

Introduction

Mai Kahiki Mai: Out from Kahiki

They came from the south. We do not know exactly when they came, why they came, or how many of them there were, but we know they came from the south. We know they came from a millennia-old tradition of Austronesian voyaging, discovery, and settlement that had colonized all the inhabitable lands of Oceania. They brought with them a set of agricultural practices and knowledge, developed over thousands of miles and hundreds of generations of voyaging into a transportable agricultural toolkit that would allow them to survive in a wide range of island ecosystems. They brought, either on the initial voyage or later ones, the plants and animals that provided not just their food, but their containers, medicine, and cloth. They brought kukui to fuel their lamps and ‘awa,¹ to ease the weariness and pains of daily life.

They brought with them their gods, genealogies, and heroes; their arts and sciences; their knowledge of the seas and the skies; their dances, chants, feather work, and carving. They brought their language, the Eastern Polynesian line of the broader Austronesian language group, which stretches from Madagascar to Rapa Nui. They brought with them all the things that would one day define so much of Native Hawaiian culture, and of Native Hawaiians as a people, but they were not Native

¹ Following on the work of other historians working on Oceanic and indigenous topics, I have opted not to italicize terms from Oceanic and indigenous languages, as these are not foreign languages but rather indigenous languages of Oceania. When the terms are italicized it is only when specifically discussing a word or term as a word or term. For instance, ‘awa is not capitalized in the preceding text, but it would be capitalized in a discussion of the difference between the Hawaiian word ‘awa and the Tahitian term *kava*.

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Hawaiians. The history of Hawai‘i starts not with Native Hawaiians, but with islanders from distant parts of Oceania.

Over the ensuing centuries, however, their descendants would become what we now call Native Hawaiians, *Kānaka Maoli*, *Kānaka ‘Ōiwi*, *Kānaka Hawai‘i*, or more simply just *Kānaka*.² Cultural and social innovations, variations in ritual and worship and language, and most importantly a strong cultural connection to the land and seas of their new home would define them as a separate people from their migratory ancestors. They would become the *Lāhui Hawai‘i*, the Hawaiian people. New variations of agricultural practices adapted to the lands and waters of their new homes allowed them to first survive and then thrive. They developed vast networks of *loko i‘a* (fishponds), *lo‘i kalo* (taro paddies), and dry-land ‘uala (sweet potato) farming that allowed them to feed a population that eventually surpassed that of many of the other islands their ancestors had settled.

The great distances involved and the lack of need for persistent travel meant that voyaging to the south eventually either ceased completely or became so rare as to take on an almost mythic quality.³ As David Chang has argued, however, the lack of direct communication should not be mistaken for a lack of understanding that other lands and other peoples existed beyond the horizon. The people of Hawai‘i would maintain numerous *mo‘olelo* (oral histories and legends) regarding voyages to and from Hawai‘i. These *mo‘olelo* and other forms of oral culture often retained the names of important places from the south, such as references

² The terms *Native Hawaiian*, *Kanaka Hawai‘i*, *Kanaka Māoli* (true/real person), and *Kanaka ‘Ōiwi* (native person) are all in common usage to refer specifically to the indigenous people of Hawai‘i. Except in specific cases when *Kanaka* (singular) or *Kānaka* (plural) might need to be clarified, I have chosen to primarily but not exclusively use the term *Kanaka/Kānaka* or *Kānaka Hawai‘i* throughout this text. I have also chosen to use *Hawaiian* as an adjective to describe things explicitly tied to Hawai‘i as a whole, rather than just *Kānaka*, such as Hawaiian history or Hawaiian politics. I have used *Kanaka* as an adjective to describe things related to *Kānaka Maoli* as a people, such as *Kanaka* missionaries being specifically missionaries who are *Kānaka*. Finally, I have chosen to use ‘*Ōiwi* to modify things specifically tied to or stemming from *Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi* Wale, the time before Cook’s arrival that was exclusively shaped and directed by *Kānaka*, such as ‘*Ōiwi* value systems or ‘*Ōiwi* agricultural methods.

³ Hard archeological evidence of such voyages is scarce, but by its nature archeology is much better suited to tracing broad shifts in a society rather than specific isolated journeys. There is some hard evidence of such journeys, however, most notably Petroglyph-styles specific to Hawai‘i that have been found in Tonga. Shane Egan and David V. Burley, “Triangular Men on One Very Long Voyage: The Context and Implications of a Hawaiian-Style Petroglyph Site in the Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 118, no. 3 (2009): 209–232.

to Bora Bora as the original home of Pele and her family. As time passed however, the specific details of these stories sometimes faded into obscurity, and Kahiki (Tahiti) soon dominated Kanaka collective memories of the South. In addition to specifically signifying Tahiti, the term *Kahiki* became a catchall term for all foreign lands. The kolea, or golden plover, for instance, frequently wintered in Hawai‘i but laid its eggs elsewhere. Not knowing where exactly that elsewhere was, Kānaka described its homeland simply as Kahiki, somewhere beyond the waters of Hawai‘i.⁴

In these mo‘olelo, Kahiki remained a place of significant mana, the term used in Hawai‘i and other parts of Oceania for a mix of power, authority, and prestige. Indeed, the lack of regular contact may have even inflated the sense of Kahiki as a place of mana. Stories of the arrival of the priest Pa‘ao and his chief Pili, for instance, remained prominent on Hawai‘i Island, as did the story of the arrival of the female god/chief Pele and her relatives. These mo‘olelo and the genealogies related to them explicitly connected the people of Hawai‘i to their ancestral homelands, granting the descendants of these lines tremendous mana within the islands. The ruling chiefs of Hawai‘i Island and the later monarchs of the Hawaiian kingdom based their authority in part on genealogies that traced their ancestry to Pili, while powerful kāhuna traced their own lines back to Pa‘ao. Similarly, O‘ahu chiefly lines traced themselves to La‘amaikahiki (La‘a from Kahiki), another chief from the south. Families in Puna and Ka‘u still trace their lineages, familial responsibilities, and mana back to Pele, whose epic story includes her family’s migration from Bora Bora.

This period of isolation, which historians and others often define as “Pre-Contact Hawai‘i,” might also be referred to as *Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale*, the time that is exclusively ‘Ōiwi, following the practice of the late Kanalu Young. Young developed the term *‘Ōiwi Wale*, as a way of defining this period not by the lack of contact with foreigners but rather by recognizing, “the foundational nature of seventeen centuries of settlement and societal development by Native Hawaiian kūpuna [ancestors] before foreign arrival.”⁵ While some may assume that such a period of isolation would result in a static and potentially moribund civilization, Ka Wā

⁴ See David Chang, “Looking Out from Hawai‘i’s Shore: The Exploration of the World Is the Inheritance of Native Hawaiians,” *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 13–20.

⁵ Kanalu G. Terry Young, *Rethinking the Native Hawaiian Past* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 20.

‘Ōiwi Wale was still an era of social, cultural, and environmental changes in Hawai‘i, albeit changes exclusively developed without outside foreign interference or contributions.

In 1778, Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale came to an end when the people of Kaua‘i spotted an unusual pair of ships approaching the island, ships arriving not from another island in the chain, but from foreign shores. The men aboard those ships must have struck the Kaua‘i people as incredibly strange, in both behavior and appearance. Their speech no doubt struck the Kaua‘i people as unusual as well. At times, it would have been absolutely unintelligible, yet at other times the strangers spoke words and phrases in a language quite similar to their own, Tahitian to be exact. These men and their ship had not only come from Kahiki in the generic sense of coming from a foreign place, but they had also spent time on this journey and others in Tahiti. Indeed, Tahiti had been their last stop before Kaua‘i. Among this group of partial Tahitian speakers was the expedition’s leader, Captain James Cook, whose arrival in Hawai‘i launched the islands into an era of rapid demographic, political, social, and cultural change.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH KAHIKI, RELATIONS WITH THE PAST

While Cook’s arrival opened the way for a flood of ideas, people, and objects into Hawai‘i, it also opened paths for ideas, people, and objects to flow out of Hawai‘i. As David Chang has explored in *The World and All the Things upon It*, Kānaka Maoli, like other Oceanic peoples, eagerly explored the world opened by interactions with European and American shipping. Within a generation, Kānaka Maoli had traveled to Europe, the Americas, Asia, and, of course, to other parts of Oceania.

This book examines how Kānaka Maoli understood and developed relationships with other Oceanic peoples as a part of a broader effort to ensure the survival and success of the lāhui in the face of social, political, and cultural changes. These relationships with other Oceanic peoples were inherently colored by Kanaka understandings of their connections to Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale. More specifically, Kānaka often viewed their relationships with other Oceanic peoples through the same set of lenses – positive, negative, or somewhere in between – that they viewed their own past.

Nineteenth-century Hawai‘i was the site of a prolonged cultural and social conflict over the proper role of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale in shaping the

Hawaiian present and future. A simplified version of this conflict might be posited as being between two extreme visions, a future Hawaiian culture and society that in all possible ways reflected Hawai‘i during Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale versus a future completely free of all traces of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale. In reality, few Kānaka held either extreme view, as neither could be mistaken as a practical option by the mid-nineteenth century. Disagreements over historical memory tended to revolve around the degree to which ‘Ōiwi Wale culture might/should remain relevant in Hawai‘i and what types of culture and knowledge should be practiced or preserved.

Those who leaned toward distancing themselves and the Hawaiian future from the Hawaiian past also tended to follow the teachings and the rhetoric of the American Congregationalist missionaries who arrived in 1821. These missionaries deemed anything from Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale, and indeed anything outside of their rigid worldview, to be full of *na‘aupō* (ignorance and inner-darkness). Such individuals, and their Kanaka followers, typically looked to Congregational religion and an idealized version of American culture to define the Hawaiian future, a future bathed in foreign *na‘auao* (inner light or enlightenment). To further complicate things, even those Kānaka who sought to retain connections to Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale tended to adopt the term *na‘auao* with respect to the mastery of foreign knowledge and often shared with their more rigid Congregationalist brethren a sense of pride in their shared mastery of foreign *na‘auao*.

In terms of broader understandings of time, another way of positioning these debates may be through two opposing visions of humanity’s position relative to time. In the common European perspective of time, humanity stood with its back to the past, looking forward to the future. In the traditional Hawaiian view, and in much of Oceania, humanity stood with its face to the past, which they described as the time *ma mua*, in front of them. Through tracing the past and understanding it, one could then chart the path of the future, which sat unknown and unpredictable *ma hope*, or behind one’s back. While either perspective can be used to either embrace or deny the past, the European/American “face the future” perspective certainly worked better for those who understood Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale as Ka Wā Na‘aupō, the time of ignorance. Coming from such a perspective, they would also be inclined to create a Hawaiian future as far from that past as possible. For those who wished to design a Hawaiian future guided by values, practices, and knowledge rooted in Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale, the “face to the past” perspective had far greater resonance. While such a perspective could easily incorporate foreign

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influences as part of the global past, the Hawaiian past remained the foundation for the Hawaiian present and future.

On a practical basis, nineteenth-century Kānaka views of their past not only differed from individual to individual but also from situation to situation. As Marie Alohalani Brown has shown in her work on John Papa I‘i, I‘i’s Congregationalist beliefs led him to often portray the sexual and religious culture of the pre-Christian past as inherently na‘aupō. Yet when it came to his understanding of his personal role in the world, he strongly maintained an ‘Ōiwi Wale-derived sense of personal duty to the royal family as a kahu or caretaker.⁶ John Tamatoa Baker,⁷ the Kānaka/Tahitian/British businessman and politician whose story forms the final chapters of this book, was part of King David Kalākaua’s Hale Nauā, an organization dedicated in large part to pursuing the wisdom of ‘Ōiwi Wale culture. At the same time, he was an agricultural entrepreneur constantly deriding other Kānaka for failing to move from subsistence-plus farming into cash cropping and a full-throated embrace of capitalist ethics. Class, religion, education, gender, nationalism, and politics all played their role in shaping how individual Kānaka might understand and value the ‘Ōiwi Wale past in any situation.

Nineteenth-century Kānaka’s conflicted and conflicting views of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale are especially important in understanding their relationships to other Oceanic peoples because, then and now, many Kānaka tend to understand other islanders through the lens of the Hawaiian past. The Hawaiian past, after all, is rooted in and built on a broader Oceanic past, leading to a logical association between other Oceanians and the Hawaiian past. Furthermore, by the mid-nineteenth century most Kānaka, saw themselves as more advanced than their fellow Oceanic peoples in terms of their collective na‘auao, defined as the acquisition and mastery of European/American knowledge and material wealth. Between this sense of Hawaiian exceptionalism and their southern roots, many Kānaka developed an understanding of other islanders as being even closer to Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale than Kānaka were.

Thus Kānaka perspectives on their own past heavily influenced their understanding and relationships with other Oceanic peoples. Those most eager to turn their back on Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale were also the most likely to dismiss, condemn, and separate themselves from other islanders as

⁶ Marie Alohalani Brown, *Facing the Spears of Change* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2016).

⁷ Some sources also refer to him as John Timoteo Baker.

part of that past. Those who were most likely to embrace Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale as an essential component of the Hawaiian future were also the most likely to embrace other islanders and their collective origins. While still frequently espousing Hawaiian exceptionalism based in a sense of a superior Hawaiian mastery of the na‘auao, they also frequently promoted relationships based on kinship and a shared Oceanic past. In an age where people across Oceania faced common threats from foreign empires as well as common opportunities stemming from easier access to a rapidly changing nineteenth-century world, such relationships would be vital to the futures of all the peoples of Oceania.

HAWAIIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND KA WĀ
 ‘ŌIWI WALE

These arguments over the meaning of the Hawaiian past and relationships to other islanders are rooted in two separate but intertwined bodies of academic literature, namely Kanaka-centered histories of nineteenth-century Hawai‘i and the work loosely connected under the umbrella of Native Pacific cultural studies. In terms of Hawaiian historiography, the arguments presented in this book build upon a larger body of work examining nineteenth-century Kānaka’s negotiations between ‘Ōiwi Wale ideas, institutions, and values and those coming from abroad. Such work has largely been undertaken as a way of correcting a historiography that for nearly a century had served up little more than apologetics for American imperial expansion into and rule over the islands.

While thorough and professional in their own way, many of these older historians such as Ralph Kuykendall and Gavan Daws relied largely on English-language sources and a set of cultural and disciplinary biases that favored the perspectives of European/American empires over those of Native peoples.⁸ The more recent wave of Kanaka-focused histories, however, have employed Hawaiian-language sources as well as Kanaka-centered analytical frameworks to reexamine Kānaka and foreign motivations for implementing nineteenth-century changes; the methods Kānaka and foreigners used to institute such changes; and the results of these changes upon the Lāhui Hawai‘i. One of the central currents running through such work has been the degree to which such changes

⁸ See Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 3 vols. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1938–1967); Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York: MacMillan, 1968).

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were either adapted and adopted by Kānaka versus being implemented upon Kānaka through coercion and trickery. By no coincidence this often corresponds to how individual historians also portray the results of such changes.

Looking specifically at monographs on Hawaiian history, the start of this historiographic period can be traced to 1992 and Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa’s *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai?*, which examines the disastrous effects of European/American diseases, cultural beliefs, and land tenure in eroding many of the foundational values/metaphors that undergirded much of ‘Ōiwi Wale culture. Though by no means dismissive of Kanaka agency, Kame‘eleihiwa’s work underscores how foreign interlopers actively sought to undermine the relationships that informed Kanaka society, such as that between the maka‘āinana (the people of the land), the ali‘i (the chiefs), and the ‘āina (land). Jon Osorio’s *Dismembering Lāhui* presents a similar argument regarding the Hawaiian kingdom’s adoption of European political practices. Osorio, however, also examines Kanaka adoption of and adaptation to the system and their success in employing parliamentary democracy and party politics in the 1870s and 1880s. Other scholars have focused more on Kanaka efforts to meld together ‘Ōiwi and foreign practices and ideas in ways that allowed for the preservation of ‘Ōiwi ideas, culture, and independence. Noenoe Silva’s *Aloha Betrayed* and Kamana Beamer’s *No Mākou Ka Mana*, for instance, examine Kanaka cultural and political efforts to preserve and act upon ‘Ōiwi logics and values while employing foreign systems and technologies.⁹

While these changes have been the primary focus of these works, one of the underlying issues that these monographs have addressed, either explicitly or implicitly, has been the ongoing conflict throughout the nineteenth century over the value of the Hawaiian past, and particularly the proper role of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale in determining the Hawaiian future. The cultural, political, and social norms and institutions being replaced, after all, were rooted in Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale. Changes in Hawaiian culture, for instance, required those carrying out and negotiating those changes to determine what elements of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale should remain, a

⁹ Lilikala Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea Lā e Pono Ai?* (Honolulu, HI: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Jon K. K. Osorio, *Dismembering Lāhui: A History of the Hawaiian Nation to 1887* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002); Noenoe Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Kamana Beamer, *No Mākou ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* (Honolulu, HI: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014).

determination often informed by the general positive and negative associations one had with that past.

Because of the centrality of the Hawaiian past in defining the institutions and norms being challenged, altered, and often attacked in the nineteenth century, one can even map out many of the key moments and trends of the conflict over the Hawaiian past through the existing historiography. One of the earliest and most significant changes, for instance, came in 1819 when Liholiho, Kamehameha II, ended the kapu system under considerable pressure from Ka‘ahumanu and Keōpūolani, the most influential of Kamehameha the Great’s queens. Due to her genealogy, Keōpūolani was one of the most sacred persons in the islands as well as being Liholiho’s birth mother. Ka‘ahumanu, though of lower genealogy, was one of the most politically powerful figures in the kingdom based both on her familial connections and her considerable political skill. Kame‘eleihiwa presents this event as a result of a loss of religious faith brought about by sustained foreign contact, particularly depopulation from introduced diseases.¹⁰

The turning point in *Native Lands* comes less than a year after the end of the kapu system with the arrival of Congregationalist missionaries from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), a group whose religious and nationalist devotion led to a tremendous distaste for anything remotely related to the pre-Christian Hawaiian past. Lead missionary Hiram Bingham, recalling his first memories of Hawai‘i in 1820, wrote, “Some of our number, with gushing tears, turned away from the spectacle. Others, with a firmer nerve, continued their gaze, but were ready to exclaim, ‘Can these be human beings?’” Though Bingham would go on to answer in the affirmative, it was only in stripping away all vestiges of their nativeness that such humanity might be revealed.¹¹ Already introduced to the Hawaiian language by Kanaka converts living in New England, the missionaries soon began to use the Hawaiian language to try and create a wedge between Kānaka and their past.¹² As noted earlier they made frequent use of the terms *na‘auao* and *na‘aupō* to refer to enlightenment and ignorance, respectively. The former was associated entirely with New England Congregationalist values and ideas while anything remotely connected to the Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale

¹⁰ Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 74–81.

¹¹ Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-One Years in the Sandwich Islands* (Canandaigua, NY: H. D. Goodwin, 1855), 81.

¹² Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 137–142.

they decried as na‘aupō. These concepts of na‘aupō and na‘auao would remain relevant to Hawaiian discussions of the proper role of Ka Wā ‘Ōiwi Wale throughout the nineteenth century and efforts to define, redefine, and control those terms were among some of the hardest fought rhetorical battles of the nineteenth century.

Despite tense relations with the mission initially, first Keōpūolani and then Ka‘ahumanu converted, in no small part due to the largely unrecognized work of Tahitian missionaries Auna and Taua. After conversion Ka‘ahumanu used New England–style Congregationalism to create a state religion that filled the religious and legal void left by the end of the kapu system, strengthening her social and cultural position over a kingdom she already exercised effective political control over. Kame‘eleihiwa has shown how the death toll and the desire for a new state religion soon led to rapid conversions to a religion that promised eternal life in exchange for denying and deriding the Native past. According to both Kame‘eleihiwa in *Native Land* and Osorio in *Dismembering Lāhui*, the perceived na‘auao of Western political and diplomatic traditions and the growing mission-promoted portrayal of Native traditions and the Native past as na‘aupō led many Kanaka elites to follow the lead of Haole advisors in creating new political, legal, and economic systems.¹³

By no coincidence these systems also favored the interests of Europeans and Americans in Hawai‘i. Kame‘eleihiwa examines the way that foreign advisors under Kamehameha III broke land-based reciprocal relationships between the ali‘i and the maka‘āinana through the “Great Māhele” in 1848, which created private property. This, by design, removed the incentives of the maka‘āinana and the ali‘i to support one another economically, a problem further exacerbated by allowing foreign investors to buy land in 1850. Osorio argues that governments set up under the constitutions of 1840 and 1852 came about as a direct result of Haole discourses that “continually subjected [Kānaka] to the pronouncements of their difference and inferiority, which both enabled and validated their dispossession.” These pronouncements of inferiority relied heavily on dismissals and condemnations of the Hawaiian past and, by extension, traces of that past among contemporary Kānaka. The governments set up under these constitutions, as well as the decision to allow foreigners to vote and hold office in Hawai‘i through a conveniently rigorless

¹³ H. E. Maude, “The Raiatean Chief Auna and the Conversion of Hawaii,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 8 (1973), 188–191; Kame‘eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, 152–164, 174–192.