

for public benefits much as a conservation land trust might do.

In Honolulu, the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society began in the 19th century as a hereditary membership and genealogical organization. In 1907, the old mission house in Honolulu, built in 1821, was rescued from decay to be used by the Society as its headquarters and library. In successive restorations, including current revisions, the three historical structures on the site, now known as the Mission Houses Museum, have come to look much as they did in the early-19th century. In the last decade, museum programs have confronted stereotypes of missionaries by presenting different perspectives of western influences on indigenous culture. In 1985, the Mission Houses Museum staff introduced bi-cultural perspectives in public forums throughout the Islands to discuss the lives of missionaries and other Hawaiian residents in the 1820s. It also provided new educational opportunities for visitors to explore the theme of "Where Two Worlds Meet" in a number of interpretive media and forms of learning and experience. Mission house tours, an orientation gallery and "living history" presentations

invited visitors to explore documentary sources and points of view in other museums and libraries. In sum, visitors experience changing ideas as historical and cultural perspective continue to be redefined. There are many fresh views of the richness and conflicts of culture to be discovered and shared by wider audiences.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds. *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*. Urbana and Chicago, 1989, p. xix.
- <sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, August 9, 1996.
- <sup>3</sup> John A Herbst, "House Museums," in *History Museums in the United States*, p. 112. See also pp. 106-109 for discussion of Mission House Museum.
- <sup>4</sup> Irving Jenkins, *Hawaiian Furniture and Hawai'i's Cabinetmakers*, Honolulu, 1983.

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*Barnes Riznik, Ph.D., is the former director of Grove Farm Homestead and Waioli Mission Houses in Lihue, Kaua'i, and a Hawai'i Advisor to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as Adjunct Faculty to the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Hawai'i.*

Dean Alexander

## Managing Historic Resources in an Evolving Hawaiian Community Kalaupapa NHP

**K**alaupapa is a place of paradoxes. Upon arrival at the airport a visitor is greeted with a sign forbidding entry without a permit.

Persons without permits are subject to arrest. Down the road a mile or so is a friendlier sign welcoming you to Kalaupapa National Historical Park.

Kalaupapa is remembered as the place of forcible exile for sufferers of Hansen's Disease (leprosy) with all the painful memories of illness, separation, and confinement. At the same time it is also remembered as a place of beauty and a touchstone to the "Old Hawai'i" of small villages and plantation camps. The place of exile from which escape was desired has now become a pu'uhonua, or sanctuary from which to escape the hectic, modern life. Kalaupapa became a place of exile due to its isolation and difficult approaches. This isolation is a burden to all residents, but it is also a highly prized commodity actively defended by the community. It is also one of the reasons

that so many significant natural and cultural resources have survived here.

Kalaupapa is one of the more interesting and unusual park management assignments in the National Park Service (NPS). Unlike most historical parks, Kalaupapa National Historical Park is still a living and evolving community. At this point in time, the primary resource of the park is not the land, nor the buildings, but is the Hansen's disease patients themselves. Some 70 patients still have rights to reside in the settlement, and they are the aspect that most distinguishes Kalaupapa from other units of the national park system. Removed from their families, often at an early age, and sent to an isolation settlement on an inaccessible peninsula on the north shore of Moloka'i, they have lived lives that are different than most Americans. Most have seen their once healthy bodies disfigured by the disease. Many of the older patients were sent here only after the doctors had given up hope of arresting the disease.

The Kalaupapa settlement. Photo by the author.



Kalaupapa is also a story of hope and caring, and of the conquest of a seemingly invincible disease. The first Hansen's disease patients arrived at the Kalaupapa peninsula of Molokai in 1866, one year after King Kamehameha V approved the isolated spot for the "Molokai Leprosy Settlement," as it came to be known. These first patients were left on the windy eastern portion of the peninsula at Kalawao without doctors, nurses, medicine, or appropriate shelter. Before long, the Kalawao patients gradually began to drift to the western village of Kalaupapa where the weather was calmer and steamer anchorage provided a connection to the outside world.

Father Damien deVeuster, a Belgian priest, arrived at Kalawao in the Kalaupapa Settlement in 1873 to minister to the needs of the already more than 700 Hansen's disease patients living there. By 1885, there were between 300 and 400 dwellings on the peninsula. During Damien's time at Kalaupapa, the population continued to grow at Kalaupapa village, and by 1932, the Board of Health abandoned the Kalawao site altogether.

In the 130 years since the first patients arrived, over 7,000 Hansen's disease patients were involuntarily exiled at Kalaupapa. Those patients that remain at the Settlement in 1996 choose to stay because of the sense of community, comfort, and understanding that has been established there over time.

Father Damien deVeuster was beatified by the Catholic Church in May 1995 for his work and sacrifices among the patients.

Drugs that were effective against the disease were developed during World War II, and first issued in Kalaupapa in May 1946. Many patients have subsequently lived very long lives. The quarantine was finally lifted in

1969. However, in consideration of the isolation in which many came to maturity and the curtailment of their liberties, as well as concerns for their privacy, the patients were given the option of staying in Kalaupapa for the remainder of their lives. And so, the settlement continues as a living community principally under the management of the Hawai'i Department of Health.

Kalaupapa was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1976 due to its integrity

as surviving example of a leprosarium, and its extensive archeological resources. The park was established in December 1980. By this act, the National Park Service was added to an existing partnership of state and federal agencies and private groups that are involved in managing the area. The park was established to preserve and interpret the resources for current and future generations, but it was also established to protect the lifestyle and privacy of the patients. This creates management difficulties as challenging as the preservation verses public use conflicts typical of most parks.

To carry out its mission, the National Park Service relies on numerous intangible resources and comparatively few tangible ones. The NPS owns 23 out of about 8,000 land acres. Most of the historic buildings are owned by the State of Hawai'i Department of Health or individual patients. The NPS occupies its offices and quarters by the permission of the on-site state administrator. So what is the NPS's role here and how does it get its job done?

A short answer is that the NPS staff does research on the natural, historic, and archeological

Bay View residential area, Kalaupapa Hansen's disease settlement. Staff housing, built circa 1916, prior to recent stabilization and rehabilitation by the National Park Service. Photo by Hunter Glidewell.



Bay View, Kalaupapa National Historical Park. National Park Service crew removing overgrown vegetation at the beginning of the rehabilitation project. Photo by Hunter Glidewell.



resources of the park, operates the water system and through cooperative agreements with state agencies and churches, maintains historic buildings and grounds. But this short answer does not give the real nature of the work here. Some additional context is needed. And some additional paradoxes emerge.

#### *An Open Ended Period of Significance?*

Most historical parks have a defined period of significance that guides resource management. At Kalaupapa things are somewhat different. The period of historic significance is in some ways open ended. The continued presence of the patients, the survivors of the isolation policy recognized in the NHL nomination, means that changes to the settlement are a part of the period of historic significance. Therefore, changes that the patients make to the community and the changes that health department makes to meet the changing needs of the patients (such as wheel chair ramps) may be perfectly acceptable, even though they alter historic structures. Unlike many historic park settings that are "frozen in time," Kalaupapa will continue to evolve for the foreseeable future. Therefore, history, the study of the past, continues into the present; and historic preservation must be blended with the management of a modern institution.

#### *Multiple Agencies, Different Missions*

As mentioned earlier, the Kalaupapa settlement is a unit of the State of Hawai'i Department of Health. While there is broad overlap in the missions of the NPS and Health Department, especially in regards to maintaining patient lifestyle and privacy, the two agencies do have different missions. These differences cause the two agencies to take different views of several issues. The treatment of "abandoned" buildings is a good example. The State Health Department,

charged with running a safe and sanitary settlement, views such buildings as health and safety hazards that should be demolished. The NPS has a historic preservation mission, and views the same buildings as historic structures which should be saved and, if possible, reused. The Service also views the outbuildings as an integral part of a historical site, while the state takes a more utilitarian view.

With about 400 structures in the settlement and a declining population, keeping all of the buildings on the site is probably not feasible. Many of the older structures were designed for an institutional way of living that included central kitchens and small allocations of personal space. Even though almost every building was modified for use as single family homes or apartments, the older buildings tend to be too big or too small for the current "standards" of single family residences that the patients and staff prefer. This factor contributes to the neglect of many of the older cottages. By the time the state determines they have no need for the structure and are willing to allocate it to the NPS, the building is often badly deteriorated. Recognizing the different missions of the agencies, the NPS tries to stabilize and reuse buildings the state can not justify continuing to maintain. In this way, the NPS maintains a base of older historic structures, while the state economizes and focuses its resources on items within its mission.

#### *Church-State Relations*

The line separating church and state is extremely problematical in Kalaupapa. Three religious denominations own six church buildings that are among the most important historic structures in the park. They also use several state-owned structures. While maintenance of the church buildings is easily accommodated by coop-

Bay View, Kalaupapa National Historical Park. Completed project, back in use as employee quarters. Photo by Hunter Glidewell.





*St. Philomena Church, Kalawao. Still an active church used on special occasions and the focus of most of the memorialization of Father Damien.*

*Father Damien's original grave. Father Damien's remains were returned to Belgium in the 1930s. As a part of Father Damien's beatification, some of his remains were returned to the Kalaupapa patients as a religious relic and reinterred at the original grave site in 1995.*

erative agreements with the several churches, some other aspects are less clear. The recent return of a relic of Father Damien illustrated some of these problems. Father Damien, a significant figure in the historic story, is an important secular figure. The relic is an important historic artifact. Possible sainthood for Father Damien is an important event commemorating this historic figure. But beyond this, the issues become more complex. Beatification and canonization are particularly Catholic institutions and involve religious practices. How far should the NPS go to support religious ceremonies honoring this important person? There is no hard and fast answer to this question. Park staff must use their best judgment and focus on the NPS missions of protecting the resources and privacy of the patients.

Kalaupapa presents a challenging park management situation. A combination of factors, including an on-going historic period, limited ownership of the key resources, and a combination of management agencies with different missions, create a situation in which the standard answers in NPS policy and guidelines do not fit well. The park manager must use moral suasion, tact, and flexibility to ensure that key resources are not destroyed or irreparably altered. At the same time,



the community must be able to change to meet the needs of the resident population. The next decade or so will be a particularly challenging period as the settlement's population continues to decline creating a growing surplus of buildings. While it would be ideal to find compatible new uses for these buildings to help defray the cost of maintaining them, the restrictions on public access and the need to protect the patients' privacy severely limits the possibilities. New partnerships will need to be developed in the next few years to help ensure that an adequate base of historic structures are maintained into the future.

#### References

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*Dean Alexander is the Park Manager at Kalaupapa National Historical Park, Moloka'i.*

*Photos this page by Stephen T. Kozosky.*

*A typical patient's cottage built in the 1930s. Cottages such as this are continually being adapted to meet the needs of the patients and the Hawaii Department of Health. View includes the spectacular Moloka'i Seacliffs.*

