

Imua, Me Ka Hopo Ole – “Forward, Without Fear”:  
Native Hawaiians and American Schooling in Territorial Hawai‘i, 1900-1941

by

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To Brooke and my parents.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Dedication</b>                                | i   |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>                          | iii |
| <b>Introduction</b>                              | 1   |
| <b>Chapter One:</b><br>Creating Order            | 9   |
| <b>Chapter Two:</b><br>Making Hawai‘i American   | 41  |
| <b>Chapter Three:</b><br>Students                | 90  |
| <b>Chapter Four:</b><br>Teachers                 | 120 |
| <b>Chapter Five:</b><br>Families and Communities | 174 |
| <b>Conclusion</b><br>“Forward Without Fear”      | 216 |
| <b>Bibliography</b>                              | 222 |

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### **Introduction: The Scene**

On January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1902, Hawai‘i’s sole delegate to the U.S. Congress, Robert William Kalanihiapo Wilikoki, submitted House Resolution (HR) 9317 to the House of Representatives’ committee on the territories. His resolution, quickly named the “school bill” by his opponents back home, attempted to “establish and maintain a system of free schools” throughout the territory of Hawai‘i.<sup>1</sup> Sketched out over 190 pages, Wilikoki’s legislation aimed to replace the central authority of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) with local jurisdiction over all school matters. Decisions on infrastructure, faculty appointments, annual budgets, and teacher training were to be in the hands of locally elected county superintendents, district “school trustees,” and township “school directors.” His resolution also tried to convert the office of the territorial superintendent from a gubernatorial appointment to an elected position. It furthermore attempted to relegate the superintendent’s responsibilities to that of an advisor with little executive power (consulting district superintendents, compiling reports, and mediating disputes). As a direct challenge to the centralized power over the territory’s public schools, House Resolution 9317 threatened to undermine DPI authority by empowering communities with grassroots control over local schools.

A seemingly innocuous effort to tinker with school governance, Wilikoki’s school bill actually proposed a radical shift in the territory’s status quo. Resolution 9317 did not simply challenge the concentration of decision-making power over education at the DPI: it endangered white minority rule of the territory. His legislation specifically contested the authority of the DPI’s continental white education professionals and administrative progressives working out of urban Honolulu. Upending centralized governance removed direct white influence over schools

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<sup>1</sup> H.R. 9317, 57th Cong. (1902).

and placed operational control into rural districts heavily populated by Native Hawaiians. With the 1893 overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani still fresh in the minds of many Natives, decentralized control would have complicated coordinating Americanization efforts across the territory.<sup>2</sup> In an age searching for order, the notion of a primitive people taking control of the very institutions meant to civilize them was anathema to the American progressive spirit. Affronted, Wilikoki’s opponents fired back.

In an official pamphlet, “In the Matter of the Public School System of the Territory of Hawaii: A Protest,” white school officials at the DPI described Wilikoki as out of touch with the real needs of the territory. First, they dismissed his school bill as “wholly impractical,” pronouncing it as “drawn in absolute ignorance” and of “utter indifference to existing conditions – moral, social, historical, educational, political and statutory.”<sup>3</sup> Next, they argued, the existing school system provided “general satisfaction to people of all parties” as it was specifically designed to meet Hawai‘i’s “peculiar local conditions” by “the ablest of the men” arriving from America during the early nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Thus HR 9317 represented an “emergency of the greatest character” jeopardizing the entire school system falling into “disorder” and dealing the “cause of education in these Islands the severest blow it has ever received.”<sup>5</sup> At the dawn of the twentieth century, the end appeared nigh for public education in Hawai‘i.

DPI officials were not alone in their assessment. White editors of various English-language newspapers echoed similar views, publishing critical and snarky opinions about the school bill, Wilikoki, and his pro-Native political affiliation, the Kū‘oko‘a Home Rula

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<sup>2</sup> In 1937, seven out of ten Hawaiians on the island of Hawai‘i opposed statehood. For more see Roger Bell’s *Last Among Equals*.

<sup>3</sup> *In the Matter of the Public School System of the Territory of Hawaii; a Protest*, (Honolulu: Department of Public Instruction, 1902), 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

(Independent Home Rule) Party. A “presumption” in the editorial section of the *Hawaiian Gazette* accused Wilikoki of wanting to place school governance into the hands of the Home Rule party to “afford more jobs for ‘teachers’” of his “political stripe.”<sup>6</sup> Frank L. Hoggs of the *Hawaiian Star* claimed the bill was “utterly unworkable” because Delegate Wilikoki had “no inner consciousness” due to his failure in consulting anyone in Hawai‘i on the subject.<sup>7</sup> Other critics focused on certain “absurdities” in the bill such as the need for schoolhouse fuel provisions as well as allegations that Wilikoki plagiarized his resolution by using an Illinois school law word for word.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Walter G. Smith of the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* summed up the general settler colonial antipathy towards Wilikoki by describing him as a “grotesque and hopeless failure.”<sup>9</sup>

Much to the relief of the local white opposition, HR 9317 never made it out of committee. Adding to their comfort was Wilikoki’s failed reelection bid in 1902 and the disintegration of the Home Rule Party by 1912. As a result, the threat of Wilikoki’s school bill destabilizing the territorial educational structure quickly faded into obscurity. However, the controversy his resolution generated for Hawai‘i’s white political elites revealed more than a local political spat over school governance; it exposed local white anxiety over their minority rule and how consolidated control of the territorial school system remained essential for them in asserting command over the future of Hawai‘i.

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<sup>6</sup> Editorial, *Hawaiian Gazette*. (Honolulu, Hawai‘i), February 04, 1902.

<sup>7</sup> Frank L. Hoggs, “New School Law,” *Hawaiian Star* (Honolulu, Hawai‘i), February 18, 1902.

<sup>8</sup> Editorial, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu, Hawai‘i), February 8, 1902, “Wilcox School Bill: Provisions Not Adapted to Conditions in Hawaii,” *Evening Star* (Washington D.C.), March 12, 1902.

<sup>9</sup> Walter G. Smith, “Wilcox’s Record,” *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* (Honolulu, Hawai‘i), April 7, 1902.

For Native Hawaiians, HR 9317 meant something different. It represented a conscious turn to schools as a proactive survival strategy to address the consequences of Americanization in territorial Hawai‘i (1900-1959). While white schoolmen praised their schools as “thoroughly familiar” with students’ learning needs, Natives sought more systematic and focused ways to expand and shape schooling to address their experiences with growing economic inequality, cultural assimilation, and social marginalization.<sup>10</sup> Despite its defeat in Congress, HR 9317 exemplified Native understanding of American schooling as an effective means to secure skills and knowledge necessary for economic survival and social mobility in an uncertain future.

This dissertation tells a local story about schools that involve all levels of government, the economy, and social relations in territorial Hawai‘i. It emphasizes and connects to national discussions and tensions involving the lofty rhetoric of democracy and equal opportunity and the harsh realities of race and capitalism as well as transnational struggles between white settler nationalism and indigenous self-determination. It also provides an alternative narrative framework for reexamining schools and schooling as important sites of contestation where Natives and colonizers shaped and defined public education according to their needs and goals.

For the white minority elite, schools represented spaces for Americanizing students as part of a larger state-building project meant to legitimize U.S. control of Hawai‘i. They relied on schools to socially engineer acceptance of American occupation and annexation of the islands by constructing and disseminating a historical narrative linking Hawai‘i’s past with America’s Manifest Destiny. This process involved revising, contextualizing, and naturalizing nineteenth-century American missionary “civilizing” influence, U.S. acts of aggression (armed intervention

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<sup>10</sup> *In the Matter of the Public School System of the Territory of Hawaii; a Protest*, 5.

in support of white planters during the 1893 overthrow), and violations of American democratic principles (denial of self-determination through annexation of the islands without a local referendum) as part of a necessary series of benevolent linear events for making Hawai'i American. Thus for white schoolmen, the past was not an obstacle if told the right way.

Depicting the history of territorial Hawai'i solely as a story of oppression and deception, however, overemphasizes the power and autonomy of professional schoolmen and business elites to convince Native Hawaiians what to believe. This narrative understates the impact of parental influence, grassroots activism, and community support in shaping and supporting how Native Hawaiian students responded to assimilationist messages in schools. It also misses other ways cultural identity, professional ambition, and ethnic pride influenced how individual Native students expressed their own desires and interests independent of white schoolmen's expectations.

Native Hawaiian students, their families, and communities selected and rejected various aspects of American schooling according to their needs. While they were not impervious to all aspects of Americanization, they were not victims. Rather Native Hawaiians understood the importance of schooling for the advancement and survival of their culture, community, and children. They saw in schools the opportunities to avoid economic and political marginalization and they actively encouraged participation as a means to secure success in an Americanizing Hawai'i.

This history neither romanticizes resistance nor laments victimization. Rather, it presents a complex narrative of sacrifice, adaptation, and survival describing what Native Hawaiians did to address the challenges brought by Americanization. This story complicates existing historical literature on Native Hawaiians during the Territorial Period by demonstrating the myriad ways

Native students, parents, and the community in urban and rural settings appropriated American schooling as a strategy of survival. In essays, journals, and autobiographies, Native students expressed the importance of education for advancement while asserting pride in their indigeneity. Parents fought for more school resources and greater educational opportunities for their children through school petitions while nurturing their cultural identity at home. Teachers and administrators entered the government workforce to financially support their families with a stable middle-class income. They also found ways to navigate around and undermine school policies in order to promote Native values in their classrooms and practice cultural arts and language in the public sphere. From 1901 to 1939, Native lawmakers continued to search for ways to return the Hawaiian language as a medium of instruction in the public schools, insert Hawaiian cultural knowledge into the curriculum, and secure educational funding for Hawaiian students pursuing advanced degrees. Participation in the schools thus represented an active response to the hegemonic influence of Americanization on territorial society.

The first two chapters outline the main goal of American educational policy in Hawai‘i during the Territorial Period: to make Hawai‘i American. Chapter one contextualizes the development of Hawai‘i’s territorial school system within the broader trends of professionalization and centralization occurring in American public schools at the turn of the twentieth century. It also describes how the importation and imposition of white continental attitudes on race, Manifest Destiny, and the rhetoric of democratic principles formed a benevolent narrative of American progress used to legitimize U.S. control of Hawai‘i. Chapter two explores the insertion of this narrative into the territory’s curriculum and how the attitudes of Hawai‘i’s white schoolmen, political elites, and sugar planters on race affected school policymaking.

Subsequent chapters analyze the various ways Native Hawaiians participated in the public school system and educational policymaking process to shape American schooling to fit their needs. Chapter three explores the ways in which Native students selectively received, engaged, and rejected various aspects of their schooling in order to obtain skills useful for attaining financial stability and social mobility. However, this was not a solitary endeavor. Parents represented a crucial support network encouraging student success and promoting cultural values at home to resist assimilationist efforts at school. Chapter four examines how Native teachers and administrators conceptualized and engaged their professions in ways that benefited them personally (financial independence, adventure, advancement opportunities, professional career, respect), supported their families (economic security), and improved their community (role models, mentors, active volunteers, Native cultural and language arts practitioners). While not openly challenging school policies and white schoolmen, they implemented agendas inside and outside of their classrooms that disrupted Americanization efforts. The final chapter analyzes the complex ways rural Hawaiian families and urban elites negotiated and utilized political and legal methods to influence curriculum development and change school policies. Their efforts demonstrated how Native engagement with American education extended beyond the classroom to reflect a wider indigenous effort to shape American schooling for advancing Native interests.

Studying the history of schools provides scholars with access to a fascinating and rich tapestry of local perspectives on a wide range of national political, social, economic, and cultural issues. Public schools represent one of the few civic gathering spaces that wide swaths of Americans have attended where they have been able to discuss, share, and experience these

broader issues with other people. As a result, “everyone has an opinion” about the meaning and direction of public schools for improving individual lives and ensuring the betterment of society.<sup>11</sup> The history of public schooling in territorial Hawai‘i stands to benefit from such an approach. Incorporating the ways in which Native Hawaiians experienced schooling problematizes the singular historical focus of the territorial schools as institutions of Americanization. This study does not deny the intentions of white schoolmen but expands and pluralizes the meaning of schooling to reveal the dynamic ways Native Hawaiians adapted and adopted American education on their own terms. Doing so also complicates understanding territorial Hawai‘i as simply a dark period of passivity and victimization and instead reveals their active participation in American schooling as evidence of their refusal to accept marginalization. Thus by placing schools at the center of twentieth-century Native Hawaiian history recasts the Territorial Period as a dynamic era of indigenous survival for Native Hawaiians utilizing the very institutions meant to assimilate them – schools.

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<sup>11</sup> William J. Reese, *America’s Public Schools: From the Common School to “No Child Left Behind”* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 2.

## Chapter One: Creating Order

### Introduction

In the fall of 1959, at two elementary schools in the newly admitted state of Hawai‘i, Walton Gordon, Hawai‘i’s first state superintendent, witnessed an amusing pair of student exchanges. At one school, a little Hawaiian boy asked his teacher, “Now that we have statehood, when will we get snow?” At another, “two little native Hawaiians” argued among themselves about the differences between mainland *haole* (white) and the people of Hawai‘i. Suddenly, in a moment of exasperation, one of the boys remarked in pidgin English, “You no can say ‘mainland *haoles*’ now. Us all mainland *haoles*!”<sup>1</sup>

Published in the June 1960 issue of *The Nation’s Schools*, Gordon sought to showcase to the country the power of American schools in bringing “true democracy” to “diverse people.” His anecdote depicting “little native Hawaiians” as quaintly naïve and linguistically inept, but excited to be full American citizens, exemplified his confidence in a color-blind ideology of inclusivity inherent to American democracy. Yet, all was not what it seemed. Hiding behind this proud appraisal of Hawai‘i as a successful “educational experiment in American democracy” was a sixty-year old, carefully constructed narrative designed to assure white continental audiences that Hawai‘i was, and always had been, American.<sup>2</sup>

Since territorial annexation to the U.S. in 1898, Hawai‘i’s schoolmen regularly fretted that white America failed to “appreciate” the “fully American character of Hawaii and its peoples.” Well educated and highly motivated, these educational professionals arrived in the islands on the heels of a political upheaval as Hawai‘i transitioned from a sovereign nation to a dependent of a larger imperial power. They brought with them not only a belief in bureaucratic

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<sup>1</sup> Walton Gordon. “Hawaiian Public Schools,” *Nations Schools* 65 (June 1960), 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

efficiency and organization but also a commitment to improving society through education. Believing they arrived at the right place, at the right time, these schoolmen sought to instill order in Hawai‘i by preparing the islands’ multicultural and multiethnic population for the responsibilities of citizenship in a modern industrial nation. Yet, despite their efforts, training, and conviction, they spent six decades peddling the same message proclaiming to the nation that Hawai‘i was American. Why? Why did it matter if white America failed to see Hawai‘i as American? What explains their need for validation? Were they unsuccessful in accomplishing their goal? What accounts for their anxiety? If Hawai‘i’s educational institutions were “already American in character” even before the islands became an organized territory in 1900, why did they feel the need to broadcast repeatedly and vociferously the inherent loyalty of this “outpost of American democracy?”<sup>3</sup>

Unpacking the answers to these questions reveals a key battle between the rhetoric of democracy and the reality of race to define the mission of Hawai‘i’s public schools and shape the territory’s future. By examining how white attitudes about race regulated and structured the political, cultural, economic, and social order of continental America, how such views informed white territorial schoolmen in constructing and implementing educational policy, how the importation and application of American attitudes on race to Hawai‘i by a white ruling minority exposed inconsistencies in the universalism of democracy, and also, ironically, how the imposition of racial difference on Hawaiian society led to the anxiety of white educators to prove Hawai‘i’s inherent American character unveils the complicated roles both schools and race played in the development of American society in the Hawaiian islands. Yet, to understand how

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<sup>3</sup> Benjamin O. Wist, “Hawaii - an Educational Experiment in American Democracy,” in *Studies in the History of American Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan School of Education, 1947), 1.

this clash between the rhetoric of democracy and the reality of race emerged and progressed through the public schools first requires returning to the tumultuous close of the nineteenth century and the annexation of Hawai‘i.

Once officially “American,” white-settler policymakers set about utilizing the schools of the newly formed territory of Hawai‘i to enact a pedagogical campaign of erasure to legitimize U.S. acquisition of the islands. Relying on a complex historical narrative of American progress channeling continental social attitudes and policies on race, immigration, and imperialism, white educators, politicians, and administrators constructed educational programs designed to naturalize Hawai‘i’s student populations to nearly a century of Anglo-American intervention. Their goal was to demonstrate to Hawai‘i’s students that annexation represented a positive and inevitable development in America’s benevolent march towards progress. In doing so, white educators and policymakers sought to eliminate the memory of U.S. acts of aggression during the nineteenth century, especially the 1893 overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani and the dubious legal process involving territorial annexation. They hoped to re-present those events not as violating American values of freedom and democracy but as the “necessary and fitting sequel to the chain of events” supporting the “incorporation of the Hawaiian Islands into the body politic of the United States.” According to President William McKinley, between 1820 and 1893 the “virtual dependence” by the Hawaiian government on the “benevolent protection of the United States” upheld annexation as the “inevitable consequence” of the two nations’ relationship.<sup>4</sup> As the

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<sup>4</sup> John Roy Musick, *Hawaii, Our New Possessions: An Account of Travels and Adventure, with Sketches of the Scenery ... an Appendix Containing the Treaty of Annexation to the United States* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1898), 487, 488.

President succinctly put it, “[u]nder such circumstances, annexation is not a change; it is a consummation.”<sup>5</sup>

By the late nineteenth century, the conviction in the uniqueness of the American experience informed interpretations of U.S. history privileging the nation as the “culmination of the evolutionary advance of human civilization.” Americans looked to the “unprecedented extent to which democracy, individualism and social mobility, civil society, free enterprise, ingenuity and inventiveness, and material well-being... flourished in the United States” as proof of the nation’s inherent “progressivist exceptionalism.”<sup>6</sup> This conviction in the nation’s uniqueness helped redefine the American historical experience as a “new goal for mankind” forming a template of success for the future of “less fortunate peoples and less developed cultures.”<sup>7</sup> While effective in consolidating the national imagination of a young country through a celebratory narrative of exceptionalism, this deep faith also underwrote the justification of U.S. interventionism and denigration of non-Western societies and cultures.

As historian Michael Adas explains, negative assessments of foreign cultures “remained implicit, even unconscious” for most of American society. Highly ethnocentric and increasingly racist assumptions of the superiority and universal applicability of Euro-American ways that informed American policies toward American Indians were increasingly deployed in encounters with overseas peoples and cultures. By the turn of the twentieth century, these presuppositions were worked into a distinctive American version of the civilizing mission. Such ideologies were used to justify social engineering projects designed to transform foreign, and again mainly non-

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 489.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001): 1695.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1696.

Western, societies whose cultures were essentialized as tradition-bound, materially underdeveloped, and hopelessly backward.<sup>8</sup>

In territorial Hawai‘i, schools represented the perfect reorganizational tool. They offered to ensure the “consummation” of America’s civilizing mission by eliminating examples of Native Hawaiian resistance and cultural identity through assimilation into the broader settler society. As one of a “range of strategies,” assimilation represented a “more effective mode of elimination” avoiding a “disruptive affront to the rule of law.”<sup>9</sup> Rather than frontier homicide or official apartheid policies, schooling promoted the “resocialization” of Natives by guiding their loyalties to the “egalitarian credentials” of American society. Through a message of inclusion including active participation as citizens, suffrage, and the universalism of American democracy, white educators sought to “eliminate” Native cultural identity and replace it with membership to the “progressive individualism of the American dream.”<sup>10</sup> This process subverted the agency of Native Hawaiian history and culture by folding their past into a broader narrative of American progress.

For white educators and policymakers, this historical narrative formed an important ideological source for creating and substantiating the common understanding that Hawai‘i was, and always had been, American. To achieve this end, they set educational policies and curriculum to acculturate Hawai‘i’s diverse student population to continental American standards and values. Campaigns to “Speak American,” daily national flag-raising ceremonies, and a social studies curriculum emphasizing U.S. citizenship and history exemplified the institutional intent to inculcate non-white students (Native and immigrant) with the symbols, rituals, and values of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 1695–1696.

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (December, 2006): 402.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 400.

American society. Yet, other initiatives extended beyond the focus of student learning. Enforcement of schools as English-only zones, banning of Hawaiian as a medium of instruction, closure of foreign-language schools, replacing college prep courses with vocational training, and the establishment of select-schools privileging white students represented specific efforts to police the homogenization of Hawaiian society and replicate race relations on the continent. It was not enough that educators were merely creating new Americans, they were culturally and politically shaping Hawai'i into America.

### **State Power and Schools**

This belief in the power of schools to organize and shape societies was not limited to the nation's overseas territorial possessions. Between 1890 and 1940, changes in American education involving a series of nationalizing, standardizing, and modernizing reform efforts that transformed U.S. schools into "new" institutions were designed to meet the growing demands of an ever-evolving domestic economy and society. While schooling in the nineteenth century strove to provide basic intellectual and literacy skills and build character, the "new education" of the twentieth century prepared students for contemporary modern life. Schooling was no longer meant to be a solitary experience within a static system of rote memorization. It instead represented the "new frontier," equipping youths for modern social roles and economic opportunity in the public interest. Armed with this vision of "new education," reformers and educators set about professing their faith in schooling as a "fundamental public project" for creating both "individual and collective progress."<sup>11</sup>

This vision of "new education" also highlights the shift to schools as a state-building project, empowering individuals with economic opportunity and social responsibilities. As

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<sup>11</sup> Tracy L. Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890-1940* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2012), 3, 21, 193, 207–8.

historian Tracy Steffes argues, this new approach was characterized by increasing government involvement in preparing youths for future roles as citizens, workers, family members, consumers, and neighbors. Schools represented an effective “social policy choice” to safeguard democracy, and to provide for the individual and collective welfare of citizens amid growing concerns over poverty, disease, labor unrest, and other perils associated with industrialization and urbanization. Reformers believed public schooling guaranteed access to educational opportunities that preserved both the democratic freedom of the individual and stability of the democratic state by preparing students as workers and citizens in a modern, industrial society. Achieving these goals required school reforms that expanded the authority of the state through schools to define education as an important national interest and investment in the future.<sup>12</sup>

This expansion of school authority deepened the level of government influence and regulation over the lives of Americans and their children. Campaigns by state legislatures and departments of education to professionalize, centralize, and bureaucratize schooling represented an “expansive and invasive” redefinition of schooling as a matter of the public good. Small and remote schools represented disjointed obstacles to the standardized enhancement of educational opportunities for children offered by educational professionals. New school codes covering curriculum development, the apportionment of state funds, compulsory attendance, and health and sanitary requirements exemplified how schools began regulating the daily lives and practices of Americans.<sup>13</sup> These efforts transformed schools from “local, voluntary supplements for home

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 5–7, 204–5.

<sup>13</sup> David B. Tyack, Thomas James, and Aaron Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 120, 115.

and community” to “compulsory, state-controlled institutions of public socialization.”<sup>14</sup>

Education had become synonymous with compulsory schooling.

No longer a choice, obtaining an education was now public policy. The twentieth-century public school now expanded paternal state oversight over children’s education and empowered the school with the primary responsibilities of prescribing citizenship, socialization, and cultural norms for all children.<sup>15</sup> It also represented state involvement in the welfare and protection of children thus profoundly shaping how Americans “experienced childhood,” managed their households, and raised their children. This broadening of schooling’s responsibilities through the legal system not only increased educational opportunities for children but also turned the child into a “creature of the state.” It also demonstrated a fundamental shift in the relationship between individuals, school, society, and government that also extended into America’s territorial possessions overseas.<sup>16</sup> Continental-inspired ideas of race transformed the responsibilities of the school and state into a broader colonial policy of benevolent paternalism determining what people “needed” for modern life.

### **Race, Empire, and Education**

In the Philippines and Puerto Rico, U.S. colonial administrators imported American public institutions with the intent of shaping the diverse non-white populations of both possessions into America’s democratic image. Despite their altruistic intentions, things did not go according to plan. As Paul A. Kramer explains, “unprecedented types of encounters” and

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<sup>14</sup> Tracy L. Steffes, “A New Education for a Modern Age: National Reform, State-Building, and the Transformation of American Schooling, 1890--1933” (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2007), 9.

<sup>15</sup> Steffes, *School, Society, and State*, 3, 205; Tyack, James, and Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, 125.

<sup>16</sup> Tyack, James, and Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, 123; Steffes, *School, Society, and State*, 207–8.

confrontations with new and unfamiliar cultural and ethnic groups in the Philippines disrupted and destabilized U.S. ideas categorizing race and regulating race relations. These specific “contexts of empire” forced the construction of entirely new racial ideologies and practices resulting in the abandonment of earlier modes defining race for a “multilevel pluralism of colonial racial formations.” Physical and armed resistance from various rural ethnic guerilla groups and political opposition from indigenous elites, as well as the linguistic, ethnic and cultural diversity, presented Americans with various “threatening forms of difference.”<sup>17</sup> These “threatening forms” not only challenged and complicated colonial governance but also showed how the colonized directly affected and shaped racial formation and colonial policy both at home and abroad.

Julian Go follows a similar trajectory by examining how U.S. political education projects in the Philippines and Puerto Rico unfolded in ways that “transgressed” their “initial premises.” Designed to provide “object lessons” in American-style government, these educational initiatives represented administrative policies intended for both colonies to emerge out of their “rudimentary” forms of civil organization in the “political image of their imperial master.” However, internal resistance mixed with “translocal tensions” to produce a unique environment distinct to each colony. As a result, both American possessions diverged creating two different forms of local government. Colonial rule, “never simply a matter of a unified state imposing its will,” represented a complex “entanglement” of competing domestic and foreign interests each pulling the colony in different directions. This entanglement formed a “chain of American

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<sup>17</sup> Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23, 22.

empire” linking the fate of “colonial populations to the actions of diverse actors” at home and abroad.<sup>18</sup>

Hawai‘i occupied a different position within this “chain.” Between 1901 and 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a series of opinions, called the “doctrine of incorporation,” that identified two different types of territories, incorporated and unincorporated. Incorporated territories were considered a part of the body politic of the U.S. while unincorporated ones belonged to the nation but received second-class status. Colonial discourses in the U.S. at the time gendered, racialized, and infantilized subject peoples by establishing a “symbolic construction” of alien “Others” as incapable of survival in an age of imperial expansion. As a result, this doctrine provided the theoretical scaffolding necessary for labeling such groups as inferior to European Americans and thereby justifying U.S. occupation and control.<sup>19</sup> Yet, as Lanny Thompson explains, this analysis fails to discuss why Congress “incorporated” only Hawai‘i, providing it with a path to statehood, while keeping Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico at colonial status. Demographically, the Hawaiian Islands appeared quite similar to the three former Spanish colonies: majority non-white populations, culturally and linguistically diverse, agriculture-based economies, and monarchical. The key difference though, as Thompson indicates, was the “continuous presence on Hawaiian soil of European Americans.”<sup>20</sup>

Sugar oligarchs of missionary stock advocated for Hawaiian annexation touting successful examples of Americanization spread throughout the islands. Lorrin Thurston, a member of the oligarchy and collaborator in the 1893 overthrow, pointed to the American-style

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<sup>18</sup> Julian Go, “Chains of Empire, Projects of State: Political Education and U.S. Colonial Rule in Puerto Rico and the Philippines,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 334–335, 357.

<sup>19</sup> Lanny Thompson, “The Imperial Republic: A Comparison of the Insular Territories under U.S. Dominion after 1898,” *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (2002): 541.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 544.

constitutional government and judicial system, widespread literacy in English, and the extensive public school system as clear evidence of an Americanized Hawai‘i. He meant to show the infrastructure in place that reassured white continental audiences of the possibility for the future assimilation of the islands’ racially diverse population. These “accomplishments” also included several unpublicized examples, such as their monopoly on sea transport and the sugar economy giving them the political capital to dominate island government and extend their cultural dominance through the imposition of the English language.<sup>21</sup> Despite these boasts of the white “hegemonic presence” controlling Hawai‘i, the oligarchy desperately sought American annexation to guarantee their economic and political control.

Comprising less than twenty percent of the islands’ population, the white ruling minority wanted their cake and to eat it too. They sought a relationship with the U.S. that not only protected their economic and political interests but also ensured their control with minimal interference. Territorial status, not statehood, appealed to them as it placed Hawai‘i under direct control of Washington without the threat of unrestricted adult male suffrage challenging white planter power under home rule as a state.<sup>22</sup> Unaffected by the irony of their revolutionary claims of democracy and opposition to tyranny they invoked to overthrow Queen Lili‘uokalani, white minority rulers traded one “tyrant” for another farther away.

Congress seemed to listen when it organized a territorial government for Hawai‘i on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900 with the passage of the Organic Act. Following broadly the provisions for incorporated territories under the Northwest Ordinance, the act established a constitution

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 564, 544.; John S. Whitehead, *Completing the Union: Alaska, Hawai‘i, and the Battle for Statehood* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 16–17.

<sup>22</sup> Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1984), 28; Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai‘i* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 8.

outlining the executive, judicial, and legislative branches of government and stipulated all executive and judicial positions were to be determined by the President. Congress maintained exclusive control over immigration, military uses of the island, and taxes. The act also expanded the discretionary powers of Hawai'i's appointed officials allowing them wider authority than those in any previous territory. The territorial governor wielded enormous power (unlike Puerto Rico's) controlling the offices of health, education, welfare, and public works through the appointment of each administrative position. The governor also could veto any territorial legislation and was above impeachment as the Organic Act failed to provide the legislature with either power.<sup>23</sup>

This system worked in favor of the oligarchy's interests. Utilizing their political ties in Washington, they secured the governorship and other top positions "almost without exception" between 1900 and the 1940s. Oligarchic control of the executive branch mitigated the effects of the largest enfranchised group in the islands, Native Hawaiians, who capitalized on universal male suffrage to wield significant influence over county, municipal, and legislative elections. The brief dominance of Wilikoki and the Independent Home Rule party during the 1901 legislative session demonstrated the political threat an all-Native voting bloc represented to oligarchic interests. However, despite their numbers, Native Hawaiians remained unable to directly influence the executive branch through the electoral process thus hampering their efforts to effectively challenge white minority rule. Secure and content through their control of

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<sup>23</sup> The legislature possessed the power to override the governor's veto on all matters except those related to money. Congress however was above any override, able to nullify any law passed by the territory's legislature. Bell, *Last Among Equals*, 41-43.; Whitehead, *Completing the Union*, 16.

Hawai‘i’s anti-democratic government, the territory’s small elite circle of white families dominated the islands’ political and economic landscape until the early 1950s.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the lack of organized political opposition, Hawai‘i was far from a racial paradise. The white oligarchy, of course, wanted to demonstrate to the nation that the success of its Americanizing influence came not through the forceful subjugation and oppression of non-white opposition but from American-style institutions, namely schools, which negated the islands’ extreme cultural and racial diversity.<sup>25</sup> They hoped to show that the “imposition of Western language, culture, religion, and government in Hawai‘i was not an assertion of White supremacy, but the natural progress of a nation from the primitive to the modern” and “the overthrow of the monarchy was not [a] racially motivated crime, but the natural result of good government wresting out bad.”<sup>26</sup> Convinced of its righteous cause, the oligarchy sought to make Hawai‘i an example to the nation of what was possible if white Americans conducted themselves with a “sense of noblesse oblige.” However, despite their claims to building a unique racial harmony in the islands, Hawai‘i failed to exist in a vacuum immune from continental influences.

Geographic isolation could not keep out America’s blatant contradictions between the founding legal principles of egalitarianism and democracy and American society’s open racial discrimination. Public policies designed to restrict the voting rights of non-whites, deny citizenship to those deemed “unassimilable,” and limit access to educational resources relied on a complex mix of inclusive, universalistic legal principles and racialized “categories of

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<sup>24</sup> Bell, *Last Among Equals*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, “The Imperial Republic,” 546.

<sup>26</sup> Lori Pierce, “Creating a Racial Paradise: Citizenship and Sociology in Hawai‘i,” Paul Spickard ed., *Race and Nation: Ethnic Systems in the Modern World* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 84.

difference.”<sup>27</sup> This process promoted racially exclusionary practices and contributed to an unofficial system of racial discrimination that codified the principle of racial exclusion through legislative and judicial discourse supported by common, social understandings of race in the U.S.

Both in the private and public sphere, this method of racial classification and regulation stemmed from a longer historical process of legal maneuvering within the U.S. to preserve racial hierarchy without compromising American democratic principles. As Mae Ngai explains, throughout the nineteenth century, the nation attempted to define and codify a racial logic “capable of circumventing the imperative of equality established by the Fourteenth Amendment.” This logic emerged out of immigration law and policy racializing the national origins of non-European immigrants in order to deny their eligibility for citizenship. Classifying the world into nation-states in order to determine who qualified for citizenship allowed the U.S. to avoid using explicit racial language in their discrimination process. Those unable to naturalize were rendered “unalterably foreign,” alien, and unassimilable to the nation.<sup>28</sup> Congress and the courts further refined and obscured this logic by sneaking in racial distinctions into public policy through “doctrinal rationalizations” (“separate but equal”), euphemisms (“aliens ineligible for citizenship”), and new categories of identity (“national origins”). However, this shift in formal language from race to national origin did not mean that race, as a category, disappeared. Rather this process blurred the lines between equal treatment and racial discrimination rendering invisible the premise of racial unassimilability.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For a deeper discussion on the process of racializing “categories of difference,” see Mae M. Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1, 1999): 67–92.

<sup>28</sup> Mae M. Ngai, “The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924,” *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June, 1999): 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

The effects of this blurring process took shape early in the territory's history with the 1900 congressional debates on the Organic Act dealing with Native Hawaiian suffrage and the territory's governmental power structure. The annexation of Hawai'i in 1898 reflected the culmination of an expansionist impulse intended to enlarge the physical realm of the U.S. in order to increase the nation's economic and political power. Yet the territorial absorption of Hawai'i quickly exposed the deep divide between those who favored market expansion through territorial gain (imperialists) and those who opposed the acquisition due to the racial makeup of the Hawaiian population (anti-imperialists). Hawai'i's large Asian and Asian-American population disturbed white America and exposed their longstanding anti-Asian prejudice fueling greater public hostility towards annexation.<sup>30</sup> This tension forced a national conversation about what it meant to belong to the U.S., what defined "American," and who actually deserved citizenship. It also revealed the various racial exclusionary components underlying the nation's liberal exterior.

As political scientist Lauren Basson reveals, the congressional debates on Native Hawaiian citizenship produced a "simultaneous espousal of inclusive, universalistic principles and exclusive racist preferences." This strategy reflected legislative attempts to exert political domination over Hawaiians and maintain white control of political power while also claiming adherence to the fourteenth amendment.<sup>31</sup> Democrats and Republicans alike worried about the political future in Hawai'i fearing how the Native vote threatened the political dominance of the white, propertied elite. Arguments for property and literacy requirements soon emerged under the rationale that such exclusive suffrage measures ensured the promotion and preservation of

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<sup>30</sup> Whitehead, *Completing the Union*, 17.

<sup>31</sup> Lauren L. Basson, "Fit for Annexation but Unfit to Vote? Debating Hawaiian Suffrage Qualifications at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Social Science History* 29, no. 4 (2005): 575.

freedom, justice and equality from “dangers of the ‘ignorant’ ballot.”<sup>32</sup> According to this logic, Hawaiians only needed to demonstrate a “definite stake” in the territory through proof of property in order to exercise their right to vote. These requirements did not disenfranchise Natives, the most impoverished ethnicity in the territory. Instead, such conditions held Hawaiians to the same measure of qualification as other eligible voters, who just happened to be white and the most affluent. This racialized distinction proved unproblematic for many U.S. congressmen as it represented an avenue to support race-based restrictions while also claiming alignment with liberal universalistic principles of government.

Like continental Democrats and Republicans, Hawai‘i’s white elites also embraced this racially exclusive vision for the islands. Restrictions along racial lines were categorical in protecting civilization from “ignoramus” voters gaining control of the government. Editorials by Walter G. Smith and other white staff writers at the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* in 1900 espoused support over property qualifications for suffrage explaining universalistic principles only made sense where a “clear white majority would inevitably exercise political control.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, institutionalizing a “tiered system of citizenship” that racially divided those “eligible *to govern* from those eligible only *to be governed*” represented the surest way to ensure an “honest government.”<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, the Organic Act of 1900 passed without property qualifications but retained the literacy requirement for either English or Hawaiian. This attempt to naturalize Native Hawaiians with limited voting rights demonstrated the extent to which white politicians tried to balance staying true to the Constitution and founding principles of the nation while maintaining

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 582-583.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 593.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid 595, 584.

the nation's racially exclusionary sociopolitical status quo. It also reflects the intricate and obscure nature of how Hawai'i Americanized following the overthrow of Lili'uokalani in 1893. More than a transfer of political power and institutions, Americanization also wove the nation's racial anxieties into the social and political fabric of the islands. As historian John Whitehead aptly points out, "territorial Hawai'i was a community characterized by a wide set of boundaries" shaped by "issues and prejudices...created and conditioned by the [American] West."<sup>35</sup> National social and legal constructs of race and the application of white nativism and scientific racism to immigration, suffrage, and citizenship provided the theoretical scaffolding for the development of Hawai'i's own de facto system of racial exclusion. Cloaked in the language of universalism, this system infiltrated various territorial institutions (schools, social work, public health) acculturating the islands and its people to national strategies on race-based segregation.

### **Enter the Administrative Progressives**

Importing and implementing these strategies were white, U.S.-educated progressives motivated by what one historian called "longings for revitalization" common to late nineteenth-century American culture. As members of a growing middle class, their professional occupations afforded them a proud "determination to improve" that sustained a constant drive for progress and efficiency. Deeply concerned about the future of the nation, their fervent idealism to "remake the world" helped usher in a "new bureaucratic vision" for building an efficient, rational, scientific-industrial nation to bring order and stability to all Americans. Anchoring this vision was the conviction that every person, once properly educated, would naturally desire

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<sup>35</sup> John S. Whitehead, "Western Progressives, Old South Planters, or Colonial Oppressors: The Enigma of Hawai'i's 'Big Five,' 1898-1940," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (October, 1999): 325.

access and membership to a safe and well-organized society.<sup>36</sup> Armed with their evangelical-like fervor to actualize their ideals of standardization and efficiency, they turned to “government to change people’s behavior in unprecedented ways.”<sup>37</sup>

Progressives envisioned this top-down human managerial approach as a means to elevate the importance of public interest over the “opportunistic scuffle of private interests.”<sup>38</sup> As “systematizers,” they advised policymakers to pass the “right laws” based on the “right principles” in order to construct a rational and fair society justified through empirical research and scientific reasoning.<sup>39</sup> However, their comfort “with rule by elite expertise” helped facilitate government gaining a “foot in the door of private life.”<sup>40</sup> The middle-class “zeal and optimism to help create a fresh climate” and improve society fused with personal searches for order and purification to form a broader campaign of conformity facilitating the unprecedented expansion of government involvement in the lives of individual Americans.<sup>41</sup> As a result, the home was expected to retain personal responsibility for everyone in the home, while the government simultaneously expanded its power and social control.<sup>42</sup> However, this was not the only unforeseen development.

Many reformers fell into the “familiar progressive contradiction between commitments to democracy and expertise.”<sup>43</sup> This mindset rendered many progressives incapable of seeing

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), 112–113, 170.

<sup>37</sup> Jackson Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010), 195.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>39</sup> Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, 180.

<sup>40</sup> Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 198.

<sup>41</sup> Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, 112.

<sup>42</sup> Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 200, 198.

<sup>43</sup> Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 163.

beyond their fortresses of idealism to understand local issues and the cultural attitudes of those “in need of expert intervention.” Their imposition of these standardized practices linked progressives to a larger cultural project of establishing authority over all aspects of American life.<sup>44</sup> This project helped construct a national millennial paradigm of “redeeming the world” that later merged with a growing American mandate for intervention and assimilation overseas. Thus, what started out as an attempt to instill domestic ideals into government and society soon expanded into the exporting of America’s “bureaucratic vision” of order.

“Redeeming the world” involved a reformer ethos of institutional paternalism relying on government participation to oversee and develop a progressive utopia in America’s colonial possessions. Reformist ideals promoting “efficiency and uplift, science and morality” mixed with the pseudo-scientific taxonomy on race to construct an ethnocentric imperial view of Anglo-American superiority.<sup>45</sup> As a result, “virtues attributed to racial Anglo-Saxonism – extraordinary purity and continuity...and transformative power over land and people” – congealed into a distinct and “persuasive form” of Anglo-American, race-based exceptionalism.<sup>46</sup> Not all colonized, however, felt the need for this U.S. brand of redemption.

Following the Spanish-American War in 1898, many white reformers’ “bureaucratic vision,” however well intended, blurred upon contact with the local needs and conditions of non-white populations. Undeterred, they applied their “logic of tutelage” conceding to local demands for economic development, technology, and education while conforming them to American progressive ideals of modernity. American progressives claimed to want to avoid the failures and

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>45</sup> Lears, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 35.

<sup>46</sup> Paul A. Kramer, “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1324.

“tyrannical” abuses of the British in Africa and Asia. The United States was to be a benevolent empire applying its power compassionately to transform and uplift foreign peoples.<sup>47</sup> They sought to achieve a “successful occupation without the use of force” by cultivating consent and compliance through concessions refashioned to American standards.<sup>48</sup>

Emerging out of these complex exchanges was the construction of a broad and intricate exceptionalist narrative of western expansionism. Informed by progressive paternalism and white supremacy, this narrative substantiated American acquisition of overseas territory through a mixed logic of benevolence and authoritarianism. Progressives found it difficult to recognize and engage with indigenous resistance and legitimate disagreement. Convinced of their social, moral, cultural, and racial authority, they constructed a mental “template” justifying increased interventionism against non-Western cultures whose “ways of thinking and doing” were “diametrically opposed” to the “exceptionally progressive and highly developed United States.”<sup>49</sup> In other words, certain groups of people required help to understand the fallacies of their ways. An important path to their enlightenment began at school.

The most important group of white school leaders was self-confident reformers that David B. Tyack labeled the “administrative progressives.” “Part and parcel” of the organizational revolution in American education, they were an elite group of education professionals and businessmen who glorified expertise and efficiency to “free education from politics.”<sup>50</sup> They represented a particular type of progressive who believed centralizing administrative power into

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<sup>47</sup> Julian Go, “The Provinciality of American Empire: ‘Liberal Exceptionalism’ and U.S. Colonial Rule, 1898-1912,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 1 (2007): 78–79.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 87, 101–102.

<sup>49</sup> Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon,” 1696.

<sup>50</sup> David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 7, 25.

the hands of expert superintendents and school boards would eliminate the corruptive influences of ward bosses over urban school boards and eliminate the ad hoc and outdated curriculum of rural school districts. They aimed to improve learning conditions and the decision-making process by consolidating school operations and its curriculum under the control of a few elite, well-educated professionals. While local communities protested the loss of their autonomy over school governance, these leading progressives remained fervent in their “administrative rationalization” that top-down school management represented a social and economic necessity. Unwavering in their vision, they were adamant in knowing what was wrong with schools and how to fix them.<sup>51</sup>

Administrative progressives also dared to dream big. They wanted to use state power to provide greater autonomy for teachers and administrators by creating a bureaucratic buffer distancing them from their students’ communities. By obtaining more public financial support, concentrating power in the hands of professional administrators, standardizing the curriculum, and increasing teacher certification requirements, they envisioned elevating public instruction above “pedagogical mossbacks” hindering students’ development.<sup>52</sup> To achieve this oasis of authority in the education system required access to political power and professional leadership. Fortunately for the reformers, their timing was impeccable.

The early twentieth century proved an “ideal time” to campaign for the legal restructuring of public education. To many Americans, the U.S. seemed unstable, teetering on collapse as unprecedented challenges threatened the country. Growing gaps between rich and poor and worries about unassimilable immigrants, the inadequacies of child welfare, poor public

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<sup>51</sup> David B. Tyack, Thomas James, and Aaron Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 108.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

sanitation, and social and moral degradation associated with industrialization all contributed to a sense of national malaise. Enter the administrative progressives who appeared as the “right people with the right program at the right time.” They preached about a “socially engineered future” that combined traditional values of self-help through hard work and personal integrity with their belief in “administrative rationalization” and efficient bureaucracy. Above all, the best part was if the current generation was properly educated towards this vision of the future, society could be saved with minimal disruption.<sup>53</sup>

To help achieve their dream, administrative progressives wanted to appear nonpolitical in order to demonstrate their concern for the common good. As educational reformers, they borrowed the political strategy of “nonpartisan benevolence” utilized by common school crusaders to demonstrate their elevation above the machinations of politics. However, they took a further step by including the “neutral authority of science” to legitimize their goals through claims of objective academic expertise in the form of research and surveys.<sup>54</sup> Such authoritative precision through quantitative studies, from the “number of toilet bowls to the proper number of students per counselor,” produced empirical knowledge bolstering the position of educational professionals to dispel criticism and support their vision. As Tyack sums it up, “[t]here was safety in objectivity.”<sup>55</sup>

This confidence in experts to influence school governance, and even direct society, emerged at a time in the U.S. when lines between “public” and “private” blurred. Elite assumption of what worked for private institutions was good for public policy expanded among

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 111–12.

<sup>55</sup> David B. Tyack, “Pilgrim’s Progress: Toward a Social History of the School Superintendency, 1860-1960,” *History of Education Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1976): 283–284.

government leaders as well as business and professional men.<sup>56</sup> Increasingly these experts relied on specialized education and institutions of higher learning to provide “standards of truth and taste, authority and expertise.” They also obtained advice from leaders of economic and social institutions on how to build corporate models of efficient governance through top-down management and emphasis in accountability. The goal was to produce an effective hybrid of enlightened institutional management to fulfill the administrative progressive quest of creating a utopian society predicated on “stable, predictable, rational social organization.”<sup>57</sup>

Administrative progressives put great faith in schools to achieve this ideal. This new educational “program for progress” through science, efficient management, and professionalism emerged from a shared belief that education represented a key mover in shaping the course of social evolution. It also attempted to reveal educational policy as a “process of rational planning” existing independent of political bargaining.<sup>58</sup> By placing “successful men” familiar with centralization and the corporate model of management on school boards and into offices of superintendent, they meant to insure rational experts controlled the decision-making process in directing structural reforms in public education. This strategy sought to streamline policymaking through a professional bureaucracy of experts versed in corporate management able to effectively measure inputs and outputs of school systems. They also advocated a strong central executive, the superintendent, to oversee this new system. Empowering such a position with a larger and clearly delineated “sphere of authority,” their argument went, allowed the executive to create a stable and “conflict-free position.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 130.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 128, 131.

<sup>58</sup> David B. Tyack and Larry Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia: A Century of Public School Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 17–18.

<sup>59</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 174.

As “trustees of the public interest,” administrative progressives often framed their search for rational efficiency within a binary of good and evil. Labeling it as a “contest...of enlightened citizens” struggling against the “forces of corruption, inefficiency, and ignorance,” they revealed the evangelical rhetoric underwriting their structural reform crusade.<sup>60</sup> Superintendents personified this millennial sense of purpose. As Protestant, Anglo-American, middle-class, married males raised in the “village heartland of traditional American values,” their personal values merged with their professional “authority of high moral purpose” to redefine the “vital part” of their job: “guardians of decorum and morality.”<sup>61</sup> Their vision soon extended beyond school management debates to become a powerful tool for the Americanization campaigns of the early twentieth century.

As “professional patriots,” administrative progressives envisioned public education as part of a highly complex system to “change the many into one.” They meant to “guide and hasten” the acculturation of more than twenty-five million immigrants that entered the U.S between 1880 and 1924 by socializing them to the “certain kinds of common competence” necessary for life in an urban-industrial society.<sup>62</sup> Schools were meant to educate immigrant students and their families in the English language, on punctuality, American economic and political institutions, and how to “thread bureaucratic processes” in order to fulfill the demands of a complicated industrial society. Yet, this was not enough. As ardent Americanizers, administrative progressives expected nothing less than complete “Anglo-conformity.”<sup>63</sup> Their

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 168, 172.

<sup>61</sup> Tyack, “Pilgrim’s Progress,” 263, 273, 277.

<sup>62</sup> James R. Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (1992): 997.

<sup>63</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 235.

goal was to create and instill a sense of shame at anything “foreign” by assaulting all forms of cultural difference.

Themselves successful within the American educational system, administrative progressives held no reason to doubt its effectiveness for others. Support for compulsory schooling, universal education, vocational training, and professionalizing teacher training represented their democratic commitment to improving access to education for all. Messianic in tone and ethnocentric in action, administrative progressives channeled their firm desire for social control and efficiency into a mission to ensure equality of opportunity. Witnesses to their own success rooted in powerful optimism and quantitative evidence, they sought to harness and spread the power of schools to “redeem” the nation. In an era of increased immigration and imperialism, the “one best system” thus exemplified their most efficient means to “serve the pluralistic character” of the nation by transforming the new “huddled masses” into Americans.<sup>64</sup>

Blinded by their own bureaucratic vision, these reformers created a dogmatic conservative public philosophy intolerant of opposition and contradictory in application. Resistance to their policies only further justified their quest for rational efficiency labeling any alternatives and challenges to their methods as anachronistic, inefficient, and corrupt. They praised the democratic purposes of public education but worked to eliminate community control and input over local school operations. Within their “one best system,” administrative progressives’ drive to achieve the goals of social efficiency and social control led them to prioritize aggregate objectives of organizational behavior over the development and achievement of individual students. Such examples represented “major proof of progress” allowing them to confidently attest their reforms as effectively serving both the national interest and the interest of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 11, 232–233, 235.

school children. While inclusive and cosmopolitan in their outreach, they remained unyielding and paternalistic in their “utopian trust in progress” through expert-led reform.<sup>65</sup> Administrative power in the hands of affluent white males tended to reinforce the values and views of their own culture and politics. Religious and racial minority groups as well as the poor suffered from this utopian vision as the expansion of state control over schools subsumed their individual rights in favor of advancing the greater good of society.<sup>66</sup> As institutions meant to promote American values of democracy and non-partisan citizenship, schools developed into autocratic sites of homogenization and conformity all in the name of progress.

### **Hawai‘i’s Administrative Progressives**

This was the organizational vision and worldview administrative progressives brought with them on the coattails of American annexation in 1898. Assessing the situation, they set about their constructive energies to recreate the islands in America’s image. By acculturating Hawai‘i’s unique and diverse student population to the nation’s foundational principles of egalitarianism and democratic citizenship, they sought to unify and organize local society around a color-blind American identity. This strategic vision developed into a fervent, self-righteous crusade that anticipated the emergence of a post-racial society forged from the Americanization process implemented through Hawai‘i’s schools. They believed their specific brand of democratic education produced a successful formula for constructing racial harmony. This formula held not only the potential to improve the efficiency of social relations in the islands but also offer a positive example for American society plagued, as they saw it, by racial tensions. Despite their assertions of color-blindness, administrative progressives in Hawai‘i relied on a

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 126–7, 167–168, 196.; Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 21.

<sup>66</sup> Tyack, James, and Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, 126; Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 22.

similar complex racial coding prevalent on the continent to construct paternalistic language and policies racializing national origins and stigmatizing non-whites as un-American.

Like many continental progressives, Hawai‘i’s white schoolmen were imbued with the deep racial anxieties and ethnocentrism prevalent on the continent. Benevolent in thought, racist in action, they espoused the universalist and inclusive qualities of democracy and egalitarianism throughout the school system. At the same time, they replicated America’s de facto system of racial discrimination creating legal roadblocks to educational resources and advanced opportunity for the majority of the territory’s non-white students. This process did not result in the replication of Jim Crow school policies extant in the American South. It did however promote segregation along racial lines with institutionalized “separate but far from equal” practices such as select-public schools privileging the English-language ability of white students and vocational education only for rural schools.<sup>67</sup>

Despite this paradox between rhetoric and reality, administrative progressives remained unfazed. In speeches, articles, and pamphlets from 1900 to 1940, they preached their obsessive belief in the inherent Americanness of Hawai‘i. They broadcasted to the nation and territory the same message used by American imperialists justifying territorial annexation: that Hawai‘i and its people were “American enough, civilized enough, republican enough, and white enough to warrant” annexation to the U.S. and receive its brand of citizenship “intimately bound” to destiny.<sup>68</sup> Hawai‘i’s American character was “not the result of accident” but the “genius of American leadership.” With “roots deeply imbedded in American precepts and practices” since the time of European discovery, Hawai‘i’s public schools served as an “integrating force” into

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<sup>67</sup> Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 119.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

the “total pattern of the American way of life.”<sup>69</sup> Given their supposedly selfless commitment to “integrating” Hawai‘i, administrative progressives were rewriting history.

Administrative progressives’ historical revision of Hawai‘i supported the U.S. narrative of “progressivist exceptionalism.” By ignoring Native agency in Hawai‘i’s past and elevating American involvement to that of paternal benevolence, they participated in the broader “politics of erasure” taking place in the islands. The promotion of this America-centric narrative dismissed and suppressed the opposition of local groups to progressives’ plans of constructing a national identity through labels of old, backward-looking, and un-American. Accomplishing this required prioritizing universal American principles of democracy, citizenship, and the English language in order to establish dominance over the specific interests of parents, students, and their community. This helped create a simplified standard of identity dismissive of alternative social and cultural realities and necessary for promoting national unity and public cohesion.<sup>70</sup>

Administrative progressives in Hawai‘i attempted to produce a standard of American identity and create a common culture through the public school system that worked to legitimize and historicize America’s place in Hawai‘i. This process masked over American complicity in the overthrow of Hawai‘i’s sovereign government and ignored the protests of its people by claiming the monarchical government, schools, and society originated out of American missionary influence. As such, U.S. educators sought to craft a commonplace attitude on Americanization as a naturally beneficial and inevitable result of progress. Thus Hawai‘i’s sovereign past resulted from America’s benevolent involvement and erased any active Native Hawaiian participation in their own history.

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<sup>69</sup> Wist, “Hawaii - an Educational Experiment in American Democracy,” 1.

<sup>70</sup> Henry A. Giroux, *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education* (New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1992), 4, 24–25.

As “agents of empire,” administrative progressives participated in the colonizing project of creating the “appearances, if not...the conditions, that enabled the naturalization of forcible conquests as consensual acts.”<sup>71</sup> Their efforts resembled those of the territory’s fledgling tourist industry to control and shape indigenous history and tradition by constructing a fictionalized space for American tourists and potential settlers to experience Hawaiian culture. Through control of the English-language media and photography, the industry created a “new product of the imagination” that “implicitly primitivized and conveniently confined [Hawai‘i] to the past.”<sup>72</sup> New forms of easily distributable visual representation, stereoscopes and postcards helped “nativize” Hawaiians through images stressing their primitive origins. Dated pictures circulated as contemporary images with popular ones of bare-breasted female hula dancers capturing the “ideal native” – “alluring and exotic,...warmly welcoming and gracious.”<sup>73</sup> Historical examples of a “civilized” Hawaiian nation appropriating “modernity” – literacy rates higher than most western nations, a constitutional government and legal system, universal male suffrage, western clothing, and electricity in ‘Iolani Palace before the White House and Buckingham Palace – made Natives appear too Westernized and not “authentically” Hawaiian enough. As a result, western media rarely provided such cases for continental audiences thereby naturalizing the fiction of Hawaiians as confined to a pre-modern innocence.<sup>74</sup>

Imbued with the dominant racial views on the continent, but hopeful of the benevolent power of education, administrative progressives were certainly Eurocentric in their conviction of

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<sup>71</sup> Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 16.

<sup>72</sup> Cristina Bacchilega, *Legendary Hawai‘i and the Politics of Place: Tradition, Translation, and Tourism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 5, 26.

<sup>73</sup> Jane C. Desmond, “Picturing Hawai‘i: The ‘Ideal’ Native and the Origins of Tourism, 1880-1915,” *Positions* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1999), 491-493.

<sup>74</sup> Stacy L. Kamehiro, “‘Iolani Palace: Spaces of Kingship in Late Nineteenth-Century Hawai‘i,” *Pacific Studies* 29, no. 3 (September 1, 2006): 2, 7; Bacchilega, *Legendary Hawai‘i and the Politics of Place*, 7.

the superiority of American values and institutions. Their color-blind rhetoric afforded them an “intellectual and emotional shield” against the contradictions of white paternalism. Like “humanitarian paternalists” in the Philippines committed to a “spirit of selfless service,” administrative progressives in Hawai‘i applied a similar version of the American historical theory of progress as “a tutorial approach to the problems of the non-European world.”<sup>75</sup> They inserted this history of progress into Hawai‘i’s school system in an effort to turn the islands into their romanticized image of American egalitarianism and universal rights. This ideology conformed to the geopolitical rhetoric of U.S. expansionists believing that Hawai‘i’s future could be found in “idealized visions of the United States’ past.”<sup>76</sup> Absent from this “glorious past” was the history of empire.

To many Americans, the U.S. was not an imperialist nation. Imperialism described the behavior of European nations, not America. The U.S. was different.<sup>77</sup> The American ideal involved democracy, equal opportunity, and self-government for all. Expanding the nation through acquisition of territory around the world was “not in the average American mind.”<sup>78</sup> This conflicted national vision fusing democracy and self-government with overseas territorial expansion informed how administrative progressives broadly constructed their purpose of schooling once beyond America’s continental borders. Imbued with their “spirit of selfless

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<sup>75</sup> Kenton J. Clymer, “Humanitarian Imperialism: David Prescott Barrows and the White Man’s Burden in the Philippines,” *Pacific Historical Review* 45, no. 4 (1976): 506-507.

<sup>76</sup> Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise*, 5–6.

<sup>77</sup> William Appleman Williams, “The Frontier Thesis and American Foreign Policy,” *Pacific Historical Review* 24, no. 4 (1955): 379; David Livingston Crawford, *Can Nations Be Neighbors?: Internationalism in Four Dimensions*, (Boston: The Stratford company, 1932), 92.

<sup>78</sup> Crawford, *Can Nations Be Neighbors?*, 92.

service,” they set out to solidify America’s denial of empire in Hawai‘i by cultivating consent rather than commanding compliance.<sup>79</sup>

### **Conclusion**

For territorial schoolmen, making Hawai‘i American was not easy. Informed by America’s brand of racial logic, they imported and applied their bureaucratic system of order to a society in disarray and a people incapable of helping themselves. Resistance was futile in their minds as progressive logic, rooted in scientific management and inspired by the pursuit of efficiency, eliminated the need for any alternatives. To ensure conformity, they relied on the concentrated political power of the elite white minority and centralized government institutions, specifically schools, to implement their utopian vision of an orderly and efficient society inhabited by educated and rational-minded individuals. Whether or not this process conflicted with democratic principles was immaterial to the greater goal of first preparing misguided groups for eventual enfranchisement and enlightenment through standardized schooling.

Equally difficult was convincing the nation that Hawai‘i’s non-white population was capable of becoming American. White America doubted that all ethnicities could be assimilated, and reformers wanted to uplift Native Hawaiians. Creatures of their age, they failed to consider them political, let alone social, equals. As the next chapter reveals, Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives were no different. Even as they touted the power of schools to socially engineer new generations of Americans inspired to build a better future, they themselves reinforced and promoted American understandings of race and racial differences, which inhibited the actualization of their utopian vision. Convinced of their infallibility, they failed to see how their own racial biases and ethnocentrism contributed to a centralized system that enforced social and

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<sup>79</sup> Clymer, “Humanitarian Imperialism,” 516.

political policies naturalizing racial discrimination. These blinders only contributed to their perplexity over why the nation failed to see the potential of Hawai‘i’s people as “real” Americans. Despite their espousal and belief in the universal values of equal opportunity and color-blind democracy, they utilized language and enacted policies segregating racial groups and communicating the incompatibility of non-white races. Thus, while they believed in their rhetoric of inclusion they only spoke the language of difference.

## Chapter Two: Making Hawai‘i American

### Introduction

In 1902, the all-white executive leadership of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) outlined ten basic facts in a defense of Hawai‘i’s school system. The DPI used statistical data collected from “objective” research (field observations, polls, budgets and expenditures) to demonstrate the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of their institutions. The leadership wanted to show evidence of a “well developed and efficient” school system that provided “general satisfaction to people of all parties.” Ultimately, they sought to expose how “absolutely without foundation” that any “Emergency” existed in the territory’s public schools.<sup>1</sup> Yet, there was one: race.

“Further Fact” number eight defined the public schools as the perfect laboratory for promoting racial harmony:

The public schools of the Territory recognize no distinction of race or class, the public schools being regarded as an efficient, and perhaps the most efficient agency at our command for unifying and harmonizing the many diverse elements of our population.

Boys and girls who attend the same school and study and play together in the intimate intercourse of school life...are likely to be reasonably free from those race and national prejudices and antipathies that are narrowing to the mind, corrupting to the heart, and a curse to any community where they prevail.<sup>2</sup>

A seemingly benign reminder of the administrative progressive belief in schools improving society, number eight exposed white America’s deep and complicated relationship with race and national identity.

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<sup>1</sup> *In the Matter of the Public School System of the Territory of Hawaii; a Protest* (Honolulu: Department of Public Instruction, 1902), 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

From the eighteenth through the early twentieth century, the quasi-official political and cultural identity of Americans was synonymous with white. This view arose from the popular notion that the nation's freedom-loving ancestors were Anglo-Saxons who arrived in the New World as the last hope of preserving human liberty from the tyrannical and corrupt English. These "first" Americans identified their participation in this new political community with a "whole array of particular cultural origins and customs" derived from northern Europeans. Equating Americanism with the nation's predominantly European heritage developed into a white-normative political ideology labeling non-white groups as both unfit for self-government and incapable of appreciating democratic principles.<sup>3</sup>

This national outlook on race complicated efforts by white territorial schoolmen to convince the nation to accept Hawai'i as American. They wanted to show the nation's identity was political, tied to the higher ideals of universal democratic principles promoted in the public schools. To achieve this view, administrative progressives applied color-blind constitutionalism to education policies as a race-neutral means to demonstrate that anyone who studied, practiced, and believed in the values of freedom and liberty qualified for American citizenship.<sup>4</sup> In their minds, Hawai'i was American and the public schools would eliminate race and skin color as identity markers and show the nation how anyone could become a citizen.

Despite their altruism, white schoolmen's understanding of color-blind constitutionalism only extended as far as political, not social, equality. To them, nothing was inconsistent about

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<sup>3</sup> Rogers M. Smith, "The 'American Creed' and American Identity: The Limits of Liberal Citizenship in the United States," *The Western Political Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (1988): 233–34.

<sup>4</sup> For more on the history of education policy and color-blind constitutionalism, see James D. Anderson, "Race-Conscious Educational Policies versus a 'Color-Blind Constitution': A Historical Perspective," *Educational Researcher* 36, no. 5 (2007): 249–57.

their social attitudes on race and their larger objective of making Hawai‘i American.<sup>5</sup> As active participants in America’s territorial expansion, schoolmen adopted and applied their civic sense of white duty to “shape the fates of other races for the future good of the world.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, administrative progressives made it their mission to convince what they believed to be a skeptical U.S. public of the inherent Americanness of Hawai‘i.

To accomplish this required cooperation between education officials, school administrators, and professors of education in enforcing, constructing, and publicizing school laws and curriculum. The Hawaiian Organic Act (1900) aided their quest by empowering the superintendent and the territorial school board at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) with complete control over Hawai‘i’s public schools.<sup>7</sup> These school officials reached out to the heads of the Territorial Normal School (1895-1931) and the College of Education at the University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa to link the different educational institutions under one ideological system. This concentration of authority demonstrated how educational elites sought to maintain absolute

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<sup>5</sup> To learn more on the role of race impacting Hawai‘i’s political status and development in the pre and post-annexation eras, see Lauren L. Basson, “Fit for Annexation but Unfit to Vote? Debating Hawaiian Suffrage Qualifications at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Social Science History* 29, no. 4 (2005): 575–98; Tennant S. McWilliams, “James H. Blount, the South, and Hawaiian Annexation,” *Pacific Historical Review* 57, no. 1 (1988): 25–46; Ann K. Ziker, “Segregationists Confront American Empire: The Conservative White South and the Question of Hawaiian Statehood, 1947–1959,” *Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (2007): 439–66; Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2004); Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1984); Noenoe K. Silva, “I Kū Mau Mau: How Kānaka Maoli Tried To Sustain National Identity Within the United States Political System,” *American Studies* 45, no. 3 (October 1, 2004): 9–31; J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Smith, “The ‘American Creed’ and American Identity,” 233.

<sup>7</sup> Aside for a confirmation hearing by the territorial senate, neither the board nor superintendent answered to voters; both were gubernatorial appointments. Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: the Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 93.

control over schooling by restricting both “lay participation in decision-making” and oppositional voices.<sup>8</sup>

As this chapter explains, administrative progressives implemented a complex strategy blending continental attitudes on race, Americanization, and vocational education to produce a pedagogical campaign of erasure. This campaign set out to remove the history of Hawai‘i and the cultural identities of its students by rewriting Hawai‘i’s past and inserting American exceptionalism in its place. A critical mouthpiece for uniform and efficient dissemination of their vision and strategy was the *Hawaii Educational Review (HER)*.

### **Preaching to the Masses: Hawai‘i as America and the Importation of Race**

“We live in an age of struggle for efficiency” read the opening sentence of the journal’s inaugural issue in January of 1913. As a “professional paper” designed to “be of distinct service” for teachers as well as for parents and the general public, the mission of the *HER* was to provide educators across the territory with material and teaching strategies to “keep abreast with educational progress on the mainland.” The *HER* represented the “official organ” of the DPI to achieve pedagogical efficiency and standardization with all teachers through a regular publication espousing the “best and latest” in educational thought, free of “propaganda” and political affiliations. It also represented the collaborative efforts and interests involving the DPI, UH-Mānoa, and the *Honolulu-Star Bulletin*. In an “epoch characterized by its deluge of periodical literature,” the DPI considered the *HER* a critical source of “especial forcefulness” and directed all teachers to read each month’s issue.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David B. Tyack, Thomas James, and Aaron Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 115–16.

<sup>9</sup> “The Mission of the Review,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 1, no. 1 (January 1913): 1; T.H. Gibson and Vaughn MacCaughey, “The Status of Hawaii,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 1, no. 5 (May 1913): 8; Vaughn MacCaughey, “To All New Public School Teachers,” September 1921,

For over forty years (1913-1954), the DPI and other white schoolmen utilized the journal's territory-wide reach to inform faculty and administrators on various issues they deemed "vital" to the success of territorial schools. They regularly emphasized the critical nature of "good English" as necessary for students' success in learning American democracy, citizenship, and culture. They also provided articles that debated the pros and cons of progressive education, the importance of hygiene, the results of meetings at local (Hawaii Education Association) and national (National Education Association) educational organizations, and stressed the magnitude of a teacher's role in building a stable society. Authors were as diverse as the topics discussed. From American presidents, territorial governors, and national intellectuals to local faculty, parents, and students, each contributed to a distinct and unique belief in the power of education to create meaningful change.

This was not all they published. Along with their efforts to promote educational strategies, contributors and editors utilized the *HER* to "cultivate" acceptance by naturalizing readers to the ways Hawai'i was and always had been American. It represented the perfect tool for Americanizers to spread a benevolent message of U.S. education and its role in promoting racial harmony and equality in the islands. It also attempted to instill a sense of patriotism and obligation to the nation's generosity and goodwill among the territory's racially diverse teachers. Its credibility as the "official organ" of the DPI assured editors the consistent circulation of their ideas and elevated their sense of importance to the Americanization project. However, embedded within their altruistic messages were deep-seated beliefs on race imported from the continent that conflicted with their mission of egalitarianism and unity.

Prior to U.S. annexation in 1898, the Kingdom of Hawai‘i maintained no institutional practices that “promoted social, reproductive, or civic exclusivity on anything resembling racial terms before the American period.” All of that changed in 1900 with the arrival of U.S. Census officials classifying “raceless” Hawai‘i’s population by ethnicity and skin color.<sup>10</sup> While not openly advocating for the application of Jim Crow, Hawai‘i’s “non-Americanness” and racial mixing simultaneously fascinated and disturbed white schoolmen. Familiar only with the white/black binary of race relations, they struggled to make sense of how such diversity peacefully developed and existed. They attempted to organize and explain Hawai‘i’s race relations through a selfless narrative touting the American school system as responsible for promoting racial harmony in the islands. Instead, the language and views expressed within this narrative spread racial stereotypes, supported segregation, and reinforced white supremacist attitudes. Thus, making Hawai‘i American involved more than just cultivating national allegiance by rewriting the past; it required instilling the nation’s racial taxonomy and assisting in the “compulsory racialization” of Hawai‘i. The *HER* was the perfect tool for the job.

### **Hawai‘i as America**

From 1913 to the mid-1930s, white editors at the *HER* published a steady stream of installments erasing the active role of Native Hawaiians in Hawai‘i’s past. Their revision was simple: America’s annexation was an act of benevolence. In its first year of publication, editors Thomas Gibson and Vaughan MacCaughey regularly reminded their readers that Hawai‘i was not an “insular possession” but a “complete autonomous Territory.” Reprinting the same paragraph throughout 1913 under the “Status of Hawaii,” the editors revealed their anxiety and irritation at Hawai‘i being associated with other U.S. colonial possessions.

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<sup>10</sup> Virginia R. Dominguez, “Exporting U.S. Concepts of Race: Are There Limits to the U.S. Model?,” *Social Research* 65, no. 2 (1998): 372, 374, 375.

It is unfair to class Hawaii with Porto Rico (sic), the Philippines, Guam, etc., as our “Insular Possessions.” This Territory is neither by method of acquisition nor in a political sense a “possession.” Hawaii was annexed by its own free consent, as was Texas, by a treaty or diplomatic bargain. It had a good system of laws, well administered, few of which needed any change to bring it into accord with the United States constitution. Hawaii is now a complete autonomous Territory, making and administering its own laws, and having as good or better government than most of the States of the mainland. The people of Hawaii are satisfied with nothing less.<sup>11</sup>

Both editors were well-educated, active schoolmen. Born in South Dakota, MacCaughey studied science at Cornell and the University of Chicago before moving to Hawai‘i in 1908. He taught “natural sciences” at the Territorial Normal School (TNS) (1908-1910) and botany and horticulture at UH-Mānoa (1910-1919) before becoming territorial superintendent in 1919. He continued to publish regularly in the *HER*, teach college summer courses on the continent, and volunteer at a number of organizations including the Boy Scouts, the Anti-Saloon League, YMCA, the National Geographic Society, and the local Masonic lodge.<sup>12</sup> Gibson, a Canadian by birth, arrived in Hawai‘i in 1884. A career administrator, he held the positions of principal and inspector general at various institutions in Canada, California, and on Kaua‘i and O‘ahu. He became deputy DPI superintendent at the same time as MacCaughey’s appointment in 1919.<sup>13</sup>

Through the *HER*, MacCaughey and Gibson set out to naturalize territorial annexation and convince readers that Hawai‘i was just like America. They emphasized that the islands were “annexed by its own free consent” in an attempt to reassure readers that Hawai‘i’s takeover was a legal and mutually desired outcome. By ignoring America’s involvement in the overthrow as well as the coup led by white American sugar planters and business elite, the continental-born

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<sup>11</sup> Gibson and MacCaughey, “The Status of Hawaii,” 8.

<sup>12</sup> John William Siddall and George F. Nellist, *Men of Hawaii: Being a Biographical Reference Library, Complete and Authentic, of the Men of Note and Substantial Achievement in the Hawaiian Islands*, vol. 2 (Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1921), 167.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:265, 267.

editors sought to legitimize the annexation of Hawai‘i and erase American duplicity and Native resistance from popular memory.<sup>14</sup> They also hoped to remind readers that Hawai‘i was safe in white American hands.

As if to reinforce their message, in the May issue of 1913, MacCaughey and Gibson included an article by then superintendent, and future UH-Mānoa botany professor, Willis T. Pope (1910-1914) entitled “A Brief Explanation of the Public Schools System of Hawaii.” Originally from California, Pope was a life-long educator, administrator, and student. The first president of UH-Mānoa in 1907, he later taught science and agriculture at the university and at the normal school in the years between his B.A. in agriculture from Kansas State College (1898) and M.S. in Agronomy (1916). He eventually received his doctorate from UH-Mānoa in 1926 and published extensively in scientific and travel publications on commercial agriculture (bananas, papayas) and the “vital problem” of education in Hawai‘i.<sup>15</sup>

In his 1913 article with the *HER*, Pope explained how the territory’s public school system was the “result of a steady growth” over the past fifty years and responsible for converting an “almost savage people” to a “highly civilized state.” He credits the “good influence” of “sturdy missionaries” who “instilled a strong moral influence which has been vital to our education and the peculiar environments in Hawaii.”<sup>16</sup> Pope’s article complemented the efforts of the *HER* editors in distinguishing Hawai‘i from other U.S. possessions by presenting the early civilizing

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<sup>14</sup> For a detailed discussion on Native Hawaiian political resistance to American annexation as captured in Hawaiian-language newspapers during the 1890s, see Noenoe Silva’s *Aloha Betrayed*.

<sup>15</sup> Siddall and Nellist, *Men of Hawaii*, 2:319; “Pope Environmental Laboratory - Willis T. Pope (Former UH President),” July 31, 2015, <http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/36632>; Willis T. Pope, “Hawaii’s Educational Facilities,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 24, no.12 (December 1911), 68.

<sup>16</sup> Willis T. Pope, “A Brief Explanation of the Public School System in Hawaii,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 1, no. 5 (May 1913), 8.

influences on the educational development of the islands. This attempt to rewrite Hawai‘i’s past by associating its growth and success with direct American influence developed into a consistent theme throughout the first twenty-five years of the *HER*.

Throughout the latter part of the 1910s, editors continued to remind their audience that Hawai‘i was not just American but an “integral part.” Often printed in red at the top or bottom in large font, “The Territory of Hawaii is an integral part of the United States of America” regularly appeared to associate the islands with the U.S. This reflected an active attempt to ensure that readers, especially teachers, maintained a consistent understanding and focus on the present fact of Hawai‘i belonging to the U.S. By the April issue of 1919, now superintendent MacCaughey reinforced this vision in his article “The Future of Hawaii and Its Schools.” He explained, in a veiled reference to the 1893 overthrow and annexation in 1898, that the “gigantic mistakes and evils of the past cannot be undone.” Instead, he argued, “we can use our best knowledge in building...the future of Hawaii” as it is “inseparably bound up with her public schools.”<sup>17</sup>

Successive superintendents followed MacCaughey’s example in impressing on teachers the inherent Americanness of Hawai‘i’s identity and the benefits of belonging to the U.S. Using “idealized visions of the United States’ past,” Superintendent Will C. Crawford (1925-1934) pointed to the importance of studying the biographies of American historical figures as an effective means of “character training.” Born to U.S. missionary parents working in Mexico, Crawford lacked experience in teaching (other than a brief stint as a flight instructor following his service as an aviator in WWI) or any teacher-training. After only a handful of years as a school administrator, first in New York and then in Singapore, he arrived in Hawai‘i in 1921 and quickly rose in school administrative circles. Appointed deputy superintendent in 1923, he

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<sup>17</sup> Vaughn MacCaughey, “The Future of Hawaii and the Schools,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 4 (April 1919), 4.

became territory superintendent two years later, succeeding the superintendent of San Diego schools in 1934.<sup>18</sup>

Crawford's military experience and missionary upbringing helps explain the emphasis he placed as superintendent on learning about the nation's great men. He believed studying the lives of presidents Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Wilson revealed crucial "ideals which led them to struggle and persevere in the face of great difficulties." He highlighted courage, honesty, vigor, sacrifice, humility, and optimism as key character traits he wanted Hawai'i's students to model. These inherent features of America's famous leaders formed a "criteria for judging great men" that Crawford extended to include heroes from Greek and English literature. Robin Hood, Hercules, William Tell, and even "stories from Aesop and Brer Rabbit" all offered examples on the proper "philosophy of life" dedicated to self-sacrifice and perseverance.<sup>19</sup>

Superintendent Oren E. Long (1934-1946) continued the discussion on character training as an "objective of education" by examining nineteenth-century reports from the Hawaiian Monarchy's Ministry of Education. The future territorial governor (1951-53) and U.S. senator (1959-1963) focused on the contributions made by American missionaries in developing moral education in Hawai'i and defined them as critical to the development of the educational infrastructure in the early twentieth century. Dating its start in 1822 with the completion of the Hawaiian alphabet, he listed the introduction of the English language as of the "greatest importance" for Hawai'i's civilizing path followed by a strong emphasis in manual training and learning the Christian Bible. He relied on reports compiled by Richard Armstrong, American missionary and Hawai'i's minister of education, to describe the "deplorable" domestic conditions

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<sup>18</sup> Siddall and Nellist, *Men of Hawaii*, 3:144-45; *Argonaut* 113, no. 2 (1934): 4.

<sup>19</sup> Will C. Crawford, "Superintendent's Monthly Address," *Hawaii Educational Review* 17, no. 2 (February 1929): 151.

of Native Hawaiians and explain how “indolence,” one of the “great master evils,” hindered their moral development. By using Armstrong’s accounts, Long intended to show how the implementation of the missionaries’ vision and strategy for nineteenth-century education was responsible for improving the moral character of Native Hawaiians and their society. He indicated how Armstrong witnessed the positive “influence of the schools on the civic consciousness of the youth in Hawaii,” describing how their new “law abiding disposition” was “in great measure, owing to our free schools.” By looking to Hawai‘i’s past, Long sought to establish the missionary influence in the islands’ nineteenth-century common schools as a fundamental cornerstone of public education in Hawai‘i and Native Hawaiians as in need of their help.<sup>20</sup>

This view was not unique among territory schoolmen. A Kansas native, Long spent his entire adult life committed to education and public service. After graduating from the University of Michigan (1916), he taught high school history for a couple of years on the continent. He then found employment as a social worker in Hilo, Hawai‘i, in 1917 before moving to Honolulu to work as the YMCA educational director (1918-1919) and vice-principal at McKinley High School (1919-1920). After completing graduate work at Columbia University (1920-1922), he returned to Hawai‘i and, after a brief stint as principal at Kaua‘i High School, spent the next twenty-two years in the DPI as deputy superintendent (1925-1934) and territory superintendent (1934-1946). A career schoolman, Long fervently believed in America’s extensive public school tradition in the islands as responsible for successfully making Hawai‘i American.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Oren E. Long, “Then and Now in Character Education,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 17, no. 4 (December 1928): 87–88.

<sup>21</sup> “LONG, Oren Ethelbirt - Biographical Information,” accessed August 18, 2016, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=l000425>; Siddall and Nellist,

Similar themes emerged from the writings of Governor Wallace R. Farrington (1921-1928), a regular contributor to the *HER* both as a public official and later as editor of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*. A newsman by trade, Farrington grew up and attended university in Maine. After a few short-term positions at various news outlets and publishing houses, he arrived in Hawai‘i a year after the overthrow in 1894 and quickly grew active in territorial politics as a Republican ardently supporting Hawai‘i statehood. Despite no formal training in education or experience as a teacher, he was a strong proponent of public schools, retaining a strong respect for the teaching profession and its role in Americanizing Hawai‘i.<sup>22</sup> Regularly extolling public school teachers as “volunteers,” “pioneers,” “leaders,” and “toilers,” Farrington tried to connect their positions to a romanticized vision of discoverers settling the great unknown. He repeated themes of moral education similar to those espoused by Crawford and Long – unsurprising as both were appointed to the DPI by Farrington – regarding how schools needed to instill into their students “our best ideals – loyalty, loyalty to God and Country, self-respect, self-control, and service to their fellows.”<sup>23</sup> His conviction in public education as the “greatest destiny controlling institution” extended to his staunch belief in the righteous legacy of America shaping the “destiny of the people of this crossroads of the Pacific.”<sup>24</sup>

In the September issue of the *HER* in 1924, Farrington pressed graduates of the Territorial Normal School to “[r]emember that the Territory of Hawaii has an American

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*Men of Hawaii*, 3:285; Oren E. Long, “Public Schools of Hawaii,,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 50, no.12 (December 1938), 13.

<sup>22</sup> George F. Nellist, *The Story of Hawaii and Its Builders* (Honolulu: Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 1925), 434–35; Siddall and Nellist, *Men of Hawaii*, 2:181, 183.

<sup>23</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “What Shall We Do With Them All?,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 14, no. 6 (February 1926): 1.

<sup>24</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “The Schools and American Citizenship in Hawaii,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 12, no. 1 (September 1924): 2.

background covering more than one hundred years of its history.”<sup>25</sup> Two years later he reiterated the same message stating, “American ideals and practice were in full swing in Hawaii when the present great states of the Pacific Coast were barbaric wilds.”<sup>26</sup> The consistency of his view echoed those of superintendents Pope, MacCaughey, Crawford, and Long: that Hawai‘i was inextricably joined to the U.S. from the arrival of American missionaries’ in 1820. In the *Paradise of the Pacific*, Farrington was even more blunt in his assessment of positive missionary influence on the Hawaiian Islands. He praised the missionaries as “pioneers,” “American men and women who established American culture, education, morals and free government in Hawaii.”<sup>27</sup>

During the 1930s, Ralph Kuykendall, professor of history at the University of Hawai‘i, specializing in Hawaiian history, channeled the same missionary-inspired progressivist narrative in his four-part series of articles titled “Some Early School Men.” Dedicated to “dealing with outstanding developments and educational leaders in the early history of Hawaii,” Kuykendall focused on the impact and legacy of particular missionaries on the development of Hawai‘i’s educational system. The last article in his series examined Richard Armstrong, crediting him for centralizing and organizing the governing structure of schools and introducing English language instruction. Yet, unlike Oren E. Long’s hagiography of Armstrong, Kuykendall’s article represented an academic synthesis of primary sources threaded by a clear thesis.<sup>28</sup> To Kuykendall, Armstrong demonstrated a clear vision of purpose and offered strong leadership at a time when Hawaiian schools remained organized among various Christian faiths, including

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Farrington, “What Shall We Do With Them All?” 1.

<sup>27</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “Hawaii, By Her Governor, Invites N.E.A. to Meet in Honolulu in 1924,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, June 1922, 20.

<sup>28</sup> Ralph S. Kuykendall, “Some Early School Men of Modern Hawaii,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 21, no. 4 (April 1933): 223.

Protestants, Catholics, and Mormons. Armstrong led the way in overhauling the school system and making all “common schools” strictly secular and centrally managed by a Board of Education. He was responsible for the “significant development” of introducing the instruction of English to Hawaiian children. More importantly, he pressed for government funds to expand the number of public schools able to provide English as a medium of instruction. This development, as Kuykendall argues, came from the “desire in the native community to support English schools.” By placing the emphasis on Armstrong as an effective leader responding to the needs of the Hawaiian people, Kuykendall described the missionary-minister as a reluctant but benevolent father figure. He pointed to Armstrong’s disagreement with “radicals” who “would have hastened” the expansion of English schools for Hawaiians and instead cautioned for a slow and smooth transition. He also placed the responsibility of “beginning...a movement which ended only with the complete abandonment many years later of the Hawaiian language as a medium of instruction in the public schools of Hawaii” squarely on the Native Hawaiian community and their wish for English-language instruction.<sup>29</sup>

Despite being “eminently qualified to deal with this phase of Hawaiian history,” Kuykendall was unable to speak or read ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language). His lack of interest in investigating Hawaiian-language sources or learning the language resonated loudly as to the value white academics and policymakers placed on Native perspectives and their history. Their indifference did not mean scholars and administrative progressives dismissed Native culture and history outright. They occasionally included English-translations of mo‘olelo (legends), mele (song), and oli (chant) but rarely ever included anything written in ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i. For the white educational elite, the only culture, language (English), and history that

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

really mattered in Hawai'i's schools were American. Their indifference did not automatically translate into overt racial discrimination but rather a subtle and entrenched form of racial bigotry.

### Race

Continental ideas of race and inherent racial difference tinted how policymakers and administrators viewed the territory's diverse student population. The casual use of racial stereotypes and demeaning references about African Americans by *HER* contributors and acceptance of such material by editors reveals a level of comfort with such simplistic, gross characterizations of non-white groups. Principal Thomas B. Vance of Kalākaua Junior High School sought to impress upon readers how the thriftiness of teachers represented their high level of commitment to modeling humility and healthy self-esteem. For example, if a teacher wanted to watch a movie, "she could then purchase a seat in 'nigger heaven' and sit there throughout the entire program in perfect mental ease" in spite of being able to afford full admission. A native of Tennessee, Vance explained how teachers' preference for thrift and simplicity reflected American middle-class humbleness and self-confidence. Thus, choosing to sit in "nigger heaven" was a class-conscious decision rooted in social and professional modesty, "rather than compulsion" resulting from economic necessity.<sup>30</sup>

Channeling similar views, an instructor at McKinley High School, Norman C. Smith, conducted a study on the school life of students living on sugar plantations attending rural schools. Through data collected from questionnaires, he attempted to construct a typical day of plantation children at school as part of an effort to ascertain their educational needs. He described a rigorous daily routine dictated by constant study and household responsibilities. He

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas B. Vance, "Job, Job Opportunities, and Job Attitudes in Hawaii," *Hawaii Educational Review* 16, no. 11 (November 1928): 62; Siddall and Nellist, *Men of Hawaii*, 3, 497.

also revealed how his racial biases affected his observations. On top of sharing his disdain for students' use of "atrocious pidgin English," an attitude commonly shared among white educators, he also nonchalantly referred to students playing a form of tag as "nigger baby."<sup>31</sup> A game played by "children from all over the civilized world," the obvious initial goal of the game was to not get hit by the ball. However, players referred to the ball as a "baby" and the larger objective was to avoid "collecting" five "babies," resulting from each time either a thrower missed an opponent or an opponent was struck.<sup>32</sup> It is impossible to know whether or not his subjects actually played the same specific form of the game Smith referenced or, that even if they had, understood the racial complexities behind such a playground activity. Nonetheless, Smith's casual use and association of any form of tag to "nigger baby" reflected how continental attitudes of race affected his analytical lens of school play in Hawai'i.

Such heedless use of derogatory references even extended up to the highest office of public education in the territory. In his monthly message to teachers published in the *HER* in September 1924, Superintendent Willard E. Givens (1923-1925) chose to stress the importance of a "true and sterling character" as a "teacher's biggest asset." In an effort to reinforce humility as part of a teacher's "sterling character," the superintendent shared a story for teachers to remember whenever they felt "too big" for their job.

A colored boy was once found asleep in a watermelon patch, beside a half-eaten melon. The owner of the patch, after having awakened the boy, said to him: 'What is the matter, son, too much watermelon?' The boy replied, 'No, too little nigger.'<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Norman C. Smith, "The Plantation Child," *Hawaii Educational Review* 21, no. 1 (January 1931): 116.

<sup>32</sup> Claude Harris Miller, *Outdoor Sports and Games* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1911), 381-82.

<sup>33</sup> Willard E. Givens, "Monthly Superintendent's Address," *Hawaii Educational Review* 12, no. 9 (September 1924): 9.

Originally from Indiana, Givens shared much in common with many of Hawai‘i’s schoolmen. He attended Columbia University, receiving his M.A. in 1915, had far more experience as an administrator than as a classroom teacher, published extensively on the socializing power of public schools, and quickly rose through the ranks of territorial school administration. Starting out as principal at McKinley in 1919, Givens then took over the same position in 1922 at the Kamehameha Schools, an all-Native Hawaiian educational institution, before becoming territorial superintendent in 1923. His rapid ascent however was matched by his quick departure. He resigned only after two years to assume a position as assistant superintendent in the Oakland city school system never returning to work in the islands.<sup>34</sup>

Similar to Smith and Vance, the ease in which Givens relied on an African American racial stereotype as a source for instructing how Hawai‘i’s racially diverse teacher corps ought to conduct themselves captures the depth in which race, paternalism, and white supremacy occupied his worldview. For all three educational professionals at different levels within the public school system, they inserted continental attitudes on race and racial hierarchy into territorial education. In a journal that prided itself in the progressiveness and “racial harmony” of Hawai‘i’s schools, open supporters of racially discriminatory policies never got published in the *HER*. However, this did not mean such educators never existed in Hawai‘i. Rather, such individuals found alternate outlets to share and express their racist views.

In an anonymous, undated “Letter From a Principal” to Superintendent MacCaughey (1919-1923), a school principal expressed his displeasure with high school dances. Observing them for twenty years, he explained how they contributed to a growing “serious and subtle breakdown of social and racial standards.” While iterating that any “evils resulting from it [were]

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<sup>34</sup> Siddall and Nellist, *Men of Hawaii*, 2:169; Nellist, *The Story of Hawaii and Its Builders*, 469.

wholly due to improper circumstances” with an individual student or the dance and not the “practice of dancing,” he went on to point out that parents, “both white and oriental,” opposed interracial school dances. Using that as a segue, the principal shared his belief that:

...the purpose of the public schools is primarily to educate the children in body, mind, and character and as there is no question about that in the minds of...all educated men and women[,] why go out of our way to encourage practices which many honest and intelligent people disapprove and...do not meet with the unanimous approval of the parents of the children.<sup>35</sup>

Taking further advantage of his self-made window of opportunity, the principal continued relying on the ideas and words of others to scaffold his personal views on racial segregation. He pointed to a speech by President Warren G. Harding addressing the “Negro question” in the American South in which the President praised the management strategies of Sir Fredrick Lugard, British colonial administrator of West Africa, who advocated “absolute” equal opportunity for non-white races striving for economic and political success but drew the lines on social and racial interaction. Lugard argued that the true “interrelation of color” required “complete uniformity” in ideals of “equal opportunity for all those who strive” but “in matters social and racial a separate path, each pursuing his own inherited traditions, preserving his own racial pride.”<sup>36</sup> Branching off from Lugard, President Harding also stopped short of calling for full equality while supporting an end to political and economic “differentiation.” The President explained, “[p]olitically and economically there need be no occasion for great and permanent

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<sup>35</sup> “Letter From a Principal,” December 1922, Wist Papers-general correspondence, box 7 folder Sept. 1922-23, University of Hawai‘i Archives, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

<sup>36</sup> Fredrick Lugard, “The President Brings the Race Problem Before the Nation,” *The Outlook* 129, no.10 (November 9, 1921), 380.

differentiation, provided on both sides there shall be recognition of the absolute divergence in things social and racial.”<sup>37</sup>

Seemingly vindicated by international and national policymakers, the principal closed his letter with a quote from Harding’s speech advocating racial segregation. The President “in discussing this statement of Mr. Lugard makes a plea for, ‘The elimination of the word ‘equality’ in the discussion of social relations for the races and the substitution for this of a recognition of a ‘fundamental’, eternal and inescapable difference.’” Unsigned and without a return address, the anonymous principal felt confident to share his “sentiment regarding this matter” as “completely expressed by the quotation.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, his decision not to identify himself or school of employment suggested he feared some form of retribution. Nevertheless, both his letter and the casual application of racial stereotypes by other educators reveal the varying degrees in which continental attitudes on race permeated the territorial school system.

### **Hawai‘i’s Americanization Crusade**

Understanding the range of racial views held by white administrative progressives and their various efforts to rewrite Hawaiian history helps establish their mindset in advance of discussing their education policies. Throughout the first forty years of the twentieth century they struggled to balance their rhetoric of progressive idealism, democracy, and equal opportunity with the realities of American race relations and the needs of Hawai‘i’s white minority. Ironically, their campaigns to bring the one best system to Hawai‘i’s school system resulted in policies dividing access to educational opportunity along racial lines. Large educational initiatives, such as the DPI’s Americanization campaign, the English Standard Movement, and

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<sup>37</sup> Warren G. Harding, "President Harding on the Race Question," *The American Chamber of Commerce Journal* 2 no.1 (January 1922), 7.

<sup>38</sup> "Letter From a Principal."

vocational education, revealed the clash between their utopian rhetoric of egalitarianism and the social reality of racial segregation in America.<sup>39</sup> These macro programs designed with the intent of modernizing Hawai‘i’s schools instead promoted a racially divided system reminiscent of the Jim Crow South.

Their fervent belief in professionalism, social efficiency, and scientific management in schooling blurred the effects of their white supremacist views on policy development and implementation. They were “true believers” of “Anglo-conformity” and white middle-class standards, which instilled in them a conservative ethnocentric “birthright” and produced an indifference to cultural pluralism in some and outright racial intolerance in others. Secure in their identity and sense of purpose, administrative progressives designed a series of policies to make Hawai‘i’s non-white majority “learn how to fit” into the nation’s one best system.<sup>40</sup>

The Americanization campaign in Hawai‘i represented one of the main initiatives administrative progressives implemented that harbored this dual agenda. Similar to assimilationist crusades on the continent, Americanizers in Hawai‘i sought to remove the native

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<sup>39</sup> The DPI developed the English Standard Schools in response to the growing numbers of middle-class white migrants from the continent who refused to send their children to the territory’s public schools, fearing their exposure to Hawaiian Creole English and Hawai‘i’s multicultural, multiracial, and working-class student population. These schools selectively admitted students based on their English proficiency and pronunciation, privileging the English-language background of white students. The result was a handful of schools predominated by whites set up within a public school system claiming to produce a common citizenry but, instead, recreating race and class segregation prevalent on the U.S. continent. For more on the English Standard School Movement see: Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Noriko Asato, “Mandating Americanization: Japanese Language Schools and the Federal Survey of Education in Hawai‘i, 1916-1920,” *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (April 2003): 10–38; Morris Young, “Standard English and Student Bodies: Institutionalizing Race and Literacy in Hawai‘i,” *College English* 64, no. 4 (March 2002): 405–31; Judith R. Hughes, “The Demise of the English Standard School System in Hawai‘i,” *The Hawaiian Journal of History* 27 (1993): 65-89.

<sup>40</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 233–237.

customs, languages, and culture of their students and replace them with “100 percent Americanism.” Their efforts established the contours and meaning of American political and social life through English-language training, instruction on American democratic ideals, and exposure to white American middle-class ways of life (diet, aesthetics, hygiene, dress, gender norms). This highly complex system of “becoming American” was intended to “modernize” students’ behaviors and beliefs away from their “backward” and “substandard” home environments.<sup>41</sup> To many Americanizers and educators, the alien origins of their immigrant and Native students sharply contrasted with their “premise that American life was to be progressive, socially advanced, and well ordered.” Unsatisfied with achieving individual cultural compliance, they sought a multilayered intervention to restructure and “harmonize” their students’ communities into the “substance of American life.” Only then, Americanizers believed, could their students overcome their Native and “immigrant ignorance” and become American.<sup>42</sup>

This was the strategy behind Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives: meld the islands’ multiethnic population into one unitary American identity. Inspired by the unidirectional process of acculturating European immigrants to “Anglo-conformity” and fusing them into an “indigenous American type,” educators in Hawai‘i turned to the public school system as “social centers” to rapidly assimilate and convert the identities of their students.<sup>43</sup> For them, schools formed a key part of their “larger symbolic scheme” to publicly showcase Americanization as a non-threatening process of dissolving ethnic allegiances and replacing them with a collective

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<sup>41</sup> Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 234; Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, 55; Michael R. Olneck, “Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900-1925: An Analysis of Symbolic Action,” *American Journal of Education* 97, no. 4 (1989): 409.

<sup>42</sup> Olneck, “Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900-1925,” 409–10.

<sup>43</sup> Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, 49, 56; Olneck, “Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900-1925,” 412.

national identity of autonomous individualism. Achieving this required securing “cultural and ideological hegemony” over America’s “configuration of the symbolic order.” As Michael Olneck explains, the symbolic order constituted the “realm of rhetoric and ritual in which collective identity is depicted, status recognized, and normative orthodoxy expressed and sanctioned.” The power of the symbolic order not only rested in its ability to endorse normality but also its capacity to *define* what constituted normal and acceptable rituals, behavior, and practices.<sup>44</sup>

In the hands of Hawai‘i’s white educational elite, authority over the symbolic order converted them into gatekeepers and tutors of essential knowledge necessary for entry and acceptance into American life. Despite their minority status in the territory, white educators controlled the ability to publicly validate as normative the social practices, behaviors, and beliefs of native-born white Americans and insert them into the public school system. Their power over the symbolic order further reinforced assertions of the progressivist narrative that Hawai‘i was always American. As a result, the theme *e pluribus unum* saturated the language and imagery in the *HER* and formed a core message of both the publication and the educational strategy for making Hawai‘i American.

Patriotic programs and exercises represented concrete practices white educators and administrative progressives advised teachers to use in instilling American pride in their students. Morning rituals involving flag salutes, reciting the pledge and the Lord’s Prayer, singing patriotic songs and “other things of a patriotic nature” all demonstrated “tangible and effective means of establishing the ethical ideas and ideals of the American commonwealth” among

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<sup>44</sup> Olneck, “Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900-1925,” 399.

Hawai‘i’s schoolchildren.<sup>45</sup> Some even elaborated on the symbolic power of the flag equating it and the nation to higher ideals of civilization. Superintendent Givens envisioned the “Flag Drill” as not just instilling the “proper respect for the American Flag” but also for teaching “children to love justice, hate evil, and to do good.”<sup>46</sup>

On the U.S. continent, such practices ritualizing expressions of patriotism in schools took shape in the 1890s and peaked in the immediate postwar years of World War I. The push for these movements began with white nationalists’ fears of new immigrants, associating them with radical political ideology (socialism), ignorance, poverty, and disloyalty. Their worries expanded during the war to include homegrown terrorism and armed violence led by a “fifth column.” Later paranoia over “Bolshevism” and the Red Scare fueled a strong conservative backlash against potential subversive alien elements and led to calls for the public schools to provide “correct patriotic instruction.” Proper socialization through the teaching of “100 percent Americanism” to the next generation represented a crucial educational solution for eliminating the perceived threat of immigrants.<sup>47</sup>

In Hawai‘i, however, race increasingly affected the formation of Americanization policies throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. As historian Eileen Tamura pointed out, Hawai‘i’s Americanization campaign relied on a combination of “ignorance, fear, xenophobia, and racism.” While mirroring similar continental strategies of “modernizing” students so they reject their old traditions and conform to American values, Hawai‘i’s crusade

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<sup>45</sup> “Americanization and the Course of Study,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 4 (December 1919): 26; Benjamin O. Wist, “War Activities in the Schools,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 2 (February 1919): 5; G.H. Webling, “Opening Exercises in the Schools,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 12, no. 5 (January 1924): 78.

<sup>46</sup> Willard E. Givens, “Monthly Superintendent’s Address,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 12, no. 10 (June 1924): 181.

<sup>47</sup> Tyack, James, and Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, 169–71, 176.

diverged in two fundamental ways: the targeted immigrants were Japanese and the crusade to Americanize them lasted nearly forty years.<sup>48</sup> Between 1900 and 1940, people of Japanese ancestry in Hawai‘i comprised roughly forty percent of the islands’ population. Their sizeable presence, coupled with Japan’s growing military strength and aggressive foreign policy, worried Americanizers that Hawai‘i would soon “Japanize.”

Such factors made Americans’ anxiety understandable, Tamura explained. However, ironically, at the same time Americanizers in Hawai‘i expected both undivided loyalty to the U.S. and rejection of all vestiges of their culture. White paranoia over Japan often resulted in prejudice against Japanese immigrants encouraging many to maintain allegiances to their country of origin. Such public animosity contributed to growing Japanese distrust of Americanization efforts. Their suspicion only heightened as the local controversy of banning the Japanese language press mixed with the national Immigration Act of 1924, excluding Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants) from the naturalization process thus revealing systematic discrimination against ethnic Japanese, both alien and American-born.<sup>49</sup>

These policies placed Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives in a quandary: how to stay true to the broader Americanization message of equality and democracy in their public schools while assuaging white continental fears about Hawai‘i’s “race problem” and avoid defending national segregationist policies. Their eventual solution was quite simple. Rather than directly address the conflict between universalism and discrimination, education elites sidestepped the issue by choosing to highlight Hawai‘i’s schools as promotional sites of “racial harmony.” Administrative progressives applied this strategy to focus the public’s attention on schools as the institutional panacea to the nation’s socio-political conflict over race. In doing so, they sought to

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<sup>48</sup> Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity*, 61, 57.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 56–61.

calm continental white fears of Hawai‘i’s multiracial majority by demonstrating that the same processes of assimilation in the islands’ schools modeled the successful examples of Americanization in the U.S. They also meant to reassure the islands’ nonwhite majority that patience, perseverance, and belief in the Americanization process through the public schools would demonstrate their commitment to becoming Americans thus winning over white skeptics.

In true progressive fashion, Hawai‘i’s schoolmen envisioned schools as the perfect institution to bring order and structure to society over the issue of race. They capitalized on this conflict to assert their vision of the public school as the “chief agency in harmonizing and developing the citizenship of the future.” Schools were to be sites of meditation and equability allowing Americanization to mold the “minds and bodies and hearts of these thousands of young people of many bloods into men and women...proud of an American citizenship broad enough to include the children of all bloods.”<sup>50</sup> Confident in their strategy, Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives believed their schools represented the best system for solving even the nation’s “race problem” by proffering a successful model for creating a racially utopian society.

In the 1920s, the *HER* regularly reminded its readers of the benevolent role schools played in developing an all-inclusive American identity. Motivational headlines, such as “Hawaii’s public school teachers and pupils are all Americans” and “Hawaii’s schools are the world’s most significant manifestations of inter-racial goodwill,” complemented a range of articles by various administrators and educators describing their Americanization efforts. Submissions covered numerous topics including the importance of home economics in providing students of “alien races” proper Americanizing “character-forming habits,” promoting the correct usage of the English-language for successful lives as American citizens, and reminding teachers

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<sup>50</sup> Riley H. Allen, “Education and Race Problems in Hawaii,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, June 1922, 8.

they represented the “best in American manners and morals” and to exercise patience in their efforts to assimilate their heterogeneous students.<sup>51</sup> Yet by far the most prolific and articulate proponent of the “racial harmony” strategy was Governor Wallace R. Farrington.

Many administrators and educators supported the ideas of “racial harmony” but only addressed it through ambiguous terms and vague plans, often overlapping it with citizenship training. The governor, on the other hand, clearly outlined the importance of Americanization efforts in Hawai‘i’s schools to not only create U.S. citizens but to eliminate any distinction of race in students’ minds. Farrington described schools as the “greatest destiny controlling institution of our country” and pressed educators and students to “dwell on the positive character of our Americanism.”<sup>52</sup> He constantly relied on inclusive and universal language of “us” and “our” to reiterate the importance of a collective identity around a shared adherence to American freedoms and rights. Like so many other Americanizers, the governor also believed in the “quest...for like-mindedness, shared belief, and cultural homogeneity.” Establishing a common character cultivated the “perception that society is constructed by the actions of cooperating individuals” requiring “agreement and uniformity...to hold otherwise separated people together.”<sup>53</sup> He deplored ethnic group identities labeling it “alien grouping.” Such affiliations, he believed, inhibited the development of a collective understanding and instead promoted “thinking in terms of foreigners [and] aliens” that placed “too great an emphasis on the hyphen in our citizenship.” Speaking to the Territorial Normal School’s graduating class of 1924, he

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<sup>51</sup> Agnes Dee Davidson, “What I Wish My Daughters to Be Taught in School about Homemaking,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 15, no. 6 (February 1927): 144; Willard E. Givens, “Monthly Superintendent’s Address,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 12, no. 6 (February 1924): 101; Kamaaina, “Suggestion to New High School Teachers in Hawaii,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 3 (November 1919): 18.

<sup>52</sup> Farrington, “The Schools and American Citizenship in Hawaii,” 2.

<sup>53</sup> Olneck, “Americanization and the Education of Immigrants, 1900-1925,” 408.

charged them with the “special duty of eliminating from their [students’] lives the hyphen” as they were all “overwhelmingly American citizens.”<sup>54</sup>

The governor was not alone in his color-blind optimism. Towards the end of his time in office, Farrington extensively quoted Herbert Hoover in a speech to student-teachers published in the 1928 September issue of the *HER*. The governor reiterated Hoover’s belief that investing in the “human spirit” represented a profitable investment for building “the most contented and unified and stable country in the world.” Farrington used Hoover’s speech to promote Hawai‘i’s schools as institutions of opportunity “cultivating brains” and rewarding only talent and effort.<sup>55</sup>

Hoover was an apt choice. The future president’s commitment to reforming society through progressive principles of “honest and efficient government” and “clean, effective public service,” informed by professional expertise and managed by well-educated elite leadership, resonated with many administrative progressives in Hawai‘i.<sup>56</sup> His successful engineering career epitomized the “self-made man” imbued with the “drive and creativity inherent in individual initiative.” “Social improvement” resulted from “progressive individualism” free of coercion, implemented through community institutions preaching faith in scientific management, and only relying on government to “maintain equality of opportunity.”<sup>57</sup> Hoover mixed compassion with hard-nosed pragmatism, ardently believing that individuals and the private sector each held

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<sup>54</sup> Farrington, “The Schools and American Citizenship in Hawaii,” 2, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “Hawaii’s Public School Teachers and Their Local Environment,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 16, no. 1 (September 1928): 59.

<sup>56</sup> Donald J. Lisio, *Hoover, Blacks, and Lily-Whites: A Study of Southern Strategies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), xvii.

<sup>57</sup> George Garcia, “Herbert Hoover and the Issue of Race,” *The Annals of Iowa* 44, no. 7 (January 1979): 509–11.

responsibility for promoting social uplift and equality of opportunity. Government was only to provide temporary assistance coupled with self-help.<sup>58</sup>

Hoover's ideal society was color-blind and governed by a political system immune to special interests. He deplored any form of discrimination and chose to accept or reject people based on individual capabilities and not group identities or loyalties. His position and values, however, clashed with the needs of African Americans who struggled to achieve success as second-class citizens in a white-man's world. They looked to government, especially patronage jobs, as an established means of "black protection" in circumventing racial oppression in order to secure a safe and productive future. Hoover's single strategy built on progressive ideals of meritocracy and efficient government was meant to promote racial progress and triumph over ignorance and bigotry. For black leaders, this gradualist approach was nothing more than a "lily-white scheme" to remove blacks from positions of leadership and influence.<sup>59</sup>

Farrington channeled a similar blend of idealism, denial, and ignorance on race in Hawai'i. He believed that sharp race lines and group identities only led to "growing suspicion of what we are and hope to be." He took great pride in recognizing the American public school as the "best medium for leveling the prejudices of race" and its role in maintaining Hawai'i's freedom from racial antagonism.<sup>60</sup> Using his inclusive references, he was sympathetic to the idea that all people "ought think well of the part of the world from which our parents or great, great grandparents emigrated." As a result, he considered "ancestral pride" and respect of ethnic heritage natural responses. Nonetheless, he remained adamant that the public schools provide programs "so intensively and aggressively American" that "children growing to manhood and

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<sup>58</sup> Glen Jeansonne, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Fighting Quaker, 1928-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 303.

<sup>59</sup> Lisio, *Hoover, Blacks, and Lily-Whites*, xvii-xviii.

<sup>60</sup> Farrington, "What Shall We Do With Them All?," 122.

womanhood [would] be fired and inspired with the loyalty to home and nation that an assumption...to protect that home and nation...[would] be a natural human response.”<sup>61</sup>

Convinced of the power of schools to improve society, Farrington used his position of influence to affect meaningful change in promoting and developing Hawai‘i’s schools into positive models for building racial harmony.

Despite his best efforts, Farrington’s quest for social harmony through the Americanization campaign never materialized. The fallout over a pair of trials soon after he left office exposed the simmering racial anxieties of both continental and local whites over Hawai‘i’s “non-Americanness” and even threatened the islands’ political future in the Union.

### **Race, Rape, and Murder**

Two dramatic events in the early 1930s challenged territorial schoolmen’s claims that Hawai‘i’s public schools effectively produced racial harmony. An alleged rape of a white woman by “some Hawaiian boys” and the murder of one those “Hawaiian boys” in retaliation exposed how the islands were not immune to the white rage policing race relations on the continent. Many white Americans saw nothing to confirm the local white elite’s message of Hawai‘i as a racial paradise. Rather, they saw the islands as a happy hunting ground for men of dark races to prey on white women. This “reality” exposed how racial anxiety consumed local and continental white imaginations and stoked doubt as to the power of Hawai‘i’s schools to educate non-white students “how to fit” and know their place in Anglo-American society.

White fears over race in Hawai‘i erupted in September of 1931 when twenty-year old Thalia Massie, wife of a naval lieutenant stationed at Pearl Harbor, claimed she been kidnapped, taken to a remote location, and raped by “some Hawaiian boys.” Initially, she explained to the

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<sup>61</sup> “School Aid to Hawaii Is Told by Farrington,” *Star-Bulletin*, December 29, 1932, RASRL Clippings File sub.1, box 2 Education.

police she could not provide any physical details about her attackers but twelve hours later she easily identified five working-class youths – Horace Ida, David Takai, Henry Chang, Benedict “Benny” Ahakuelo, and Joseph Kahahawai – as those who assaulted her. All five had been picked up by police earlier for an unrelated misdemeanor elsewhere in Honolulu around the time Massie claimed to have been attacked. Poor police work, bungling of evidence, and inconsistent testimony eventually led to a mistrial in November of 1931.

In the eyes of white males, Ida, Takai, Chang, Ahakuelo, and Kahahawai were guilty of breaking the “unwritten law” intended to keep predatory nonwhite men away from white women and they needed to be punished. Before the second trial, a group of white U.S. sailors kidnapped and assaulted Ida in an attempt to elicit a confession. He denied any involvement and managed to escape his assailants. A few weeks later, Kahahawai was kidnapped but this time it was by Lieutenant Thomas Massie (Thalia’s husband), Grace Fortescue (Thalia’s mother), and two other white sailors. They also sought a confession from Kahahawai through violence and intimidation. However, at some point in the struggle, Thomas Massie fired a single shot through Kahahawai’s heart, killing him instantly. The four were eventually caught after a lengthy car chase as they attempted to dispose of Kahahawai’s body.

In the resulting trial, *Territory of Hawaii vs. Massie, Fortescue, Lord, and Jones*, Thomas Massie claimed “temporary insanity” in his role of killing Joseph Kahahawai. While this defense failed to obtain an acquittal, the Massie-Fortescue group’s counsel, Clarence Darrow, managed to sway the jury to reduce the charges of kidnapping and murder to the lesser charge of manslaughter. Found guilty, all four faced ten-year sentences of hard labor but territorial governor Lawrence Judd, under pressure by Congress and the Navy, commuted their sentences to a one-hour meeting with him in his office. Within a week of their release, all four, including

Thalia, left Hawai‘i for good and, with no defendant, the rape case against the five accused boys was dismissed.<sup>62</sup> However, while the legal drama related to the Massie case ended, a much larger fight brewed over the political future of the territory.

To the continental press, Congress, and the Navy, justice had not been served. They obsessed over the role a racially mixed jury (six of the twelve jurors were white) played in the justice system and only heard the conviction of four innocent Americans who attempted to uphold the honor of a white woman while her attackers went free. For U.S. audiences, it did not matter that the legal system failed to secure justice for Kahahawai, his family, and the Hawaiian community, exposing a locally common-held belief that whites received preferential treatment. Instead, to white Americans, the rape case exposed Hawai‘i as a lawless and dangerous place for white women. To the Navy and its local commandant at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yates Stirling, Hawai‘i was no “paradise of the Pacific” but a “primordial jungle” that subjected white women to “wanton racial attack.” As a result, the admiral began inquiring about replacing the civilian territorial government with direct military control.<sup>63</sup>

National anger over the trials and talk of revoking Hawai‘i’s home rule only intensified when U.S. Assistant Attorney Seth Richardson began investigating the islands’ law enforcement procedures. While his findings revealed Hawai‘i’s multiracial population as law-abiding and that no “spell of a racial crime wave” existed, Richardson did recommend greater federal control of the islands. Coupled with bills presented to Congress supported by the Navy to impose a military commission, Hawai‘i’s status as an insular territory with statehood potential faced demotion to a

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<sup>62</sup> John P. Rosa, *Local Story: The Massie-Kahahawai Case and the Culture of History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2014), 1–3.

<sup>63</sup> Bell, *Last Among Equals*, 57–58; Whitehead, *Completing the Union*, 21–25; For more on the history of the rape case, murder trial, and the individuals involved see David E. Stannard, *Honor Killing: Race, Rape, and Clarence Darrow’s Spectacular Last Case*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006).

non-insular possession with limited local control and reduced political status. By 1933, the national hysteria abated and calls for military control of the islands soon dissipated. Even with the threat gone, the controversy damaged Hawai‘i’s carefully constructed image of “racial harmony” and the “world center of ‘inter-racial’ aloha and goodwill.”<sup>64</sup>

Many contemporary scholars today challenge this myth of Hawai‘i as a “multiracial panacea.” They argue this myth masks larger systematic discrimination resulting from white supremacy, manifest destiny, and colonization. It also ignores the historical social and political tensions resulting from longstanding economic inequality between Hawai‘i’s various ethnic and racial groups. Not surprisingly, as Jonathan Okamura writes, those who benefited from this “ethnic status quo” (Chinese Americans, haole, and Japanese Americans) have also been “leading advocates” in perpetuating this myth.<sup>65</sup> In the 1930s, whites firmly controlled most aspects governing territorial life and they stood the most to gain, and lose, from their myth of “racial harmony.” Despite the tarnish to their carefully constructed fiction brought by the *Massie* case, they remained adamant in promoting Hawai‘i as a racial utopia. To support their claim, they turned to academic research for “objective” evidence.

In 1920, Wisconsin native Romanzo Adams moved to Hawai‘i after nearly twenty years teaching sociology and economics at the University of Nevada to start up the sociology program (later known as the Social Research Laboratory) at the University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa. A high school teacher turned sociologist trained at the University of Chicago, Adams applied his research training to explain Hawai‘i’s “unorthodox race doctrine” of tolerance, equality, and harmony as resulting from the high rate of interracial marriage. Adams was fascinated with the

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<sup>64</sup> Whitehead, *Completing the Union*, 24–26.

<sup>65</sup> Laura Edles, “Rethinking ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘culture’: Is Hawai‘i the ‘model Minority’ State?,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 1 (January 2004): 37–41; Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai‘i*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008), 15–16.

racial amalgamation occurring in the islands leading him to label Hawai‘i as a racial “melting pot.” He believed that this process created one people out of the islands’ various ethnic groups, reinforcing universal equality and denying privilege based on race. He also pointed out that during a time when most U.S. states passed anti-miscegenation laws, the territory lacked any such statute. In Adams’ mind, this absence of legal barriers only substantiated his claim of Hawai‘i as a haven for racial equality.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, to Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives, the negative national attention brought by the Massie rape and Kahahawai murder trials demonstrated how their message of racial harmony failed to convince American audiences. Remarks by continental whites through the national media depicted the people of Hawai‘i as quite “different” in race and culture reinforcing the image of them as “second class citizens at best and ‘un-American’ at worst.” White communities in Hawai‘i and on the continent viewed the Massie case as a violation of the color line. The narrative describing Thalia’s experience revealed white anxiety over interracial contact in Hawai‘i and a “larger patriarchal system of terror” separating men of color from white women in the U.S. The islands’ geographic isolation from the U.S. continent only complicated matters by reinforcing an image of the islands as an “outpost” far removed from civilization.<sup>67</sup> As a result, white administrative progressives feared the fallout brought by the Massie case rendered their endorsements of democracy and Hawai‘i as American as lofty illusions of naïveté.

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<sup>66</sup> Jonathan Y. Okamura, *Ethnicity and Inequality in Hawai‘i*, 7–8; “Romanzo Adams Biographical Sketch,” Social Research Laboratory, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, accessed August 18, 2016, <http://library.manoa.hawaii.edu/departments/archives/univarch/colsch/rasrl/history.php>; “Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory,” Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory, University of Hawaii at Manoa Library, accessed August 18, 2016, <http://library.manoa.hawaii.edu/departments/archives/univarch/colsch/rasrl/bio.php#one>.

<sup>67</sup> Rosa, *Local Story*, 28–29.

In the months following the Massie/Kahahawai trials and debates over the political future of the territory, education leaders wasted no time instituting damage control. In 1933, Walter R. Farrington, now editor at the *Honolulu Advertiser*, quickly rallied to the defense of “racial harmony” and Hawai‘i’s home rule status. While critical at times of those “elements in the nation” calling to eliminate the territory’s self governing capabilities, Farrington reiterated his same stoic conviction as governor nearly a decade earlier: “Our country, and especially our territory, stands for tolerance” and “at no point along the line of life can it accept a divided allegiance.” He sought to project a “doctrine of courage” over the national “doctrine of fear” concerning Hawai‘i’s “race problem” by expressing confidence in the Americanizing capabilities of the territory’s school system. Addressing the nation, he defended the “Americanism of all races making up the population of Hawaii” by pointing to the territory’s teachers as “architects of the nation” building its future citizens. Farrington also sought to appease white fears about Hawai‘i’s racial diversity by explaining how the Americanization process “ceased...worry over the Hawaiians” and for the Japanese “element,” “the answer to their Americanism is and must be found in the schools.”<sup>68</sup> The former governor, in true form, addressed the challenges to his territory from a position combining strength and optimism.

Farrington also directed his “doctrine of courage” onto the territory’s schoolteachers explaining they held a “position of commanding importance and responsibility.” Despite being “tested by more exacting standards than almost any other place under the flag” due to the “virtue” of Hawai‘i’s racial diversity, he urged teachers to bravely accept the “responsibility” to show the country their Americanism. They needed to teach tolerance for all and confidence in

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<sup>68</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “How Can the Schools Help Preserve Self-Government in Hawaii?,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 21, no. 2 (February 1933), 173.; “School Aid to Hawaii Is Told by Farrington,” *Star-Bulletin*, December 29, 1932, RASRL Clippings File sub.1, box 2 Education.

the American government, promote schools as “mediums” of fostering independence, and instill a brand of Americanism built on freedom of expression and equal opportunity.<sup>69</sup> Key to his strategy was the idea of “Hawaiian-Americanism.”

Farrington envisioned “Hawaiian-Americanism” as an effective way of reasserting Hawai‘i as American. He advised teachers to “properly amplify” this reality by preaching “friendly and tolerant Americanism insofar as friendliness and tolerance relate to the dealings of the peoples about the Pacific.”<sup>70</sup> He wanted to highlight Hawai‘i as a successful site of Americanization effectively implementing the nation’s universal principles of freedom and equality. Hawai‘i’s schools had helped forge a singular national identity out of the islands’ various races and cultures. To further substantiate his claim, the former governor turned to the “problem of the hour” with the “meeting of the Occident and the Orient.” Viewed with growing suspicion over Hawai‘i’s sizeable Japanese immigrant population as Japan aggressively expanded in Asia and the Pacific, Farrington sought to assure his continental audience that Hawai‘i was “the only place under the American flag” where Oriental “adjustment” was being “worked out in an American way, the friendly American way.” He wanted the country to maintain faith in the strength of American institutions in Hawai‘i to “assist and preserve the purpose of all American government, that is, self-government.”<sup>71</sup> Hawai‘i was American, he argued, the nation just needed reminding.

Taking a more aggressive position, the local chapter of the National Education Association (NEA), the Hawaii Education Association (HEA), also spoke directly to the threat of military rule as a “betrayal of the American citizens residing” in Hawai‘i and “out of harmony

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<sup>69</sup> “School Aid to Hawaii Is Told by Farrington.”

<sup>70</sup> Farrington, “How Can the Schools Help Preserve Self-Government in Hawaii?,” 173.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.; “School Aid to Hawaii Is Told by Farrington.”

with American democratic ideals.” They argued Hawai‘i was not America’s “Gibraltar,” simply an American outpost, but a part of the U.S. with all “traditional rights and privileges.” The HEA boldly pointed out that continental fear, distrust, and ignorance, rooted in racial bigotry and prejudice over recognizing the full rights of citizenship for Americans of Asian ancestry, framed the threat to democracy in the territory. Yet the danger did not end there; an “even more significant matter” was at stake.<sup>72</sup>

The association expanded the peril to the international stage. Working within the great American progressivist narrative, the HEA argued,

The destruction of self-government in Hawaii would mean the abandonment of the most unusual and significant, and thus far, successful experiment in interracial democracy existing anywhere in the world. With the destruction of democratic control of affairs in Hawaii would go the destruction of the dream and hope of many true citizens, here and elsewhere, that Hawaii may ultimately contribute to the nations and races of the world such insight and understanding as will lead powerfully toward the wiping out of racial and international antagonisms and hatred.<sup>73</sup>

Unlike Farrington’s assertions of how the territorial schools excelled in Americanizing Hawai‘i’s diverse population, the HEA simply presented it as fact. They wasted no effort in assuring white audiences about the effectiveness of Americanization in the territorial schools. They showcased Hawai‘i as American by equating the threat to democracy in the territory as a real threat to the very essence of freedom for all Americans. While similar to Farrington in aim, the HEA diverged in emphasis subverting the conversation about race by elevating the larger discussion over national identity.

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<sup>72</sup> Hawaii Educational Association Committee on Educational Policies, “Shall Hawaii Be Reduced to the Status of a Possession?,” *Hawaii Education Review* 21, no. 2 (February 1933): 184–185.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

Balancing both approaches to the home rule crisis was University of Hawai‘i president and older brother of Superintendent Will C. Crawford, David L. Crawford (1927-1941). Rather than focus solely on the controversy, the university president argued that the American school system deserved credit for creating such a racially harmonious atmosphere in Hawai‘i. The islands’ population remained steadfastly loyal to the American ideal of a “full educational opportunity for all regardless of race, color or sex, with no discrimination between races” and no policies privileging one race over another. Hawai‘i’s students learned the same content as any of their continental peers sharing in the same learning process of becoming an American. They also benefited from the additional study of numerous cultures, races and peoples, effectively preparing them for “service in which the world is coming more and more to stand in need – the interpreting of one culture to another.” Crawford blamed the national “phobia” fearing the “flood of people of an alien race” in the islands as the result of the “American brand” of racial prejudice exemplified by the “relationship between Negro and White and between Oriental and Occidental.” Such “mainland attitudes,” inflamed by a sensationalizing national press, attempted to make the Massie case about race when really the issues were about “crime and lax government.”<sup>74</sup>

Much like his younger brother, David Crawford wanted to demonstrate how the territorial schools made Hawai‘i American. He also devoutly believed the islands had “always been dominated by American principles and ideals” since the arrival of the missionaries and western education in 1820. As a result, American schooling prevented the drawing of race lines and contributed to the “spirit of racial friendship and goodwill...characteristic of the place.” Even the teaching staff of various races, while “relatively limited in their ability to teach English

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<sup>74</sup> David Livingston Crawford, *Paradox in Hawaii: An Examination of Industry and Education and the Paradox They Present*, (Boston: Stratford Co., 1933), 205, 213, 209.

language and American culture,” maintained the “positive values” obtained from “inter-racial understanding and friendliness,” a direct result of benevolent policies promoting a “variegated teaching staff.”<sup>75</sup>

Unwavering in spite of the Massie case, administrative progressives remained messianic in their belief that racial harmony and the Americanization of Hawai‘i was right around the corner. They just needed to stay focused and committed to promoting the universal values of color-blind nationalism and equal opportunity. Even when confronted with challenges that proved problematic to their objectives, Hawai‘i’s educational elite believed adversity meant they work that much harder. Race, however, was not the only test they faced. Another major hurdle for them involved reconciling the promotion of universalist principles with the labor needs of the islands’ agricultural economy run by the islands’ white oligarchy.

### **The “Dignity of Labor”**

Between 1890 and 1940, sugar and pineapple production dominated the islands’ economy. In control of these two crops was an intricate oligarchy of five “factors,” known as the “Big Five,” founded by the second generation of American missionaries to Hawai‘i. Over this fifty-year period, the Big Five consolidated and enlarged their economic wealth and political influence in the islands through a series of industry mergers, business trusts, and intermarriage between other prosperous missionary families. They sought to promote “co-operation not competition” over the limited resources and land in Hawai‘i to maximize profits and efficiency. Not content with just agriculture, the Big Five gained control over the islands’ railroad networks and inter-island and mainland-bound steamship lines and expanded into the growing hotel industry, utilities, banks, insurance, and wholesale and retail business. By 1905, the Big Five

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 196, 198.

owned eight of every eleven dollars and fifty cents invested in Hawai‘i’s businesses and directly employed one in four people in the territory on its plantations. Their control over the economy allowed them leverage to drive out individual businesses and farmers whenever they fell into disfavor.<sup>76</sup>

This economic dominance allowed the Big Five to exert substantial influence in territorial politics through the Republican Party, which controlled the legislature until World War II. They also held sway over most of the territory’s governors, either through direct familial relation or indirectly as investors or officers in Big Five firms.<sup>77</sup> Such political connections provided the oligarchy with low tax rates. This helped create advantageous economic conditions for a thirty-year period of high dividend returns averaging over 10 percent annually for the Big Five’s businesses. Dividends from some of their individual plantations and businesses consistently returned over 40 percent of capital invested.<sup>78</sup>

The Big Five sought to protect their financial interests from the public sector by lobbying for a tax structure benefiting the generators and owners of Hawai‘i’s wealth. Income and property taxes were sharply curbed forcing territorial politicians to spread taxation “whenever possible” through school, road, poll, and excise taxes to fund public services. As historian Lawrence Fuchs describes the economic theory of the Big Five, “[i]f the controllers of Hawaii believed in the trickle-down theory of wealth, they did not believe that much should trickle through the hands of government.”<sup>79</sup> Rather, many members of the oligarchy believed in and

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<sup>76</sup> Lawrence H. Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono: A Social History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 241, 244–245, 253, 258–259.

<sup>77</sup> John S. Whitehead, “Western Progressives, Old South Planters, or Colonial Oppressors: The Enigma of Hawai‘i’s ‘Big Five,’ 1898-1940,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (October 1999): 297.

<sup>78</sup> Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 258–59.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

practiced community philanthropy with some donating 40 to 60 percent of their income to charity.<sup>80</sup> Nonetheless, even with their favorable tax structure, taxes paid by the Big Five, and other affluent whites, made up the majority of the territory's revenue. In 1929, they contributed 74 percent of the funds used in public education despite comprising only 10 percent of the territory's population. The use of the taxes to support the education of Asians, particularly the Japanese, in the public schools irritated the Big Five, as they believed it siphoned the next generation away from work on plantations. However, they remained reticent as long as foreign labor stayed plentiful and taxes low.<sup>81</sup> By the late 1920s, all this began to change.

One important change was the spread of secondary public education in the territory, which grew by "leaps and bounds" following a federal survey of Hawai'i's public schools in 1920. The commissioners of the survey criticized the poor public transportation and school infrastructure for students, the inadequate financial support for a "first-class American public-school system," and the limited opportunities for educational advancement beyond elementary school. They recommended expanding the number of secondary schools, improving students' English-language abilities, removing-foreign language schools, reforming the territorial normal school to reflect similar institutions on the continent, and increasing teachers' salaries.<sup>82</sup> Embarrassed and under public pressure, the legislature adopted many of the survey's major recommendations much to the chagrin of the Big Five, who only perceived such changes as threats to their bottom line. Adding to their financial woes was the Immigration Act of 1924, effectively closing off their labor supply from Asia, the onset of the Great Depression, and

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<sup>80</sup> Whitehead, "Western Progressives, Old South Planters, or Colonial Oppressors," 304.

<sup>81</sup> Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 292; Linda Louise Logan, "Territorial Normal and Training School, 1895-1931 : An Institutional History of Public Teacher Education in Hawaii" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 1989), 186.

<sup>82</sup> Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 271-73.

growing labor unrest resulting in strikes and efforts to unionize. Thus, as costs and conflicts mounted, so did grumbles from the Big Five.

The loudest criticisms from the oligarchy came through the Hawaii Sugar Planters' Association (HSPA) and the Chamber of Commerce. Both groups formed joint-committees during the 1920s to check how the DPI spent its budget by requesting explanations on items considered "unnecessary or unwise." They publicly criticized teachers for thinking of high school as college preparatory institutions, labeling them as "visionary high-brows" beholden to the "mistaken idealism" of secondary education. Such ideas of schooling, they believed, undermined the image of employment opportunities on their plantations among the territory's public school students. Politicians tied to the HSPA and the Big Five fought plans to open new schools and argued that public education beyond the fourth grade constituted a waste of taxpayers' money.<sup>83</sup> As such, they began calling for limits on school spending and the number of educational opportunities for public school students. In the eyes of the Big Five, the territory's education system led Hawai'i's children away from a productive career in agriculture and sabotaged the future of the islands' economy.<sup>84</sup>

If administrative progressives worried over the Big Five's handwringing, they chose not to publicly express it. Like the controversy over race, Hawai'i's educational elite remained committed to achieving their goals of Americanization without disrupting the status quo. Rather than fight the islands' job creators, they once again sidestepped the issue at hand, choosing to cooperate with Hawai'i's business leaders in an effort to slowly reform the agricultural industry away from autocratic management and to a democratic system of negotiation. They realized that

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 281; Noriko Asato, "Mandating Americanization: Japanese Language Schools and the Federal Survey of Education in Hawai'i, 1916-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (April 2003): 20.

<sup>84</sup> Logan, "Territorial Normal and Training School," 185-186.

their grander vision of improving society through the schools required avoiding conflict with the “needs and wants of the economic power that paid the bills.”<sup>85</sup> To meet both their objectives and industry’s expectations, Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives once again took a middle-road approach by adopting the Big Fives’ strategy of cooperation rather than coercion.<sup>86</sup> Central to their strategy was popularizing the “dignity of labor.”

The “dignity of labor” became an umbrella slogan used by administrative progressives and various white elites throughout the 1920s and 1930s to garner support from the public, teachers, and private industry. They defined it as a “broader educational view” designed to make students “recognize the dignity and value of manual labor” and realize that they would not “lose face” by working on the plantations.<sup>87</sup> Their efforts emerged during the broader movement of social efficiency-oriented thinking on the continent towards work, schooling, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Advocates argued that a practical education better prepared students for a successful future through adult, occupational roles that effectively served their personal needs for employment and advanced the smooth operation of society. They used the language of vocationalism to highlight manual training and agricultural education as tangible, technical skills and devalue a comprehensive, liberal education as impractical for success in the labor market.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 156–58.

<sup>87</sup> Allen, “Education and Race Problems in Hawaii,” 11.

<sup>88</sup> For more on the history of vocational education see: Herbert M. Kliebard, *Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958*, (London: Taylor and Francis, 1986); Herbert M. Kliebard, *Schooled to Work: Vocationalism and the American Curriculum, 1876-1946*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999).

This vocational strategy was not unique to the islands. Following the end of the Civil War, white northern philanthropists, missionaries, and teachers flooded the South to provide educational opportunities for black women and men as part of a larger program to rebuild the war torn region. They frowned upon and actively discouraged the self-determination efforts of freedmen taking control of their own schooling in order to secure social and economic progress.<sup>89</sup> Instead, white northern school leaders viewed industrial education as the most suitable means for black advancement. They emphasized the moral value of hard labor over technical skills and academic instruction in manual training schools, such as the Hampton Institute, in order to promote African American economic adjustment to a new subservient role as laborers.<sup>90</sup> Unconcerned with black desires for social mobility, white elites wanted to keep ex-slaves tied to the region as wage laborers, sharecroppers, and domestic workers. They looked to schooling to impress upon them the “idea of an inseparable relation” between black education and the southern agricultural economy.<sup>91</sup>

In Hawai‘i, schoolmen and the oligarchy viewed schools in a similar fashion. They believed students avoided careers in agriculture simply because they failed to receive training “toward the plantation.” Schools needed to instruct students to become “better workers and not educate them away from work.”<sup>92</sup> Education elites often agreed with the criticisms made by the Big Five that the educational system was “so overwhelmingly intellectual” that it produced a

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<sup>89</sup> Jacqueline Jones, “All Educational Politics Are Local: New Perspectives on Black Schooling in the Postbellum South,” in *Rethinking the History of American Education*, ed. John L. Rury and Reese, William J. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 48–49.

<sup>90</sup> James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 55.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>92</sup> MacCaughey, “The Future of Hawaii and the Schools,” 4; Benjamin O. Wist, “Ways of Connecting the Public School with the Plantation,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 8, no. 3 (March 1920): 2.

“wholesale misdirection of brains” “bound to mislead the undiscerning mind into the conviction that the important and lucrative professions of life must be those to which this education leads.”<sup>93</sup> The “dignity of labor” attempted to rebrand plantation employment as “profitable and enjoyable” and idealize manual training as unearthing the “creative power of all labor.”<sup>94</sup> School leaders still believed in academic instruction committed to Americanization but that it ought to complement vocational training as part of a broader “universal education.” Otherwise, as Governor Farrington exclaimed in 1926, “[e]ducation is a farce if it does not glorify the dignity of labor.”<sup>95</sup>

Administrative progressives could not spread this message alone. As “guides and leaders,” teachers held the “grave responsibility for the vocational guidance” of students. They needed to instill the “dignity of labor” consistently in the classroom and reveal to students the numerous opportunities agriculture offered.<sup>96</sup> School leaders also wanted teachers to emphasize that “many jobs without a white collar” paid better and society considered such employment “more important than...so called white collar jobs.”<sup>97</sup> Teachers were responsible for persuading students to embrace “training for Hawaii’s daily work” in order for them to “be educated as good workmen, – toward the job not away from it.”<sup>98</sup> Always with a flair for the dramatic, Governor

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<sup>93</sup> J.M. Lydgate, “Hawaii’s Labor Problems,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 10 (October 1919): 16; Crawford, *Paradox in Hawaii*, 217.

<sup>94</sup> Will C. Crawford, “Superintendent’s Monthly Address,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 19, no. 3 (March 1931): 177; MacCaughey, “The Future of Hawaii and the Schools,” 14.

<sup>95</sup> Farrington, “What Shall We Do With Them All?,” 122.

<sup>96</sup> Crawford, “Superintendent’s Monthly Address,” March 1931, 177; Farrington, “What Shall We Do With Them All?,” 122–23.

<sup>97</sup> Will C. Crawford, “Superintendent’s Monthly Address,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 13, no. 9 (September 1925): 9.

<sup>98</sup> MacCaughey, “The Future of Hawaii and the Schools,” 5.

Farrington implored schoolteachers to present commercial agriculture in “such a manner that it will touch the same wells of enthusiasm that gush forth for a horse race.”<sup>99</sup>

Drunk with ambition and armed with rhetoric, administrative progressives pushed forward with their “dignity of labor” campaign while looking to the Big Five to do their part in popularizing agricultural work. They wanted industry to “woo” laborers by humanizing labor conditions through incentives and benefits designed to entice students in entering plantation employment. Constructing self-sufficient “village communities,” complete with “community affairs of various kinds – entertainments, games, social events, athletics, clubs, classes, lectures, concerts, moving pictures,” improvement in wages, and financial rewards for “superior effort” demonstrated concrete ways sugar planters attempted to incentivize plantation employment.<sup>100</sup> School men also wanted plantation owners to provide internship opportunities for students to “develop a wholesome attitude towards work” through direct experience in “productive labor.”<sup>101</sup>

To administrative progressives, vocational education represented the best means of collaboration between the school and plantation in building a socially efficient school system.<sup>102</sup> Their “dignity of labor” movement revealed, in their minds at least, the perfect synergy of democratic principles involving individual free choice and the benevolent expertise of industry and educational professionals working to together build a better Hawai‘i. Yet their vision of constructing unity through public education rooted in allegiance to a “shared worldview” and core American values soon gave way to a government-run “pedagogical conglomerate” aligned

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<sup>99</sup> Farrington, “Hawaii’s Public School Teachers and Their Local Environment,” 60.

<sup>100</sup> Logan, “Territorial Normal and Training School, 1895-1931,” 156–57; Lydgate, “Hawaii’s Labor Problems,” 16; Crawford, *Paradox in Hawaii*, 243.

<sup>101</sup> Crawford, *Paradox in Hawaii*, 245–47.

<sup>102</sup> Wist, “Ways of Connecting the Public School with the Plantation,” 2.

closely with business interests.<sup>103</sup> As a result, administrative progressives in Hawai‘i tripped over two competing plans in their attempt to build their one best system.

Unable to see beyond their fortresses of idealism to understand the needs of their students, school administrators and DPI officials continued to view Hawai‘i’s youths as “in need of expert intervention.” Restructuring schools to make vocational training the central function of the educational system reflected their “nonpartisan,” “benevolent” commitment to harmonizing industry and schools for the common good of Hawai‘i. Their professional concept of school governance mixed with advice and support from industry experts allowed Hawai‘i’s educational elite to claim they knew what most benefitted children and society. Despite resistance from their teachers, administrative progressives in Hawai‘i “knew what was wrong” with their schools and how to fix them.<sup>104</sup> They believed that proper education on local working conditions and opportunities framed within the plantation system provided students with the best means to “select for themselves that which will give them the greatest economic independence.”<sup>105</sup> Collaboration between education and industry represented an “intelligent American plan” that put “boys and girls on the land” allowing “them to seek this career from choice.”<sup>106</sup> However their strategy merely offered an illusion of choice couched within the “dignity of labor” movement that disguised administrative efforts at tracking students through a school-to-plantation pipeline. Students deserved the opportunity to choose their occupation, Governor

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<sup>103</sup> Tyack, James, and Benavot, *Law and the Shaping of Public Education, 1785-1954*, 117.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 110–12.

<sup>105</sup> Crawford, “Superintendent’s Monthly Address,” September 1925, 9.

<sup>106</sup> Wallace R. Farrington, “Solving Hawaii’s Labor Problem,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 8 (April 1919): 7.

Farrington argued, and the public schools needed to prepare students to make the right choice, as long as it involved agriculture.<sup>107</sup>

### **The Legacy of the One Best System**

As true believers of an “opportunity structure dominated by WASPs,” Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives saw no hypocrisy or contradiction in insisting success resulted from “Anglo-conformity” to middle-class standards. Messianic in tone, they built an Americanization crusade confident that any and all students could learn how to fit into the one best system and succeed just like them. Yet their evangelical-like fervor quickly muddled their crusade for equality of opportunity with a “desire for social control” clouding their capabilities of understanding instances of non-conformity and competing definitions of success.<sup>108</sup> Such conviction melded with their ethnocentrism and sense of white superiority towards their non-white students to form a powerful interpretative lens categorizing examples of non-conformity as threats to administrative authority.

The clash between progressive idealism and American attitudes on race intensified due to white anxiety as a minority in the territory. Rather than admit their system promoted racial segregation and injustice as well as white privilege, administrative progressives instead chose to protect and continue believing in the inherent fairness of their school governance. Challenges exposing inconsistencies and contradictions to the system that put white school leaders into their positions of affluence and power represented personal attacks to the validity and viability of their positions. They wanted to believe in an American system that saw no color line, protected universal human principles of freedom and equal opportunity, and rewarded individual efforts of

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<sup>107</sup> Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 280.

<sup>108</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 236, 232.

hard work. In their minds, these efforts were all that was required of an individual to achieve success.

Hawai‘i’s white schoolmen also failed to comprehend the effects of systemic inequality and how they contributed to its continuation. In their minds, anything contrary to their brand of success, and its steps in achieving it, rested in the failure of the individual, not the system. Outlining their strategies towards success in practical and tangible terms of scientific efficiency and personal effort eliminated any contradictions that limiting student-choice, instituting student tracking, and promoting social engineering hindered positive student outcomes. Hawai‘i’s schoolmen ardently believed in political freedom, economic success, and equal educational opportunity for all citizens, but not in racial or social equality. They never considered themselves racist, or complicit in sustaining racial inequality, due to their efforts at uplifting and enlightening groups they believed desperately needed help. Admitting to their own involvement in undermining the very notions they attempted to promote was beyond their purview. Blinded by their achievements and sense of self-sacrifice, administrative progressives attempted to construct the one best system according to what they believed Hawai‘i’s students needed.

For territorial schoolmen, making Hawai‘i American was about controlling the islands’ past. Justifying the U.S. presence and occupation involved a consistent and convincing narrative that repackaged clear examples of Hawai‘i’s independent indigenous past as products of America’s benevolence and commitment to progress. This required altering any contrary historical evidence that challenged or questioned U.S. motives to absorb and govern the islands as anything but legitimate and moral. To do so, Americanizers civilized Native history by weaving it into the nation’s grand progressive narrative emphasizing U.S. expansion as the spread of American democracy and equal opportunity. By erasing Hawai‘i as a sovereign

modern nation-state and rewriting it as a passive recipient of U.S. benevolence, white educators inventively placed the islands' past and future within their vision of America's inevitable march towards progress. Hawai'i was destined to become American; its people just did not know it yet.

Essential to standardizing and naturalizing this narrative was the public school system. Schools represented efficient and effective sites for transmitting and exposing students to a standardized historical message of what made Hawai'i American. This benevolence however did not exist in a vacuum. Alongside their idealism, white educators imported and disseminated American attitudes on race and recreated the very conditions of inequality and structures of segregation they claimed to reject. Thus the process of democratizing also led to the racializing of Hawai'i. Yet, despite this organized campaign to legitimize the Americanization of the islands, Native Hawaiians responded with ideas of their own.

## Chapter Three: Students

### Introduction

The white fathers from the land of the free decided my people should go to school. Hadn't they always been to school? Were not the great out of doors their books, wherein they learned the things they needed to know the most? Superimposition and education were brought about without regard for the elements in my peoples' culture that were worth saving. I am still a Hawaiian and I am proud of it. I am no different from you.<sup>1</sup>

Entitled "I am a Hawaiian," Native author, educator, and intellectual, Charles W. Kenn, sought to inform potential white American tourists in 1936 to the active indigenous presence in Hawai'i. His article, published in a nationally circulated travel magazine about the islands, *Paradise of the Pacific*, clashed with the idyllic representations of happy, passive natives portrayed throughout the publication. A product of the public education system, Kenn exemplified how he utilized his schooling to assert his indigenous identity during an era of increasing Americanization. Juxtaposed against the assimilation efforts of territorial schoolmen, his article broadcasted a conflicting message to the nation over the effectiveness of the Americanization crusade in the islands.

Student archival sources support Kenn's defiant message by revealing how numerous Native Hawaiians refused to be victimized. Life histories, research assignments, and journal entries written by Native students bear testimony to their creativity, adaptability, and resiliency in the face of the Americanization campaign. They bring to light a hidden worldview of what the American educational system meant to them: a resource for survival. Far from passive victims of assimilation and American progress, Native students expressed in their writings how they selectively appropriated aspects of their schooling to negotiate and endure the Americanization process while retaining their cultural identity. Collectively, their stories offer a critical counter-

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<sup>1</sup> Charles W. Kenn, "I Am a Hawaiian," *Paradise of the Pacific*, November 1936, 21.

narrative highlighting how Native Hawaiians remained active during the Territorial Period and turned to schooling as a deliberate response to foreign forces threatening to marginalize their culture and community.

This approach is nothing new to the study of Native American experiences with American education. Since the late 1980s, scholars of Indian boarding schools have shifted their research away from a policy-oriented focus on the design and implementation of boarding schools towards an understanding of how Native American students navigated and negotiated the educational system.<sup>2</sup> However, current understandings of the Native Hawaiian student experience with Americanization reflect earlier studies on Indian boarding schools focused on the aims of white schoolmen and policymakers. This top-down approach, though effective in discussing the attitudes of white educators on pedagogy, race, and class, fails to capture how Native students understood, experienced, and responded to school policies and curriculum.

Native student writings reveal those critical viewpoints. Their reactions to Americanization ranged from complete rejection to open enthusiasm as many students turned to schooling as an opportunity for advancement. Like their American Indian counterparts, Native Hawaiian students often did not adopt a sense of inferiority. Most students' family relationships remained strong with parents actively supporting their children's schooling in myriad ways. Individual students selectively incorporated aspects of their American education that ensured their individual and collective survival and wellbeing. As a result, the Americanization experience for Native Hawaiians in the territorial public schools cannot be simply framed in terms as an "either or" phenomenon of passive assimilation or defiant resistance. Instead, student

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<sup>2</sup> Kevin Whalen, "Finding the Balance Student Voices and Cultural Loss at Sherman Institute," *American Behavioral Scientist* 58, no. 1 (January 2014): 130.

views reveal a complex and paradoxical story of how Native youths shaped their educational experience influenced but not defined by the bounds of assimilation.

Student stories challenge how historians view resistance and underscore their agency. Students were neither free agents shaping themselves as they pleased, nor blank sheets awaiting the imprint of their schools. While the formation and implementation of assimilation policies reveal the intentions of white educators, they can only tell one side of the story. Student experiences provide an alternative perspective that sometimes challenges dominant narratives but sometimes complements them. Their stories fill a critical gap in the history of indigenous education since they describe and help explain how students selectively received, engaged, and rejected various aspects of their schooling. As historians Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc explain, this “turning the power” on the very institutions meant to transform them demonstrates the importance of student narratives in expanding and redefining student resistance.<sup>3</sup> Doing so reveals a wider, dynamic, and complex network of opposition and resiliency as Native peoples empowered themselves to survive in a hostile environment.

This chapter explores the ways in which Native Hawaiian students and their families viewed public schooling as a vehicle for success and empowerment in an Americanized Hawai‘i. Native students attended school to speak English, learn about the world and America, and obtain skills and credentials for social and economic advancement. They did so well aware of the inconsistencies in the rhetoric and reality of Americanization in the schools, the dangers of assimilation to their cultural identity, and the presence of white privilege and racism as hurdles to their success. Fortunately, students did not face these challenges alone. Their families

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<sup>3</sup> Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, “Introduction: Origin and Development of the American Indian Boarding School System,” in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2006), 1–3.

represented a critical support network, sustaining and nurturing students' Native identity while encouraging their pursuit of knowledge, training, and English-language proficiency. Actualizing this vision came at a high price: many families stopped speaking Hawaiian at home to ensure their children mastered the English language. While a painful sacrifice, both parents and students remained proud of their indigeneity and continued to view schools, the most intimate of sites for Americanization, as the best means to prepare for their future as Native Hawaiians.

### **“Turning the Power” Through Student Stories**

For Native Americans, the boarding schools represented a “successful failure” by Americanizers to assimilate Indian students and destroy the foundational “essence” of their culture and identity.<sup>4</sup> While the schools succeeded in providing Native students with an academic, domestic, and vocational education, saturated with American values of domesticity, consumerism, and rugged individualism, Native students and their families “turned the power” by asserting their own positive meaning over their education. They converted the destructive cultural environment of the boarding schools into a constructive learning space for their own purposes such as obtaining skilled employment and foreign knowledge to assert and protect Native claims in white society. This represented a pragmatic approach to white education, accepting certain aspects, rejecting others, and viewing schooling as a “means to an end.”<sup>5</sup>

By the 1910s, many Native Americans faced the grim reality that the only way to ensure the survival of their people and culture in a world dominated by white society required an American education. Native families and tribes began realizing that in order to succeed in the new modern world, their youths needed to learn the ways of the dominant society. This

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>5</sup> Myriam Vuckovic, *Voices from Haskell: Indian Students Between Two Worlds, 1884-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 241.

acknowledgment as to the importance of American schooling did not mean acceptance of the white man's ways as superior. Rather, their engagement with American schooling represented a "continuation of an enduring theme" of integrating "alien customs" into Native "lifeways."<sup>6</sup>

While white "architects of assimilation" expected Indian children to abandon their cultural and tribal ties and "learn to talk and work like Americans," these outcomes never materialized. Rather, Indian students "turned assimilationist logic on its head." They converted schools and the Americanizing curriculum into "vehicles for cultural survival" and demonstrated they *could* talk and work like Americans but *without* becoming American.<sup>7</sup> Ethnomusicologist Melissa Parkhurst defines these examples of student agency as forms of resiliency reflecting a "more expansive and accurate concept" for how students negotiated the numerous ways schools and society encouraged them to be "true or false to his or her self." While the process is difficult to quantify, it reveals the resiliency by which empowered students defined themselves through their achievements, created intertribal social networks, and gained competencies in various subjects useful for survival in white society.<sup>8</sup>

This understanding of resiliency offers an effective means to understand and conceptualize how Native Hawaiian students responded to assimilationism. The public schools of Hawai'i were not federal institutions like the boarding schools that aimed to achieve "education for extinction" in the 1870s.<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, the balance of power between oppressor

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid; Thomas G. Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakotas and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2002): 430.

<sup>7</sup> Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation," 425, 427.

<sup>8</sup> Melissa D. Parkhurst, *To Win the Indian Heart: Music at Chemawa Indian School*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2014), 181, 19.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the impact of American schooling on Native American cultures, see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995).

and oppressed remained very unequal in the territorial school system.<sup>10</sup> Native Hawaiians were not subjected to the same physically traumatic experiences of forced removal to government boarding schools, exposed to military discipline, or twenty-four hour observation. Yet, they still shared strikingly similar school experiences with Native Americans. Repression of indigenous language and culture, subjection to a foreign curriculum in a foreign environment, and denial of their cultural heritage and past represent a common set of occurrences highlighting their mutually painful past. Like their Indian counterparts, Native Hawaiians also subverted their colonial schooling by defying the goals of white authorities and imposing their own.

In 1926, a visiting sociology professor from Texas Christian University, William C. Smith, distributed a research questionnaire to ten public and private intermediate and senior high schools across Hawai‘i. Composing over a dozen questions, Smith asked the following: when and where students were born, the size of their families, the occupation and educational background of their parents, their parents’ ethnicity and places of origin, their attitude on the languages spoken and customs practiced at home, their views on other ethnic groups, how they conceptualized their political identity as Americans, and their future plans. Smith intended his questions as guides, since he was looking for personal narratives capturing students’ overall feelings, impressions, and reactions to various issues. Teachers gave out the questionnaire to their students as an assignment for writing their own life histories. Smith also distributed the questionnaire among his students at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa as well as to those attending the territorial normal school. Smith’s methodology thus provided him with a wide sampling of age ranges, between 13 and 24.

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<sup>10</sup> Alice Littlefield, “The BIA Boarding School: Theories of Resistance and Social Reproduction,” *Humanity and Society* 13, no. 4 (November 1989): 436.

During this same year, the DPI managed 187 elementary, intermediate, and secondary schools, employed 2,145 teachers, and educated 72,574 students across the Hawaiian Islands.<sup>11</sup> While the total number of students and teachers rose throughout the 1920s, the amount of Native Hawaiians in either category steadily declined. In 1920, Native students comprised eighteen percent of the total student population but dipped to ten percent by 1930. This slip was also noticed among Hawaiian normal school students as their numbers dropped from thirty percent at the beginning of the decade to twenty-one percent ten years later. One large reason: increasing numbers of Japanese school-age children and naturalized adults legally able to teach. For in-service Native teachers, their numbers remained relatively steady throughout the 1920s, starting out at thirty-three percent in 1920 and sliding only to twenty-one percent by 1930.<sup>12</sup>

The data drawn from the Smith questionnaires authored by Native Hawaiians affirm this general downward trend. They also comprise a significant component of the data used in this chapter. Native students composed close to ten percent, or 130, of the roughly 1,400 essays collected by Smith. After examining all 130, twenty were selected for this chapter. No data source, of course, is perfect. While assigned as an autobiography, students often failed to compose them as personal memoirs dedicated to themselves. Rather, teachers solicited these papers for a famous white continental researcher that possibly created pressure for students to project a pro-American and pro-English language positions. Also, these papers do not take into

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<sup>11</sup> Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977), 214.

<sup>12</sup> Thayne M. Livesay, *A Study of Public Education in Hawaii: With Special Reference to the Pupil Population*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1932), 76–77; United States Office of Education, *A Survey of Education in Hawaii, Made under the Direction of the Commissioner of Education*, No. 16 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1920), 144–45; Riley H. Allen, “Education and Race Problems in Hawaii,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, June 1922, 7.

account the number of students who forgot their assignment, were absent, or felt too embarrassed about their English-language skills to complete their autobiographies.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the shortcomings, these papers represent a wealth of information for understanding indigenous resiliency in an era of sweeping change. While most were composed anonymously, these sources reveal how Native Hawaiians imposed their own objectives, values, and expectations onto the American educational system. Instead of emphasizing how students responded to specific policy initiatives, student writings focus on how they, their families, and communities refashioned assimilationist schooling to strengthen and maintain their cultural identity, obtain language proficiency, and, to the degree possible, determine their own future. This approach moves away from a policy-oriented emphasis of a passive narrative discussing how students responded to specific schooling agendas and towards an active initiative to secure knowledge and skills in order to succeed and survive in an Americanized Hawai‘i. Thus for Native Hawaiians, their story focuses less on what was done to them and more on “what they did with what was done to them.”<sup>14</sup>

### **Going to School**

In story after story from schools on different islands across the territory, Native students repeatedly emphasized the importance of obtaining a good education to ensure a secure future. They understood that success at school help pave a path to white-collar employment as stenographers, social workers, clerks, secretaries, nurses, lawyers, doctors, and teachers. One Native student believed as much when he wrote, “Hawaiian-born children of my group are

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<sup>13</sup> Sarah Julianne Roberts, “Nativization and the Genesis of Hawaiian Creole,” in *Language Change and Language Contact in Pidgins and Creole*, vol. 21 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, 2000), 277–78.

<sup>14</sup> Charles M. Payne, “Countering the Master Narratives: The ‘Why’ of Education for Liberation,” *Voices in Urban Education* 34 (2010): 8.

attending schools and educational institutions for the benefit of their lives.”<sup>15</sup> Mixed in with their optimism, Native students consistently worried about the future of their people. A student lamented that “everytime” she thought about her people it produced with a “pang of regret that these islands were ever discovered.” Her words captured the grim and poignant reality of Hawaiians, who never envisioned that “someday there [*sic*] lands would be taken from them,” be “shoved toward the ‘outside’ districts,” and “dying out of politics.” Still, despite the gloom, like so many other Native students she expressed hope for the future believing that through their education “Hawaiian children are now being taught how to help their people.”<sup>16</sup>

To many Native Hawaiian students, going to school not only meant them achieving individual success and financial reward. Their autobiographies describe a collective awareness that personal success as students could help their families, too. They espoused a strong communal sense of responsibility and duty to help and improve the quality of life for their families and communities. Thus, their drive to succeed and benefit from an American education would hopefully provide benefits for the wider community. This sense of purpose and dedication especially resonated the loudest and most often from students considering a career in education, and for good reason.

Native Hawaiians consistently ranked highest in the worst statistical categories of health and mortality for the nation and territory throughout the twentieth century. Despite improvements in nutrition, vaccinations, and public sanitation that benefited all residents,

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<sup>15</sup> WCSC R15 MK152, 1–2, William Carlson Smith papers, Reel 15, *Life Histories of Students: Selected Series*, University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

Initials used represent the institutions Native students attended at the time of their life histories. H – University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa, N – Territorial Normal School, MK – McKinley High School, HH – Hilo High School. WCSC – William Carlson Smith Collection, R – Reel.

<sup>16</sup> WCSC R4 HH60, 2,11.

Hawaiians continued to experience the lowest life expectancy and highest rate of stillbirths.<sup>17</sup> At only fourteen percent of the islands' population in 1930, cancer, alcoholism, diabetes, tuberculosis, and diseases typically non-fatal to other ethnicities, such as measles, influenza, and chicken pox, disproportionately ravaged Native Hawaiians. Only in cases of suicide and “violent and accidental deaths” did Hawaiians fare better.<sup>18</sup>

For many aspiring teachers, the plight of their people drove them to act. One student from Hilo was quite blunt when she stated, “I must devote myself to do work for my community instead of helping myself only.”<sup>19</sup> Fearing Hawaiians “gradually fading into the past,” another described his “duty” to give everything within his “power for the rehabilitation of (my) race”<sup>20</sup> One particular “daughter of the soil” worrying about her race “dying out” expressed her frustration that Hawaiian children were “left stranded of many positions” and opportunities to succeed due to the “excess of Orientals” in the schools. She also recognized how immigrant children benefited from active participation in the school system and wanted the same for her people explaining, “I am sure Hawaiian students may be bright also if they put more interest in their studying.” She thus sought to “contribute [her] part to [their] benefit” by becoming a teacher, a common aspiration.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1900 and 1930, Native Hawaiians entered the Territorial Normal School in droves, comprising over thirty percent of the teacher workforce. By 1929, they “alone lead all others, even outnumbering Orientals” as the “largest racial group employed by the Department

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<sup>17</sup> Chronic Disease Management and Control Branch, “Chronic Disease Disparities Report 2011: Social Determinants” (Hawai'i State Department of Health, June 2011); Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, “Mortality Statistics 1931” (United States Printing Office, 1935) 470-474.

<sup>18</sup> Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, “Mortality Statistics 1931,” 470-74.

<sup>19</sup> WCSC R2 HH192, 5.

<sup>20</sup> WCSC R3 HH255, 3.

<sup>21</sup> WCSC R5 HH40, 3-4.

[of Public Instruction], as well as the largest group of graduates” from the school.<sup>22</sup> Motivated and determined, many made it clear why they chose this profession. They wanted to be a “great help” to their communities and make the “younger Hawaii...the best they can be.”<sup>23</sup> One ambitious student-teacher equated her future position to a “great leader in a community, solving problems for the people and helping them.” This sentiment was exceptionally strong when she thought of her “Hawaiian nation...dying out,” exclaiming, “I must do something.” As a result, she dedicated her “future here in Hawaii” to obtaining an advanced degree in curriculum development from a mainland university after teaching for a few years. Her ultimate goal was to become a “specialist in reading and storytelling” and return home to provide Native students with a “proper education.”<sup>24</sup>

Emboldened and motivated, numerous Native Hawaiian students pursued their education with the belief in making a difference. From their writings, they exhibited a clear and strong sense of purpose that success at school increased not only their chances of a productive and positive future for themselves but also that of their families and communities. Yet students did not embark on this journey alone. Underwriting their beliefs and supporting their studies, Native families operated behind-the-scenes. They built a solid home environment for their children to engage their American schooling and still retain their Native identity.

### **Behind-the-Scenes: Families and Teachers**

Native families played a key role in encouraging and affirming their children’s engagement with the American educational system. Their supportive influence reinforced a constructive and pragmatic understanding that to survive in an Americanized Hawai‘i required

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<sup>22</sup> Ruth Cornelia Shaw, “The Output of the Territorial Normal and Training School.” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1929), 25–30, 104.

<sup>23</sup> WCSC R5 N258, 11; R6 N239, 7.

<sup>24</sup> WCSC R6 N195, 7-8.

active participation at school. Throughout their autobiographies, students constantly refer to the efforts of their parents and grandparents to make education a priority. Whether they moved from their rural homes to urban areas (Hilo and Honolulu) for greater access to educational opportunities, prevented them from taking on part-time work lest it hurt their studies, lectured them on the need to learn English, joined the PTA, or simply helped out with their homework, families invested time, resources, and energy to help ensure a successful future for their children. Native Hawaiian parents were not “selling-out.” Instead, living under a system they felt unable to change, they viewed American schooling as a worthy and necessary investment for advancing their children’s needs.

This complex and dynamic history of engagement and exchange with non-Hawaiian societies resembles the historical experiences of American Indians and white settlers on the continent. For nearly three hundred years, Native Americans negotiated, adapted, and resisted European and white-settler colonialism at “different moments and places” across North America. From these encounters, Native tribes “absorbed knowledge” as part of a rational approach to incorporate new learning in their lives. Whether they acquired new languages, literacy, agricultural advancements, equestrianism, artistic designs, and technological advancements (firearms, iron), American Indians demonstrated a pragmatic willingness to “grow, adapt, adopt, and expand their ways of knowing.”<sup>25</sup> These tools and skills allowed them to assert their identity, interests, and physical presence demonstrating how Native survival defined a “primary act of resistance.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, “Introduction: Origin and Development of the American Indian Boarding School System,” 4–5.

<sup>26</sup> Joy Porter, “Progressivism and Native American Self-Expression in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century,” in *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 293.

This understanding does not erase the poverty, broken treaties, forced relocation, loss of land, and death all in the name of “progress” that also accompanied the Native experience with Europeans. Instead, including survival as a form of resistance helps show how overuse of “extermination” as a historiographical theme contributes to a problematically passive and “tidy narrative” describing how Native Americans were “essentially eliminated.”<sup>27</sup> Over emphasis of such a theme “eliminates” any analysis to make “indigenous *persistence*...as important as *resistance*” thus recognizing the only true opposition as acts of “‘doomed’ physical resistance.” For tribes relegated to reservations, this was not an option and survival represented their only “primary act of resistance.” However, to survive first required the “maintenance, often against terrific odds, of the web of social, familial, political, and cultural platforms that make such resistance possible.”<sup>28</sup> Thus for Native American parents, the “redeeming value” in attending the boarding schools was the educational opportunities it provided their children in securing the necessary survival “platforms” to resist assimilation.<sup>29</sup>

Understanding how American Indians faced and engaged settler colonialism provides a framework for conceptualizing how Native Hawaiians also prioritized learning as a rational means to survive. Throughout the nineteenth century, Hawaiians learned how to “grow, adapt, adopt, and expand their ways of knowing” by incorporating western skills and ideas on government, literacy, technology, institutions, and white people into their political systems. They in turn used these foreign systems to advance their interests and ensure their survival in an era of

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<sup>27</sup> Gregory D. Smithers, “Introduction: ‘What Is an Indian?’ - The Enduring Question of American Indian Identity,” in *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Porter, “Progressivism and Native American Self-Expression in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century,” 273–74, 293.

<sup>29</sup> David Wallace Adams, “Beyond Bleakness: The Brighter Side of Indian Boarding Schools,” in *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2006), 36.

increasing foreign encroachment.<sup>30</sup> Even prior to Western contact in 1778, Native Hawaiians never remained “static.” Mele (songs and chants) and mo‘olelo (legends and stories) recount a voyaging period during which numerous round-trip journeys between Hawai‘i and “Kahiki” facilitated the exchange of ideas, language, culture, trade, navigation, and technology. They also describe how ali‘i (chiefs) on both sides used intermarriage to establish and maintain political alliances between distant lands.<sup>31</sup>

For Native parents, participating in the public school system fits within this paradigm. They sought opportunities from an American education for their children to “absorb knowledge” as part of a larger effort to advance their individual and familial interests, resist colonization, and prepare for a better future. Much like their American Indian counterparts, Native Hawaiian families did not promote engagement with the schools expecting students to Americanize and lose their cultural identity. Instead, going to school offered the chance to obtain language skills and “white ways” in order to guide and assist their survival as “distinct entities.” While the loss of language and culture remained a constant worry, many families expressed a greater fear of their children being “left behind” to face an uncertain future as Hawai‘i Americanized.

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<sup>30</sup> Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, “Introduction: Origin and Development of the American Indian Boarding School System,” 4–5. For the role of literacy and Hawaiian-language newspapers during the anti-annexation protests of the late 1890s, see Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), on the restructuring of land tenure, see Stuart Banner, “Preparing to Be Colonized: Land Tenure and Legal Strategy in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii,” *Law & Society Review* 39, no.2 (2005), for the role of masonry as a mark of civilization see Frank J. Karpel Jr., “Mystic Ties of Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Ritual, and Hawaiian Royalty in the Nineteenth Century,” *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no.3 (August 2000), and for state formation and institutional development see Paul D’arcy, “Warfare and State Formation in Hawaii,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 38, no.1 (2003).

<sup>31</sup> Rowland B. Reeve, *Na Wahi Pana O Kaho‘olawe = The Storied Places of Kaho‘olawe: A Study of the Traditional Cultural Places on the Island of Kaho‘olawe* (Wailuku: Kaho‘olawe Island Conveyance Commission, 1993), 163–64; Patrick Vinton Kirch, *On the Road of the Winds: An Archæological History of the Pacific Islands before European Contact*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 291.

Underwriting this Native parental anxiety was that they wanted the best for their children and they did not hesitate to let them know.

Students identified their families as the most powerful influence on their decisions to pursue and excel in their studies. In their autobiographies, many described how their parents went out of their way to give them their “utmost” in providing “ample time to study.”<sup>32</sup> Students also noted how parents “boosted” their children’s spirits when faced with “many difficulties” over their school work, offering emotional support and even tutoring various subjects.<sup>33</sup> One student not only benefited from parental encouragement but also received support from her older siblings who always remained “interested in my school work” and tried to assist her “as much as possible.”<sup>34</sup>

Family support also came at important moments in students’ lives when they questioned the need to continue their education. Some students merely gave a nod of acknowledgement as one explained, “[m]any years after I was in school I realized the importance of an education. After graduating from Grammar School my intention was then to work but father said I ought to continue and go to High School.”<sup>35</sup> Others expressed a bit more of their gratitude as a self-described “Tom boy” described:

During my eighth grade year, I had no intention of going to high school because I wanted to work. I wanted to take up a business course to become a stenographer because my mother had taught me typewriting and with this little start I wanted and was interested in office work but my mother insisted on my attending high school. I consented and now I am thankful. One reason for my being thankful is because the girl friends with whom I associated preferred married life to education...If I had not left Maui, I would probably have followed their footsteps.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> WCSC R4 HH60, 5.

<sup>33</sup> WCSC R3 HH250, 3.

<sup>34</sup> WCSC R15 MK414, 4.

<sup>35</sup> WCSC R2 HH158, 2, 3.

<sup>36</sup> WCSC R5 N221, 2-3.

Such support often contributed to developing students' "duty to help." As one student put it, his family was "always helping me to become successful. This has given me sympathy and courage to go through school and...earn enough money to support myself and my parents."<sup>37</sup> Another saw parental influence on a macro scale commenting on how "parents are helping many young people by sending them to schools" and how this active involvement produced positive results.

The Hawaiian-born children of my racial group are trying hard to get a good education. They are willing to get out of school and work for themselves. When they are earning there [*sic*] own living they help there [*sic*] parents. In this way they make there [*sic*] parents feel happy. They also think that it was worth while sending there [*sic*] children to school.<sup>38</sup>

Active parental involvement in their children's education occurred regardless of their own educational background. For parents who graduated from high school and even attended college, they wanted their children to receive "every educational opportunity possible" in an effort to replicate their positive experiences with school. As a university student named "Pauline" described, "[o]ur parents, being educated, realize the value of education and have always urged us to take advantage of the opportunities afforded us."<sup>39</sup> This was certainly not unique to the well educated. In many cases, Native parents born and raised in rural districts, often with only an elementary school education, sought to ensure their children obtained the educational opportunities they never received. As one student observed, the parents of his community wanted to "solve their children's educational problems by belonging to the P.T.A" in order to afford them a "better education than they themselves were able to obtain."<sup>40</sup> However,

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<sup>37</sup> WCSC R14 MK122, 6, 8.

<sup>38</sup> WCSC R HH

<sup>39</sup> WCSC R2 Life History of Pauline Gleason, 1.

<sup>40</sup> WCSC R15 MK152, 5-6.

while parents clearly held a vested interest in the success of their children, they were not the only ones.

Sympathetic teachers often augmented familial support. A number of students regarded Native Hawaiian educators as positive role models who challenged them to excel in their studies and provided critical guidance and encouragement for them to pursue and advance their schooling. These students described their impressions of how Native teachers sought to make a difference in their communities by building connections with their students to promote a positive association with education. A normal school student told the story of her “excellent” elementary school teacher in Hāna, Maui, who “influenced [her] several times to study harder and become a teacher so that I could come right back and teach in the country.”<sup>41</sup> Another spoke of how a Native married couple, both teachers, “did everything to encourage” her to perform well at school. Affectionately called “Auntie Norah” and “Uncle Wilbur,” they “urged” her to become a teacher. Having “not regretted taking this step,” she finished high school and soon enrolled at the territorial normal school and was “ready to begin real teaching.” She also held high “hopes of going away to specialize” in an advanced degree on the continent.<sup>42</sup>

Student recognition of the positive influences exhibited by Native teachers and parents on their academic pursuits demonstrated how the Native community associated American schooling as a means for success. This acknowledgement did not mean they accepted and condoned Americanization. Rather, they viewed schooling as a vehicle for achieving socio-economic stability in an uncertain time. This strategy came at a price. For Native Hawaiians, establishing a stable and productive future within Hawai‘i’s white settler-colonial society required adopting the socially and economically vital, but culturally caustic, tool of survival: the English language.

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<sup>41</sup> WCSC R6 N197, 9.

<sup>42</sup> WCSC R5 N258, 5, 8.

### The Survival Tool

The earliest written accounts of Native Hawaiians learning English came from the accounts of British and American visitors onboard foreign vessels frequenting Hawai‘i following the arrival of British Naval Captain James Cook in 1778. They described how Hawaiians obtained English-language proficiency either from their time as laborers or sailors on foreign ships or from regular contact with the islands’ small population of English-speaking residents. Many ali‘i expressed great interest in acquiring English-language literacy and obtained tutors to develop their skills. Yet, as linguist Albert J. Schutz explains, while these early desires to learn English came from Hawaiians themselves, after 1820, the “pressure was external.”<sup>43</sup>

The year 1820 marked the arrival of Congregational missionaries from Boston committed to their “world saving” project of spreading the word of God and instilling an “entire moral revolution” in the islands’ pagan population. This “crusader mentality” belonged to a larger millennial movement of religious excitement sweeping the United States between the 1790s and 1820s, also known as the “Second Great Awakening,” that involved virtually all Protestant denominations.<sup>44</sup> Initially they held no plan of replacing the native language with English. Unable to converse in Hawaiian, missionaries simply viewed English as a “pro tempore way” to spread the Christian religion, and they began building private schools to educate both ali‘i and commoners about the language. However, they structured their English-language instruction for native speakers, not second-language learners, focusing less on grammatical structure and more on literature appreciation. The result was a “twenty-five year history of failures” in promoting the English language as the medium of instruction. This outcome, coupled with the lack of public

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<sup>43</sup> Albert J. Schütz, *The Voices of Eden: A History of Hawaiian Language Studies* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1994), 289–292.

<sup>44</sup> John Demos, *The Heathen School: A Story of Hope and Betrayal in the Age of the Early Republic*, (New York: Knopf, 2014), 4–5, 62–65.

money to properly educate all Native schools in the language, contributed to a general lack of interest among rural Hawaiians in learning English by the late 1830s.<sup>45</sup>

This was not the case in the Hawaiian Kingdom's political and commercial capital of Honolulu. The growing influx of English-speaking merchants, whalers, military personnel, and foreign diplomats in the early nineteenth century symbolized Hawai'i's participation in the global networks of trade and international relations. In response, many high-ranking ali'i sent their children to the Royal School in preparation for their eventual roles as either mō'i (ruling monarch) or upper-level government positions. Built by Kamehameha III in 1840, ali'i wanted the future rulers of Hawai'i to learn English and study the ways of other "enlightened nations" in order to survive as an independent indigenous country within a westernizing Pacific.<sup>46</sup> However, by the late 1870s, the political and cultural climate began to radically change, threatening the very survival of Native sovereignty.

The resurgence of Hawaiian nationalism challenged the expansion of foreign influence and the steep rise in immigrant laborers exacerbated the white minority's fears of marginalization. In their minds, this justified their attempts to Americanize Hawai'i. In the early 1890s, white educators promoted the study of English at private and public schools by creating hostile environments for the use of Hawaiian. At the all-Native Hawaiian Kamehameha Schools, the board of trustees and Principal William Oleson forbade Hawaiian language usage on school grounds. The North Pacific Missionary Institute changed the language of instruction from

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<sup>45</sup> Schütz, *The Voices of Eden*, 293, 296; Trafzer, Keller, and Sisquoc, "Introduction," 1.

<sup>46</sup> Julie Kaomea, "Education for Elimination in Nineteenth-Century Hawai'i: Settler Colonialism and the Native Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's Boarding School," *History of Education Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (May 2014): 124; Schütz, *The Voices of Eden*, 298; for more on the history of the Royal School from the missionary perspective see Linda K. Menton, "A Christian and 'Civilized' Education: The Hawaiian Chiefs' Children's School, 1839-50," *History of Education Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1992): 213-42.

Hawaiian to English for students studying to become missionaries. He concluded that the “time seems close at hand” for a “new era of social development” requiring English as a “prominent feature” of the institute. Hawaiian-language public schools dwindled as the Board of Education shifted more money to English-language schools. While these policies of attrition failed to eliminate the Hawaiian language, they created a more active form of neglect by limiting its use and perpetuation in the public sphere. They also stunted the spread of the language and growth of fluent speakers by restricting the opportunities for foreigners to learn the language at school. Thus, the swift decline of Hawaiian schools during the late nineteenth century resulted not from growing indigenous interest in English-language schools but from a “concerted government policy of neglect and opposition” towards the Hawaiian language.<sup>47</sup> Down but not out, ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language) continued to stagger along in the few remaining Hawaiian schools.

The death knell came in 1893 with the overthrow of Queen Lili‘uokalani led by the islands’ white business elites and supported by U.S. Marines. These white-minority “revolutionaries” quickly established the Republic of Hawaii (1893-1898) and began preparing the local non-white population for annexation. This change of government created the friendly political conditions for the passage of Act 57 (1896) reorganizing the public school system and, under section 30, establishing the English language as the “medium and basis of instruction” for all private and public schools. Any institutions failing to comply by the provisions of this act faced losing their accreditation and financial support from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Authorized with the “entire charge and control” for the “conduct of all affairs appertaining to public instruction,” including the ability to “regulate the course of study to be

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<sup>47</sup> William E.H. Tagupa, “Education, Change, and Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Hawai‘i,” *Pacific Studies* 5, no. 1 (1981): 68; Schütz, *The Voices of Eden*, 349–55.

pursued in all grades of public schools,” the American officials at the DPI all but ensured the demise of the Hawaiian language.<sup>48</sup>

This external pressure to make English the *de facto lingua franca* exposes the extent to which Hawai‘i’s white elites at the turn of the twentieth century constructed education policy to assimilate Native Hawaiians into the American ethos. As the dominant ethnic group in the islands, Native Hawaiians represented the greatest organized obstacle to white minority rule and their goal of annexation to the U.S. Designed under this context, Act 57, section 30, was not just about replacing official mediums of instruction; it was about going after the cultural core of Native identity in order to neutralize Native Hawaiians as a political threat.

Many contemporary Native Hawaiians place great emphasis on Act 57, section 30 as the root cause for the demise of their language, culture, and way of life. Certainly a powerful influence, this understanding of the act oversimplifies the historical complexity and nuances of this era by presuming Native Hawaiians remained passive, simple victims lacking any influence or control over their future. In reality, the adoption of the English language by Native Hawaiians represented a complex survival strategy during an age of Americanization and indigenous marginalization. While Michael C. Coleman warns against overusing the “triumphalist empowerment” argument, portraying the “erstwhile victim as now the near-controller” of a colonizer-colonized experience, in myriad ways Native Hawaiians successfully navigated the American school system and preserved their cultural identity.<sup>49</sup> Thus as student autobiographies illustrate, the Native response was anything but simple.

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<sup>48</sup> Hawaii, *Laws of the Republic of Hawaii Passed by the Legislature*, 1896, 186, 189.

<sup>49</sup> Michael C. Coleman, “The Symbiotic Embrace: American Indians, White Educators and the School,” *History of Education* 25, no. 1 (March 1996): 17.

Students' life histories from the 1920s complicate the singular view that the DPI was solely responsible for the decline of 'ōlelo Hawai'i in the public sphere. Their stories reveal the innate parental instinct exhibited by Hawaiian families for employing extreme measures to secure a better future for their children. This impulse informed their conscious decision not to teach or speak the Hawaiian language at home and instead replace it with English. Many Native parents believed that surviving and prospering in an Americanized Hawai'i required proficiency in English and practicing their native tongue only hampered their children's chances for success. Faced with an uncertain future, parents adopted the English language as a tool for survival.

In their life histories, students explain why their parents chose not to speak to them in Hawaiian. The father of a Native university student named Ernie described to her grandmother their "native tongue... was very seldom heard in the house" because Ernie was "having a hard time learning to speak English correctly."<sup>50</sup> In another instance, Pauline's father maintained a high level of Hawaiian-language proficiency but the family only spoke in English because her mother did not understand Hawaiian. However, it was not the mother's fault. Pauline's grandparents deliberately chose not to speak in Hawaiian to her mother and her siblings as they grew up believing that the "English language would be THE language and that the learning of their native language would make it harder for them to learn English." As a result, her mother never learned to speak Hawaiian.<sup>51</sup>

Other student stories contain a more nuanced discussion about their families' appropriation of English as a survival tool. With both parents as native 'ōlelo Hawai'i speakers, one student described how they naturalized the use of English at home despite their limited comprehension. As she explained, "I must admit that my mother does not speak English very

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<sup>50</sup> WCSC R1 H41, 1.

<sup>51</sup> WCSC R2 Life History of Pauline Gleason, 1.

fluently, but in teaching me to speak it from babyhood, she established quite a good foundation for my school life in the grammar grades.”<sup>52</sup> Another expressed how her grandfather, a former teacher at a Hawaiian school on Maui, “realized the importance and advantage of speaking English as he was neglected of that privilege during his younger days.” Despite his rudimentary language skills, she noticed how he utilized English to assist him in dealings with prominent haole who eventually paid the tuition for his sons to attend private schools on O‘ahu. Impressed, she worked for a haole family during her summer vacations realizing that the “more I come in contact with them the better I can improve my English.”<sup>53</sup>

These student experiences capture a difficult moment for the Native Hawaiian community. Facing a deluge of outside interests and people reshaping the cultural, social, and demographic fabric of Hawai‘i, Hawaiian families faced the tough dilemma: save their language or save their children. Witnesses to the mushrooming of America’s presence and the English language in the islands, Native parents and grandparents were forced to reconcile the uncompromising demands of Americanization with their imperiled cultural values and being. Student stories provide rare insight into how their families’ wrestled with the bleak reality that the English language and America were here to stay. They establish the worldview of Native Hawaiians prioritizing English proficiency over Hawaiian as a means to resist marginalization and assert control for a better future.

Parents were not the only ones fretting over the future. Embedded within their autobiographies were student complaints about their elders’ strategy to unilaterally deny them their native language. They overwhelmingly disagreed with the singular focus their families and community applied in preparing them for the future. They also expressed disappointment and

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<sup>52</sup> WCSC R3 HH256, 1.

<sup>53</sup> WCSC R6 N197, 4, 8.

irritation at their families' overzealous, but well-intended, decision to learn English at any cost rather than advocate for the return of Hawaiian-language schools or promote usage of Hawaiian at home and English at school. Many students expressed embarrassment at their inability to respond fluently when spoken to in Hawaiian and vented their frustration at the lack of opportunities to learn their language either at home or at school. However, students did more than just complain. Many expressed confidence in their abilities to successfully engage Americanization and adopt English while also preserving their cultural identity.

Ernie's story effectively describes this strategy. Writing in the third-person, "Ernie" credited her father for fostering her interest "in things Hawaiian" and wanting to learn the language. She explained if her father, Mr. Mara "hadn't [*sic*] been educated to American ideals and standards and kept up with time, Ernie might have found herself balked [*sic*] at any such attempt." Both parents regularly "looked over her report card with the greatest care, but there was little they could find that displeas[e]d them." Such affirmation of their American schooling reflected how many Native students simply viewed their education independent of the assimilationist agenda of the DPI. To Ernie, "[i]t has always seemed to me that we were just as good as the haole's and that our family life was the same as in the Average American home." She also identified how her father and mother's own educational experiences made it "much easier for them to adapt themselves to the aho[e] [*sic*] [haole] ways they were being taught."<sup>54</sup>

This syncretic adaptation showed how Native families played a critical role in maintaining students' cultural identity while supporting their educational development immersed in a foreign language and learning system. For Ernie, her parents' interest and educational background fostered a general appreciation for "absorbing knowledge" that included both her

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<sup>54</sup> WCSC R1 H41, 2-3.

Native heritage and American education. Not all students were as fortunate however. For those who lacked such parental involvement, many expressed a desire for the public schools to get involved in supporting the Hawaiian language.

One Hilo High School student recognized that English “counted more than anything else” and committed herself to improving her language skills by going to the library and getting together with “haoles” to practice speaking “good English.” Like many other students, her family only spoke English at home despite her parents’ proficiency in Hawaiian. But not once did she reject her Native identity or abandon her heritage. While acknowledging the importance of English, she also expressed clear interest in her native language, explaining that “[i]f there was a school for Hawaiians...I would go, for I want to be able to speak and write my native language.”<sup>55</sup>

Another Hilo High student shared similar frustrations over the “lackness” of her mother tongue despite her parents being “well learned in it.” While claiming to “understand well,” she described her ability to speak as “very little and brokenly.” Disappointed with her family, but motivated to learn, she planned to eventually “study Hawaiian in the schools of Honolulu.” Looking beyond her own predicament, she also expressed a fervent “wish that the Hawaiian language would be taught in every school of the territory.” Believing the survival of their language was of “vital importance” to Hawaiians of all generations, she called on the public schools to address the interests of her community.<sup>56</sup>

These clear assertions of confidence represent how many Native students maintained their indigenous identities contrary to the goals of the Americanization campaign. While denied the opportunity to learn their language, encouraged to study English, and repeatedly exposed to

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<sup>55</sup> WCSC R2 HH192, 2-4.

<sup>56</sup> WCSC R5 HH40, 4.

an assimilationist curriculum, student autobiographies show how many continued to see themselves as Native Hawaiian. This sentiment only grew stronger and more pronounced when students focused their attention on Hawai‘i’s “color line” and Americanization. In their life histories, Native youth shared their candid assessments about the hypocrisy of Americanizers preaching equal opportunity in a nation that practiced racial discrimination. Their stories offer testimony to a larger historical experience of inequality to which they responded by rejecting the rhetoric of Americanization and defying the effects of assimilation.

One Normal school student wanted to attend college on the continent but learned how the “strong racial feelings in the states” that would have caused her to be “looked upon as a negress” resulting in “all privilege barred” from her. Drawing connections, she turned to her experiences in Hawai‘i, asking quizzically, “why do the haoles come to our islands and create brotherly love and say, ‘Let us have peace,’ ‘Let us have one heart and mind,’ [but] deep in their hearts they do not mean what they say.” Frustrated with haoles who “looked down upon us as browns,” she felt that of “all the races” here, Hawaiians seemed “to be given no chances of advancing so that they too may be outstanding in the face of the public.” As a result, she advocated “disposing some of the haoles” since they held “greater advantages in educational work thereby robbing the others of the same privilege.”<sup>57</sup>

To many Native students, this “greater advantage” simply meant skin color. One angry Normal student interrogated a hypothetical white person asking, “Why do the White people have private schools for their children?”

Most likely your answer will be: To protect your child from speaking incorrect English or because the Orientals or other nationalities give the wrong accent to the English words. Is this not drawing a color line?....The White people have been the very people that have

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<sup>57</sup> WCSC R6 N197, 10-12.

drawn the color line. I have felt this barrier in many circumstances that I have come in contact during my life.<sup>58</sup>

His critique of white people did not end with his personal experiences with racial discrimination. He expanded his criticism further, exposing a broader paradox in the DPI mission of promoting “racial harmony.”

To create a harmonious atmosphere between the whites and other nationalities is to allow them to mingle with each other. How can they solve the future problems of the world if that color barrier is not done away with? . . . they think that God made them to live and eat while the poor colored skin people were made to slave for them. All the different nationalities could work in harmony but the whites could not. Maybe if they would come down from their ‘high horses’ the world would be working in harmony.”<sup>59</sup>

By exposing inconsistencies in the theory and practice of universal qualities of American egalitarianism, Native students refused to accept second-class treatment. They also resented the importation of America’s attitudes on racial hierarchy and white privilege prevalent on the continent. Flustered with the racial double standards and the preferential treatment haole received, this student observed how even ethics and public laws did not apply equally to whites and non-whites.

“[i]f a Haole is able to ‘get away’ with immorality; immoral dress, immoral speech, immoral thought, immoral conduct, its [*sic*] perfectly all right; but just as soon as a Hawaiian . . . girl or boy starts the same thing, then the public is down on them; they are criticized and ostracized. This has been proven time and time again from observation.

Not long ago, there was a ‘booze raid’ in a white family home, but no names were mentioned, the supposition is that if it had been a Hawaiian family or a home of any other race, very likely their names would have been made public. I ask ‘Why?’ Are the Haoles privileged characters?”<sup>60</sup>

According to other students, these inconsistencies extended beyond society and the legal system. Many observed white privilege existing in the very institution proselytizing them about

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<sup>58</sup> WCSC R6 N195, 8-9.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

<sup>60</sup> WCSC R6 N190, 8-9.

the greatness of the American Dream. Hilo High School student John K. Akau outright believed the DPI was “too political” and were “sponsors of race prejudice.” Convinced that even if he “had all A’s,” “because I am brown” it would be difficult to “secure a position, . . . as an instructor.”<sup>61</sup> Echoing this sentiment, another Hilo High student queried, “Why should they [the DPI] import the Mainland teachers while we have lots here that may take their place.”<sup>62</sup>

These societal injustices rooted in white American attitudes on race exposed Native students to the adversity their skin color and cultural heritage posed to their lives and future in an Americanized Hawai‘i. While certainly frustrated, students refused to allow racism to negatively impact how they embraced their indigenous identity, culture, and community. Some were explicit about how racial discrimination failed to affect their confidence. Defiant and self-assured, one student boldly wrote, “I knew even in grammer [*sic*] grades that I was different in color from the ‘haoles’ but at no time have I even felt myself or any of my other friends inferior to them.” Even when labeled a lazy “kanaka” by various haole, he stood tall believing that “before God we are all alike and that God does not favor the whites.”<sup>63</sup> Others were brief and straightforward: “I am 16 years old and I am a part Hawaiian girl. I’m proud of it.”<sup>64</sup>

One of the best and most articulate examples of this Native defiance was Charles W. Kenn. A graduate of Hawai‘i’s first public high school, named after a key architect of the islands’ annexation to the U.S., President William McKinley, Kenn exemplified the ways in which many Native Hawaiian students, and later as adults, resisted assimilation during Hawai‘i’s pre-statehood years. Like many of his people who attended the territorial public schools, he refused to replace his culture, identity, and history. Proud and defiant, Kenn adopted English,

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<sup>61</sup> WCSC R4 HH69 Life history of John K. Akau, 6.

<sup>62</sup> WCSC R3 HH257, 5.

<sup>63</sup> WCSC R4 HH60, 9.

<sup>64</sup> WCSC R3 HH257, 2.

rejected Americanization, and perpetuated a strong and assertive Native voice at a critical moment in Native Hawaiian history.

I do not want to become a sorry imitation white man. I want to retain some of my own individuality. I want to know something about my own people, and I want to retain that knowledge for posterity.<sup>65</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, Native student stories did not reveal any larger movement of organized resistance capable of destabilizing either the American presence in Hawai‘i or the educational system. However, they demonstrate how Native identity failed to disappear upon annexation and actually continued to persevere throughout the twentieth century. While not equal in visibility to more demonstrative forms of violence and protest, Hawaiian students’ subtler expressions of defiance and refusal broadens the lens of resistance to include a greater number of examples embodying non-compliance and rejection of assimilation. This view requires understanding student agency as a measured oppositional response, either overt or subtle, to the imposition of control by schools on student minds and actions. Native students resisted their victimization through strategies that allowed them to retain their dignity, some degree of freedom, and a positive sense of themselves in a system that they felt they could not substantially change.<sup>66</sup>

As historian David B. Tyack explains, “unforeseen consequences of administrative progressivism becomes most clear” when examining the schooling experiences of those “at the bottom of the social structure.”<sup>67</sup> This is certainly appropriate when applied to the Native Hawaiian student experience during Hawai‘i’s territorial period. Student stories disrupt the passive narrative of native compliance and disappearance to reveal a variety of ways Hawaiians

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<sup>65</sup> Kenn, “I Am a Hawaiian,” 21.

<sup>66</sup> Vuckovic, *Voices from Haskell*, 127, 223.

<sup>67</sup> David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 181.

engaged the school system to survive settler colonial society and resist complete assimilation. They also offer a unique look at not just the inconsistencies of the Americanization experience at school in regards to race and access to equal opportunity but also the broader territorial society. However, student perspectives were not the only indigenous views from the “bottom of the social structure.” Native Hawaiian teachers and administrators also attempted to reconcile their professional commitments with their cultural identity and heritage.

## Chapter Four: Teachers

### Introduction

**Interviewer:** *Do you recall if any of the teachers were sort of building up the idea of being haole or the haole education, or was it just pretty much you were going to school and that was it?*

**EE:** *Just going to school.*<sup>1</sup>

**Interviewer:** *What factors have re-excited your interest in your Hawaiian background and the interest of people around you?*

**EE:** *Well, I've always been, from the time when I began to teach (1923), that's when I became aware. When my grandfather made me proud to feel that I had Hawaiian and I was educated and could hold my own...I became more aware of what we can do as Hawaiians if we went ahead and educated ourselves but don't forget that we're still Hawaiians.*<sup>2</sup>

In a 1977 interview, retired schoolteacher Elizabeth Nalani McMillan Ellis painted a complicated picture of Native Hawaiian teachers and their relationship with the Americanization project during the Territorial Period. Neither mindless automatons nor radical nationalists, Native educators occupied a difficult middle ground where they wafted between those polar extremes at various times in their lives. As Ellis revealed, she remained aloof to the Americanization forces as a grade-school student, but the cumulative exposure eventually led to anxieties about herself as a Native Hawaiian in her college years. These detrimental effects, however, were mitigated by the positive impact of her family to sustain and nurture her cultural identity while supporting her education and professional aspirations.

Ellis' experiences illustrate the ways in which Native Hawaiians contested, subverted, and appropriated various aspects of Americanization while maintaining their cultural identity. Her story also illuminates a general range of experiences shared among Hawaiian teachers that help

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Ellis, interview by June Gutmanis, *Life Histories of Native Hawaiians*, November 1978, Center for Oral History, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, HI, 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

explain the roots of Native resistance and survival that resulted from the collective effort of various actors and institutions in the Hawaiian community. As this chapter explains, one important institution was the public school system and equally important actors were Native educators.

Like Native students, Hawaiian educators expressed a range of thoughts and views that disputed the scope and effectiveness of the Americanization program as portrayed by white schoolmen. They understood and engaged their profession in ways that benefited them personally (financial independence, adventure, advancement opportunities, professional career, respect), supported their families (economic security), and improved their community (role models, mentors, active volunteers, Native cultural and language arts practitioners). Their objectives clashed with the univocal effort of the DPI to make Hawai‘i American. While not openly challenging and defying their white superiors, Native educators implemented agendas inside and outside of their classrooms that disrupted assimilationist efforts.

Their exploits, however, remain largely absent from the history of the Territorial Period. The standard historical narrative of this era takes a sweeping and monolithic view of teachers as Americanizers during this time. Lawrence Fuchs’ *Hawaii Pono* offers a celebratory account describing territorial teachers as the “godparents of modern Hawaii” who viewed teaching “more than a job” but a “dedication.”<sup>3</sup> As the “principal transmitters of American civilization,” they brought an evangelical fervor to making Hawai‘i America. They introduced alongside the three R’s the dominant characteristics of American culture to the islands’ predominantly “dark-skinned and slant-eyed” public school student population. Teachers especially placed great emphasis on American history and government, free enterprise, and the meaning of democracy

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<sup>3</sup> Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 282–83.

to draw a sharp contrast with the cultural and social systems of students' backgrounds. To illustrate their points, they pointed to the heroes of American history to stir romantic imaginations about pioneers who conquered the wilderness, patriots revolting against tyranny, and "humble haole" who rose from "rags to riches" to demonstrate what "one could do in America."<sup>4</sup> According to Fuchs, such lessons and stories instilled the message that America rewarded individual hard work, competitive spirit, and belief in freedom with success and opportunity.

Underwriting the path to American success was freedom of choice. As Fuchs explained, "Freedom was the keynote of this culture."<sup>5</sup> "Home-grown" educators chose to become teachers and white continental instructors chose to make Hawai'i their home. They relayed to students through their career choice and instruction that everyone possessed the freedom to select their future leaders, jobs, and mates. They sought to promote a "new way of life" different from the "old-country ways" students' families observed at home by offering a liberally inclusive brand of civic Americanization replacing the socialization responsibilities of Hawai'i's "alien" parents.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately for Hawai'i's ethnically diverse children, "no community in the world was blessed with so devoted a group of white and nonwhite educators" dedicated to social elevation and the advancement of freedom. Thanks to them, students were not destined for a fixed future.

A generation after Fuchs, Bernard K. Hyams challenged this univocal view of territorial teachers. He questioned whether teachers in Hawai'i actually practiced and believed DPI expectations and warned scholars not to "attribute too much to the school as a social

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 283–84.

institution.”<sup>7</sup> He acknowledged Fuch’s view that teachers promoted the cultural and political socialization of Hawai‘i’s students as “plausible enough” but argued that other factors “accelerated” or “retarded” student reception of assimilation.<sup>8</sup>

As Hyams pointed out, “instructions and exhortations, especially of the repetitive kind” suggested many teachers were not “persuasive agents of influence.” While he found ample evidence concerning qualifications, preparation, expectations, and directives provided to teachers over the span of their careers, he cautioned against overestimating the role of teachers as “either crusaders or robots.” Although many of Hawai‘i’s white continental teachers may have been “liberal visionaries” committed to making territorial schools “crucibles of democracy,” the vast majority were itinerants on a “brief sojourn in the tropical sun.” The other half of Hawai‘i’s teacher force (local and nonwhite) settled into education as an “occupation characterized by caution rather than by radical zeal.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, according to Hyams, rather than an army of Americanizing proselytizers, Hawai‘i’s teachers represented a complex group that confounded assimilation.

Michelle Morgan further complicated the assimilationist role of teachers by revealing how they actively debated and constructed alternative visions of Americanization for Hawai‘i’s students. She revealed a dynamic workforce that turned their classrooms into “spaces of negotiation,” modifying the meanings and methods of Americanization in order to uphold the civic ideals of equal opportunity and democracy in public education. They resisted DPI and white planters’ efforts to create separate public schools systems based on vocational education and English language ability. Teachers feared that such policies would have relegated the

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<sup>7</sup> B. K. Hyams, “School Teachers as Agents of Cultural Imperialism in Territorial Hawaii,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 20, no. 4 (October 1, 1985): 218.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 208, 218.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 218–19.

islands' local, nonwhite students to pre-destined careers on plantations and limited their opportunities for social mobility. They also challenged school policies aimed at inserting continental ideas on race and citizenship into Hawai'i's curriculum meant to conform student behavior to local elites' concepts of what constituted American. Thus, teacher engagement with Americanization mediated and shaped the meaning of American identity to align with national ideas of equal opportunity and democratic participation to best serve the needs of Hawai'i's students.<sup>10</sup>

By positioning teachers as central actors during the territorial period, Fuchs, Hyams, and Morgan tell a story of Hawai'i's dynamic teaching force challenging, negotiating, and participating in Americanization. This collective narrative however understates the specific ways the cultural background and identity of Native teachers shaped and defined their unique relationship and engagement with assimilationist policies and schools. While effective as an organizational strategy, this history examines teacher behavior and activity through a binary lens of white/colonizer and nonwhite/colonized "other." Doing so homogenizes the historical experiences of Asian immigrant and Native Hawaiian teachers into a collective past that reinforces a "developmental narrative" of Hawai'i's "harmonious multiculturalism."<sup>11</sup> This shared history obfuscates the complex and nuanced ways Native Hawaiian educators navigated

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<sup>10</sup> Michelle Morgan, "Americanizing the Teachers: Identity, Citizenship, and the Teaching Corps in Hawai'i, 1900-1941," *Western Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 165-67.

<sup>11</sup> This shared narrative begins with the colonization of Native Hawaiians, expands to include a common suffering due to racist treatment by the white oligarchy, and culminates with multicultural democracy and statehood. Candace Fujikane, "Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai'i," in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawaii*, ed. Jonathan Y. Okamura and Candace Fujikane (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 1-4.

and rationalized their decisions and actions as an indigenous people colonized on their native land.<sup>12</sup>

Focusing historical inquiry on Native teachers disrupts this broader narrative by shedding light on how they established, presented, and modeled a constructive working relationship between colonial education and self-determination to Native students and their communities. This narrative framework defines American schooling as a colonial educational system and reveals how Native teachers ardently sought ways to sustain Hawaiian identity and promote survival in a climate hostile to Native nationalism and cultural expression. It outlines a set of experiences and strategies involving American education unique to Native teachers and separate from their non-Native colleagues by drawing upon analyses involving race, gender, indigeneity, and settler colonialism. Doing so helps explain why numerous Native Hawaiians, especially women, entered teaching as a pragmatic strategy for financial self-sufficiency, professional recognition, family support, and community advancement. Thus, exploring the experiences of Native educators further complicate the role of Hawai‘i’s teachers in facilitating Americanization and highlight their contributions to sustaining a vibrant indigenous presence in territorial Hawai‘i.

### **Teachers and Teaching Institutions**

In the decades before World War II, Native Hawaiians dominated the civil service. Employment in local government represented a steady means of income allowing Hawaiians to

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<sup>12</sup> Haunani-Kay Trask, “Settlers of Color and ‘Immigrant’ Hegemony: ‘Locals’ in Hawai‘i,” in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawaii*, ed. Jonathan Y. Okamura and Candace Fujikane (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 45–50.

avoid direct white planter control over their financial means.<sup>13</sup> While this freed many from the racial hierarchy on the plantations, political patronage controlled who received county and municipal government jobs. With politics squarely within a “man’s world,” men dominated most positions, especially managerial, thus relegating women to secretaries or typists.

Things operated differently in the world of education. Teaching represented one of the few professional careers available to women and, as a civil service position, it offered a transparent salary schedule unaffected by gender or racial bias. It also provided maternity leave, job security for married women, and, more importantly, exemption from the patronage system. One key reason for this independence was centralization. Under the Hawaiian Monarchy, the Ministry of Education consolidated all public schools under its governance and American officials left the system intact after annexation in 1898. For administrative progressives, the structure of Hawai‘i’s school system conformed nicely with their desire to ensure schools operated under a “rational and expert process of decision-making.” In their minds, central governance eliminated corruption, inefficiency, and ignorance resulting from direct public involvement in school-related matters.<sup>14</sup>

Another important reason that ensured teaching rose above politics was the territory’s superintendent. As a gubernatorial appointee, the position tended to be filled by white administrative progressives born, raised, and trained on the continent. These schoolmen brought with them the core values of administrative progressivism (scientific management, efficient bureaucracy, and meritocracy) and infused them into the territorial school system. While not immune from paternalistic attitudes on race and gender that regulated American society, these

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<sup>13</sup> Ronald T. Takaki, *Raising Cane: The World of Plantation Hawaii* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1994), 22.

<sup>14</sup> David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 176.

education experts sought to professionalize teachers through clear, quantitative data supporting standards of measurement and assessment. As a result, teacher selection was to be a meritocratic process overseen by a central school board of education professionals designed to eliminate “nepotism, favoritism, and political influence” associated with ward-based patronage.<sup>15</sup>

These developments proved extremely beneficial for female Native Hawaiian educators. Bureaucratic norms of “reward by merit and performance” assured them that “preference by sex, or race, or religion, or class” remained “irrelevant and noxious.”<sup>16</sup> This was evident early on in Hawai‘i regarding teachers’ salaries. In 1902, the DPI codified a “carefully prepared schedule” standardizing teachers’ pay across lines of gender, “race, color, nationality, party politics, [and] religious belief.” This “uniform for all” system ensured that women “filling corresponding positions and having equal certificates and experience” as men could expect the same pay.<sup>17</sup> This salary structure however was far from common elsewhere in the nation.

Teachers’ salary schedules varied greatly across the U.S. Location (rural vs. urban), race, gender, grade level (primary or secondary), and education credentials all affected how much an individual teacher received. In the 1910s, things began to change as education reformers started advocating for a single salary schedule for all teachers, regardless if they taught elementary or secondary or were male or female. However, by 1930, only a dozen states had adopted equal-pay laws. A number of cities across the country in that same year managed to implement uniform pay schedules based on years of service and professional preparation.<sup>18</sup> While effective for municipal

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<sup>15</sup> “Report of the Commissioner of Education,” *Hawaii Educational Review* 7, no. 9 (September 1919): 7.

<sup>16</sup> Tyack, *The One Best System*, 65.

<sup>17</sup> *In the Matter of the Public School System of the Territory of Hawaii; a Protest*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 128.

areas, country districts remained unaffected thus creating a statewide salary divide between rural and urban teachers.

Watching from afar, Hawai‘i’s administrative progressives beamed with pride. Commenting on the helter-skelter salary systems on the continent, they drew comparisons and made conclusions about their pay schedule and school system as a whole, believing that they represented a leading voice in school administrative reform. They also made sure their teachers knew how good they had it. In 1919, the editors of the *Hawaii Educational Review* (HER) proudly informed their readers, “Hawaii’s school administrative system is the ideal towards which educators on the mainland are looking forward.” They boasted about the uniformity, fairness, and efficiency of Hawai‘i’s school system, highlighting that every school followed a 190-day academic calendar and maintained a system-wide 94.57 percent average of attendance; the “highest of any state.”<sup>19</sup> Yet it was about how the territory treated its teachers that the editors were especially proud.

Teachers with the same qualifications and experience are paid the same salaries, whether they teach in the city or in the most out-of-the-way place in the Territory. In fact, there is a wise regulation...that “competent teachers in undesirable locations may be paid above schedule.”

Women are paid the same salaries as men...

Teachers are paid for the twelve months of the year, while on the mainland,...they are paid only for the time they teach.

Teachers’ appointments, transfers and promotions are controlled by one central board. This ensures the minimum opportunity for nepotism, favoritism, and political influence.<sup>20</sup>

These institutional assurances of merit and transparency proved attractive for Native Hawaiian women and they took full advantage of the opportunity by entering the profession in droves.

Throughout the first forty years of the twentieth century, Native women occupied over a quarter

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<sup>19</sup> “Report of the Commissioner of Education,” 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

of all teacher positions.<sup>21</sup> Many rose through the school bureaucracy to secure administrative positions in rural and urban schools across the islands. They also participated on territory-level curriculum development committees, became district administrators, and some even reached the superintendent's inner circle as education commissioners. Thus, in a system independent of political orthodoxy that rewarded advancement based on individual performance and standardized assessment, many female Native Hawaiian educators excelled.

Native women also benefited from chronic teacher shortages that plagued the school system during most of the Territorial Period. Following annexation, thousands of Asian immigrants and white migrants poured into Hawai'i annually. Between 1900 and 1940, the territory's population tripled, from 154,001 to 423,330.<sup>22</sup> While many arrived as single men, more brought young families with them. With compulsory schooling in place since 1840, this enormous demographic change placed constant pressure on the DPI to develop policies to meet the educational needs of Hawai'i's growing population. As a result, schoolmen resorted to importing white women teachers as one strategy to meet rising enrollment. While effective in the short term, this plan failed as a long-term solution as many white teachers remained in the territory for only a couple of years.

The persistent need for teachers forced the DPI to avoid bans on hiring married women or women with children as teachers. This situation was not unprecedented. Despite such widespread

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<sup>21</sup> Between 1900 and 1940, women dominated the teaching profession in Hawai'i at ninety percent. During this same time period, the Native Hawaiian population fluctuated from its peak in 1900 at 25.5% of the territory's total to its nadir in 1930 at 13.8%. Despite these changes, the percentage of Native teachers in the territorial schools remained constant at 25%. "The Population of the State and Territory of Hawai'i, 1900-2009" (Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 2011), [http://www.ohadatabook.com/go\\_chap01.11.html](http://www.ohadatabook.com/go_chap01.11.html); Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 283; "Teachers by Racial Descent, School Year 1930-1931," Department of Public Instruction Meeting Minutes, July 29, 1931, Hawai'i State Archives, Honolulu, Hawai'i, 262.

<sup>22</sup> "The Population of the State and Territory of Hawai'i, 1900-2009."

prohibitions, various eastern and Midwestern urban school districts on the continent hired married women in order to fill teaching positions. In other districts, officials even hired married women with a “foreign manner of living” who fulfilled their white nativist criteria when they failed to find preferred native-born whites.<sup>23</sup> Thus, while numerous school districts on the continent enforced policies preventing the employment of married women as teachers, in certain cases vacancies dictated the hiring process.

Women faced even less discrimination concerning the combination of marriage and teaching farther west. They also enjoyed greater educational, economic, and political opportunities in the less populated western continental states and territories.<sup>24</sup> They encountered far less resistance in attending public institutions of higher education and finding professional work, especially in the fields of law, teaching, and medicine. Under the 1862 Homestead Act, single, divorced, or widowed women took advantage of property ownership out West in greater numbers than anywhere else in the Union.<sup>25</sup> Access to such opportunities helped blur and expand the boundaries of acceptable female participation in the labor force. More importantly, it also increased public exposure of well educated, independent, ambitious women professionals working outside the home. While their careers often reinforced the “nurturing qualities” of

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<sup>23</sup> David M. Donahue, “Rhode Island’s Last Holdout: Tenure and Married Women Teachers at the Brink of the Women’s Movement,” *History of Education Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2002): 54.

<sup>24</sup> Victoria-Maria Macdonald, “The Paradox of Bureaucratization: New Views on Progressive Era Teachers and the Development of a Woman’s Profession,” *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2002): 450; Kathleen Underwood, “The Pace of Their Own Lives: Teacher Training and the Life Course of Western Women,” *Pacific Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (1986): 517.

<sup>25</sup> Holly J. McCammon and Karen E. Campbell, “Winning the Vote in the West: The Political Successes of the Women’s Suffrage Movements, 1866-1919,” *Gender and Society* 15, no. 1 (2001): 67.

women (nursing, teaching, charity organizations), their employment expanded general awareness and acceptance of women as professionals.

This expansion of the private sphere into public life also helped increase women's participation in politics out West. By asserting their "special skills and insights" related to domesticity and maternalism, suffragists relied on "public motherhood" roles to promote the woman's vote as an asset to politics. They pushed their inherent domestic virtues as productive tools for improving public life by diminishing corruption, assisting the needy, and improving public schools. Framing their arguments in this manner helped create a "gendered opportunity" for the adoption of women's suffrage across the West. Doing so avoided disrupting accepted beliefs of female and male roles and allowed women to create greater inroads into traditional male spheres of political activity and power, especially in educational administration.<sup>26</sup>

Once women achieved the power to influence decisions, change came quickly. As a result of western suffrage, female state and county superintendents appeared all across the plains and the West. These gains expanded after the passage of Amendment 19 when a number of western states soon passed "equal pay for equal work" laws.<sup>27</sup> These represented significant steps forward for women educators: they now enjoyed state support and political capital to fulfill their professional interests. During the nineteenth century, women teachers resorted to forming voluntary organizations and leagues to influence change and fulfill financial needs unmet by the state.<sup>28</sup> By the twentieth century, they enjoyed broader public recognition and institutional protection of their careers.

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 63–68.

<sup>27</sup> Tyack and Cuban, *Tinkering toward Utopia*, 67; Underwood, "The Pace of Their Own Lives," 517–18.

<sup>28</sup> Karen Leroux, "Lady Teachers' and the Genteel Roots of Teacher Organization in Gilded Age Cities," *History of Education Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2007): 164.

Back east, however, women continued to struggle for fair treatment on the job.<sup>29</sup> School committees still preferred single women and sixty percent of urban districts maintained bans on hiring married women.<sup>30</sup> Even with increasing numbers of women in higher positions of administration and outnumbering male teachers three to one, men still dominated school bureaucracy. Thus, while women lobbied to explain their positive influence on the world outside the family and home, men continued to decide who was qualified and how much they were worth.

This was not the case in Hawai'i. Unlike other western states and continental territories, suffrage for women in the islands only arrived with the federal amendment in 1920 and the limited amount of career options for well-educated women in Hawai'i created a glut of willing workers eager for a job. Thus it was the law of supply and demand that created favorable employment conditions for *all* women rather than access to the ballot box. However, this did not mean equal and fair access to any school position for female teachers of color, including Native women. White schoolmen still controlled who went where and why and, at times, implemented controversial policies and teacher placements separating students and faculty along overlapping lines of language and race.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Courtney Ann Vaughn-Roberson, "Sometimes Independent but Never Equal: Women Teachers, 1900-1950: The Oklahoma Example," *Pacific Historical Review* 53, no. 1 (1984): 57.

<sup>30</sup> Donahue, "Rhode Island's Last Holdout," 53-54.

<sup>31</sup> For more on the intersection of race, language, and school policy involving the English Standard School Movement see: Noriko Asato, "Mandating Americanization: Japanese Language Schools and the Federal Survey of Education in Hawai'i, 1916-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (April 1, 2003): 10-38; Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*; Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Morris Young, "Standard English and Student Bodies: Institutionalizing Race and Literacy in Hawai'i," *College English* 64, no. 4 (March 1, 2002): 405-31.

Nevertheless, despite the challenges, female Native teachers took full advantage of their employment opportunities to pursue an agenda independent, and often contrary, to the larger Americanization mission of the public schools. While white schoolmen extolled the color-blind benevolence of American exceptionalism and demanded teacher compliance with their assimilationist crusade, Native educators prioritized professional development, equal education opportunities for students, financial support for their families, improving their communities, and social justice. Employment as a teacher allowed them to avoid the patriarchal plantation system and resist the “normal life course” expectations of early twentieth-century American women: marriage, childbearing, and confinement to the home. It also represented financial independence and economic security through a steady and progressive salary system.<sup>32</sup>

More importantly, the teaching profession provided Native Hawaiian women the opportunity to develop and hone a clear indigenous consciousness. Rather than assimilate, they utilized their training to bring attention to racial injustices, acted as positive role models for Native students, rose to higher positions within school administration, and perpetuated the Hawaiian language and cultural arts. Their efforts increased public awareness of a well-educated, ambitious, independent-minded class of Native women that defied conventional American expectations of their race and gender. Doing so allowed them to present a stark alternative to the familiar sexualized image of the passive “hula maiden.” While not advocating a return to Hawaiian sovereignty, they used their economic independence and professional skills to develop a “larger world view” that they employed to preserve their cultural identity, resist Americanization, and create a positive learning environment to empower future Native Hawaiians.<sup>33</sup> Thus, in choosing a career in education, Native women worked inside and outside the assimilationist campaign

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<sup>32</sup> Underwood, “The Pace of Their Own Lives,” 524.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

challenging its message of Hawai‘i as American. Critical to their rise was the professional teacher-training program at the Territorial Normal School (1895-1931).

### **American Normal Schools**

Hawai‘i’s normal school first opened its doors in 1895 and owed its entire institutional design to the legacy and evolution of those on the continent. Originating from the French term *norme*, meaning model or rule, state normal schools in the U.S. emerged as a hybrid of the German teacher seminary and French *écolé normale*. They were an institutional response to the increased need for trained teachers during the common school revival of the early to mid-nineteenth century.<sup>34</sup> In these early years, normal schools represented “bare bones institutions” with many students barely possessing an elementary-level education and learning from an “immature” academic curriculum and undemanding teacher-training program. Yet, even with these limitations, normal institutions symbolized a major shift in higher education. They served low-income students (often from rural, farming backgrounds) and women, who were typically denied entry at most institutions of higher education. While the education they received fell short of the academic rigor at many elite colleges and universities, normal school students (or “normalites”) took full advantage of their training and studies to excel in their careers.<sup>35</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, the “revolutionary spark” of normal schools continued to multiply and expand their outreach bringing in more “nontraditional students.” By 1890, there were over 100 in the nation and during the 1910s many moved beyond elementary teacher-training to include secondary teacher

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<sup>34</sup> Andrew Gitlin, “Gender and Professionalization: An Institutional Analysis of Teacher Education and Unionism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” *Teachers College Record* 97, no. 4 (1996): 592; Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: “An Instrument of Great Good”* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 3–4.

preparation, collegiate education, and vocational training. The student body grew increasingly female with many schools also educating students of color (African Americans and Native Americans).<sup>36</sup> During this time, more incoming students held high school degrees and normal-school administrators responded with academic requirements and subjects designed to foster “reasoning powers, analytical skills and interest in intellectual matters.”<sup>37</sup> Normal schools offered electives in advanced courses of study (botany, astronomy, trigonometry, calculus, romance languages, “Oriental” history, Greek philosophy, Shakespeare) to satisfy students’ growing interests in gaining “prestigious knowledge,” “cultural refinement,” and “elements of cultural capital.” They also sanctioned student clubs and extracurricular activities to develop an “intellectually encouraging atmosphere” extending beyond the classroom. Students established newspapers and joined literary societies, performing groups, and debate clubs, all of which contributed to fostering a dynamic student culture and intellectual life on campus.<sup>38</sup> Yet, while academic instruction and student activities provided important intellectual and social outlets, the “center and core of school life” revolved around the teacher-training program.<sup>39</sup>

Practice teaching at model schools represented the capstone of formal teacher-training programs. Normalites gained experience, received advice, and “nourished their craft” from experienced teachers. Challenging and instructive, the goal was for student-teachers to never enter their practice classes unprepared. They met regularly with their instructors to discuss their teaching experiences, preparation, and personal evaluations of their own progress. Normal school

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<sup>36</sup> Gitlin, “Gender and Professionalization,” 593, 595; Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 4; Christine A. Ogren, “‘A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power’: Women Students at State Normal Schools During the Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 3/4 (2000): 211.

<sup>37</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 103, 106.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

faculty viewed such reflections on experience as a sound method for student-teachers to develop an “independence of thought” from content matter.<sup>40</sup> They advocated self-assessment as a means to promote independent thinkers who relied less on textbook knowledge and more on their abilities to think critically as rising professionals about the effectiveness of their lessons.

“Affordable and accessible,” normal schools at the dawn of the twentieth century represented important institutions of higher education with an “open access orientation” that exposed increasing numbers of Americans to a progressive and vibrant learning environment.<sup>41</sup>

One group of Americans in particular benefited greatly from this expansion of higher learning: women. As historian Christine Ogren explains, state normal schools were “remarkable institutions for female students.” They advanced post-secondary educational opportunities for women and provided them with an “extraordinary experience” during an era when few educational and professional opportunities existed for women outside the home. The academic coursework, experiential teacher training, and extracurricular activities delivered normalites a “lively intellectual life” which formed a key component in fostering a “strong professional spirit.” This “spirit” empowered female students to view themselves as members of a professional class challenging Victorian gender norms of domesticity by entering a career outside the home. As a result, many normalites acted upon a growing fundamental belief in female autonomy and “expansive vision of women’s capabilities.”<sup>42</sup> Yet, despite their growing achievements, most stopped short of considering themselves feminists.

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<sup>40</sup> Gitlin, “Gender and Professionalization,” 595.

<sup>41</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 85; Gitlin, “Gender and Professionalization,” 593–94.

<sup>42</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 151; Ogren, “A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power,” 214, 221.

Given the social and political climate of Victorian America in the 1890s, normalites generally avoided participation in suffrage marches, women's rights campaigns, or even wearing "bloomers."<sup>43</sup> Both normalites and normal graduates perceived themselves as "members of the dominant culture, not apart from it." As such, they accepted their limited prospects based on their gender simply as a "fact of life."<sup>44</sup> Yet, despite their relatively conservative attitudes on gender equality, they advanced women's rights by supporting female autonomy on specific issues. Many delayed and or avoided marriage altogether by relying on teaching to support their livelihood. Large numbers of graduates pursued advanced degrees, became administrators, or used their education and experience to launch into other professions thus expanding the visibility of professional women working outside of the home.<sup>45</sup> Ogren describes normalites harboring this contradiction in belief systems as "protofeminists"; "autonomous individuals" believing in their inherent individual rights as women in politics, education, life, and marriage but still conforming to Victorian middle-class gender roles and social norms.<sup>46</sup>

American normal schools thus represented "incubator[s] of a new style of female personality" and their "products" characterized the birth of a new generation of women. Their institutional expansion and curriculum development increased women's access to academic

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<sup>43</sup> "Bloomers" were a form of undergarment often worn by young women in the mid to late nineteenth century. They allowed for greater freedom of physical movement but also became a symbol of female resistance for budding feminists who viewed bloomers as way to raise awareness of oppressive societal expectations of women and their confinement to gender norms through dress. For more on the actual garment and its politicization see Lori Duin Kelly, "Bipeds in Bloomers: How the Popular Press Killed the Dress Reform Movement," *Studies in Popular Culture* 13, no. 2 (1991): 67–76; Amy Kesselman, "The 'Freedom Suit': Feminism and Dress Reform in the United States, 1848-1875," *Gender and Society* 5, no. 4 (1991): 495–510.

<sup>44</sup> Vaughn-Roberson, "Sometimes Independent but Never Equal," 52.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 53–57; Ogren, "A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power," 221–22.

<sup>46</sup> Ogren, "A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power," 225; Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 175–76.

opportunities and created a new class of autonomous women professionals empowered through “knowledge gained by experience” and advanced studies.<sup>47</sup> Their public presence helped increase the professional possibilities and inspire the personal ambitions of other young women. While ambivalent over the larger women’s rights movement, normalites fervently believed in “autonomy for their sex.”<sup>48</sup>

These developments profoundly impacted Hawai‘i’s lone teacher-training institution and its students. Following national educational trends and institutional designs, the school’s various administrators attempted to recreate the territorial normal in the same image of those on the continent. Hawai‘i’s female normalites also adopted similar profeminist sentiments and applied their professional training to advance personal and professional interests that challenged prescribed gender norms. Yet, it was the issue of race that complicated and differentiated the mission of Hawai‘i’s normal school and the Native normalite experience from those on the continent.

The territorial normal school’s white continental administrators believed that to successfully Americanize Hawai‘i’s multiracial population began with Americanizing their teachers.<sup>49</sup> White sugar planters, on the other hand, wanted the normal school to train teachers in vocational trades and agriculture in order to prepare and promote employment on the plantations to public school students. Native normalites, however, had other ideas. They identified and valued the importance of education for their people as a means to survive in an Americanizing Hawai‘i. Their intentions to secure a teaching position resulted from financial, familial, and community concerns rather than the political assimilationist agenda intended by the DPI and

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<sup>47</sup> Ogren, “A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power,” 213, 216.

<sup>48</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 181.

<sup>49</sup> Morgan, “Americanizing the Teachers,” 148.

administrative progressives. Unearthing what Native teachers thought about their schooling, what they did with it, and what it meant to them reveals the contested nature of teacher training in Hawai‘i. It also challenges the myth of Native passivity by demonstrating how Native Hawaiians subverted the political agendas of white elites and utilized the Territorial Normal School to create opportunities for their success.

**Ke Kula A‘o Kumu o Kelikoli o Hawai‘i: The Territorial Normal School of Hawai‘i  
(1895-1931)**

The Territorial Normal School (TNS) began as a government teacher-training institute under the Republic of Hawaii in 1895.<sup>50</sup> The institution’s first principal was James L. Dumas, a graduate of Oswego Normal School in western New York State. Opened in 1861 by Edward A. Sheldon, Oswego was no ordinary teacher-training institution. Inspired by Pestalozzianism, or “object learning,” – the theory of education promoted by Swiss educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi that argued children should learn from objects, nature, and physical activities that excited their curiosities – Sheldon articulated his own version known as the “Oswego method.” His method challenged the rigidity of the laws and strategies of contemporary teaching practices, describing them as incapable of accessing and uncovering children’s natural educational development. Instead, he argued for combining structure with student interests in order to create “systematic ways” of teaching children along “natural lines.”<sup>51</sup> This modification of Pestalozzi’s theory offered a template for teaching any subject and represented the first tangible principles for promoting teaching as an art or science.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> The Republic of Hawaii (1893-1898) was the interregnum government installed by the islands’ white elite minority, many of whom led the coup against Queen Lili‘uokalani in 1893, while they waited for a more favorable American administration to support the territorial annexation of Hawai‘i to the U.S.

<sup>51</sup> Reese, *America’s Public Schools*, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 35–37.

As the TNS's first administrator, Dumas placed great emphasis on experiential learning and academic instruction in the hopes of recreating the American normal school model in the islands. During his brief tenure, he quickly established two central components of the normal school's structure: instruction in the "art of teaching" and a practice school for teacher-candidates to obtain hands-on classroom experience. His curriculum placed heavy emphasis on educational psychology, focusing on the "study of emotion, instincts, appetites, affections, desires, influence of the soul on the body, attention, perception, imagination, reasoning and mental reproduction."<sup>53</sup> He also prioritized a detailed study of educational history. According to his report on the subject, students examined:

1. Education in ancient times. Confucius, Zoroaster, Moses, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian.
2. Education in the Middle Ages. St. Augustine, Charlemagne, Thomas-a-Kempis, Agricola.
3. The early reformers. Melancthon, Zwingle, John Strum, Montaigne, Bacon, Comenius.
4. Education in the nineteenth century.
5. Special students of Pestalozzi...<sup>54</sup>

Despite his motivation and ambition, Dumas lasted only one year.

Dumas completely misread the needs and capabilities of the new territory. With the limited English abilities of most nonwhites, his curriculum proved to be overzealous for his twenty-one students, ten of whom were sixteen with only an eighth-grade education. More importantly though, he ran afoul with the white ruling oligarchy who rejected his efforts at creating a democratic education that promoted a society where "all people would have an opportunity to control their lives rather than merely adapt to the narrow opportunities the elite

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<sup>53</sup> Linda Louise Logan, "Territorial Normal and Training School, 1895-1931 : An Institutional History of Public Teacher Education in Hawaii" (PhD diss., University of Hawai'i, 1989), 16-17.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 17.

provided them.”<sup>55</sup> This approach ran counter to the oligarchy’s vision of a public education that emphasized the production of “future citizens who possessed controllable knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes.”<sup>56</sup> Ultimately, the white elite won this clash of visions and placed pressure on the DPI to dismiss Dumas in the spring of 1897.

The oligarchy’s fervent opposition and the resulting DPI compliance were not surprising. Hawai‘i’s white sugar planters held considerable influence over territorial politics. Anything that challenged their business interests, such as educational reforms, often met a quick end. Dumas’ firing proved early on the DPI’s conservative nature concerning the public education system and the oligarchy’s influential role in developing school policies that fit their political and economic agendas. The appointment of Dumas’ replacement, Edgar Wood, only confirmed their sway.

A descendant of a Massachusetts loyalist who fled to Canada after the Revolutionary War, Wood grew up in a home supportive of the British crown and unfamiliar with American ideals of democracy. Autocratic in managerial style, Wood quickly restructured the normal school curriculum in his first year with a strict emphasis on the “fundamental branches,” English composition and arithmetic. The following year, in 1898, he established an industrial and manual training program. Strongly committed to the idea that Hawai‘i’s youth were best served with a “vocational education to serve vocational ends,” he groomed teachers whose central focus was to prepare students for a career in labor first and provide academic instruction second.<sup>57</sup>

The goal of his program revolved around a general pre-planned teacher-training course that equipped teachers to lead any class of any grade on any subject, kindergarten through eighth grade. Worried that nonwhite students, especially Native Hawaiians, lacked the capabilities to

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 44, 56.

learn abstract principles of teaching, Wood intentionally limited choice in the curriculum to keep the normal school accessible.<sup>58</sup> As the years progressed, he began expanding the subject matter to include a wider range of options. In the 1905-1906 course catalog, Wood included “thought work,” English and American literature, physics, chemistry, botany, rhetoric, ancient, medieval, and modern history, civics, and music, in an effort to develop “harmony” with “formal work,” or the fundamental branches. For the 1910-1911 academic year, he went further introducing options for students who wanted a greater selection of subjects included in their training. He offered a two-year collegiate course for those seeking an education in advanced subjects or a four-year course for those students pursuing teaching certification. Still, even with the changes to the curriculum and program, the basic philosophy of instruction in the “common branches of knowledge” remained intact.<sup>59</sup>

Wood’s approach and background, according to education scholar Linda Logan, “served him well in a Hawaii under oligarchical control.”<sup>60</sup> The oligarchy viewed the public school system as its vehicle and the teachers as its agents in maintaining their power and privileged lifestyle in Hawai‘i. In their eyes, Edgar Wood was their man. He fashioned a curriculum that promised to produce teachers who supported assimilation and the economic interests of the islands’ white elites.<sup>61</sup> However, despite nearly a quarter century at the helm of the TNS, by 1920, Wood had outlived his usefulness and not even the privileged white community could save his job.

In that same year, a federal survey commission investigating Hawai‘i’s school system recommended the reorganization of the TNS. It charged that the “machinery of administration”

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 31, 61.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 9, 12–13, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 47.

at the TNS defeated its own objectives of creating a “satisfactory efficiency in the training of local teachers.”<sup>62</sup> As a result, the commission proposed “radical changes” beginning with the removal of Principal Wood. Wood, unsurprisingly, disagreed and fought to clear his name and keep his job. His pleas fell on deaf ears and after 26 years, the DPI replaced him with Benjamin O. Wist in 1921.

A 1910 graduate of Spokane University in Washington State, Wist arrived in the islands in 1911 to serve as principal at an elementary school in Hilo, Hawai‘i. He eventually transferred to two other elementary schools as principal before his appointment at TNS.<sup>63</sup> Despite no classroom experience, Wist ushered in a new era for the school by transforming the “formalistic authoritarian” teacher-training style of Wood into a progressive democratic teacher-education program.<sup>64</sup> “Democracy in education” became the normal school’s new philosophy. While he remained the central figure in creating and directing policy, Wist diffused authority to his administrative faculty to assist him in managing the daily operations of the school.<sup>65</sup> He firmly believed in offering students a greater range of electives and, in his first year, he increased the number of faculty, tripling it from twenty in 1910 under Dumas, to over sixty, and he diversified its ranks by hiring Native Hawaiian instructors. He also sought to raise the quality of instruction at the TNS to the collegiate level and expected every faculty member to hold a B.A. or higher.<sup>66</sup> With greater numbers of college-trained faculty, he continued to expand the number and variety of courses and electives available and introduced new student clubs and extracurricular activities.

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<sup>62</sup> As quoted in the Education Commissioner’s report, *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 153–54.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>66</sup> In 1925, TNS became a “collegiate normal.” For more see Lorraine Ota, “The Origins of the Teachers College of the University of Hawaii: 1921-1931” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawai‘i, 1969), 67.

Wist was deeply committed to professionalizing teacher education and he implemented a rigorous academic schedule. Moving away from a strictly teacher-training program, he created five “nonprofessional” collegiate departments dedicated to academic instruction in subject matter and a sixth “professional” education department devoted solely to preparing normalites for student teaching. Through this redesign, Wist hoped to strengthen the teaching skills of student-teachers so they relied on the “totality” of their education, and not solely “mechanical techniques,” to guide their instructional strategies in the classroom. He also expanded the professionalization campaign to include correspondence work and extension courses to help in-service teachers trained during the Wood years to obtain credits for a collegiate diploma.<sup>67</sup> As a result of Wist’s programs and reforms, annual enrollment increased throughout the 1920s and teachers across the territory gained access to academic enrichment. However, towards the decade’s end, the TNS and Wist had produced too much of a good thing.

By 1927, the very success of the TNS created more teachers than available teaching spots. Adding to the problem a few years later was the Great Depression and the drop in sugar prices. With the oligarchy loudly protesting the waste of taxpayer money on public education, the territorial legislature looked for ways to cut costs. They proposed merging the TNS with the University of Hawaii-Mānoa and creating a new Teacher’s College (TC). While the plan created greater bureaucratic efficiency and saved money, Wist feared the loss of influence by professional schoolmen on teacher education and pressed for a better deal.<sup>68</sup> Despite his concerns, the merger went through in 1931 but the new Teacher’s College remained a separate institution within the university and retained Wist as dean to lead the way.

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<sup>67</sup> Logan, “Territorial Normal and Training School, 1895-1931,” 170, 173, 175.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 190-199; Ota, “The Origins of the Teachers College of the University of Hawaii,” v.

Wist remained head of the TC until 1947. During his administration, he maintained pressure to ensure the college's administrative independence from the university's larger focus on liberal arts. In a speech he gave in March of 1936, Wist expressed confidence that the TNS "spirit of professionalism" lived on at the TC.

Throughout the five years, the student is encouraged to think of himself as a member of the teaching profession.

The present professional courses become the core of the program of teacher preparation and culture and knowledge courses become the instruments of tools necessary in the learning process.<sup>69</sup>

Also, while further cost cuts forced a reduction in the faculty by one-third, thereby decreasing enrollment, it allowed the college to remain selective in welcoming and retaining only highly motivated and learned student-teachers.<sup>70</sup> Thus, despite the loss of its institutional independence, the legacy and influence of the TNS continued on at the TC.<sup>71</sup>

Much of the TNS's past mirrors the general history of normal schools on the continent. Like other normals during the first half of the twentieth century, Hawai'i's normal gradually lost its autonomy and distinct institutional identity by conforming to the "academic procession" towards university status.<sup>72</sup> It also followed the same curriculum evolution: expansion of manual and agricultural education alongside elementary teacher training; emphasis on experiential learning; greater access to higher education for underprivileged groups (especially women), transition to collegiate and then university status; incorporation of liberal arts education and content knowledge; and promotion of a professional consciousness. Despite the striking similarities, however, the central role of the TNS in the Americanization campaign of Hawai'i

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>70</sup> Robert M. Kamins, *Mālamalama: A History of the University of Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 38.

<sup>71</sup> Ota, "The Origins of the Teachers College of the University of Hawaii," 68–70.

<sup>72</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 200–203.

represented its defining characteristic that distinguished it from all other American normal schools.

As mentioned in chapter one, the main goal of the territorial public schools system was to assimilate Hawai‘i’s multiethnic population to the social norms and political institutions of the nation. For this to become reality depended on the effective Americanization of Hawai‘i’s teachers.<sup>73</sup> As agents of this campaign, Dumas, Wood, and Wist designed their programs to produce educators well-trained in color-blind civic nationalism and “good English” to convince nonwhite students and their parents that Hawai‘i was American. Of the three, Wist was the most vocal and dedicated to this mission. In his first year leading the TNS, he described the main responsibility of teachers and the normal school to Hawai‘i and its people.

...to some more than others is given the opportunity to make Americanization in Hawaii a success. These are our elementary school teachers. It is they who bear the banner of American ideals into the remotest nook and corner of our Territory. It is they who, as potent social factors in our rural communities, carry the American gospel to unbelievers.<sup>74</sup>

Wist then explained the “supreme gift” Native Hawaiians offered to the assimilationist campaign. The “one thing that makes our Americanization program possible” he proclaimed, was the “great socializing influence of the Hawaiian race.” To Wist, this “quality” not only made the “Hawaiian a good teacher” but also the perfect vehicle for spreading the “American gospel.”<sup>75</sup> However, while schoolmen thought of ways to use Native teachers to advance their grand vision of making Hawai‘i American, Native teachers devised approaches to make their education work for them.

### **Native Student-Teachers and Professional Educators**

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<sup>73</sup> Morgan, “Americanizing the Teachers,” 147–49.

<sup>74</sup> Benjamin O. Wist, “Making School Teachers in Hawaii,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, December 1921, 73.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

Native Hawaiian female normalites and in-service teachers both approached their training and the profession by prioritizing their professional and personal needs, family welfare, and the advancement of their people above Americanization directives of the DPI and TNS. By inserting these indigenous-centric interests, Native teachers challenged the efficacy of administrative efforts to spread the gospel of Americanization. Their efforts demonstrated the divide between Native Hawaiian student-teachers and their white instructors over the meaning of teacher education and the role of Native teachers in the public school system. To the DPI and TNS, professionalism enhanced the quality of education to further the Americanization project; to Native teachers, professionalism advanced their own personal and professional agendas.<sup>76</sup>

As one of the few acceptable professional careers allowed to women at the time, Native women took full advantage of white middle-class understandings of education as “women’s work” to cut across socio-economic lines of race, class, and gender. While a bold strategy, it also produced a paradoxical existence: pursuing personal independence, cultural survival, and equal opportunity through an institution rooted in a national ideology of domesticity, racial barriers, and white privilege. Undeterred, Native women continued to enter the teacher-training program to obtain the language skills, professional behavior, and technical know-how necessary for successfully navigating the complexities of settler-colonial society. Employment as teachers also allowed them to create opportunities outside of the home to influence their people, control their lives, and challenge racial and gendered stereotypes. By embracing “women’s work,” they advanced their careers, improved the educational experiences of Native children, promoted female leadership in the schools, and forged a “woman’s culture” of positive role models in the

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<sup>76</sup> Macdonald, “The Paradox of Bureaucratization,” 430.

profession.<sup>77</sup> As a result of their achievements, Native women were able to preserve and perpetuate their cultural identity and assert their presence in the public sphere of Americanized Hawai‘i.

The life histories of Native TNS students and teachers document this complex process. They illustrate the ways in which Native Hawaiian women – as mothers, daughters, role models, mentors, public figures, and aspiring professionals – forged a “spectrum of behavior” in pursuing individual and group empowerment drawn from their academic education, teacher training, and extracurricular experiences.<sup>78</sup> Their “multipositionality” in these stories illustrate how their emphases on professionalism, self-reliance, ambition, autonomy, duty, and protofeminist consciousness contributed to an “oppositional community identity” rooted in Native Hawaiian historical experiences of resilience and resistance.<sup>79</sup> This background empowered them to subvert their colonial education designed to assimilate them to American views on race, gender, and class and build careers supporting their kaleidoscope of personal, communal, and professional goals.

Native teachers believed in both the power of education and the ideals of American color-blind civic nationalism to raise their people above the restrictive limits created by national attitudes on race, gender, and class. They did so clearly aware of the inherent inequity within white America’s brand of civic nationalism: hierarchies of citizenship, racial segregation, and separate gender spheres. Rather than conform, they constructed their own pluralized message of civic nationalism to fulfill an alternative set of goals constructed around indigenous commitments to family and their community. As a result, they constituted new resistant identities

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 438.

<sup>78</sup> Gunja SenGupta, “Elites, Subalterns, and American Identities: A Case Study of African-American Benevolence,” *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 2004): 1111.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 1127.

within the boundaries of the “exceptionalist ideal of civic equality.” Thus, rather than completely reject Americanization, Native Hawaiian teachers embraced the equality of opportunity and freedom to all inherent within the color-blind civic nationalism promoted by white schoolmen. They constructed their own prism as “self-conscious actors” looking to advance their aims as Native Hawaiians independent of the Americanization crusade.<sup>80</sup>

Many Native normalites utilized this prism to express a range of interests: desire for knowledge, ambition to experience new things, and commitment to helping their families and communities. They also revealed strong reactions to injustices involving race and civic nationalism as well as societal expectations, especially on marriage. Charlotte Ayers embodied a number of these traits. Born about 1907 and raised in Makapala, North Kohala, Hawai‘i, an area heavily populated by Native Hawaiians, she moved to Honolulu at the age of fourteen to pursue secondary and post-secondary schooling opportunities. Like many normalites’ families of her generation, Ayers’ parents refused to speak Hawaiian to her and insisted on an English-only home environment. Inspired at a young age by a Native teacher, Charlotte’s pursued a career in education.

At the start of her final year at TNS in 1926, Charlotte expressed no regrets at “taking the steps” to become a teacher. “Contented and happy” in her work, she could not wait to begin “real teaching.” This enthusiasm also inspired her curiosity for learning and adventure. Unfortunately, however, while she had held “hopes of going away to specialize” in advanced studies in New York, her mother refused. Disappointed, Ayers accepted her mother’s decision for her to remain in Hawai‘i for school “at least for some time.”<sup>81</sup> She also acknowledged the racial tensions at

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 1111, 1110.

<sup>81</sup> WCSC R5 N258, 8,

school between white and nonwhite students. She shared personal experiences with her pupils and told stories of how “our young people feel that if they advance a little in their work, they are held back because of their race or color.” Ayers also admitted how there have been “many haoles who have helped us to go on” as well and credited TNS clubs and student organizations for doing so “much to unite all races in their work and play.”<sup>82</sup>

A normalite from Maui shared her strong view on the importance of language to identity formation and her broader worldview. Born in 1906, she made clear that she disagreed not just with her parents but also the DPI English-only school policy. Coming from a home where English and Hawaiian were “spoken fluently,” she voiced a sense of irony at her parents’ position that foreign language schools “hinder a child’s opportunity in learning to speak good English.”<sup>83</sup> She asked,

Why should children of foreign parentage be robbed of their opportunity of learning to speak their forefather’s language? Someday they would like to solve foreign problems and studying out their needs [*sic*] [study about specific issues of interest in their language].

In order to undertake such an important piece of work intelligently one must know how to speak the language intelligently in order to make the people understand and see the situation in a broader field. My ideas maybe against America the country that I owe for my freedom and happiness but I think I have a perfect right to express my own ideas.<sup>84</sup>

She also expressed strong interests in developing her leadership skills, helping others locally and abroad, and pursuing opportunities of higher education. Yet, she did so with a bit of personal restraint. Admitting she had many dreams, some “wild” and others “very ambitious,” she described one in which she was a “great leader in a community, solving problems for the people

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Initials used represent the institutions Native students attended at the time of their life histories. H – University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa, N – Territorial Normal School.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>83</sup> WCSC R5 N195, 3-4. Most autobiographies composed by TNS students for sociologist William C. Smith in 1926 were anonymous, as per his instructions.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

and helping them.” She was part Chinese, and in one dream travelled to China to help relatives but, “before I could do anything for them I’ll have to attend a Chinese language school, study the situation and problems of China.” Above all, “many a time” she dreamt of completing her education at “some university on the mainland.”<sup>85</sup>

Another unidentified normalite from Maui, however, felt no restraint in uttering disdain over her autobiography assignment. Curbing her irritation, she protested,

I sincerely feel and have felt the undesirable attitude towards writing [sic] my life history and this attitude seemed to have prevailed over me. Having some one person who knows practically nothing about me, read my life history seems disagreeable to me. What is the purpose of this!<sup>86</sup>

Despite her vehement reluctance, over the course of fifteen pages she revealed herself as a budding feminist challenging conventional American norms on women and marriage and asserting her ambition for a professional career. In explaining her decision to delay marriage, she identified her “future ambition” to become a teacher. Believing it “only fair and square to be true to myself...[and] fulfill my desire,” she decided “not to let [the] marriage question interfere with my future plans just now.”<sup>87</sup>

Not all Native Hawaiian normalites expressed their autonomy in the same way. A married twenty-one year old TNS student from Honolulu explained that throughout her years in high school and first year at the normal school, she was “never what many people call ‘boy crazy’.” She wanted to wait until she was twenty-five years old and accrued a few years of work experience before “settling down.” That all changed after meeting her “ideal man” at a school dance at the age of eighteen and then marrying a year later. Despite the disruption to her original

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>86</sup> WCSC R5 N197, 1.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 14.

life plan, her “greatest aim” still remained graduating from TNS. On top of that, she wanted to be a “good wife, mother, daughter, and teacher.”<sup>88</sup>

This clash between personal ambition and society’s gendered expectations of women was nothing new to Native student-teachers. They often struggled to balance societal and parental pressure to get married while actualizing their personal and career goals. For some, the marriage question combined with internal conflicts involving family commitments and personal concerns over cultural identity markers, such as the inability to speak ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i (the Hawaiian language). The resulting stress between pursuing their own ambitions with that of living up to larger external expectations left many normalites undecided and confused. As one student explained, “I have not settled this subject of choosing a life partner yet because I am so changeable.”<sup>89</sup>

Seemingly contradictory, embracing domesticity while at the same time desiring a career, was not unusual. School campuses provided a comfortable sphere with few gender boundaries. They allowed normalites to embark on new opportunities of intellectual engagement and new experiences through extracurricular activities, clubs, and academic coursework. Through this process, they “absorbed an expansive vision of women’s capabilities.”<sup>90</sup> As a result, many developed and acted upon a fundamental belief in general autonomy for women to control their destinies, especially in education. However, in response to formal political rights for women, they often maintained a conservative stance. National developments involving increased female college and university enrollment, women’s suffrage, and the rise of unmarried career women

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<sup>88</sup> WCSC R5 N179, 10-12

<sup>89</sup> WCSC R5 N221, 4.

<sup>90</sup> Ogren, *The American State Normal School*, 175.

created severe angst in the public sphere over the survival of middle-class femininity.<sup>91</sup> As a result, many young, aspiring women would have felt the pressure to conform from both society and their families. Socially active and eager to learn, most women continued to obey conventional gender expectations.

Despite the challenges, teaching still represented “one of the best options” available for women to “achieve self-sufficiency, respectability, advanced study, and travel.”<sup>92</sup> It provided a sense of empowerment through a professional career that based advancement on merit. The teaching profession also offered young women a diversified “life course” through economic independence and increased social status resulting from their control over the financial means to direct the pace of their lives. While many did embrace marriage and childbearing, teaching allowed them to integrate personal and professional education opportunities and career within the standard family life of the early twentieth century.<sup>93</sup> Even those who did marry exercised a high degree of autonomy for women of their time and some even delayed their nuptials until they were “quite mature.”<sup>94</sup> Thus, while the majority of Native female normalites graduated without specifically studying gender issues, they “received messages that were ambivalently but unmistakably feminist and, therefore, liberating.”<sup>95</sup>

**“To be a teacher meant you were somebody.”<sup>96</sup>**

The ambition, duty, and autonomy expressed by Native normalites only strengthened as they entered their careers and began their adult lives. Once out of school, they applied their education, training, and experiences as “everyday forms of resistance” to contest Americanization,

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Underwood, “The Pace of Their Own Lives,” 514.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 530.

<sup>94</sup> Ogren, “A Large Measure Of Self-Control and Personal Power,” 223.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>96</sup> As quoted by retired teacher Florence Morse in Hyams, “School Teachers as Agents,” 218.

challenge racial stereotypes, and maintain an active Native Hawaiian presence in the public sphere.<sup>97</sup> These tactics disrupted the coherence of established narratives of Native passivity and silence crucial to making Hawai'i American in ways that defied the legitimacy of the Americanization project. As teachers, they promoted the importance of education for rising above the limits of race and class and exemplified the achievable success through American schooling. As career women, they served as positive role models of professional achievement and personal independence as they disputed racial and gender boundaries of occupational mobility. As mothers, they raised and supported families, instilling in them pride for their Native heritage. As Native Hawaiians, they disproved negative stereotypes, nurtured and sustained their indigenous consciousness, and practiced their culture in a Hawai'i hostile to Native nationalism. Their daily existence, survival, and attempts to control their future through American institutions and the promises of equal opportunity and individual freedom, exposed Native resilience and resistance operating at the most immediate and intimate levels of territorial society.

These themes resound in the oral histories of two Native teachers, Doris Kahikilani Mossman Keppler (UHM 1924) and Elizabeth Nalani McMillan Ellis (TNS 1923). Their stories animate a larger vision of social and ethical responsibility shared by many other Native educators as they saw in American schooling a way to impart strategies to their students on how to survive and succeed. For them, teaching was more than a career or calling but a lifestyle and commitment to their people and community. They understood that to make a difference in their students' lives required employing culturally relevant strategies that extended beyond the formal American classroom and school day to incorporate the participation of students' families and communities with their learning experiences.

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<sup>97</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xvi, 29, 36.

Through extracurricular activities and school projects and events, Native teachers sought to make American education more inclusive and relatable to the lives of Native students by demonstrating schooling as a communal network of interaction rather than seemingly isolated individual tasks. These teachers understood the lives of their students and the challenges they faced (socioeconomic marginalization, cultural trivialization, poverty, short life expectancy) as they learned about them growing up. As a result, Native educators wanted to apply their experiences and training to make a difference in students' lives by showing them how to take advantage of educational opportunities in order to achieve success. Thus the specific efforts of Doris and Elizabeth highlight how Native Hawaiian educators engaged the teaching profession to become well-educated professionals, effective leaders, and highly competent users of English without internalizing assimilationist policies.

As “one of the few girls of Hawaiian blood” at the University of Hawai‘i in the 1920s, Doris witnessed the dearth of Natives in higher education. After graduation, she took it upon herself to improve the schooling experiences of Native students by converting schools into positive learning environments. At her first teaching assignment as a seventh-grade hygiene instructor at Hilo Intermediate, she established a Hawaiian Girl’s Club with the intent of getting students’ mothers involved with the school.<sup>98</sup> She organized and led weekly evening activities for Native mothers and their children that included calisthenics, dancing, and sports in the school gymnasium. She also volunteered at the YWCA and led a Girl Scout troop. One year later, in 1925, she transferred to McKinley High School and taught math and science before becoming a girl’s counselor.

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<sup>98</sup> Doris Kahikilani Mossman Keppeler, interview by Katherine B. Allen, 1979, The Watumull Foundation Oral History Project, University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa, Hamilton Library, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, 42-43.

Meticulous and active as a teacher, Doris shined as a counselor. To all of her students, she was the student activities advisor, song leader, as well as a guide and mentor. She was exceptionally “fired up” for supporting the needs of Native students. She headed up the school’s Hawaiian culture club, “mothered” Hawaiian students from Papakolea, and organized historical and cultural “pageants” (performances).<sup>99</sup> Her drive extended off campus as she directed the Lei Day parade for the city of Honolulu for eighteen years, joined the Kamehameha Day Celebration Commission, and became a pa‘u rider.<sup>100</sup> She also volunteered at her alma mater (UHM) donating her time and energy in researching Hawaiian culture, medicine, and history. As a result of her efforts, she received an honorary master’s degree from the University of Hawai‘i for her work in advancing “Hawaiiiana” (Hawaiian studies) in 1947 and a Distinguished Service Award in 1954 from the University Alumni Association.<sup>101</sup>

Despite her busy schedule, Doris always made time for her family. She raised three children and made their schooling a priority. Her efforts to ensure they received the “best education possible” resulted in all three of her children graduating from college. The daughter of an alcoholic father, she embraced the values of her work-aholic mother who labored at multiple jobs to support the family and put her through school. Doris shared her energy not just with her own

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 17. Papakolea was (and still is) a residential area reserved only for Native Hawaiians established under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. Many who lived there were frequently unemployed. For more on the history of Papakolea during the first thirty years of the Territorial Period see: Elizabeth Lulu Heen, “The Hawaiians of Papakolea: A Study in Social and Economic Realism” (M.A. thesis, University of Hawai‘i, 1936).

<sup>100</sup> Keppeler, *The Watumull Foundation Oral History Project*, 47–48. Pa‘u riders are skilled Native female equestrians who initially used the pa‘u (long, flowing cover garment) in the 1800s to protect their clothing from getting soiled as they traveled on horseback. With the advent of the automobile in the twentieth century, pa‘u riding became more ceremonial and the pa‘u itself developed into a fashion. Yet, many riders continued to emphasize advanced horsemanship as a trademark of the institution.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 59–60.

family but extended it to her community and other Native children. Active and ambitious, she framed her efforts as part of a larger obligation by Native educators to improve and inspire Native students. As she explained, “the challenge was given us that we had to do well for posterity, for the rest of the Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian girls and boys that came after.”<sup>102</sup>

Doris’ story provides important insight into understanding the professional experiences of Native teachers in the territorial schools. Elizabeth, on the other hand, shared a variety of personal anecdotes to convey the impact of race and language politics on the early lives of Native teachers. From a young age, Elizabeth knew whites viewed her as different. Growing up on a plantation in Hāmākua, Hawai‘i, her father worked as an assistant engineer for the Pa‘auhau Sugar Plantation. Due to his position, her family lived in the “haole section” of the plantation but this did not earn them respect from their neighbors. She observed how the white management and their families treated them “as though we were Hawaiians, not quite their equal.” Feeling ostracized, she began to grow “a little ashamed” of her heritage and eventually “wanted to be a haole.”<sup>103</sup>

While not an uncommon sentiment expressed by Native Hawaiian teachers and students, her desire to be “haole” was not a profession of racial self-hatred. Rather, young Elizabeth found herself equating the material comforts and privileged lifestyles of the white planter class and affluent tourists with “being haole.” This longing to “be haole” arose not from an internalized racial or ethnic disdain but from aspirations to achieve class mobility. By living on the plantation, she noticed how the “most beautiful houses and yards were occupied by the white man.”<sup>104</sup> She elaborated,

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<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–46.

<sup>103</sup> Ellis, Oral History Interview with Elizabeth Ellis (EE), 231.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

I wanted to live the way the haoles do. That's the way the haoles do it. We want this kind of dishes, because that's the way the haoles eat, on those dishes. Even when Grandma was raising me, many a time I would say to her, 'Let's eat at the table.' [Grandma responded,] 'No, no, no, we eat on the floor. I'd say, 'But you know, I'm haole.'...(Laughs) And [Grandma] would shake her head.<sup>105</sup>

For Elizabeth, being “haole” meant possessing the appropriate political and financial capital to cross class lines in order to succeed in territorial Hawai‘i. Understanding this distinction helped her conceptualize receiving a “haole” education as “just going to school” in order to secure a better economic future. Yet, it was not until her grandfather made her feel proud to be a Hawaiian that she realized her larger calling.

Elizabeth spent the first twelve years of her life living with her grandparents and speaking Hawaiian at home. When her grandmother died, she moved in with her parents who insisted on English at home. Coupled with the English-only atmosphere at school and on the plantation, Elizabeth grew embarrassed about her Native culture until the conversation with her grandfather. His words quickly resonated with her and she began seeing the beauty and importance in her language and culture and felt inspired to ensure her students and children felt the same. Elizabeth lamented how in her early years “everything was a haole. Everything was a haole way of doing things.” To her this explained, “why many people in our generation didn’t learn Hawaiian, because at that time, they were all aiming to be able to speak English well.”<sup>106</sup> While not denouncing the importance of English to survive in an Americanizing Hawai‘i, Elizabeth extolled the importance of Native Hawaiians knowing and embracing their identity. Explaining to her young children, “No, you must do everything. Keep the Hawaiian in you [*sic*] heart...it

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 231. Pushed to self-hatred by the racism imported by white Americans, incidents of self-hatred did occur among Native Hawaiians. In one case, Gladys Kamakakuokalani ‘Ainoa Brandt (1906-2003), as a young female student at Kamehameha Schools in the 1920s, attempted to lighten her skin using lemon juice. [https://apps.ksbe.edu/kaiwakiloumoku/makalii/feature-stories/suppression\\_of\\_hawaiian\\_culture](https://apps.ksbe.edu/kaiwakiloumoku/makalii/feature-stories/suppression_of_hawaiian_culture)

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 258.

will always be there, but learn the English ways because that is the way you will score in the future.” She extended this view to other Native youth directing them to “Learn your language” as it will “give you the background” needed to survive as a people where “everything is a haole.”<sup>107</sup>

As well-educated Native women working with other Hawaiians who enjoyed fewer opportunities, both Doris and Elizabeth could have easily dismissed the needs and concerns of their students and communities. Instead, both extended their training and schooling beyond the classroom to instill ethnic pride and interest in Native culture and language. As advocates and practitioners of hula and the Hawaiian-language, both also challenged white depictions of “kahunaism” as Hawaiian witchcraft. As Doris explained,

Now everybody, when you say kahuna, thinks a great deal of the wrong-doing kahuna, the sorcerer, the person who can pray you to death. That’s the one that they always refer to, but the kahuna word means a doctor through a doctor’s degree...so that the Hawaiians’ doctorate began very early in history,...and there were different kinds of kahuna.

The man who told the weather, the stars, the moon, the wind, was a kahuna....The man who builds a canoe is also a kahuna....He’s the learned one really.<sup>108</sup>

Elizabeth agreed with Doris’ description, adding that the kahuna was a:

professor of this and of that, you know, medicine, and house-building and so forth. When we want to build a house, we go and get a contractor. We don’t build it ourself, because we don’t know how. Or an architect, he plans it. Well, all right, the Hawaiians had that, too.<sup>109</sup>

Like African Americans who adopted the discourse of racial uplift and Native Americans who appropriated “white education” at the turn of twentieth century, both Doris and Elizabeth understood that their people needed convincing of their own worth. To both teachers, advancing and preserving Native identity required encouraging racial uplift through success in American education. Yet, it also involved presenting positive role models, both past and present, to Native

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 299.

<sup>108</sup> Keppeler, The Watumull Foundation Oral History Project, 59.

<sup>109</sup> Ellis, Oral History Interview, 300.

students in an effort to mitigate the harmful effects of a curricula and society that ignored and denigrated their language, history, and heritage. Thus, for Native students, help from people of their own race represented a powerful means in achieving that goal and Native teachers were not alone in their efforts.

### **Nā Po‘o Kumu: “Head Teachers”**

Native Hawaiian school principals also represented key figures in uplifting Native students through American schooling while also incorporating Hawaiian values into the curriculum. Like Native teachers, they too were considered role models and leaders but their official administrative positions allowed them greater flexibility to institute broader strategies. They facilitated and incorporated a community-focus to problem solving with the design of promoting parental investment in their children’s school and learning. They also placed great emphasis in forging an inclusive identity of the school as belonging within the wider network of students’ lives. To them, the school was more than an institution for individual academic achievement but also an integral part of the larger community.

During her twenty-five years as principal of Moanalua Elementary on O‘ahu, Clara Mokumaia (TNS 1912) successfully transformed her school from an isolated institution in a predominantly Native Hawaiian area into a community center for students and their families. She held workshops for parents to learn the latest studies and practices on hygiene and sanitation. She formed the “Lauhala Club” (later the “Moanalua Mother’s Club”), an organization of mothers who collaborated to raise school funds. With no DPI funding for school maintenance or food, the club collected money to build a full, “self-supporting” kitchen to combat student hunger.

With her students, Mokumaia extended her strategy of self-support by promoting “learn to live by living.” She prized academic studies but also realized the need for homemaking skills for

students, boys and girls, in establishing homes of their own. Under her direction, girls learned cooking and sewing skills that they applied towards feeding and even clothing other students and creating school materials such as linen, curtains, and napkins. Boys were responsible for cleaning the classrooms and school grounds. She also organized them into a boys' club to provide them with constructive activities and direction on weekends and during the summer months.

Ultimately, Mokumaia's wish for her students was for them be "happy in the doing, whatever they were doing" and the best way for her to ensure this was to keep her students in school and "give them what they needed" for creating and maintaining a clean, orderly, "self-respecting" home.<sup>110</sup>

As a result of Mokumaia's guidance, Moanalua Elementary obtained an "excellent health record" in 1928. While she emphasized the development of domestic skills, she more importantly offered her students, especially the girls, a sense of empowerment. She provided them training, experiences, and confidence to take charge of their circumstances and improve their lives and those of others. She modeled a "driving spirit" that "could not have rested until the work which was needed, was done."<sup>111</sup> By instilling in her students and their families a sense of personal investment in a collective effort, Mokumaia built an effective "interrelationship" between her school, students, and the surrounding community.<sup>112</sup>

Principal Phoebe Heen Amoy (TNS 1909, TC 1935) created a similar understanding of community with her administrative practices at Hanamaulu Elementary on Kaua'i in the late 1920s. Highly motivated, Amoy created goals to "build up friendly cooperation between the

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<sup>110</sup> Department of Public Instruction. Division of Research, *Some Descriptions of Progressive Education in the Public Schools of Hawaii*, (Honolulu: Kawanakoa Experimental School, 1929), 198, 202.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

school and the community” and foster a “spirit of responsibility” among her students.<sup>113</sup> On her first day, she set about a plan to clear the school playground overrun by weeds. She designed a rotation system assigning each classroom a section of the yard to clean and beautify each day during recess. She arranged the help of the local sugar plantation in clearing the park next to the school and planting coconut trees along the school driveway leading to the beach. She also organized a school lū‘au (celebratory feast) to raise money for schoolbooks, playground equipment, and construction of a school library and started an alumni association to increase community involvement through donations and hosting local events. By building strong relationships with businesses and student families, Amoy transformed Hanamaulu School from an isolated, single-purpose institution into a versatile community center.

The administrative styles of Mokumaia and Amoy accentuated the contrasting approaches of continental white and Native Hawaiian attitudes toward public education. White principals demonstrated concern for the wellbeing of their students but focused their efforts on improving students’ learning environments from a top-down approach. Discipline and order informed their administrative strategies and many saw their position as ensuring each teacher remained committed to improving individual student performance. Under their direction, schools represented a collection of single teaching spaces held together by a central governing authority isolated from students’ communities.<sup>114</sup>

Both Mokumaia and Heen, however, envisioned schools as complete learning institutions woven into the fabric of local communities. They sought to create holistic educational opportunities that combined ideas of self-sufficiency, civic responsibility, cooperation, and, above all, the value of community with academic studies. In doing so, they hoped to demonstrate

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 216, 218.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 202-205, 219-227.

learning as a collaborative process that extended beyond the classroom and their formal years as students. While not directly defying DPI Americanization efforts, they deemphasized the primacy of the individual in the learning process and instead elevated a communal understanding to the acquisition of knowledge from inside and outside the schoolroom.

### **Native Teachers in the Public Sphere**

Scores of Native educators also employed this holistic approach for themselves as a means of securing greater economic opportunities. Several capitalized on their cultural knowledge and professional training to offer extracurricular courses in “Hawaiian dancing” and Hawaiian language. Many entered part-time employment in “Hawaiian entertainment” as singers and hula performers, which proved especially popular at hotels and United Service Organization (USO) events for military personnel. Others taught adult education classes and English-language lessons to both Native and immigrant students.<sup>115</sup>

Working after school was an important source of extra income for many teachers and their families. For some, it even proved lucrative. For Mollie Yap (TNS 1912) and Emma Ka‘awakauo (TNS1912), teaching English-language courses at their local YMCAs added anywhere from ten to thirty-two dollars to their monthly salary.<sup>116</sup> Lorna Hau‘olilani Awai Burger (TNS 1926, Colorado State Teachers College 1929), a teacher first at Kalākaua Intermediate and then Farrington High on O‘ahu, added \$150 monthly to her family’s income as the leader of a USO entertainer group working five to six nights a week.<sup>117</sup> Waimea Elementary teacher Nora Kahaleole Chang (TNS 1915) taught Hawaiian-language courses for adults on

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<sup>115</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Department of Public Instruction Meeting Minutes, Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> 1942, Hawai‘i State Archives, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, 104-105; December 10<sup>th</sup> 1942, 125; November 8<sup>th</sup> 1938, 174.

<sup>116</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Meeting Minutes, September 25<sup>th</sup> 1941, 203; December 9<sup>th</sup> 1943, 53.

<sup>117</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Meeting Minutes, December 10<sup>th</sup> 1942, 125.

Kaua‘i, charging beginners ten dollars and advanced learners five for twelve lessons.<sup>118</sup> Emma Kapi‘olani Farden Sharpe (TNS 1922), an elementary teacher at Kamehameha III on Maui, made as much as \$50 extra per month teaching “Hawaiian dancing” (hula).<sup>119</sup> She also taught hula workshops at the University of Hawai‘i for fifteen summers. Other teachers contributed different forms of labor and skills to family businesses to help out their families. During the summers, Mabel Ahuna (TNS 1914) worked as a bookkeeper and Eleanor Awai (TC 1939) helped out part-time at her father’s café afterschool.<sup>120</sup>

The extra earnings, especially during the Depression, greatly added to teachers’ household budgets. The average annual salary for teachers in 1920 was \$1,163. By 1930 it had risen to \$1,773 but only increased twenty dollars by 1940, effectively keeping them in the lower-middle class.<sup>121</sup> For teachers unmarried, widowed, and single with children, the additional income provided financial security for their families and economic self-sufficiency as individuals. Yet financial motive was not the only reason why many Native teachers continued working after their day ended.

Part-time work allowed teachers the chance to practice and perpetuate Native culture and language in their private lives. While the DPI prohibited the use of any language other than English in the classroom, several Native teachers dedicated their spare time to keeping hula and their language alive in informal academic environments. Seemingly innocuous, their efforts would have lasting effects on the survival of Native identity in the territorial period and into the

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<sup>118</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Meeting Minutes, November 8<sup>th</sup> 1938, 174.

<sup>119</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Meeting Minutes, October 24<sup>th</sup> 1940, 77; October 29<sup>th</sup> 1942, 104.

<sup>120</sup> “Outside Pursuits,” Meeting Minutes, September 1924, 186; 1943, 243.

<sup>121</sup> Robert C. Schmitt, *Historical Statistics of Hawaii* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1977), 218; According to federal tax returns for the years between 1919 and 1943, Hawai‘i’s teachers sat in the \$1000 to \$2000 income bracket, placing them in the lower-middle class, or bottom third of the territory’s economic hierarchy (Schmitt 184).

post-WWII era. For some, such as Emma Sharpe, these opportunities represented important foundational moments in developing their future roles as kūpuna (cultural elders).

Initially, Emma's father forbade any of his children in learning hula. His decision arose not from any internalized moral missionary concerns of lasciviousness, but from a larger fear of the instability of entertaining as a form of employment. As such, he insisted they obtain a profession and learn the "value of the dollar" through hard work. Thus, Emma, as well as her younger sister, Irmgard, turned to teaching as their formal employment but secretly continued their hula training for several years and eventually gained their father's support. After graduation, Emma fulfilled her father's wishes, quickly secured a teaching job on Maui, and followed hers by forming her own hula "dancing troupe."<sup>122</sup>

Over the next forty years, Emma remained actively employed as a teacher while continuing to refine and expand her cultural knowledge base, eventually developing into a skilled mea oli (chanter), haku mele (composer), and kumu hula (hula teacher). She eventually started her own hula hālau (hula school) and took advantage of the growing tourist economy through contracted performances that included many of her students at various hotels on Maui.<sup>123</sup> Despite her rising success, Emma never forgot her father's lessons and remained committed to her teaching career.

So did Native women educators who worked at various extracurricular jobs. Taken together, their efforts represented clear examples of how Native teachers found ways to resist and defy Americanization by differentiating their roles based on the space they occupied. On campus and in the classroom, they performed their duties as employees of the DPI and its

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<sup>122</sup> *Emma Sharpe: Part 1*. (Honolulu, Hawai'i: KHET-TV, 1998), [http://www.sinclair.hawaii.edu/auth/auth.php?fn=Pau\\_Hana\\_Emma\\_Sharpe\\_1.mov](http://www.sinclair.hawaii.edu/auth/auth.php?fn=Pau_Hana_Emma_Sharpe_1.mov).

<sup>123</sup> *Emma Sharpe: Part 1 and 2*.

assimilationist campaign: participating in the various nationalist rituals, enforcing English-only policies, and teaching American civics and citizenship. However, once away from campus, Native teachers shrugged off their formal responsibilities and worked to sustain their indigenous identity by promoting the study and practice of their culture and language. They also modeled effective ways to successfully engage and navigate an Americanized Hawai'i as Native Hawaiians retaining their cultural identity.

One other important group of Native women educators worked in higher education and territorial school administration. Like all other Native female educators, these upper-level administrators and instructors also faced “[p]rescriptions for female behavior” that directly contravened the requirements of their professional conduct.<sup>124</sup> These social expectations took the form of persistent nineteenth-century feminine ideals pushing women toward “passivity, humility, and self-sacrifice” that conflicted with their professional training that demanded “activity, confidence, and self-assertion.”<sup>125</sup>

The major difference for these professional women was they entered a world dominated by men. Among schoolteachers, women outnumbered men by four to one. However, in the realms of educational bureaucracy and post-secondary educational institutions, men ruled. Thus, for those who persevered, they represented important female mentors who struggled against double standards and racial stereotypes to build successful careers as Native women. To arrive at that level was a slow, arduous journey.

From his first year as principal of the TNS in 1921, Wist initially hired several prominent Native Hawaiian “specialists” and “authorities” to teach a variety of indigenous subjects – Hawaiian language, “handicraft,” weaving, art, and history. However, there was one major

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<sup>124</sup> Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935*, xiii.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

problem: each Native instructor lacked a formal university degree. This was not surprising since no university in the nation offered or specialized in Native Hawaiian history or cultural arts. As a result, by the 1925-1926 academic year, none of these Native instructors remained – victims of Wist’s professionalizing campaign to staff the TNS only with academically trained and credentialed faculty.<sup>126</sup> As a result, every Native Hawaiian subject disappeared from the TNS course catalog. Only Hawaiian history returned to the 1927-1928 class schedule after the school hired James K. Akimo, a Native Hawaiian graduate of Princeton’s theological seminary, to teach the course. Thus, for Native faculty to teach Hawaiian subjects and survive in an academic environment indifferent to indigenous studies, they needed to adapt by obtaining advanced degrees in western fields.

Lorna Ho‘oleia Jarrett and Dorothy Mitchell Kahananui were two such Native faculty members who persevered and secured successful and lengthy careers in higher education. Both graduates of TNS in 1913, they shared strikingly similar professional and academic paths. After teaching for a few years in the public schools, they returned to the TNS as instructors when Wist took over and quickly obtained their bachelors of science on the continent in order to remain employed. Their ambitions did not let them stop there. By the mid-1930s, they also received master’s degrees from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and eventually became faculty members.

With degrees in geography, Jarrett taught the subject first at TNS in 1921 and continued on at TC after the merger in 1931. She also had taken numerous sociology and psychology courses during her time at Columbia, which qualified her to fill the dean of women position in 1932. She

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<sup>126</sup> The only exception to Wist’s policy was Esther Kelle, an instructor of “Hawaiian Arts,” who remained on as faculty despite possessing only a high school diploma from Kohala Seminary on Hawai‘i until the merger with UHM in 1931.

remained there until 1934 when she married Alexander Desha and moved to Hilo, Hawai‘i. Marital life failed to slow her down. Soon after settling in, she applied her administrative experience and training to a variety of positions – DPI “field assistant,” principal of Waiākea-kai Intermediate, and assistant principal at Hilo High School.<sup>127</sup>

Kahananui also utilized her academic training in her profession. Starting out at TNS in 1923, she taught music while also earning her diploma via correspondence from the Siegel Meyers School of Music in Chicago. She left Hawai‘i in 1927 for NYU and, upon her return in 1931 she took over the music education curriculum for prospective and in-service teachers at the TC until her retirement in 1960. Over the course of her career, she taught every music class the college offered, including music history, and was the faculty advisor for the glee club, student social committee, and the all-Native Hawaiian women’s club, Ke Ānuehue. She also provided weekly music lessons for the territory’s public schools via radio.<sup>128</sup>

For both Jarrett and Kahananui, their contributions did not end in the classroom. Similar to the extracurricular activities of other Native schoolteachers, they made significant contributions to the advancement of Native Hawaiian cultural knowledge in the public sphere. Both utilized their academic training to expand specific research in Hawaiian studies by publishing various books, papers, and pamphlets on their areas of specialty. Jarrett emphasized history, legends, and human geography. She converted her M.A. thesis, “A Source Book in Hawaiian Geography,” into a public school textbook, *Hawaii and Its People*. Despite claiming never to do “that kind of

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<sup>127</sup> Lorna Hooleia Jarrett Desha, interview by Katherine B. Allen, 1979, 13–30, Center for Oral History, University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa.

<sup>128</sup> “UHM Music Building Named For Dorothy M. Kahananui,” *Music at Mānoa* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 1; *Ka Palapala*, (Honolulu: Associated Students of the University of Hawai‘i, 1939), 227, 236; Dorothy M. Kahananui to Vaughan MacCaughey, 24 February 1923, Box 1, Folder K, Wist Papers, University Archives, Hamilton Library, University of Hawai‘i-Mānoa, Honolulu.

work” again, she continued to publish.<sup>129</sup> A few years after *Hawaii and Its People*, she headed up a research group to produce a social studies curriculum guidebook covering Native Hawaiian land use pre-European contact and subsequent changes to the environment post-contact. She later published a Hawaiian legends and stories reader for fourth and fifth graders to supplement social studies material with the intent of fostering an “appreciation of their local environment and of those early people who first made Hawaii their home.”<sup>130</sup> Finally, in 1952, two years before her retirement, she led a special workshop of “well-known authorities” on ancient Hawaiian culture from which she published a social studies curriculum manual through the DPI.

Kahananui was equally as productive in the fields of music and Hawaiian language. In 1932, she was the executive editor for a DPI publication on music curriculum in the public schools. In the following years, she published her M.A. thesis, “The Influence of Psychological Theories on Music Education,” and other classroom pamphlets on how to read music. She also composed music and directed the university’s choral group. Later, in the 1940s, she joined the Hawaiian Culture Committee at the Kamehameha Schools to discuss ways to incorporate more Native cultural knowledge into the Schools’ curriculum. Following retirement, she started out on a second career of Hawaiian-language and music revitalization writing numerous textbooks such as: *Music of Ancient Hawaii: A Brief Survey* (1962), *E pāpā ‘ōlelo kākou: Hawaiian level one* (1965), and *E Kama ‘ilio Hawai‘i Kākou: Let’s Speak Hawaiian* (1970).<sup>131</sup>

In an increasingly Americanizing Hawai‘i, Jarrett and Kahananui represented key figures in sustaining Hawaiian culture and consciousness during the Territorial Period. As professional

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<sup>129</sup> Desha, Oral History Interview, 18.

<sup>130</sup> Lorna J. Desha, *Legends and Stories of Hawaii*. (Hilo, Hawaii, 1940), 1.

<sup>131</sup> Kawika Eyre, “Suppression of Hawaiian Culture at Kamehameha Schools,” *Makali‘i: An Eclectic Array*, January 2004, [https://apps.ksbe.edu/kaiwakiloumoku/makalii/feature-stories/suppression\\_of\\_hawaiian\\_culture](https://apps.ksbe.edu/kaiwakiloumoku/makalii/feature-stories/suppression_of_hawaiian_culture); “UHM Music Building Named For Dorothy M. Kahananui,” 1.

academics, they understood the value of collaborative research with other cultural experts for the production of knowledge in advancing and preserving their heritage. As educators, they appreciated and recognized the need to make the results of their research accessible to their community and wider audiences. As Native female role models, their academic and professional achievements would have inspired many of their students to travel, earn extra degrees, pursue professional advancement, improve their communities, and contribute to the spread of their culture.

Not all Native teachers followed the same professional path. Others found ways to progress through their careers in education and contribute meaningfully to their people other than as an academic and Henrietta Smith Mann was one such individual. A 1910 graduate of the TNS, Mann taught elementary school for five years before attending Teachers College at Columbia University and graduating with her B.A. in education during the spring of 1921. She returned to TNS that fall to teach primary education but left the academic profession after only one year. She then spent the next ten years working at various social welfare groups such as the Red Cross before accepting an appointment from territorial governor Lawrence Judd as the first female Native Hawaiian DPI education commissioner of O‘ahu. Her responsibilities involved overseeing all school operations on the island, including curriculum development and implementation, and regular meetings with the superintendent.

Outspoken and direct, Mann used her position to address inequity within the territory’s schools. She was the only commissioner to ever question the efficacy of territorial education standards for all of Hawai‘i’s school children. In addressing the “main causes of delinquency, failures, and dropping out of school,” Mann challenged lingering racial attitudes within local education circles and the broader white American public to the capacity for Hawai‘i’s diverse

population to succeed at school. She pointed out how the failure of many students stemmed not from any “inherent” deficiencies, but rather “unquestionably” developed from “background, language and adjustment to a new environment.”<sup>132</sup> As she explained, “[w]ith these handicaps, children, other than Anglo-Saxons, who constitute the largest percent of enrollment, cannot develop in the earliest years to the extent that other children develop, since the curriculum is based and results judged by Anglo-Saxon standards.<sup>133</sup> Mann’s observation effectively spotted the bias woven into the territorial schools’ curriculum that privileged white students’ abilities over those of their nonwhite classmates.

Mann’s professional background in education and social welfare no doubt alerted her to how Native Hawaiian students suffered the highest numbers of “retardation” in the public schools.<sup>134</sup> She also would have known it was impossible to concentrate solely on their plight as universal qualities of “racial harmony,” color-blind nationalism, and equal opportunity dominated the official rhetoric of the DPI. Giving specific attention to one group, namely her people, from her position of authority would have drawn negative white attention and calls of racial favoritism.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, whether or not she received criticism for her position, she stayed on as commissioner only for two years before moving to the community nonprofit Child and Family Service in 1934.

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<sup>132</sup> “Curriculum and Personnel,” Henrietta Smith Mann, Department of Public Instruction Meeting Minutes, August – December 1932, Hawai‘i State Archives, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, 29.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Romanzo Colfax Adams, *The Peoples of Hawaii* (Honolulu: American Council, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1933), 46.

<sup>135</sup> For more on white anxiety towards Hawaiian nationalism and political solidarity during the Territorial Period, see Noenoe K. Silva, “I Kū Mau Mau: How Kānaka Maoli Tried To Sustain National Identity Within the United States Political System,” *American Studies* 45, no. 3 (October 2004): 9–31.

Like many other Native educators of her generation, Mann exhibited a drive to learn, professionalize, and improve her community while still retaining her cultural identity. Despite her parents' refusal to speak Hawaiian to her growing up, preferring she "learn one language well, namely English," she found other ways to embrace and celebrate her Native heritage.<sup>136</sup> She joined a hula hālau, performing regularly from an early age, and participated in plays that reenacted famous Native Hawaiian historical events. Professionally, she applied her training and education to building a career in public service. While her efforts remained confined to accepted societal dominions of "women's work," Mann successfully moved between education and social work, even climbing the bureaucratic structure to enter a position of authority within the male-dominated world of educational administration.

### **Conclusion**

Hawai'i's Territorial Period was a difficult time for Native Hawaiians and especially so for Native female educators. As government employees, they were expected to follow and implement an assimilationist campaign linked to the larger political project of making Hawai'i American. This did not mean they embraced DPI strategies of cultural annihilation or complete assimilation. Rather, many Native teachers and administrators resisted such policies and actively worked to undermine them while still fulfilling the expectations of their white employers. As their oral histories reveal, many maintained a self-assured understanding and pride in their cultural identity and encouraged their Native students to feel proud about their indigeneity by highlighting Native accomplishments and cultural values. They also found innovative ways to practice and perpetuate their culture and identity and balance their personal and communal needs while still fulfilling their professional commitments to the DPI.

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<sup>136</sup> Henrietta Smith Mann, interview by Lynda Mair, 1979, 14, Center for Oral History, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa.

Successful engagement and negotiation with American schooling however involved more than just students and teachers. Native Hawaiian parents, politicians, and the greater community also played a vital role in shaping the meaning and implementation of American education for their children. They drafted petitions and supported legislation to fight for greater access to educational resources and opportunities and contest school policies. These extracurricular efforts complicate territorial history by demonstrating how Native participation in schools extended beyond campus walls to include a variety of non-school actors who also viewed schooling as a means to survive and succeed in an Americanized Hawai'i. The Native community did not view American schooling as a means to become American but rather a way to remain Hawaiian.

## Chapter 5: Families and Communities

### Introduction

*Nothing passes away.*

*Those who so easily say that the Hawaiian nation is dying – or dead, speak from the mouth only. Because forms of government change they think the spirit of a people can change. Were there not many changes in forms of government in Hawaii long before the haole came?*

*Prince Kalanianaʻole was no less royal because he served a new political order as a representative of his people at Washington instead of serving upon a throne at Iolani Palace. Nor is the spirit of the Hawaiian nation less potent because it is helping to build a new social order.<sup>1</sup>*

Such was the tribute paid to Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalanianaʻole, a well-known figure in territorial politics and the Native Hawaiian community, in the 1922 February edition of Hawaiʻi's monthly-illustrated travel magazine, *Paradise of the Pacific*. His death on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1922 left a critical void within the Native political establishment. An ardent Hawaiian patriot, he committed nearly thirty years of his life to the advancement of his people. This began with his participation in the failed armed uprising in 1895 to restore the monarchy. After a brief incarceration, Kūhiō redirected his energy into public service as a more pragmatic and effective means to improve the welfare of Native Hawaiians. From 1903 to 1922, he served as territorial delegate to Congress and played a vital role in securing passage of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) in 1921.<sup>2</sup> He also helped found the Hawaiian Civic Club, a private

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<sup>1</sup> "There Is No Death," *Paradise of the Pacific*, February 1922, 20.

<sup>2</sup> The HHCA was designed to encourage Native Hawaiian survival and physical rehabilitation by restoring them to rural life on homesteads located on formerly designated Crown lands seized by the republic and then ceded over to the federal government. The idea was to help Natives escape the slums of Honolulu and become self-sufficient, raise "happy families," and become "homeowners." The HHCA implemented a 50-percent or greater blood quantum requirement in order to qualify for a homestead. For more on the HHCA and the implications of blood quantum as proof of indigeneity, see J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

group of prominent Native Hawaiians committed to raising money for Native youths aspiring to enter institutions of higher education.

As the last appointed heir to the throne, Kūhiō represented the final direct connection to the kingdom's leadership and, to many in the territory, his passing meant the demise of the Hawaiian monarchy. His death also symbolized the end of a generation of Native politicians born and raised under the monarchy that lived and understood Hawaiian values free of Americanizing influences. As Native scholar Davianna Pomaika'i MacGregor explained, Native lawmakers like Kūhiō understood the importance of maintaining an "adversarial and competitive relationship" with the white minority elite in order to defend Hawaiian interests and avoid marginalization. Kūhiō's passing marked the end of that great generation. Younger Native politicians, she argued, educated in private and public schools of the post-annexation era learned to "accept assimilationist attitudes and Western values." As a result, this generation ushered in a "new period of cooperation and collaboration" between Hawaiians and haole favoring white political and economic concerns.<sup>3</sup> Thus, for many Native Hawaiians, the loss of their last ali'i (chiefs) signaled the end of their nation.

The author of Kūhiō's tribute in the *Paradise of the Pacific* believed otherwise. Published barely a month after his death, the anonymous essayist provided a defiant and resilient message to Natives and non-natives alike that the Hawaiian nation lived on explaining, "[t]here is no end – there is no death. Only change." He or she did not fear the coming new "social order" and instead acknowledged it as a "natural and right...transition from one age to another" with any

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<sup>3</sup> Davianna Pomaika'i MacGregor, "Aina Ho'opulapula: Hawaiian Homesteading," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 24 (1990), 33.

change only “outward seeming.” The Hawaiian nation continued to exist, the author asserted, and Kūhiō’s death marked the beginning of a new era for Native Hawaiians.<sup>4</sup>

This was not a unique, rare, or peripheral opinion but evidence of an entrenched indigenous consciousness circulating among Native Hawaiians of the territorial period. The author merely brought to life this Native awareness, showing that in the years since the overthrow (1893), annexation (1898), and naturalization (1900), Hawaiians continued to resist assimilation and assert their indigenous identity. This oppositional point of view challenged one-dimensional white imaginations of eternally happy, exotic natives who passively accepted the changes to their land. From the age of Polynesian exploration, Native Hawaiians actively discovered, experimented, and engaged with the larger world around them without compromising their cultural identity and incorporating new information and skills to enhance their lives and communities. This dynamic approach to learning did not end with the overthrow but continued on into the twentieth century.

Throughout his life, Kūhiō modeled this appreciation for education and experience. A graduate from Saint Matthews military school in California, he later travelled to England and briefly studied at the Royal Agricultural College before receiving a business degree from a local commercial school. He left the islands after his release from prison to fight for the British against the Boers in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite his foreign education and military service, Kūhiō never forgot who he was or his responsibilities to his people. He returned to Hawai‘i in 1902 and dedicated himself to improving the livelihood of Native Hawaiians. His career demonstrated how

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<sup>4</sup> “There Is No Death,” 20.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 71; “KALANIANA‘OLE, Jonah Kuhio - Biographical Information,” accessed September 29, 2016, <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=K000004>.

Natives could embrace and apply non-Native schooling and English-language skills to advance their lives and others without compromising their values and identity.

The prince was not alone. He belonged to a large network of indigenous intellectuals, politicians, cultural practitioners, and local activists that also shared this view. Together they formed a strong, public Native voice in territorial society promoting the importance of public schooling in advancing both the educational needs of their people and sustaining their language and culture. Affluent, urban, and well-educated, many elites applied their political, social, and cultural capital in the territorial legislature to protest injustices, advocate for greater educational opportunities and resources, and search for ways to revitalize and return their native language to the public sphere.

Native rural families also believed in Kūhiō's view. Living in country towns and villages across the territory, parents expressed a deep appreciation and desire for public education and looked to their schools as vehicles in advancing their children's success and survival. Like the elites, they utilized the political process through school petitions to formally protest DPI decisions, disclose their fears over their children's economic and political marginalization, and press for greater access to educational opportunities and resources. Native families also represented an important cultural bulwark against Americanization in schools. Their subsistence lifestyle in agriculture and fishing, daily use of the Hawaiian language, and regular practice of cultural arts and medicine provided a solid cultural foundation at home for sustaining their indigenous identity and way of life.<sup>6</sup>

Urban and rural groups never coalesced into a unified movement or put forward a "uniform platform of action." Instead they symbolized a diverse and vibrant community united in

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<sup>6</sup> Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, *Nā Kua 'Āina: Living Hawaiian Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 44.

their concerns over the direction of their people and solutions to advance them through public education.<sup>7</sup> While the strong Americanization presence in the public school system remained worrisome, many in this diverse community failed to equate their pursuit of educational opportunity and economic security with assimilation. This chapter explores the specific ways rural and urban Native Hawaiians appropriated and used American institutional tools and processes to make schooling work for them. Between 1900 and 1941, rural families regularly petitioned the DPI requesting greater access to educational resources and involvement in decision-making. During that same period, urban elites submitted and supported legislation reinstating the Hawaiian language, expanding the study of Native history and culture, and providing economic support for higher education. Collectively, they viewed schools as providing “tools of the oppressors” – English-language fluency, knowledge of American government, and white middle-class norms – necessary for securing financial means for social mobility, contributing to the development of a Native middle class, and empowering community self-determination.<sup>8</sup> Thus, to ensure their survival in an Americanized Hawai‘i, the Native community labored to shape the public schools to meet the needs of their people. An important vehicle in delivering this message was the school petition.

### **Petitions**

From across the territory, school petitions regularly poured into the DPI’s central office in Honolulu requesting (sometimes demanding) attention to issues concentrated around two central themes: personnel (protests over and requests for the hiring and firing of faculty and administrators) and infrastructure (appeals for more school resources, services, and buildings).

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<sup>7</sup> Heather Howard-Bobiwash, “Women’s Class Strategies as Activism in Native Community Building in Toronto, 1950-1975,” *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 3/4 (2003): 576, 579.

<sup>8</sup> James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

Some were even sent to the territorial legislature with the specific requests for the reinstatement of the Hawaiian language in the public schools and greater emphasis in teaching Hawaiian history and culture. Most times though school petitions ended up on the desks of unelected white school officials with no recourse for parents if a decision failed to go in their favor. Nonetheless, this failed to deter families in both rural and urban settings on O‘ahu, Hawai‘i, Kaua‘i, Moloka‘i, Maui, and Lāna‘i from asserting their interests and needs for schooling. Their petitions reveal them as a vibrant and politically active indigenous population resisting marginalization and assimilation by appropriating public education to succeed and survive on their terms.

The use of petitions as tools for change was not a new concept for Native Hawaiians. In 1897, nearly 40,000 Natives signed anti-annexation petitions submitted to the U.S. Senate to formally protest a treaty of Hawai‘i’s annexation. Their effort succeeded in convincing enough U.S. senators early in 1898 to vote against the treaty. However, that same year, America declared war on Spain and on July 6<sup>th</sup>, a joint resolution of Congress supporting Hawaiian annexation, the Newlands Resolution, cleared both houses with a simple majority; Hawai‘i had officially become American. Native Hawaiians again quickly rallied to protest the resolution, submitting another petition in early August of 1898 but it found no support in Congress. Gripped with war fever, U.S. security interests trumped democratic principles and, on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1898, under armed guard U.S. officials raised the American flag at ‘Iolani Palace symbolically completing Hawai‘i’s absorption into the union.<sup>9</sup>

It may seem “ironic or absurd” that Native Hawaiians relied only on petitions to pressure the U.S. government, but, as Native political science professor, Noenoe K. Silva, argued, they had no other choice. The heavily armed white oligarchy physically prevented Natives from

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<sup>9</sup> Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*, 158–60.

reasserting their own sovereignty following the overthrow in 1893. As such, Native organizers of the anti-annexation movement were forced to appeal to the U.S. as a final, “desperate tactic” to force the white minority government to hold a local plebiscite on annexation or independence. While ultimately this failed to return Hawai‘i’s sovereignty, Silva points to the petitions as an effective “counterhegemonic” use of a Western-style tool of democratic government meant to hold the President and Congress accountable to American universal principles of “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”<sup>10</sup>

The anti-annexation petitions represent an important precedent for discussing the use of school petitions by the Native Hawaiian community in the twentieth century. Leaders of the 1890s resistance organizations adopted the mechanizations of democratic government, language of rights, and English-language proficiency to present and argue their case for the return of their national sovereignty. Despite their appropriation of these Western institutions and tools, at no point was their identity as Hawaiians called into question. Their ultimate goal was the survival of their nation and they demonstrated the lengths they would go to ensure its existence. Native Hawaiians who utilized school petitions between 1900 and 1941 were no different. They embodied the same urgency, sacrifice, and dedication demonstrated by the anti-annexation protesters in their commitment to ensuring the survival of their people, culture, and identity. While school petitions never received the same publicity in print media as those of the anti-annexation movement, they remained a critical outlet for many rural and less affluent Hawaiians in expressing concern for their future.

School petitions also challenge understanding assimilation as a linear process or thinking that actively participating in the American school system demonstrated willing rejection of

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 146, 153–54.

Native identity and acceptance of Americanization. Instead, their use represented a course of action by parents to harness their local schools as a resource for their children's success. During a time of uncertainty over their physical and socioeconomic survival, the petitions capture how Native Hawaiians resisted marginalization and attempted to exercise control over their future. One issue they targeted was the decision-making process over faculty and administrative employment.

### **Removal**

Petitions represented a powerful tool for Native parents to assert their support or disdain over who taught and led their children at school. They utilized their signatures to emphasize a unified voice in order to capture the attention of school officials in Honolulu, the territory's capital. Calling for the removal of a particular teacher or principal represented an effective means for local communities to alert the DPI to educators they found detrimental to their children's learning needs. Incompetence, immorality, and abuse describe the range of concerns outlined in their petitions and shed light on the various obstacles many students, parents, and communities faced in securing quality schooling. Their petitions also reveal the unwillingness of many Natives to tolerate poor conditions and ineffective faculty and their active steps to improve their children's learning environment.

The number of petitions filed specifically concerning teacher and administrator incompetence was highest between 1903 and 1914, though they continued to arrive at the DPI in later years. They generally highlighted the lack of commitment by teachers to effectively educate students, depriving them of knowledge to succeed and advance in their studies. For some petitions, proof of teacher ineptitude involved the inability of children to write their own name and read and count in English. In May 1903, eighteen Native parents signed a petition to remove

Miss Lizzie Ahuai, citing her poor teaching abilities as “interfering” with her students’ educational development. They pointed to how students could not write letters to their parents or count using advanced numbers.<sup>11</sup> Parents of John T. Unea’s students, an elementary teacher at Kalaupapa on the island of Moloka‘i, accused him of incompetence, writing to the DPI in November of 1910 indicating how children “who have gone to his school for several years, can hardly write their own names.”<sup>12</sup>

Incompetence also involved laziness and unprofessional behavior. Parents of children in the combined rural school district of Ka‘a‘awa, Kualoa, and Kahana on the island of O‘ahu protested against Mr. J.P. Looney’s improper appearance, conduct, and ineffective teaching style. They described how Mr. Looney did not instruct students “as he should,” resulting in students acting “careless in their studies.” They also mentioned how he slept during class time, ended school an hour early every day, and described his general “filthiness” as breaches of DPI rules. Thus, these parents warned, if Mr. Looney remained on for the next year, they intended to withdraw their children from that school and send them to another.<sup>13</sup> Laziness appeared to even bother students. Pupils at a grade school in Lāhainā, Maui in May of 1909, complained how they could “not learn anything” from their teacher, Mr. Law, since he “always [slept] in school time.” When he was awake, his solution to girls asking questions about math was for them to “ask the boys.” As a result of his incompetence, students protested, “[w]e are not coming to school anymore” as long as Mr. Law was their teacher.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Puna, Hawaii School Petition, May 1903, folder 4, box 56, General Correspondence, series 261, Records of the Department of Education, Hawai‘i State Archives (HSA), Honolulu.

<sup>12</sup> Kalaupapa, Molokai School Petition, 30 November 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>13</sup> Kaaawa-Koolauloa, Oahu School Petition, 18 June 1917, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>14</sup> Lahaina, Maui School, Maui Petition, 5 May 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

The use of “bad language” by teachers also constituted another form of incompetence worthy of dismissal. Native parents of Puako in South Kohala on the island of Hawai‘i, demanded the replacement of Mrs. Christy Wagner in 1905 due to her teaching “scholars some bad language.” As a result, parents wanted a “better teacher” so that their children learned “the right kind of language.”<sup>15</sup> In the town of Līhu‘e on the island of Kaua‘i, parents submitted a petition on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1906 asking for the removal of Ms. Kawena Kaulili for “not teaching well to the pupils [*sic*]” and using “bad language.”<sup>16</sup> Whether “bad language” referred to cursing or poor English skills, to petitioners seeking the dismissals of Wagner and Kaulili, it did not matter: they wanted their children to learn the correct use of the English language.

Immorality also represented a grave concern for Native communities that emerged in affidavits or personal letters, typically reporting cases of adultery. In a letter to the superintendent dated August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1907, Wilson Nahakuelua observed Mrs. J.V. Marciel, a teacher at Laupahoehoe, Hawai‘i, “kissing and acting in manner unbecoming a school teacher” during the late night hours of August 17<sup>th</sup>. His concern over her poor conduct emanated from the fact that his children attended that same school. As a result, he was prepared to formally “prove his charges” and awaited anxiously for a reply from the superintendent of how to move forward.<sup>17</sup> In another case, the person directly affected by an extramarital affair got involved. Mrs. Tillie Hua wrote to the superintendent on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1909 bluntly asking him to inform Miss Lizzie Alua‘aihu(?) to leave her husband alone, claiming she was causing “all kinds of

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<sup>15</sup> Wailuku, Maui School Petition, 21 September 1905, folder 5, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>16</sup> Hulaia, Kauai School Petition, 3 April 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>17</sup> Wilson Nahakuelua to Superintendent W.H. Babbitt, 30 August 1907, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

trouble between my husband and I.” At the end of her brief letter, Mrs. Hua made clear to the superintendent that if he failed stop her, Hua would “put her in trouble.”<sup>18</sup>

Overall, the most prolific concern was abuse. Allegations ranged from the excessive and violent application of corporal punishment to misuse of authority but despite the high number of accusations, abuse never constituted a stand-alone issue for removal petitions. Instead, Native parents lumped charges of abuse with complaints of incompetence as part of a larger case supporting an educator’s dismissal. These composite petitions constituted the majority of formal complaints submitted to the DPI.

Parents in the community of Kahalepalaoa on the island of Lāna‘i wrote to the DPI in November of 1903 requesting the removal of Mr. S.C. Biddell. Besides allegations that he failed to advance the learning of his students by not teaching them how to read, the petition claimed Biddell further “distressed” his students by shunning his teacher duties to spend two days each school week farming and fulfilling personal economic pursuits.<sup>19</sup> Parents of children attending Laupahoehoe elementary called for the dismissal of their teacher, Mr. Charles Swain, in 1906 not just for whipping students but also for forcing them to work on his farm shoveling manure and washing his laundry.<sup>20</sup> In another petition, dated August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1913, parents accused teacher Eddie Iona in Kona, Hawai‘i of incompetent instruction and excessive use of force in striking children’s heads against the classroom wall, and cuffing them on their ears.<sup>21</sup> Three years later, in the rural town of Wailau on Moloka‘i, the local community requested the transfer of Mr. L.K.

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<sup>18</sup> Mrs. Tillie Hua to Superintendent W.H. Babbitt, 19 January 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>19</sup> Kahalepalaoa, Lanai School Petition, 7 November 1903, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>20</sup> Laupahoehoe, Hawaii School Petition, 9 June 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>21</sup> Kona, Hawaii School Petition, 1 August 1913, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

Ka‘alouahi for sleeping during class time, starting school at noon each day, and beating children with his hands, books, and a stick “not once but most every week.”<sup>22</sup>

Community policing also extended to principals. In 1906, parents of children attending Waipi‘o Elementary on Hawai‘i asked for the removal of Principal John K. Kealoha for his authoritative and abusive rule over their school. They cited how he kept children in school for over six hours each day instead of five, had been arrested twice for excessively punishing students, embezzled school funds, and taught their children dancing and “love songs” that threatened to lead them into “bad habits.”<sup>23</sup> That same year, farther south on Hawai‘i at Napo‘opo‘o Public School, parents petitioned for the dismissal of Principal R.L. Ogilive due to his poor efforts in helping students prepare for advancement to high school and insulting his students and their families by calling them “leprous.”<sup>24</sup> Neither principal however pushed his community as far as Principal David Kapohakimohewa of Kēōkea Elementary in 1914. In an affidavit detailing his offenses, they labeled Kapohakimohewa as “unfit” to hold the position of principal as he “cruelly and unmercifully” terrorized students by striking them in the head with books and articles of furniture as well as kicking and punching them. As if the physical abuse was not enough, parents also described how Kapohakimohewa grossly overcharged both students and Kēōkea School for supplies sold at his small general store across the street. To ensure his monopoly, he banned the use of any school materials on campus other than those purchased from his store.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wailau, Molokai School Petition, 28 June 1916, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>23</sup> Waipio, Hawaii School Petition, 30 July 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>24</sup> Napoopoo, Hawaii School Petition, 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>25</sup> Keokea, Maui School Petition, 18 May 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

## Support

Despite these examples of malfeasance, requests for removal remained low. The vast majority of petitions relayed powerful affirmations by Native communities for their children’s teachers and principals. Petitions of support expressed deep parental satisfaction over the quality of their educators and their commitment to creating constructive learning environments that enhanced their children’s learning needs. They describe the qualities communities admired and desired most about their educators: advancing students’ knowledge, interacting with the community, and demonstrating good morals and academic competency. They also reflect the active involvement of Native parents in addressing the schooling concerns of their local communities and shaping a positive outcome for their future.

The most common impetuses for petitions of support resulted from the routine rotation of teachers to other schools, personal requests by educators to relocate, and resignation. Petitions also tended to be vague on details but direct on requests. In February of 1905, parents submitted a petition for teacher Mrs. Clara Mokumaia to remain at Moanalua School on O‘ahu, describing her as “perfectly able and competent” to teach their children.<sup>26</sup> The parents of students attending Kalua‘aha School on Moloka‘i petitioned for the reappointment of Mrs. Anahu in 1909 stating they held “no good cause to complain of her work” and held her in high regard as a teacher.<sup>27</sup> The Native community in Hāna, Maui endorsed Miss Ida Kauloku in 1911 due to her “good moral character” and their experiences with her as a “capable” and trustworthy individual.<sup>28</sup> A petition submitted in 1932 gathered over one-hundred signatures, three-fourths of whom were

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<sup>26</sup> She later became principal of Moanalua, remaining nearly forty years. For more on her impact on the community see chapter four. Moanalua, Oahu School Petition, February 1905, folder 5, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>27</sup> Kaluaaha, Molokai School Petition, 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>28</sup> Hana, Maui School Petition, 1911, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

from Native Hawaiians, supporting the reappointment of Principal George Apela to Ho‘okena School, Hawai‘i and describing him as “one of our most respectable citizens.”<sup>29</sup>

Other petitions focused solely on the capability of teachers to instill learning in their children as justification for retention. During the summer of 1916, upon learning of the transfer of Mr. John Limahai Jr., a teacher at Hā‘ō‘ū School on Maui, parents fired off a petition requesting he remain for a few more years. They explained their children “greatly improved in their studies through his active and splendid teaching” and lamented that his “removal from here will be a great loss.”<sup>30</sup> That same year, parents submitted a petition asking the DPI to extend the stay of Mr. Henry K. Domingo at Ka‘a‘awa School, O‘ahu for two more years citing how their children “improved a great deal by his instruction.”<sup>31</sup> Also on O‘ahu, several Native parents asked right before the start of school in August of 1932 that Mrs. Mabel E. Peterson remain at Lāi‘e School for two reasons: “her admirable work with the primary group” and “her wonderful work with the adults vocational group.”<sup>32</sup>

Most communities however refrained from submitting single-issue petitions. Instead, many chose to combine qualities and values they believed important for advancing the educational opportunities of their children. The Native community of Hōnaunau, Hawai‘i asked for the retention of Mrs. L. Kawewehi as teacher for their school and to stop her transfer to another ten miles away. They explained how in two years she advanced student learning, upheld good Christian morals, received student praise, and maintained a harmonious relationship with

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<sup>29</sup> Hookena, Hawaii School Petition, v.13, 11 December 1931 - 27 June 1932, Minutes of the Department of Education (Minutes), series 235, Record of the Department of Education, Hawai‘i State Archives (HSA), Honolulu, 215.

<sup>30</sup> Haou, Maui School Petition, 19 July 1916, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>31</sup> Ka‘a‘awa-Ko‘olauloa, Oahu School Petition, 1916, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>32</sup> Laie, Oahu School Petition, v.14, 15 August 1932 - 9 December 1932, Minutes, HSA, 139.

students and their families.<sup>33</sup> In 1909, parents of students attending Ka‘a‘awa School wanted to hold on to Mr. James Kamakaiwi as he was a natural “fit” to be a teacher of their children. He maintained a good moral stature and continually sought to improve his teaching skills, from which his students clearly benefited as they regularly advanced to upper grade levels.<sup>34</sup> The community of Hāna, Maui asked for the reappointment of Mrs. A. Roback as principal of Ke‘anae School in July of 1911 citing her intelligence and teaching skill as qualities of an effective leader and dedication to the welfare of her students.<sup>35</sup> In their request to retain Miss Annie Apaka, parents at Kāne‘ohe School on O‘ahu in July of 1916 glowed over her tireless and “excellent work” in teaching their children how to sew, embroider, and “other good things.” She solidified their support by representing a good role model for students through her “easy temper,” “good behavior,” and willingness to help others.<sup>36</sup>

Despite the hopes and efforts parents and the community poured into their petitions, the ultimate outcome of each request remains unclear. Only a small number of responses from the DPI exist and they leave a muddled picture of petitions’ overall effectiveness. Many departmental replies simply acknowledged receipt and explained they would be reviewed. One letter, dated July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1906, typified how the department responded,

Dear Sir: -

Beg to acknowledge receipt of the communication of July 5<sup>th</sup> signed by yourself and others asking for the appointment of Asiu Akui as teacher for the Haena School.

In reply to same, I beg to say that appointment will be made next week and that your petition will be considered by the Board at that time.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Honaunau, Hawaii School Petition, n.d., box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>34</sup> Ka‘a‘awa-Ko‘olauloa, Oahu School Petition, 12 July 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>35</sup> Keanae, Maui School Petition, 29 July 1911, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>36</sup> Kaneohe, Oahu School Petition, 25 July 1916, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>37</sup> Superintendent W.H. Babbitt to Mr. D. Kanealii, 17 July 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

In a few instances, communities obtained their request. Responding to the community at Pelekunu, Moloka'i on August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1910, Superintendent Henry W. Kinney stated,

Dear Madam: -

The Department of Public Instruction is in receipt of your letter and petition of July 27<sup>th</sup> asking that Miss Nellie Alexander be appointed as teacher at Pelekunu for the next school year.

We have placed her name as teacher for the Pelekunu School which I think will prove satisfactory for all concerned.<sup>38</sup>

Most letters suggested DPI officials were unmoved. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1909, despite a petition by Native parents in Hanalei, Kaua'i supporting the reappointment of Miss Florence Deverill as principal, calling her a valuable resource for their children, board members responded,

Dear Sir: -

Beg to acknowledge receipt of a petition signed by yourself and other residents of Hanalei. At the meeting held by the Board on the 12<sup>th</sup> ult., it was decided not to re-appoint Miss Deverill to the principalship of the Hanalei School.<sup>39</sup>

The same occurred in Kalapana, Hawai'i in 1910 with parents asking for Keahiloa R. Nalima and, instead, received someone else.

In reply [*sic*] can say that Mrs. M. Campbell was appointed as teacher of Kalapana School early in July and that Daniel Kalo'i was appointed to Kauea [*sic*]. I believe that this arrangement will be quite satisfactory to your community and that you will find Mrs. Campbell an excellent teacher for your children.<sup>40</sup>

Many communities did not respond well to denial or deferment of their requests. In several instances, they refused to accept noncommittal letters, inaction, and even "no" as sufficient replies to their appeals. The parents of Makena School on Maui expressed their

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<sup>38</sup> Superintendent W.T. Pope to Mrs. Kapeka Konahao, 11 August 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>39</sup> Acting Superintendent M.T.M to Mr. James K. Lota, 3 August 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>40</sup> Superintendent W.T. Pope to Mr. Wm. K. Kaawaloa, 19 August 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

desperation over department inaction and delays in responding to their petition of August 1909. Initially, they submitted their petition on August 6<sup>th</sup> upon learning that Mr. Sam E. Kahele was to be transferred to another school. Describing Kahele as “intelligible” and great with students, Makena parents felt confident in his abilities to educate and lead their children.<sup>41</sup> Responding three days later, Mr. M. Cox, secretary to the superintendent, replied that he received the request and that this “communication [would] be brought to the attention of the Superintendent on his return from the mainland about the end of the present month.”<sup>42</sup> Three weeks passed with no reply. With school ready to start in a few days, Makena parents sent another letter on August 27<sup>th</sup> inquiring the whereabouts of the superintendent and the status of their request. Responding in one sentence on September 1<sup>st</sup>, the interim superintendent flatly explained,

In reply to your favor of August 23, addressed to Mr. Cox, I beg to say that Mr. Sam Kahele has been appointed as teacher of the Kaaawa School on the Island of Oahu.<sup>43</sup>

The Native community in Kekaha, Kaua‘i exercised much less tact in their exchanges with the DPI during the summer of 1910. In their petition dated May 28<sup>th</sup>, parents requested the appointment of Mr. D. Prigge as principal to replace the outgoing Miss Christina Finkler. Superintendent Willis T. Pope responded on June 13<sup>th</sup> confirming that he had received their petition and informing them that Mr. Prigge had also applied for the position of principal at Kekaha. Pope went on to add, “his name will be given consideration when we are making appointments of teachers for the next school year.”<sup>44</sup> By August, Kekaha parents learned of their

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<sup>41</sup> Makena, Maui School Petition, 6 August 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>42</sup> Secretary W.H. Babbitt to John Halemanu, 10 April 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>43</sup> Interim Superintendent to Mr. Job Lima, 1 September 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>44</sup> Superintendent W.T. Pope to Mr. Keanoano Malama, 13 June 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

disappointment. In a letter dated on the 5<sup>th</sup>, they initially expressed their sincere regret that Mr. Prigge was passed over for the position but midway their tone quickly turned pointed.

Under date of May 28<sup>th</sup> we most respectfully petitioned that Mr. Prigge be appointed principal at Kekaha, but our wishes were not granted. We are surprised that our wishes were so utterly ignored. Instead we find that Mrs. Hodge is appointed principal. We wish to state that we resent this appointment. Mr. Prigge has been known to us all for a great many years. We know of his eleven years success at the Mana School, and we have entire confidence in him.<sup>45</sup>

Initially upset, the parents of Kekaha eventually accepted the decision and continued to hope for the future but possibly nursed a grudge. On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1911, nearly a year to the day of their original petition, another one arrived on Superintendent Pope's desk. Mrs. Hodge apparently had had enough with Kekaha School and put in a sudden request for a transfer. Unsurprised and well informed about her early departure, Kekaha parents explained to Pope that they remained ready and willing to accept Mr. Prigge as her replacement.<sup>46</sup>

As the Makena and Kekaha situations exemplify, petitions were not a one-way plea but an assertive tool of communication relaying the needs and emotions of a community. Native families utilized them to reject departmental decisions and persist in asserting their claims for securing educators they believed benefited and improved their communities, children, and their future. These claims occasionally overlapped as petitions from different, sometimes distant, communities occasionally requested the same individual. These intra-island and inter-island competitions for reputable teachers demonstrated how Native families in rural districts across the territory sought active involvement in the decision-making process.

The tussle over William Ioena illustrates this contest. For nearly ten years, three schools on two different islands lobbied the DPI for the appointment of Ioena. He first appeared in a

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<sup>45</sup> Kekaha, Kauai School Petition, 5 August 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>46</sup> Kekaha, Kauai School Petition, 26 May 1911, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

petition from parents at Ko‘olau, Kaua‘i on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1903 requesting his appointment due to the departure of a previous teacher.<sup>47</sup> Three years later, on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906, the neighboring town of Anahola sought his return, citing Ioena as a former teacher of Anahola School and that the community was “very sorry for him [to have left] as he...correctly taught our children.”<sup>48</sup> Their request was granted but a year barely passed before they found themselves on the defensive.

Over 170 miles away, on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1907, parents of Pelekunu School on Moloka‘i requested the appointment of Ioena to replace the outgoing Miss Emily Naopala.<sup>49</sup> The Anahola community quickly found out and responded on July 30<sup>th</sup> asking the DPI to “disregard any requests that may come from parties living elsewhere asking him [Ioena] to be transferred.”<sup>50</sup> To their relief, Superintendent Babbitt responded a week later stating that Ioena would remain at Anahola through the next year.

The community seemed to be on a winning streak. At the end of the 1907-1908 school year they once more applied to retain Ioena for the next term, expressing the “greatest confidence in him” over the positive impact of his conduct and instruction on their children. This apparently worked as Anahola parents again wrote to the DPI on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1909, asking for his reappointment.<sup>51</sup> This time they were not so fortunate. In a letter containing two dozen signatures dated July 27<sup>th</sup>, the Anahola community expressed both shock and regret at the loss of their beloved teacher to the neighboring town of Kapa‘a. They also questioned how Ioena could have been transferred despite their petition a month earlier and pressed the department to

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<sup>47</sup> Koolau, Kauai School Petition, 19 June 1903, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>48</sup> Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 25 August 1906, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>49</sup> Pelekunu, Molokai School Petition, 25 July 1907, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>50</sup> Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 30 July 1907, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>51</sup> Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 19 June 1908, folder 7, box 56, Correspondence, HSA; Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 25 June 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

reconsider.<sup>52</sup> In the end, Pelekunu had the last laugh. As a removal petition for Miss Nellie Malina, submitted on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1911, revealed, Ioena was hard at work as that school's principal dealing with the constant conflict between Malina and students' parents.<sup>53</sup>

Not all teachers benefited from such undivided community support. Some received neither unanimous approval nor disapproval but a community split into polarized camps, bickering over their performance and character. Abel Cathcart was such a case. Controversy followed him for at least ten years of his teaching career, extending across three islands and four schools. In September of 1904, the DPI received three separate petitions by parents of Makena School on Maui: two in support and one against. The first, dated September 9<sup>th</sup>, read like any other petition of endorsement – expression of parental gratitude towards Mr. Cathcart in the diligence of his teaching their children and expanding their depth of knowledge – and they asked for his reinstatement the following school year.<sup>54</sup> Then, three weeks later, two more petitions arrived from Makena both dated September 23<sup>rd</sup>. One made serious accusations of bigamy, sexual abuse of a minor, and neglect of teaching responsibilities.<sup>55</sup> The other condemned the former petition as not reflective of the majority opinion in the community supporting Mr. Cathcart and charged that those authors were upset that he was replacing their preferred choice, Mr. Simeona. Cathcart's defenders explained that many who attempted to block his appointment did not have school age children in Makena and therefore remained unaware of Simeona's

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<sup>52</sup> Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 27 July 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>53</sup> Pelekunu, Molokai School Petition, 4 October 1911, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>54</sup> Makena, Maui School Petition, 9 September 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>55</sup> Makena, Maui School Petition Against Abel Cathcart, 23 September 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

incompetence.<sup>56</sup> The DPI's ruling on Cathcart remains unknown but he resurfaced five years later at Waialua, Moloka'i and succeeded in dividing that community.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1909, Waialua parents requested the reappointment of Cathcart, highlighting his abilities to improve student engagement with their studies.<sup>57</sup> Three years later, however, he fell out of favor. Parents submitted a petition on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1912, charging that Cathcart abused his ex-wife, neglected to pay child support, and then attempted to live with both his new wife and ex-wife in the same house to the "indignity" of his position and the community. As a result, they strongly urged his dismissal due to his "unfitness as a teacher" and existence as a "worthless being."<sup>58</sup>

Their wish came true. A letter of support signed by Cathcart on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1913, for Miss B. B. Taylor, supervising principal of the Ka'ū district on Hawai'i, revealed he occupied an administrative position at Kapakala School in Ka'ū but this was only temporary.<sup>59</sup> In January of 1914, he reemerged as an "honest man" and with the endorsement of the community over his teaching at Nahiku School on Maui in a petition signed that month.<sup>60</sup> The DPI quickly responded with relief that he was "giving satisfaction to the people there," adding, "he will probably be allowed to remain in Nahiku...so long as he does his whole duty."<sup>61</sup> He apparently did. In the

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<sup>56</sup> Makena, Maui School Petition For Abel Cathcart, 23 September 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>57</sup> Waialua, Molokai School Petition, 11 September 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>58</sup> Waialua, Molokai School Petition, 28 September 1912, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>59</sup> Principal Abel Cathcart and Assistant Mrs. Bella Dawson to Commissioner Emma C. Bond, 22 May 1913, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>60</sup> Nahiku, Maui School Petition, 6 January 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>61</sup> Superintendent T.H. Gibson to Mrs. Esther Reuter, 9 January 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

fall of 1914, the community learned of Mr. Cathcart's sudden transfer "to another place" due to his wife's illness and regretted "very much to lose them."<sup>62</sup>

### **Securing Opportunities**

While reaching consensus on the hiring and firing of faculty at times proved a hotly contentious process, the community easily rallied around petitions for better educational opportunities and infrastructure. Requests for more schools, the construction of new buildings, protests over school closures, and access to more resources represented core issues that concerned parents across the territory. Their petitions also revealed worries over the safety of their children's school commute, the lack of proper equipment, teachers, and buildings, and limited opportunities for advancement into upper grades. Parents and their communities thus responded proactively to ensure that their children were not left behind and received the most they could provide in helping them prepare for a successful future.

For many rural communities, this began with securing easy and safe access to school. Students living in urban areas on each island accessed trains, trollies, and buses for their journeys to and from school. In the remote countryside, most students walked several miles on their round-trip commute. Some even needed to cross open streams, an effort that turned dangerous during heavy rains. Such conditions alarmed and worried parents so they petitioned for the construction of new schools closer to their villages and towns.

In the small village of Kapa'ahu, Puna on Hawai'i in 1904, parents requested the DPI to build their community a new school as their children commuted four miles each day to the nearest school in Kalapana. They also explained many students just stayed home as the distance

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<sup>62</sup> Nahiku, Maui School Petition, 17 November 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

deterred them from attending school.<sup>63</sup> In the same year, families scattered across the rural districts of Ko‘olauloa, Ka‘a‘awa, Kahana, and Makaua on O‘ahu asked for a new school in Ka‘a‘awa, citing the distance to the nearest school in Waiahole from the four districts was over thirteen miles.<sup>64</sup> The “principal reason” for the community in Hamoa, Maui, petitioning the DPI in 1915 focused on the burden a three-mile walk placed on their youngest students.<sup>65</sup> For years, both distance and the lack of funds for transportation prevented students of Nanakuli, O‘ahu from attending Wai‘anae School. Fed up, over sixty Native parents in 1932 requested the construction of a three-room school building in their area.<sup>66</sup>

In 1911, parents in Kapehu, North Hilo, Hawai‘i outlined in detail the dangers their children faced in their efforts to attend school four miles away at Laupahoehoe. Fatigue often affected the younger students, requiring numerous breaks along the way and creating lengthier return trips. This worried parents, especially during winter, as many returned after dark and often on the backs of older schoolmates. The annual rainfall in the district averaged 160 inches per year, leaving the road “notoriously bad.” Travel during such rough weather, they argued, proved detrimental to their health and contributed to chronic absenteeism. The community thus recommended their village as the site for the new school. They believed their abundant supply of good water and close vicinity to other villages that also sent their children to Laupahoehoe represented clear reasons for Kapehu to host the new school.<sup>67</sup> The community in Ha‘aula, O‘ahu in 1913 also mentioned adverse weather as a compelling reason for a new school. Located on the windward side of the island, they received heavy amounts of rain year round. Frequent

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<sup>63</sup> Kapaahu, Hawaii School Petition, 20 April 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>64</sup> Koolauloa, Oahu School Petition, 12 August 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>65</sup> Hamoa, Maui School Petition, 3 February 1915, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>66</sup> Nanakuli, Oahu School Petition, v.13, 11 December 1931 - 27 June 1932, Minutes, HSA, 251.

<sup>67</sup> Kapehu, Hawaii School Petition, 1911, folder 10, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

exposure to rain storms often left students soaking wet, requiring them to constantly carry dry extra clothes. Parents also complained of the distance their children walked and the dangers they faced due to the number of horseback riders and increased automobile traffic on the roads.<sup>68</sup> In a 1931 petition requesting the reopening of their village school, the community at Kahakuloa, Maui listed their school route to Waihe'e School as "dangerous to the lives of our children at all times, and more especially during rainy weather." Parents stated they did not have the financial means to supply their children with the proper clothing suited for "inclement weather." They also added that sending their children far away required supplying them with lunch money, an extra cost they could not always afford.<sup>69</sup>

Heavy rain and traffic were not the only problems that rural students faced on their long distances to school. The community in Kaluaihakoko, Maui worried about the danger posed by the infestation of wild cattle inundating the road students used on their three-mile trek to Kīhei School. They feared students going around the animals would prompt violent reactions from the cattle resulting in student injury. Families living at Puakea Ranch on Hawai'i feared for their children's lives as a "Philipino" robbed students along their six-mile journey in the spring of 1914. While the suspect was later caught and arrested, anxiety gripped the community. Believing the distance to school left students vulnerable to criminals, parents begged for a new schoolhouse to help ensure their safety.<sup>70</sup>

The few existing DPI responses to community requests for new schools and buildings describe the department as constrained by budgetary concerns. Responding to a petition on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1909 for a new school building at Napo'opo'o, Hawai'i, Superintendent Babbitt

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<sup>68</sup> Hauula, Oahu School Petition, 23 April 1913, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>69</sup> Kahakuloa, Maui School Petition, v.13, 11 December 1931 - 27 June 1932, Minutes, HSA, 69.

<sup>70</sup> Puakea Ranch, Hawaii School Petition, 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

explained, “this matter has already had the consideration of the Department and that if the Legislature appropriates the money asked it is planned to change the present location. The site suggested by you will have the consideration of this Department.”<sup>71</sup> In a belittling tone to the parents at Kaluaihakoko, Maui on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1910, Superintendent Pope stated, “[i]t is rather late in the school year for you to ask the Department to consider a school at that place [Kaluaihakoko]” and added that he saw “no way in which we can place a teacher there if the County should furnish you a building.” He then advised they send their children to school “as best they can at Kihei and if the need for the additional school is great that you again write the Department early next summer.”<sup>72</sup> Budgetary limits continued to affect decisions to expand school infrastructure in 1931. Supervising principal for rural O‘ahu, O.W. Robinson, replied on December 30<sup>th</sup> to an earlier inquiry by Superintendent Will C. Crawford about the possibility of adding ninth grade work in Robinson’s district without the need for “providing extra buildings or equipment.” Robinson explained that at the present time he did not believe “any schools of Rural Oahu can be considered for ninth grade work” until the “effect of elimination of [teaching] positions” was determined and “gauged with any certainty.”<sup>73</sup>

Some communities refused to accept such outcomes. To help expedite their request, some offered their own land and local buildings to ease the financial concerns of the DPI. In an effort to open a school as soon as possible, families in the village of Honu‘apo, Hawai‘i, in 1904, offered their church as a temporary schoolhouse until the DPI constructed a proper one.<sup>74</sup> The

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<sup>71</sup> Superintendent W.H. Babbitt to Mr. J.G. Machado, 1 February 1909, folder 8, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>72</sup> Superintendent W.T. Pope to Mr. Auhana Akina, 19 September 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>73</sup> Supervising Principal O.W. Robinson to Superintendent Will C. Crawford, v.13, 11 December 1931 - 27 June 1932, Minutes, HSA, 69.

<sup>74</sup> Honuapo, Hawaii School Petition, 5 July 1904, folder 4, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

Hawaiian community in Kalihi-Pālana, O‘ahu, in 1910, took the same approach. They simply wanted benches, blackboards, and the appointment of a teacher from the DPI. Thus, in order to secure this support, they provided a building “suitable” for the purpose of educating “at least Sixty-three children of school age who have no means of attending school.”<sup>75</sup> In a petition dated May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1914, parents of ninety school-age children in Kapa‘a, Kaua‘i, explained to the DPI that Mr. S. Kalaweola Kelakoma offered to donate an acre of his land for a school site in their community.<sup>76</sup>

For some remote villages that lacked open acreage or a building, parents resorted to dogged persistence. With nothing to offer, the rural village of Pelekunu, Moloka‘i sent several petitions asking for a school in 1914, explaining the eight-mile round trip and the closing of their school two years earlier proved detrimental to their children’s educational development. These reasons failed to convince Superintendent Kinney. In each reply, he made clear that it was “decided that owing to the small number of children at that place it would not be advisable to establish a school there at present.”<sup>77</sup> Still, petitions continued to arrive. Annoyed by the serial petitions, Kinney informed the community on August 29<sup>th</sup> that he intended to personally visit Pelekunu in the next couple months. He maintained that the number of school age children there remained too small to warrant a school but explained he would be “glad to take the matter up” with them at that time. While not a complete victory, the village managed to secure an audience with the territory’s top school official to present their case in person.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Kalihi, Oahu School Petition, 31 March 1910, folder 9, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>76</sup> Kapaa, Kauai School Petition, 9 May 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>77</sup> Superintendent Henry W. Kinney to Mr. Joseph Makau and Others, 30 July 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>78</sup> Superintendent Henry W. Kinney to Mr. Solomon Makalei, 29 August 1914, folder 11, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

Some communities looked to other government officials to help them press their claims. Sheriff James Mattoon of North Hilo, Hawai‘i wrote to Superintendent Babbitt on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907 asking on behalf of the parents of Pāpa‘aloa for a school in their community. He referred to earlier petitions sent by the community and the specific appropriations made by the legislature for a school at Pāpa‘aloa as evidence of popular support for the construction of a new school. Mattoon also explained that, “another point must be taken into consideration...that during [the] rainy season it is very hard to [*sic*] small children to walk all the way from Papaaloa and Kapehu to Laupahoehoe to school.” Falling rocks and loose earth made travel along the roads treacherous, he argued.<sup>79</sup> Responding on December 9<sup>th</sup>, Superintendent Babbitt informed the sheriff he sent a copy of his letter to School Inspector King asking him to “look into the matter.”<sup>80</sup>

Opening schools and securing safe passage were not the only objectives of Native parents in their battles to secure access to educational opportunities. Communities also wanted influence over what their children learned and how schools operated. Parents wrote to the DPI asking for changes in their school’s curriculum, special accommodations for students, adjustments to school hours, and more resources and grade levels. In 1908, parents at Kāne‘ohe School on O‘ahu had an unusually precise request concerning their children’s curriculum: they wanted them to learn the Spencerian style of calligraphy instead of the Vertical style. The recent introduction of this new method left families “disappointed at the progress” of their children in their studies and cited that it was “not in favor with the Principal Business Houses” and had been “condemned” by

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<sup>79</sup> Deputy Sheriff James Mattoon to Superintendent W.H. Babbitt, 6 December 1907, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>80</sup> Superintendent W.H. Babbitt to Deputy Sheriff James Mattoon, 9 December 1907, folder 6, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

employers across the territory for “not being a Commercial hand.”<sup>81</sup> The community of Anahola, Kaua‘i petitioned in 1918 for school to begin at eight in the morning and end at one in the afternoon with the flag salute at 7:55 instead of 8:55. They believed the “underfed child” was best served from this new schedule as it allowed them to go home for lunch rather than stay hungry in school as many families could not provide lunch money.<sup>82</sup>

Other petitions addressed politically controversial issues such as public policy mandating English as the medium of instruction. The Native community in Kohala, Hawai‘i sent a petition to the territorial legislature in 1901 asking that it direct the DPI in redesigning the curriculum to support bilingualism in the classroom. They wanted both the English and Hawaiian languages used equally as mediums of instruction for all students in the public school system.<sup>83</sup> Parents in Lāhainā, Maui submitted another petition to the legislature in 1917 asking for the reinstatement of the Hawaiian language in the public schools but specifically for Native Hawaiian students. Expressing “great respect and esteem [for] the mother language of these islands,” they asked for the enactment of a law “setting aside a certain hour of each school day...for the purpose of instructing the Hawaiian language to the Hawaiian youth.”<sup>84</sup>

In urban areas, Native parents joined and led ethnically diverse PTAs to help secure greater access to educational resources and opportunities for all children in the public schools.

The Native-led PTA in South Hilo, Hawai‘i petitioned the DPI in 1932 for the addition of a

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<sup>81</sup> Kaneohe, Oahu School Petition, 18 July 1908, folder 7, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>82</sup> Anahola, Kauai School Petition, 10 April 1918, folder 12, box 56, Correspondence, HSA.

<sup>83</sup> Hawaii State Archives (HSA), Records of the Legislature, Series 228, Microfilm box 5, House Petition (HP) 68, H.M. Kaniho, April 9, 1901.

<sup>84</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 5, HP 36, John Brown Jr., *From Citizens of Lahaina, Maui praying for the enactment of a law...for the instruction in the Hawaiian language of the Hawaiian youth in the public schools...* April 12, 1917.

fourth grade to their community school.<sup>85</sup> In Honolulu, O‘ahu, Native Hawaiian PTA president, Mrs. Eleanor McClellan, and the parents of the ethnically diverse Ma‘ema‘e School sent a petition to the DPI on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 1940 accusing school officials of English-language bias in determining whether their children attended Ma‘ema‘e or not. They argued,

Any selective grouping of children classified according to their ability to speak and write the English language is unfair and entirely too prejudicial because it is the duty of your servants in these schools to train the young children in the manner of speaking and writing the English language correctly and to not penalize them merely because they are unable to satisfy a requirement of yours in regards to their ability.<sup>86</sup>

The PTA at Pohukaina in Honolulu, led by Mrs. Julia Kaonohilani, sought DPI approval to conduct a fund drive to raise the amount equivalent to fifty cents per child per year. They intended to use the money for purchasing art supplies, tools, education films on nature, phonograph records, radios, and “beautiful pictures.” The PTA expressed that by working together cooperatively, they could “do more for the education of our children than is possible if we work individually.”<sup>87</sup>

Petitions represented an important tool for Native parents and their communities in drawing attention to their needs and affecting positive change. They used language to embarrass, placate, and create guilt in white school officials in order to gather the resources and opportunities for their children to succeed in an Americanizing Hawai‘i. While submitting one did not guarantee success, they documented how Natives refused to accept marginalization and fought for a better future.

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<sup>85</sup> Keaukaha, Hawaii School Petition, v.15, 9 January 1933 - 24 January 1935, Minutes, HSA, 21.

<sup>86</sup> Maemae, Oahu School Petition, v.17, 21 March 1940 - 19 March 1942, Minutes, HSA, 88-89, 103-104.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

### **Bills, Resolutions and the Legislative Process**

Communities and families were not alone in their struggle. Native legislators also took up the fight to assert Native Hawaiian educational needs in the territorial senate and house of representatives. During the first forty years of the territorial period, they submitted numerous bills and resolutions advocating financial support for Native Hawaiians pursuing post-secondary education, increasing study of Hawaiian culture, history, and language, and reinstating the Hawaiian language as the medium of instruction. While almost none of their initiatives became law, they never accepted defeat and continued to assert the schooling needs of Native Hawaiians.

Legislators regularly demanded the restoration of the Hawaiian language in the public schools. This was not an easy task. Doing so required nullifying, revising, or amending Act 57, section 30 of 1896, the school law that established English as the official medium of instruction in all public and private schools in the territory. Designed and implemented during the brief years of the Republic of Hawaii (1893-1898), the law represented a deliberate attempt by the islands' white minority elite to garner continental support for annexation by demonstrating English as the lingua franca of the islands. The U.S. allowed the statute to remain in place during the islands' transition to a territory with the Organic Act of 1900. White schoolmen interpreted the law to include converting schools into English-only zones, effectively banning the use of Hawaiian, Hawaiian pidgin creole, and any other language on campus. Common forms of student discipline used in enforcing the act involved scolding, shaming, suspension, and even corporal punishment. White administrators also policed the English-language use of Native teachers, threatening them with termination of employment to ensure compliance.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Silva, "I Kū Mau Mau," 24.

Overturing or changing section 30 should have been easy as “[i]sland politics was native politics.”<sup>89</sup> Native Hawaiians represented the majority of voters from 1900 to 1922 and the largest ethnic voting bloc until 1938 but their dominance at the polls did not guarantee absolute legislative control. The success of the all-Native Hawaiian Home Rule Party during the inaugural territorial election in 1901 produced a slight majority in the senate and nearly half the seats in the house but Home Rulers failed to secure a two-third majority in both chambers necessary for neutralizing the governor’s veto.<sup>90</sup> While an impressive victory, it revealed the ceiling of Native political power. Still, frightened over this display of strength and its implications for control of the territory, the oligarchy struck back.

Hawai‘i’s white minority ardently supported the Republican Party and what they lacked in voter numbers, they made up with political and economic influence. They aimed to upstage the Home Rulers by directly appealing to Native voters and politicians with government patronage jobs, employment on ranches, plantations, and other oligarchy-controlled industries, and stoking anti-immigrant fears over the increasing numbers of Asian laborers. Their efforts eventually paid off as they formed a Hawaiian-haole Republican coalition around Prince Kūhiō. This move helped to draw enough Native voters away from the Home Rule Party and towards the Republicans allowing Kūhiō to defeat the incumbent congressional delegate, Home Ruler

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<sup>89</sup> Lawrence H. Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono : A Social History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 161.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 161; Robert Colfax Lydecker, *Roster Legislatures of Hawaii, 1841-1918 : Constitutions of Monarchy and Republic, Speeches of Sovereigns and President* (Honolulu : Hawaiian Gazette Co., Ltd., 1918), 263. The Home Rule Party won nine of fifteen seats in the senate and fourteen of thirty seats in the house.

Robert Wilikoki, in 1902. Suffering a significant blow, the Home Rulers soldiered on for a few more years but continued to bleed support until the party folded in 1912.<sup>91</sup>

This outcome failed to dissuade or detract Native politicians from their commitment to reinstating the Hawaiian language in the schools and expanding educational opportunities for Native Hawaiians. Several influential and able indigenous policymakers remained who believed they could shape the “laws of the land within the framework of...colonial restrictions.”<sup>92</sup> As such, their efforts contributed to a determined resistance trying to keep their language and identity alive through the very system trying to assimilate their people: schools.

### **Legislation**

Attempts to reinstate the Hawaiian language in the public schools began immediately during the first session of the territorial legislature in 1901 with House Bill (HB) 55. Submitted by Home Rule Representative Reverend I.K. Ka‘auwai of Kaua‘i, HB 55 sought to amend the English-language school law by making the Hawaiian and English languages the “medium and basis of instruction in all public schools” across the territory.<sup>93</sup> Ka‘auwai wanted schools to be bilingual institutions with children of all ethnicities obtaining working knowledge of both languages. White legislators with ties to the oligarchy, however, were not interested.

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<sup>91</sup> United States Congress House Committee on the Territories, *Hearing Before the Committee on the Territories of the House of Representatives on Leasing of Land in Hawaii: Statements of B.G. Rivenburgh, Hon. Geo. H. Fairchild, Hon. W.A. Kinney, and A.S. Tuttle, Esq. January 20 and February 8, 1912* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912), 88; Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono*, 159–62.

<sup>92</sup> Silva, “I Kū Mau Mau,” 23.

<sup>93</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 3, House Bill (HB) 55, I.K. Ka‘auwai, *Amend Section 123 Relating to the Teaching of The English and Hawaiian Languages in Public Schools*, 1901.

Republican Representative Charles Dickey of Maui attempted to attach an amendment to HB 55 in order to weaken its original intent.<sup>94</sup> He proposed removing the words “Hawaiian” from the bill and inserting the following:

provided, that the Hawaiian language shall be taught in all public schools in case the parents of the Hawaiian pupils in such schools so desire.<sup>95</sup>

Such wording attempted to eliminate the Hawaiian language as a proposed medium of instruction and replace it with parental choice on a school-by-school basis. In the end, both HB 55 and the amendment failed to pass but this early clash failed to dissuade Native policymakers.

Native Hawaiian lawmakers renewed their effort in 1903 with HB 110 authored by Home Rule Representative David M. Kupihea but this time there was a difference in tone. Borrowing language on parental choice from Dickey’s amendment in 1901, HB 110 called for the inclusion of the Hawaiian language as part of the curriculum in the public schools “when a majority of the parents of the children attending such schools so elect.”<sup>96</sup> This milder approach resulted from the fact that the Home Rulers no longer possessed the political capital to assert legislation on their terms. The 1902 territorial election represented a setback for those Native politicians seeking a more aggressive legislative agenda. The political division brought on by the GOP Hawaiian-haole coalition whittled away at the Home Rule control of the 1903 legislature. While Home Rulers only lost four house seats in the 1902 election, Republicans gained eleven, bringing their

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<sup>94</sup> “Charles Henry Dickey,” *The Friend* 151, no. 3 (March 1, 1932): 358. Dickey was married to Anne Alexander, daughter of William P. Alexander, one of the original American missionaries to Hawai‘i in the early nineteenth century. Anne’s brother, Samuel Thomas Alexander, along with Henry P. Baldwin, married to Anne’s sister and the son of early American missionary Dwight Baldwin, co-founded Alexander & Baldwin, a member of the Big 5 oligarchy.

<sup>95</sup> Hawaii. Legislature. House of Representatives, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the ... Legislature, Territory of Hawaii*, (Honolulu: Territorial Legislature, 1901), 415.

<sup>96</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 10, HB 110, David M. Kupihea, *An Act to Amend Section 123 of the Civil Laws as to Pertain to the Teaching of the Hawaiian Language in the Public Schools*, 1903.

total to twenty of the thirty seats in the house. Home Rule control of the senate vanished as well with their loss of five seats. As a result, Home Rulers were forced to compromise their goal of returning Hawaiian as a medium of instruction by offering it as an academic subject in the hopes of getting something passed.

Things only grew darker for Hawaiian-language advocates as the GOP coalition slowly solidified its hold over the house and senate. For the next five legislative sessions, no legislator submitted bills or resolutions supporting the return of the Hawaiian language even though Native Hawaiians enjoyed numerical supremacy as the dominant ethnic group in each session.<sup>97</sup> This rise of the Republican Party coincided with the hiatus in language legislation, suggesting that new Native GOP lawmakers adhered to party discipline and toed the oligarchy line. The only pro-Native legislation following HB 110 emerged in 1915 with House Joint Resolution (HJR) 3 presented by Republican Representative R.J. Nawahine, instructing the DPI to expand their curriculum and teacher training to include Hawaiian history, “pronunciation, customs and other matters relating thereto.” His intent was to create a more “intimate and correct knowledge of the Hawaiian race than [students] have at present.”<sup>98</sup> While a laudable effort, HJR 3 merely represented a compromise similar to HB 110 in assuaging white concerns of an overly assertive pro-indigenous legislative agenda.

This all changed in 1917, the year of Queen Lili‘uokalani’s passing. During that session, Representative James K. Kula submitted HB 252 directing the DPI to allow the use of Hawaiian as a medium of instruction when it was “desired that another language shall be taught in addition

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<sup>97</sup> Territories, *Hearing Before the Committee on the Territories of the House of Representatives on Leasing of Land in Hawaii*, 88; By 1919 David M. Kupihea was the only original Home Ruler left in either chamber of the legislature. He ran as a Democrat, rather than join the GOP, and won his seat back in 1913.

<sup>98</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 55, HJR 3, R.J. Nawahine, *Authorizing the Appointment of a Special Teacher in Hawaiian History and Kindred Subjects*, March 26, 1915.

to the English language” by “twenty-five parents of the pupils of any public school.”<sup>99</sup> To make it palatable to white legislators he added,

Should the Department of Public Instruction authorize such instruction in Hawaiian language, such instruction shall be held after the regular school hours and shall be of not less a period than one hour per day on each regular school day.<sup>100</sup>

Native Representative John Brown Jr.’s HJR 8 also took aim at returning the Hawaiian language but as a subject of study. HJR 8 authorized the superintendent of public instruction to “cause the Hawaiian language to be taught in the public schools” as the “knowledge of the Hawaiian language among the youths of Hawaiian descent is fast disappearing.” He wanted two half-hour periods each week “during which the Hawaiian language shall be taught.”<sup>101</sup> While less ambitious than HB 252, HJR 8 accentuated the real fear among Native Hawaiians that something needed to be done.

Brown and Kula’s legislation signaled the restart of using the legislative process to address the schooling interests of Native Hawaiians. In 1919, Democratic Representative Jonah Kumalae presented House Resolution (HR) 12, requesting an appropriation of \$15,000 for the “purpose of teaching the Hawaiian language in the high and normal schools of the Territory of Hawaii.”<sup>102</sup> Kumalae also attempted to weaken the position of the territorial governor. As a member of the minority party, he also offered House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 13 calling for amendments to the Organic Act of 1900 allowing the direct election of both the territorial

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<sup>99</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 62, HB 252, James K. Kula, *To Amend Section 277 of the Revised Laws of Hawaii, 1915, Relating to Public Instruction in Public Schools*, March 13, 1917.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 62, HJR 8, John Brown Jr., *Authorizing the Superintendent of Public Instruction to Cause the Hawaiian Language to be Taught in the Public Schools...*, April 12, 1917.

<sup>102</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 71, HR 12, Jonah Kumalae, *...Appropriation Bill for the Purpose of teaching the Hawaiian language in the High and Normal Schools of the Territory*, February 20, 1919.

governor and secretary of the territory.<sup>103</sup> Neither of Kumalae's efforts made it past committee but Republican Senator G.P. Kamauoha had better luck.

During the same session, Kamauoha successfully amended section 277 of the Revised Laws of Hawaii, 1915 – the successor to Act 57, section 30 of 1896 – with passage of his bill, SB 171 (Act 191). The revised statute now included the specific wording that “the Hawaiian language shall be taught in addition to the English language in all Normal and High schools of the territory.”<sup>104</sup> This seemed like a historic victory for Hawaiian-language advocates. Section 277 originally contained no phrasing related to the specific instruction of any language other than English and SB 171 intended to revise the English-only school law with the inclusion of Hawaiian as a mandatory subject in the high school curriculum and teacher training program. Unfortunately, there was one problem: SB 171 needed white political support to pass. As the Dickey amendment with HB 55 (1901) demonstrated, white lawmakers objected to any legislation that challenged the supremacy of English in the public schools. While SB 171 did not advocate bilingual education, it presented the Hawaiian language as a required subject. Responding to growing pressure, Kamauoha eventually acquiesced to an amendment that read, “[p]rovided, further, that instruction in such courses shall be elective.”<sup>105</sup> With the amendment secured, SB 171 passed into law as Act 191 formally allowing the study of Hawaiian in all high schools and the TNS but only as an elective.

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<sup>103</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 71, HCR 13, Jonah Kumalae, *Requesting the Congress of the United States to amend Sections 66 and 69 of the Organic Act*, February 27, 1919. The secretary of the territory also filled the role of lieutenant-governor.

<sup>104</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 67, Senate Bill (SB) 171, G.P. Kamauoha, *To Amend Section 277...Relating to the English Language as the Basis of Instruction, and Providing for the Teaching of the Hawaiian and Other Languages*, March 26, 1919.

<sup>105</sup> Hawaii. Legislature. Senate, *Journal of the Senate of the ... Legislature, Territory of Hawaii*, (Honolulu: Territorial Legislature, 1919), 260.

While an important first step in returning the Hawaiian language to the public schools, Native lawmakers recognized the limits of Act 191. Securing Hawaiian as an elective failed to adequately address the fear many Native Hawaiians felt over the decline of their language. Native policymakers believed they could do much more. They sought to capitalize upon Kamauoha's success, using it as momentum for submitting additional legislation expanding educational opportunities for Native Hawaiians and supporting the return of the Hawaiian language. Far from a small, isolated victory, Act 191 established an important legal precedent for Native lawmakers to use in their legislative campaign for the next twenty years.

During the 1920 special legislative session, Representative Norman K. Lyman proposed HR 30, authorizing the DPI to “investigate and report” on the “cost and proper method of introducing...a course in the Hawaiian language” at the University of Hawai‘i.<sup>106</sup> He also submitted HR 31 with the same goal but for all “Elementary, High and Normal Schools of the Territory.”<sup>107</sup> The following year in 1921 he offered HB 74 aimed at further amending section 277 by including the wording:

In any school where Hawaiian children are in attendance instructions shall be given to them in the Hawaiian language for One Hour each day, for five days each week during the school year. They shall be taught to read and write[,] arithmetic, Hawaiian geography and music, vocal and instrumental.<sup>108</sup>

HB 74 exemplified how Native policymakers began utilizing Act 191 as a foundation to expand their efforts in progressively amending the English-only school law. Lyman's bill offered

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<sup>106</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 74, HR 30, Norman K. Lyman, *Requesting the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii to investigate into the cost of introducing in said University a course in the Hawaiian Language*, November 22, 1920.

<sup>107</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 74, HR 31, Norman K. Lyman, *Requesting the DPI to investigate into the cost of introducing in the elementary, high, and normal schools...a course in the Hawaiian Language*, November 22, 1920.

<sup>108</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 79, HB 74, Norman K. Lyman, *To Amend Section 277...as Amended by Act 191...Relating to the English Language as the Basis of Instruction, and Providing for the Teaching of the Hawaiian and Other Languages*, February 17, 1921.

academic instruction in the Hawaiian language on a limited daily basis. This represented a shrewd attempt at removing Hawaiian as an academic subject and promoting it as a working medium of learning. In the end, none of Lyman's initiatives passed, but this outcome failed to deter others.

Republican Representative W.K. Hussey presented three bills in 1923 committed to the teaching of Hawaiian. Similar to Lyman's HR 31, Hussey's HB 241 and HB 306 proposed that the Hawaiian language "be taught in all public schools" throughout the territory but as a mandatory part of the curriculum.<sup>109</sup> In anticipation of either bill passing, Hussey's HB 307 sought an appropriation of \$10,000 for the "preparation and publication of text books in the Hawaiian language." None of Hussey's bills progressed far: both HB 241 and HB 306 were tabled in their first readings and the \$10,000 appropriation for HB 307 was reduced to \$2000 before being tabled at its third reading.<sup>110</sup> Still, Hawaiian lawmakers pressed on. In 1927, Republican Representative Herbert N. Ahuna proposed House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 4 calling for the employment of Hawaiian-language teachers at schools in Kaunakakai and Ho'olehua on Moloka'i to teach academic subjects *in* Hawaiian.<sup>111</sup> During the next legislative session in 1929, Republican Representative Albert K. Akana attempted to amend the English-only school law with HB 98, extending the Hawaiian-language elective to junior high school students.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 87, HB 241 and 306, W.K. Hussey, *Authorizing and Directing the Teaching of Hawaiian Language in Public Schools...*, March 31, 1921.

<sup>110</sup> Hawaii. Legislature. House, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the ... Legislature, Territory of Hawaii*, 1923, 1003.

<sup>111</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 105, HCR 4, Herbert N. Ahuna, February 24, 1927. HCR 4 was adopted by both the House (April 18) and Senate (April 20).

<sup>112</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 112, HB 98, Albert K. Akana, *To Amend Section 315 of the Revised Laws of Hawaii 1925, Relating to the Medium of Instruction in the Public Schools...*, February 27, 1929.

Other than HCR 8, none of the Hawaiian-language legislation proposed in the 1920s advanced beyond committee but these repeated losses only seemed to galvanize Native policymakers. They opened up the 1930s expanding their legislative focus to include greater access to educational opportunities for Native students. Representative Ahuna's HB 362 in 1931, requested \$12,000 for the "teaching of the Hawaiian language, customs, traditions, culture and methods of agriculture" in rural public schools "wherein the enrollment are not less than fifty per cent (50%) Hawaiian."<sup>113</sup> While HB 362 ultimately went nowhere, his HB 146 (Act 21) in 1935 succeeded in amending the English-only school law. Ahuna's amendment expanded the wording of Act 191 (1919) to include:

Daily instruction for at least ten minutes in conversation or, in the discretion of the department, in reading and writing, in the Hawaiian language shall be given in every public school conducted in any settlement of [Native Hawaiian] homesteaders under the Hawaiian Homes Commission.<sup>114</sup>

At first glance, Act 21 represents only a superficial expansion of the Hawaiian language in the public schools or, as one scholar put it, "at best – farcical, and – at worst – insulting to the language and culture."<sup>115</sup> However, such criticism misses the statute's important progressive significance: Act 21 specified the *daily* use of Hawaiian as a medium of instruction in all public schools on Hawaiian homestead land. The new amendment expanded the use of the Hawaiian language even further than Act 191 in mandating it as a medium of instruction in schools heavily populated by Native Hawaiians. In 1935, Native students could now legally receive daily instruction in their language, speak Hawaiian on campus, and enroll themselves in Hawaiian-

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<sup>113</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 121, HB 362, Herbert N. Ahuna, *Providing for the teaching of the Hawaiian language, customs, tradition, culture, and agriculture in the public schools in the rural districts...*, April 2, 1931.

<sup>114</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 142, HB 146 (Act 21), Herbert N. Ahuna, *To Amend Section 734 of the Revised Laws of 1935, Relating to the Basis of Instruction in the Public Schools*, March 7, 1935.

<sup>115</sup> Schütz, *The Voices of Eden*, 359.

language courses. These developments thus represented steady, incremental progress towards greater integration of the language in the public schools.

Still, for Native lawmakers, this was not enough and they entered the 1937 and 1939 legislative sessions with renewed vigor. In 1937, Senator William J. Kimi presented Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 5 authorizing the DPI to set certain classes aside for “instruction in the Hawaiian language in all high schools.”<sup>116</sup> That same session, Senator David K. Trask submitted Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 16 requesting government financial assistance to support any Native Hawaiian interested in “acquiring a higher education in any university, graduate or professional school of the U.S. or of Europe.” Arguing that the “acquisition of higher education would materially assist in the rehabilitation of the Hawaiian race,” Trask stressed that such aid be considered a scholarship and not a loan.<sup>117</sup> Democratic Senator James Kealoha presented SB 216 in 1939 authorizing the DPI to “establish and maintain Hawaiian language classes in all public schools operated on Hawaiian Homes Commission lands, as part of their regular curriculum.” He believed that the DPI failed to help advance the mission of Hawaiian homesteading in “establishing, rehabilitating and perpetuating Hawaiians” by neglecting “one of the principal requisites of the perpetuation of any national group...its native language.”<sup>118</sup>

While these proposals went nowhere, the end of the 1930s capped a relatively productive four decades for Native lawmakers. They succeeded twice in amending the school law,

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<sup>116</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 150, Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 5, William J. Kimi, *Requesting the DPI to Include Classes for Instruction in the Hawaiian Language in all High Schools...*, March 8, 1937.

<sup>117</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 150, SCR 16, David K. Trask, *Requesting Congress...to Permit the [Hawaiian Homes] Commission to Make Advances for Financial Assistance to Hawaiians for Educational Purposes*, April 1, 1937.

<sup>118</sup> HSA, Series 228, box 166, SB 216, James Kealoha, *Authorizing and Directing the DPI to Include Classes in the Hawaiian Language in All Public Schools Located on Hawaiian Homes Commission Lands*, March 9, 1939.

establishing important legal precedents for future revisions and possibly even a repeal. They diversified their legislative objectives to include financial support for higher education and greater inclusion of Hawaiian history and culture in an effort to address the broader schooling needs of their people. Their endeavors also gave hope to the Native community who expressed their gratitude and support in Hawaiian-language newspapers for politicians such as Representatives Kaniho and Kupihea and Senator Kealoha. With this momentum behind them, Native Hawaiian policymakers had good reason to be optimistic moving forward into the 1940s.

### **Conclusion**

While they never officially joined forces, the efforts of rural families and politicians reveal an indigenous crusade dedicated to improving and advancing their children's future through schools. They understood the "past could not be recaptured" but that was never their intention.<sup>119</sup> Rather, they produced a two-pronged strategy that aimed to shape public education in their favor: petitioning for greater access to schooling in order for their children to achieve economic success and social mobility and legislating their language back into the curriculum to survive culturally as Hawaiians. These efforts were not trivial examples of "window-dressing" but sincere bids to mitigate the culturally destructive effects of assimilation while also appropriating survival skills.<sup>120</sup> As such, they refused to accept their present with "quiet resignation" and vowed to fight for a more secure future through schools.<sup>121</sup> Their courage captures both their appreciation for the complexity and severity of their situation and pragmatic engagement in preparing their children for life in a new social order as Native Hawaiians.

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<sup>119</sup> Roger Bell, *Last Among Equals: Hawaiian Statehood and American Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 37.

<sup>120</sup> Paul F. Nahoia Lucas, "Hawaiian Language Policy and the Courts.," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 34 (2000): 10.

<sup>121</sup> Bell, *Last Among Equals*, 37.

### **Conclusion: “Forward Without Fear”**

Positioning schools at the center of analysis for twentieth-century Native Hawaiian history provides new perspectives on American state building and indigenous resistance. It reveals schools as critical sites for establishing, legitimizing, and naturalizing acceptance of American territorial expansion among Hawai‘i’s multiethnic student population. This process required a historical narrative that reconstructed the history of American occupation and annexation of the islands as part of an inevitable journey linking Hawai‘i’s past with America’s Manifest Destiny. The goal of Americanizers was to demonstrate Hawai‘i’s American character was “not the result of accident” but the “genius of American leadership.”<sup>1</sup> Ironically, this involved relying heavily on unelected political leaders and schoolmen, immune from local opposition and wielding authoritarian-like power, to promote ostensibly universal principles of equal opportunity and democracy. While ideologically inconsistent, the ends justified the means. To make Hawai‘i American represented a national project of socialization that converted schools into centralized institutions of public power for fostering and facilitating acceptance of American sovereignty over the islands.

Putting schools at the center of Native Hawaiian history also highlights the historical gap between the rhetoric of democratic opportunity and the reality of race and inequality in American education. White schoolmen looked to schools as the perfect institutions for creating and promoting opportunity for any individual to advance in life based on his or her own effort. They viewed public education as the great equalizer, instilling well-respected universal American values of progress, individualism, merit, and equal opportunity. In reality, this personalizing of responsibility shifted attention away from structural inequity and framed failure as solely the

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<sup>1</sup> Wist, “Hawaii - an Educational Experiment in American Democracy,” 1.

fault of the individual. As a result, territorial schools offered mismatched opportunities for achieving social mobility and economic advancement resulting from systemic barriers such as poverty and racial discrimination that systematically limited opportunities for Native Hawaiian students.

Situating schools at the center of twentieth-century Native Hawaiian history also offers new ways of understanding what constitutes resistance. Examining how Native Hawaiians participated in American education fails to uncover large movements of organized resistance capable of undermining either U.S. occupation of Hawai‘i or the educational system. Instead, Native engagement with schools demonstrates how their identity failed to disappear upon annexation and actually continued to persevere throughout the twentieth century. While not equal in visibility to more demonstrative forms of violence and protest, Hawaiian students’ subtler expressions of defiance and refusal broadens the lens of resistance to include a greater number of examples embodying non-compliance and rejection of assimilation. This view requires understanding Native agency as a measured oppositional response, either overt or subtle, to the imposition of control by schools on student minds, bodies, and actions. Native Hawaiians thus developed ingenious ways to resist victimization through strategies allowing them to retain their dignity, some degree of freedom, and a positive sense of themselves in a settler colonial society hostile to indigenous identity.

The complexity of the Native Hawaiian response to American education further demonstrates how the meaning of schooling has never been a static concept. The various ways Native Hawaiians participated in the public education system helps to reveal schools as complex sites attempting to serve and satisfy the diverse needs, mandates, and hopes of the various groups involved in operating, attending, funding, and designing schools. Native engagement also

exposed schooling as a “messy, pluralistic project” where they imposed their own meanings and values onto American education and made it their own with minimal commitment to Americanization.<sup>2</sup> This dissertation neither seeks to demonize territorial schools as total institutions of settler colonial oppression nor overly romanticize the extent of indigenous resistance. Rather it disrupts simple narratives that present a definitive and singular historical understanding of schooling by addressing the complexity and diversity of experiences and perspectives ever present within schools. It also extends the past into the present by discussing the historical legacy of a fundamental question that continues to challenge public education in the twentieth-first century: what constitutes “equal” opportunity?

As William J. Reese explains, schools represent “multi-purpose institutions” that “always assume different forms” based on the needs of individuals, their communities, and broader society.<sup>3</sup> For many Native Hawaiians, schooling represented access to a better future. Throughout the first forty years of the Territorial Period, Native families and communities poured energy, time, and resources into securing the best schooling opportunities for their children. During this same period, Native teachers pursued careers in education to financially support their families while students attended school as a means to appropriate skills and knowledge for a successful future. Thus, Native participation in public education was not part of an effort to become American but a proactive strategy to survive and succeed as Native Hawaiians in an Americanized Hawai‘i. While a capable plan in the interwar years, World War II and the Cold War of the 1950s represented a different era that produced new threats to Native Hawaiian culture, language, and identity and required a reassessment of strategy. How Native

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<sup>2</sup> Tracy L. Steffes, *School, Society, and State: A New Education to Govern Modern America, 1890-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 199.

<sup>3</sup> William J. Reese, “Why Americans Love to Reform the Public Schools,” *Educational Horizons* 85, no. 4 (2007): 217, 229.

Hawaiians responded and engaged Americanization and schooling during these years remains outside the scope of this dissertation but preliminary research reveals some Native Hawaiians wasted little time in devising new survival tactics.

In the 1948 February issue of *Ka Hoku o Hawaii* (*The Star of Hawaii*), editor Solomon Anakalea, shared his concern over the current state of the Hawaiian language with his readers in an editorial he wrote entitled “Ka Olelo Makuahine” (“Mother Language”). Anakalea lamented how Native youths lacked proper understanding and pronunciation of words and grammar, explaining that their poor usage hurt him in his na‘au, or “gut.”<sup>4</sup> Native Hawaiians believe na‘au represents the seat of a human’s thought, intellect, emotions, and morality whereas western thinking places forms of cognition and logic in the brain and attaches sentiment and emotions to the heart.<sup>5</sup> Despite his extreme disappointment however, the editor did not fault them or blame outside forces for the decline of the Hawaiian language. Rather, he believed his own people needed to take responsibility for ensuring the survival of their language.

Anakalea expressed doubt at assertions made by some Native Hawaiians that simply reopening Hawaiian-language schools – closed after annexation in 1898 – would reinvigorate the use of Hawaiian in daily life. He explained it was not an easy language and merely studying it failed to expose students to its nuances, pronunciation, and kaona – “hidden meanings.” Obtaining proficiency, he argued, required personal diligence in reading newspapers and the Bible and conversing with Native speakers. Ultimately, he feared the loss of their language would make Native Hawaiians “forget who they are.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Solomon Anakalea, “Ka Olelo Makuahine,” *Ka Hoku o Hawaii*, February 2, 1948.

<sup>5</sup> For a more detailed discussion on na‘au, see: Mary Kawena Pukui, E. W. Haertig, and Catherine A. Lee, *Nana I Ke Kumu*, vol. 1 (Honolulu: Hui Hānai, Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, 1972).

<sup>6</sup> “Ka Olelo Makuahine.”

Anakalea had good reasons to worry. Postwar Hawai‘i was a different place in 1948 than it was in 1938. While Native Hawaiians were gradually reasserting their influence throughout territorial society and government by the end of the 1930s, World War II and the Cold War quickly dashed those ambitions. From 1941 to 1944, martial law reigned over the islands. Between 1947 to 1953, labor unrest on plantations, dock strikes, and increased union organizing fed growing fears of a communist takeover of Hawai‘i and led to F.B.I. “Red hunts” and congressional investigations of suspected communist sympathizers and their activities. During this same period, Hawai‘i’s Japanese American citizens, representing nearly forty percent of the territory’s population and a powerful voting constituency, helped lead a political revolution in 1954 that swept the Democratic Party into power, fueled by nonwhite resentment of nearly sixty years of oligarchic rule. Not content with careers on plantations, many Japanese Americans pursued white-collar employment and competed for teaching and civil service positions heavily occupied by Native Hawaiians. The postwar era also witnessed the rise of mass tourism as increased airline traffic brought greater numbers of white visitors to the islands, signaling a shift in the territory’s economy away from agriculture. With these new changes also came new questions and concerns involving who controlled land development and oversaw natural resources management.

These unprecedented issues only served to further exacerbate and complicate the physical struggles of Native Hawaiians as they continued to occupy the worst demographic statistics for life expectancy, unemployment, infant mortality, incarceration, school dropouts, and alcoholism in the territory. Compounding their efforts to survive was the loss of the Hawaiian language in the public sphere exemplified by the disappearance of Hawaiian-language newspapers. Peaking in 1896 with fourteen, they slowly declined throughout the Territorial Period to eight in 1920 and

three in 1930. By 1948, only *Ka Hoku o Hawaii* remained in circulation but it too ceased publication by the end of the year.<sup>7</sup>

Despite these difficulties, Anakalea remained defiant and even gave his readers a bit of tough love. He described how the Filipino and Japanese communities still practiced their languages and how their children actively listened when spoken to. He believed Hawaiians could accomplish the same. He did not attack the public schools for the loss of their language or provide any excuses for how they arrived at this point as a people. Rather, in an era increasingly growing foreign and hostile to Native culture and ways of life, he believed individuals, families, and the Native community needed to take responsibility and rely on themselves to survive by creating their own opportunities for preserving their language.

E ALA E NA HAWAII OPIO, E APO I KA KAKOU OLELO MAKUAHINE, A IMUA HOI A LOAA IA KAKOU KA LANAKILA MA O KA LOAA ANA O KA MAKUKAU I KA OLELO HAWAII.

Imua, me ka hopo ole. I loa ka hoi ia oe ka ike ame ka makaukau i kau olelo pono, o kou lanakila ana no ia.<sup>8</sup>

*STAND UP CHILDREN OF HAWAII. SEIZE OUR MOTHER LANGUAGE AND GO FORTH AND FIND OUR VICTORY IN OBTAINING PROFICIENCY IN HAWAIIAN.*

*Forward, without fear. To have understanding and preparation in your own language, that is your victory.*

Thus, even on the eve of the last Hawaiian-language newspaper disappearing, Anakalea refused to give up or admit defeat. He held no grand plan or made any promise. Instead, he argued that the way forward into an uncertain future required drawing strength from what linked Hawaiians to their past – their language and culture.

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<sup>7</sup> For more on Hawaiian-Language newspapers see Esther T. Mookini, *The Hawaiian Newspapers* (Honolulu: Topgallant Publishing, 1974).

<sup>8</sup> “Ka Olelo Makuahine.”

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