



Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa

Recommended reading about the history of Kalaupapa and the history of leprosy in Hawaii based on the words of the people themselves

“Olivia: My Life of Exile at Kalaupapa,” by Olivia Robello Breitha. This is a first-hand account of how a young woman learned she had leprosy when she was 18 years old and engaged to be married -- and the great pain she experienced in being taken from her family, her fiancée and her home followed by her ability to overcome all the challenges and injustices associated with this disease. The words are all Mrs. Breitha's. This was the first autobiography written by a Kalaupapa resident, released in 1988 and it remains popular today. Suitable for students and adults. **(To order: pacifichistoricparks.org)**

“The True Story of Kaluaikoolau As Told By His Wife Piilani.” This is another first-hand account of a family from Kekaha, Kaua'i that refused to be separated by government policies regarding leprosy even if it meant leaving behind everything that they knew. Koolau is probably the most significant person in the history of leprosy in Hawaii who did not go to Kalaupapa because he could not take along his family. His decision came around the time of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom and resulted in the Provisional Government storming Kalalau Valley in search of him. Koolau escaped deep into the valley with his wife and son where he and his wife lived for nearly three and a half years, living off the land and in almost total isolation. This book is beautifully told by Piilani, the wife of Koolau – it is presented in two sections: one in its original form in Hawaiian and the other section in English. Suitable for students and adults. **(kauaihistoricalsociety.org or amazon.com)**

“Kalaupapa: A Collective Memory,” by Anwei Skinsnes Law. This all-encompassing history is told through the voices of the people of Kalaupapa based on 40 years of research and interviews. Words of the early residents have been taken from letters and other materials that were written in Hawaiian and have since been translated, giving us another side of the history of Kalaupapa, a side that is accurate and more inclusive of the contributions of so many people who have been left out of their own history. The book is 600 pages long with 300 photographs, many that have never been published before. It follows the history of Kalaupapa from the period that led to the drastic separation of families through the future with descendants now becoming involved in the future to insure that their kupuna will be remembered as they wish to be. Suitable for older students with a serious interest in Kalaupapa and especially recommended for teachers of all grade levels. This will become the “textbook” of Kalaupapa. **(uhpress.hawaii.edu or amazon.com)**



“Ili Na Ho`omana`o O Kalaupapa: Casting Remembrances of Kalaupapa,” by Anwei Law, Wayne Levin and Valerie Monson. This book includes an overall look of the history of Kalaupapa, historical photographs, many elegant portraits of current and recent residents of Kalaupapa with quotes from them and stories based on interviews with family members who share memories of their Kalaupapa ‘ohana or tell how they have reconnected to their ancestors. Suitable students and adults. (pacifichistoricparks.org)

“Adjourned With a Prayer: The Minutes of Siloama and Kanaana Hou Churches from 1866-1928,” by Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa. A forgotten chapter of the early residents of Kalawao/Kalaupapa regards the first church established at Kalawao: a church called Siloama. The congregation organized in June of 1866, less than six months after the first 12 people were sent to Kalaupapa because they were diagnosed with leprosy and immediately began keeping minutes in their native language of Hawaiian. These minutes show the early residents were developing structure and process to their new situation – a completely opposite of negative images written by writers of historical fiction about Kalaupapa. The book includes a narrative in addition to all the minutes that were translated into English in the 1940s along with photographs, some which have never been published before. Suitable for older students and above, including adults. (**contact Ka ‘Ohana O Kalaupapa for referral to United Church of Christ offices in Honolulu**)

“Father Damien: A Bit of Taro, a Piece of Fish and a Glass of Water,” by Anwei Law and Henry G. Law. This book, issued in conjunction with the canonization of Father Damien in 2009, looks at the priest from the perspectives of the people who knew them along with words from Damien himself, showing him to be an early proponent of justice at Kalaupapa, concerned about the emotional effects of separating families because one member was diagnosed with leprosy and his true love for the people of Hawai`i. Suitable for students and adults. (amazon.com)

“Kalaupapa Place Names: Waikolu to Nihoa,” by John Clark. The title of this excellent book is somewhat misleading. It sounds as though the entire book is about how places around the peninsula got their names. That information is there, but so are hundreds of articles from the Hawaiian language newspapers, translated into English. These articles begin before the first people were sent to Kalaupapa in 1866 and continue for decades after. Many names of people are included and important events of the day. The book is published by UH Press. (uhpress.hawaii.edu or amazon.com)

All of the above books are affordable – and should be included in the library of anyone with a deep interest in learning about the history of Kalaupapa.

Other books that might be more difficult to find, but are valuable in understanding the history of Kalaupapa:

“Siloama: Church of the Healing Spring,” by Ethel Damon. This slim book features wonderful stories about Siloama and Kanaana Hou Churches, an earlier Calvinist Church on the Kalaupapa peninsula and many stories about the people. It has long been out of print, but can sometimes be found in libraries or for purchase on rare book sites.

The book, **“News from Molokai,”** is also on our recommended list of reading materials, but this book is out of print. It is an important account of Kalaupapa in the mid-1870s, a series of letters exchanged between Peter Kaeo, a former member of the House of Nobles who was sent to Kalaupapa in 1873, and his cousin, Queen Emma. One note of caution: This book was written when the word “leper” was being used. This would be a book more suited to adults or older students as the reading can be difficult, but the information is very essential to learning more about the early history of Kalaupapa. It can sometimes be found in libraries or on rare book websites.

We also recommend **“Tales from the Night Rainbow,”** based on the life of a Molokai woman, Kaili`ohe Kame`ekua who was born in 1816 – and lived to be 115 years old. She was a “kaula” – a keeper of light. This book is full of her wisdom, including her memories of when Father Damien built the churches on topside Molokai. Again, this book might be out of print.