

Interview with Timothy Jordan (April 1, 2014)

How do you think the political change during the late nineteenth century (monarchical government to United States territory) impacted life at Kalaupapa for the patients?

Recent research by Anwei Law into the letters of patients and newspapers of the time has shown that patients at Kalaupapa fervently supported Lili'uokalani and the Hawaiian Kingdom prior to annexation. Patients even signed a petition in great numbers opposing annexation.

Likely the biggest change that occurred for the patients in the shift of ruling governments came in the form of how the disease was being dealt with. In early 1905, the U.S. Surgeon-General Walter Wyman commented in a letter to the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury that places like Kalaupapa and Carville were treating Hansen's disease as it had for hundreds of years -- by isolation. He felt the time was ripe for a concerted scientific effort to study the causes and transmission of the disease. The president of the Hawai'i Territorial Board of Health, Dr. Charles B. Cooper, helped explain the huge financial burden the territory was under to care for the patients at Kalaupapa.

In March 1905 the U.S. Congress passed the "Act to Provide for the Investigation of Leprosy", with a special reference to the care and treatment of the Hawaiian people at Kalaupapa. This act allocated money to establish a no-expense-spared, 68,000 square feet Hansen's disease research facility at Kalawao. The campus opened in 1909 but closed in August of 1913 because of high costs, and lack of volunteers for experimental treatments. The facility was eventually dismantled and the lumber reused to construct buildings in Kalaupapa settlement. Kalihi Hospital, established in 1909, in Honolulu then became the primary Hansen's Disease research facility for the Hawaiian Islands. Approximately 40 years later a cure for the disease was found.

How do you think the Kalaupapa National Park improved the lives of the remaining patients and the memory of those who died there?

In 1977, the Department of Health was threatening to close Hale Mohalu, in Honolulu, to save money. Patients protested the closure, but the state had made its decision and forced patients from the buildings on January 26, 1978. Following the closure of Hale Mohalu, patient-residents of Kalaupapa were concerned that the state was going to close Kalaupapa as well. There was fear that if Kalaupapa closed developers would move in and build on the peninsula, severely affecting the lives of the remaining patient community.

Several residents of the Kalaupapa community began to work with Congresswoman Patsy Mink to gain Kalaupapa national park status. The bill they submitted to Congress was signed into law and Kalaupapa

National Historical Park was established on December 22, 1980. The language in the enabling legislation passed by Congress to create the park states that the primary purpose of the park is to:

(1) preserve and interpret the Kalaupapa settlement for the education and inspiration of present and future generations.

(2) to provide a well-maintained community in which the Kalaupapa leprosy patients are guaranteed that they may remain at Kalaupapa as long as they wish; to protect the current lifestyle of these patients and their individual privacy; to research, preserve, and maintain the present character of the community; to research, preserve, and maintain important historic structures, traditional Hawaiian sites, cultural values, and natural features: and to provide for limited visitation by the general public and

(3) to provide that the preservation and interpretation of the settlement be managed and performed by patient and Native Hawaiians to the extent practical, and that training opportunities be provided such person in management and interpretation of the settlement's culture, historical, educational and scenic resources.

Since the national park was established at Kalaupapa, the National Park Service has dedicated over \$30 million in infrastructural improvements. Some of these improvements that have impacted the lives of the patients directly have been: the installation of a new water system, which now provides Kalaupapa settlement with an ample supply of clean water; new septic and cesspool facilities for sewage; the paving of roads throughout the settlement; the installation of a recycling center and solid waste management program; composting service; reconstruction of the Kalaupapa pier; and the restoration of a number of residences, churches, and social halls throughout the settlement.