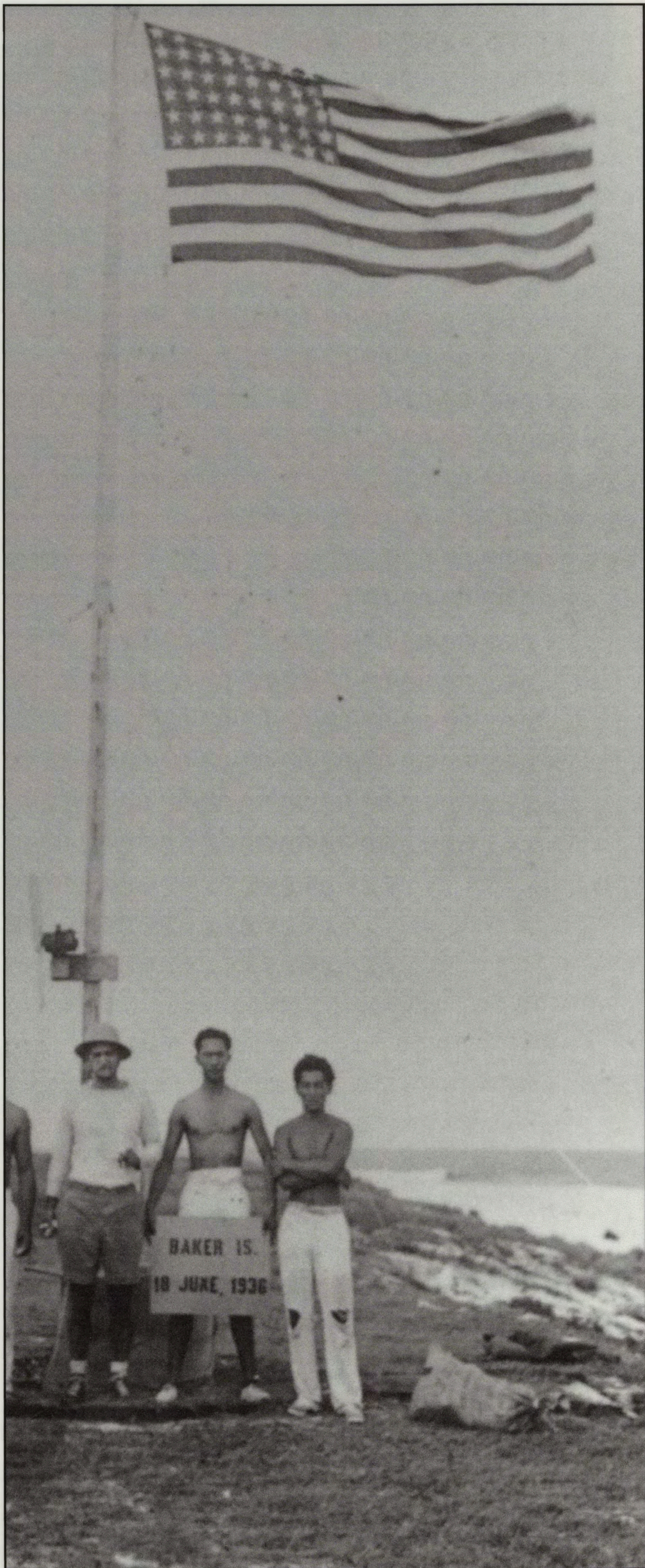




BAKER MODULE

Mural
(35.25" x 36")

BAKER ISLAND

"You could smell the island before you could see it."

This was not the first time Baker Island would serve as a temporary home for Hawaiians. Once called "Pua-ka-'ilima," flower of the 'ilima, Baker Island hosted Hawaiian workers who, from 1859-1878, sifted thousands of tons of high-grade guano from the limestone rubble. At times, the island seemed to almost welcome her returning inhabitants.



A barren Baker Island, barely visible above the surf.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



The first shore party on Baker Island: Corp. Summers (with plaque), Corp. Surber, Ralph Wilson, William Kaina, Abraham Piianaia, and William T. Miller, standing, 1935.
Photo by J.W. Kelly, courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

Left: Baker Island is reoccupied by Hawaiian colonists, June 18, 1936.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

"This evening after dinner, the full moon glided over the horizon in all its splendor and beauty, making all other stars and constellations in the heavens seem insignificant. As we watched in silence, the panorama continually changes—everything is at it was, never as it is— we see the moon as it was one, two, or three minutes ago. I glance at Young, and he seems to be in deep reverie. Suddenly he says, 'I'm just wondering how many other people are watching that same moon.'"

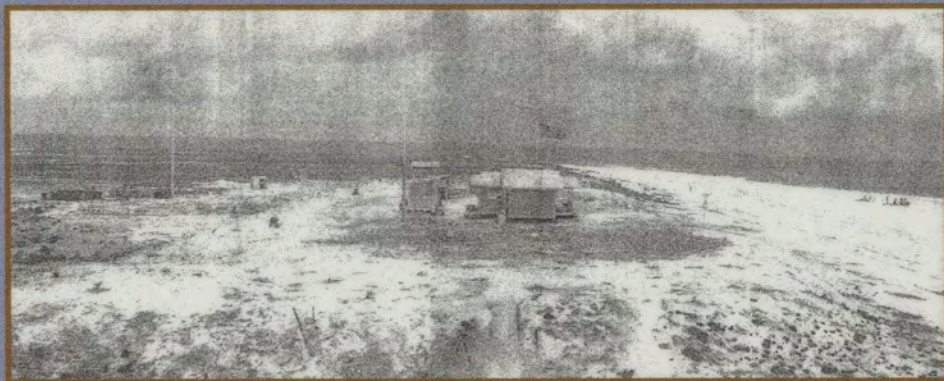
— Abraham Piianaia
Baker log, July 3, 1936

"Baker is an island about one mile long, a half a mile wide, and about fifteen, twenty feet above sea level. The deep end of the reef...was very steep, infested with sharks, and plenty of fish. But you could smell the island before you could see it because of all the guano from the birds there. And in the evening the birds would come in from fishing. They would fly low, they were heavily laden with fish."

— Arthur Harris
Interview, March 27, 2002

"During breakfast we all seemed to have the same thought in minds—dreams. Every one of us has been having fantastic dreams the past few nights. Willie Kaina and I are used to these dreams as we have had hundreds of them during our 10 months here, but to Ed Young it is something novel...Sometimes I wonder if isolation from a civilization which we are accustomed to has anything to do with a person dreaming..."

— Abraham Piianaia
Baker log, June 23, 1936



A panoramic of Baker Island, showing the "town" of Meyerton, 1938.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

BAKER MODULE

3.A.1 Middle Panel
(41" x 48")
Baker Island

LANDING SUPPLIES

Known as the "hostile" island, Baker's unwelcome shorebreak made landing nearly impossible. Ships would anchor several hundreds yards off shore and send supplies in on smaller boats, which routinely overturned, spilling their precious cargo into the churning surf.

"The sea was slightly better today...a boat crew broke through the surf safely. However, on the trip back to the island the boat overturned in the surf. Lashed in the boat was 3/4 bag of rice, 1/2 bag of sugar, and one bag containing about 20 pounds of sweet potatoes, one dozen lemons, 5 pounds onions, and one pumpkin. All of these were saved. The sugar was soaked, but it was immediately dipped in fresh water, then dried out. In several hours it was as good as new."

— Baker log
November 29, 1935



High surf greets the *Itasca* as it approaches for a landing, 1935.

Photo by J.W. Kelly, courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Coast Guard crew assist in the offloading of supplies.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

"Fortunately, no lives were lost and no one was seriously injured in the five times the boat overturned. In about 15 attempts to go through the surf from land, only four were successful."

— Baker log
December 2, 1935

Roughly oval in shape and consisting of a mere 339 acres, Baker's highest point rose less than 20 feet above mean sea level.

Map by Michael Blasco, Bishop Museum



BAKER MODULE

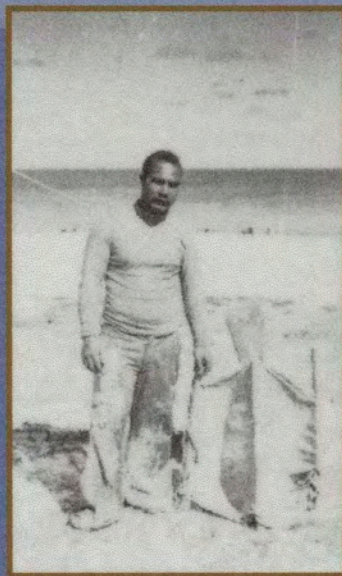
3.A.2 Right Panel
(30" x 48")
Landing Supplies

DAILY LIFE ON BAKER

The young colonists took seriously their "reforestation" duties, planting and tending to numerous coconut trees. They also took weather reports, dividing into four watches of three hours each so that the reports "could be made as accurate as possible."

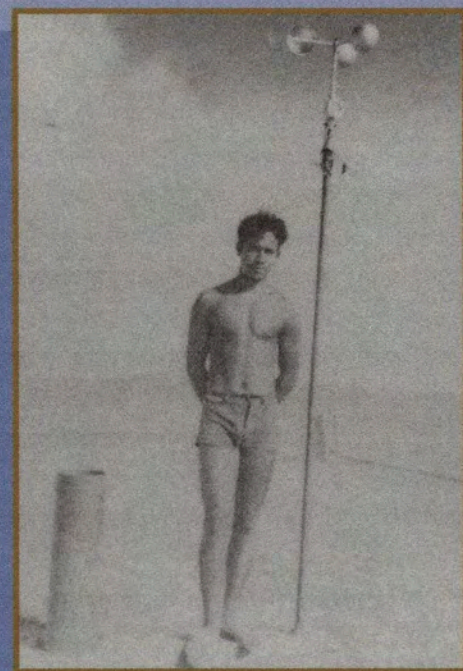
"Today marks the fifth month of our occupation of this island. During that time we have built our camps at three different sites, and have planted about 50 coconuts, over 30 of which are now growing."

— Baker Log, September 2, 1935



Herbert Hooper in front of one of the coconut trees planted by the early colonists. Rats would often chew the stalks off the young plants.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Sammy Kalama with a rain gauge, used to measure the meager rainfall, September, 1935.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Early colonists, in a relaxed moment, Sept. 1935.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

THE VORACIOUS NORWAY RATS

The Norway rat had found its way to Baker Island via whaling ships. The rat had done considerable damage to bird life by feeding on small birds and eggs. With the arrival of the colonists, the rats found a myriad of new activities to occupy their time. Young coconut trees, food supplies, and even beards were fair game to the rats.

"Last night the rats chewed off more of our coconut palms. They must have been desperately hungry to do so. This has riled me, so we are having a rat drive tonight. Captured 22 rats."

— Baker Log, November 20, 1935

"He finally admitted that he cut his beard because for the past several nights the rats have been chewing on it."

— Baker Log, July 17, 1936

"They were big rats about 6 to 8 inches long. The rats would climb up the ropes and get at the food that you had wrapped up and hauled to the top of the tent."

— Arthur Harris
Interview, March 27, 2002

"And the island had these big rats, which ate the pili grass. Vegetarians. We used to catch them and roast them for red meat. They were delicious!"

— Abe Piiānala
Honolulu Star Bulletin, April 28, 2002

BAKER MODULE

3.B.1 Middle Panel
(41" x 48")
Daily Life On Baker Island

ALONE AT LAST

Once the Coast Guard cutter disappeared, the colonists were left to their own devices. They found themselves in total isolation, without even a radio to communicate with the outside world.

"We watched in silence for several moments. Then we all looked at each other with a mixture of sadness and happiness in our eyes-sad to see our only contact with the world, our homes, and friends, getting farther away every moment, yet happy to be left by ourselves on this little atoll that we hope will be of great importance some day."

— Baker Log, June 8, 1936



Colonists watch the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Roger B. Taney* fade into the distance, 1941.

Photo courtesy of Elvin Mattson

LEADERSHIP

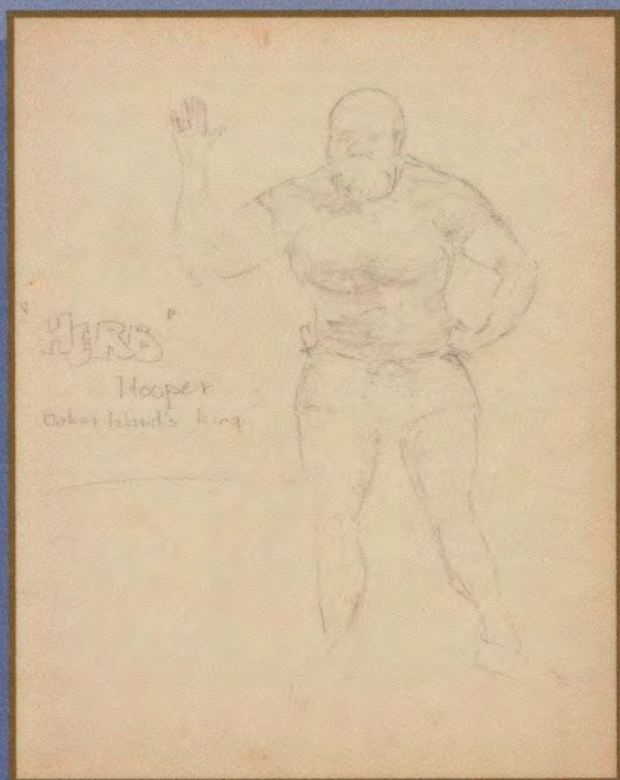
Under the leadership of Abe Piianaia, a post he held for 4 "tours," the early groups worked out a policy of changing the schedule every 26 days "so that every man will have a chance to have different watches. Each will have a chance to do the cooking." Herbert Hooper, a member of the group, became the one to experiment, building a windmill to charge a battery and constructing a pili grass hut for shelter.

"All of us gave a silent prayer that nothing serious happens to the youngest of our companions."

— Baker Log, June 18, 1936

"Hooper found some driftwood, made a house frame, and thatched it with 'pili' grass. He mounted it on four empty drums and it afforded a very cool arbor to sit under when it gets hot."

— Baker Log, November 10, 1935



Reproduction of drawing of Herbert Hooper by James Carroll, a "spare" on the 4th expedition.

Courtesy of Kamehameha Schools Archives

BAKER MODULE

3.B.2 Left Panel
(30" x 48")
Alone At Last

FOOD, FISHING & FUN

Although work-related activities consumed much of their daily routine, the young Hawaiians found time to enjoy themselves and their surroundings by doing what came naturally—fishing, playing music, and talking story. Their thoughts also never strayed too far from home. Extra dried fish was often set aside to send back to their families.

"For dinner Young surprised us with a plate of raw aama. After such a meal, there was nothing but contentment written on everybody's face."

— Baker Log, July 15, 1936

Dear Henry (Ahia)
I hope you are saving your money. As for me, I am asking Black to put \$500 in the Building and Loan Association. From the bottom of my heart I hope you folks back here are having a much easier time financially. I won't be a damn fool like the last time I came back from Jarvis. I'm sending dried papio and squid. If you folks want some take some and give the rest to Papa.

Your loving brother,
Charlie (Ahia)
Baker Island,
November 13, 1937

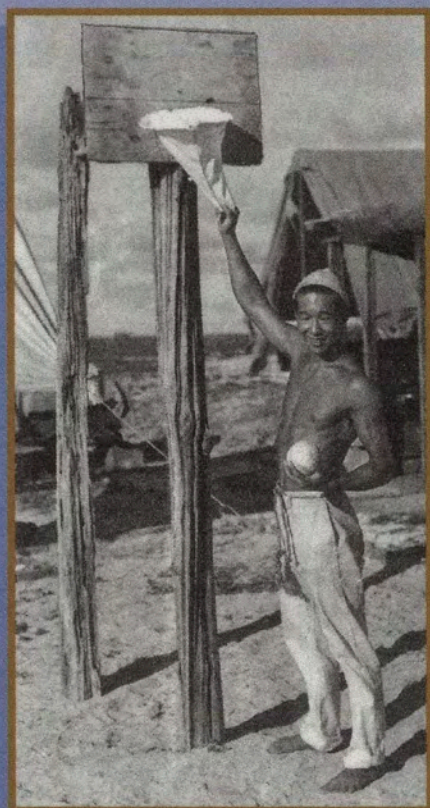
"This is Thanksgiving Day, but the sea doesn't seem to know it. It is still angry and rumbling like a spoiled tiger. Having no turkey, chicken or pig did not spoil our Thanksgiving Day party a bit. Caught two booby birds and introduced them to the cook. The cook curried one and stewed the other, and believe me, when dinner was over there was no booby bird left on the table. Everybody enjoyed it and was surprised to find it tasted so good. That was something to be thankful for."

— Baker Log, November 28, 1935



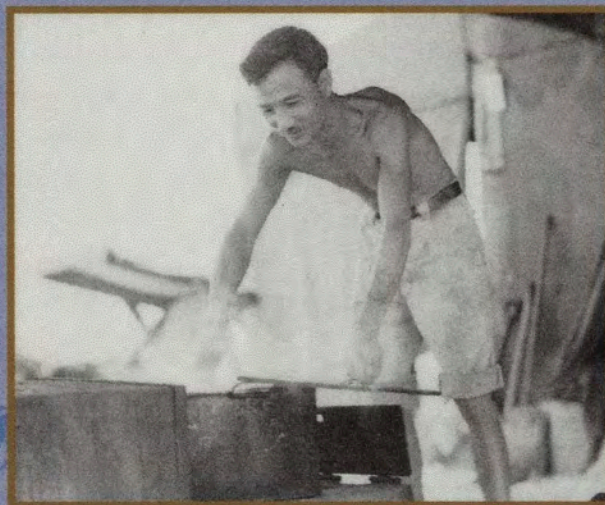
Musical entertainment followed the dedication ceremony of the Government House.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Creative use of driftwood, a crab net, and a softball enabled the colonists to play basketball.

Photo courtesy of Burl Burlingame

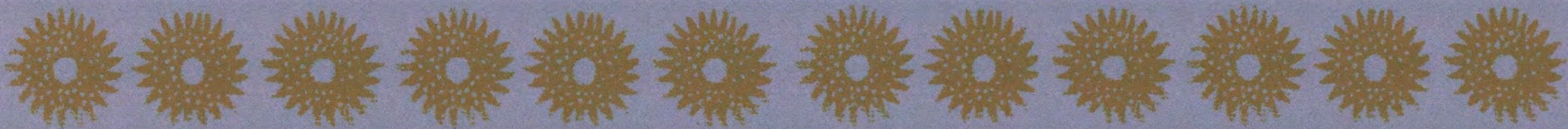


Boiling fresh lobsters on the stove.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

BAKER MODULE

**3.B.3 Right Panel
(30" x 48")
Food, Fishing & Fun**



BAKER ISLAND ROSTER

Listed by Expedition

1

April 2 & 18, 1935

Summers, Carl (Army) (Leader)
Surber, George (Army)
Wilson, Ralph (Army)
Kaina, William N.
Pi'ianai'a, Abraham

2

June 19, 1935

Piianaia, Abraham (Leader)
Kaina, William N.
Kalama, Samuel
Ching, Archie

3

September 19, 1936

Piianaia, Abraham (Leader)
Kaina, William N.
Hooper, Herbert
Ching, Archie

4

January 19 & March 1, 1936

Hooper, Herbert (Leader)
Waiwaiole, Luther
Kauahikaua, Archie
Kim, Joseph

5

June 18, 1936

Piianaia, Abraham (Leader)
Kaina, William
Bell, Kenneth
Young, Edward

6

August 6, 1936

Piianaia, Abraham (Leader)
Kaina, William
Kim, Joseph
Young, Edward

7

October 26, 1936

Akana, Albert K. (Leader)
Burke, Eugene
Leong, Ah Kin
Victor, Gabriel

8

January 27, 1937

Akana, Albert K. (Leader)
Burke, Eugene
Lum, Paul Yat
Victor, Gabriel

9

March 16, 1937

Akana, Albert K. (Leader)
Burke, Eugene
Leong, Ah Kin
Victor, Gabriel

10

June 24, 1937

Ahia, Charles A.
Lum, Paul Yat
Williamson, Elmer
Akana, Theodore

11

November 17, 1937

Akana, Theodore
Chang, Herbert
Williamson, Elmer

12

March, 1938

Akana, Theodore
Chang, Herbert
McCorriston, Mike

13

July 23, 1938

McCorriston, Mike
Chang, Herbert
Boyd, Andrew
Lee, H.K.

14

December 1, 1938

Akana, Bernard
Ching, Lawrence
Boyd, Andrew
Lee, H.K.

15

March 20, 1939

Suares, Louis (Leader)
Crowden, Lawrence
Akana, Bernard
Ching, Lawrence

16

June 10, 1939

Suares, Louis (Leader)
Stein, Charles
Jensen, Hans
Au, Charles

17

October 12, 1939

Suares, Louis (Leader)
Stein, Charles
Jensen, Hans
Au, Charles

18

March 10, 1940

Paoa, Melvin
Toomey, John K.
Phillips, Woodrow
Jensen, Hans

19

July 24 & 28, 1940

Jensen, Karl
Toomey, John K.
Phillips, Woodrow
Kepo'o, Joseph

20

October, 1940

Jensen, Karl
Toomey, John K.
Kepo'o, Joseph

21

March 25 & 27, 1941

Rankin, Earnest W.
Pea, William K.
Jensen, K.E.
Kepo'o, Joseph

22

July 28, 1941

Burke, Walter (Leader)
Makua, Blue
Jensen, K.E.
Kepo'o, Joseph

23

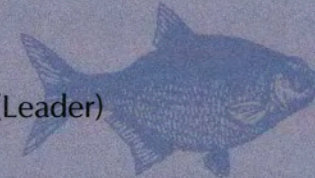
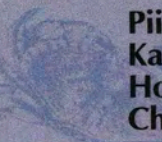
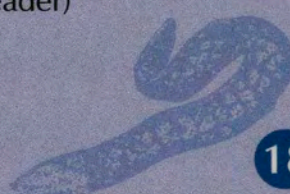
November, 1941

Burke, Walter (Leader)
Pease, J.K.
Coyle, J.W.
Makua, Blue

24

February 9, 1942

All colonists removed



BAKER MODULE

3.C.1 Left Panel
(30" x 36")
Baker Island Roster

HUI PANALĀ'AU-

PHOTOS & DOCUMENTS



Abe Piianaia,
Class of 1933, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



Luther Waiwaiolo,
Class of 1932, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives

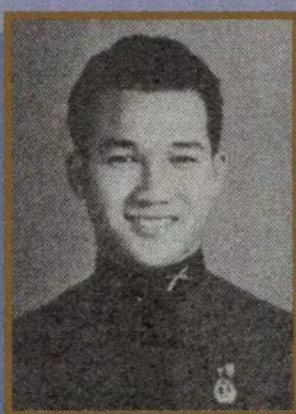
William Kaina,
Class of 1933, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



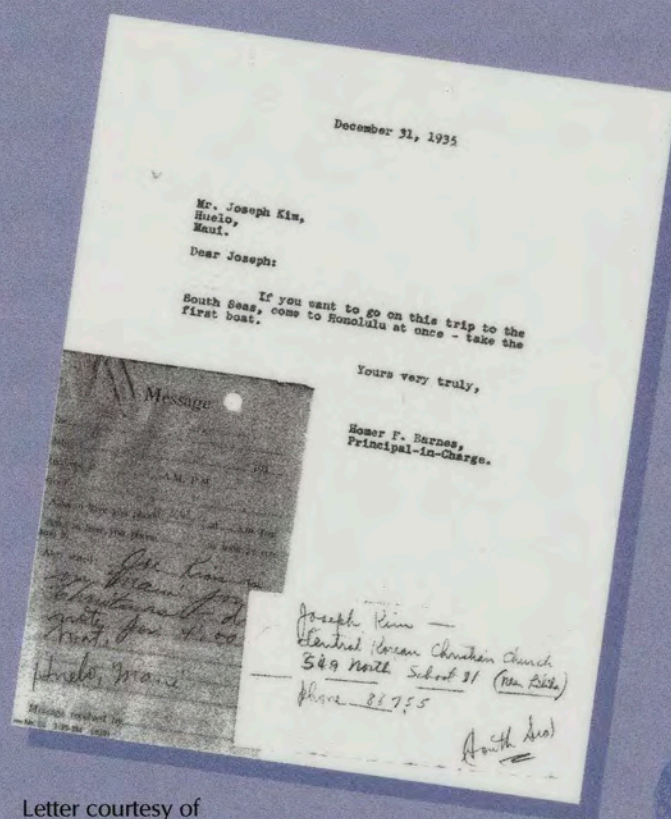
Archie Kauahikaua,
Class of 1929, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives

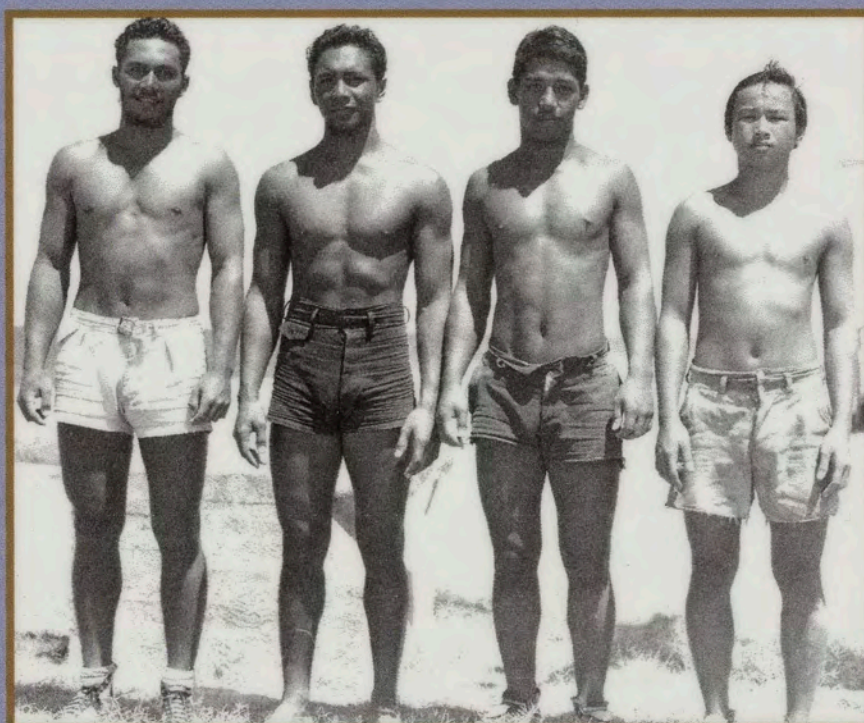


Joe Kim,
Class of 1935, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



Letter courtesy of
Kamehameha Schools Archives



Albert Akana, Eugene Burke, Gabriel Victor, Ah Kin Leong, 1937.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

BAKER MODULE

3.C.2 Right Panel
(30" x 36")

Photos & Documents

THE LUCRATIVE GUANO MARKET

Under the Guano Act of 1856, America laid claim to numerous small islands in the central Pacific, including Jarvis, Baker, Howland, Canton, and Enderbury. Known as the phosphate islands, these islands yield some of the highest quality bird droppings, a natural fertilizer, known as guano. From 1857 to 1877, thousands of tons of guano were sifted by hand from the limestone rubble, carried across to the landing on tram cars, and loaded with great difficulty through the pounding surf onto schooners and clipper ships. When the best of the guano had been dug and shipped away, the islands were abandoned, leaving them open to British occupation.

"The method of transferring this animal wealth [guano] from its native bed to the hold of the ship is as follows: A railway track is laid from the shore to some rich field inland. Here the guano is shoveled into stout canvas bags, which are then drawn on cars by mules or kanakas to the landing place on the shore. In its transit over the track the car passes over one of Fairbanks' scales and its weight is accurately ascertained. At the beach, each guano bag weighing about 100 pounds, is placed on the back of an athletic kanaka, who bears it to a whale boat, which is drawn up sufficiently far upon the beach to escape the power of the surf."

Baker's Island, Pacific Ocean
Friday, January 15, 1869
From *Life on a Guano Island* by Nathaniel B. Emerson



An advertisement for guano from
Paradise of the Pacific, 1910.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

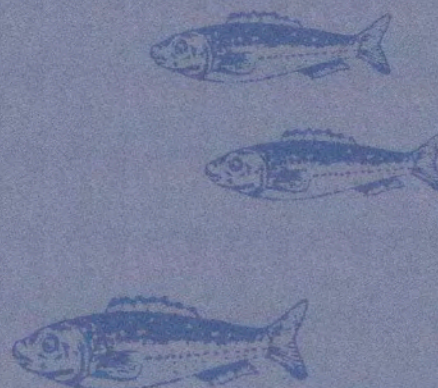


A prominent landmark on Baker Island, "Judd Hale" was occupied by both American and British guano workers. The stonework was later used by the colonists to build the Amelia Earhart lighthouse.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Literally hundreds of thousands of Blue-faced Boobies and Sooty Terns called Howland Island their home.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



BAKER MODULE

3.D.1 Right Panel
(30" x 48")
The Lucrative Guano Market

A BAND OF TAWNY GLADIATORS

Hundreds of Hawaiian workers toiled in sun-baked guano fields throughout the Pacific. Much like the young colonists who would walk in their footsteps 80 years later, the ability of these laborers to adhere to Hawaiian traditions and values made their stays more tolerable. Hawaiian guano workers on Baker, although a 1,000 miles from home, continued to swim, surf, fish, and even compose mele for their beloved ali'i.

"These patient, hardy, dark-skinned kanakas who dig and handle the guano, and pull the toilsome car through boiling surf from sunrise to sunset, under the glare of an equatorial sun, are natives of the Hawaiian Islands, and are a remarkable race of people. Their skin takes on a darker hue, and as they strip for a swim in the ocean, or for a ride on the foaming crest of the breakers, you would think you were gazing on a band of tawny gladiators."

— Baker's Island, Pacific Ocean
Friday, Jan. 15, 1869
From *Life on a Guano Island*
by Nathaniel B. Emerson



Hawaiians working the guano fields of Laysan Island.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

Song of the Workers of Baker Island

This mele, dedicated to Queen Emma, was composed by one or several poet-workers among the guano-digging crews.

Mele a Na Pa'ahana i Pua-ka-ilima

Aia e ka nani i Pua-ka-ilima.
Kela'ilana noho i ke kai.
No kahi ka makani la a he Kona.
Ha'ia i lau la'au o ka uka.
No uka ka 'iwa I kiani mai.
Ke hea mai nei ka nui kino.
E naue a'e au me ku'u hoa.
Me ku'u komo kaimana i ka la'i.
Ha'ina ka puana no ku'u lani.
No Emalani no la he inoa.

Song of the Workers of Baker Island

There is beauty here on Pua-ka-ilima,
island-flower of the western sea
but the Kona wind blowing inland
strips every leaf and tree.
Along the ridge a sea eagle soars
Calling, "Come, come back to Hawai'i and me."
Now let me walk with my love,
In quiet contentment, alone with my diamond ring.
I go to her soon.
Here is a song for my Queen.
Emalani is her name.

From *The Echo of Our Song*, 1975
Translation by Mary Kawena Pukui



A recent photo from Baker Island captures century-old evidence of guano mining.
Photo courtesy of Stephanie Holzwarth

BAKER MODULE

3.D.2 Left Panel
(30" x 48")
A Band of Tawny Gladiators