

# Hawaiian genealogy: Stateside and island resources

By Darcie M. Hind Posz

HERE'S A CHANCE TO GET A WIFE.



The Hawaiian Islands are full of beautiful women—from an island standpoint—who are waiting and willing to become the wives of ambitious young Americans who go to Hawaii to make their fortunes. Such is the declaration of Miss Rose Davidson, who is to represent Hawaii at the Pan-American Exposition. To be sure, the young women are as brown as Cuban perfectos, but they are said to be good-looking. Miss Davidson, who lives in Honolulu, gives assurance that the agricultural attractions of the country are quite as alluring as the feminine charms, and that fortunes as well as wives await ambitious foreigners.

"Here's A Chance to Get a Wife," The Chicago Tribune, 10 July 1901, digital image, Fold3 (<http://www.fold3.com>: accessed 28 April 2012), Page 5, Cols B-C.

Genealogy is embedded in every aspect of Hawaiian life. From creation chants to hula to Hawaiian royalty to the ruling chiefs, Hawaiians have repeated their genealogy from their arrival on the archipelago to the current day. By the time the winds brought them to the Islands, many centuries before Captain James Cook's arrival, Hawaiians had cultivated a system of oral history to be recited and eventually recorded for westerners by individuals like David Malo and Samuel Kamakau.

Waves of immigration began shortly after 1778, and even as immigration was impacting the makeup of the peoples of Hawaii, Hawaiians were emigrating from the islands to western states. These migrations shape what is now Hawaii and also shape the future of Hawaiian genealogical research. Simply put, Hawaiians, both *Kanaka Maoli* (native Hawaiian) and otherwise, are everywhere. Every migration, every outsider, and every *Maoli* shapes what these beautiful Islands are, were, and will be and impacts the record groups that contain the valuable genealogical information we seek.

It is believed that there were approximately 250,000 native Hawaiians on the Islands when Captain Cook landed in 1778.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, native

Hawaiians accounted for 0.3 percent (874,414) of the population of the United States; this accounts for native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, or combinations of other groups.<sup>2</sup> By 2010, that number had jumped to 0.4 percent (1,255,195)—a 40 percent increase from ten years earlier.<sup>3</sup>

Hawaiian genealogy (*mo'o-ku'auhau*) is multi-layered. First there are the Hawaiian genealogies that focus on the creation of the islands and the ruling chiefs (*Ali'i*) and have long been the subject of anthropological study throughout the many Polynesian Islands.<sup>4</sup> There are also oral histories passed down over generations, some recorded and some not. Then there is the American genealogy focus that relies primarily on concrete records supporting and correlating the traditions. This article will focus on Hawaiian genealogical records and resources, both stateside and on the islands, and on the arrivals of the many ethnic groups that have impacted those records.

## History of Hawaii

The Hawaiian archipelago consists of eight islands, seven of which are inhabited. Prior to the arrival of Captain Cook, Hawaii was governed according to an ancient code of conduct known as the *kapu* system. This system influenced social customs, politics, and the economy until 1819. By the 1820s, American missionaries were arriving in droves and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was established. By 1839, the ABCFM had printed the first Hawaiian language Bible.<sup>5</sup> This time period proved pivotal to Hawaiian genealogical records: translating and distributing a Hawaiian language Bible meant that Hawaiian records could now be translated, recorded, and understood. Less than a decade later, the Great *Mahele*, a land division act of 1848, made it possible for foreigners and commoners to purchase land, which eventually led to the widespread establishment of sugar plantations.

Along with missionaries and other foreigners, diseases arrived, impacting the population of native Hawaiians, which shrunk from the purported 250,000 at Cook's visit to 71,000 by

1850.<sup>6</sup> Even as native populations decreased, plantations built on recently procured land required a greater number of laborers. This prompted the arrival of many Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, and other groups after the prohibition on immigration was lifted in 1850. The Japanese and Hawaiian governments formed a contract to manage these migrations between 1885 and 1894, while other groups were ordered by plantations on an as-needed basis.

The American occupation of the Islands was strategic: it influenced military and commercial control of the Pacific. The monarchy of Hawaii was overthrown in 1898; by June 1900 it became a territory of the United States. The location of the Islands was invaluable during World War II, and in 1959 Hawaii officially became the fiftieth state.

Emigration from Hawaii was influenced by trading with the Pacific Northwest as early as 1788.<sup>7</sup> More recently, as cheaper land and labor have been found elsewhere, the plantation economy has dried up, leaving many native Hawaiians and other plantation employees without work. Over the years since statehood, groups have moved to the mainland where they remain today.

## Records

In *The Peopling of Hawaii*, Eleanor C. Nordyke states that, "Hawaiians have served as a biological bridge between the many ethnic groups that have migrated to the Islands."<sup>8</sup> Interracial marriage has been legal in Hawaii since 1840, which accounts for the mixed roots.<sup>9</sup> In 2010, 55.9 percent of native Hawaiians reported multiple races.<sup>10</sup>

Birth (*hanau*) and marriage records for Hawaii began as early as 1842, although a majority of records from before 1900 are written in Hawaiian. Death (*make*) records were also kept and all were eventually deposited with the state archives. Since 1980, vital records for Hawaii have not been available to the general public, and present accessibility has been limited even further following arguments over President Obama's place of birth.<sup>11</sup> Indexes for pre-1930 records are available at FamilySearch.org and Ulukau.org.

More recent records can be obtained if you are a direct descendant of the individual whose vital record you are requesting and submit proof, such as vital records along with a pedigree chart.

Court records are available either at the island or state level. A majority of these records before 1930 are indexed and easily found through online resources that will be discussed later.

Land records specifically related to the *Mahele* are also available online. The original book has been digitized and can be accessed at the Hawaii State Archives website, <http://archives1.dags.hawaii.gov/gsd/cgi-bin/library>. Indexes to these records are available at island and statewide levels, and are also available on microfilm from

the Family History Library. Census records in Hawaii began in 1840 in some areas. It is also notable that, unlike the mainland, an 1890 Hawaii census still exists.

### Research stateside and on the islands

The majority of Hawaiian records are available online, either as digitized versions of the original or in indexes. The Hawaii State Archives has indexes for the government office holders, Chinese/Japanese/Portuguese passenger manifests, land and names. Also available online are the *Mahele* book, tax ledgers from 1847, vital statistics (Molokai, Niihau, Kauai, and some of Maui), and judiciary records. The *Mahele* book can

Census Year	Hawaii	Kauai	Lanai	Maui	Molokai	Oahu	Resource and Repository
1840–1844						X	Ronald Vern Jackson's <i>Hawaii 1840–1843</i> (and 1840–1844) <i>Territorial Census Records</i> ; available in book format
1840–1866						X	FHL 1009896 Items 1–2
1847–1896	X					X	FHL 1009896 Items 3;4
1878	X						FHL 1010681 and 1010682
1884						X	Robert C. Schmitt, "The Curious 1884 Census of Health and Fire Wards in Honolulu," <i>The Hawaiian Journal of History</i> 36 (2002), 73–77, available online at <a href="http://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10524/513/JL36079.pdf?sequence=2">http://evols.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/10524/513/JL36079.pdf?sequence=2</a>
1890	X	X		X	X	X	FHL 1010683–1010685, Hawaii; FHL 1010685, Kauai; FHL 1010686, Molokai and Maui
1895						X	Citizens' Guard commissions, 1895, volume 1, reel 1; available at University of Hawaii, Manoa Library
1896						X	FHL 1010687 and 1010688

Table 1. A comprehensive descriptive pamphlet is available at <http://hawaii.gov/dags/archives/about-us/CENSUSFA.pdf>.

be accompanied by the *Mahele* database available at the Waihona 'Aina website, <https://www.waihona.com/default-ssl.asp>, for more extensive research of land use. Two more invaluable *Mahele* resources are Jon J. Chinen's *The Great Mahele: Hawaii's Land Division of 1848* and Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa's *Native Land and Foreign Desires*, which studies the impact of the 1848 opening of land to commoners and foreigners.

The database of databases for Hawaii is the *Papakilo* Database at <http://www.papakilo.com/main/about.php>; partners include Awaiaulu, the Bishop Museum, DL Consulting (of New Zealand), Hawaii State Archives, Ho'olaupa'i, Ka'iwakiloumoku, Pumu Pono Associates, the Nature Conservancy, and Ulukau. The native Hawaiian Genealogy Society (NHGsoc.com) and Hawaiian Voyaging Society (Hookele.org) also have online indexes, articles and resources to supplement the records.

Chronicling America, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>, the Library of Congress's American newspaper digitization effort, includes several newspapers of Hawaii, both Hawaiian language and English. The earliest is the *Hawaiian Gazette* of Honolulu, with coverage beginning in 1868; there are also newspapers for Lihue, Maui, and Hilo.

Several small libraries do not have their own websites, but for local resources consider looking at the statewide library's website for information (<http://hawaii.sdp.sirsi.net>). Historical and genealogical societies may also have shortened hours or require an appointment before an in-person visit, so be sure to contact them in advance. The Hawaii State Archives has descriptive pamphlets that can be read before you visit to make you aware of the layout of the building, procedures, and collections available. The University of Hawaii in Manoa has the astounding plantation archives and also has finding aids online ([http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/m\\_about.html](http://www2.hawaii.edu/~speccoll/m_about.html)).

When visiting the islands in person, some tried and true research practices should be applied. For instance, if you are looking for one of the many small family cemeteries, consider going to the nearest post office to see if anyone

has any information on the location. In smaller communities, look for local watering holes or hangouts frequented by elders who you can talk with about family names that were in that area. In general, just stay social and receptive and you might be surprised what you find.

## Hanai and double names

Traditional Hawaiian adoptions, or *hanai*, may not have been recorded or legally recognized and could have been based on verbal agreements between families. When *hanai* has taken place and is not noted in the lineage, the lineage will be disrupted or may omit generations. For instance, Ned Neki Hind was adopted by his biological grandparents shortly after birth, was raised by them, and identified them as his parents in vital records and census records. Biologically, Ned's parents were Annie Kaili Hind and Yoshito Tanaka, but ten days before Ned's birth Annie was widowed and chose to have her parents raise the child; Ned believed his grandparents were his parents. With respect to Ned, the Hind pedigree has two lineages, the *hanai* lineage (that he chose as his own) and the biological lineage.

## Example of *hanai* vs. biological lineage

Biological Lineage: Ned Neki Hind à Annie Kaili Hind and Yoshito Tanaka à Robert Hind & Oliva Makahi

*Hanai* Lineage: Ned Neki Hind à Robert Hind and Oliva Makahi

With so many different ethnic groups living together, intermarrying, and having children, cultures often blended. A Hawaiian woman married to a Chinese plantation worker might give their children double names representative of both cultures. Hawaiians also tended to have long names; in a census or vital record they could be represented by their middle names or surnames of either parent. "Hawaiian society was and continues to be based on principles of bilateral descent, where descent groups are formed by people who claim each other by connections made through both their maternal and paternal lines. Hawaiian kinship terminology does not

distinguish male and female lines; all the relatives within a generation receive the same kin-term without regard to collateral versus lineal or matrilineal versus patrilineal distinction.”<sup>12</sup>

Be flexible with given names and surnames when searching for ancestors in records. Widening searches for ancestors' names but narrowing them down by vital dates and locations may be the key to locating them in these cases.

## Conclusion

This article has only touched the tip of the iceberg of Hawaiian genealogy, which is as multi-faceted as the various record groups both stateside and on the islands. Some items are not yet recorded but still exist in Hawaii as part of an oral tradition, while other items are only available in index format. Evaluate what you know, what has been proven, and what needs to be found when approaching Hawaiian genealogy. Remember to be flexible and open to the directions it may take you. Be willing to reach out whenever possible to listen and learn from what is not available online.



## Notes

1. Eleanor C. Nordyke, *The Peopling of Hawaii* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1977), 52.
2. Elizabeth M. Grieco, “The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, December 2001) (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-14.pdf>: accessed online), 3.
3. Lindsay Hixson, Bradford B. Hepler, and Myoung Ouk Kim, “The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2010,” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, May 2012) (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-12.pdf>: accessed online), 4.
4. For a more in-depth study of this, see E.S. Craighill Handy & Mary Kawena Pukui's *The Polynesian Family System in Ka'u, Hawai'i* (North Clarendon, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1989).
5. Clifford Putney, “Notable Appearances of the ABCFM in the U.S. and World History,” Global Ministries (<http://globalministries.org/resources/>

[mission-study/abcfm/abcfm-in-history.html](http://mission-study/abcfm/abcfm-in-history.html): accessed online).

6. Ronald T. Takaki, *Pau Hana; Plantation life and labor in Hawaii, 1835–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 22.
7. Jean Barman and Bruce McIntyre Watson, *Leaving Paradise: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787, 1898* (University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu, 2006), 17.
8. Nordyke, *The Peopling of Hawaii*, 52.
9. Andrew William Lind, *Hawaii's People* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1980), 112.
10. Karen R. Humes, Nicholas A. Jones, and Roberto R. Ramirez, “Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, March 2011) (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf>: accessed online), 8.
11. Hawaii State Department of Health, “Frequently Asked Questions about Vital Records of President Barack Hussein Obama II” (<http://hawaii.gov/health/vital-records/obama.html>: accessed online).
12. J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty and Indigeneity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), 38–39.

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*Darcie M. Hind Posz has been practicing genealogy for more than sixteen years, professionally for eight. Posz's research emphases include Chicago and Hawaiian/Polynesian genealogy and urban ancestors. Portions of her research are housed at Columbia University and she has contributed research for three biographies of early twentieth-century literary figures. Currently, she is chair of the Federation of Genealogical Societies Outreach Committee and resides in Washington, D.C. She can be reached at [darcieposz@hotmail.com](mailto:darcieposz@hotmail.com).*



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## ON THE COVER

*Hawaiian family in front of thatched grass house. Date unknown. Photo courtesy of the Hawaii State Archives. Learn more about Hawaiian genealogy by Darcie M. Hind Posz on page 48.*

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