KAUAI
OVER THE YEARS

SCENES, MOSTLY OLD, SOME NEW

R. J. BAKER, Photographer
1960
"Kauai Over the Years – Scenes Mostly Old, Some New
an album of photos taken and compiled by
Ray Jerome Baker between 1908 & 1961
Prepared March 25, 1999

Introduction

In 1996, the Kauai Historical Society received a gift from the Lihue Public Library (Accession Number 1996.003). It is a small photo album containing 187 original photographs taken by well-known Hawaii photographer, Ray Jerome Baker. Baker gave the album the title, “Kauai Over the Years – Scenes Mostly Old, Some New.” The black and white images were taken by Baker on visits to Kauai between 1908 and 1961. Lynn Davis, Preservation Department, University of Hawaii, notes that many small albums of photos such as this one, were compiled by Baker for friends and colleagues. However, Davis is not aware of any other Baker albums comprised solely of Kauai images.

Biographical Sketch of Ray Jerome Baker

Ray Jerome Baker was born in Rockford, Illinois in 1880 (1880 - 1972). There he attended Mechanic Arts High School where he shot his first photographs. He attended University of Minnesota for one semester, and then in 1903 left to become a traveling photographer, moving to Portland, Oregon. The following year, he moved south to Eureka, California.

In Eureka, at a Socialist Party meeting in 1906, Baker met his future wife Edith Mary Frost. They were married later that year and in 1908 left on a delayed wedding trip to Hawaii.

Baker and his new wife extended their Hawaii vacation from two weeks to four months. During their stay, Baker visited the neighbor islands,’ taking numerous photographs. After a brief return to California, the Bakers moved permanently to Hawaii in 1910.

Baker had his residence and photo studio at 1911 Kalakaua Avenue from 1915 until his retirement in 1960. At his studio, Baker had his darkroom where he developed his black and white images. Although Baker is best known for his black and white photography, he also produced postcards and hand-tinted photos (tinted by Mrs. Baker) made lantern slides, took moving pictures, and self-published books of his photographs and those of other photographers. He found a market for his photos, postcards and books with the tourist industry, and his images often appeared in Paradise of the Pacific and Mid-Pacific Magazine.

Description, Scope and Content of Collection

The size of the Baker album is approximately 5" x 8". The images are from 5" x 7" negatives and were printed on larger paper with a blank tab on the left side of each photo for binding. The album cover was red plastic and there are at least two sets of holes for binding on the left edge, indicating that the red plastic cover was not original. For conservation and ease of access, the plastic cover was removed by the Society; the

Ronck, Ronn. Hawaiian Yesterdays, p. 4.
photographs were individually placed in conservation materials, and catalogued as part of the KHS photo collection.

As was his practice, Baker identified most and dated some of this photo collection in typescript on the reverse. Baker divided the album into two sections. The first is dated 1960 (PN5294.001-058) and the second section is described as “scenes taken before 1920” (PN5294.059-187). They have been accessioned and catalogued in their original order (See attached catalog listing).

Photographs in this collection are comprised primarily of landscapes and scenics, but also represented are buildings, people, businesses and streetscapes. Bakers photographic interests were diverse. He photographed individuals, members of various ethnic groups, “common man” as well as prominent residents, buildings and landscapes. “Kauai Over the Years – Scenes Mostly Old, Some New” is representative of Baker’s overall work, and is a reflection of Kauai landscape and activities in the early and mid part of the century.

Photos in “Kauai Over the Years...” span 1908 through 1960 and include:

- Landscapes and scenics: 110
- Structures: 34
- People: 18
- Industry (mills, maritime, etc): 16
- Streetscapes: 9
- Total: 187

Besides his own work, Baker collected and documented the images of early Hawaii photographers. In the mid-1950s Baker began giving his negatives and prints to the Bishop Museum. Baker also donated his personal diaries and newsletters to the Museum and the Museum holds the bulk of his work.

Significance of the Collection

Dr. Barnes Riznik, Principal Humanities Scholar for the project writes,

Forty years ago Ray Jerome Baker flew to Kauai on two occasions for picture-taking trips with his friend, the Hawaiian dealer Robert Van Dyke. The trips to Kauai in 1960 and 1961 informally marked Bakers half-century of recording and promoting the picturesque beauty and architectural history of Kauai. Through his photographers art, Baker shaped our memory of Kauai’s history in the first half of the century with images made on his numerous trips over five decades.

At 80 years of age Baker continued to keep a detailed account of his photographs in personal diaries at the archives of the Bishop Museum, providing significant documentation. In 1960 and 1961 Baker was interested in double-checking his catalogue notes on the subjects and places of his earlier photos of Kauai. In these historical images we have scenic views but there are also invaluable ethnographic recordings of traditional ways of life and material culture on Kauai in 1908, 1910, 1912, 1914 and 1915. Of particular interest are Bakers photographs of rice farms and taro growing and arrowroot processing on the North Shore. There is one image of a Japanese-style thatched house, probably
The album of photos taken and compiled by Baker and received as a gift from the Lihue Public Library is significant for two other reasons. First, the majority of Baker's images were part of his long career of making and selling Hawaii, taking the islands public by producing beautiful images that helped establish Hawaii as a prime tourist attraction. In this sense, Baker was like Wallace Nutting whose commercial line of popular photographs of New England were also versions of the visually appealing and traditional aspects of a region that reached a broad audience.

In the second place, this particular group of Baker photographs, and other historical images in the Kauai Historical Society collection, complement the Kauai views made by the Society between 1976 and 1980 and published as The Kauai Album. For researchers, the images document change as well as continuity over an 80-year period.

Baker's photos in "Kauai Over the Years..." can be identified in his diary entries. The diaries record visits to Kauai in 1926, 1940, 1960 and 1961. However, it's probable that Baker visited Kauai in 1908, 1912, 1914, 1915, 1926, 1933, 1940, 1960 and 1961 according to dates he typed on the reverse of the photos. Baker's earlier diaries cover an entire year on one or two pages. Later, probably in the 1940s, Baker begins recording on a daily basis.

1908 Diary

Baker's 1908 diary covers the entire year in one page. He mentions visiting Hawaii, Kona, and Maui. Although there is no record of a Kauai visit, Baker records on April 22, 1960 having traveled to Niihau "many years ago." There are three photos in this collection taken on Niihau [P5294.177-179]. Similar photos in "Hawaiian Yesterdays" are dated 1908 and in "Kauai Over the Years..." Baker has dated some of the photos 1908.

1910 - 1912 Diaries

Baker dated some photographs from "Kauai Over the Years..." as having been taken 1910 - 1912. [P5294.009, 054-057, 061, 095, 149-150, 164,168-176,184-187] In the 1910 and 1911 diaries, Baker does not mention traveling to other islands. However, in his 1912 diary he records, "this entire year was spent in Honolulu and the Hawaiian islands, doing photographic work, mostly scenic work." Following the typewritten portion of the diary, there is a handwritten note about a trip to Lawai on March 30, 1912. In his November 1, 1940 diary entry, Baker refers to photos he took of the Kauai Chamber of Commerce in 1912, but these are not included in this collection.

2 Some photos in "Kauai Over the Years..." are marked with dates 1910, 1912, and 1915. The Baker diaries at the Bishop Museum do not indicate visits to Kauai on these dates. However, in Baker's 1940 and 1960 diaries, he mentions having been to Kauai "years ago." Also, "Hawaiian Yesterdays" dates some of Baker's photos 1908, 1912, 1914 and 1915, and reproduces aerial photographs taken by Baker in 1933 when he was hired by Inter-Island Airways to make some photos for tourism promotion.

Group 16, Box 12.3
November 1, 1940 diary entry, Baker refers to photos he took of the Kauai Chamber of Commerce in 1912, but these are not included in this collection.

According to staff at the Bishop Museum, these kind of small albums were compiled in the 1950s and 1960s. It’s possible that by the time Baker dated these photos---some 40-50 years later---that the dates were “off” by a couple of years.

1914 – 1915 Diaries

In his September 9, 1914 diary entry, Baker describes returning from San Francisco and “on this trip was the Jack Magee company of theater people . . .” possibly the “theater people” later photographed in Kokee [P5294.174]. In 1914, Baker only mentions a trip to Maui.

In 1915, Baker again mentions traveling to Maui, but the 1914-1915 photos in the “Kauai Over the Years . . .” include P5294.058, 096, 165-167, 181-I 83.

Diary for March 8 – 21, 1926

“Left on camping trip, Kauai. 7 on first party including EMB [Edith Mary Baker]. 2nd party only 2. Returned to Honolulu Sunday morning, March 21st.” No photographs in “Kauai Over the Years...” are identified as being taken in 1926.

1933 Diary

According to “Hawaiian Yesterdays”4 Baker was hired by Inter-Island Airways to take aerial photos for tourist promotion. The one-page 1933 diary entry does not record a Kauai trip, but there are 1933 aerial photos in “Yesterdays” of Nawiliwili Harbor, Niumalu, Kauai Surf, Lawai Kai, and Port Allen.

Diary for October 28 – November 5, 1940

In 1940, Baker took an eight-day trip to Kauai. His diary records many details where he went and whom he saw. “Kauai Over the Years...” collection does not contain any images dated 1940s.

Diary for April 18 – April 24, 1960

Now, at 80 years of age, Baker made a full account of his four-day Kauai visit. Long-time friend Robert Van Dyke accompanied him,

Monday, April 18th.

"... The plane took off at 7:30 and arrived at the Kauai airport at 8:15. At the airport Robert [Van Dyke] rented a new Ford car for six dollars per day, plus ten cents per mile. Gasoline furnished. We immediately loaded luggage and drove to the hotel where we had a simple breakfast... .After which we drove to Nawiliwili. [P5294.001] In Lihue, we

p.211

4 See transcription of 1940 diary entries.
called on Senda old time photographer. He introduced his son who is now a mature young man. Senda said he had retired and his son had now taken over. He looked very elderly. The son conducted a store as will as a studio, sold photo supplies, film, views, Kodaks. Senda was very friendly and invited me to use his dark room. After leaving Senda we visited the newspaper office, the GARDEN ISLAND, where we met Charles fern, the owner and his son..."

"... After the call at the newspaper office we went to call on Charlie Rice, now 85, feeble, old. Mrs. Rice was a second wife, looked about forty, much younger than her husband. Certainly not more than fifty. Sat down with Charlie Rice and discussed the identity of the subjects in [some] pictures. Rice was some help, but not too much. After the interview I took his picture..." [P5294.026]

"Next we called on Miss Bernice Hundley, for a long time a school teacher, but now retired. It was getting late in the day, but after the interview with Miss Hundley, she came outside and I took her picture, also with Robert. [P5294.010] I also made pictures of the old House, which had been the home of the Do/e family, Emily and Charles, both of whom I knew, but also of the rest of the family, eight children..."

Tuesday, April 19th

"The first night we spent at a Lihue hotel called the PUMAHANA. There was clean beds and a convenient room, charge $4.00 per night. About eight in the morning we drove over to the other hotel, now known as the KAUAI INN. [P5294.011, 025, 027] The HALE PUMAHANA, where spent the night did not serve meals. There we had breakfast..."

"... Took pictures of the Lihue Mill, which now does the milling for Hanamaulu and Kealia plantations. We then called at the Senda Studio where Mr. Senda had his picture with me and the son took several of me. I changed films at Senda's studio, after which we drove to the PALMS where we had lunch and were assigned to a room for Tuesday night as guests at the Hotel..." [P5294.002, 050, 053, 059, 060]

"... After lunch we drove to the home of Mr. Gaylord Wilcox. Arrived about 2:30 and found Mr. Wilcox waiting for us. We had a long session with him, that is Robert did. Wilcox is a stamp collector and Robert brought along his stamps to show him. Robert told me later that Mr. Wilcox offered him ten thousand dollars for his collection, but, of course, Robert would not sell. While waiting I made a few pictures of the Wilcox home..." [P5294.022, 023, 024]

Wednesday, April 20th

"After leaving Mr. Wilcox on Tuesday evening, to the Palms Hotel. Lunch at the hotel was served buffet style, good set out and guests took a plate and served themselves. Early this morning I was out and took a few pictures about the place. [P5294.012 – 016]There were many delightful spots where fine pictures could be made, but did not cover many of them..."

"... After breakfast, off to Hanalei. Visited the site of the new hotel, a high promontory overlooking the valley and mountains. The work of grading and putting in the foundation was going on. Then we went down in the valley and visited the old mission home. [P5294.046, 052] In charge of the Japanese caretaker, we found it very interesting Wandered about the old house, which is maintained by Wilcox. Upstairs, many beds with old style quilts on them. In one mom a library with books..."
Thursday, April 11th.
"This morning after breakfast, drove to Kapaa, pictures of cannery, street scenes. . ."

[Note: this is the likely source of the Lihue Library donation to KHS] Then to the old isenberg Home where years ago, about 1910 I made pictures for Mrs. Dora isenberg. [P5294.003 - 008, 044] The place, becoming run down was occupied by Mrs. Cole, who had several children. She was a daughter of Paul isenberg. Robert began talking his line with Mrs. Cole, while I went about getting pictures. . . She said the isenberg home would shortly be torn down. I later at home located negatives, 8 x 10 that I had made for Mrs. isenberg over fifty years ago. . ."

". . . At Lihue we walked through dense foliage to reach what had once been the McBride Beach Home...The home was not an elaborate one, but well maintained, as was also the Queen Emma home, nearby. [P5294.039 - 040,048 - 049,051,a136 - 140] Queen Emma had owned the property, but after her death it was sold because of her debts. . ."

". . . At Lawai we walked through dense foliage to reach what had once been the McBride Beach Home...The home was not an elaborate one, but well maintained, as was also the Queen Emma home, nearby. [P5294.039 - 040,048 - 049,051,a136 - 140] Queen Emma had owned the property, but after her death it was sold because of her debts. . ."

". . . After leaving Lawai we drove to the Hector Moir's not far from Koioa. . . He and Mrs. Moir have a very showy Cactus farm, some 800 species, to which visitors come in big buses. Mrs. Moir met us and was most cordial. Mr. Moir showed me about the place. Entirely planted with zerophytic plants, it is beautifully laid out and makes a fine show place. . ." [P5294.028, 031, 041 - 042, 047]

Friday, April 22nd.
"This morning we drove to Koioa, then on to Makaweei and Waimea, on the south side of the island. . . Finally we reached Kekaha and the mad to turn off and climb the hill to overlook Waimea Canyon. Stopped at Puukepeie for pictures, then on to the point overlooking KALALAU. [P5294.034-038, 043] Robert [Van Dyke] had planned to go to NIIHAU, and I had agreed to go with him, if necessary, but was gratified to learn that the Robinsons refused permission. I was there many years ago and did not care to go again."

Diary for July 11 – 15, 1961

A year later, Baker returned to Kauai for four days.

Tuesday, July 11th.
". . . At Lihue [airport] we met the man . . . in the matter of a car for use, a practically new light car, driven almost exclusively by Steve while on Kauai. We went immediately to Senda's photo studio to get film for the 35mm camera. There was some trouble about loading, which was attended to by Senda's son. Once on our way we struck off for the south side of the island, Waimea, Kekaha then up the hill to Puukapeie and Waimea Canyon. [P5294.029-030,032433] Found a number of tourists there, then on to the viewpoint overlooking Kaiaiau Valley with its rainbow. We loitered there some time, then back to the Museum. . . After the visit to the up-country we drove through the sugar can fields to Mana and to the Barking Sands. We found the sands much over grown with Algarobe trees."
Wednesday, July 12th.

"Up at six. Comfortable room at Lihue Hale Hotel...To the restaurant in the Tip Top Building...After finishing breakfast we were off to the North side of the island. [P5294.045] We continued on to Hanalei and further to the wet and dry caves and the end of the road. Back to Hanalei where we bought some food at the Chinese grocery store, then went to the beach park pavilion to eat... We visited the Hanalei pier and went to the river, where looking across, we could see the elaborate new hotel on the opposite bank, only recently opened. Our food for lunch consisted of sugar buns, two quarts of milk, bread and oranges. Grape Juice..."

Thursday, July 13th.

"After having breakfast at the little restaurant nearby, we started off from Hale Lihue Hotel about 9:30. Drove to Koloa and visited the Moir Cactus Gardens. Mrs. Moir met us and took considerable pains to show us about the Cactus gardens, calling attention to various plants, Mr. Moir came out shortly before we left. We went back and made a few pictures...After leaving the Spouting Horn we paused a few minutes at the park where there is a monument to Hawaiian Prince Kuhio. [P5294.134] On the monument is a bronze bust of the Prince which was modeled by my old friend Rosenstein. I photographed it for him at the time he did it many years ago. We then drove back to Lihue and back to the hotel..."

Friday, July 14th.

"I was up at six this morning, and drove the car...to the Palms, a nice hotel at Wailua, in the coconut grove...Hurried over to Smith’s River boats where I bought tickets for the boat trip up the Wailua...Later we drove back to Lihue and took a drive to Nawiliwili, to the New and swanky hotel, the beach beyond, and took a drive to visit and overlook the Menehune Fishpond. [P5294.017 – 018] After leaving the Pond, we nearly got lost, but finally back to the Hotel. The new hotel is the KAUAI SURF. Beyond was a popular beach where children were swimming..."

Saturday, July 15th.

"Leaving Lihue, Kauai. We were up early and had to be satisfied with fruit and buns for breakfast as we were leaving for the plane. At the airport... There was some waiting for the plane, as several planes were leaving... Finally we were off for the 35 minute ride to Honolulu. There we picked up bags and took a Yellow Cab home, fare a little less than five dollars..."

Other Baker Photos at the Kauai Historical Society

Mid Pacific Magazine (photos and accompanying articles):
October – December 1917
January – February 1918
October – December 1935

Books:
Familiar Hawaiian Flowers (1938)
Alohaland (Self-published, 1938)
Hawaiian Yesterdays (1939)
Honolulu Then and Now (1941)
Honolulu in 1870 (1951)
Princess Ka'iulani (Self-publisher, 1954)
Works Consulted


For Further Information

Contact the UHCARL Online Catalog: telnet://uhcarl.lib.hawaii.edu and connect to the “UH Uncover” file.

Prepared by Barbara Robeson, March 25, 1999.
**Ray Jerome Baker**

*Articles Paradise of the Pacific and Mid Pacific Magazine*

Retrieved from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Library Uncover Service

**Kauai Articles**

**AUTHOR(s):** Baker, Ray S.  
**TITLE(s):** Olokele Canyon, Kauai island.  
**Summary:** Photograph  

In: *Paradise of the Pacific*. OCTOI 1932 v 45 n 10

**AUTHOR(s):** Baker, Ray Jerome  
**TITLE(s):** Beach and bay of Hanalei, Kauai.  
**Summary:** Photograph  

In: *Paradise of the Pacific*. OCTOI 1923 v 36 n 10

**All Articles**

1 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/56)  
Norman Hill ... photographer’s poet.

2 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 1/01/56)  
This was Honolulu less than fifty years ago.

3 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/55)  
Promoting Hawaii on the Chautauqua circuits.

4 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/54)  
A visit to Palmyra Island.

5 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/52)  
Movie making in pioneer days.

6 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/51)  
Honolulu in 1870.

7 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 12/01/50)  
The Oahu Charity School.

8 Baker, Ray Jerome (Paradise of the Pacific. 03/01/46)  
Tour of Oahu seventy-three years ago.
9 Baker, Ray Jerome  
Honolulu’s first photographer. (Paradise of the Pacific. 01/01/46)

10 Baker, Ray Jerome  
Kamehameha Statue in Kohala. (Paradise of the Pacific. 11/01/45)

11 Baker, Ray Jerome  
Kamehameha Statue. (Paradise of the Pacific. 10/01/45)

12 Baker, Ray Jerome  
The case of the wild bullock. (Paradise of the Pacific. 10/01/44)

13 Baker, Ray Jerome  
A backward glance. (Paradise of the Pacific. 08/01/44)

14 Baker, Ray Jerome  
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16 Baker, Ray Jerome  
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17 Baker, Ray Jerome  
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18 Baker, Ray Jerome  
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19 Baker, Ray Jerome  
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20 Baker, Ray Jerome  
What can be seen from the top of Haleakala. (Paradise of the Pacific. 06/01/23)

21 Baker, Ray Jerome  
The highest point of Haleakala. (Paradise of the Pacific. 06/01/23)

22 Baker, Ray Jerome  
Native fishing, fishing on the reef, Hawaii. (The Mid-Pacific magazine. 08/01/33)
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Originally a photo album of 187 black and white photographs, entitled "Kauai Over the Years, Scenes Mostly Old, Some New." The subjects are people, scenery, and buildings on Kauai, and the photos were taken by Baker, a professional photographer living in Honolulu, on several visits between 1908 and 1961. The album was donated by the Lihue Library. For preservation purposes, the photographs have been individually placed in conservation envelopes.

For a full description of the collection and a short biography of the photographer, see The Ray Jerome Baker Photograph Collection Finding Aid.

1. Kauai--History -- Pictorial works. I. Title. II. Series.
Preparing taro for poi making, near Hanalei [ca. 1912]

The photograph was originally in an album, entitled 'Kauai Over the Years, Scenes Mostly Old, Some New.' The album contained 187 black and white photographs of people, scenery, and buildings on Kauai (and Ni'ihau), which were taken by Baker on visits to Kauai between 1908 and 1961. For preservation purposes, the photographs have been individually placed in conservation envelopes. For a full description of the collection, see The Ray Jerome Baker Photograph Collection Finding Aid.

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1. Hawaiians--Hanalei--Kauai. 2. Kauai--History -- pictorial works. I. Title. II.

Preparation taro for poi making, near Hanalei