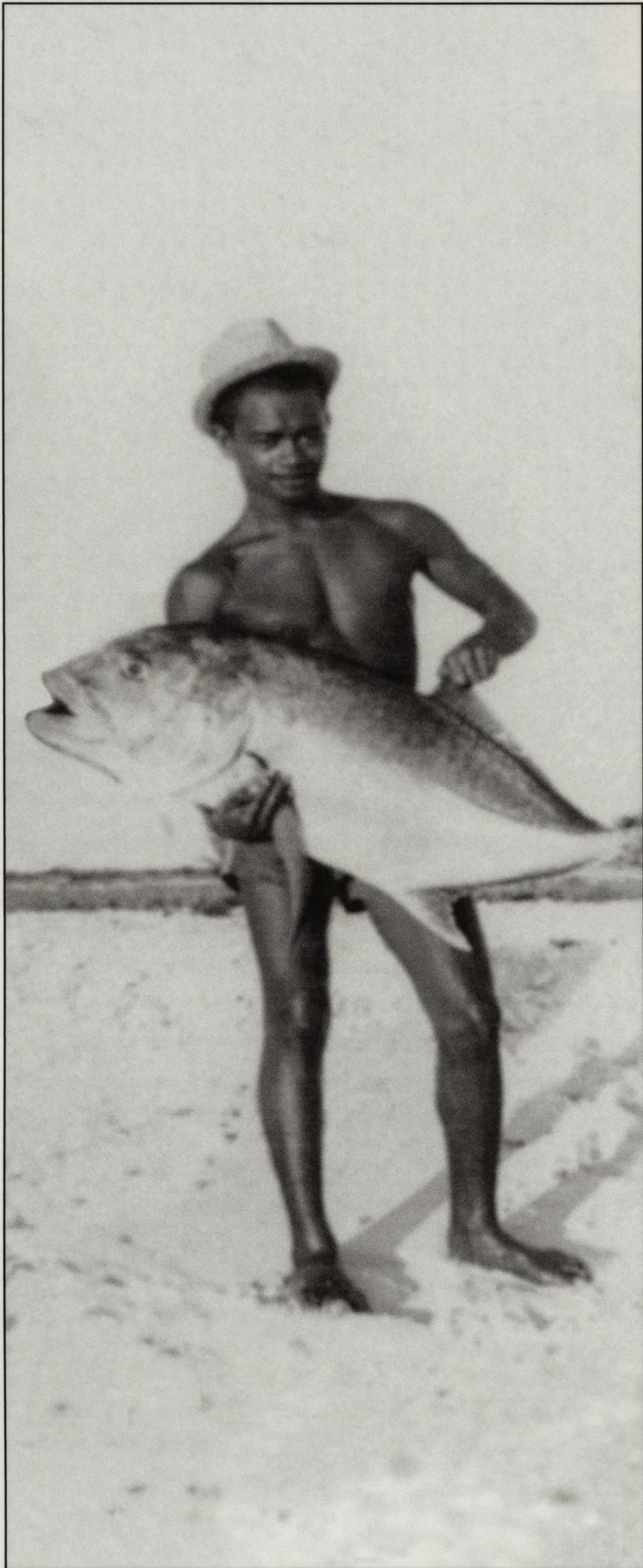




HOWLAND MODULE

Mural
(35.25" x 36")

HOWLAND ISLAND-

"Once you get there, you wish you never got there."

Known as Ulukou for its scraggly clump of kou trees, Howland Island was low, narrow and elongated. It was a little over 1 1/2 miles long and 1/2 mile wide. Unlike Jarvis and Baker, there was no pronounced beach crest or central depression. The entire surface of Howland was flat, and rose less than 20 feet above sea level.



The first encampment is barely visible above the shoreline of Howland Island, April 18, 1935.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



After landing and setting up camp, the American flag was raised in a prominent position, April 1, 1935.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

"The [kou] trees actually, instead of growing up they grew something like the hau tree because the birds roosted on them. Millions of birds, so the trees didn't have a chance to grow straight up, they grew on the side."

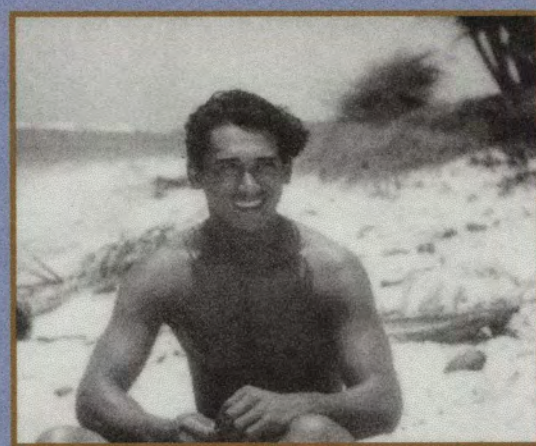
— Arthur Harris
Radio interview, March 26, 2002

"You get to feel, after everybody leaves and you're sitting down by yourself and you start to think, what did I get myself into?"

— Elvin Mattson
Interview, April 2, 2002



Howland Island, showing Itascatown.
Map by Michael Blasco, Bishop Museum



James Kamakaiwi was on Howland for over two years, from the original landing in 1935 to July 1937.
Photo from Song of the Islands, courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

Left: Colonist Richard Whaley poses with an ulua on Howland island, 1941.

Photo courtesy of Elvin Mattson

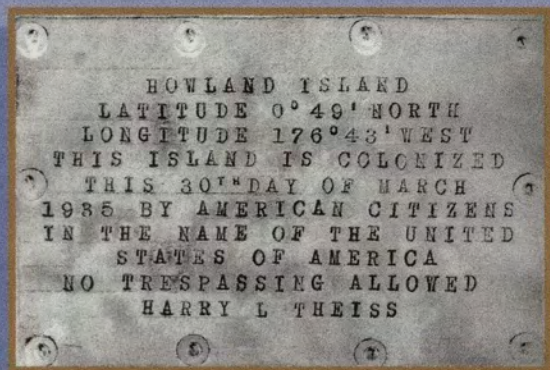


HOWLAND MODULE

4.A.1 Middle Panel
(41" x 48")
Howland Island

COLONIZATION

Colonization of Howland Island began on March 30, 1935 by four Army personnel and one Hawaiian, James Kamakaiwi. Within three months, all Army personnel were rotated off the islands and replaced by Hawaiians. Nearly a year later, all the colonists would be removed, their occupation having been deemed a success. Following President Roosevelt's Executive Order asserting jurisdiction over the islands, Howland would again be reoccupied and would remain so continuously until 1942.



Plaques such as these were placed on each island at the base of the flagpole, declaring the jurisdiction of the United States.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Richard Black of the U.S. Department of the Interior and Capt. Harold Meyer with Howland Island colonists, 1937.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

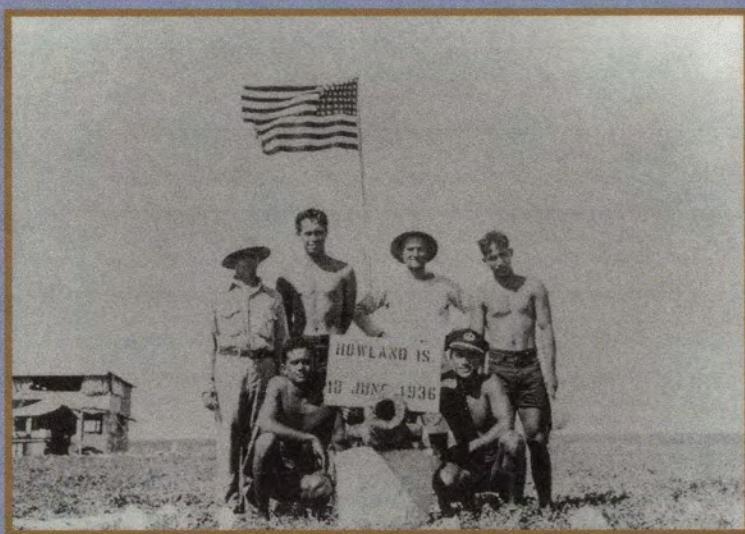
"We were 100 percent tan. From the time the Coast Guard dropped us off on the island, we'd take off our shirts and wave goodbye, and never put them back on. It was paradise."

— William Hutchinson
Imua, Spring 1993

"I have visited Howland, Baker, Canton, Enderbury, Jarvis, and Palmyra Islands, and it is my honest opinion that the only two places where mainland raised men taken at random could stand the climate for more than ninety days are Canton and Palmyra. There is much romance attendant upon the thought of an assignment to a tropical isle. However, when it is considered that the islands are lonely as prisons, at most of the places no shade exists and that an almost unbearable sun bears down on them all day, every day parching the skin and hurting the eyes regardless of protective glasses, an entirely different picture is gained. I do not say that mainlanders cannot stand these assignments. If picked carefully they can, but I do predict that if mainlanders are assigned these jobs we will have several troublesome experiences before we find a crew of men who can stick them out."

The Hawaiians can stand the island assignments. They have proven it by staying nine, twelve and fifteen months and coming back to Hawaii in perfect physical and mental condition."

— W.F. McBride,
Chief Radio Engineering Section
Iolani Palace, Honolulu, April 8, 1940



Howland is reoccupied on June 18, 1936, following President Roosevelt's Executive Order placing the islands under U.S. control.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

HOWLAND MODULE

4.A.2 Right Panel
(30" x 48")
Colonization

DAILY LIFE ON HOWLAND ISLAND

Howland's natural environment provided the colonists with an abundance of activities. With a little bit of creativity, humor, and initiative, the colonists always found something to occupy their time.

"We found the weakness of the skipper that would come down...We knew when they were coming down. So we went out that evening and got bags of lobsters. That was the easiest place to get lobster.

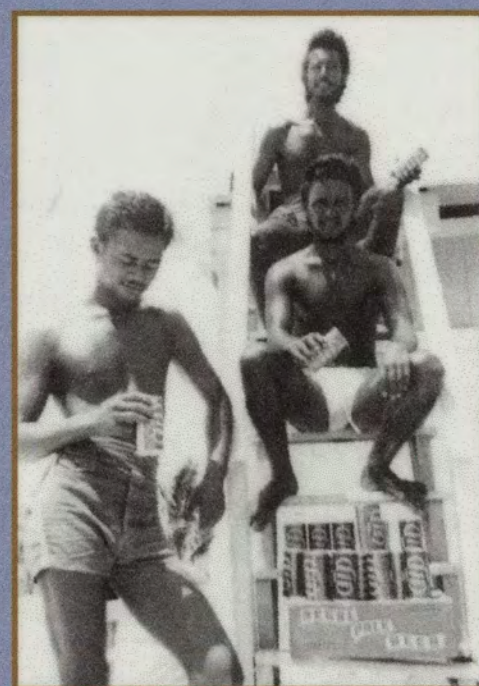
You go in there when the tide is low in about a foot of water. You see the lobsters going around all over the place. You'd fill up two, three big gunny sacks full. The next day when the ship came in we'd get our beer, which is a no-no...we'd get something like 4-6 cases of beer!"

— Elvin Mattson
Interview, April 2, 2002



"One of the duties was to go out and catch these cats. The island was getting overrun with cats. So we'd put them in cages. Prior to that, the island was overrun with rats..., so they brought in the cats to control the rats."

Elvin Mattson, interview, April 2, 2002



Whaley, Elvin and Keliihananui enjoying the fruits of their lobster exchange, 1941.

Photo courtesy of Elvin Mattson

LEI HULU

Bill Hutchinson took up feather lei making in his spare time. He would tease the tropical bird with a stick, grab hold of its beak, put one wing under each foot, and then pluck its shiny pearly pinkish neck feathers. For backing, he would cut strips from his canvas shorts.



Bill Hutchinson showing off his feather lei, 1939.

Photo courtesy of Mary Ann Hutchinson

On the way home I thought of the old trick with the Frigate birds, which Mr. Albert F. Judd, Trustee of the Kamehameha Schools, told us of...Two rats were tied at both ends of a cord and thrown into the air...One bird would swallow one rat and the other rat would be dangling, when suddenly another bird would grab it. The two birds, swallowing their rats, would fly in different directions, and one rat would come dangling out of the other's throat...when we reached camp we tried this trick, and used fishes instead of rats. We had the time of our lives watching the birds, and I never laughed so much since landing on the island."

HOWLAND MODULE

4.B.1 Middle Panel
(41" x 48")
Daily Life On Howland
Island

FROM TABLE TALK TO SHORT WAVE RADIOS

As Howland progressed from mere tents to the permanent structures of "Itascatown," so to did the ability of the colonists to communicate with the outside world. Although later colonists, with their short wave radios, were not nearly as isolated as their predecessors, overall success still depended upon four young men and their ability to get along.

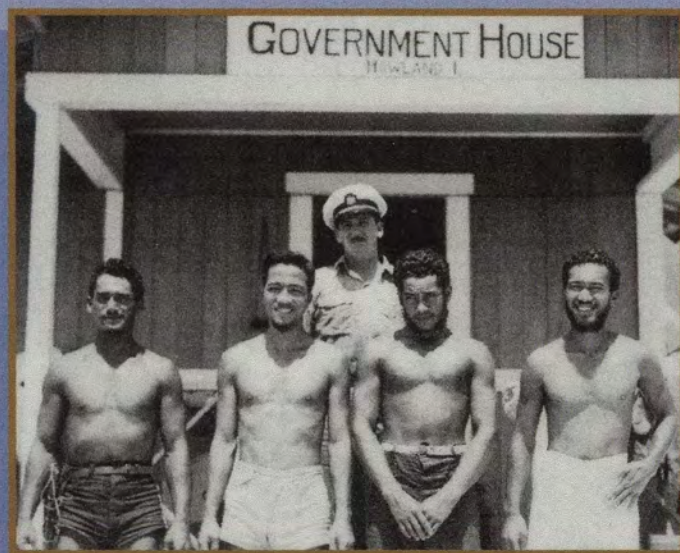


"While we were having breakfast this morning we talked about the good things (deeds and all that) that we did and those that came our way, and also of our faults and ungentlemanly actions. Killarney and I scored a hundred per cent because we only spent two months of this period back home. We could not find any fault, so we scored ourselves highly. The other two we gave eighty per cent and a big laugh."

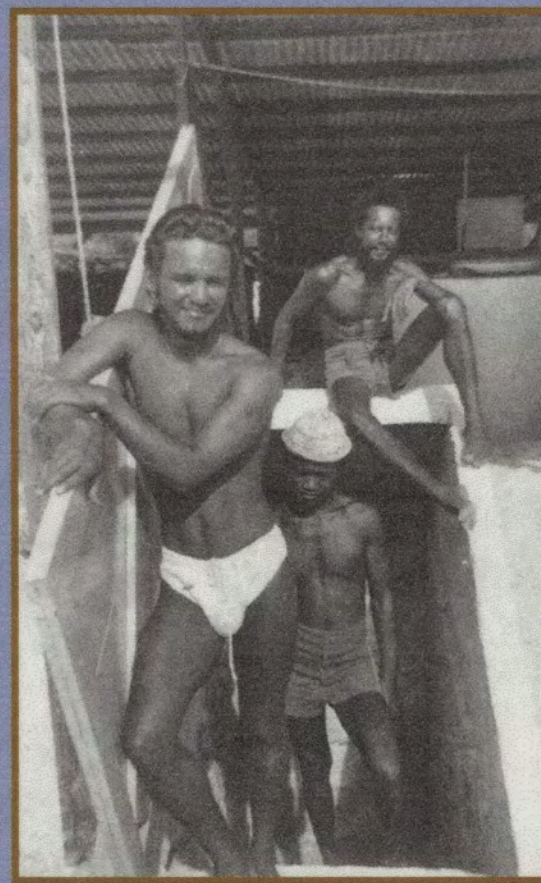
— James Kamakaiwi
Howland log, December 29, 1935



Harry T. Stewart, Territorial Architect for Hawaii, assisted in the construction of government houses on each of the islands, 1936.
Photo courtesy of George Kahanu, Sr.



Black, Kamakaiwi, Lum, Tavares and Kaina stand before a newly built Government House, 1937.
Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



Elvin Mattson, Richard Whaley, and Joe Keliihanui in their "deluxe" accommodations, 1941.
Photo courtesy of Elvin Mattson

"When we were not working, we looked for shells along the beaches, went fishing or contacted amateur radio operators on the West Coast of the U.S. by short wave. Off and on we would listen to commercial radio programs broadcast from the West Coast. We liked Harry Owens' Band, which used to play at the Royal Hawaiian, best of all. It was a great evening on Howland whenever we heard him."

— Thomas Beterman
Life Magazine, March 9, 1942

"We had a refrigerator and gas stove and all the facilities of modern life. ...Tom [Beterman] had a short wave radio and he knew all the people to call up on it. Once or twice a week we could talk to the folks back home. Sunday was the day you called home."

— Elvin Mattson
Interview, April 2, 2002

HOWLAND MODULE

4.B.2 Left Panel
(30" x 48")
From Table Talk
To Short Wave Radios

HOWLAND ISLAND ROSTER

Listed by Expedition

1 March 30 & April 18, 1935

Theiss, Henry (Army) (Leader)
Duff, Leonard (Army)
Lawler, Vernon (Army)
Kamakaiwi, James
Dyen, Samuel
Opiopio, Killarney

2 June 19, 1935

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Opiopio, Killarney
Anahu, William N.
Toomey, William T.

3 September 19, 1936

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Opiopio, Killarney
Anakalea, Joseph
Faufata, Folinga

4 January 19 & March 1, 1936

Anakalea, Joseph (Leader)
Kahapea, Alexander
Kalama, Solomon
Ohumukini, Henry

5 June 18, 1936

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Opiopio, Killarney
Markham, William S.
Pea, Kini

6 August 6, 1936

Opiopio, Killarney (Leader)
Anakalea, Joseph
Leong, Ah Kin
Yomes, William

7 October 26, 1936

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Lum, Paul Yat
Anakalea, Joseph
Tavares, William

8 January 27, 1937

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Lum, Yau Fai
Kaina, William
Tavares, William

9 March 15, 1937

Kamakaiwi, James (Leader)
Lum, Yau Fai
Kaina, William
Tavares, William

10 June 25, 1937

Kaina, William (Leader)
Lum, Paul Yat
Anakalea, Joseph

11 November 16, 1937

Ahia, Charles (Leader)
Tavares, William
Lum-King, Kenneth
Anakalea, Joseph

12 March 23, 1938

Kinney, James (Leader)
Medeiros, Henry
Lum-King, Kenneth

13 July 22, 1938

Kinney, James (Leader)
Medeiros, Henry
Chang, Herbert
Kahalewai, Samuel

14 November 30, 1938

Tavares, William
Fiakowski, Henry
Wilhelm, Frederick
Burke, Eugene

15 March 21, 1939

Burke, Eugene (Leader)
Crowden, Lawrence
Hutchinson, William
Lee, H.K.
McCorriston, E.M.

16 June 10, 1939

McCorriston, E.M. (Leader)
Robinson, Alexander
Bederman, Thomas
Pea, William I.

17 October 12, 1939

Stillman, Francis (Leader)
Pea, William
Robinson, Alexander
Bederman, Thomas

18 March 9, 1940

McCorriston, E.M. (Leader)
Lieson, Robert W.
Henderson, Waldron
Pea, William

19 July 23 & 29, 1940

Suares, Louis
Keliihananui, J.K.
Lieson, Robert W.
Henderson, Waldron

20 October, 1940

Suares, Louis (Leader)
Keliihananui, J.K.
Lieson, Robert W.
Henderson, Waldron

21 March 27 - 28, 1941

Bederman, T.W.
Keliihananui, J.K.
Knell, H.C.
Zagara, D.P.

22 July 28, 1941

Bederman, T.W.
Keliihananui, J.K.
Whaley, Richard
Mattson, Elvin K.

23 November, 1941

Bederman, T.W.
Keliihananui, J.K. *
Whaley, Richard *
Mattson, Elvin K.

* Note: Keliihananui & Whaley
were killed on December 8, 1941
by enemy fire

24 January 31, 1942

Remaining colonists removed

Bederman, T.W.
Mattson, Elvin K.

HOWLAND MODULE

4.C.1 Left Panel
(30" x 36")
Howland Island Roster

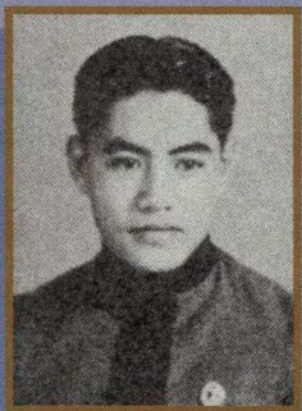
HUI PANALĀ'AU-

PHOTOS & DOCUMENTS



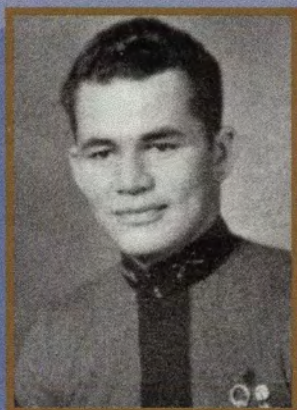
William Anahu,
Class of 1936, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



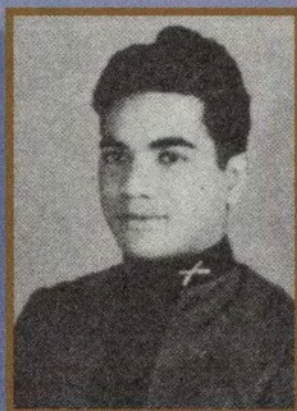
Joe Anakalea,
Class of 1936, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



William Toomey,
Class of 1936, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



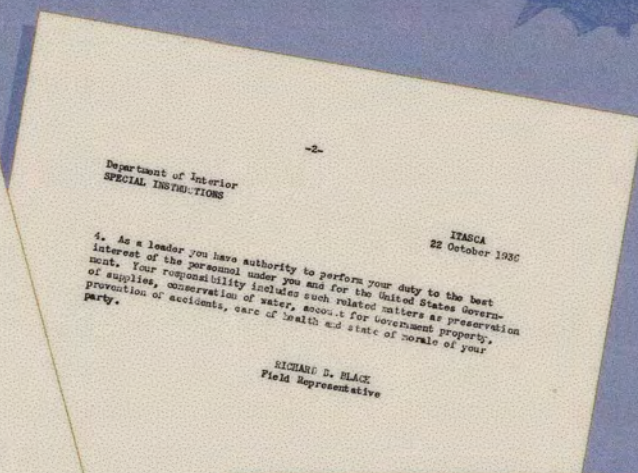
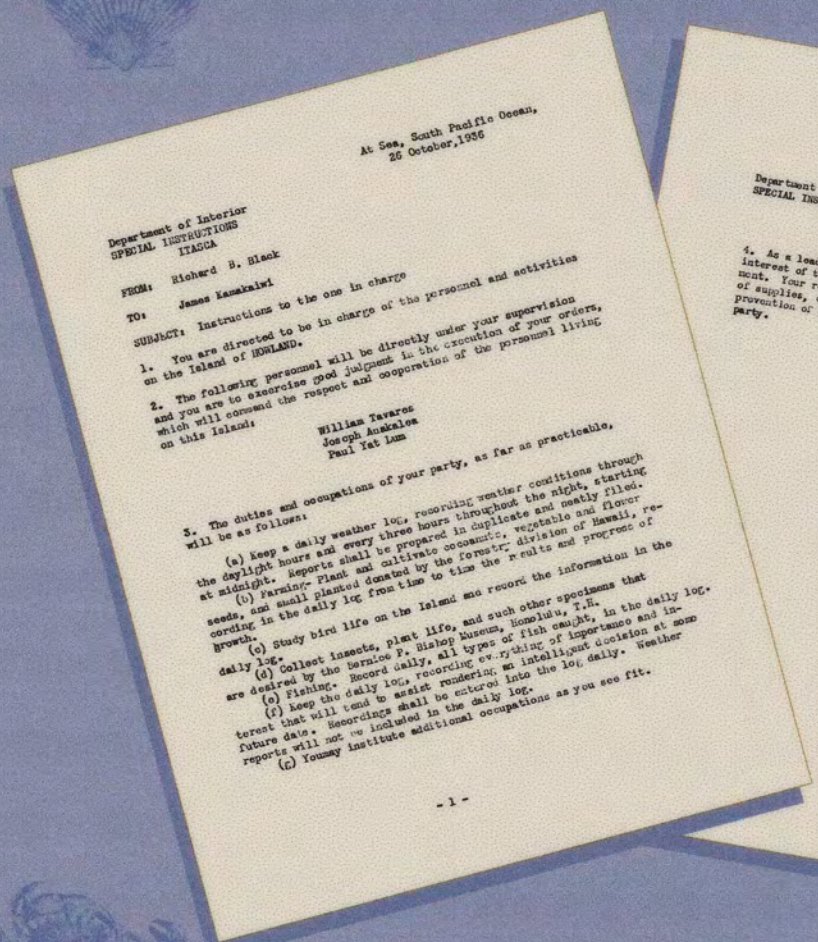
Folinga Faufata,
Class of 1936, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



Henry Ohumukini,
Class of 1936, from the
Kamehameha Schools
yearbook.

Photo courtesy of Kamehameha
Schools Archives



Letter courtesy of
Kamehameha Schools Archives



Elvin Mattson, Tom Beterman,
Richard Wiley with four iwa birds, 1941.

Photo courtesy of Elvin Mattson

HOWLAND MODULE

4.C.2 Right Panel
(30" x 36")
Photos & Documents

EARHART'S FIRST ATTEMPT

Amelia Earhart, the world's most famous aviator, twice attempted to land on the remote Howland Island, causing many to speculate that her actions were part of a broader U.S. policy to justify the island's acquisition. Her first attempt, flying from Honolulu in March of 1937, was aborted due to a runway accident on Ford Island.



Earhart in Hawai'i just before her first attempt to fly to Howland, March 20, 1937.

Photo by N.R. Farbman, courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

"The third and last notification received by Mr. Black was that a takeoff accident at Honolulu prevented further action, and that Miss Earhart was returning to the mainland. It was with unbelievable relief on the part of all of us that, although cancelled, the proposed flight had resulted in no tragic events."

— Col. Meyer
Panala'au Memoirs, by E.H. Bryan, Jr.,

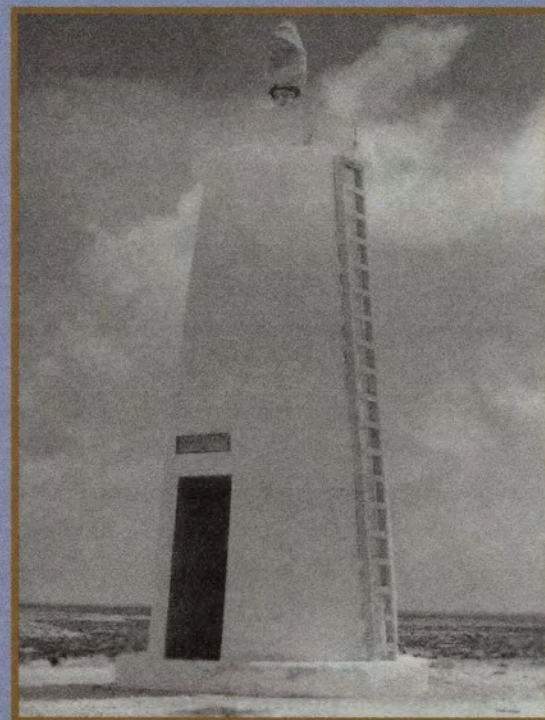
"The second radio notification received at a late hour by Mr. Black was that Miss Earhart had changed the original plans, and was going to leave Honolulu in the morning hours. This meant an arrival late in the day, probably even in darkness. It called for the immediate removal of several additional groups of birds, whose flight or nesting patterns could have been most dangerous to the fliers. It required frantic preparation of coconut fiber-clothing material flare to provide some outline of the very short landing strip."

— Col. Meyer
Panala'au Memoirs, by E.H. Bryan, Jr.,



Just after this photo was taken, a runway accident badly damaged Earhart's plane, thus delaying and rerouting her trip.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



The tragic loss of Amelia Earhart on her second attempt to reach Howland was commemorated by this memorial lighthouse, built by the colonists.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

HOWLAND MODULE

4.D.1 Left Panel
(30" x 48")
Earhart's First Attempt

A FATEFUL SECOND TRY

Less than four months after her first unsuccessful attempt, Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, again headed for Howland, this time departing from Papua New Guinea and traveling in an easterly direction. The colonists helped prepare for her arrival, promising a party like no other ever seen on Howland, but unfortunately, on July 2, 1937, Earhart's plane vanished. Extensive searches in the ensuing weeks and months would prove fruitless.



A tractor, needed to create a serviceable runway, was landed on Howland through pounding surf, 1937.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



A shower, especially built for Earhart, was never used for its intended purpose. She was lost at sea in June of 1937, having never reached Howland.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives

"Charlie (Ahia) was on Howland waiting for Earhart's arrival. He said he heard her plane that night, but she never showed."

— Mrs. Henry Ahia
May 6, 2002

Drums of tractor oil were brought in to help prepare the airstrip for Earhart's arrival.

Photo courtesy of Bishop Museum Archives



"One of the mothers sent us some curtains. We put them up in the window of the bedroom where Amelia was going to sleep. They were the first curtains on Howland. We also fixed up a shower for her. It was made out of a 52 gallon oil drum raised up with a pipe leading to a number 10 tomato can with nail holes punched in the bottom. That was the shower head."

— Solomon Kalama
Honolulu Advertiser, May 5, 1981

"We were eating ice cream on the Itasca when the captain suddenly ordered the anchor raised. He said we've got to go out and look for Amelia. They stopped all shore parties and took the boats in. There was no way for us to get back to the island. We were there for several weeks, streaming among the Gilbert and Ellis Islands looking for Amelia Earhart. We wanted to search in the Carolines but those were under Japanese control and we couldn't."

— Solomon Kalama
Honolulu Advertiser, May 5, 1981

HOWLAND MODULE

4.D.2 Right Panel
(30" x 48")

A Fateful Second Try