

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

APR 15 1978

DATE ENTERED

OCT 3 1978

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC



Mokuaikaua Church

AND/OR COMMON

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Box 1447

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kailua, Kona

\_\_ VICINITY OF

2

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Hawaii

15

Hawaii

001

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

\_\_DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_SITE

\_\_OBJECT

#### OWNERSHIP

\_\_PUBLIC

PRIVATE

\_\_BOTH

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

#### STATUS

OCCUPIED

\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

#### ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_NO

#### PRESENT USE

\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_MUSEUM

\_\_PARK

\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ

STREET & NUMBER

2103 Nuuanu Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Honolulu

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Hawaii 96817

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Bureau of Conveyances

STREET & NUMBER

1151 Punchbowl Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Honolulu

Hawaii

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Hawaii Register of Historic Places (HRHP #10-28-7231)

DATE

November, 1973

\_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Historic Preservation Office, State of Hawaii  
Department of Land and Natural Resources, P.O. Box 621

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Honolulu

Hawaii 96809

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Mokuaikaua Church is a large stone church centered in a small level lot near the center of Kailua. Its high steeple stands out conspicuously and has become a landmark from both land and sea during its 135 years of service. Its spire is shingled and there are bartizans at the top of the rectangular base. The central core of the steeple is polygonal with alternating sections of wide and narrow clapboard. The wider sections are articulated with louvered arches. The 48 by 120 feet lava rock and coral mortared church is capped with a gable roof. Construction beams are made from ohia wood. Pieces of the wooden structure were joined with ohia pins. The spanning beams are fifty feet long and are made from ohia timbers. Corner stones were set in place 20 to 30 feet above the ground.

There are numerous entrances, two of which are opposite the altar end. These doorways are decorated with applied segmental pediments made out of cement. The motif is also carried out in the central window above the doorways. Large quoins of cut stone are a pleasing counterpoint to the rounded forms of the walls.

Mokuaikaua Church is the first and one of the largest stone churches in Hawaii, outstanding for its simple, well-proportioned mass and construction. The interior open timber structure with high galleries is a fine architectural and engineering design. The architectural interest is further enhanced by the church's historical significance which makes this site a candidate for national register rating.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1836-1837, 1865, 1937 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Governor Kuakini, Asa Thurston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Known as the "First Christian Church of Hawaii," Mokuaikaua Church in Kailua, Kona is a landmark manifestation of the influence and dedication of New England's pioneer missionaries in the Islands.

Reverend Asa Thurston and his wife, Lucy, arrived in Kailua, Kona on April 4, 1820. They were among six other couples sent by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to convert the local Polynesians to Christianity. The Thurstons remained in Kailua while their fellow missionaries went to establish stations on other Hawaiian islands.

Preaching and teaching was limited only to the King, Kamehameha II, certain nobles, and those deemed worthy by royal choice. After about seven months the King and his party moved to Honolulu. Loneliness, insufficient protection, and the removal of Kamehameha's court apparently convinced Reverend Thurston and his wife that they should take up a new station and late in 1820 they moved to Honolulu.

Upon the return of the Thurstons to Kailua in October 1823, they found that the Hawaiians had maintained a vigorous interest in Christianity and under the direction of Kuakini, the governor of Hawaii, had erected a wooden church 60 feet long by 30 feet wide. The building was surrounded by the ruins of a heiau, Hawaiian temple, and stones from it were used for the foundation of the church. Reverend Thurston dedicated the house of worship on December 10, 1823. Its name became Mokuaikaua Church, probably relating to the region in which lohia timbers were cut for the building. It served a congregation numbering between 600 and 1,000 persons, and education as well as the holding of regular religious services became part of its functions.

It soon was found that the church was incapable of holding the growing following of the missionaries. The Kona District had by the mid-1820's, an estimated population of 20,000 and congregations became so large that a considerable number had to be excluded from services.

<sup>1</sup> ohia-ohia lehua, Metrosideros macropus, M. collina - native hardwood.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Anderson, Rufus, History of the Sandwich Islands Mission, 1870, p.53.
2. Ellis, William, A Journal of a Tour Around Hawaii, 1826.
3. Gulick, Orramel H., The Pilgrims of Hawaii.
4. Toms, Paul E., The Story of Mokuaikaua Church, p. 5-14.
5. Thurston, Lucy G., Life and Times of Mrs. Lucy G. Thurston, 1882, p. 50-51
6. Damon, Ethel, Early Hawaiian Churches, 1924, p. 8-15.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	0,5	18,5	7,3,0	2,1	7,4	7,4,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING	
C							D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Mokuaikaua Church is located on Tax Map Parcel 7-5-7:18 and 7-5-7:45 in the center of Kailua-Kona across the street from Hulihee Palace. The church is bounded by Alii Drive on the east by TMK 7-5-7:19, on the north by TMK's 7-5-7:47, 7-5-7:48, and 7-5-7:44 on the west, and by TMK's 7-5-7:16 and 7-5-7:17 on the south.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John Wright - Historian / John T. Jacobsen - Architect November, 1973  
ORGANIZATION DATE

State Historic Preservation Office  
STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

P.O. Box 621  
CITY OR TOWN STATE

Honolulu Hawaii

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Jane L. Silverman

DATE April 12, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 ATTEST [Signature]  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 6/3/78  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 DATE Sept 25, 1978

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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Reverend Thurston suggested to Governor Kuakini the necessity of a larger church, and he immediately agreed to help in the erection of a new structure. Every male in the district was sent into the mountains to help cut and haul timber. Construction continued between February and September, 1826. The dimensions of the completed building measured 180 feet by 78 feet. As in the case of Kuakini's first church, the new structure was built of wood and its roof was thatched. On September 27, 1826, the church was dedicated.

It was predicted at the time of its completion that the second Moku-aikaua Church would stand for at least 20 years. The structure's estimated existence was cut in half when a fire, probably set intentionally, reduced it to ashes in the latter part of 1835. The fire did have one happy result. It encouraged Reverend Thurston to erect a more durable church which has lasted through the decades to the present. Again, natives were sent to the forests to collect ohia timber. Pieces of the wooden structure were joined with ohia pins. Huge corner stones, said to have been hewn by order of King Umi in the 16th century for a heiau (temple), were set in place and offers evidence of the heavy labor which contributed to the Church's construction. Natives had to search the whole upland forest for the roof's 50 foot spanning beams. Mortar for the walls was supplied by coral dragged from the ocean floor and burned for its lime. The dimensions of the present church are 120 feet by 48 feet, which is smaller than the structure destroyed by fire.

The Governor bore the full expense of the construction, from \$2,000 to \$3,000, and labor was donated by church members. Building time was between early January of 1836 and late January of 1837 and on February 4, 1837 the new church was dedicated.

Governor Kuakini, with justification pride, enacted several laws regarding the new edifice. Among them were laws which would exclude dogs and women without bonnets. Men were stationed within the church to keep order and rap anyone on the forehead with a long cane if he were caught sleeping.

Mokuaikaua Congregational Church underwent major repairs in 1865 at a cost of \$2,000 and in 1937 at a cost of \$18,000. When the structure

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was refurbished the second time, a false ceiling, which had been put up in the intervening years, was removed revealing the simple and functional lines of the original construction. A steeple, the same size as the first steeple, was built on the roof and a new beam cut to match the other beams was cut from an ohia tree and installed in the rear of the church.

In 1910, a memorial arch was erected at the entrance to the church grounds to commemorate the arrival of the first missionaries.

Mokuaikaua Church is closely associated with the first efforts of Christian missionaries arises in the Hawaiian Islands. It offers testimony of the determination and sacrifice that became the driving force of those efforts despite constant setbacks and catastrophes. The present building, as the first stone church in the Islands, became an example that other missionaries would imitate. The massive effort in erecting the building with primitive tools and an amateur knowledge of architecture gives evidence of the devotion of native Hawaiians. Present-day architects appreciate the simple, solid use of local materials, and comment particularly on the absence of trusses in the roof construction.