

Chapter 2

Jonathan Napela: A Noble Hawaiian Convert

Fred E. Woods

Jonathan Hawaii Napela is considered by many to be the most influential Hawaiian convert to Mormonism. Descending from royal lineage (known to Hawaiians as the *aliʻi*), he was born September 11, 1813, to his father Hawaiiwaʻaʻole and his mother Wiwiokalani, in Honokowai on the island of Maui.¹

At age eighteen Napela began his formal education among the first group of forty-three students to attend a Protestant school called Lahainaluna on Maui.² From this academic

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1. See International Genealogical Index file 1235151; see also “Genealogy of Harriet Pānānā Ka-ʻuhane-nui-o-Hono-ka-wai-lani Hiana-loli Kaʻiwa-o-ka-lani Na-pela (wife of Samuel Parker, of Waimea, Hawaii),” typescript from the Honolulu *Advertiser*, July 19, 1901, Bishop Museum, Honolulu. An obituary for Napela’s father in a local Hawaiian newspaper notes that he was an active deacon in the Protestant church on Maui: “Another pillar of the church has fallen here in Wailuku, his name is Hawaii. . . . Hawaii was an old man, but physically nimble and strong. . . . He was 70 or more years old and was born here on Maui at Kaanapali. He lived long in ignorance but upon Mr. Richard’s arrival here in Lahaina, soon turned to godliness” (“The Death of Hawaii, a Deacon at Wailuku,” *Ka Nonanona*, March 19, 1844). The author wishes to thank Jason Achiu for the translation.
 2. Scott G. Kenney, “Mormons and the Smallpox Epidemic of 1853,” *Hawaiian Journal of History* 31 (1997): 18. Kenney is incorrect on the date of Napela’s birth and thus on the date when he began school at Lahainaluna. Primary documents covering the Lahainaluna classes may be obtained at the Children’s Museum Library in Honolulu.

foundation, Napela went on to practice law. He later served as a district judge in Wailuku from 1848 to 1851.³ On August 3, 1843, Napela married Kitty Keli‘ikua‘aina Richardson (half Hawaiian and half Caucasian), who also descended from *ali‘i* blood.⁴ From their union came one known child, Harriet (Hattie) Pānānā Ka‘iwaokalani Napela.⁵

A Faithful Convert

Elder George Q. Cannon, a missionary who later served in the First Presidency, introduced Napela to the Church on March 8, 1851.⁶ “The moment I entered into the house of this native and saw him and his two friends,” Cannon noted, “I felt convinced that I had met the men for whom I had been looking” to help with the Lord’s work in Hawaii.⁷ During their island years together, Napela and Cannon developed a symbiotic relationship and became fast friends. Less than two weeks after first meeting, Cannon noted, “I was invited by Napela to come and stay with [him]. I having told [him] I wanted to find somebody to learn me Hawaiian and I would him English; he

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3. Record from the Judiciary History Center, Honolulu. I appreciate Chris Mahelona, a Napela descendant, for bringing this document to my attention and scanning it for me.
 4. Napela writes, “On August 3, 1843, I took my wife as my legally married wife” (Jonathan Napela to E. O. Hall, October 23, 1873, Board of Health Records, 1873, letters incoming, series 334, box 5, fd. 4, Hawaii State Archives).
 5. See International Genealogical Index file 1235151 and the genealogy of Harriet Napela from the Bishop Museum.
 6. Journals of George Q. Cannon, March 8, 1851, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; *The Journals of George Q. Cannon, Vol. 2: Hawaiian Mission, 1850–1854*, ed. Chad M. Orton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, forthcoming).
 7. George Q. Cannon, *My First Mission* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1879), 27.

told [me] he wanted [to learn] & to stay with him.”⁸ Not only did Napela and Cannon learn each other’s native language, but Cannon taught Napela the restored gospel and Napela showed Cannon (and eventually the other Utah missionaries) a greater dimension of faith. Ten months after their initial encounter, and following much investigation and opposition, Cannon baptized Napela on January 5, 1852.⁹

Almost three months after Napela’s conversion, Cannon recorded an impressive event in his journal. Apparently, after Cannon and others had prayed for good weather for a Church conference to be held the next day, they surmised that the weather would be unpleasant and determined to hold the meeting indoors. The next day, as these men were about to enter a shop for the meeting, Napela and a few of the Hawaiian Latter-day Saints asked why they planned to hold the meeting indoors when they had asked the Lord to bless the weather. Napela was surprised at their lack of faith, and Cannon and his American missionary companions felt rebuked. As a result they held the meeting in a nearby grove.¹⁰

Desire to Visit Utah

Cannon subsequently wrote on the back of a letter Napela was sending to President Brigham Young that Napela was “the most influential man that has yet joined the Church” and added that Napela was “anxious to see the Valley and the folks there.” Napela’s letter, which Cannon translated from Hawaiian into English, also contained the Hawaiian convert’s testimony: “This is the Church of God, . . . the gospel which is preached by the white

8. Journals of George Q. Cannon, March 21, 1851.

9. Journals of George Q. Cannon, January 5, 1852.

10. Journals of George Q. Cannon, April 1, 1852. See also May 15, 1854, wherein Napela’s prayer of faith causes the rain to cease on another occasion.

men from the Rocky Mountains.” Napela added, “My desire is great to see you, ye Fathers of the gospel of Jesus Christ.”¹¹

Three years later President Young wrote to the Sandwich Islands missionaries: “If some of the native brethren would accompany you that come here the ensuing season I should be pleased to see them, and if they find by trying our winter that they can endure this climate, I shall be glad to have them gather to this place as fast as the way shall open for them to do so.”¹² The elders of the mission voted to send Napela and three other Hawaiians to Utah.¹³ But years earlier the Hawaiian monarchy had outlawed emigration,¹⁴ so fourteen years passed before Napela met President Young and the Utah Saints in their desert Zion in 1869.

Assistance to Missionaries

From the time Napela was converted, he was dedicated to building Zion in the Hawaiian Islands and had a great influence in furthering God’s work in his native homeland. He

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11. This letter appeared in “Foreign Correspondence,” *Deseret News*, November 27, 1852, in Hawaiian with an English translation by George Q. Cannon. Napela wrote three other letters to Brigham Young, dated October 11, 1865; May 2, 1868; and April 11, 1871. See Brigham Young letters, incoming correspondence, Church History Library.
 12. Brigham Young to Philip B. Lewis, B. F. Johnson, and the Brethren on the Sandwich Island Mission, January 30, 1855, Brigham Young letters, outgoing correspondence, Church History Library.
 13. Journal of Eli Bell, July 25, 1855, typescript, Special Collections, Joseph F. Smith Library, Brigham Young University–Hawaii. Bell’s entry was apparently used for the entry in Andrew Jenson, *Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, typescript, July 25, 1855, Church History Library.
 14. “No native subject of the King shall be allowed to emigrate to California or other foreign country” (Hawaiian House of Nobles and Representatives, *Penal Code Session Laws 1850*, sec. 1, 154, quoted in Raymond Clyde Beck, “Palawai Basin: Hawaii’s Mormon Zion” [master’s thesis, University of Hawaii, 1972], 27).

helped Cannon translate the Book of Mormon,¹⁵ and Napela also first suggested the idea of a missionary training center. Redick Allred described that “Napela wanted to keep us [the American missionaries] in school 2 months & then we might go, for he thought we would begin to talk [in Hawaiian] in that time to get our places of appointment.”¹⁶ Napela’s language training plans were put into practice in Hawaii, and current missionary training centers use Napela’s suggested learning system for missionaries assigned to foreign-language-speaking missions.¹⁷

Napela served the missionaries in many ways. He taught them the Hawaiian language, fed them, and allowed them to lodge in his home. There is also evidence that he loaned his horse to Cannon and provided Cannon and the other missionaries with shoes, pants, and money at the time of their return to Utah.¹⁸ “Bro. Napela is a noble hearted man and has done more in assisting the elders than any other Elder in these islands,” one Utah missionary wrote. “He has fed us and assisting in clothing the elders from the time he first took hold

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15. See Cannon, *My First Mission*, 59–61, for a description of how Napela and Cannon worked together on the translation of the Book of Mormon. It is significant to note that forty years after his death, Jonathan H. Napela was remembered at the dedication of the Laie Hawaii Temple. In late November 1919, President Heber J. Grant mentioned Napela in his dedicatory prayer: “We thank Thee for raising up Thy servant Elder J. H. Napela, that devoted Hawaiian, who assisted Thy servant President Cannon in the translation of the Book of Mormon” (<http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/laie/prayer/>).
 16. Redick Allred Journal, April 27, 1853; see also Journals of George Q. Cannon, April 8, 1853, Church History Library. Thanks to Chad M. Orton for sharing this information with the author.
 17. See Ephraim Green Diary, April 9, 16, 20, 1853, typescript, Special Collections, BYU–Hawaii.
 18. Journals of George Q. Cannon, April 26, 1852; March 3, 1853; April 20, 1853; April 15, 1854; May 11, 1854; May 14, 1854; May 25, 1854.

of this work.”¹⁹ Napela was also instrumental in the creation of a Hawaiian gathering place. He taught his fellow Hawaiians the restored gospel and encouraged them to gather with the main body of Hawaiian Church members. At the October 1853 Sandwich Islands Mission conference, several Utah missionaries and Napela—the only Hawaiian—were appointed to find a gathering place for Hawaiian Saints.²⁰ The committee sailed to the island of Lanai to explore possibilities. The following year, they established the Palawai Basin on Lanai as the inaugural Hawaiian gathering place.²¹

On their return voyage from Lanai to Maui, the Utah missionaries were reminded of Napela’s faith when they encountered problems crossing the channel between the two islands. Cannon’s faith in Napela was evidenced by Cannon’s journal entry: “Bro. Napela prayed aloud to the Lord, by my request to bless us with a breeze and it was only a few minutes before we had to unship our oars and we were gliding along delightfully before a pleasant breeze.”²² Another missionary, Benjamin F. Johnson, recounted the event in more detail:

A storm the night before our leaving for Lahaina left the channel very rough, and on setting sail in the morning we were at once in a choppy sea and then in a dead and sultry calm

19. Journal of John Stillman Woodbury, quoted in Joseph H. Spurrier, *Sandwich Island Saints: Early Mormon Converts in the Hawaiian Islands* (Oahu: Joseph H. Spurrier, 1989), 263.

20. Jenson, Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission, October 19, 1853.

21. For more information on this topic, see Fred E. Woods, “The Palawai Pioneers on the Island of Lanai: The First Hawaiian Latter-day Saint Gathering Place (1854–1864),” *Mormon Historical Studies* 5, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 3–35. On October 3, 2004, the Mormon Historic Sites Foundation and the Mormon Pacific Historical Society erected a monument in the Palawai Basin to commemorate the sesquicentennial anniversary of the first Hawaiian gathering place on the island of Lanai.

22. Journals of George Q. Cannon, October 21, 1853.

of tropical heat. The natives plied their oars until exhausted, with little progress. The choppy sea and sultry calm was a terrible ordeal, and all became seasick—so very sick, and like some others I became unconscious. When aroused from stupor I heard Brother Cannon tell Brother Napela to pray. He stood up in the bow, and in his native tongue and simple faith asked the Lord to have mercy upon His servants there so sick, and send the wind quickly or they might die. I knew the wind would come, and it did, in less time than I take to write it, and we soon gladly landed at Lahaini.²³

Napela again demonstrated his powerful faith at a meeting in Wailuku, Maui, where the American missionaries were worried about crossing a swollen river. “They wished to go over the river under a grove of Kukui to hold their meeting, but the river being so high made it dangerous crossing,” missionary Francis Hammond recorded. “So Brother Napela proposed to the Saints that they should kneel down and pray for the rain to cease and for the river to go down so as to let them go over in safety to their meeting place. They accordingly all prayed and the rain ceased. The river went down quickly and they went over and had a good time in fasting and prayer before the Lord.”²⁴

Service as a Local Leader

For nearly a decade, Napela lived primarily in the Palawai Basin on Lanai. When Walter Murray Gibson presided over the

23. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa, AZ: 21st Century Printing, 1992), 169.

24. Francis Hammond Journal, June 1, 1852, Brigham Young University–Hawaii, quoted in Frank Alan Bruno, “Faith like the Ancients: The LDS Church in Pulehu and on Maui” (address delivered at the Mormon Pacific Historical Society tenth annual conference, Kahului, HI, July 29, 1989); proceedings can be found at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/dlib/spc/mphs/>.

Church on Lanai, Napela served as one of his trusted leaders. In a Hawaiian document titled “Ka Oihana Koho” (The Certificate of Appointment), Gibson wrote, “This certifies that J. W. Napela . . . has been chosen to the high Office of President of the Twelve of the Church in the Hawaiian Islands, and has Authority to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to perform all the duties of his Office to which he has been chosen.”²⁵ But in 1864, Gibson was excommunicated for apostasy, having deceived many of the Hawaiian Saints. At this time of painful transition, Napela encouraged his fellow Hawaiians to remain faithful to the gospel. During a subsequent mission conference held in Honolulu, Napela testified to local Church members: “We have sinned ignorantly. We were deceived and led away by Gibson’s cunning words, and thereby have broken the sacred covenants we had made, but we are now undeceived, therefore let us renew our covenants and be faithful. I know this work is of God, that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young are prophets of God.”²⁶

Church leaders selected a new gathering place at Laie on the island of Oahu.²⁷ By April 1867, Napela served as the assistant clerk of the Church conference in Laie.²⁸ Here the Church owned

25. Walter Murray Gibson, Ka Oihana Koho for J. W. Napela, October 9, 1862, trans. E. Wesley Smith, MS 16878, Church History Library. Kenney, “Mormons and the Smallpox Epidemic of 1853,” 18, further notes that Napela also served as a member of Gibson’s presidency from 1862 to 1864. For more information on Walter Murray Gibson, see Gwynn Barrett, “Walter Murray Gibson: The Shepherd Saint of Lanai Revisited,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 142–62; and R. Lanier Britsch, “Another Visit with Walter Murray Gibson,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 65–78.

26. “Sandwich Islands Mission,” *Deseret News*, November 30, 1864, 67.

27. Woods, “The Palawai Pioneers on the Island of Lanai,” 24–35, discusses the gathering places of Lanai and the move to Laie.

28. George Nebeker, “Minutes of a Conference Held at Laie, on the Island of Oahu, Sandwich Islands, Commencing April 6, 1867,” *Millennial Star*, July 20, 1867, 455.

a plantation where Napela and other Hawaiian Saints gathered; Napela helped supervise the work on Laie.²⁹ At this time, the Church plantation at Laie was viewed by others as a superior model for Hawaiian plantations, especially in the treatment of the laborers. Napela wrote to Brigham Young: “My current work is here in Laie, where I encourage my brothers to cultivate sugarcane of which there is close to eight acres and done by hand, not by plow. . . . My desire is to end our poverty as we are in deep poverty. . . . We survive and do without nice homes or clothes. But all the brethren are hopeful that we will benefit in the near future from the sugarcane we are planting.”³⁰

Visit to Utah

Napela finally visited Utah in the summer of 1869, becoming the first known Hawaiian Latter-day Saint to enter Salt Lake City. The *Deseret Evening News* reported that Napela “has been welcomed warmly by all who have met him, and his meeting with some of the Elders who have labored there has been affecting. They have never forgotten the many acts of kindness which they

29. “From the Sandwich Islands,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 22, 1869, 2.

30. H. Napela to Brigham Young, May 2, 1868, Brigham Young Letters, incoming correspondence, Church History Library. This assignment seems to have helped rejuvenate Napela in the gospel. This is evidenced from a letter George Nebeker wrote from Laie to the editor of the *Deseret News* on April 11, 1868: “Napela is with us, and George Raymon and some others who were the first fruits of the Gospel here. They have been seeming indifferent to the work until recently. They are now full of faith and good works so far. They have formed themselves into a company to work in the sugar business, and are plowing and planting cane” (“Correspondence,” *Deseret News*, May 20, 1868, 120). About a year later, Nebeker, presiding over the Laie plantation and mission affairs in Hawaii, wrote to Elder Wilford Woodruff: “The native brethren have improved from some of their late habits and also in their appearance. We have had from thirty to sixty of them working for us for the last six months” (“Laie, Sandwich Islands,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 7, 1869, 3).

received from him while on the Islands.”³¹ Napela was privileged to observe the Pioneer Day parade while seated with the First Presidency, members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and other dignitaries.³² This celebration left quite an impression on him. When he returned to Hawaii, he described the festivities to King Kamehameha V and made special mention of the clothing worn by President Young.³³ Napela also addressed a local congregation of the Saints in Hawaiian while his friend George Q. Cannon translated for him.³⁴ One Utahn who met Napela during his visit to Salt Lake City remarked that he was “a fine fellow . . . and a noble-looking man.”³⁵

News of Napela’s warm reception in Utah quickly reached the Saints in Hawaii. Missionary Benjamin Cluff wrote that “the natives . . . are pleased to hear how well Napela has been treated.”³⁶ His Utah visit seemingly interested Church members in Hawaii for another reason. While in Salt Lake City, Napela became the first known Hawaiian to receive his temple endowment.³⁷ Napela told his fellow island Church members about the endowment, and he taught King Kamehameha V about

31. “From the Sandwich Islands,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 22, 1869, 2.

32. “The Twenty-Fourth of July in Salt Lake City,” *Millennial Star*, August 21, 1869, 540.

33. H. Napela to Brigham Young, April 11, 1871, in Brigham Young Letters, incoming correspondence, Church History Library. See also Fred E. Woods, “An Islander’s View of a Desert Kingdom: Jonathan Napela Recounts His 1869 Visit to Salt Lake City,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 1 (2006): 23–34.

34. “Sabbath Meetings,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 26, 1869, 3.

35. John D. T. McAllister to A. Carrington, *Millennial Star*, September 11, 1869, 599.

36. “Sandwich Island Saints,” *Deseret Evening News*, September 30, 1869, 3.

37. At this time the Salt Lake Temple was not yet completed. Therefore most Saints in the Salt Lake Valley received their endowment in the Endowment House on the northwest corner of Temple Square, here sacred ordinances were performed during the years 1855–89. Accord-

the vicarious ordinance of baptism for the dead. In a letter to President Young, Napela shared: "I informed my King that B. Young's responsibility to Kamehameha I was concluded, as I was baptized on his (Kamehameha I's) behalf; but that he [the king] is responsible for the remainder of his ancestors buried in the earth and that their salvation rests upon him and that he must think about them. . . . There was much astonishment before me and appreciation."³⁸ This sacred experience likely inspired other Hawaiian Saints to travel to Utah so that they also could receive this holy ordinance.³⁹

Triumphant Return and Tragedy

Days after his November 1869 return to Oahu, Napela met with the Saints at a Church conference in Laie. According to missionary George Nebeker, who voyaged home with Napela, they "found the brethren and sisters all glad to see us, and to hear what good news we had to tell them about the Saints at home. . . . The king advises Bro. Napela to offer himself as a candidate for the next Legislature."⁴⁰ A few months later, Nebeker wrote that Napela lost the election by only forty votes, due to a lack of financial support.⁴¹ At an October 1871 conference held in Laie, Napela and thirteen of his

ing to International Genealogical Index file 1235151, Jonathan H. Napela received his endowment on August 2, 1869.

38. Jonathan Napela to Brigham Young, April 11, 1871, trans. Jason Achiu, whom the author wishes to thank for this service.

39. In the late nineteenth century, native Hawaiians were permitted to emigrate from their island homes. Hundreds of Hawaiian Saints chose to gather to Utah, where, commencing in 1889, they made their home about seventy-five miles west of Salt Lake City at a place called Iosepa. They remained here until the Hawaiian temple in Laie was announced in 1915. Receiving this wonderful news, they returned to Hawaii.

40. George Nebeker, letter to the editor, *Deseret News*, December 15, 1869, 69.

41. George Nebeker, letter to the editor, *Deseret News*, April 13, 1870, 113.

other Hawaiian brethren were called as missionaries. Napela was appointed to oversee these men, who were to visit all the Hawaiian Islands.⁴²

Months later, in January 1872, Napela grieved when doctors discovered that his wife, Kitty, had contracted Hansen's disease, or leprosy.⁴³ Kitty was quarantined on the island of Molokai, where there was a leprosy settlement; the couple arrived in Kalaupapa in May 1873.⁴⁴ Rather than abandoning his wife, Napela chose to remain and become Kitty's *kōkua* (helper) in the isolated community full of suffering. To E. O. Hall, minister of the interior and chairman of the board of health, Napela pleaded to be allowed to stay with her: "I humbly petition the Board, and its benevolence as our father, to permit me to stay here with my wife as a kokua, for the following reasons: On August 3, 1843 I took my wife as my legally married wife and on that same day I vowed before God to care for my wife in health and sickness, and until death do us part. . . . I am 60 years old and do not have much longer to live. During the brief time remaining, I want to be with my wife. My wife has also lived a long life, but with this disease, it will quickly shorten her life. Such is the reason for this petition."⁴⁵

42. H. H. Cluff, "Correspondence," *Deseret News*, November 15, 1871, 484.

43. Spurrier, *Sandwich Island Saints*, 258.

44. Lance Chase, "Mormons and Lepers: The Saints at Kalaupapa" (address delivered at the thirteenth annual conference of the Mormon Pacific Historical Society, May 16, 1992), says that Kitty was the first Latter-day Saint patient to be assigned to the leprosy settlement.

45. Jonathan Napela to E. O. Hall, October 23, 1873. On the same day that this letter was sent, Peter Kaeo (also of Hawaiian royal descent and inflicted with Hansen's disease) wrote to his cousin, Queen Emma, "I rode Home and went over to Napela's. They were both crying over the letter which Napela had received from the Board of Health . . . [telling him] to leave the Leper Setelment [*sic*] for Home"

Napela's appeal was granted. He spent most of his remaining days at the leprosy settlement. Church leaders subsequently assigned Napela to oversee the Hawaiian Saints on the islands of Maui, Lanai, and Molokai.⁴⁶ His desire to remain with his beloved wife, however, limited his travel to the leprosy settlements of Kalawao and Kalaupapa on Molokai.⁴⁷

During his final years, Napela sought to become united with the Latter-day Saints of Kalaupapa and developed a close friendship with the well-known Catholic priest Father Damien. Notwithstanding their religious and ethnic differences, one Kalawao resident noted that the two church leaders "were the best of friends."⁴⁸ A Utah missionary who visited Kalaupapa during the time of Napela's spiritual supervision wrote, "At this place we found brother Napela, who is taking care of his wife and presiding over the Saints there; he is full of faith, and is still that good-natured, honorable soul."⁴⁹

When missionary Henry P. Richards visited Kalaupapa in January 1878, there were seventy-eight members of the Church

(Letter 53 in *News from Molokai: Letters between Peter Kaeo & Queen Emma, 1873–1876*, ed. Alfons L. Korn [Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976], 139).

46. Linda W. Greene, *Exile in Paradise: The Isolation of Hawai'i's Leprosy Victims and Development of Kalaupapa Settlement, 1865 to the Present* (National Park Service, 1985), 579.
47. One known exception to his travel occurred when he attended the spring 1876 conference held in Laie. Alma Smith reported that "Elder Napela came from the Island of Molokai" ("Conference—Distribution of Elders—Baptisms, etc." *Deseret News*, May 24, 1876, 266).
48. Ambrose T. Hutchison, "In Memory of Reverend Father Damien J. De Veuster and Other Priests Who Have Labored in the Leper Settlement of Kalawao, Moloka'i," 19, Sacred Hearts Archive, Kanaohe, HI. The author expresses appreciation to Patrick J. Boland for bringing this document to his attention.
49. Simpson Montgomery Molen, "Foreign Correspondence," *Millennial Star*, November 12, 1877, 750.

divided into two branches.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, Napela had contracted leprosy himself; by this time he was in a worse condition than his wife. “I called upon him [Napela] who was very much pleased to see me but poor fellow,” Richards noted in his journal, “I should hardly have recognized him he is so changed since I saw him last in Salt Lake City his face is swollen—many of his teeth gone—his hands broken out with the disease and he is a confirmed Leper.”⁵¹ Napela died of this dreaded disease on August 6, 1879. Kitty passed away just over two weeks later, on August 23, 1879, from the same illness.⁵²

Throughout his life, Jonathan Hawaii Napela proved to be a devoted husband and a man committed to the welfare of the Hawaiian Saints and the missionaries with whom he labored. He helped unite the Saints of the islands with the Church members in the Great Basin desert. Napela was a noble son of God who was perhaps Mormonism’s most influential Hawaiian convert.

50. Jenson, Manuscript History of the Hawaiian Mission, January 27, 1878.

51. Journal of Henry Phineas Richards, January 26, 1878, MS 148M, box 1, fol. 4, Church History Library.

52. Kalawao Death Register, 1879–80, Hawaii State Archives.