIIAN COFFEE MUST BE PROTECTED! This is the keynote of a campaign which the News, initiates with this editorial It is a fight against heavy odds, but it is a fight which must and will win in the end. The News cannot win the fight alone. Every coffee planter on the Islands, and everyone interested in coffee culture must organize into an association with the single word **PROTECTION** emblazoned on its banner. The newspapers of the Islands are vitally interested in the success of coffee culture and they should take up the fight **AT ONCE**. Congress alone can give us protection, and our delegate in congress should lead the fight there. Petitions should be prepared and sent to him from every town, plantation and hamlet on the Islands, and his hands should be strengthened in every manner possible. Hawaiian coffee is admittedly a delicious beverage, Maui is peculiarly adapted to the production of a high grade of coffee, and with just sufficient protection to encourage the industry, thousands of tons of coffee could be shipped from this Island every year. May that time soon come.

In 1902 Charles and Luika Gay purchased most of the fee-simple land on Lana'i and put their energies in cattle ranching and limited agriculture—with a focus on watermelon and pineapple crops and beehives for honey, they also experimented with coffee cultivation.

By World War I in other areas of the Islands, coffee plantings were either converted to sugar, pineapple or abandoned, with of course, the exception of the Big Island. On the island of Hawaii, the largest plantations eventually succumbed to the realities of economics, and were parceled off as smaller plots. For much of the Kona coffee history, family-run

operations were generally the rule, most of them Japanese immigrant families. Many of them were at elevations around 1000 ft. or higher so the incidences of blight were less severe, allowing production to continue in these smaller farms without loss.

Eventually, a “ladybeetle” from Australia was introduced as a predator, and in a short time, the blight ceased to be a significant problem.

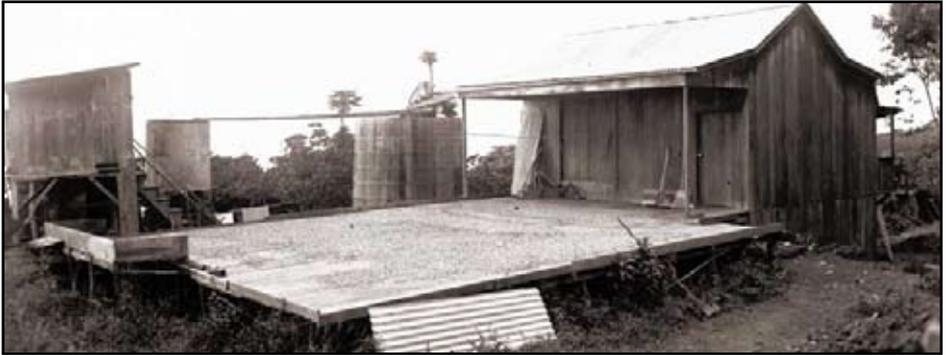


The two World Wars and the Great Depression brought more peaks and valleys to Hawaii’s coffee fortune.

A HAWAI’I COFFEE RENAISSANCE



Kona and the other regions of the Big Island have produced coffee continuously since the early 1800’s and support nearly 600 independent farms. Farms average 3 acres and only a few have 50 or more acres, including some producing coffee organically. Total Big Island coffee acreage is more than 2,000 acres, producing more than 2 million pounds in most years.



A COFFEE DRYING PLATFORM KNOWN AS A “HOSHIDANA” - KONA, HAWAI’I

Maui has more than 50 coffee farms and 500 acres in production, with more being added every year. There are large-scale commercial farms and many smaller coffee estates spanning from Kā’anapali to the slopes of Haleakalā and Hana. Several are producing coffee organically.



COFFEES OF HAWAI’I - KUALAPU’U, MOLOKA’I

Moloka’i has one 500-acre coffee farm in the village of Kualapu’u.

O'ahu has more than 100 acres of coffee in Wahiawa and Waialua.

Kaua'i has the largest coffee orchard in Hawaii and in the United States with 3,100 acres in production. There are also several small estate farms on the Garden Isle.

In 1995 growers from throughout Hawaii's coffee islands banded together to form the Hawaii Coffee Association, dedicated to education, research and high production standards.



KAUA'I COFFEE COMPANY

Today Hawaiian coffees are known for their delicate and well-balanced taste, rich aroma and clean finish. With just under 800 farms and approximately 6,300 acres in production today, Hawaii ranks among the smallest coffee production areas in the world. Yet Hawaiian coffee consistently ranks in the top ten coffees of the world year after great tasting year. This is no small feat; after petroleum, coffee is the second most heavily-traded commodity in the world.

In the 2010 crop year, state-wide "green" bean production stood at 7,900,000 pounds, representing approximately 26,000,000 dollars in sales in parchment or \$260,000,000 retail, making Hawai'i coffee one of the states most valuable crops.

So, before you take your next sip of Hawaii coffee, stop and thank the first botanists, early entrepreneurial farmers and today's hard-working growers. They brought you that delicate and delicious Hawaiian coffee bean.



Nicholas N. I. Goodness
Todd Scantlebury

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www.hawaiihistory.org



“The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.”



Mahalo

State of Hawai'i
Department of Agriculture

County of Maui

Maui County Farm Bureau

Hawai'i Coffee Association

Maui Coffee Association

and

all the hard-working coffee growers here in Hawai'i,
past and present, who made this all possible.