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## *Our Origins*

# History

In 1970 Frances “Patches” Damon Holt and her sister Harriet “Haku” Damon Baldwin, founded Moanalua Gardens Foundation (MGF) to prevent Kamananui (Moanalua) Valley, the last undeveloped valley in urban Honolulu, from being overtaken by a major freeway. The great granddaughters of Samuel Mills Damon who inherited the entire ahupua‘a of Moanalua (land to sea district) from Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Patches and Haku fought to maintain this precious wahi pana (storied place) whose history dates back to the 1100s. Part of the Moanalua ahupua‘a that sustained life and the cultural practices of hula and chanting in ancient times, Kamananui Valley was the intended pathway for the construction of the H-3 freeway until MGF stepped in to stop construction and effectively preserved 3,700 acres of this historic site for future generations. Since then, MGF, a nonprofit organization, has continued the sisters’ legacy of conservation in its work and mission to preserve and perpetuate the precious cultural and natural resources of our islands through education and stewardship of Kamananui Valley and celebration of the annual Prince Lot Hula Festival. A pioneer in environmental education, MGF developed, in the late 1970s, the first culture-based environmental education K-12 curriculum in Hawaii which was used extensively in public and private schools throughout O‘ahu with a groundbreaking distance learning program for neighbor island schools. In 1978, MGF launched the Prince Lot Hula Festival to continue the legacy of hula and chanting begun in the 1600s by King Kākuhihewa in Kamananui and perpetuated by Prince Lot Kapuāiwa when he hosted pa‘ina (gatherings) at his summer home in Moanalua. Over its more than half a century of service to the community, Moanalua Gardens Foundation has become one of the most respected environmental and cultural preservation organizations in Hawai‘i winning awards for excellence in both areas. Today our work continues in advocating for environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and community resilience, through our

four core pillars:

1. The Annual Prince Lot Hula Festival which provides opportunities for hālau hula (hula schools) to perform in Hawai'i's largest non-competitive hula celebration, continuing the preservation of one of the purest forms of artistic expression for Hawaiians, while at the same time, building pride and respect in haumana (students) for their culture.
2. The Halia (Reflection) Oral History Program which is collecting the mo'olelo (history and stories) of Kamamanui, specific to the valley we have saved, from 'ike kupuna (elders with knowledge) before they pass on, preserving in perpetuity the reflections of 'ike kupuna with direct ties to Kamananui.
3. The Hanauna (Generation) Digital Library and Archive which will house the oral histories as well as complete performances of recent Prince Lot Hula Festivals and make them accessible to Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) and a global audience through the internet. The Digital Library and Archive will be the first of its kind to provide at no cost complete performances of hālau hula over 11 years with the goal of including all 45 years of festival performances as funds become available.
4. The Mālama (care for) Kamananui Valley Program which utilizes the Valley as a learning incubator for Hawai'i youth who participate in place and culture-based environmental education programs, fostering a connection to culture and place and nurturing a love for mālama 'āina, caring for our lands. And, continuing our partnerships with Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) organizations and governmental agencies to restore native species and develop a management plan for the protection and preservation of this historic Valley for generations to come.