

1921

The Little
Lane

A LITTLE lane off King street at Liliha forms the entrance to Palama Settlement. For more than twenty-five years this lane has been known to Palama folk, and of late years its significance has grown steadily greater. That those who have known Palama may review its history, and that new friends may become better acquainted, this booklet has been prepared.



HERE IS PALAMA CHAPEL 25 YEARS AGO.
The "Little Lane" may be seen at the right.
Observe the unpaved and muddy expanse of King
Street in front of the chapel.



AT PA OLA, WHERE FRESH AIR FIGHTS TUBERCULOSIS.



WAITING FOR PALAMA'S NEVER FAILING HELP.



GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL ON THE PLAYGROUND



GROUP OF WIDE-AWAKE PALAMA GIRLS

The Little Lane

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By JAMES A. RATH,
Head Worker, Palama Settlement.

TO attempt to chronicle the work of Palama Settlement for the past twenty-five years is no easy task, particularly in an abbreviated form. This is indeed all the more difficult by the fact that for the first nine years I was not connected with Palama and hence have to depend on written records which do not always express the real spirit behind any good work. There are, however, a few of the good folks left and with their help I have tried to glimpse the meaning of the past.

So far as can be gathered, Palama Chapel was the outcome of the interest of Mr. and Mrs. P. C. Jones, who in their wanderings about Honolulu, decided that the Palama neighborhood needed just such an institution as Palama Chapel. On June 1st, 1896, the chapel building was dedicated and formally presented to Central Union Church and from that date to December 31, 1904, Palama was a child of this church.

The first prayer meeting (and in fact the first meeting of any description) held in the building was on June 5th, 1896, and was led by the late Mr. W. A. Bowen, who took for his text "I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision."

At this meeting Rev. J. M. Lewis was introduced to those present, and assumed charge of the work at Palama as Superintendent and carried on the work until January 30th, 1898.

The Palama of 1896 socially and racially was a different Palama to 1921, from information obtainable. There were no frame tenements at the time the first building was erected, and there was not the mixture

of races that predominates today. All those living in the Palama section either owned or rented their homes and kulianas and were endeavoring to bring up their children as good citizens. Into and around this environment Palama Chapel was built and its workers made every effort to help the folks living in Palama.

In addition to the Sunday School and services held in the building, the following activities were reported by Mr. Lewis: Sewing circle, choral society, boys' clubs, monthly entertainments and a kindergarten started by the Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association of Hawaii.

On August 7th, 1898, Hiram Bingham III assumed the leadership of Palama and even at this early date advocated methods that have since been introduced. It was unfortunate for Palama that he could not carry out his ideals, having to resign in April, 1899, on account of poor health.

In September, 1899, Rev. J. P. Erdman arrived and was welcomed by the people as the Superintendent of this growing work. Mr. Erdman, shortly after assuming charge, had to face the closing down of the work in the Chapel for a month by the Board of Health. This scattered some of the people who were in the habit of attending and upon resumption of the work made Mr. Erdman's task a somewhat difficult one, as social conditions had changed very considerably, the cottages and homes were giving way to frame tenements, and the latter brought with them the problem of congestion and its attendant evils.

In December, 1902, Mr. Erdman resigned and was succeeded by Mr. H. P. Judd who carried on the work of Palama Chapel until September 22, 1902; when Rev. A. C. Logan took charge but found it necessary to resign, and left in February, 1905, about two months after the supervision of Palama had been transferred to the Board of the Hawaiian Evangelical Association.

During the many changes that had occurred in superintendents between June 1st, 1896, and February 24th, 1905, a small group of interested persons re-

mained loyal to Palama and carried on the work in face of difficulties and discouragements. Among these were Mr. and Mrs. P. C. Jones, Mr. U. Thompson, Mr. F. C. Atherton and the Misses Ida and Anna Pope, the latter two giving of themselves unsparingly to the work of Palama and its people. To this day they are affectionately remembered by residents of Palama.

On March 1st, 1905, Mrs. Rath and I arrived in Honolulu and entered into the work at Palama immediately and for sixteen years it has been our good fortune to be associated with the work and neighborhood.

A cottage secured by Mr. Jones furnished the nucleus of the Settlement work inaugurated, together with the Chapel building.

Our first job was to become acquainted with our cosmopolitan neighborhood, representing Europe, Asia and Hawaii, not an easy task for two young people, one of whom had never been outside of New England prior to coming to Hawaii. Our neighbors, however, were most kind and considerate and in spite of the many discrepancies in methods of expressing ourselves, we became friends with those among whom we lived. The first feeling of suspicion gave way to one of curiosity which in turn lost itself in confidence and friendship.

In spite of supposed racial difficulties, we found the boys and girls of the various races among whom we lived much the same as the children in other lands. A feed of ice cream and cake always drew a crowd and the Sunday School showed large numbers just before Christmas and June 11th, when an annual picnic was given by Central Union Church.

The boys responded to athletics quite eagerly and enthusiastically and in consequence clubs for these activities were organized, together with domestic science classes and clubs for girls. These clubs and classes have grown steadily until today they enroll over 1200 individuals.

There was a demand for education. Many of our neighbors wanted to learn English, which led to the starting of classes. Not content with learning to read and write, they were anxious to know something of the history of our country and in this way the original class of two has grown into quite an evening school.

To attempt to detail all of the activities started or in progress would take up more space than is wise in a report which must necessarily be short in order to be read. Every new phase of the work was introduced in response to a need or a demand by the people of Palama. Our neighbors did not always at first appreciate what was being done. They were not used to American social ideals and were somewhat suspicious of their new neighbors and what to them seemed "their fads." Nor were the Palama neighbors the only ones to view the new features introduced as fads; a large number of those living waikiki of Nuuanu stream were inclined to the same opinion and were far from enthusiastic in their support.

It was in the midst of an atmosphere of this sort that the first nurse entered upon her work. The Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association of Hawaii (who had for several years employed a graduate nurse to give her mornings to sanitary work in the kindergartens of the city), and the Settlement entered into a joint agreement to employ a nurse to give her whole time as district nurse. The mornings were taken up in an attempt to clean the children of the various kindergartens, while the afternoons were given to visiting or district nursing. I well recall the first case we tried to help. I personally conducted the nurse to the cottage or rather shack in which the patient lived. It was a case of typhoid and we were asked by one of the local doctors to help. It took a great deal of persuasion to get the family to allow the nurse to do a thing for the sick one. The members of the household, as well as the patient, were eventually won over to a sympathetic understanding of the nurse and her

work and it was not long before this one woman had more than she could attend to properly.

The Settlement had not been engaged in visiting nursing very long before the problem of infant mortality was forced upon its workers. A study revealed a high mortality among the infants of the city and in cooperation with Dr. W. D. Baldwin, who had become interested in the same problem, a Pure Milk Depot was started and continued for several years.

Thus it was that an attempt to solve one problem revealed others just as serious and the Settlement was forced into visiting nursing and allied phases of work on a scale it never dreamt of when it first started its one nurse on her work of mercy.

A young man, a member of one of the clubs, was found sick in a rooming house not far from the Settlement. The nurse was sent to see him and found him paying a rather high rent for the one room he had; he was removed to the home of one of the workers and nursed back to health and strength. It was learned that the young fellow in order to meet the high room rent was not nourishing himself properly and he was not the only case, an investigation proved. A small tenement was rented and converted into furnished rooms for young men at as low a rental as was possible. This experiment had to be dropped, as the tenement was later condemned and demolished. There is, however, still a great need for suitable furnished rooms for young men of moderate means, which I trust the Settlement may be able to furnish in the near future.

In September, 1906, the name of the work was changed from "Palama Chapel" to "Palama Settlement." The original name did not adequately express the meaning of the enlarged work being undertaken, hence the change.

Our friends waikiki of Nuuanu were not slow in seeing the meaning of the new Palama and the financial support so much needed was generously given by friends, old as well as new. In conse-

quence of this support, new land and buildings were added to the original ones and in October, 1908, a swimming tank was added to the equipment, followed by a large gymnasium in 1909.

One other congested section of the city, seeing the benefits of a visiting nurse, asked for similar service, which was furnished and the first branch dispensary was opened in Kakaako in January, 1909.

On January 1st, 1905, the supervision of the work at Palama was, as previously stated, transferred to the Hawaiian Board, a Committee of this Board exercising formal supervision. The Hawaiian Board as such contributed 25 per cent of the total expenditures; the balance had to be raised by the Head Worker, who, finding this quite a burden, requested the Hawaiian Board to appoint a special committee to oversee the work at Palama.

This committee consisted of Messrs. J. R. Galt, W. F. Dillingham, W. W. Hall, A. L. Castle, A. Gartley and Drs. W. D. Baldwin and D. Scudder, and assumed charge of their work on March 22nd, 1909.

This arrangement was a temporary one at best. The newly organized committee, while having general supervision over the work and policies of the Settlement, were not an incorporated body, and hence had very limited powers. The land and buildings stood in the name of Central Union Church and the Hawaiian Board; this arrangement did not prove satisfactory and as a result, the committee was granted as of July 21, 1910, a charter as an eleemosynary corporation.

Negotiations were entered into with the Hawaiian Board and Central Union Church, as a result of which both these organizations very generously transferred—without conditions—the land and buildings held by them to the new corporation.

Thus Palama, which for fourteen years had been carried as a branch of Central Union Church and the Hawaiian Board, became an independent and non-

sectarian organization. There were grave doubts in the minds of a number of men connected with the two organizations referred to above, as to the wisdom of this new departure. Time will, however, I believe, prove, if it has not already done so, that the move was a wise one for all concerned.

From about this period, 1909-1910, begins the work of the "New Palama" if I may be pardoned for using such an expression. Hitherto Palama had been a child in the home of its original and foster parents; from this time on it was to be mistress of its own.

The first president elected by the new Board of Trustees was Mr. J. R. Galt, who has remained in that position for the past ten years with the exception of a period when he was absent on the mainland in military service. My association with this gentleman, and in fact with all the members of the Board of Trustees, will always be a very pleasant and happy memory to me.

The work of the three nurses had made itself so felt that calls were coming in from various parts of the city for similar service and in 1910 seven centers were opened and operated, one additional center being added in 1914.

Early in 1910 the Settlement was approached relative to the operation of a Tubercular Day Camp. Certain friends were willing to contribute the money for the building of such a camp, provided the Settlement would operate the same. Failure on the part of the Settlement to assume this responsibility would have meant the withdrawal of the offer and after consideration this responsibility was assumed and Pa Ola Day Camp erected and has been in operation since 1910. In the flu epidemic of 1920, this camp played an important part.

Housing conditions in and around Palama were anything but desirable. Several studies of the situation had been made both by workers of the Settlement as well as others, the original cottages had almost entirely given way to frame tenements and shacks, and what

few remained were leased and crowded with humanity. Rents were advancing and people were finding it hard to meet the advance. The first step taken by the Settlement was in the leasing of some cottages from the O. R. & L. Co., and renting them at as low a figure as possible to those who needed decent houses. This experiment was observed by some friends, who presented the Settlement with cottages for twenty-two families, built on plans made by one of the trustees. Not content with this gift, these same friends have added seven more cottages to their original gift.

In 1914, Dr. A. F. Jackson offered his services to the Settlement and a medical clinic was opened. This eventually led to the present enlarged work subsidized by the City and County Government. The Settlement did not seek this work, but took it up at the request of the City and County officials, as other organizations refused to establish such a dispensary.

It was in connection with the dispensary work that cases needing rest and change were brought to the attention of the Settlement. It was very easy for the physician to prescribe "rest and change." This was the easiest part of the problem; the most difficult part was for the tired mother to find a place in which to rest. A woman trying to raise a family on a wage earner's income is not apt to have sufficient funds on which to take the "rest cure"; it is hard enough for her to live from day to day. It was the presentation of this problem that led the trustees of the Settlement to sanction in 1914 the experiment of taking some mothers and children to a camp some thirty-five miles from Honolulu. So successful was this temporary camp that in the following year a permanent site was obtained and buildings erected. This camp, known as "The Fresh Air Camp," is now a permanent feature of the Settlement's activities.

The Dental Association of Honolulu in 1914; after a survey of the schools of Honolulu, established at the Settlement a free dental clinic. Several—if not all—of the dentists of the city volunteered their services

and carried on this clinic for about a year, when the Settlement was asked to take over this work and carry it on. Thus did the Settlement Dental Clinic come into being.

In 1920 the need of a new plant in which to adequately house the growing work of the Settlement was discussed by the trustees and after careful consideration of the question \$50,000.00 was raised for the purchase of the Lanakila Hale premises and additional land. This property was formerly used as a home for working girls and was operated by the trustees of the Kaulani Home for Girls. The Settlement is now conducting a boarding department for working girls and when sufficient land is obtainable in the vicinity, the present plant will probably be sold and a new plant erected on the proposed site.

At present two playgrounds are being operated, one in connection with the present land and one in the premises purchased in 1920.

I have had to omit several details of our activities in order to avoid a too lengthy document. Our workers have been active not only in Settlement matters, but in affairs outside of the Settlement. We have all been busy trying to solve the problems and work out the principles laid down for the solution of our problems.

There is some talk of lack of cooperation between the social agencies of Honolulu. I know of no time, since my arrival here, when the spirit of cooperation has been better exemplified than right now. Some good folks mistake absolute obedience to or the following of a system of social effort developed by themselves as cooperation. When such obedience is not given the cry of a lack of cooperation is heard.

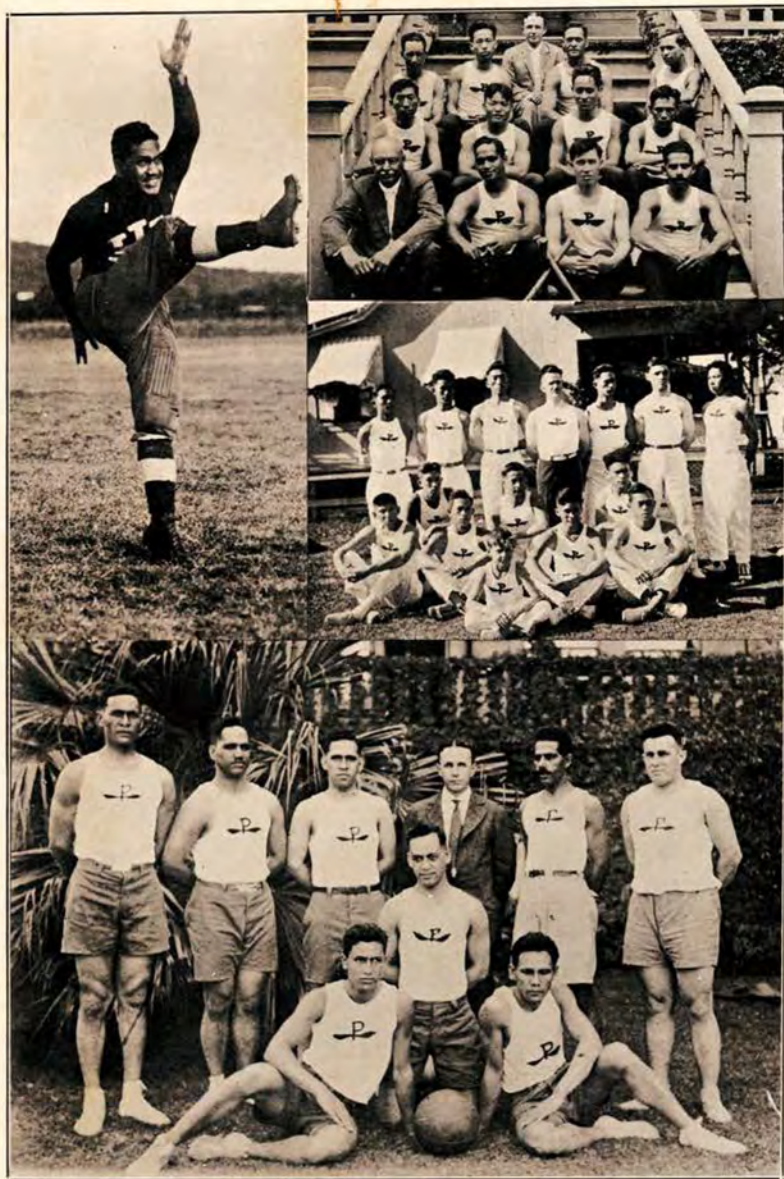
With the various government agencies working for the welfare of our city, we have found ourselves working in sympathy, while a great many of the social agencies and ourselves are on the best of terms and so may it continue.

The one building erected in 1896 still stands on King Street, opposite Liliha, but its influence has spread

and there are now thirteen centers where the Settlement operates and carries on its work in fifty-three separate buildings.

The little lane still runs by the first building and is used by those who come to the Settlement for divers reasons. The boys still sit on the curb in the little lane and discuss questions, from Babe Ruth's last home run to Sun Yat Sen's recent rebellion. The girls still linger in the little lane to exchange the latest gossip or talk over Dame Fashion's last exploit, and the older folks meet in the little lane and talk over "the dear dead days beyond recall." The little lane has been a "refuge in a time of storm" to many who have entered it, for it is the lane leading to the Settlement.

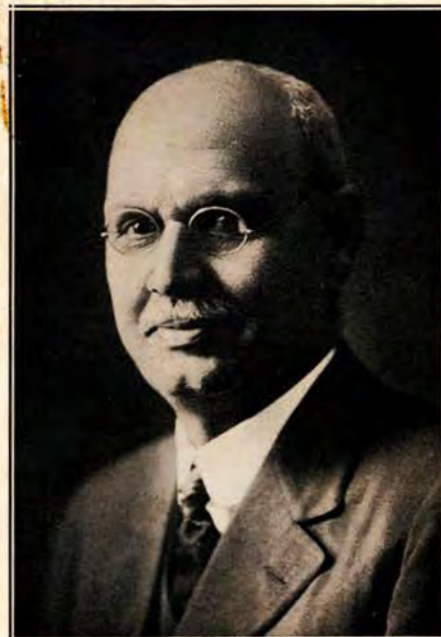
I realize that I have very inadequately told the story of Palama; what it has meant to hundreds of boys and girls is almost impossible of telling; it will have to be judged by its results in the lives of those it has touched.



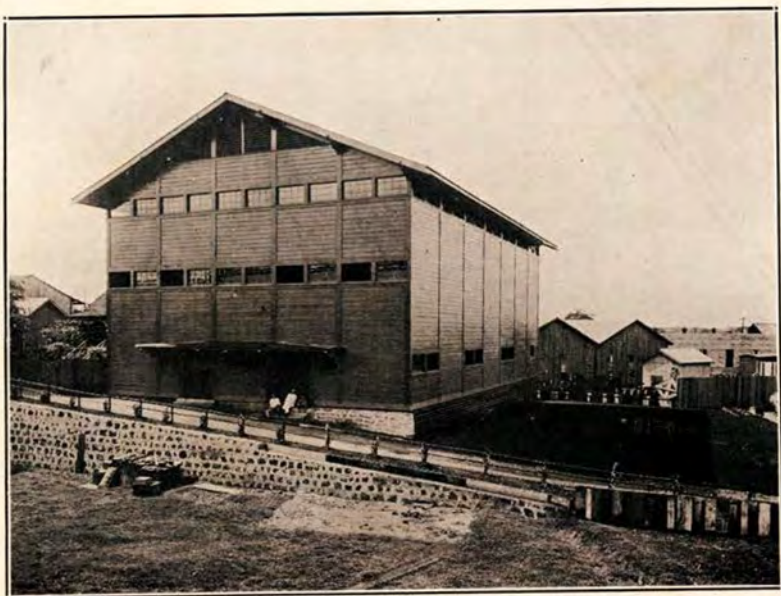
SOME OF PALAMA'S HUSKY BOYS.



MR. J. R. GALT
President of the Palama
Board of Trustees



MR. JAMES A. RATH
Head Worker at Palama



THE PALAMA GYMNASIUM.



HOW THE NURSES HELP CHILDREN.



PALAMA'S YOUNGER GENERATION IN THE CLUB ROOM.



BOYS ENJOYING THE PALAMA SWIMMING TANK.