



(Honolulu, HI) Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives

The Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives is continuing its bimonthly virtual speaker series to highlight the discoveries and work of diverse history and humanities scholars that work with Hawaiian Mission Houses' extensive archives that inform our contemporary world. *The Hawaiian Mission Houses' speaker series: Archives and Inquiry*, an hour long discussion, will begin with the guest speaker and end with a Q& A from the audience.

The schedule for the Archives and Inquiry Speaker Series is as follows:

October 19 – Dr. Carmen Tomfohrde, “Testaments on Trial: Early Missionary Failures and the First Fruits of Christianity in Polynesia”

December 21 – Kilin Reece, Luthier, Founder and President of Kealakekai Center for Pacific Strings

Dr. Carmen Tomfohrde's presentation offers a contextualization of the early years of the Hawaiian mission against prior years of Polynesian mission history south of the equator. This talk will discuss the archival texts and documents that narrate the early Polynesian mission histories from the first days of missionary arrivals to to the era in which Christianity became dominant. While missionaries in Tahiti, Tonga, and the Marquesas experienced years of failures before large-scale conversions began, the First Company of missionaries to Hawai'i found receptive audiences soon after arriving in 1820. This presentation will discuss this era of culture change and suggest lessons Hawai'i may have learned from the experiences of the Society Islands.

Carmen Tomfohrde holds a bachelor's degree from Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and she completed her M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Hong Kong. Funded by the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong, her interdisciplinary doctoral research on missionaries in Polynesia took her to Tonga as a guest lecturer; to the Marquesas, where she assisted museum development on the island of Tahuata; and to additional sites in Polynesia, the United States, and England. As a project manager, she developed a Learning Resources Center in Hong Kong, and she has additional work experience in the visual arts and corporate sectors, in addition to teaching experience gained in the United States, mainland China, and Hong Kong.

The talk will be livestreamed and be available afterwards via the Hawaiian Mission House website www.missionhouses.org. The Hawaiian Mission Houses Archives are open to the public ,

including free digital access to over 100,000 pages of historical documents and pictures at <https://hmha.missionhouses.org/>

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Hawaiian Mission Houses Historic Site and Archives (HMH), an active site for Hawaii's history since 1820, is a National Historic Landmark (listed in 1965) and accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (last re-accredited in 2010). HMH graces a one-acre site in the Historic Capital district in downtown Honolulu. HMH preserves Hawai'i's oldest Western-style house, the 1821 Mission House, as well as the 1831 Chamberlain House, the 1841 Bedroom Annex, a cemetery, a collections storage vault, a gift shop, and multi-purpose space. The library, which holds both English and Hawaiian archival material, welcomes researchers on site as well as from around the globe through the digital collection. A coral-and-grass performance arena was added in 2011, hosting theater and mele (music) performances throughout the year, and a reconstructed hale pili, built using cultural practitioner leadership and designed with sources from journals in the HMH archives, was added in 2021. HMH offers school field trips, tours, historical theater performances and has been awarded over 15 awards for theatrical performance, writing, and direction. The HMH historical archive holds over 80,000 digital pieces and is home to one of the largest collections of Hawaiian language books in the world.