Awong Brothers Store Hawai'i, Hawai'i

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property
   Historic name: Awong Brothers Store
   Other names/site number: HFS Federal Credit Union; North Hawai'i Community FCU; Honoka'a Community FCU; (3) 4-5-016: 017
   Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Honoka'a Town, Haina Ahupua'a, Hāmākua District, Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
   Street & number: 45-3600 Māmāne Street
   City or town: Honoka'a State: Hawai'i County: Hawai'i
   Not For Publication:
   Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.
   I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
   __ national __ statewide x local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   x A __ B x C __ D

Signature of certifying official/Title: ____________________________ Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
Awong Brothers Store

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Name of Property: __________________________ County and State: __________________________

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: ___________ Date: ___________

Title: ____________________________________ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government: __________________________

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) __________________________

Signature of the Keeper: __________________________ Date of Action: __________________________

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: □

Public – Local □

Public – State □

Public – Federal □
Awong Brothers Store  
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**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box.)

<table>
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<th>District</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Object</th>
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**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
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</tbody>
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| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites     |
| 0 | 0 | structures|
| 0 | 0 | objects   |

| 1 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. **Function or Use**  
**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/department store/general store

__________________________________________________________________________
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Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

__ COMMERCE/financial institution/credit union

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________

___________________
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Plantation

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Hilo side, posts and piers: Waipiʻo side enclosed understory resting on concrete; Walls: wood; Roof: totan (corrugated metal)

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Honokaʻa Directional Terms:
makai (downside, toward the ocean, roughly to the north)
mauka (uphill, toward the mountains, roughly to the south)
Waipiʻo/Waipiʻo side (roughly to Waipiʻo Valley on the west)
Hilo/Hilo side (roughly to Hilo on the east)

The Awong Brothers Store building is a single story commercial building which sits on a makai sloping, 16,618 square foot lot on the makai side of Māmane Street in Honokaʻa. The building is located on a street lined with commercial buildings and contributes to the retail-office character of the town’s downtown core. The building is three bays wide, with the center bay featuring a false front which conceals the two-story center section of the building with its totan (corrugated metal), lateral running, gable roof. A 6-foot wide totan pent-roofed awning, mounted above the first story and over the concrete sidewalk, runs across the façade. A cornice with modillion-like brackets caps the façade. The building follows a U-shaped plan, with its end wings running off
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the rear. The two wings are sheltered by *totan* pent roofs. The Hilo side of the building sits on a post and pier foundation, while the Waipiʻo side has an enclosed understory resting on a concrete foundation. The walls are shiplap. The building remains in good condition and retains its integrity of location, design, materials, setting, craftsmanship, feeling and association.

**Narrative Description**

The Awong Brothers Store building’s façade runs parallel to Māmane Street and is separated from the roadway by angled parking, small bricked-in triangular pedestrian spaces and a concrete sidewalk. A paved driveway runs downhill on left (Waipiʻo) side of the building and accesses a paved parking lot at the rear of the property. The center bay of the building features a false front which displays in raised letters the North Hawaiʻi Community Credit Union’s name and the address of the building. Behind the centered bay, the credit union’s banking hall is located. A centered, inset entry’s set of double doors open on the banking hall. The doors each have a single panel below and a two-pane window above, with the panes surmounted one above the other. Completing the entry is a canted, two-pane window with a paneled kick plate below to either side of the doors.

To either side of the entrance is a four-pane display window, with a paneled kick plate below. The display windows have a transom with four panes, while a two-pane transom is above the canted windows and a three-pane transom is above the doors. To the left of the entry and display windows is an automatic teller machine, while to the right is a hinged door, with two panels below and a six-pane window above. This door accesses a set of stairs which lead to the second floor. It does not have its original hardware or knob, as security is necessary for this financial institution.

To either side of the central bay is a single-story bay. On the Waipiʻo side is a storefront echoing the center bay’s store front, but on a smaller scale. It too has an entry with canted windows and a double doorway, and display windows to either side. The doors are similar to the center bay’s doors, and each has a single-pane transom above. The windows have kick plates below, but no transoms. The canted windows each have three horizontal panes, and the display windows each have nine panes.

The Hilo-side bay is comprised of a centered hinged door, which is flanked on either side by nine-pane display windows. These windows have no kick plate or transoms. The door is of twelve panels, with the upper central panel being a single-pane window. The door does not have its original hardware or knob as security is necessary for this financial institution.

The credit union occupies the center and Waipiʻo side bays on the first floor. The second floor and the rear wings are used for storage. These have all been remodeled to address contemporary needs. The second-floor storage areas, once used for apartments, have new windows, but these
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are on the side and rear elevations and do not detract from the historic character of the building and its relationship to the other buildings along Māmane Street.

The Awong Brothers Store building remains very intact on its street front, thanks to a very sensitive renovation of the building by the credit union in 1979. It retains its massing, scale, and such character defining elements as the front elevation’s walls, windows, doors, false front, shed roofed awning, and cornice.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

B. Removed from its original location

C. A birthplace or grave

D. A cemetery

E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

F. A commemorative property

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
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**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE/the business of trading goods, services, and commodities
- ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

c. 1870s building constructed–1968–(historical period)

**Significant Dates (also, please see ADDENDUM A for TIMELINE)**

c. 1870s building constructed
1925–Property and building leased to brothers Alfred and Henry, titled the Awong Brothers Store.
1947–Property Deed from William Lawson and his wife to Alfred Awong (and wife Norah)
1959–Gilbert Awong bought out his sister, Nancy Awong Teves, becoming the sole business owner.
1968–Norah (mother) and Gilbert (son) sold the property to the Honoka‘a Community Federal Credit Union

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Awong Brothers Store is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on the local level under Criteria A (Events/History) and C (Architecture). The Awong Brothers Store Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Honoka’a and Hawai’i history in the area of commerce, and it embodies the distinctive architectural characteristics of a type, period, and method of construction.

The Awong Brothers Store is significant at the local level under Criterion A as a significant reflection of the commercial development of Honoka’a, as an important later nineteenth and early twentieth-century trade center for the local (sugar) plantation workers, ranchers, and independent farmers, and the building is a well-preserved local example of vernacular, single-wall, wood-frame commercial construction.

The building’s simple yet commanding presence on Honoka’a’s main street and has long been established as an important focal point for town activities and events. This narrative emerges from the Multiple Property Submission in which the development of the town and the Holmes/Lawson/Awong Brothers Store is directly related to the acquisition of the property and the building of this structure in this location.

The Awong Brothers Store is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a good example of vernacular commercial “plantation” style architecture—a wood commercial building constructed in Hawai’i during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is typical of its period in its use of materials, method of construction, craftsmanship, and design.

Justification of the Period of Significance
The period of significance began with the construction of the Awong Brothers Store building in the 1870s as one of the earliest buildings in the settlement of Honoka’a Town. From that time, up to 1968, the building has served many commercial purposes as a purveyor of general mercantile goods, as a stable, and as a saloon. Its plantation-style building adapted easily to successive owners, and today retains all the major characteristics of the original building’s architecture.

The Awong Brothers Store meets the Registration Requirements set forth in the Historical and Architectural Resources of Honoka’a Town, Haina Ahupua’a, Hāmākua District, Hawai’i Island, Hawai’i Multiple Property Submission; and the Property Type is OTHER: Plantation Vernacular.
Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Events/History

Historical Background

Hāmākua is a moku-o-loko or district which extended along the coast from Kaʻula Gulch in the Hilo vicinity to the Honokeʻā Valley near Kohala, then inland and upward, where it enveloped the entire summit of Mauna Kea. Its full name “Hāmākua kihi loa” or “Hāmākua [of] long (excessive) corners, and corners of the district” (Pukui 1983: 441; Maly and Maly 2011: 1408-4). The complicated topography made it difficult to transport goods and people to the fledgling nineteenth century Honokaʻa Town. Within the moku were apportioned ahupuaʻa, of which Haina Ahupuaʻa is the location of the Rickard/Holmes/Moses/Lawson/Awong Brothers/Credit Union property.

Reverend Lorenzo Lyons, the first American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) minister noted how travel to Hāmākua was accomplished when he wrote in correspondence to his brother in 1834 that:

We have no roads such as you have in America, but we got to Hāmākua after a fashion. Mrs. L[yon]s was drawn part of the way in a rocking chair attached to the fore wheels of a wagon; a part of the way she was carried in the same chair by natives; and a part of the way she walked. The little one [their son Curtis] was carried by a native (Ibid.).

In 1876, an agreement between the Hawaiian Kingdom and the United States (popularly known as the Reciprocity Treaty) allowed Hawaiian sugar to enter the U.S. mainland “duty-free” and prompted the proliferation of sugar plantations throughout the archipelago and along the Hāmākua Coast in particular. Within two years of the treaty’s signing, there were three sugar plantations located within the vicinity of the village that later became known as Honokaʻa Town. They included: Honokaʻa Sugar Company (HSCo) (1878), Pāʻauhau Sugar Company (1878), and Pacific Sugar Mill (at Kukuihaele, 1879). At that time, it was apparent that the duty-free sugar crop had to have transportation out of the Hāmākua Coast.

Landings

Like other sugar companies which were established in the region, HSCo was isolated and reached initially by coaster or lighter, then by schooner or bark, and eventually by steamship or steamer. The nearest port was located in Hilo, forty-one miles to the southeast, and connected overland by a stage route which—depending on the season—traversed a dusty or muddy road
that remained unpaved until 1927. It was preceded by a long-awaited rail line that although built by 1913 still never quite reached the town, and stopped short at Pa‘auilo.

A Dusty and Muddy Road

Honoka‘a’s only fully overland link to Hilo, the island’s nearest substantial port, was by way of a similar forty one-mile dirt road that was built from the southeastern coast northward to Waipi‘o Valley in 1883 (Thrum 1883: 15). Its course along the coast was precarious because of slope, landslides, and flash floods. Improvements appear to have been made after 1902 as part of the government wagon road that was intended to belt the island (Hilo Herald-Tribune, December 5, 1902: 4: 1). By 1903, daily stagecoach service had been established between Hilo and Laupāhoehoe, with additional service to Honoka‘a four days a week and Kawaihae two days a week (Hilo Tribune, December 11,1903, Page 6).

The 1932 deluge flooded Māmane Street with mud. The Awong Brothers Store is on the right.

Honoka‘a was settled at an indeterminate date and was described by 1880 as “quite a flourishing village…with a court house,” “where the wants of the neighborhood are met by the presence of a half a dozen stores, a butcher shop and a restaurant” (Bowser 1880: n.p.). Honoka‘a developed linearly on either side of the road to Waipi‘o (the Government Road) and extended southwest-
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northeast from Ilima to Haina (Lehua) Roads. The main Government Road through town, like the rest of the overland route from Hilo to Waipiʻo, long remained unpaved. On either side of the thoroughfare were erected buildings mostly of wood.

An article in the *Hilo Tribune*, dated December 5, 1902 noted that M. V. Holmes, “Dealer in General Merchandise and Plantation Supplies, “Fresh goods direct from San Francisco every month.” The Holmes Store would have received its goods by way of the landings and then the goods would have been hauled uphill to the Government Road.

**Development of Honokaʻa Town**

Four factors influenced the initial village location of Honokaʻa, a crossroads in the 1880s through the end of the 19th century: (1) the landing at Haina, one of the few areas along the shore with direct access to the sea, fostered the development of a sugar mill (and employment) immediately downslope of what became Honokaʻa; (2) the establishment of the first wagon road (i.e. Government Road) that crossed the Hāmākua District, built mauka of the coast to lessen construction difficulties, concentrated overland travel within a narrow corridor; (3) and also, the purchase of a residence by William Rickard, who managed Honokaʻa Sugar Company (the most successful of the early sugar plantations in Hāmākua); and (4) the unique circumstances constructing commercial buildings at Honokaʻa may be derived from how building materials were delivered to the town. From 1882-1927, the bulk of the town’s cargo—including building materials, merchandise, fuel, and manpower—came by way of the sea to Honokaʻa Landing and via cable trams up to the mill and then up Haina (Lehua) Road to the town site. These four factors focused activity along a specific section of that wagon road. Where Lehua Street crossed Government Road/Māmane Street and Pakalana Street met Māmane became major intersections. Development of Honokaʻa was focused between these two points.

After 1900, the size and configuration of Honokaʻa was influenced by other factors. For one, the expiration of plantation worker contracts gave individuals the opportunity to seek new employment opportunities and purchase more goods in towns such as Honokaʻa.

Another factor was the economic and population growth that occurred as Hāmākua plantations consolidated and expanded, creating greater cane yields from massive infrastructure projects such as the Upper and Lower Hāmākua (Irrigation) Ditches and requiring additional labor to function. The district was also supported economically by commercial ranching, macadamia nut growing, and coffee farming, as well as homesteading.

Continued expansion of public services in Honokaʻa, including courts, a library, and schools, was a distinct economic advantage for the town’s economy over those of other villages nearby. (These facilities in the latter half of the twentieth century have mostly been located on the Hilo side of town.) Additionally, World War II, and the locations of U.S. Marine divisions at nearby
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Camp Tarawa, was a short-lived economic boom to Honoka‘a as goods, services, and recreational opportunities were provided by merchants in town to the troops.

Commercial Activities—“Mom and Pop” Stores

Small, independent stores outside the plantation economy hegemony developed as the norm in rural areas throughout the Hawaiian Islands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Contrary to popular myth, the entrepreneurs who founded these companies often came to Hawai‘i with mercantile experience gained in the old country or had acquired such skills working in stores run by the plantations themselves. The earliest proprietors of what has become known as the Awong Brothers Store came from elsewhere (Holmes–Vermont by way of Wisconsin, Moses–Nova Scotia, and Lawson–Scotland). Alfred Awong was born in Laupāhoehoe but of immigrant parents. All of these owners had previous shopkeeping experience before coming to the Honoka‘a store. Particular functions, such as accounting, stocking, paying bills, etc., would be assigned to individual family members or employees based upon ability and knowledge.

Proprietors differentiated their shops from similar establishments through specialization, personal relationships with customers and service. It was not uncommon to have a member of the store fill a customer’s order in the shop, drive to the customer’s home, place perishables in the refrigerator (if there was one) and non-perishable items on the kitchen table. This occurred under an honor system, wherein the customer was expected to visit the store monthly to settle up accounts. This honor system is still practiced in Honoka‘a.

(Please see MPS Historic and Architectural Resources of Honoka‘a Town, Hāmākua District, Hawai‘i Island, Hawai‘i–Section E for additional historical background of Honoka‘a and Hāmākua.)

Property and Building History

In 1876, William Rickard purchased 36.3 acres of Grant 3156 fronting the north side of Māmane Street in Haina Ahupua‘a from King Kalākaua for $128.61 (Grant Book #15, p. 377).
In 1882, W.H. Rickard leased 21,280 sq. ft. on Māmane Street to W.H. Holmes for $72 annually (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 75, p. 1). This was the location for one of two stores owned and run by the Holmes family in Honoka’a. (The other store is located in what is now the Holmes/Rice Building on the mauka side of the street near the Ferriera Building.) In 1896, W.H. Rickard and wife Nora sold the property for $650 to Milton V. Holmes, who had been managing the stores for his brother (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 173, p. 62). After Milton’s early death, his brother Everett ran the stores as the executor of the estate until 1919, when he sold the (TMK 3-5-16: 017) location to A.L. Moses for $15,062 (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 558, p. 247). A.L. Moses, as part of a partnership agreement, sold the property to William G. Lawson for $1 (Bureau of Conveyances Liber 590, p. 146). In 1924, the partners sold the Hilo-side part of the

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lot to local plumber and hardware store owner Bunso Ikeuchi for $2,850 (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 747, pp. 418-419). (This location is currently used by the Ikeuchis as a storage building.) A.L. Moses died in 1924, and his estate was bankrupt. His estate was sold to Lawson for $3,131.74 (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 746, pp. 192-194). The Lawson store continued to operate until 1925 when Alfred and Henry Awong assumed a long-term lease and renamed it Awong Brothers Store. In 1947, Lawson and his wife sold the property to Alfred Awong for $15,000 (Bureau of Conveyances, Liber 2074, p. 27).

After Alfred Awong’s death in 1956, “Grandma Norah Awong owned the building and property but had no part in running the business. She was given a monthly stipend allowing her to live comfortably until her death in 1975.” (Beverly Awong Cypriano, 2016)

In 1959, Alfred’s children, Gilbert and Nancy, shared ownership with their mother, and in the same year, Gilbert bought out Nancy. In 1968, Gilbert (and Norah) sold the property to the credit union organization; and in 1979 The credit union opened its doors. Over the years it has gone through various name changes and mergers, but always with the same credit union functions (to join people together for mutual financial benefit). It was named the Honoka’a Community Federal Credit Union, and subsequently the North Hawai‘i Community Federal Credit Union, and currently the HFS Federal Credit Union.
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1879 Reg0335 HGS Hāmākua, Hawai‘i Honoka‘a Section Government Survey map by C.J. Lyons and J.S. Emerson which is the first recording of the building.
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Holmes Stores

1904 Historic Honoka’a area map (Reg2267WIDE)–Charles Dove C.E. (cropped) with the approximate location Awong Brothers Store/Holmes Store property on Māmane Street Survey on the current HFS Credit Union property.

In 1876, William Rickard received a grant in Haina Ahupua’a from Kalākaua for 36.3 acres. In 1882, Everett N. Holmes purchased on 21,280 square feet of the former Rickard property and established the Holmes Store.

In 1884, brother Milton V. Holmes was manager for W.H. Holmes Stores. He also had a residence and post office address in Honoka’a, Hāmākua District. (McKenney Directory of Hawai‘i) In 1898, Milton was listed as carrying general merchandise in the Holmes Store Honoka’a. (F.M. Husted Handbook of Honolulu)

Milton V. Holmes was listed as manager of the Honoka’a Holmes Store in 1902, 1903, and 1904. But he died in 1905. His estate is recorded in the F.M. Husted Directory in 1905-1906 and brothers W.H. and E.N completed the estate probate procedures.

In 1907 E.N. Holmes was listed as manager of the Hamakua Wine and Liquor Co., presumably this was the same Holmes Store. (F.M. Husted’s Directory and Hand-book of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands)
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The Daily Post Herald Saturday, March 29, 1919

HOLMES STORE AT HONOKAA IS SOLD

Ownership of the Holmes store at Honokaa has passed to A. L. Moses of Laupahoehoe. It is announced after more than two weeks of negotiation.

The consideration involved in the transaction has not been made public, but Mr. Moses said a week ago that it was an “inventory sale.” In other words that he had agreed to pay for the store whatever the stock inventoried. A general enlargement of the business is contemplated by the purchaser, he says.

The Honokaa Holmes Store was established by W. H. Holmes, a brother of E. N. Holmes in 1882, when it was removed from Waipio Valley to that point. Its ownership since has remained with one or the other of the three Holmes brothers until the present time.

1919 Daily Post Herald article announcing the transfer of the property from W.H., E.N., and M.V. Holmes to A.L. Moses.
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Moses Store

A.L. Moses purchased the Holmes Store in 1919. The property and building dimensions remained the same. The Holmes brothers also sold all the contents of the store to Moses: “Store buildings, furniture and fixture, horses and wagons, auto trucks, stock of goods wares and merchandise, fire insurance premiums and the good will and business of the Holmes Store.”

The 1920 Honolulu Business Directory shows Moses still shopkeeping in Laupāhoehoe even though he had purchased the property and store from the Holmes estate.
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**Lawson’s Department Store**

In 1921 Moses and William G. Lawson were part of a partnership agreement. Moses sold the store to Lawson, but retained an undivided interest. Lawson bought the 15,960 square feet of the property from Moses’s bankruptcy estate (5,320 square feet having been sold to Bunso Ikeuchi in a prior arrangement). This included the existing building also.

Unpaved Māmame Street looking Waipi‘o. On the right of the photo is the then-renamed Lawson’s Department Store, and the two-story Holmes/Rice building is on the left. (c. 1922)
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KOYASAN SHINGON MISSION (PA‘AUILO KONGOJI MISSION)

A Honoka’a Kinpukuji Shingon Mission Celebration showing the building’s central location (n.d.)

SAKATA ART STUDIO

This photo shows the Lawson’s Department Store with the gas pump to the left, William Lawson standing in the doorway and the stables to the right. The photo was taken on or before 1927 as the First Bank of Hilo, Ltd.-Bank of Hawai‘i wood-framed building to the far right has not been moved to the Botelho property to make way for the new wholly concrete Bank of Hawai‘i building on that site.
Awong Brothers Store

C.1920s J.J. Nobriga poses with his touring car (possibly a 1923 Buick), the store's gas pump to the left. At one time, according to Gilbert Awong (interview, 2016) the store also had a tall pump with a glass cylinder on top so the customer could see the quantity of gas pumped. Standard Oil was the distributor and gas was $.25 a gallon. In later years, the gas pumps proved too much hassle for the general merchandise store, so Alfred Awong pulled out the gas tanks knowing there were other gas stations to serve the townspeople. This was a time of transition: note the horses tied to the hitching post in front of the stable.

This is a geared lift pump once used at B. Ikeuchi and Sons Hardware, later moved to the Health Department Plague Laboratory. Unlock the case, open the clam-shell covers, crank one turn for one gallon of gas, reverse the crank again. The hand-operated counting wheel, with dial at the top clicked for each gallon. (Perspectives p. 100-101)
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1884 Lawson Department Store ledger pages. Gilbert Awong in his 2016 interview said that the Awong Brothers Store used modern bookkeeping methods.
Awong Brothers Store

Lawson’s Department Store patron’s ledger, and an 1894 ledger page from the store. Lawson’s Department Store, and later Awong Brothers Store, kept the majority of their business in individual accounts for each person or family.
Awong Brothers Store

In 1922 Alfred began clerking in Lawson’s General Store. Alfred decided that running the store would be a good opportunity, and in 1925 the property was leased to brothers Alfred and Henry, and brother William was the bookkeeper, and the store operated under their own name: Awong Brothers. Also in 1925 Alfred bought out Henry and became the sole owner. Eventually, in 1947 Alfred and his wife Norah Johansen Awong bought the property. Upon Alfred’s death, Norah became the sole owner of the property by probate. The control of the store continued with William Awong as manager, but he was never an owner. Gilbert Awong and Nancy Awong Teves (Alfred’s children) were business partners, and in 1959 Gilbert bought out Nancy and became the sole owner.
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The Awong Brothers Store was a constant in Honoka‘a Town.

The Awong Brothers Store served as the backdrop for many of the town’s photos, and its Māmane Street façade has remained unchanged over the years, with the exception of enclosing the Hilo-side stables.

Awong Brothers had everything that a general store could provide and more. The store spatial organization changed little over the 45 years.

In 1941 Lawson’s Department Store is listed in the Hawai‘i County Field Book as “combination store and rooms–beer parlor–warehouse–dwelling–1-2 story–garage for 4 cars.” (By 1961, the Field Book records list the garage as salvage.)
Gilbert Awong’s hand-drawn floor plan showing the layout of the Awong Brothers Store. (2016)
Gilbert Awong’s floor plan (not to scale), showing the store on the left of the property. Not shown: former stable and beer parlor on the right of the property. (2016)
Awong Brothers Store

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Current floor plan of the HFS Federal Credit Union. (2016)

Interior of the Store

The off-white colored building was U-shaped, and when the Awongs took over, the store was opened up. Partitions were removed, a pharmacy counter installed, liquor storage secured, and an elevated office platform was installed adjacent to the front door entrance so that the store employees could watch over the shoppers. Alfred also had a small private office in the Waipiʻo-mauka corner of the store.

As a general merchandise store and situated distant from the main port of Hilo the business had a warehouse space to keep an inventory of goods on hand. The warehouse had a loft, as well as a downstairs with a dirt floor. The groceries were kept upstairs, including bags of rice. Animal feed, and other bulky items were kept downstairs along with the kerosene. Beverly had fun going up the ladder to the loft and jumping down onto the bags.
Awong Brothers Store                                      Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

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The store carried groceries, liquors, produce, meat, dry goods, baby items, household items, and shoes, among other items. Uncle Fat was stationed behind the pharmaceuticals counter. The Liquor sold from a glass-door covered shelf that was closed on holidays and election days. The office with the safe was raised above the floor level to so the customers could be watched.

The Awong Store was also known as the shoe store. Alfred would go to Honolulu, especially to buy shoes. Many, many boxes of shoes were displayed floor to ceiling. A priest never bought a pair of shoes. Gilbert would notice that the priest’s shoes were worn and he gave them new ones.

One time a person shopping put on new shoes and then put his older ones in the shoebox. Later someone wanted that particular box of shoes and to his surprise found old shoes that had been left.

Beverly Awong Cypriano recalled that what was then known as “rat cheese” was sold, though she thought that it might actually have been cheddar cheese. The cheese was covered in cheese cloth and then covered over with a see-through dome. Uncle Fat would cut a wedge and then wrap it in wax paper for the customer.

Inventory was taken twice a year. Beverly did the school supplies, and tablets “My mother had a little tool like an ice pick and she was able to judge the amount of yardage remaining in the bolt of cloth.” (Beverly, 2016)

At Christmas-time toys and housewares would be displayed at the front of the store.

In the early days, coffins were kept upstairs. It was the practice to take a coffin to a house to prepare for burial. One day, as the story goes, Satoshi, one of the clerks at the store, lay down in a comfortable resting place in one of the coffins. Other clerks sent Lawson’s boy upstairs. Satoshi got up from the coffin and scared the life out of the boy. (Gilbert, 2016)

Later, a large upstairs apartment with big living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms was rented out. At another point in time the Awongs rented to William “Kaiser” Branco. His wife was a nurse and they had a young daughter. The little girl taking a bath leaned against a window screen next to the bathtub and fell out the window. The girl fell two stories and landed on her backside. The nurse mother panicked, ran to the store asking for help, and the child was taken to the hospital. The girl was not seriously injured from the fall. (Gilbert, 2016)

Making use of other areas of the property, the Awongs rented out the second or makai apartment in back. The Awong’s never lived in the residence spaces.

The Hilo-side section of the building had a history of many tenants. It was originally used as stables, as indicated by early photographs of the building. In one photo, there appears to be a glowing light coming from within the stables. Peter Tomich, past Executive Director of the HFS
Awong Brothers Store
Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

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Federal Credit Union relayed that the light came not from an open-to-the-sky roof, but rather an opening in the *makai* side of the building that let in light and air for the horses. The horses went down the Māmane Street ramp to reach the lower level. (Peter Tomich, interview, 2016)

By the 1941, County Field Book notations recorded that the street level stables had been converted into a beer parlor with a tenant named John Mendes. During the war years, all Honoka‘a saloons, bars, and beer parlors were very popular with military. Other tenants Gilbert remembered were the Matsuda’s Radio Electronics Store, Yvonne’s Bar, and the Hāmākua Humanities Project.

“stable glow” 1927 BOH building

This photo was taken in 1929—the new 1927 Bank of Hawai‘i building’s scalloped-roof parapet located behind the car is barely visible on the right in this photo. The occasion is a Honoka‘a Hongwanji Mission celebration.
This detail of the panorama photo shows an advertisement for Gold Metal flour, and the chalk board announcement for Sunday 7 or 17 November at 8:30am. The primary Awong Brothers sign is above main entrance here.
The Awong Brothers sign at the Waipiʻo side secondary entrance to the store.

This advertisement is from the 1939 Hāmākua District Fair and Carnival booklet sponsored by the Hāmākua Lions Club on the Honokaʻa School grounds.
Awong Brothers Store

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During World War II, thousands of marines were based near Waimea, preparing for or recovering from battles at Tarawa, Iwo Jima, and the planned invasion of Japan. The United Services Organizations (USO) provided programs, services, and live entertainment. Above, a USO convoy, with mandated blacked out headlights, awaits. The USO headquarters in Honokaʻa was located in the Botelho Building uptown. Price controls were in effect at the Awong Brothers Store as at all establishments in Hawaiʻi.

The store stayed open late because of competition, except for the war years when the store closed at 5 p.m. because of the curfew blackout.
Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property  County and State

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service / National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
NPS Form 10-900  OMB No. 1024-0018

Ref:Item 1: (r/s, 6/29/68).

(Tab 1134/47, 4507-25, former key)

Note: Deed fr William G Lawson to Mary W to Alfred Awong
dated 8/1/47, rec 10/11/47 in Bk 2074 p 273
Area: 15,960 sq., per Gr 3156, Des as follows:

Be at SE cor of Geo Hall lot, adjoining gov't rd & running along gov't rd
in E direction 205 ft to cor on lot conveyed in May 1924, by L Moses & W G Lawson
to B Ikeuchi; thence in N direction along said last named lot 152 ft to lands of
Donald J Sue 60; thence in W direction along said land 105 ft to rock marked X; thence
in straight line along bdy of Geo Hall lot for distance of 152 ft to pt of bg.
(Being the same conveyed to Grantors by W G Lawson, dated 6/17/41, Bk 1644 p 433).
Note: Area of 15,960 sq. is more or less. Said area being of 150 ft times
152 ft.

(Hawai‘i County Field Book) reference to the 1947 Deed in which Alfred Awong purchased the
property in 1947. The square footage increased to 16,813 square feet as a proper county survey
was undertaken.

Christmas was a magical time at the Awong Store. “There were Christmas lights lighting all the
way down the street, and there was a big Christmas tree in front of the store. The Awong Store
made gift packages of apple, raisins, oranges, and maybe sodas for all its regular customers
(other stores gave whole hams). “Once a year we drank soda. We drank lots of soda at
Christmastime. (Gilbert, 2016)

In 1968, Norah and Gilbert Awong sold the building and property to the Honoka‘a Community
Federal Credit Union for $45,000. In 1972, Gilbert closed the store and liquidated the business.
“The store closed because times had changed and supermarkets came along, and we couldn’t
compete—the store was losing customers” (Gilbert, 2016)

“When we closed up we sold everything: old scales counters, safes, everything sold, and dollies.
Other merchants bought boxes of groceries, and cleaned up our warehouse for us. And there
were bills that were never collected. The safe was sold to a farm equipment store in Hilo.
Though Lawson’s Department Store, the former owners before the Awong Brothers, had
damaged the safe by doing a messy welding job on it.” (Gilbert, 2016)

Gilbert was eventually hired by the credit union as a controller until his retirement in 1987.
(Beverly, 2016) Gilbert was the kind of personable proprietor who brought people into the
building, and as controller, continued his good customer relations with credit union patrons.
During his employment with the credit union, Gilbert maintained the character that got people
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property

through the Depression—to use and reuse things. Just as when he was running the store throughout the Depression, he was also ever-thrifty. One credit union co-worker noted that Gilbert, being ever-thrifty, would roll the used calculator tapes back, perhaps on a pencil, and put the clean side back in the machine to be reused. Very thrifty. (Tomich, interview, 2016)

1970s: after the Awong Brothers Store closed in 1972, the store remained intact until the Honoka‘a Community Federal Credit Union began renovations.

Awong Brothers Store
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The credit union board had voted to tear down the building and replacing it with a new modern building. Fortunately, the Honoka‘a Community Federal Credit Union manager Katherine Mendes petitioned the credit union members to save the 100-year-old building and keep the exterior intact while remodeling the interior in period-appropriate counter and tellers’ windows. *(Hawai‘i Herald Tribune, October 14, 1979)*

Above: workmen during the restoration. Below: Credit Union Manager Catherine Mendes who spearheaded the restoration of the building/children opening bank accounts.
Awong Brothers Store

Name of Property

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Left: workmen installing the parapet sides during the restoration; Right: 2016 repairs to the building before the parapet side is reinstalled.

Opening day celebration in 1979 at the Honoka‘a Community Federal Credit Union (later renamed the North Hawai‘i Community Federal Credit Union and currently named the HFS Federal Credit Union).
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property

County and State

People History

Milton V. Holmes (1854-1905)

Milton V. Holmes was born in Vermont and immigrated to Hāmākua Hawai‘i in 1884 when he became manager for his brother’s W.H. Holmes Stores. He also had a residence and post office address in Honoka‘a, Hāmākua District. (McKenney Directory of Hawai‘i)

1890 Hawai‘i Census
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property  
County and State

In 1896, Milton/M.V. Holmes purchased both the Affonso Store [where the Rice-Holmes building is today] and the Holmes Store [where the Credit Union is today]. (Hawai‘i Bureau of Conveyances)

In 1898, the *F.M. Husted Handbook of Honolulu*, listed Milton as carrying general merchandise in the Holmes Store Honoka’a. From 1898 until 1905 Milton was manager of the Honoka’a Holmes Store. In 1905, Milton V. Holmes died, later that year E.N. Holmes was recorded as “executor of MV Holmes estate gen merchandise Honoka’a.” (*F.M. Husted Directory in 1905-1906*) Brothers W.H. and E.N completed the estate probate procedures. In 1907, E.N. Holmes was listed as manager of the Hamakua Wine and Liquor Co. Presumably this was the same Holmes Store. (*F.M. Husted’s Directory and Hand-book of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands*) E.N. Holmes continued to run the Honoka’a general store and serve as the M.V. estate executor throughout 1907-1910.

1905 Probate document for the estate of Milton V. Holmes. Everett N. Holmes was executor for his brother’s estate.
Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property  County and State

Alfonso L. Moses (1881-1924)

Alfonso Moses was born in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and immigrated to Hawai‘i in 1902. In the 1920 census Moses was 38 and residing in Laupāhoehoe with wife Olivia, 21, and infant sons George and John. He was a manager of a general store. In 1924 he died bankrupt.

Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property  County and State

William G. Lawson (1875-1962)

William Lawson was born in Scotland, and immigrated to Hawai‘i in 1907. In 1920 he was managing the AL Moses store in Honoka‘a.

This 1920 Polk-Husted Directory and Handbook of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands (p. 1029) shows that Lawson became manager of a retail general store.
Awong Brothers Store  

Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi

Name of Property  

County and State

By 1922 the store became Lawson’s Department Store in Honokaʻa—Lawson as manager (Tel 17, P O Box 4).

1923 Polk-Husted Directory and Handbook of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands (p. 1167)
Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i  
Name of Property  County and State

Lawson spent many years living in Honolulu. In the 1930, Census he was listed as office manager of a Music Store. He leased the Honoka‘a store property to the Awong Brothers until he finally sold to them in 1947.

The Awong Family

Ah Wong

Grandfather [Ah Wong or Au Yan or Yap] was the patriarch of a large Chinese-Portuguese family. He was born in 1842 in China and immigrated to Hawai‘i in 1874. He married Jacinta Amoral who had immigrated from Portugal in 1883.

1900 Census showing the Ah Wong family residing in Laupāhoehoe.
Awong Brothers Store

Name of Property

Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi

County and State

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AWONG FAMILY COLLECTION–NHERC

c. 1906–bottom row left to right: George, Nellie, mother Jacintha (Amoral) holding baby William, father and patriarch Ah Ah Wong [or Au Yan or Yap], Annie; Top row: Alfred, Antone, Emilia, Hanry, Mary, and John.
1919 is the first mention of Alfred Awong clerking for A.L. Moses in Honoka’a. Alfred began his working career as a cane planter and homesteader as well as clerking in the E.W. Barnard Store in the Laupahoehoe area. *Polk-Husted Directory and Handbook of Honolulu and the Hawaiian Islands.*
Awong Brothers Store Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i
Name of Property County and State

Alfred began clerking in Lawson’s Department Store in 1922, and in 1925 the property with building was leased to brothers Alfred and Henry and named the Awong Brothers Store. Brother William worked as the store’s bookkeeper. Eventually in 1947, Alfred along with his wife took ownership.

Besides long six-days-a-week store responsibilities Alfred was also an active member of the community. He had lists and lists of devoted customers and was known as a person you could always go to for help. Though not a political office seeker, he once ran unsuccessfully for a seat at the constitutional convention. Alfred was a well-liked and important man of the town. It was well known that if you wanted a job in Honoka‘a you went to Alfred. “Grandfather was kind. He would bring people home so that Grandmother Norah never knew how many people, even the Catholic bishop, would be coming for dinner.” Beverly, 2016)

Community leaders ride sure-footed horses down a rough and steep road to Waipiʻo Valley even in first decades of the 20th century. Pictured with other important community leaders: County Supervisor A.M. Cabrinha; unknown individual; Bandmaster and Store Owner Alfred Awong; County Board Chairman (Mayor) Samuel “Mahuka” Spencer (for whom Spencer Park at Kawaihae is named); Road Overseer Antone Ferreira, and Kalopa homesteader Joaquin Pestana. (n.d.)
Awong Brothers Store

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PHOTOGRAPH: ISA ART STUDIO; HAWAIʻI STATE LIBRARY HONOKAʻA BRANCH COLLECTION

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin announced the dedication of the new Honokaʻa Library on June 15, 1937. “Among those present were, reading from left to right: Police Officer William Mendes, Manuel Galdera, Charles Kohara, W.P. Naquin (manager of the Honokaʻa Sugar Co.), Mrs. Finlay Robertson, Mrs. Ethel King, Mrs. W.B. Macfarlane (Honokaʻa librarian), Mrs. L.C. Lyman, Mrs. Isabel Welsh, Miss Nella Tucker, Dr. H.B. Elliot, Dr. Milton Rice, James Yapp (territorial engineer), Sheriff A.M. Cabrinha of Honokaʻa, George Lowson, Stanley Elmore, Dr. Clarence Carter, Alfred Awong, Road overseer Antone Ferreira of Honokaʻa, Miss Doris Higashi, Miss “Billy” Takata, Rev. Alfalla, and K Takimoto (contractor).”

In 1937, Alfred was one of the founders of the library, along with Gerald De Mello’s grandfather, Antone Luce Ferreira. This opening day ceremonial photo can be seen inside and just to the left of the entrance to the Hawaiʻi State Library Honokaʻa Branch.
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi

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1940 Census. Notice Alfred is listed as “proprietor” of a retail general merchandise store, whereas in the 1930 Census he is listed as “retail merchant” of dry goods.
Awong Brothers Store  

Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi

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AWONG FAMILY COLLECTION–NHERC

c. Late 1940s-early 1950s, Bandmaster Alfred Awong leading the Hāmākua County Band in a Christmas parade in Waimea. (Alfred played trumpet under Joe Cypriano and became band master after Joe died. (n.d.)
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property  
County and State

August 24, 1952–The Hāmākua County Band at a concert program at Pu‘umaile Hospital. Bandmaster Alfred Awong with lei is standing directly below the right sousaphone. (n.d.)

Honoka‘a had the second oldest community band on the island (established 1884). Well-known Bandmaster Alfred Awong is on the left and Manager William Rickard is the tallest person in the back row. After World War II, the Honoka‘a Band was reorganized and became known as the Hāmākua County Band. The band is shown here at a concert at the Honoka‘a Hospital. (n.d.)
Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Alfred was a community leader and a musician. Manager William Rickard and Bandmaster Alfred were good friends. The Hāmākua Band started in 1936 and disbanded in 1963 (after Peter Enanoria (Beverly’s mother’s (Veronica’s) brother-in-law) died. For a short time, David Lorch another band member took over, but the band disbanded when David moved to the Hilo County Band.

Many Filipino men knew music and wanted to form a band, so they organized. Alfred convinced the Hawai‘i County chairman (today he would be called Mayor) that the Hāmākua band should be officially recognized. Alfred saw to it that the band members were placed on the county payroll, receiving modest salaries. And so the band became famous playing for all important occasions in Hāmākua including such places as Laupāhoehoe and Kohala. And their salary was increased from $5 to $25 a month! The band also played in Hilo and even Moloka‘i, Nā‘ālehu, and Mountain View. When the band was in Hilo, Alfred would take the members to Jimmy’s restaurant and Alfred would pay for meals.” (Beverly, 2016)

For his innermost circle Alfred took his family and employees to Sun Sun Lau in downtown Hilo for a nine course Chinese dinner. “I didn’t like any of the food so Grandpa took me to a fountain for ice cream after dinner.” (Beverly, 2016)

Alfred invested wisely in properties. He had cane land in Laupāhoehoe and a ranch in Āhualoa (and hired two men to take care of it). He also bought a beach house in Puakō (only two years before he died), and built a canoe there that he never used. He had a 20-year lease on government property in Kawaihae and kept a boat to go fishing there; and he had more properties in Honoka‘a.

Additionally, he raised and raced horses at Pa‘auilo and Hilo race tracks. Once a year Alfred oversaw the branding of his cattle. There was lots of liquor, of which the store had plenty, food, and games. The brand was a “diamond N.”

Alfred’s sense of fairness extended to purchasing groceries: “All family members paid full price for groceries, and only Uncle Fat and Uncle Willy had a discount.” (Beverly, 2016)

Gilbert Awong

When Gilbert first started his working life, he was employed at the Department of Health. But the Awong Brothers needed help so Alfred asked Gilbert to come and work in the store.

Originally Alfred and Henry were co-owners of the Awong Brothers Store. But when Alfred, at 62, died of a heart attack on a business trip to O‘ahu, 34-year-old Gilbert was left to run the store with Uncle William. Gilbert and sister Nancy Awong Teves received Alfred’s share of the business, and along with Uncle Willie took over the management of the store. Alfred’s other children divided up other properties.
Awong Brothers Store Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

The store was always closed on Sundays because Gilbert and Veronica were devout Catholics. But even though patrons knew the store was closed, “How many times did people knock at the door on Sundays and want me to open up needing aspirin or whatever?” (Gilbert, 2016)

Awong Brothers accommodated the store’s customers. If Awong Brothers’ customers did not get what they wanted, then they would go elsewhere. “If someone wanted to borrow a lawnmower and we did not lend it to him, he would quit. Beverly wanted to have a party but I said she had to invite everyone or they would quit coming to the store.” (Gilbert, 2016)

One time the Sharp family (married to the John Teves family) had an emergency on the mainland. The only person or place that the husband could ask for travel money was Gilbert. Gilbert asked how much he need and got the money from the safe. Gilbert was trusting and never asked how he would pay it back or when, but of course the family repaid the money as soon as it could.

The whole town was trusting. One time Beverly had a group of University of Hawaii-Hilo students in the car and she had to buy something quickly at the Hasegawa Store. Beverly left the car running and went in to buy the item. The students were so impressed that the Hasegawa Store did not ask for money. The Hasegawas would of course write down the item and the cost and the Awongs of course would pay the Hasegawas back later, probably at the end of the month.

When Beverly was young, Uncle Bill Rickard gave Beverly a set of finely etched glasses from the Rickard Hotel long in advance of Beverly’s marriage. She always considered them too special to use. When she did get married, her father, Gilbert, gave her “as much money as I could use because he said that I would need it when I am starting out, and Aunt Nancy (Teves) gave back half of her property to me when I got married.” (Beverly, 2016)
Life at the Store

Gilbert and Uncle William ran the store. Norah, Alfred’s wife, had half interest in the property but she did not work in the store. Those working at the store included Gilbert and his wife Veronica (part time), Gilbert’s sister Auntie Nancy Awong Teves, Daughter Beverly, Uncle Willie, “Uncle Fat” On Leong, and Elizabeth Cordero (part time). Gilbert eventually became sole owner in 1959.

Day-to-day store activities included: Oh On Leong would open the store at 7 a.m., lunch was at any time, and Gilbert would trade off with his wife and take time for dinner, coming home at 5 p.m. to eat, and then he would lock up at 8 p.m. During the day, the floor was swept, and shelves dusted, and canned goods and other items were neatly arranged on the shelves with their labels facing out. Periodically, the windows were washed, displays were changed in the windows, and the floor was regularly oiled with a dark brown stain.
The regular customers were Portuguese, haole, and Ching Ying Society members of the community (but few Japanese Americans). As soon as electricity became available the Awong Brothers got refrigeration. The most often purchased items were rice, meat and other frozen goods, vegetables, and canned goods. One item that was once popular but eventually was no longer sold were the dry goods—customers had started to buy ready-made clothes.

Price controls were in effect during the war years. Throughout the years there was no competition among the stores. Awong Brothers Store, Ujiki Store, and T. Kaneshiro Store all had the same markup percentage.

When Gilbert’s youngest daughter, Ellen, was six-years-old, she surprised everyone. No one except Gilbert and William knew the combination to the safe, and they thought nothing of having a curious youngster watching them open the safe. One day in the 1965 Gilbert forgot his glasses and so could not see the numbers on the safe combination. So, Ellen, stepped forward and turned the dial to the closely guarded combination numbers and opened the safe. Apparently, she had been innocently standing near the safe openings for some time and had absorbed the safe combination.

One day, Uncle Fat had a visible sore. The Awongs were scared that it might be leprosy and that Gilbert might have to close up the store. It turned out that it was nothing so serious, but the store’s temporary closing weighed heavily on the Awong’s minds.

Deliveries

Initially, the Awong Store had a Model A truck, then a big van, to haul groceries from Hilo. One embarrassing event for daughter Beverly was, as a University of Hawaii-Hilo student, Gilbert picked her up for the weekend with the van full of toilet paper.

Another delivery event happened when toys were picked up in Hilo, but by the time they had driven to Honoka’a, all the boxes were opened—Ellen had played with all the toys on the way back home.

The Awong Store delivered: Mondays and Wednesdays to Haina, Tuesdays and Thursdays to Åhualoa, Saturday to Laupāhoehoe, and everyday to Honoka’a and vicinity. The Awongs did not deliver to Pā’auhau probably because another store served that town.

Some people would buy all their groceries at one time in the month. Some had regular requests for items and the store knew how to put together their order. “With some older people we could choose their monthly order and they would be happy.” (Gilbert, 2016)

Beverly used to ride along on deliveries. When they reached the houses, Gilbert took the heavier items and Beverly lighter ones. One man they delivered to was Crispin Caires. They left the
items on kitchen table and and took Crispin’s list of items for next week, but Beverly never saw Crispin. Joe Lele Gonsalves, a mentally-challenged man living on his own in Haina, gave Gilbert a wad of money in payment for the Awong’s delivery. He told Gilbert to take what was due. Gilbert could have taken more but he told Beverly “that’s not what we do.” (Gilbert, 2016)

Gilbert made deliveries to isolated spots. One such regular delivery to an isolated location was in Kalōpā Mauka to Gerald De Mello’s grandparents’ home, to Antone Luce Ferreira’s mother-in-law, Emelia Souza (1857-1957). Antone had given up his own small store when he became the Hāmākua Overseer. When Gilbert got as close to the household as he could, Yuki, a Japanese neighbor, took the groceries on horseback the rest of the way to Emelia’s house.

Gilbert Awong

Gilbert was very active in Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church activities. At various times he was on the Executive Board, the Finance Chair, and Ground and Maintenance Chair, as well as
the Holy Name Society. He organized Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) activities such as the sports teams. He helped organize the St. Joseph’s Day festivities, and he was instrumental in establishing St. Joseph’s School–Hāmākua (though this branch of the Hilo school only lasted approximately five years between 1980 and 1990). Additionally, he was a founder of the Hawai‘i Saddle Club, and always liked the grooming and caring for horses. However, he resigned when rodeos became over-emphasized.

Regarding vacations from the store: Alfred and Gilbert never could have a vacation. Finally, Gilbert’s wife and their two daughters “would stay at their house at Puakō, but it was no vacation for Dad who ended up commuting every day.” (Beverly, 2016)

**Conclusion**

The Awong Brothers Store building is eligible for the Hawai‘i and National Registers of Historic Places at the Local Level under Criteria A (History/Events) and C (Architecture) due to its significance in the areas of commerce as a general store and its period architecture.

**Criterion A (History/Events)**

The Awong Brothers Store building is significant at the local level under Criterion A and it is historically important as representative of the development of Honoka‘a town, of small businesses outside the plantation hegemony, and of succeeding property owners offering an increased range of general store goods and services. Community members benefited from these independent businesses. While ethnic customs were honored, the policy of “all comers welcomed” also facilitated social integration.

The period of significance begins with the nineteenth-century completion of the Holmes/Moses/Lawson/Awong Brothers Store building (c. 1870s) and continues up to 1968 (the 50-year mark) recognizing the structure as an important center of commerce, and social and cultural activity in the Honoka‘a community.

**Criterion C (Architecture)**

The Awong Brothers Store is significant at the local level under Criterion C as a fine example of a wood commercial plantation-style building as rendered in wood, reflecting the materials and carpentry skills available at the time of construction in Hawai‘i during the late nineteenth century. It is typical of its period in its use of materials, method of construction, and craftsmanship, and retains its historical integrity in terms of location, design, setting, workmanship, feeling and association.
Outside of areas with fire safety ordinances, wood was the most common material used to construct commercial buildings in Hawai‘i in the late nineteenth century and the first four decades of the twentieth century. Honolulu passed fire district ordinances commencing in 1888, and Hilo in 1913. As a result, the preponderance of wood commercial buildings is found in Hawaii’s small towns and pre-date World War II. The wood buildings were usually always one-to-two stories in height and often sat on concrete foundations. A number featured false fronts and often Italianate inspired cornices with modillion shaped brackets cap the buildings. The buildings were constructed primarily with vertical tongue and groove walls, although some of the earlier examples have shiplap siding. Frequently, pent-roofed awnings sheltered the sidewalks in front of the buildings. The facades contained doors to each store in the building and display windows. These openings were often arranged in a symmetric manner. Most of the display windows were single pane from 1910 onward.

The Awong Brothers Store building, with its façade’s display windows, and individual store entries, as well as its bracketed cornice, and façade length pent-roofed awning is typical of the wood commercial buildings of its period. It is a good example of the form, with its centered false-front. Its double-wall construction and use of shiplap siding well bespeak its nineteenth century origins, when shiplap siding was a popular material for more substantial buildings. Similarly, its multi-pane display windows were typical of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century commercial buildings in Hawai‘i.

Very few buildings from the nineteenth century remain standing in Hawai‘i, and even fewer nineteenth century commercial buildings constructed from wood. On the island of Hawai‘i, the only other nineteenth century frame commercial building which comes to mind is the Wo On Store in North Kohala (c. 1890). Other still surviving wood commercial buildings on the island include the Spreckels Block (1900) and the Burns Block (1913), both of which are in Hilo. As such the Awong Brothers Store building stands as a rare and good example of a late nineteenth century wood commercial building, a form which once graced the streets of Hawai‘i’s rural and plantation communities.
9. Major Bibliographical References

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Hilo Tribune. December 12, 1911: 1: 2;


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**Hilo Tribune-Herald.** “Plans Studied for Māmane Street District,” August 8-14, 1976: 3-4.


City Directory, Island of Hawai‘i, 1913, p. 1136.
City Directory, Island of Hawai‘i, 1914, p. 1080.
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[https://www.google.com/search?q=Camp+Tarawa&hl=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=cRulUs3FOtXooATB0ILICw&ved=0CDEQsAQ&biw=1600&bih=796.](https://www.google.com/search?q=Camp+Tarawa&hl=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=cRulUs3FOtXooATB0ILICw&ved=0CDEQsAQ&biw=1600&bih=796. (Camp Tarawa Images.)](https://www.google.com/search?q=Camp+Tarawa&hl=en&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=cRulUs3FOtXooATB0ILICw&ved=0CDEQsAQ&biw=1600&bih=796. (Camp Tarawa Images.)


Awong Brothers Store  Hawaiʻi, Hawaiʻi

Name of Property  County and State


National Archives Microfilm Publication: A3571; Roll: 20; Record Group Title: Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787-2004; Record Group Number: RG 85. Washington, D.C.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Draft Registration Card. Registration State: Hawaiʻi; Registration County: Hawaiʻi; Roll: 1452025; Draft Board: 1. Washington, D.C.


National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Index to Passengers, Not Including Filipinos, Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaiʻi, ca. 1900-ca. 1952; Microfilm Series: A3410; Microfilm Roll: 16. Washington, D.C.

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Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

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Awong Brothers Store

Name of Property

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

County and State


Tomich, Peter. Interview, 2016.


Sections 9-end page 65
Awong Brothers Store Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i
Name of Property County and State


**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
____ designated a National Historic Landmark
____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #__________
____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #__________
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #__________

**Primary location of additional data:**

x State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
x Local government
x University (of Hawai‘i)
____ Other

Name of repository: _______________________________

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** __________

---

1. **Geographical Data**

   **Acreage of Property** 0.38597 acre

   Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

   **Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

   Datum if other than WGS84: __________
Awong Brothers Store

Name of Property

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

County and State

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: Longitude:
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☑ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 5Q Easting: 241847.13 Northing: 2222196.45
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting: Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property is a rectangle with the shortest sides to the north and south now listed on the State and County records as Tax Map Key (3) 4-5-016: 017. The perimeter dimensions are as follows: Starting at the southeast corner, moving clockwise, 106.50 feet fronting Māmane Street; 157.50 feet on the Waipiʻo side; 108.45 feet on the makai side; and 152.12 feet on the Hilo side.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the parcel are the historic boundaries listed in the State Bureau of Conveyances and the County Tax Assessor’s Notebooks since the mid-1947.
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai’i, Hawai’i

Name of Property

County and State

2. Form Prepared By

name/title: Ross W. Stephenson PHD and Laura Ruby MA, MFA

organization: Historic Honoka’a Town Project

street & number: 38 South Judd Street, Unit 24B

city or town: Honolulu state: Hawai’i zip code: 96817

e-mail: rwaylands808@aol.com

telephone: (808) 679-9060-cell

date: December 4, 2017
Awong Brothers Store  |  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i
Name of Property  |  County and State

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps**: A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items**: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**MAPS**

**Awong Brothers Store Map Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current Maps Showing the Awong Brothers Store</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1983 Honoka‘a USGS Quadrangle Map cropped.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1995 USGS Honoka‘a Quad showing the Awong Brothers Store building in its current location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2014 Honoka‘a street map demarking the current Awong Brothers Store building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1995 7. 1995 USGS Honoka‘a Quad map showing the approximate location of the Awong Brothers Store building in Honoka‘a Town in Haina Ahupua‘a shown in red.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>2017</td>
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Awong Brothers Store

Name of Property

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

County and State

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Awong Brothers Store

County and State

4. 1983 Honoka’a USGS Quadrangle Map cropped.
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property

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5. 1995 USGS Honoka‘a Quad Honoka‘a Quad showing Honoka‘a Town on the Hāmākua Coast of the Island of Hawai‘i.
6. 1995 USGS Honoka’a Quad showing the Awong Brothers Store building in its current location.
7. 2014 Honokaʻa street map demarking the current Awong Brothers Store building.
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Name of Property

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8. 1995 USGS Honoka‘a Quad map showing the approximate location of the Awong Brothers Store building in Honoka‘a Town in Haina Ahupua‘a shown in red.
Historic Maps showing the Awong Brothers Store

9. 1879 Historic Reg0335 HGS map showing the approximate location of the Awong Brothers Store building in Grant 3156 in Haina Ahupua’a.
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

10. 1904 Historic Honoka‘a area map (Reg2267WIDE)–Charles Dove C.E. (cropped) with the approximate location Awong Brothers Store/Holmes Store property.
12. 1914 Historic Honokaʻa Town Sanborn Fire Insurance map with the Awong Brothers Store/Holmes businesses demarked in red.
13. 1914/1955 Historic Honokaʻa Town Sanborn Fire Insurance map with 1955 updates (note the tracing paper overlays) showing the Awong Brothers Store building demarked in red.
Awong Brothers Store

14. 1932 Historic (3) 4-5 Tax Map showing the whole Historic Honokaʻa Town with the Awong Brothers Store property in olive green color.
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawai’i, Hawai’i  

Name of Property  
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15. 1935 Historic (3) 4-5-: 006 014 County tax map showing the Awong Brothers Store property depicted in olive green color.
Awong Brothers Store  

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i  

16. 1925 to 1941 Composite Historic Honokaʻa Town Map (Sheet 2) created by Toshio Harunaga demarking the Awong Brothers Store in red outline.
17. 2012 Composite Historic Honokaʻa Town map (sheet 4) created by Eric Paiva demarking the Awong Brothers Store property with a red rectangle.
18. 2016 Historic Honokaʻa Town building map showing the Awong Brothers Store in contrasting color.
Awong Brothers Store  
Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

19. 2017 Honoka‘a, HI 96727—Awong Brothers Store building on Google Map outlined in red.

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

Photo Sketch
Awong Brothers Store  Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i
Name of Property  County and State

**Photo Log**

Name of Property: Awong Brothers Store (HFS Federal Credit Union)

City or Vicinity: Honoka‘a

County: Hawai‘i  State: Hawai‘i

Photographer: Laura Ruby (unless otherwise noted, Ross W. Stephenson)

Dates Photographed: 2015-2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo #1 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0001) Māmane Street façade (*mauka* side), camera facing north-northeast.

1 of 10.

Photo #2 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0002) External detail: Waipi‘o-side bay, Māmane Street façade (*mauka* side), camera facing north-northeast.

2 of 10.

Photo #3 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0003) External detail: center bay, Māmane Street façade (*mauka* side), camera facing north-northeast.

3 of 10.

Photo #4 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0004) External detail: door to second floor stairs. Māmane Street façade (*mauka* side), camera facing north-northeast.

4 of 10.
Awong Brothers Store

Hawai‘i, Hawai‘i

---

Name of Property

Photo #5 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0005)
External detail: Hilo-side bay, Māmane Street façade (mauka side), camera facing north-northeast.

5 of 10.

Photo #6 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0006)
External detail: Māmane Street façade (mauka side), showing pedestrian awning and Hilo-side façade showing parapet side, camera facing north-northwest.

6 of 10.

Photo #7 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0007)
Hilo-side façade, camera facing south-southwest.

7 of 10.

Photo #8 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0008)
Rear façade (makai side), camera facing south-southwest.

8 of 10.

Photo #9 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0009)
Exterior detail: mandated fire escape stairs (makai side), photographed through a screened window, camera facing north-northeast.

9 of 10.

Photo #10 (HI_Hawai‘i County_Honoka‘a MPS_Awong Brothers Store_0010)
Waipi‘o-side façade (mauka side), camera facing west.

Photographer: Ross W. Stephenson

10 of 10.