

Iā 'Oe, E Moloka'i

Iā 'oe, e Moloka'i Nui a Hina
 "Lonely isle of Hawai'i"
 'Āina aloha o ka malihini
 Lanakila mau loa *no 'oe

(G7) C
 Aloha a'e au lā
 C/G G
 I ku'u 'āina lā
 G/D D7
 Moloka'i Nui lā
 D7/A G
 'O ka heke nō ia lā
 G7 C
 Aloha a'e au lā
 C/G G
 I ku'u 'āina lā
 G/D D7
 Moloka'i nui lā
 D7/A G
 'O ka heke nō ia lā

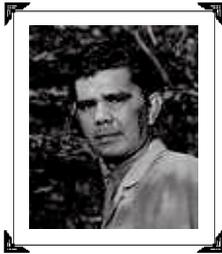
To You, O Moloka'i

This song is for you, O Great Moloka'i of Hina
 "Lonely isle of Hawai'i"
 A land beloved of the visitor
 Prevailing victory for you

I love better (than anywhere else)
 My homeland
 Great Moloka'i,
 the unsurpassed

(*original from Chillingworth recording is "iā
 'oe", which is problematic)

(translation needs working on: Rob Mondoy &
 Puakea Nogelmeier)



Sonny Chillingworth,
ca. 1964

"The Lonely Isle" was the moniker for Moloka'i before the Hawaiian tourism business' discussion during the 1940s about replacing it with the more appealing "Friendly Isle." Given Helen Parker's composing period (1920s-1940s), we could date the song to around 1940. In a telephone conversation with Nalani Olds (1927-1918) in 2012, I happenstance sang this song to her. She recognized it, and nostalgically recalled that her mother sang this song from the piano in the mid 1950s. Sonny Chillingworth (1932-1994), the only one who ever recorded the song (in 1976), spent his summers in Ho'olehua, Moloka'i since age 12 in the mid 1940s with his music-mentor grandpa Harry Purdy, Sr. (1917-1998). The Purdy homestead, Lot 4, was directly before the hill on which stood the old Sacred Heart Catholic Church, as you head west. There used to be a massive Cook Island Pine tree adjacent the old family home, both now long gone. In my youthful mind and memory that tree was a landmark. The composer Helen Parker had a sister, Mamie Levi, who lived on a Ho'olehua homestead as well.

Interestingly, Harry Purdy, Sr. was the son of the famed 1908 national rodeo champion Ikua Purdy (1873-1945) of Parker Ranch fame; the song celebrating this paniolo triumph, "Waiomina," is attributed to Helen Parker as well; she actually married one of the Parker Ranch 'ohana to boot. Harry K. Purdy Jr. was an older classmate of mine and manages the Purdy Macadamia nut farm on Lihipali Avenue behind Moloka'i High School. He told me that Sonny Chillingworth spent a lot of his adolescent summers with his Moloka'i family. The Purdy family oldtimers along with the neighbor, the Hulu family, often "jammed" (i.e. played and sang music) throughout the 1940s, and often with Sonny participating.⁶ He did his first recording (with Auntie Vicky I'i Rodrigues) in 1954, "Make'e 'Ailana." Sonny Chillingworth developed into an accomplished slack-key guitar artist, and recorded another Moloka'i Helen Parker song, "'Olu O Pu'ulani," in 1964.

Iā 'Oe, E Moloka'i

'Ōlelo me ka leo: Helen Parker (1889-1954) , ca. 1935
transcribed after Sonny Chillingworth (1932-1994), 1976

(Slack-key introduction; freely)



Stately strum straight eighths ♩=92

Iā 'o-e, e Mo-lo-ka-i Nu-i a Hi - na "Lone-ly isle
of Ha - wai - 'i" 'Āi - na a - lo-ha o ka ma-li-
hi - ni La-na-ki-la mau lo - a *no 'o-e

**Easy waltz swing eighths ♩=108

A - lo - ha a - 'e au lā I ku - 'u 'āi - na lā
Mo - lo - ka - 'i Nu - i lā 'O ka he-ke nō i - a lā A -
lo - ha a - 'e au lā I ku - 'u 'āi - na lā
Mo - lo - ka - 'i Nu - i lā 'O ka he-ke nō i - a lā

* original on Chillingworth recording is "iā 'oe", which is problematic.

** The instrumental musicians on the recording confute the 3/4 and 4/4 meter here; I proffer this adjusted transcription based on the vocal line's implied symmetry and downbeat, and informed by Chillingworth vocal "style" from other recordings.

'Ōlelo me ka leo: Helen Parker (1889-1954) , ca.1935. This typeset proffered for educational purposes only.

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