

HAWAII FISHMONGERS

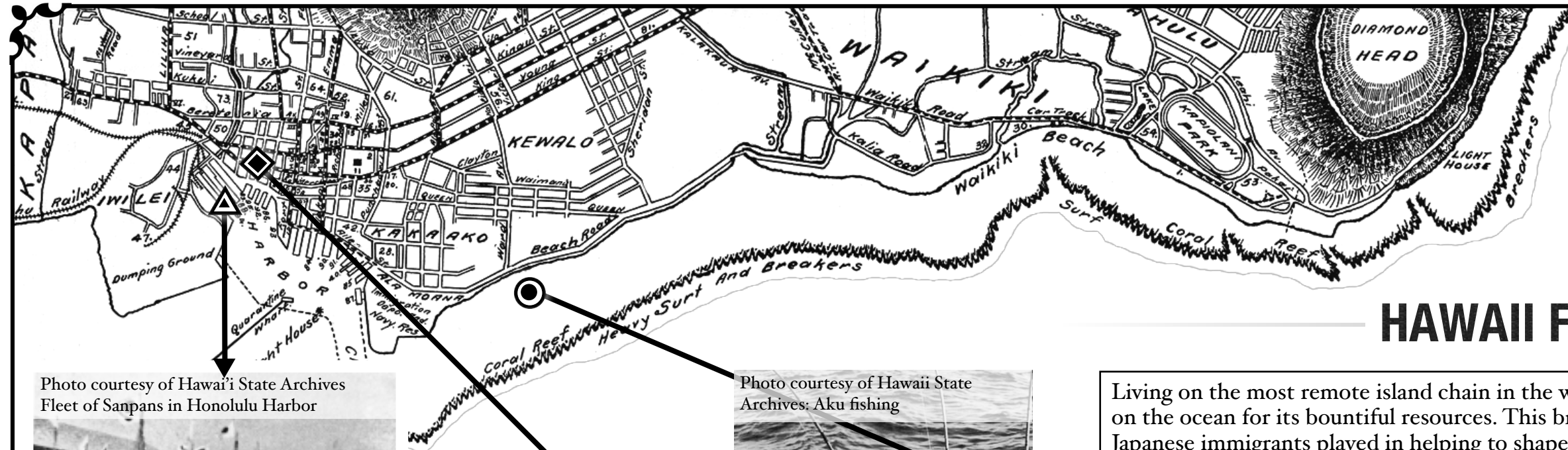


Photo courtesy of Hawai'i State Archives
Fleet of Sanpans in Honolulu Harbor



Introduction of the Sampan

- First wooden hulled sampan was imported from Wakayama Prefecture by Gorokichi Kakasuji in 1899 (Shugg, 2001)
- 1905 - first motor powered sampan and fleet expanded.
- Average length of the pole and line sanpans was 75 feet, targeting aku.
- Aku trips stayed with 4-5 hours from shore to deliver fresh fish daily.
- 1917 - Longline or flag line methods for pelagics were employed off of Waianae by a fisherman named Imose.
- Sanpans targeting ahi using flag line gear were smaller but traveled farther.
- 1913 - fleet was exploring the NWHI
- 1930 - "chief warden of Territorial Fish and Game Division recorded that practically all the fishing is done and controlled by Japanese.
- Started with deep handline fishing targeting bottomfishing for opakapaka and uku
- Late 1930s - 2670 licensed fishermen employing 999 licensed fishing boats.
- 1920s - Kewalo Basin was constructed and by the 1930s was the main berthing area for the sampan fleet and also the site of the tuna cannery, fish auction, shipyard, ice plant, fuel dock and other shore side facilities.

Photo courtesy of Hawaii State Archives: Aku fishing

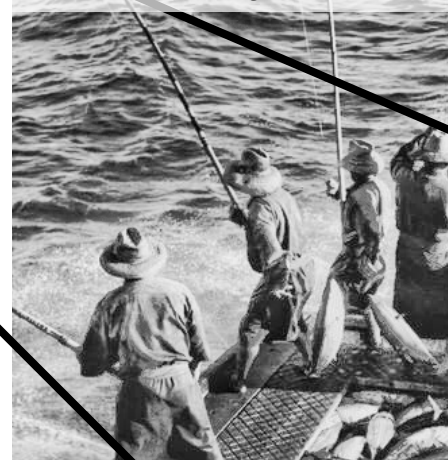


Photo courtesy of Hawaii State Archives: Fishing vessel Orion unloading aku



Photo courtesy of Hawaii State Archives: Kewalo Basin Hawaiian Tuna Packing Cannery



Living on the most remote island chain in the world, the people of Hawaii have traditionally relied on the ocean for its bountiful resources. This brochure highlights the role early Chinese and Japanese immigrants played in helping to shape Oahu's seafood markets and fishing industry through the introduction of traditional wooden sampan fishing vessels, fish markets and auctions.

Seafood Marketing

- Japanese controlled the seafood market in Honolulu which was initially held by the Chinese.
- 1908 - the Chinese refused to purchase fish from the Japanese fishermen because China boycotted Japanese products as a result of the seizure of a Japanese cargo ship, Tatsu Maru, in Macao on charges of smuggling.
- As a result, Honolulu Dr. Toshiyuki Mitamura and a group of Japanese, Hawaiian and Caucasian businessmen established the Hawaiian Fisheries Company that operated as an auction house.
- Fish would be taken from the fishermen on consignment and sold daily to wholesale and retail dealers for a 10% commission
- Auction houses were established over the next several years, Pacific Fishing Company in 1910 and Honolulu Fishing Company in 1914.
- 1923 - Hawaii Suisan Kaisha succeeded the Honolulu fishing company which became the largest auction house annually handling \$500,000 worth of fish that was supplied by 130 sanpans.
- Retail fish industry remained in control of the Chinese.

Photo courtesy of Hawaii State Archives: Hawaiian Tuna Packing Company



Photo courtesy of Akira Otani: A'ala Fish Market, 1941



Cannery

- 1917 - F. Walter MacFarlane opened the Hawaiian Tuna Packing Company in Honolulu
- 1922 - the tuna canning company was incorporated as Hawaiian Tuna Packers, Ltd.
- Enabled Hawaii fishing industry to expand beyond fresh and dried markets.
- 1930s - the Cannery employed 500 men producing 10 million cans of tuna per year.

¹ Donald M. Schug, "Hawaii's Commercial Fishing Industry 1820-1945" (2001)

² Richard S. Shomura, "Hawaii's Marine Fishery Resources: Yesterday (1900) and Today (1986)" (1987)

³ J.A. Wyban and C. Arki, "Aquaculture in Hawaii: Past, Present, and Future" (1989)

⁴ Christofer H. Boggs and Bert S. Kikkawa, "The Development and Decline of Hawaii's Skipjack Tuna Fishery" (1993)



Prior to 1900

- Capt James Cook arrived in the Hawaiian Islands in 1778, he found a thriving community of over 300,000 people with sophisticated resource management and food production systems in place.
- Estimated 350 actively managed fish ponds (Kikuchi, 1976)
- Estimated 6,500 acres of actively managed ponds
- Hawaii fish ponds were unique in Oceania dating back prior to 14th Century. Other island areas employed fish traps, weir systems, etc.
- Fish primarily to support the chiefs and ruling class. “Kapu” or forbidden to commoners

Post 1900

- J.N. Cobb report (1900 and 1903)
- Fish ponds were converted to commercially produce fish and other seafood products for sale at markets.
- Most of ponds at the turn of the century were operated by Chinese immigrants producing largely mullet and milkfish.
- Estimated production was 661,386 pounds worth \$160,000.
- 1903 - Chinese businessmen established trade guilds, the Wing Lok Ngue Hong, of fish sellers.
- Open air stalls in market places were leased by individual retailers who sold fresh fish and seafood products.
- Early markets were owned and run by the territorial government.
- The first privately owned market, City Market, was constructed in 1904 by Chung Kun Ai who emigrated from China to Hawaii in 1879.
- 1905 - Anin Young and Chinese entrepreneurs established the Oahu Fish Market.
- 1907 - King Fish Market was established and Aala Market in 1920.
- 1908 - Average price per pound of fish in Hawaii was 15 cents as compared to 3 cents in Pacific Coast States and 2.5 cents in New England States.
- Territory Fish and Game Commissioner, Hercules Kelly, explained that the high prices resulted from the population of ethnic groups accustomed to eating fish as the main article in their diet.
- 2 million pounds of fresh fish valued at \$5 million sold annually
- Of the 600 plus species of fish that scientist found at the time in Hawaii, 350 plus varieties were sold in the Honolulu fish markets, each having Hawaiian names.

War – Collapse of the Fishery

- December 7, 1941 - the start of WWII virtually eliminated offshore fishing
- The multimillion dollar industry that employed hundreds of people and indirectly provided jobs for thousands more came to a screeching halt.
- Fishing boats were requisitioned by the Army or Navy.
- Tuna cannery was converted into a plant for the assembly of airplane auxiliary fuel tanks
- Shipyard was converted to maintain military craft.

Post War – Rebuilding of the Fisheries, Expansion North and Flag Line

- A significant portion of the sampan fleet fell into disrepair during the war as vessels were confiscated by the military and Japanese residents were relocated to internment camps and prohibited for venturing offshore.
- Rebuilding of fisheries centered around Kewalo Basin, the site of the tuna cannery, which included pole and line sampans, fish auction, shipyard, ice plant, fuel dock and other shore side facilities.
- 1948 - 32 aku sampans primarily supplied the tuna cannery; 42 flagline vessels were in operation.
- 1952 - United Fishing Agency, Matsujiro Otani (arrived in 1908) opens the Honolulu Fish Auction at Kekaulike Street, Chinatown Honolulu.
- 1970 - 15 aku sampans and 14 flagline vessels were in operation.
- 1979 - United Fishing Agency relocated to Ahui Street, Kewalo Basin.
- 1984 - Closure of the Hawaiian Tuna Packers (Boggs et al.)
- 1988 - 35 flagline (longline) vessels in operation.
- 1991 - 164 longline vessels in operation (Capped through federal limited entry program)
- This rapid expansion was the result of the closure of the East coast swordfish fishery and discovery of swordfish in the waters north of Hawaii. Gulf of Mexico shrimp boats also transitioned to the Pacific to target swordfish
- 2004 - United Fishing Agency relocates to Pier 38 Honolulu Fishing Village.
- 2018 - About 120 active deep-set longline fishing vessels target tuna; About 20 shallow-set longline vessels target swordfish.
- Invention of the longline reel, Development of the swordfish fishery and deepset lonline tuna fishery

Photo courtesy of PIFG: Traditional Hawaiian fishponds, Moloka'i, HI



Photo courtesy of Teruo Funai:
Seiichi Funai master boat builder



Photo courtesy of Hawaii State Archives:
Fishing vessel Orion unloading aku



Photo courtesy of Akira Otani:
A'ala Fish Market, 1941

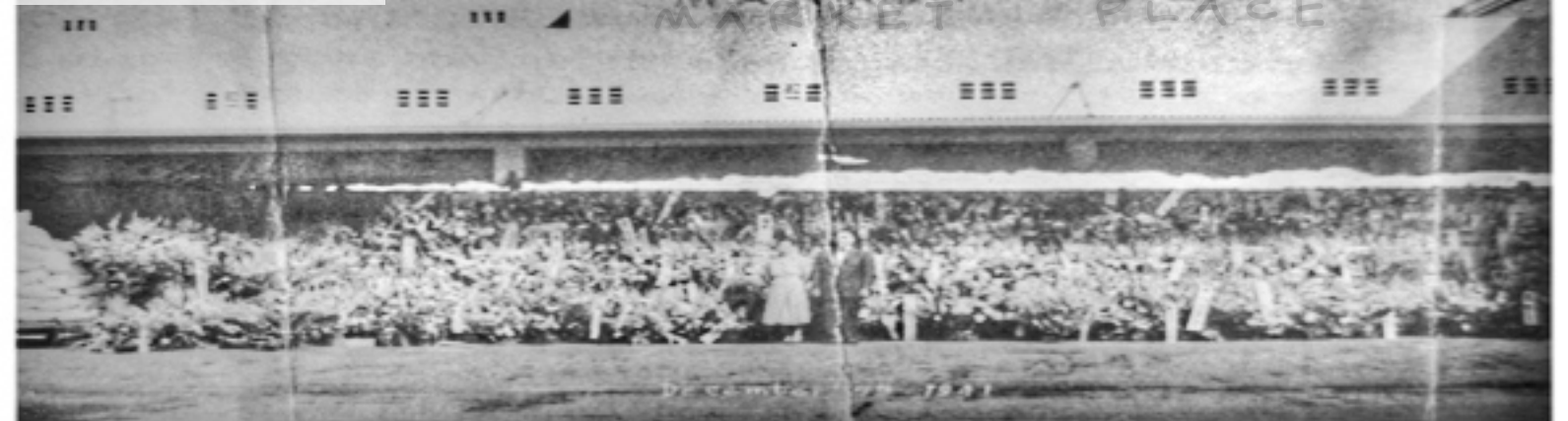


Photo courtesy of PIFG: United Fishing Agency
auction floor, Pier 38



Photo courtesy of PIFG: O'ahu Market, Chinatown, 2017

