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Many Hawaiians have made their home on the continent, at least for a while. Many dream of returning to Hawaii nei when they can. Here is the story of a Hawaiian pioneer who left his home with great dreams of returning to help his people.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Hawaii experienced many battles among opposing native forces to gain power and control over land. During this time, 'Opukaha'ia became an orphan at the age of ten. His father (Keau) and mother (Kamoho'ula) were killed when their chief was defeated and the opposing warriors put his supporters to death. The young 'Opukaha'ia was turned over to his uncle, Pahua, who was a kahuna and who trained his nephew in that vocation: however, God had other plans for 'Opukaha'ia. The young Hawaiian swam out to the fur trading ship Triumph in Kealakekua Bay and convinced the captain to allow him to become his servant.

After travelling to the American Northwest and China, the ship landed in New York in 1809. 'Opukaha'ia continued his journey to New Haven, Connecticut and eventually was taken into the home of the Rev. Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College, and taught the first principles of Christianity. It was here he first witnessed and practiced pule 'ohana-family prayer each morning and evening. The following year he lived with the pious and affectionate family of the Rev. Samuel J. Mills, where he was baptized and received into the church. Rev. Mills, one of the founders of the American foreign missions movement, brought 'Opukaha'ia to Andover Theological Seminary which was the center for foreign mission training. In the summer of 1813, 'Opukaha'ia recorded in his journal that he translated a few chapters of the Scriptures into his own language and began making a kind of spelling, dictionary, and grammar book.

In October 1816, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) established the Foreign Mission School in Cornwall, Connecticut, where 'Opukaha'ia and other Hawaiian and native students were trained to preach the Gospel back in their native lands. Expressing a sincere devotion to Christ, 'Opukaha'ia excelled in his studies and was considered a leader of the student body. His deepest desire was to return to Hawaii and preach the Gospel message to his people. Unfortunately, 'Opukaha'ia contracted typhus fever and died on February 17, 1818. He was laid to rest in Cornwall Cemetery.

Although 'Opukaha'ia did not realize his dream of returning home, his letters and journals, published in a book, *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah*, became a best-seller and inspired missionaries to carry his message to the Hawaiian Islands. The ABCFM instructed the first missionaries who set sail to Hawaii in 1819: "You will never forget Obookiah. You will never forget his fervent love, his affectionate counsels, his many prayers and tears for you, and his and your nation. You saw him die; saw how the Christian could triumph over death and the grave; saw the radiant glory in which he left this world for heaven. You will remember it always, and you will tell it to your kindred and countrymen who are dying without hope." 'Opukaha'ia's remains were returned to Hawaii from Cornwall on August 15, 1993, and reinterred at Kahikolu church, overlooking Kealakekua Bay.

This story is copied from the Ka Baibala Hemolele, The Holy Bible, a New American Standard Bible published in O'ahu in 2018.