

25th March 1960
General Delivery
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Mr. Howard A. Powers
Geological Survey
Federal Center,
Denver 25, Colorado

Dear Mr. Powers:

Please pardon this long delay in answering your letter of 2nd December. I have just returned from a six months trip to Australia.

I agree that the 1938 earthquake was on wrong side of the island to make the Pimoe lava flow. This was thrown in merely as a suggestion for want of anything better. The original Pimoe activity occurred very long ago. However, there are many later subsidiary small flows which may easily be seen from the top of crater. None of these reached the sea. One of these covers only a dozen acres or so, and is very sharp and black. An edge came within a few score feet of two existing trees of about the same size as that forming the half tree mold.

A sketch of this mold is on attached sheet. The tree was a small one growing on soil only a couple of feet deep in a vale of an old flow. The roots ran along the top of ground. No charcoal could be found in or below the mold as tree had no tap root. Apparently all the exposed combustible material was completely burned out. The charcoal was found immediately under the lava on top the ground in positions shown. Along with the charcoal, especially on the right side, were a lot of flakes of white ash which I saved. This material is water soluble, so it could not have been made along time ago, even in the desert environment of Pimoe.

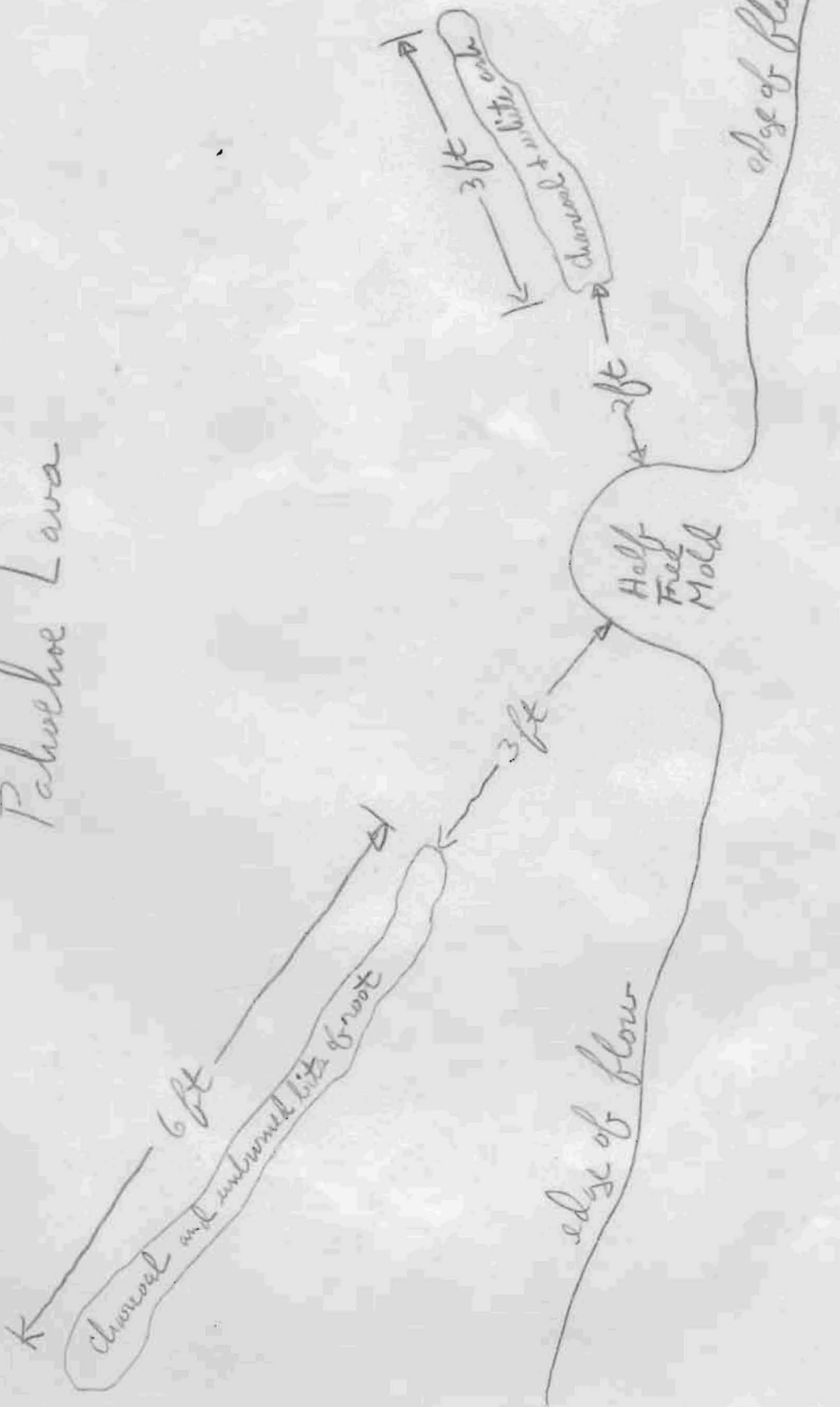
It is conceivable that a later tree grew in an old mold; that this later tree was burned out, etc. However, the place is so barren of even grass, much less bushes, that no ground fire could have swept along to ignite the tree. Even if the tree had been burned out by hunters making a campfire near it, I doubt that the roots would have burned of their own accord under the cold lava because of lack of oxygen. The problem is an interesting one.

Again, thanks for your letter and interest.

Aloha,

Grote Reber
Grote Reber

Pahoehoe Lava



Barren dirt and cinder

Grote Reber
25 March 1960