



THE
HAWAIIAN
UKULELE & GUITAR
MAKERS

AS
LISTED IN THE HONOLULU CITY DIRECTORY
AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY SOURCES

FOR THE YEARS
1884 to 1930

WITH APPENDICES & ILLUSTRATIONS

AND AN
INTRODUCTION

WRITTEN BY

JOHN KING



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INTRODUCTION

A NATIVE HAWAIIAN INSTRUMENT?

The small guitar that we know today as the ukulele is generally believed to have been introduced into the Hawaiian Islands in 1879 by Portuguese immigrants from the island of Madeira. The ukulele is a short-necked plucked lute of the chordophone class, however, as a member of the guitar family, it is more accurately described as a type of *vihuela*.¹ Some early methods describe the instrument as an invention of Hawaiian origin. For example, Geo. Kia writes that “The ukulele is a native Hawaiian instrument,”² Ernest K. Kaai states that the ukulele is an adaptation of the Hawaiian *ukeke*,³ and E.N. Guckert asserts that “[the ukulele] originated among the natives of Hawaii.”⁴ Despite statements like these, there is no evidence to support the claim that the instrument is of Hawaiian origin. While one might dispute the date of its introduction into the Hawaiian Islands, one cannot mistake

1. The *vihuela* was a large, guitar-like instrument, with a flat back, and incurved sides. The lute had a vaulted, or rounded back and was almond shaped, with sides that curved outwardly. According to John Ward, “The word *vihuela* is from a large family -- fidula, fiddle, vielle, viola, viol, violin, etc. -- of uncertain derivation. The Spanish variant [*vihuela*] applied not only to a single instrument but to all stringed instruments. Though the medieval practice of using *vihuela* in a collective sense continued in 16th century theoretical writings, in popular usage the name was more and more reserved for a single stringed instrument and separate names were employed for other stringed instruments.” John Ward, *The Vihuela De Mano and Its Music* (New York University: Ph.D. dissertation, 1953) pp. 2. The earliest comparative description of a small guitar (the four course Renaissance *guitarra*, predecessor of the ukulele and modern six string guitar) is found in the prologue to *Orphenica Lyra*, a book of *vihuela* tablature by Miguel Fuenllana published in 1554. Fuenllana describes the instrument thus: “*vihuela para quatro ordenes, que dizen guitarra*.” (*Vihuela* with four courses, called the guitar). Guitars are still called ‘*viola*’ or ‘*violão*’ in Portuguese speaking countries today.

2. Geo. Kia, *Self Instructor for the Ukulele and Taro-Patch Fiddle* (Los Angeles: R.W. Heffelfinger, 1914) pp. 4.

3. Ernest K. Kaai, *The Ukulele and How Its(sic) Played* (Honolulu: Hawaiian News Co., Ltd., 1916) pp. 8.

4. E.N. Guckert, *Guckert's Chords for the Ukulele at Sight* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, Inc., 1917) pp. 2.

America: it is, in fact, a little unpretending guitar. The machête has four catgut strings, which are tuned in thirds, except the two lower ones, which, I believe, have the interval of a fourth.⁴⁶ The generality of their island music is merely a succession of very simple chords; but this little instrument is said to boast of much higher capabilities when played by a masterly hand, and the most brilliant waltzes and mazurkas of the best German composers may be skilfully rendered on this toy-like instrument.”⁴⁷

A HALF-PENNY FOR THE LOVE OF GOD

Charles W. March, also writing in 1852, points to the machête as an integral part of the grape harvest revelry: “The vintage bringing in to Funchal the peasantry, with their filled goat-skins, makes a *fiesta*—a frolic; and of an evening you hear every where in the environs the simple harmony of the machête—a small guitar, used to accompany the voice and dance. Every body dances here, and every body sings, if not with much grace, with great abandon.”⁴⁸

Another interesting account is provided by Isabella de França in

46. This tuning, which is not re-entrant, is used in the *Original Method and Self-Instructor on the Ukulele* by A. A. Santos and Angeline F. Nunes, ca. 1914. They state: “The original way of tuning the ukulele has not been put into print, consequently it is unknown to most people.” Santos & Nunes, pp. 5. The tuning is D G B D'. This is the exact tuning that Michel' Angelo Lambertini notates (in 1914) for “le plus petite modèle, cavaquinho ou braguinha” in the *Encyclopédie de la Musique*, pp. 2466. Marian Harrison also mentions this tuning in 1971, writing “The Machête generally has gut strings tuned d-g-b-d' or d-g-b-e.” ‘Small Guitars’, *Guitar Review*, No. 34, Winter, 1971, pp. 46.

47. Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, *A Visit to Portugal and Madeira* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1854) pp. 233.

48. Charles W. March, *Sketches and Adventures in Madeira, Portugal and the Andalusias of Spain* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1856) pp. 75.

the city directory. The ad stated “Makers of the Celebrated Royal Ukuleles.” No further listing for this company appeared in the directory after 1917 and there were no other references to Royal or Royal Hawaiian ukuleles through 1930.

Ukulele Company, Ltd. (1916 -1918)

The Ukulele Company, Ltd. was incorporated September 27, 1916 by L.M. Fishel, E.J. Botts, John S. Grace, Harry E. Hoffman, and C.H. Hou. The company was formed to “establish, conduct, maintain and carry on the business of making, manufacturing, producing, selling, marketing and distributing ukuleles and other musical instruments and Hawaiian curios and souvenirs.” An article in the *New York Times* from October 1916 states “... in September a company was organized in Honolulu with plans to manufacture from 1,000 to 2,000 ukuleles a month with improved machinery, the workers to be Hawaiians and Portuguese. This company plans not only the manufacture of ukuleles, but the purchase of completed instruments from other makers.”¹⁴¹ The Ukulele Company, Ltd. is apparently the company mentioned in the *Times* article; the owners filed for dissolution of the corporation in March, 1918.

A Note about the Honolulu Ad Club Trademark, also known as the Tabu Brand

The “tabu brand” has been the source of a good deal of idle speculation, confusion, and outright misinformation. It was not the name of an ukulele company, as is sometimes stated, nor was it a warning to non-Hawaiian ukulele makers. The brand, or more correctly, stamp, which is usually found on the back of the headstock or inside of the back of an ukulele, is a trademark which was registered with the

141. The *New York Times*, October 15, 1916 Sec. VIII, pg. 6.

HAWAIIAN UKULELE & GUITAR MAKERS 1884 to 1930

Akai (also see Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co.)

Akai, maker of ukuleles with Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co., Ltd. - city directory 1925

Aloha/ (Royal Hawaiian Crest)/ Hawaii - decal to peghead;
Honolulu Ad Club Trademark / Akai - brand to inside of back

Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Manufacturers of Quality Ukuleles, Stringed Instruments, Calabashes, Trays and Novelties in Hawaiian Woods Beretania cor Alexander, Tel 5511, Cable Address Aloukule - city directory 1918-1919

Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co. Ltd. 1511 S Beretania - city directories 1920-1921-1922

Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co. Ltd., 1092 S Beretania - city directories 1923-1924-1925-1926 through 1930

Aloha/ (Royal Hawaiian Crest)/ Hawaii - decal to peghead;
Honolulu Ad Club Trademark / Akai - brand to inside of back

Aloha/ (Royal Hawaiian Crest)/ Hawaii - decal to the peghead of a taro-patch; *Honolulu Ad Club Trademark* - brand to inside of back

Hawaii/ (Crown)(crossed U.S. & Hawaiian flags and stylized Royal Hawaiian Crest behind) Aloha/ Paradise of the Pacific - decal to peghead; *Honolulu Ad Club Trademark* - brand to inside of back, not completely legible

Honolulu City Directory Advertisements, 1916 - 1918. These ads all appeared in the margins of the *City Directory*.




James N. Anahu
 MANUFACTURER OF LEIS
 Genuine Koa **Ukuleles** a Specialty
 552 S. Hotel St. Phone 4483 Honolulu, T. H.



Kaai Ukulele Manufacturing Co.
 Ukuleles made only in Hawaii by Expert Hawaiians
 51-52 Alexander Young Building --:-- Phone 3687



Hawaiian Ukulele Co.
 Makers of the Celebrated
ROYAL UKULELES
 Corner Fort & Kukui Sts.
Phone 3028
 Honolulu, T. H.



Kinney & Mossman

UKULELES

Pronounced by Experts to be unequalled in Tone and Sweetness

1282 NUUANU ST.
 Honolulu, T. H.

Gold Medal UKULELES
Canes Calabashes Trays and Plates



Manufactured and Ukulele Instruction Given by
Jonah Kumalae
 1719 Liliha Street
 Telephone 2384
 Honolulu, T. H.



M. NUNES
 Inventor of the original
Ukulele
 Hawaii's Sweet Toned Instrument
 Manufactured by
M. Nunes & Sons
 76 S. Beretania St.
 P. O. Box 1145
 Honolulu, T. H.

APPENDIX A

Chronological list of Hawaiian ukulele makers appearing in contemporary printed sources (unless noted). Dates indicate first and last appearance in directory or other period reference materials.

*listings may have continued beyond the cut-off date for this checklist

**still in business

Dias, Augusto	1884-1911, died 1915
Nunes, Manuel	1885-1917, died 1922
Espirito Santo, Jose do	1886-1905, died 1905
Naapohou	1898-1899
Vierra, Jose	1900-1901
Fernandez, Manuel	1903
Nunes, Leonardo	1908-1913 first in the shop of M. Nunes and later M Nunes & Sons. Continued building in Los Angeles, 1914-1930. Died 1944.
Nunes, Julius	1910-1917 with M. Nunes & Sons
Nunes, M. & Sons	1910-1917
Anahu, James N.	1910-1922 see Kaai Ukulele Manuf. Co.
Sakai, Ichiga	1911-1912
Kumalae, Jonah	1911-1940, died 1940
Kaai Ukulele Manufacturing Co.	1912-1920 See Anahu, James N.
Soares, João M	1913-1923
Kinney & Mossman	1914-1918
Davis, Jonah P	1915
Nunes Ukulele Co.	1915
Machado, Ernesto	1915-1917
Hawaiian Ukulele Co.	1916-1917
Ukulele Co. Ltd	1916-1918 (dissolved)
Ross & Kapio	1917 see Pelio, Lot K
Singers Ukulele Manufacturing Co.	1917
Pelio, Lot K	1918 see Ross & Kapio
Kamaka, Samuel K.	1918-1919
Anahu Ukulele Co., Ltd.	1918-1920; dissolved 1926
Paradise Ukulele and Guitar Works, Ltd.	1918; dissolved 1926
Aloha Ukulele Manufacturing Co., Ltd.	1918-1930*; dissolved 1935

Please visit [NALU Music](#) to purchase these and other ukulele related items:



"Harp-like sound." - *Honolulu Star Bulletin*

"John King stretches a small instrument to new lengths." - *National Public Radio*

"King takes Bach to inspired levels. His playing is superb." - *The Ukulele Occasional*

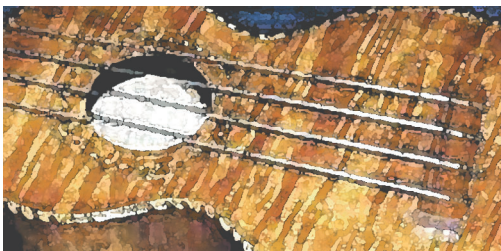
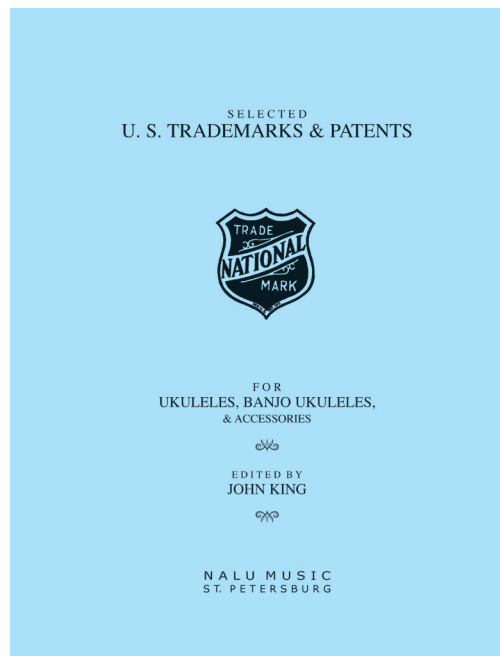
"King has a virtuoso technique, creating a delicate beauty that takes these adaptations from simply being thought of as a novelty to the sublime." - *FIGA News*

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
Partita No. 3, BWV 1006
for Unaccompanied Ukulele

\$15, plus shipping

A companion volume to *The Hawaiian Ukulele and Guitar Makers* which contains a selection of trademarks and patents drawn from the Official Gazette of the U.S. Patent Office from 1888 to the present. Contains over 300 ukulele related trademarks reproduced in facsimile as published by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Each entry consists of the trademark and information such as the registrants' name, city, date of registration and date of first use, and goods for which the trademark was used. Also includes the full text and drawings of 54 design and utility patents, and drawings of 8 others, reproduced in facsimile. Introduction by John King, spiral bound, heavyweight acid-free paper, 381 illustrations in B&W, 260 pp. ISBN 0-9729385-1-6.

\$125, plus shipping



WE BUY AND SELL VINTAGE UKULELES. PLEASE EMAIL US FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF OUR CURRENT STOCK
ukulele@nalu-music.com