

## A tribute to O. A. Bushnell

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It is appropriate and fitting to state that no one has advanced knowledge of Hawai'i's medical history more than Dr. Oswald A. Bushnell. This is a view shared by many: University of Hawai'i undergraduate students who sat in his classes during his tenure as professor of bacteriology, fledgling researchers who were guided by his extraordinary scholarly output on germs and Hawai'i's past, historians inspired by his tenacity for truth and facts, and physicians, who not only learned the basics of microbiology under his tutelage at the John A. Burns School of Medicine but were also trained by him to be unyielding in the search for root causes of diseases and illnesses.

In 1950, Dr. Bushnell and his wife, Betty, had just seen an historical play and, while walking to the parking lot afterwards, Ozzie casually remarked to his wife, "I can do better than that!" Betty challenged Ozzie to do so and thus began a calling for which the name "Bushnell" and Hawaiian literature became synonymous.

Few people know of the personal side of Ozzie Bushnell. This commentary will also provide some rare anecdotes and glimpses of a life speckled with humor, of a life with an early love of language and words, of a determination to excel, and of happiness in a simple family life with wife, two sons, a daughter, and several grandchildren.

The first novel written was *The Return of Lono* about Capt. Cook and the introduction of syphilis and gonorrhea; followed by *Moloka'i*, in 1963, about leprosy and Father Damien; *Kaaawa*, in 1972, about small pox; *Stone of Kannon*, about the first Japanese contract laborers in Hawai'i; and then, in 1980, *The Water of Kane*. While on a trip to Japan, the inspiration came to produce the *Stone of Kannon*. Images from a slumbering mind also played a significant role in portions of novels. For example, stumped to find a

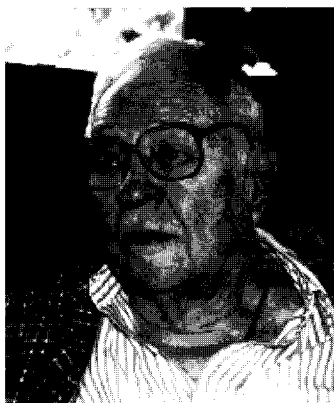
solution for the murder of Ah See in *Moloka'i*, the answer came to Ozzie in a dream. The sadness of the plight of Hawaiians following contact in 1778 and the distortions in historical facts by a young Hawaiian led the main character Hiram Nihoa to lament in *Kaaawa*, "There are so few who know of the olden days, and fewer yet who even care." The story of Mother Marianne in *A Song of Pilgrimage and Exile: The Life and Spirit of Mother Marianne of Moloka'i*, co-authored with Sister Mary Laurence Hanley, is an account of the life of a remarkable heroine of Kalaupapa. Bushnell has always maintained a dry humor about his stories, for he is known to often quote, "A man who writes history tells the truth, or tries to. A man who writes novels tells lies!"

The writing of these poignant and emotional epics did not come without daily toil and discipline. Each evening Dr. Bushnell would lock himself in his study from 6:30 to 9:00 o'clock. Even if he wrote just one sentence, he forced himself to remain in that room until the self-imposed time restriction was up. It is rumored that when writing, there were strict orders he was never to be disturbed. Only once was the rigid rule broken, and that was when a phone call was received inviting Ozzie to come to the Vatican for an audience with the Pope.

His latest masterpiece, *The Gifts of Civilization*, is already a classic and a "must read" book for anyone with an interest on the impact of microbes and the west on the history of Hawai'i and the continuing plight of *Kānaka Maoli*.

Television stations and bookstores have often requested interviews and autograph sessions only to be politely and courteously refused by Bushnell who prefers to maintain a low profile.

O.A. Bushnell was born on May 11, 1913 at the Lying in Hospital on Kewalo Street in Honolulu. He attended St. Louis College, now called High School on River Street until the school was moved to Kalaepōhaku. While there, his favorite teacher was a Brother Adrian Keoho who was a nephew of Queen Keohokalole, a name that is recorded in the House of Nobles. It was there that he developed his interest in writing because "I was the only literate *haole* kid. There was another *haole* kid there but he was a juvenile delinquent.



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His name was Jack Burns!" "I came to know and love words and was always elected the class secretary." He graduated from St. Louis with the class of 1930.

Bushnell entered the University of Hawai'i graduating in 1934 with a major in bacteriology. Destined to go to work at the Hawai'i Sugar Planters Association, he was "saved" by a summer romance with Gladys Sinclair, a niece of Gregg M. Sinclair, late president of the University of Hawai'i. Dr. Sinclair "put in a good word for me at the University of Wisconsin" and Bushnell headed for Madison, Wisconsin on a scholarship of \$62 a month.

After receiving his doctorate in 1937, in bacteriology, no jobs were available in Hawai'i so Ozzie moved to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. where he taught bacteriology to medical students. He received a job offer from the Territorial Board of Health and the homesick Bushnell returned to the islands and was assigned to work as a medical technologist on Maui in September 1941.

Then came Pearl Harbor and "we were ordered to gather at the Wailuku armory and were given rifles to guard the island. Alas, we were given no bullets!" Provided with an opportunity to choose which sector of the military to serve, Ozzie said, "I did some research and found out that the only quartermaster killed in World War I died when a coffin fell on him!" "So, I enlisted and became a quartermaster and a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant." In April 1942, he moved to Schofield for four years where "it was a good job, good microbiology experience, a fine salary, and some fine living quarters." O.A. Bushnell was promoted to major. In 1945, as World War II ended, he served as medical corps officer in Okinawa and Japan before returning home to Hawai'i to be discharged.

With nostalgic tenderness, he said, "In Wisconsin, it was Karma, for it was there I met a young girl also studying bacteriology, and I fell in love with her." Ozzie and Betty were married on December 15, 1943 in Central Union Church.

Ozzie began his career with the University of Hawai'i as his first post war job. Caught up in the publish-or-perish environment, he said "I still remember one of the earliest papers I had to read, 'The Effects of Increased Concentration of Sucrose On the Intestinal Micro Flora of Chicken' or in other words, pure chicken shit!"

Bushnell's family background is the story of Hawai'i's immigrants. His paternal grandfather was Louie Busnalli, an Italian machinist employed at the Honolulu Iron Works. His paternal grandmother was Anna DeJesus from Madeira, Portugal. His maternal grandmother and grandfather,

Marie and Johann Johanessen, were "pure Norwegians" who came to work on the plantation. Marie was pregnant on the ship over and when prominent missionary and physician Reverend Dwight Baldwin saw her, he gave strict orders she was not to work in the fields but to work in his Maui home.

His father was Andrew Louis Bushnell (the name was changed from Busnalli to Busnell in 1890 and sometime around 1900, the name was again changed to Bushnell). His mother was named Hulda. Ozzie was the firstborn of three children. There were two younger sisters, Muriel who died from a failed heart transplant in 1994 and Helena, who passed away several years ago.

Ozzie and Betty have three children. Andrew is a professor at Kaua'i Community College. Phillip is a research toxicologist in North Carolina. Māhealani is with the Star-Bulletin.

Ozzie Bushnell is among very few authors who have been able to record deep and moving insights about Hawai'i's social and medical history. He is counted among even fewer writers who have been able to portray the intensity of the suffering of Native Hawaiians, a group of people still afflicted with the highest rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, mental illness, drug abuse, and family disintegration. These are the same Hawaiians whose medical conditions are camouflaged by the beauty and benign climate of our islands, and whose dismal health statistics are masked by businesses promoting images of "aloha".

This issue of the *Pacific Health Dialog* attempts to provide publishing opportunities for aspiring researchers, to call attention to the alarming health conditions of Native Hawaiians, and to address areas needing further research. This issue also acknowledges one who has paved the way for so many to follow. Research into disease, public health, and the depopulation of Hawaiians has been a lifelong pursuit for Dr. O. A. Bushnell and in this small way we pay tribute to his valuable and scholarly gifts to our civilization. ■

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# A tribute to "Papa" Henry Allen Auwae

BABETTE GALANG\*



As *Po'okela* (Master) *lā'au lapa'au* (herbal medicine), "Papa" Henry Allen Auwae's legacy is unmatched. His training in traditional Hawaiian healing practices began in the early 1900s. At the age of seven, he was selected and trained by his great-great-grandmother to carry on the family lineage as a healer. Throughout his life he shared his vast knowledge. People from Hawai'i and worldwide sought his help for a variety of ailments ranging from broken bones, cancer, heart disease, and diabetes to spiritual counseling. Additionally, over the past two decades, researchers in medicine, pharmacology, and ethnobotany sought him for his knowledge of more than 2,500 herbs.

Papa Auwae consistently attributed the success of treatment to *Ke Akua* (God). He continually conveyed, "healing is a gift from God," and Papa Auwae often expressed, "all herbs were placed on earth for all mankind." He believed healing is 80% spiritual and 20% *lā'au* (herbal). These beliefs were incorporated into his apprenticeship training of more than a 100 selected *haumana* (students) from across Hawai'i. His graduates continue to perpetuate Papa's deep commitment to maintain this traditional art of healing and preserve the cultural integrity of his teachings.

Education was a key vehicle used by Papa to promote the understanding of his work. He often was called upon to testify on traditional herbal medicine and healing at legislative

and congressional hearings. He also participated in numerous conferences, workshops, and panel discussions. Papa, in recent years, was a guest to the Haudenosunee Nation (also known as Iroquois Confederacy), where he shared his knowledge and treated those seeking to be healed. He encouraged the Nation to return to its elders and medicine people for its healing. His impact on the Nation's six major tribes (Seneca, Cayuga, Onodaga, Oneida, Mohawk and Tuscarora) is still felt. Today, efforts to organize a conference on the reservation are being made by the Nation to convey Papa's message.

**PAPA HENRY AUWAE**

*Pōwehiwehi ke kukui o Kohala  
The light has dimmed in Kohala*

*I ke kū mehameha o ka 'ohe kahi o uka  
As the bamboo stand lonely in the uplands*

*Puana 'ia kona inoa i ka pā a ka 'Āpa'apa'a  
And the winds whisper his name*

*E kū a'e, e ka mea nui i wae 'ia  
Rise up, you who have been chosen*

*Lele nō ka 'ohe i kona lua  
Each in his own place*

*Ho'oili 'ia ihola kona ipukukui  
The torch has been passed*

*I kukui mā'ama'ama a mau loa aku  
Let his light shine proudly on*

*Original English text by LorrieAnn Santos  
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Hawaiian translation by Keao Nesmith*

Recognition and honor for his work have been widespread. Some of the awards that he has received include: Honpa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple "Living Treasures of Hawai'i" Recognition and the Papa Ola Lōkahi's Ka'ōnohi Award. Other local and national organizations that have acknowledged Papa's contributions have been the Department of Veteran Affairs, Hawai'i; the American Public Health Association and the 1996 Treating and Counseling People of Colour Conference.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, on December 31, 2000, Papa Henry Allen Auwae passed on from this Earth. He and his wife raised 20 children, including 7 sons, 9 daughters, and 4 grandchildren. Today, he has more than 265 grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren. His spirit and light of knowledge continue to be with those he touched, including the patients

he helped heal. Papa is remembered with love, and the wisdom he left for all humanity is treasured. Throughout Hawai'i and the world, Papa's legacy lives on. ■

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