

“We Are Our History”: Reviewing the History of Education in Hawai‘i and Oceania

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Key Words: History of education in Oceania, history of education in Hawai‘i, settler colonialism, history of Indigenous education, Pacific World

There is a “world of difference,” anthropologist Epeli Hau‘ofa argued, “between viewing the Pacific as ‘islands in a far sea’ and as ‘a sea of islands.’” The distinction between both perspectives, he explained, is exemplified in the two names used for the region: Pacific Islands and Oceania. The former represents a colonial vision produced by white “continental men” emphasizing the smallness and remoteness of “dry surfaces in a vast ocean far from centers of power.” This understanding has produced and sustained an “economistic and geographic deterministic view” emphasizing Pacific Island nations as “too small, too poor, and too isolated” to take care of themselves. The latter, in contrast, denotes a grand space inhabited by brave and resourceful people whose myths, legends, oral traditions, and cosmologies reveal how they did not conceive of themselves in such “microscopic proportions.” Rather, Oceanic peoples have for over two millennia viewed the sea as a “large world” where peoples, goods, and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by fixed national boundaries.¹

For Hau‘ofa, this discrepancy was more than a semantic turn—it represented a reclamation of Indigenous identity and representation of the region from two hundred years of European and American imperialist influence. He feared if such narrow and deterministic colonial perspectives continue to define Oceania, its people, and its culture, “our histories will remain imperial histories and narratives of passive submission to transformations, victimisations, and fatal impacts.”

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¹Epeli Hau‘ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1994), 152.

Internalization of these narratives could confine Oceanic peoples to "mental reservations" in which they remain forever dependent on foreign nations and international agencies for survival. Therefore, to counteract these negative effects, he argued, "We must . . . actively reconstruct our histories, rewrite our geography, create our own realities, and disseminate these through our educational institutions and our societies at large."² Doing so would not only restore agency to "people of the sea" but also empower them to take charge of their destiny.

This essay draws inspiration from Hau'ofa's writings to reconceptualize and situate the educational historiography of Hawai'i within the broader context of the educational historiography of Oceania. I seek to attract attention to the ways in which the region's educational history has been theorized, constructed, and employed by framing the history of education in Hawai'i (immigrant, Indigenous, and colonial) as emblematic of Oceania's limited presence in the larger historical literature on education and schooling. In doing so, I hope to highlight how the historical educational experiences of immigrant and Indigenous peoples in both Hawai'i and Oceania remain woefully understudied and that the vast majority of extant research centers on Western events, institutions, and individuals following European contact. As Hau'ofa succinctly puts it, "this kind of history is a hindrance," as it establishes Oceania as having no history prior to imperialism, only a "prehistory." Such misunderstanding relegates Oceanic peoples to the "roles of spectators and objects for transformation," marginalizes their narratives and experiences to the "footnotes of the histories of empires," and reinforces paternalistic colonial ideas of Oceania as tiny, remote, and helpless.³ Coupled with enduring and deeply rooted commercialized themes in the imaginations of continental Americans of idyllic scenery and friendly natives living in eternal paradise, it is easy to comprehend why Hawai'i and Oceania escape greater critical examination.⁴

²Epeli Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 65, 74–76.

³Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean*, 62–63.

⁴Hauanani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993); Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea La' E Pono Ai? How Shall We Live in Harmony?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992); Jane C. Desmond, "Picturing Hawai'i: The 'Ideal' Native and the Origins of Tourism, 1880–1915," *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1999), 459; Christine Skwiot, *The Purposes of Paradise: U.S. Tourism and Empire in Cuba and Hawai'i* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Stephanie Nohelani Teves, "Aloha State Apparatuses,"

This sociocultural reality, however, does not suggest a lack of interest in Indigenous experiences in education. The history of Native American boarding schools reflects a wealth of scholarship involving a range of issues that include settler colonial pedagogy and institutions; settler educators and administrators; and Indigenous teachers', communities', and students' experiences and responses. Seminal works in the 1990s by K. Tsianina Lomawaima, David W. Adams, and Brenda J. Child reveal the lengths to which settler colonials attempted to assimilate Native American children as well as the complex forms of resistance and survival strategies Native students and their communities employed to endure their schooling and colonization more broadly.⁵ As a result, these works have inspired a new generation of scholars in the twenty-first century eager to explore and expand the field through fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.

Hawai'i, however, has yet to experience such an undertaking. The first written histories about Hawaiian education—composed in the mid-nineteenth century by haole (white) American missionaries—emphasize the common schools as the primary sites for transforming Hawai'i from a “state of heathenism” to that of a Christian nation. These early narratives reveal how missionaries envisioned Hawaiian salvation as an orderly educational process that guided Natives away from paganism and toward Christianity and that portrayed schools as the most efficient and effective institutions for achieving this transition. In *History of the Sandwich Islands*, missionary Sheldon Dibble described the kingdom's common schools as the greatest means of access to the souls of Native Hawaiians in order to ensure their salvation. At school, they learned the “art of reading” which “unlock[ed] . . . the rich volume of God's word” and granted Native Hawaiians direct access to the “blessings of Christianity and . . . civilization” in the Bible.⁶ Fellow missionaries Rufus Anderson and Edwin O. Hall shared similar views. In an 1838 article, Hall emphasized the importance of establishing an extensive system of Christian public schools for removing the “rubbish of ignorance and superstition” and making the blessings of Christianity

American Quarterly 67, no. 3 (Sept. 2015), 705–26; and Adria L. Imada, *Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁵K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995); and Brenda J. Child, *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900–1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

⁶Sheldon Dibble, *History of the Sandwich Islands* (Lahainaluna, HI: Press of the Mission Seminary, 1843), 180.

and civilization "permanent."⁷ Anderson's "Missionary Schools" takes a global look at the history of foreign mission schooling and its impact on countries across the world. His narrative situates "Sandwich Island" mission schools within this larger history and compares them with those of other "heathen nation[s]" as "folds where the lambs of the flock [were] to be fed."⁸

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the history of Hawaiian education underwent a dramatic revision to support the political actions and objectives of a new generation of white settlers. These narratives, mostly written by the adult children of the original missionaries (or "second-generation missionaries"), no longer emphasized the importance of schools to Hawaiian salvation but, rather, stressed the essential roles missionaries played in advising, organizing, and leading the Hawaiian nation's educational institutions during the nineteenth century. This revision defined both first- and second-generation missionaries as benevolent and selfless crusaders committed to developing a school system capable of civilizing a primitive people and, thereby, converting their feudal kingdom into a modern nation-state.⁹

These narrative adjustments began appearing in various publications during the final years of the monarchy. In 1888, Alatau Atkinson, inspector general of schools and future territorial superintendent, and second-generation missionary William D. Alexander coauthored the pamphlet *An Historical Sketch of Education in the Hawaiian Islands*, in which they praise the missionaries in building a number of primitive schools that provided a rudimentary education in reading, writing, and basic arithmetic.¹⁰ This arrangement, they argued, brought literacy to the Hawaiian people and established the foundation of the kingdom's school system. In an 1892 article, first-generation missionary Charles M. Hyde described the public school system his colleagues created as a

⁷Edwin O. Hall, "Common Schools at the Sandwich Islands," *Hawaiian Spectator* 1, no. 4, (Oct. 1838), 352.

⁸Rufus Anderson, "Missionary Schools," *The American Biblical Repository* 12 (July 1838): 107, 108.

⁹The white conspirators who led the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani in 1893, established the provisional white minority government (the Republic of Hawaii, 1893–1898), and sought territorial annexation in 1898 used this historical reconstruction of missionary involvement to portray the Hawaiian monarchy as despotic and incompetent and a threat to America's fifty-year "civilizing influence." For more on Hawai'i's white settler interventionist rhetoric see, Lorrin A. Thurston, *A Hand-Book on the Annexation of Hawaii* (St. Joseph, MI: A. B. Morse, Printers and Binders, 1897).

¹⁰William De Witt Alexander and Alatau Tamchiboulac Atkinson, *An Historical Sketch of Education in the Hawaiian Islands* (Honolulu: Board of Education of the Hawaiian Kingdom, 1888).

“great factor” in “uplifting the dark races into full fellowship in the brotherhood of man.”¹¹ In particular, he credited the inclusion of manual labor into the nation’s public school system as critical to civilizing Native Hawaiians. That same year, an anonymous author with the penname “Kanakaole” outlined the benefits of American civilization bestowed by the kingdom’s centralized, “Anglo-Saxon”-led school system to Hawai‘i’s “little, dirty, brown-skinned” students.¹² In “Education in the Hawaiian Kingdom,” the author explained how a unified district provided a standard “enlightenment” curriculum emphasizing American “home life and its comforts, its literature and intellectual force, [and] its social and moral elevation.”¹³

In the immediate years following the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, historical understanding of public education shifted once again. Authors now looked to establish the educational system of the Republic of Hawaii as fundamentally American in origin, organization, curriculum, and faculty. They did so in support of the white-minority government’s larger objective of securing the annexation of Hawai‘i to the United States. Accomplishing this goal, however, required assuaging white Americans’ fear of Hawai‘i’s “non-homogeneous people” as “unfit for incorporation” by demonstrating how the islands’ school system, led and designed by white Americans since 1820, had always been American and was the perfect institution for preparing Hawai‘i’s people for annexation.¹⁴

Scholars of the first half of the twentieth century embraced this narrative highlighting the inherent positive American nature of Hawai‘i’s schools. In his publications on the Hawaiian Kingdom, University of Hawai‘i history professor Ralph S. Kuykendall credited American missionaries as the “most potent driving force” in creating and sustaining the “American pattern” of the island nation’s “strong school system.”¹⁵ In particular, he showcased the efforts of Richard Armstrong (father of Samuel C. Armstrong, founder of the Hampton Institute) to inculcate “habits of industry” through agricultural training in the public schools and promote the English language as the medium

¹¹C. M. Hyde, “Educational Work of the American Mission for the Hawaiian People,” in *Hawaiian Almanac and Annual for 1892*, ed. and comp. Thomas G. Thurm (Honolulu: Black & Auld, Printers, 1891), 117–26.

¹²Kanakaole, “Education in the Hawaiian Kingdom,” *Pacific Coast Teacher* 1, no. 4 (Jan. 1892), 130.

¹³Kanakaole, “Education in the Hawaiian Kingdom,” 132.

¹⁴Thurston, *A Hand-Book on the Annexation of Hawaii*, 31.

¹⁵Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1854–1874: Twenty Critical Years*, vol. 2 (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1953), 109; and Ralph S. Kuykendall and A. Grove Day, *Hawaii: A History: From Polynesian Kingdom to American Statehood* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1948), 249.

of instruction as strong examples of American leadership.¹⁶ Kuykendall's pro-missionary coverage, however, starkly contrasted with his assessment of Indigenous school administrators and bureaucrats as inexperienced and incapable of successfully overseeing a national education system.¹⁷

Territorial Normal School president Benjamin O. Wist shared the same assessments of missionary achievements and critique of Native incompetence, but whereas Kuykendall remained focused on the nineteenth century, Wist expanded the argument to contend that missionary educational efforts actually represented a nascent Americanization process instilling "American ideals, institutions, and practices" into Hawai'i's student population in preparation for eventual US citizenship. "In every particular," he argued, "the Hawaiian public school system became American in practice before it became American in fact."¹⁸ Therefore, as an incorporated territory awaiting statehood since 1820, he reasoned, "It is public education in the American pattern that does most to justify Hawaii's claim to equal status with other commonwealths of the American nation."¹⁹

This historical consensus involving the missionary legacy in education began to fracture by the late 1950s. In his book *Hawaii Pono: A Social History*, American studies professor Lawrence Fuchs broadly agreed with Wist's assessment that American education influenced Hawai'i's political transformations during the territorial period, but he argued that this change came from the bottom up. He reinterpreted missionary and white planter involvement in nineteenth- and twentieth-century public education as creating an un-American school system that restricted opportunities for social mobility based on race. Undaunted, Fuchs claimed, the "brown-skinned and slant-eyed" students of territorial Hawai'i took advantage of their American civics education in the public schools to learn about their rights and privileges as citizens and reject the agricultural and vocational education agenda white sugar planters and their supporters in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) promoted.²⁰ As a result, this new multicultural generation of Americans who came of age in the postwar era forged a new politically active middle class that backed the

¹⁶Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 356, 361.

¹⁷Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 107, 351.

¹⁸Benjamin O. Wist, *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii: October 15, 1840-October 15, 1940* (Honolulu: Hawaii Educational Review, 1940), 219.

¹⁹Wist, *A Century of Public Education in Hawaii*, 4.

²⁰Lawrence H. Fuchs, *Hawaii Pono: A Social History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 284.

Democratic Party sweep of the territorial legislature in 1954, ending fifty years of white planter political control over Hawai'i.

While an important departure from the benevolent missionary focus of earlier accounts, Fuchs's book still celebrates America and American education as crucial influences on the historical and political development of Hawai'i into a US territory. He defines decades of racial, political, economic, and educational grievances of Hawai'i's multiracial population as disorganized anger that required American education to inspire, inform, and guide their political organization against white minority control. American schools, therefore, represented critical institutions for spreading democratic freedom and opportunity and, more importantly, establishing America's presence as a positive influence on Hawai'i's political destiny.

By the end of the twentieth century, historical scholarship on education in Hawai'i had once again shifted, with a new generation of scholars critically reexamining missionary involvement in education and the celebratory narratives of Hawai'i's public school leadership and institutions. This growing body of research focuses on the ways in which race, labor, imperialism, and settler colonialism have intersected to inform and shape nineteenth-century and territorial-era education policy, practice, and curriculum. In a 1981 article, William E. H. Tagupa discussed the evolution and impact of missionary education policies, beginning with Hawaiian-language literacy programs meant to promote Christian salvation to that of preparing Hawaiians for American assimilation and annexation by replacing the Hawaiian language with English as the medium of instruction.²¹ In *Hawaiian by Birth*, Joy Schulz explains how the private education of second-generation missionary children at Punahou in the middle decades of the nineteenth century cultivated a sense of white superiority and privilege that created tense relations between them and the Native Hawaiian community and, ultimately, lead to their involvement in overthrowing the monarchy.²² Several of C. Kalani Beyer's articles explore how attitudes of white supremacy, civilization, and patriarchy informed the construction of and instruction at manual training institutions and female seminaries meant to "uplift" and "save" Native Hawaiians during the late nineteenth century.²³ Michelle Morgan

²¹William E. H. Tagupa, "Education, Change, and Assimilation in Nineteenth Century Hawai'i," *Pacific Studies* 5, no. 1 (Fall 1981), 57–70.

²²Joy Schulz, *Hawaiian by Birth: Missionary Children, Bicultural Identity, and U.S. Colonialism in the Pacific* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017).

²³C. Kalani Beyer, "The Connection of Samuel Chapman Armstrong as Both Borrower and Architect of Education in Hawai'i," *History of Education Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Feb. 2007), 23–48; Carl Kalani Beyer, "Female Seminaries in America and Hawai'i During the 19th Century," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 37 (2003), 91–118;

expands the discussion of manual education into the first half of the twentieth century to highlight the aggressive push by the DPI to make vocational training a core component of territorial schooling.²⁴ Judith R. Hughes, Morris Young, and Katherine Fox each examine the history of the territorial-era English Standard School (ESS) movement and the challenges local policymakers faced in promoting ESS as a necessary part of their Americanization campaign and addressing accusations that the policy racially excluded nonwhite students.²⁵ Finally, Clif Stratton's *Education for Empire*, Michelle Morgan's article on Hawai'i's teachers and Americanization, and dissertations by Sarah D. Manekin and Khalil Anthony Johnson Jr. reveal the growing interest in the use of empire as an analytical framework for contextualizing Hawai'i within larger national debates about race, citizenship, manual labor, and schools.²⁶

These histories represent important contributions for advancing our understanding of the myriad ways American influence over Hawai'i's education system affected the islands' political development into a territory of the United States. But white settler involvement in education is only part of the story. Missing are equally robust examinations of the ways in which immigrants—in particular Chinese, Portuguese, and Filipino—and Native Hawaiians understood, experienced, and engaged formal schooling, literacy practices, and Americanization in the decades after the arrival of American missionaries in 1820.

and Kalani Beyer, "A Century of Using Secondary Education to Extend an American Hegemony Over Hawai'i," *American Educational History Journal* 39, no. 1–2 (2012), 515–35.

²⁴Michelle M. K. Morgan, "More Than Mere 'Book Learning': Democracy and Vocational Education in the Territory of Hawai'i, 1900–1959," in *Educating a Working Society: Vocationalism in 20th-Century American Schooling*, ed. Glenn P. Lauzon (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing 2019), 95–116.

²⁵Judith R. Hughes, "The Demise of the English Standard School System in Hawai'i," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 27 (1993), 65–89; Morris Young, "Standard English and Student Bodies: Institutionalizing Race and Literacy in Hawai'i," *College English* 64, no. 4 (March 2002), 405–31; and Katherine J. E. Fox, "Pidgin in Classroom: Hawai'i's English Standard Schools, Americanization, and Hawaiian Identity, 1920–1960" (PhD diss., University of Memphis, 2012).

²⁶Clif Stratton, *Education for Empire: American Schools, Race, and the Paths of Good Citizenship* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Michelle Morgan, "Americanizing the Teachers: Identity, Citizenship, and the Teaching Corps in Hawai'i, 1900–1941," *Western Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2014), 147–67; Sarah D. Manekin, "Spreading the Empire of Free Education, 1865–1905" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009); and Khalil Anthony Johnson Jr., "The Education of Black and Indigenous People in the United States and Abroad, 1730–1980" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2016).

One exception is scholarship on Japanese immigrants. Eileen Tamura's seminal work, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity, the Nisei Generation in Hawai'i*, examines the efforts of Hawai'i's white school officials to force Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) to Americanize and the ways in which Nisei and their Issei parents (first-generation Japanese immigrants to North America) responded by appropriating and adapting American education to advance their own interests.²⁷ Reed Ueda's 1999 article builds upon Tamura's argument, exploring how the civics education program at McKinley High School in Honolulu, meant to Americanize Nisei students, instead provided them with the political language of equal rights and universal citizenship they would later use to politically transform Hawai'i into a pluralistic democratic community in the postwar era.²⁸ In examining Nikkei (Japanese-American) legal challenges to territorial government efforts to control Japanese-language schools, Noriko Asato's book *Teaching Mikadoism* further demonstrates the complicated ways in which race, citizenship, language, and schools affected Hawai'i's Japanese-American population.²⁹

By comparison, historical research on Native Hawaiian engagement with public education during the territorial period remains narrow and limited. Beginning in the 1990s, several scholars began denouncing missionary influence and DPI policies as suppressing and replacing the Hawaiian language and culture with English and Americanization. Their revisionist critique defined American schooling as a process of stripping Indigenous children of their Native identity and transforming them into a new passive generation of "Hawaiian-Americans" accepting of US occupation.³⁰ While powerful as an anticolonial narrative drawing public attention to white settler

²⁷ Eileen H. Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

²⁸ Reed Ueda, "Second-Generation Civic America: Education, Citizenship, and the Children of Immigrants," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no. 4 (Spring 1999), 661–81.

²⁹ Noriko Asato, *Teaching Mikadoism: The Attack on Japanese Language Schools in Hawaii, California, and Washington, 1919–1927* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

³⁰ Maenette K. P. Ah Nee-Benham and Ronald H. Heck, *Culture and Educational Policy in Hawai'i: The Silencing of Native Voices* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1998); Paul F. Nahoia Lucas, "Ē Ola Mau Kakou I Ka 'Olelo Makuahine: Hawaiian Language Policy and the Courts," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 34 (2000), 1–28; Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), 113–17; Davianna Pomaika'i McGregor, "Engaging Hawaiians in the Expansion of the U.S. Empire," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 7, no. 3 (Oct. 2004), 218–19; and Davianna Pomaika'i

efforts to eliminate Indigenous identity through education, it also had the adverse effect of creating an entrenched victimization narrative that framed Hawai'i's history of public education in the territorial period as a time of deprivation and loss. As a result, little room existed for a more nuanced understanding of Indigenous responses to territorial-era schooling.

Times, however, are changing. In recent years, several Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) scholars have pushed back at the victimization depiction by relying on nineteenth-century Hawaiian-language sources to argue that Natives were not passive victims of colonialism. Political scientist Noenoe Silva examines antiannexation protests from the late nineteenth century to counter settler-colonial histories of Indigenous acceptance of the US invasion and occupation of the islands.³¹ Geographer Kamanamaikalani Beamer explains how Hawaiian leadership customized and adopted Western technologies and concepts to support and bolster Indigenous governance in a time of increasing foreign encroachment.³² Research by historian David A. Chang reveals how Hawaiians during the nineteenth century adapted to and embraced literacy and written texts as a means to control relations with Westerners and, later, resist colonization and assimilation efforts.³³ Noelani Arista's work takes a more nuanced approach toward understanding the historical development and impact of Hawaiian-language literacy practices and printing skills. Rather than view literacy and printing as straightforward examples of Hawaiian agency, she contextualizes Native appropriation of these technologies within a larger "confluence of worlds" that acknowledges the complexity and fluid nature of negotiation and deliberation that occurs when different "meaning-making systems" engage one another.³⁴ Doing so moves away from simply understanding Hawaiian-language sources as evidence of historical resistance and, instead, recognizes them as

McGregor, "Aina Ho'opulapula: Hawaiian Homesteading," *Hawaiian Journal of History* 24 (1990), 33.

³¹Noenoe K. Silva, *Aloha Betrayed: Native Hawaiian Resistance to American Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2004).

³²Kamanamaikalani Beamer, *No Mākou Ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* (Honolulu: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014).

³³David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); and David A. Chang, "The Good Written Word of Life: The Native Hawaiian Appropriation of Textuality," *William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (April 2018), 237–58.

³⁴Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai'i and the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 10.

“oral-made-textual sources” reflecting the continuation of Hawaiian customary practices of learning and passing on knowledge.³⁵

These histories, while not specifically focused on education, demonstrate the new and exciting opportunities for expanding and reevaluating the history of education in Hawai‘i by examining non-English sources. Hawaiian-language newspapers and documents reveal a complex and organized Indigenous response to Western education, literacy practices, and print technology that operated in conjunction as well as in opposition to missionary and white settler schooling initiatives. This new understanding underscores Native Hawaiians as keen and savvy actors in school administration, teaching, and learning during the first half of the monarchy.³⁶ They also reveal that while second-generation missionaries and their settler allies secured greater control over the school system and government toward the end of the nineteenth century, Natives continued to oppose the takeover of their nation, textbooks, and curriculum.³⁷

Despite these developments, more research is needed. For example, in the years before and during the monarchy, we still understand little about school life in rural communities, Native teacher-training practices and curriculum, charity schools, the lives and efforts of Native school administrators, the battle over secularism and Catholicism in the public schools, ali‘i (chief) influence over public and private school construction and instruction, the development of the common- and select-school systems, immigrant schooling experiences, Indigenous instructional practices and educational philosophy, higher education, and international exchange programs. Even lesser known is education during the territorial period. While current research expands our understanding of settler control over the education system and Japanese immigrant schooling experiences, there remains a dearth of historical scholarship on Chinese, Portuguese, Filipino, and Native Hawaiian populations (as mentioned previously); the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; progressive education in the

³⁵ Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic*, 24.

³⁶ Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic*; Noelani Arista, “Mo‘olelo and Mana: The Transmission of Hawaiian History from Hawai‘i to the United States, 1836–1843,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2018), 415–43; and Noelani Arista, “Davida Malo, a Hawaiian Life,” in *The Mo‘olelo Hawai‘i of Davida Malo, Volume 2: Text and Translation*, ed. and trans. Charles Langlas and Jeffery Lyon, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2020).

³⁷ David A. Chang, “We Will Be Comparable to the Indian Peoples’: Recognizing Likeness between Native Hawaiians and American Indians, 1834–1923,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (Sept. 2015), 859–86; Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It*; and Silva, *Aloha Betrayed*.

islands; the educational philanthropy of missionary descendants; and reform schools.

This paucity of research, however, should not be viewed as an impediment to future scholarship. Rather, it represents an exciting opportunity for expanding and developing contextual knowledge of the various institutions and communities in Hawai'i to better understand their complicated experiences and varied outcomes with American education. As scholars of nineteenth-century Hawai'i have demonstrated, great potential exists in researching non-English language sources to unearth diverse perspectives that challenge, affirm, and enrich current historical understandings of schools and schooling. Taking the same approach with research on education during the territorial period could similarly uncover new stories and experiences revealing a much more vibrant and complex past and inspiring fresh questions for future scholars.

*Smallness is a state of mind.*³⁸

Hawai'i may be America's most remote, isolated, and only island-state in the union but it also belongs to Oceania. It is a chain of islands deeply connected to the linguistic, cultural, environmental, and geographic histories of the region's vast "sea of islands," and its history of education needs to reflect this reality. Historical research needs to expand beyond its coupling with America to situate Hawai'i within the broader historical experience and development of education in Oceania. Doing so will highlight Hawai'i's unique schooling history in relation to the United States but also demonstrate the numerous ways the islands' historical development mirrors that of the region. This approach does not deny the diversity of the region and its rich, local historical and cultural experiences with education and schooling. Rather, it seeks to reestablish Hawai'i as a member of Oceania in order to draw and spark comparisons to other settler colonial states and Indigenous and immigrant experiences throughout the region and provide a more holistic historical understanding of the space and its people.

³⁸Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," 152.